Atenea

Número especial sobre **el discurso de la discapacidad**

Special Issue on **the Discourse of Disability**

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The cover design is based on an Athenian silver tetradrachm from the 5th century B.C., depicting Athena on the obverse and her owl on the reverse. Courtesy of the Ancient Coin Forum.

Illustration: José Irizarry

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ENSAYOS / *ESSAYS*

AT THE LIMITS OF LIVING: TO JOSEPH GRIGELY[1]

Julia Kristeva

> The problems of disabled people are of increasing concern to psychoanalysts today. It is in this way that psychoanalytic attentiveness to vulnerability becomes a genuine political issue.

People Say I Am Crazy: such is the title of a documentary screened in the United States which reinforced my decision, had there been need, to accept the Chair of the National "Handicap: Sensitise, Inform, Develop" Council in France. The documentary tries to explain to us how we can successfully "heal" and "integrate" a schizophrenic. The hero of the film, reluctantly stuffed with a range of medications which make him "obese," is nevertheless saved by his sister, an amateur film-maker who has the good idea of filming her poor brother John, who, fortunately is passionate about drawing and engraving. Thanks to the film, the work of the handicapped artist is swiftly made public; he has the right to an exhibition; the funding pours in. The madman henceforth becomes "*a disabled artist*." He could leave the appalling hostel that he shared with others like him and even regain a certain amount of serenity; I must add that it was the social services that offered him a home worthy of the name. So there we have it, he is cured. All that remained was to award the film a prize, which did not take long to happen. From time to time, the artist rebelled against the camera that focused its gaze upon him, and a little, in the same way, against those who were making a work of art from his malady. But, in the end, he was persuaded, and we could say that he even participated in the making of the film. Was not the

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[1] Published originally as "Aux frontières du vivant" by Julia Kristeva, in *Magazine Littéraire,* No. 428, Paris, février 2004, pp. 33-36. The English title of the text, as it appears here, "At the limits of living: To Joseph Grigely," has been specified by Julia Kristeva.

Julia Kristeva "Aux frontiers du vivant"

camera a familiar outsider, a small breathing space between John's malaise and his family? He was not insane enough to deprive himself of this space. Better than the charming "very American" therapist who encouraged him with her amiable "social worker" advice, the loving entrapment made possible by John's film-maker sister was not lacking in interest for the "works" of the artist, which nobody understood, but represented the place into which John had, it seemed, locked away his life. It is here in the film that something seemingly takes place, but that would be another film. Which one? There was no chance of this *"movie*" revealing it.

Not a word nor an interpretation accompanied John's dramatic representations of the brains and stomachs swarming around with abject flora and fauna; it occurred to no one to let the handicapped artist speak about his anxieties and his desires, about the exclusion into which "the people" had walled him up—an exclusion nevertheless flaunted in the title of the documentary: *People Say I Am Crazy*. Perhaps he could not speak? Perhaps no attempts had been made to let him speak? Perhaps he would try to speak after the making of the film? Who knows?

Today the patient has disappeared: he resurfaces as the object of a film, and why not even say a co-author, since it is true that the adventure has pushed him to produce and exhibit objects that will even be put up for sale, or at least it is hoped so. What a success! It is obvious, he is cured. What could be more wished for in the benign society of the spectacle other than good handicapped people? It suffices that patient has only to become a producer and/or an object of the "show."

An immense sadness restrained my unreserved applause. Something seemed to be missing from this lovely "integration." The *question of the subject* not having been raised, there was nothing *to be shared*. I had been witness to a *process*, perhaps even to a procedure*,* but not to a *rebirth*—to an *integration*, but not to an *interaction.* The handicapped person was indeed supported, but this was done in order to facilitate the insertion of his produced objects into the circuit of consumption, where success was measured by the bringing of his story to the screen. The subject in his entirety was absorbed by his objects, and his psychical life was taken as cured since it had quite simply disappeared from sight.

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While his sister director triumphed, and I could understand her joy, John searched for a perspective upon which to rest his weary eyes, out of shame, it seemed to me, out of resignation, out of anxiety.
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I was this gaze. Could more have been done? Everyone was happy for him, and he himself gave the impression of wishing to please us; the public was enchanted.

The uneasiness that seized me at the sight of this spectacle only served to reinforce my commitment to the "Handicap" project in France undertaken by the President of the Republic. What else could shake humanistic hypocrisy and productivist self-righteous thinking, other than an attentive accompaniment to psychoanalysis, which alone is capable of unearthing the subject from beneath the producer of images?

—"Where does the current delay in France come from, when you compare the ways in which Canada, Sweden, the Netherlands or Belgium take care of their handicapped people? Especially given that you have had, since the eighteenth century, the Abbé de l'Épée for the deaf, Pinel for the mentally ill, and Diderot for the blind 'for the benefit of those who could see?'"

This was the question I was asked during my stay in Chicago by the intellectual and renowned deaf artist, Joseph Grigely, after he had read my "Letter to the President of the Republic on the subject of handicapped citizens."[2]

—"Perhaps this delay emerges from the fact that secularisation has ousted compassion from our world, and yet, without psychoanalysis, we seriously risk being pushed into an impasse—one threatening all countries—wherein handicapped people are reduced to the function of either invalid or worker. In the United States, you know how to manage this 'process' more efficiently than we do in France, and consumerism triumphs in the most pernicious of good consciences. I prefer to wager that we will attempt to rehabilitate the subject in the deficient body, in order to pry him out of the exclusion into which common sense has locked him. I prefer to wager that it is from this authentic and necessary cultural change that we will be able to improve the laws and material compensations."

This was how I responded to Joseph Grigely, benefiting from his interest in French psychoanalysis which he astutely distinguished from the various American therapies, and trying to persuade myself that I was not simply nurturing thoughts of "*wishful thinking*." It is here that I would like to continue the conversation I had with Joseph Grigely, thanks to sign-language translation.

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[2] Julia Kristeva, *Lettre au Président de la République sur les citoyens en situation de handicap, à l'usage de ceux qui le sont et de ceux qui ne le sont pas*. Paris: Fayard, 2003.

Twenty-five years of analytical practice have convinced me that psychoanalysis being the intimate experience *par excellence*, there could not be a politics of psychoanalysis. However, the psychoanalytic attentiveness to the *parlêtre* is the Copernican revolution of values and norms which opens up new possibilities of links to others, links which themselves constitute the very essence of politics. If listening to the unconscious unveils the vulnerability of the speaking being, it is inevitable that psychoanalysis meets with the principal anxiety of the third millennium: what meaning is given to the limits of life—to birth, to death, to deficiencies? By transferring the religious and philosophical ambitions of an individualised Western world into the very heart of scientific rationality, the Freudian discovery of the unconscious is undoubtedly the only humane approach likely to avoid both the euthanasia based on scientific pretensions and the pseudo-humanism destined to ossify the patient under the carapace of a worker. We know about *body-building*; we are now taking part in *producer-building*. Will the advanced democracies know how to find the ways to accompany life to its limits and limitations, whilst still privileging and appealing to the subjects within them? Such is the wager that the Freudian discovery of the unconscious prepares us for, if we admit that it is a discovery of the *essential vulnerability of the speaking body.*

Summarising the analytical approach in such a way requires some explanation. Eros and Thanatos, unveiled by Freud in the unconscious of men and women of the twentieth century, were led neither to reveal a desiring superman (as certain Lacanian zealots would have it), nor to take pity upon a suffering humanity (as the orthodox post-Freudians would like to murmur). In fact, the duel between hedonists and nihilists is one of those French specificities which fends well in the media, but cannot stand up to the complexities of psychical life revealed on the couch of the contemporary psychoanalyst.

It is the *delicacy of the speaking being* that the analyst examines today, after having read his Freud and his Lacan, his Melanie Klein and his Bion, his Winnicott and his Frances Tustin. The Freudian voyage into the *night of desire* gives way to taking care of the *capacity to think*—never one without the other. The result? Modern psychoanalysis, as I understand it, seems to be an elucidation of the vulnerability resulting from the biology/language crossroad, as well as a perpetual rebirth of the subject, if and only if this vulnerability is recognised. Situated in this untenable place, psychoanalysts, by going beyond the frequent disasters and increasingly visible psychic-somatic terrain, have the privilege—unique today?—of accompanying new emerging capacities to think-represent-think; capacities which are as much new bodies as well as new lives.

Contrary to world-wide technology that overwhelms us with its propaganda, the global era that unfolds after the modern era is not characterised by a performing and enjoying Man(kind), bisexual master of his desires and/or of their debacles. The vulnerability that reveals itself today on the analysts' couches is precisely what the maniacal surge of hyper-productivity, of global demonstration, and of suicidal religious wars, is fiercely trying to deny.

By adding a fourth term—vulnerability—to the inherited humanism of the Enlightenment's "liberty, equality, fraternity," the analytical ear inflects these latter terms towards a concern for sharing, in which and thanks to which desire, with its lining of suffering, moves towards a permanent renewal of the self, the other and their bond.

It is from examining, for more than two decades so far, the delicacy and vulnerability of women and men who have confided in me, that I believe I heard—in the President's intention that France make up for its reluctance to personally accompany its handicapped citizens—an appeal … to psychoanalysis. For no other discourse, no other interrogation or therapy would know better, at one and the same time, how to recognise the lack in being (*manque à être*), and how to enlist it in a project of on-going renewal, whether it be limiting or surprising.[3]

I do not speak only of the psychoanalytic approach to *psychical handicaps*—psychosis or autism—which, in the best of cases, would lead to a situation wherein the subject is foreclosed. Without denying pharmacological or other approaches which facilitate social behaviours, I also want to speak about the approach which claims for its objective the protection and the optimisation of psychical life, to the extent that it remains an infinite quest for meaning—a *bios* traversal to the *zoe*—resulting in a biography with and for others. Although what John, in the documentary that I have referred to, managed neither to say nor to think, the film—almost despite its producers—could not prevent the potentialities of his thoughts and words from being guessed at.

Other types of handicaps—*mental* (Down syndrome), *sensorial* (deafness, blindness) or *motor*—also push, though differently, people into deficient situations which exclude them from belonging

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[3] '*manque à être*' makes reference to the same phrase of Jacques Lacan's, which has been variously translated as 'want-to-be,' 'want of being,' 'lack of being,' Whilst these translations are important, I have chosen, with Kristeva's agreement, to translate here the phrase as 'lack in being.' – TN.

to a community. This is because these disabilities bring each of those *not* suffering from them face to face with the anxiety of castration, the horror of narcissistic wounding and, at a later stage, with the unbearableness of psychical or physical death: deepening therein the most intractable kind of exclusion suffered by the handicapped person.

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Rejections caused by race, social origin or religious differences have led to political disputes which, for the last two centuries at least, have taken over the place once occupied by charity, and managed, for better or for worse, to reinstate in the minds of citizens and by law, the well-named “human rights”: a horizon forever unsatisfying but henceforward part of “common sense,” so that resisting racism, classist and religious persecution appears to be the sensible thing to do. It is an altogether different question when the exclusion suffered by the handicapped person is raised. The voluntarism of the beautiful humanist soul, sustained—though not always—by juridical and social measures, and nourished by a more or less noble camaraderie, is shown to be incapable of overcoming the fears and anxieties which determine the unconscious, and very often conscious, rejection of those who are handicapped by those who are not.

It is here, in this precise place that *psychoanalytic attentiveness to vulnerability* could assume its full political significance, by addressing not only those who suffer from a handicap, but those in society who are capable not only of integrating them, but to create a real interaction with them. Be reassured, I am not suggesting that everyone must be “psychoanalysed,” unless people want it, and it happens; nor am I trying to say that “we are all handicapped,” as has been said “we are all German Jews,” all New Yorkers of the Twin Towers, all gays or all women. I say only this: by lending a psychoanalytical ear to the incommensurable singularity of the *exclusion unlike others* that handicapped people suffer from, it becomes obvious that it concerns us. Not necessarily because “it could happen to anyone,” but because *it* (*ça*) is already inside me: in our dreams, our anxieties, our amorous and existential crises, in the *lack in being* (*manque à être*) that overwhelms us when our resistances fall apart and the “interior castle” itself begins to crumble. Since to recognise it in myself will help me to discover the incommensurable subject within the deficient body, in order to build together the project of a shared life. A project in which my fear of castration, of a narcissistic wound, of defect, and of death—up until now repressed—are translated into care, into patience, and into a solidarity capable of cultivating my being in the world (*être au monde*). At this conjunction, the handicapped subject
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perhaps becomes not my *analyst*, but my *analyser*?

I am not claiming that this social contract supported by psychoanalytic attentiveness will manage to dissolve a handicap into a state of vulnerability. If every speaking being is constructed around a central weakness, the presence of a handicap imposes a very different ordeal: it is the *irreparable* that the handicapped subject is faced with, in addition to the lacks or deficiencies which only evolve in certain cases, when they do not stagnate or worsen. And yet, the analysand who has not confronted the irreparable in himself has not finished, in Céline's words, with his "journey to the end of the night." And how many impending desires, dormant abilities, possibilities of an astonishing life lie in this cohabitation with the irreparable!

I am convinced that by having tamed their vulnerability, analysands and all those who try and lend their speech to the unconscious are capable of receiving handicapped subjects with the best outcomes, so that the desires, anxieties, and creativities of those excluded unlike others, are expressed and elaborated. Having identified our own limits permits us to share those of the handicapped subject: his weaknesses, like his brilliances, therein emphasising the strongest sense of the word "sharing," which is not fusion, osmosis or identification. To share: to take part in particularity, going beyond the separation that our destinies impose on us. To participate: without forgetting that we remain "apart," by recognising our unshareable "part"—the part of the irreparable.

Have we not, in this dream of a citizenship shared with the most fragile, wandered very far from psychoanalysis? In a certain way we have. But not really, if we admit that far from being a world apart, a coded language or a sect of initiates, psychoanalysis is another way of being in the world.

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DIFERENCIAS ATERRADORAS: EL DISCURSO DEL MIEDO Y LA LIMINALIDAD VINCULADOS A DOS EJEMPLOS DE DISCAPACIDAD

Rosana Díaz Zambrana

> "¿Qué lugar es éste, qué región, qué parte del mundo?"
> Séneca

La realidad contemporánea experimenta un proceso de homogeneización cultural, económica y espacial en donde los elementos heterogéneos con respecto a las demarcaciones y condicionamientos preestablecidos por la sociedad, son recibidos con reticencia, rechazo, y en la mayoría de las casos, miedo. En el siguiente ensayo me interesa explorar cómo el tema de la diferencia, asociado a la discapacidad o a los portadores de algún tipo de deficiencia física o mental como los delineados en el cuento de Julio Cortázar, "Después del almuerzo" y en el largometraje de Andrew Niccol, *Gattaca (1997)*, se interpola con un discurso del terror en sus variables de miedo a lo desconocido, al contagio y a la intrusión. Debido al desafío que implica definir y clasificar social y culturalmente el lugar de las personas con discapacidad, en nuestro acercamiento a dos ejemplos del cine y la literatura, nos valemos del concepto de *liminalidad* estudiado por el antropólogo Víctor Turner a propósito de las sociedades primitivas. En estas transiciones iniciáticas será precisamente esa etapa de ambigüedad o de limen (espacial, cultural) la que nos servirá como punto de partida para examinar los problemas que surgen frente a aquellos fenómenos sociales que no son completamente reconocibles, nombrables o clasificables.

En *Simbolismo y ritual*, siguiendo la definición de Arnold Van Gennep, Turner reexamina los ritos de paso que acompañan cada cambio de estado, lugar, posición o edad y que se ratifican en tres fases esenciales: 1) fase de separación del individuo de su grupo social;

2) fase liminal que se sitúa en el límite entre dos mundos: aquél de los valores pragmáticos y el de los valores ideales de la *communitas perfecta* lo que indicaría la posición paradójica que precede a la transformación final y, 3) fase de agregación o incorporación total al grupo (Turner 54). Mientras en la tercera fase de integración de un estado liminal a uno total, el sujeto adquiere los derechos y obligaciones de un tipo estructural, gracias a una transición que se supera cabalmente, la *persona liminal* se instala en la ambigüedad nominal y espacial que, a su vez, dificulta la denominación y la integración al estado total. En este sentido, el sujeto liminal *desaparece* para los miembros de la comunidad que gozan de definición social, y como consecuencia, ese primero permanece inclasificable e indefinible en lo que Turner llama *invisibilidad estructural*. Por tal razón, en nuestro análisis los seres que exhiben algún tipo de discapacidad son víctimas de prácticas sociales exclusivas debido a la condición intermedia que los vuelve invisibles y, como consecuencia, prescindibles.

La película *Gattaca* se ubica dentro una tradición en el género de la ciencia ficción que explora los alcances de la *eugenesia* como la vía científica que llevará al perfeccionamiento de la raza humana y que predomina no sólo en las películas del principio del siglo XX sino que continúa siendo una inquietud temática (científica y social) explorada por los cineastas contemporáneos.[1] *Gattaca* se propone una visión futura donde descifrado el genoma humano, la biogenética es capaz de llegar a detectar enfermedades, mutaciones, defectos y malformaciones antes de que éstas se manifiesten. Situada en "un futuro no tan distante," *Gattaca* nos transporta a un universo en el que los embriones son predispuestos para ser cada vez mejores y es posible desglosar toda la carga genética con tan sólo una pestaña. Sin embargo, este aparente avance científico plantea, simultáneamente, una problemática polarización entre las personas con genes manipulados a la perfección, catalogadas como "válidas" y aquéllas que fueron concebidas de forma natural, las "inválidas"o como son llamadas en la película, "hijos de Dios". Debido a los defectos que

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[1] Este tema de la ingeniería genética fue estudiado ampliamente por Martin Pernick en el libro *The Black Stork*. De acuerdo a Pernick, la eugenesia se convirtió en un tema médico muy controversial y los filmes que lidiaban con ese asunto durante la primera mitad del siglo XX fueron restringidos y censurados. Sin embargo, el deseo de crear criaturas superiores y avanzadas sigue siendo un lugar común a través de la historia cinematográfica de la ciencia ficción. Aun cuando la eugenesia apunta hacia una promesa de poder acelerar el mejoramiento de la raza humana, esa posibilidad refleja igualmente el miedo y la ansiedad con respecto al poder transformador y en ocasiones, terrible de la ciencia.

acarrea ese “nacimiento inferior” (miopía, baja estatura, problemas cardíacos), el protagonista del filme, Vincent Freeman, no puede ambicionar a su sueño de niño de viajar al espacio en alguna de las misiones auspiciadas por Gattaca, la compañía dedicada al estudio de los planetas; en cambio, sólo cualifica para tener ‘acceso’ a la misma como empleado de mantenimiento y limpieza. Decidido a rebasar las limitaciones genéticas conocidas desde su nacimiento y usadas en su contra a la hora de solicitar admisión al programa espacial de Gattaca, Vincent opta por convertirse en un “escalón prestado”, que sería el robar o comprar una identidad ajena para escamotear la discriminación genética. En este caso, asume la identidad de Eugene Morrow que, como evidencia su nombre es un “eu-gen”, o sea, un *buen gen*. Sin embargo, a pesar de su sorprendente potencial genético, está *confinado* a una silla de ruedas luego de un accidente automovilístico que inmediatamente lo “de-gene-ra” a la categoría de “inválido o “gen malo”.

No es gratuito que la escena inicial de la película sea la de Vincent sometiéndose al exhaustivo y metódico “ritual del baño” en el que se frota y restriega la piel para extraer el tejido muerto y presentarse “limpio” a la prestigiosa empresa Gattaca en la que discriminan laboralmente a aquéllos que no poseen validez o pureza genética. En *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas establece que en las sociedades existe una distinción antitética entre los elementos puros y los contaminantes donde estos últimos se vinculan a los aspectos que atentan contra la configuración social aceptada. El concepto de polución evoca entonces la potencialidad del peligro y el contagio adjudicados al carácter contradictorio de los seres fronterizos; desde la perspectiva de la definición social, aquello que es considerado sucio se convierte en una amenaza a la coherencia del sistema en que opera ya que actúa como una intromisión desarticuladora del orden (Douglas 96). En resumidas cuentas, la persona liminal denota una naturaleza inmunda que la hace marginal y la degrada en materia extirpable. Los ritos de purificación, como los sugeridos por la reiteración de escenas de limpieza (personal y espacial) en *Gattaca*, servirán para corregir la ambigüedad de esas personas discordantes, polutas o discapacitadas. Una de las repercusiones de esa contaminación es que aquéllos que no han superado el estado intermedio de la imperfección azarosa otorgada por Dios no pueden aspirar a integrarse satisfactoriamente al estado total de la utopía científica que patrocina Gattaca. Esa meticulosa higiene de la compañía metaforiza el miedo a la calidad corruptiva del cuerpo defectuoso o de como los llamara Garland-Thomson, *cuerpos extraordinarios*, término que incorpora todas las percepciones corporales de la otredad: mutilación, deformación, monstruosidad, desfiguración y discapacidad física (5).

Incluso, en otra de las escenas iniciales los empleados de Gattaca se presentan de espaldas, robotizados, homogeneizados por los movimientos, la vestimenta y el espacio, igualmente mecanizado, rígido y desinfectado. El efecto del miedo es continuado mediante la atmósfera claustrofóbica de los espacios que impone una suerte de confinamiento psicológico o reclusión aislante de los personajes atrapados en una "condición inferior". En *The Closed Space*, Manuel Aguirre alude precisamente al espacio cerrado como aquél "que se identifica más con la literatura de horror" (2). Esta constricción espacial encuentra su contrapartida en el deseo de Vincent de viajar al espacio, lo que pudiera incitar una especie de liberación; sin embargo, su constante mirar hacia "arriba" desde "el abajo" metafórico en que se sitúa es paralelo al oscuro sótano en donde habita Eugene entregado a la bebida y a la autocompasión. En ese espacio subterráneo de la casa, el Eugene *inválido* da comienzo a un proceso de borradura de su identidad y de su productividad social que, por fuerza, culmina en el acto último de autoexclusión y silenciamiento: el suicidio.

Dentro de este orden panóptico de control, automatismo, competencia y racionalidad en Gattaca, emerge al mismo tiempo una escalofriante sensación análoga a aquélla engendrada por la extrema eficiencia racional y científica de la lógica nazi. Ya en el Positivismo se había articulado un discurso racista concerniente a los grupos urbanos contaminantes y peligrosos como vagabundos y mendigos. En "The Visible Cripple", Mark Jeffreys explica cómo las fundaciones culturales prejuiciosas se afianzan debido al predominio de los segmentos elitistas de la sociedad patriarcal y a la solidificación del saber científico: "Many of the most egregiously oppressive and even genocidal practices of the modern era, including race laws, eugenics, and the Holocaust, have been buttressed and defended by the authoritative rhetoric of objective science" (32).[2] Por ello, cuando la tecnología atenta contra aquéllos a quienes debiera servir, ocurre una conturbadora desmembración del ideal científico como sucede también en la novela de Edmundo Paz Soldán, *Sueños digitales* (2000). En esta novela, al igual que en *Gattaca*, el simulacro del sistema benévolo se trastoca en una máquina generadora de terror,

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[2] Esta es una traducción mía: "Algunas de las prácticas notoriamente opresivas y genocidas de la era moderna, incluyendo las leyes raciales, la eugenesia y el Holocausto, han sido apoyadas y defendidas por la retórica autoritaria de la ciencia."

donde la diferencia equivale a la contaminación y al contagio, y por tanto, debe ser extraída como una condición infecciosa que lleva al prejuicio, a la segregación y, eventualmente, a la muerte. Es elocuente el hecho de que en *Sueños digitales* los personajes que muestran una suerte de apatía a la revolución tecnológica sean marginales y denoten una aberrante anomalía. Por ejemplo, el padre del protagonista, después de vivir en una comuna de *hippies* y contestatarios, termina refugiado en una cabaña en Colorado imprecando contra el gobierno y los adelantos tecnológicos mientras el personaje del bibliotecario reniega del progreso y se aferra patológicamente a sus libros. Todas estas actitudes de extremas rebeldías apuntan a la melancolía de vivenciar la reducción de aquello tradicional o sagrado en simple mercadería: mudable, sustituible y desechable. Por este motivo en *Sueños digitales* predomina la presencia del "ojo de la cámara" que se encarniza como la mirada inquisitoria y opresora del estado o los mecanismos de poder que restringen y perturban a los seres en los márgenes. Por lo tanto, las obsesiones paranoicas que padecen de modo similar los personajes "imperfectos" en *Gattaca* responden a esos organismos invisibles y centralizados de la sociedad tecnificada en que las excepciones a la norma son objeto de escrutinio, persecución y erradicación. Para los desajustados o anormales, incapaces de integrarse, sólo queda el camino a la automarginación, la locura o la muerte. En otras palabras, el disidente (o la presencia de la discapacidad) se cementa como amenaza porque su presencia desestabiliza el sistema a su vez que persigue el aparente equilibrio de la neutralidad. Esta búsqueda de igualdad artificial pretende estandarizar y borrar lo que no encuadre en esta macabra imagen de totalidad conciliatoria. Aquí es justamente donde acontece el pasaje a lo siniestro en la acepción freudiana del proceso inusitado de desfamiliarización. Incluso, según Freud, la respuesta que nace de esa inexplicable alteración de lo familiar en lo ajeno es registrada a nivel individual como terror. Ese sentimiento de peligro (real o interno) yace tras lo que oculta e(l)o otro. La confrontación con lo otro, asociado a lo extraño y ambiguo, detona una abrumadora sensación de desconfianza e incomodidad. Para Otto Bollnow, lo otro es aquello que se opone a nuestro ser, es lo que nos intranquiliza y altera nuestra propia seguridad porque lo desconocido sugiere maldad (89). Ante ese confín de lo reconocible y lo desconcertante, el sujeto llega a sufrir la resonancia de una desestabilización que agrava las emociones de incertidumbre y aprensión. Como ocurre con las personas inválidas de *Gattaca*, el entorno desfamiliar de la perfección se materializa en la constancia de la angustia, del mismo modo que el individuo discapacitado internaliza y traduce la fricción y marginalización social en un trauma personal.

En *Gattaca*, el concepto de la naturaleza divina es sustituido por la excesiva prepotencia de la ciencia cuyos hijos (productos) son física, intelectual y genéticamente más capacitados, y por tanto, superiores, a los hijos de Dios. Tales productos son modificados a imagen y semejanza de los tipos favorables y favorecidos por la sociedad. Mientras la madre de Vincent, al momento de conocer que su hijo tendría una predisposición a enfermedades cardíacas de un 99% y su expectativa de vida sería de 30.2 años, afirma esperanzada "sé que llegará a ser alguien"; por su parte, Antonio, el padre de Vincent en vez de nombrarlo como él, escoge llamarlo Vincent y no es hasta que nace el segundo hijo, genéticamente manipulado, que este último puede ser digno del nombre del padre. Ambas decisiones implican una posición ética frente al problema de la discapacidad y las estrategias para confrontarlo. El mismo Vincent admite que: "Desde muy niño, pensaba de mí, como los demás pensaban de mí…estaba crónicamente in-válido". De acuerdo al sociólogo Charlie Davison:

> the more a person knows about his or her genetic predispositions, the more influence this knowledge tends to have in the determination of self; for example, a person who knows that he or she has a genetic predisposition for heart disease will behave as if certain to develop heart disease, rather than take the chance that the disease may never develop. (citado por Kirby 202)[3]

En otras palabras, conocer de antemano las posibles limitaciones produce, en el peor de los escenarios, una predisposición psicológica fatalista en el individuo que le condiciona el comportamiento y debilita las posibilidades de superar esas constricciones sociales.

No en balde los padres que tienen la opción de manipular la carga genética de sus hijos buscan reproducir en ellos esas mismas características aceptables que viabilizarían la obtención del éxito, y por consiguiente, el "estado de felicidad y sanidad" que tanto valora la sociedad y en función del cual se proyecta el progreso científico. En el mundo feliz y saneado al que aspira Gattaca, la discriminación ya no es racial o de religión, sino genoísta, o sea, basada en las características deficientes del genotipo. Curiosamente, en la utopía futurista, la discriminación parte de un problema de clases ya que

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[3] Esta es una traducción mía: "Mientras más una persona conozca sobre su predisposición genética, esta información más influirá en su desarrollo, por ejemplo, una persona que sabe que posee una predisposición cardíaca se comportará como si fuera a desarrollar esa condición cardíaca, en vez de considerar que la enfermedad puede que nunca se manifieste."

sólo aquellos grupos con los medios económicos tienen acceso a la prevención genética para sus hijos y al dominio sobre esas oportunidades. En otra escena significativa del filme, el genetista que, irónicamente, es calvo y de raza negra, advierte a los padres de Vincent sobre los prejuicios sociales que la ciencia tiene la posibilidad de prever y evitar en aras de "perfeccionar" la configuración genética del embrión:

> "Primero decidamos el sexo … Han especificado ojos color avellana, cabello oscuro, tez blanca. Me he tomado la libertad de erradicar cualquier condición potencialmente prejuiciosa: calvicie prematura, miopía, alcoholismo, susceptibilidades adictivas, propensión a la violencia, obesidad … ustedes quieren dar a su hijo el mejor comienzo posible. Créanme, ya traemos demasiadas imperfecciones incorporadas. Su hijo no necesita más carga adicional."

Como hemos estipulado, el motivo del terror en esta película surge de la disociación macabra entre la diferencia y la normalidad pautada por el determinismo genético. De hecho, Vincent sólo puede contemplar las posibilidades laborales como ingeniero en la exclusiva corporación Gattaca cuando asume la identidad genética *validada* de Eugene. A pesar de su extraordinario coeficiente de inteligencia, su visión impecable y demás atributos que denotan una excedente superioridad genética, Eugene comparte la marginalidad de Vincent debido a su discapacidad fisica. Ambos personajes son igualados y reducidos a su fisicalidad por las prácticas sociales constringentes que eventualmente llevan al suicidio a Eugene y hacen que Vincent se rebele contra el fatalismo genético y concretice su sueño de llegar al espacio, excediendo las expectativas que habían configurado su futuro bajo el signo del fracaso y la discapacidad. Esto atestiguaría la superación del determinismo biogenético, ya que, como aclara Vincent, "no hay un gen para el éxito"; y mucho menos, existe un gen para la voluntad y la determinación del espíritu humano, lo que al final de cuentas se evidencia en su afirmación identitaria como *Free-man* y la apoteósica realización de su viaje "a las estrellas."

El terror del umbral: los espacios hostiles y el viaje en "Después del almuerzo"

"¡La puerta! La puerta es todo un cosmos de lo entreabierto"
Gaston Bachelard

La transferencia de lo siniestro a la representación de un portador de deficiencia física se consolida con maestría en el cuento de Julio Cortázar, "Después del almuerzo." En el cuento, un narrador-niño, probablemente un preadolescente, relata cómo después del almuerzo, recibe de sus padres la agobiante tarea de pasear a quien, en nuestra interpretación, identificamos como un hermano con algún tipo de discapacidad. El paseo requiere que tomen el tranvía en ruta al centro de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Ese recorrido se articula a partir de desafíos psicológicos y espaciales tales como el huir de las miradas inquisidoras de los espectadores, el mantener control del comportamiento impredecible del hermano o el persuadirlo para que obedezca órdenes; en fin, el evitar cualquier error que dilate o entorpezca el viaje. Al momento de llegar a la Plaza de Mayo, el narrador, abrumado por el constreñimiento de la responsabilidad que le ha sido delegada y la vergüenza de "lidiar" en público con su hermano, decide abandonarlo a su suerte en plena plaza, pero el remordimiento lo hace volver para recogerlo y regresar juntos a la casa.

En principio, la historia a grandes rasgos parece simple, sin embargo, la ambigüedad se enarbola como eje vertebrador de un universo invadido/infectado por la diferencia como sucedía en *Gattaca.* Por ejemplo, el nombre del hermano "enfermo" y sus limitaciones cognoscitivas, comunicativas o adaptivas permanecen todas sin nombrar. Por su parte, el narrador se refiere a su hermano en términos de "él" o "lo": "Lo encontré," "lo agarré," "lo limpié," lo abandoné" (111).[4] De hecho, algunos críticos, al hablar del que hemos de llamar el *hermano*, lo han denominado el *idiota* o la *criatura*, de alguna manera, comprobando la "monstruosidad" con la que se liga al sujeto inclasificable. Esta deliberada imprecisión con respecto a la naturaleza del ser sin identificar confirma el carácter dudoso que acompaña a la persona liminal. La construcción de una atmósfera de extrañeza sirve para calificar la discapacidad física dentro de un marco en que imágenes familiares se funden con el espanto y con el impacto terrorífico que imparten los espacios en el cuento.

El espacio nos vincula al mundo, a la proximidad de éste, no sólo en términos concretos sino por el valor que adquieren sus signos en la comunicación cotidiana. Cuando Heidegger afirma que "ser hombre significa habitar" alude a ese *ser-en-el-mundo* que implica un sentido espacial de la existencia. Es precisamente esa espacialidad la que define la relación del hombre con su entorno y viabiliza su habitar en el mundo. En "Después del almuerzo" tiene lugar un cuestionamiento del modo de habitar-dialogar con el espacio por parte de la persona portadora de alguna discapacidad y la extensión

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[4] En adelante, las citas del cuento "Después del almuerzo" irán numeradas entre paréntesis.

de esa problemática interacción a los miembros que comparten su mismo ámbito socio-cultural.

Según Lev Kipnis, algunos textos de Cortázar se caracterizan por perfilar un héroe que, por un lado, se presenta como solitario, pasivo y libre de sus acciones y que, por otro lado, súbitamente se hace esclavo de un espacio amenazante (75). El camino a la plaza que, hasta el momento del paseo con el hermano, había sido para el narrador un recorrido placentero, lúdico y predecible por su familiaridad, de repente, dicha cartografía citadina se desfigura en un territorio siniestro e inclusive, pesadillesco: “las cuadras me parecían terriblemente largas y a cada momento tenía miedo de oír alguna exclamación o un grito”/ “cada paso me costaba como en esos sueños en que uno tiene unos zapatos que pesan toneladas” (113).

De acuerdo a Rowland Sherill, el viajero actúa en un estatus especial de *homo spectans* porque observa desde los márgenes y periferias, frecuentemente percibe horizontes inesperados, ángulos inusuales, giros particulares de percepción (178). La alteración de lo ordinario durante el viaje se dinamiza a través de la percepción visual y la repentina inserción de lo extraordinario manifestado en la discontinuidad de los campos espaciales reconocibles. La mirada paranoica del narrador se alterna con la mirada reduccionista de los otros que *ven* pero no *reconocen* al hermano. Eso explicaría el porqué el inspector del tranvía, al momento de marcar los boletos, “mira para abajo” donde debiera estar el hermano y reacciona con turbación y duda ante lo que juzga como una situación extraña (114). Aquí el acto de vigilar (mirar con cuidado o insistencia) se impone como la dinámica interactiva que fundamenta la creciente tensión en el narrador. Garland-Thomson apunta al modo espectacular en que convergen las miradas de fascinación, terror y desconcierto frente al cuerpo discapacitado:

> Staring at disability choreographs a visual relation between a spectator and a spectacle. A more intense form of looking than glancing, glimpsing, scanning, surveying, gazing, and other forms of casual or uninterested looking, staring registers the perception of difference and gives meaning to impairment by marking it as aberrant. (56)[5]

Examinar el tranvía y los movimientos del guarda, estudiar el tráfico de personas que quieren bajar, inspeccionar el asiento del

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[5] Esta traducción es mía: “Mirar fijamente a la discapacidad crea una dinámica visual entre el espectador y el espectáculo. Mirar fijamente es una acción más intensa que mirar de reojo, echar vistazos, atisbar, curiosear o incluso, cualquier otra forma casual de mirar ya que la mirada fija percibe el impedimento como una diferencia y la clasifica como algo aberrante.”

hermano, reubicarse a su lado, velar que no alcance la ventanilla, son reacciones que demuestran cómo la mirada del narrador se intensifica durante el intercambio con el entorno y la introducción de la discapacidad en ese espacio. El ojo incisivo del guarda, del vigilante, del inspector y de los desconocidos "sin decir nada pero mirando" actúa como una prolongación de la mirada agresiva de la autoridad paterna al momento de dar la orden al narrador de pasear a su hermano: "pero papá dio un paso adelante y se puso a mirarme en esa forma que no puedo resistir, me clava los ojos y yo siento que se me van entrando cada vez más hondo en la cara, hasta que estoy a punto de gritar y tengo que darme vuelta y contestar que sí" (110). La susodicha repetición del motivo del vigilante en el cuento, recuerda al guarda especial del umbral en los antiguos rituales religiosos, quien debía combatir las fuerzas nefastas que buscaban atravesar el espacio de la casa, que en este caso, equivale al espacio en abierto de lo social-reconocido ya sea la plaza o la calle.

La travesía de los hermanos al centro (del terror) se coloca como metáfora de la superación de obstáculos y de la penetración de espacios desafiantes y hostiles. El narrador se debate entre dos estados críticos de angustia: la agorafobia y la claustrofobia. En la agorafobia la persona experimenta un miedo en lugares o situaciones donde escapar o pedir ayuda son particularmente difíciles mientras la claustrofobia alude a la crisis de angustia en lugares que, por otro lado, son psicológicamente asfixiantes. La ansiedad entonces, sería provocada por lo que se conoce en psicología como la *respuesta de lucha-huida*; es decir, la confrontación de dos posibles opciones: enfrentar la situación de peligro o huir de la misma. El horror de atravesar el espacio cerrado (el tranvía y la puerta) y el abierto (la plaza y la calle) que siente el chico de "Después del almuerzo" sólo es aplacado cuando, en efecto, los encara física y mentalmente.

Otro ejemplo significativo de la redefinición de las coordenadas psicológicas en el cuento se arma a través del motivo del viaje. El narrador de "Después del almuerzo" es capaz de intuir y anticipar las vicisitudes del desplazamiento, y por ello su reacción instintiva ante la posibilidad del viaje es de rechazo ("Lo primero que contesté fue que no, que lo llevara otro") (110). Esa oscilación entre el *placer* del espacio identitario del cuarto ("yo hubiera querido quedarme en mi cuarto") y el *displacer* del espacio desestabilizador de la calle ("pero…*tenía que* llevarlo de paseo") expresan los conflictos dicotómicos de dentro/fuera, identidad/otredad, seguridad/extrañeza y capacitado/discapacitado (110). Una vez en el tranvía, la angustia del narrador se recrudece y la ventanilla se transforma en el foco de atención ya que el transporte público funciona como una concretización por excelencia de todos estos motivos espaciales y además, les sirve de marco, de límite (Kipnis 76). Por eso, la apertura del espacio favorece la sensación de vastedad mientras la angostura produce en su sentido literal angustia. En este aspecto, el horror del chico reside en el enfrentamiento con lo imprevisible del espacio cerrado que se agrava con la compañía sofocadora y desesperante del discapacitado. Sin embargo, la permeabilidad espacial de la ventana contrarresta, de cierta manera, la implacable opresión del tranvía debido a que el estado de aprisionamiento para el narrador no sólo es físico sino temporal y existencial. Aunque para Lev Kipnis, el descenso del tranvía actúa como válvula de escape de la angustia acumulada, en "Después del almuerzo," el confinamiento y la apertura producen un miedo parecido y, en ocasiones, intercambiable (78), como se denota en las palabras del narrador: "Pero cuando bajamos del tranvía…sentí como un mareo, de golpe me daba cuenta de que me había cansado terriblemente" (115). Esa aparente descompresión del narrador es seguida por síntomas psicosomáticos (mareos, náuseas, sudores) como resultado de la adversidad de los espacios y la carga ética de tener que *cruzarlos* con el hermano:

> entonces me empezó a doler el estómago, no como cuando uno tiene que ir en seguida al baño, era más arriba, en el estómago verdadero, como si se me retorciera poco a poco; y yo quería respirar y me costaba, entonces tenía que quedarme quieto y esperar que se pasara el calambre, y delante de mí se veía como una mancha verde y puntitos que bailaban. (118)

Las puertas y las esquinas también adquieren una función sugestiva de peligro en que el paso del umbral explicita la incómoda confluencia con lo ignoto y en ciertos momentos, el triunfo sobre el miedo. Según Mircea Eliade, el umbral y la puerta muestran de modo inmediato y concreto la anulación de la continuidad espacial; en ello reside su gran significado religioso, pues son a la par símbolo y mediadores de transición. Semánticamente *limen/liminis* (umbral) se asemeja a *limes/limitis* (límite), lo que combina el poder restrictivo de la entrada con la capacidad de *e-liminar* o franquear el paso al *otro lado*. Parte de la angustia espacial emana de la posible "expulsión del umbral" o de lo que sería el destino de los seres con invisibilidad estructural, el quedarse varados en el mismo límite.

Los ritos de pasaje del narrador obedecen a diversos enfrentamientos ligados a la fuerza separadora del *limen*. La repetida presencia de la imagen aislante de la puerta se debe a que el cuento privilegia la fase liminal que precede al traspaso de la demarcación. El cruce del umbral por parte del chico de "Después del almuerzo," envuelve una serie de enfrentamientos que se desglosan en tres variaciones del miedo: 1) a la autoridad ("pasé *delante de la puerta* donde estaban papá y mamá jugando a las damas"), 2) interior o psicológico ("pero estaba seguro de que acabarían por traerlo y obligarme a ir con el *hasta la puerta de la calle*") y 3) exterior o real ("lo agarré lo mejor que pude y *salimos por el patio hasta la puerta* que daba al jardín de adelante") (cursiva mía, 111). Una vez iniciada la penetración a ese espacio desafiante, continúa la consecutiva presentación de umbrales menores: ("Yo hacía lo posible para *cruzar* por las partes más secas y no mojarme los zapatos nuevos"/ "ahora la cosa era *cruzar*") (cursiva mía, 111). La tensión climática creada a raíz del cruce de la calle reafirma la ambigüedad del discapacitado que se instala "justo en la mitad" en contraposición al grupo social definido, localizado en "el otro lado": "Lo malo es que para llegar a la Plaza de Mayo hay que cruzar siempre alguna calle […] me di cuenta de que *no íbamos a poder llegar al otro lado porque se plantaría justo en la mitad*" (116).

Existe otra expresión del temor en "Después del almuerzo," que se concibe como el miedo a la polución del que habíamos señalado a propósito de *Gattaca*. Éste se repite en la preocupación del chico por no *ensuciar* con los charcos sus zapatos nuevos "que brillaban y brillaban" y la subsiguiente escena en donde con gran indisposición debe *limpiar* con su pañuelo las manchas de barro y las hojas secas del cuerpo del hermano. Más tarde, ese mismo pañuelo sucio que el narrador había colocado en su bolsillo empieza a "infiltrar" su cuerpo, y al cobrar conciencia de esa incómoda invasión, la angustia se reinstala en él: "lo peor era estar ahí parado, con un pañuelo que se iba mojando y llenando de manchas de barro […] empezaba a mojar el forro del bolsillo y sentía la humedad en la pierna, era como para no creer en tanta mala suerte junta" (112).

La reiterada metáfora de la suciedad confirma la categorización social en base a la desagregación de los agentes contaminantes y nocivos, como serían en este contexto los portadores de discapacidad. Sin embargo, al momento del chico limpiarse el sudor de la cara, una hoja incrustada en el pañuelo sucio le araña la boca. Esta marca en la cara que sustituye a la mancha en el pañuelo podría sugerir una reinterpretación de signos sociales en que la suciedad (mancha) se reincorpora como diferencia (marca) y de este modo, facilitaría la visibilidad estructural de los portadores de discapacidad sin requerir su saneamiento o expulsión del centro. Ese arañazo en el labio del narrador simboliza el despertar de la conciencia frente a la discapacidad, que aun cuando cause dolor o embarazo sigue siendo un deber moral irrenunciable.

De igual forma, la presencia de espejos a lo largo de nuestra discusión (la ventanilla del tranvía, las vidrieras o los cristales del techo limpiados por Vincent en Gattaca) sugieren la metáfora de una sociedad que se mira y busca reconocer en su elusivo reflejo aquello que le reafirma su mismidad y no la intromisión de la otredad porque ésta incomoda, desestabiliza y, como hemos visto, aterra. El espacio abierto de la plaza en "Después del almuerzo" y el viaje interespacial de Vincent en *Gattaca* propondrían la apertura al diálogo, en oposición a la deserción ética con respecto a la diferencia, aceptando así el riesgo de esa porosidad comunicativa y transformando el miedo en reconocimiento.

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THE PSYCHIATRIC GAZE: DEVIANCE AND DISABILITY IN FILM

Elizabeth Donaldson

"This is a true story." Leaning against the seats in a seemingly empty theater, journalist Alistair Cooke stands in front of a blank screen and introduces the plot of *The Three Faces of Eve* (1957). Cooke functions as a surrogate spokesman for Drs. Thigpen and Cleckley, the two psychiatrists who originally authored this case study. Much of the film's dialogue, Cooke reassures us, is taken directly from their clinical record, which has become a "classic of psychiatric literature." Cooke's preface is just as crucial as the narrative that follows: he helps to initiate the viewer's complicity in a psychiatric gaze. *The Three Faces of Eve* promises the spectators a privileged glimpse into a rare medical case involving the multiple Eve White, who has "one more personality than Jekyll and Hyde," Cooke notes. When Cooke conveniently drops the "Dr." from Jekyll's name, he does two things: he obscures the role Dr. Jekyll's scientific background played in Robert Louis Stevenson's original text, and he conceals the mutually constitutive exchange that exists at the permeable boundary of doctor and patient, of normal and abnormal. Except for the barely detectable cracks in Cooke's Jekyll and Hide analogy, the pathology of Eve White is safely specularized by this introduction.

Much has changed since the late 1950s. Eve White's troublesome behavior as her alternate Eve Black—dancing with sailors and buying revealing clothing—would probably fail to shock today's viewers and might even be judged as a justifiable feminist rebellion against her straitlaced husband. The trauma that ostensibly produces her multiple personalities—being forced as a young child to kiss the corpse of her grandmother—is even anticlimactic according to current conceptions of multiple personality, which would link severe childhood sexual abuse with Eve's disorder.[1] Yet perhaps the most

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[1] For a thorough, albeit somewhat controversial, history of thinking about multiple personality (now called dissociative identity disorder) and the

important development in attitudes toward psychiatry and in film representations of mental illness since Eve White's day is the death of heroic narratives of psychiatry's power. In *The Three Faces of Eve*, the psychiatrists' attempt to integrate and normalize Eve White's three divergent personalities achieves success and produces a grateful ex-patient, Jane. In the stereotypically heteronormative ending of the film, Jane is newly reunited with the daughter she lost during her illness. As Jane drives away with her new husband, she expresses her gratitude for the insights her doctors helped her gain in psychotherapy. In contrast, in post-*One-Flew-Over-the-Cuckoo's-Nest* films, psychiatrists are commonly represented as corrupt, power hungry, or mad. Psychotherapy, moreover, is misguided and ineffectual, often failing in darkly comical ways. Psychiatric hospitals, the incarnations of psychiatric power, are almost exclusively portrayed as oppressive and unsalvageable institutions, more like prisons than true asylums for the ill.[2] This deep suspicion and anxiety about psychiatry, psychiatrists, and psychotherapy is especially thought provoking because it has developed and has been sustained in conjunction with a marked increase in Americans' identification with categories of mental illness. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, approximately 18.8 million adults (9.5% of the U.S. population) have a depressive disorder and, furthermore, these disorders seem to be appearing earlier, in younger patients, than in the past ("The Numbers Count"). As the popularity of Prozac and other antidepressants likewise suggests, more Americans have embraced the idea that they have impaired moods and mental conditions that should be treated by psychiatric medication. In other words, the psychiatric gaze is "schizophrenic," in the popular misunderstanding of the term: multiple and conflicted.

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Michel Foucault describes the development of the "clinical eye" of medicine, the doctor's gaze on the body of the patient (120). Similarly, by psychiatric gaze, I want to suggest a gaze broadly structured by concepts of psychiatry and clinical psychology, but not exclusive to professionals in the mental health field. The psychiatric gaze may be the camera's critical stance toward psychiatry and psychiatrists, or the diagnosing vision assumed by a camera and the spectator's complicity in that vision, or the self-diagnosing dynamic created by antidepressant ads and

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controversies surrounding its diagnosis, see Ian Hacking's *Rewriting the Soul*. See also Ruth Ley's "The Real Miss Beauchamp" and Marta Caminero-Santangelo's *The Madwoman Can't Speak* for feminist criticism of these diagnoses.

[2] In fact, the recent film *Quills* portrays an asylum doctor as even more sadistic than de Sade.

web sites that encourage would-be consumers to screen themselves for mental illness.

This essay sketches out recurring themes in the representation of mental illness in films and the media in order to interrogate how this frequently contradictory psychiatric gaze functions. The first section, "Mad Science," juxtaposes the mental illness classic, *The Snake Pit*, with several films that register the failure of psychotherapy (*Leaving Las Vegas*) and the mad, criminal genius of psychiatrists (*The Silence of the Lambs* and *Hannibal*). The second section, "Schizophrenic Subjects," focuses on *Fight Club* and *A Beautiful Mind* and the cinematic conventions used to narrate psychosis. The third section, "Self/Diagnosis," employs disability studies theory to read the discourses of normalcy in television ads marketing antidepressants and "bipolar awareness." Though the anxiety surrounding psychiatrists and the severely mentally ill may seem to contradict the tendency of these campaigns to normalize mental illness, these processes, I will argue, are actually mutually reinforcing.

I. Mad Science

The 1948 film adaptation of Mary Jane Ward's novel, *The Snake Pit*, illustrates the earlier heroic narrative of psychoanalysis even more clearly than *The Three Faces of Eve* and contrasts well with the sentiment of current films that register the failures of psychotherapy. Audiences were well primed for this film—Ward's novel had already appeared in condensed form in *Reader's Digest* in 1946. Also, at the time of *The Snake Pit*'s cinematic release, the public's attention had been awakened to the horrors of state psychiatric hospitals by Albert Deutsch's influential exposé, *The Shame of the States* (1948). Even though *The Snake Pit* catered to the American public's new interest in the previously hidden world of the asylum, the film was not a radical challenge to current psychiatric treatment. In this context, what is most noteworthy about the film version of *The Snake Pit* are the strategic departures from Ward's original text, which relates the psychiatric hospitalization (or incarceration) of a writer, Virginia Cunningham, who has had a nervous breakdown. In the autobiographically-based novel, Mrs. Cunningham remembers very little about her therapeutic talk sessions with her psychiatrist, Dr. Kik. The narrator is disoriented and amnesiatic during almost the entire novel, making the book a difficult and challenging read. Virginia moves from ward to ward, sometimes blacking out in one ward and regaining conscious memory in a new ward. The wards are numbered based on the patient's level of function: Ward One is supposedly the last step toward earning release, while the higher numbered wards are that much further from health and freedom. But Virginia's movements from ward to ward do not proceed in a linear sequential manner: she moves back and forth and then back again, from Three to One and, at her worst, to Thirty-three. In the end, her release from the mental hospital (from Ward Five) seems to happen by chance, with no culminating epiphany and no convincing evidence that she has been at all "cured," as her doctors candidly acknowledge in the novel. Actually, the most important factor determining her doctors' decision to release her is the fact that she and her husband will be moving out of state (and out of the jurisdiction and realm of responsibility of this particular state hospital).

But the film is quite different. Although the film does acknowledge Virginia Cunningham's disorientation and her amnesia from shock treatments, it imposes a much stronger sense of narrative continuity by adding scenes portraying her psychoanalytic sessions, which reconstruct and make sense of Virginia's past. During these sessions, a photograph of Sigmund Freud, strategically placed in between Dr. Kik and his patient, looms in the background, like the seeing eye atop a pyramid. In the film, Virginia actively participates in her therapy, remembers the content of these sessions, and agrees with Dr. Kik's final analysis, that her breakdown is the culmination of survivor guilt after the death of her fiancé many years ago. In the novel, on the other hand, Virginia and her husband openly mock this explanation (Ward 255-57). The film, therefore, presents us with a therapy experience which is the exact opposite of what Ward's autobiographical novel describes. The authority of the patient to tell her story has been literally usurped by the authority of the doctor and the successful psychotherapeutic narrative; likewise, the novel's chaotic pastiche of asylum experience has been restructured and regulated by the psychiatric gaze of the film.

The antipsychiatry movement of the 1960s and 70s would forever alter the authority of this vision in popular film. The asylum, Foucault suggested in his influential *Madness and Civilization*, was primarily a form of institutional control. Similarly, in his *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Asylum Patients and Other Inmates*, Erving Goffman used his field work in the infamous St. Elizabeth's Hospital to argue that large institutions shaped and harmed psychiatric patients more than the illnesses that originally caused them to be hospitalized. Inspired by the work of Foucault and others, antipsychiatry flourished: R. D. Laing described the ways in which psychiatric labeling engendered illness (*The Politics of Experience*), and in *The Myth of Mental Illness*, psychiatrist Thomas Szaz argued that mental illness did not exist (a belief he still maintains, quite vocally). The authority of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists was thereby widely challenged.

Perhaps no text reflects the influence of antipsychiatry and the American public's fear of psychiatric power more recognizably than the seminal film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), based on Ken Kesey's novel of the same name. While the film is surely familiar territory to many readers, in the immediate context of my argument about the psychiatric gaze one aspect of the plot is worth recalling briefly.[3] In this film, convict Randall Patrick McMurphy feigns a mental illness in order to move from a work farm to a mental hospital. While a member of the ward, McMurphy attends group therapy sessions led by Nurse Ratched. These therapy sessions are more than simply ineffectual: they are portrayed as absurd exercises which infantilize and feminize the patients. Because of the structuring quality of the psychiatric gaze, the antipathy toward therapy in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is mixed in nature. Although the spectator is encouraged, through the perspective of McMurphy, to cast a cold eye on the group sessions' therapeutic effects, at the same time it is in these group therapy scenes that the problems of the characters are revealed to McMurphy. Although McMurphy contests Nurse Ratched's authority by attempting to seize control of the group session, he does not try to abolish the group: he primarily seeks to replace what he considers Ratched's feminized ideal of normative male behavior with an alternate, more active and rebellious, model of masculinity. The psychiatric gaze of McMurphy (and the spectator) corrects the flawed psychiatric gaze of Nurse Ratched: the regulatory power of the psychiatric gaze remains intact.

Similarly, although it is not a film about severe mental illness or psychiatric institutions, *Leaving Las Vegas* is, I would argue, a film about this same self-critical yet structuring quality of the psychiatric gaze: the film deploys the psychiatric gaze in order to challenge the efficacy of psychotherapy. In *Leaving Las Vegas*, the suspicion of

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[3] It is also worth noting in the context of the psychiatric gaze and disability studies theory several other pertinent issues in the film. For example, McMurphy's successful malingering calls into question the scientific legitimacy of a profession that cannot accurately diagnose illness. McMurphy's ability to "pass" as a patient also reinforces the public's belief that criminals habitually and successfully fake mental illness to avoid prison (a belief that makes advocacy for people disabled by mental illness even more difficult within the criminal justice system). Finally, as a result of his insubordination to Nurse Ratched, McMurphy is lobotomized as a form of punishment and control. His mercy killing by the Chief, and the film's valorization of this act as the proper, noble end for McMurphy, illustrates the public attitude that the chronically disabled are better off dead.

psychiatry or therapy is covert. The film portrays the romantic relationship that develops between a prostitute, Sera, and an alcoholic writer, Ben Sanderson, who comes to Las Vegas to drink himself to death. Early in the film, Sanderson says, “I can’t remember if I started drinking because my wife left me, or my wife left me because I started drinking, but fuck it anyway.” Ben’s self-assessment is not only circular, which may signal Ben’s confusion between disease and symptom; it is also a meaningless exercise (“fuck it anyway”), which reflects the treatment failures and diagnostic confusion concerning alcoholism (whether conceptualized as a disease or as a behavior disorder, treatments may be equally ineffective).[4] The inscrutable cause, or unresolved diagnosis, of Ben’s problem—why does Ben drink?—drives much of the film. Before he leaves Los Angeles, a bartender attempts to advise Ben: “It’s none of my business, but if you could see what I see, you wouldn’t be doing this to yourself.” The spectator does see what the bartender sees, and this dialogue illustrates the essentially powerless relationship that any witness has regarding Ben’s actions. Early in their relationship, Sera also searches for the cause of Ben’s drinking: “So why are you a drunk?” Although Ben’s answers are cryptic, she grasps his purpose: “Are you saying that your drinking is a way to kill yourself?” “Or killing myself is a way to drink,” he replies. By eliciting conjecture about the causes of Ben’s problem, the film encourages the spectator to adopt a psychiatric gaze. Yet, in the case of Ben, this diagnostic vision is never consummated: when Sera asks, Ben refuses to see a doctor. The film also never reveals the cause of his drinking, and perhaps as Ben’s dialogue suggests, to ask is a circular process, or an infinite regress of two mirrors touching.[5]

Leaving Las Vegas also employs the structuring psychiatric gaze, and depicts the failure of the therapeutic moment, in scenes that take Sera as their primary object. Though the camera usually adopts a third-person-close or first-person perspective involving either Ben or Sera, in several scenes Sera speaks directly to the camera. In these distinct scenes, no one speaks back to Sera, and the camera focuses so tightly on her face that little else has room to appear on

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[4] In *The Natural History of Alcoholism*, George Vaillant assesses the disease model (15-44) and the limits of contemporary treatments (285-94).

[5] On the one hand, Ben’s drinking does not seem to be an involuntary compulsion: he repeatedly expresses the desire to drink himself to death, and he does not want anyone to stop him. However, one could argue that Ben’s apparently voluntary drive is actually an irresistible or hopeless capitulation to his physical addiction to alcohol. In some ways though, the point is moot. Ben’s desire to kill himself using alcohol is never reduced to a simple explanation.

the screen. Despite this seeming lack of context, these scenes are clearly identifiable as therapy sessions, with the camera characterized as the therapist. Through this pivotal characterization of the camera, the film's spectators are likewise positioned as the therapist. Just as the film tempts the viewers to diagnose Ben, the camera even more forcefully positions the viewers to assume the role of Sera's seemingly understanding, though silent, therapist.

Later in the film, this very identification between the spectator and the camera's perspective is purposefully manipulated. As three young men in football jerseys beat and rape Sera, they film the assault using a portable camcorder. Segments of this scene (including, oddly, Sera's flashbacks of the event) appear to be shown through the lens of this home video. This conceit—the screen images of the film becoming the images of the video within the film—collapses the distinctions between the clinical gaze of the therapist and the criminal vision of the rapists, and furthermore suggests a parallel perspective of the spectator, complicit as both rapist and therapist.

This same association of criminal violence with psychotherapeutic perception is perhaps best illustrated by the mad doctor of the mad, Hannibal Lecter.[6] In *The Silence of the Lambs*, Lecter is the imprisoned psychiatrist who aids FBI agent Clarice Starling in her hunt for a serial killer. Because Lecter has moved from doctor to incarcerated patient, he is also an example of the all-too-permeable boundaries dividing the normal and the abnormal, health and illness, the sane and the insane, reason and delusion. Films and novels about asylums conventionally include such a figure—like the former nurse Miss Sommerville in Ward's *The Three Faces of Eve*—someone who once held the keys, but who now is under lock. These figures of transgression not only mark the disturbingly porous bounds of disability and the abnormal; they also figure mental illness as a contagion. Even if it is not true that mental illness is infectious, the figure of Hannibal, the former doctor turned patient, illustrates the contagious creep of stigma. The stigma of mental illness and disability becomes associated not only with the patient, but also with doctors, caregivers, family members, and anyone who has familiar contact with mental illness. Lecter helps Clarice's investigation using his abstract professional knowledge of mental illness, by giving her clues about what in general motivates a person to commit these sorts of crimes. But, more to the

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[6] Lecter is obviously not the first "mad" doctor. In the film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), an asylum director uses hypnosis to compel a mental patient to commit murder, though the fact that the story is narrated by another mental patient, whom Dr. Caligari describes as deluded, renders the doctor's madness nicely ambiguous.

point, Lecter is an insider. He also has personal, first-hand knowledge of the murderer, having met him before.

Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter is dangerous on one level because of the sheer physical power of his jaw: he eats his victims. But this danger is also symbolic of Lecter's power to manipulate people through conversation, and to divine, like any good analyst, the hidden vulnerabilities and motivations of others. Lecter's methods of revenge and his interviews with Clarice illustrate this power. For example, on one occasion Lecter stays up all night talking with a fellow psychiatric inmate, Miggs, who has offended Clarice and angered Lecter. In the morning Miggs is dead, having swallowed his tongue evidently as a result of his nighttime conversation with Lecter. Likewise, during his conversations with Clarice, Lecter probes into her past childhood traumas. Even in scenes that clearly do not include Lecter, the camera reinforces this psychotherapeutic vision by revealing flashbacks to Clarice's childhood and her close relationship with her father. Also, in the final climactic scene, Buffalo Bill, the former psychiatric patient turned serial killer, uses night-vision goggles to hunt Clarice.[7] These images of Clarice groping in the dark recall earlier scenes when the penetrating gaze of Lecter revealed her figurative, psychic groping for meaning in her past.

Yet, just as in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, the violence of Lecter's psychiatric gaze is not limited to the psychotherapeutic moment. For example, *Hannibal*, the sequel to *The Silence of the Lambs*, is remarkable primarily for its graphic ending, when Lecter cuts out part of an FBI agent's brain and fries it up in a pan. While Lecter performs this surgery, he lectures as if he were in a teaching hospital: "You see, the brain itself feels no pain, Clarice, if that concerns you. For example, Paul won't miss this little piece here, which is part of the prefrontal lobe, which they say is the seat of good manners." The frontal lobe is indeed associated with behavior, social adjustment, impulse control and emotions. In addition to vividly portraying the particular "madness" of Lecter, this scene evokes the troubled history of psychosurgery as a medical treatment. When Dr. Lecter cuts out a section of the prefrontal lobe, cooks it, and feeds it to Paul, who seems to enjoy it, he parodies the most controversial of psychiatric surgeries, lobotomy (or "lobe cutting," cutting the nerve fibers that connect the frontal and prefrontal cortex to the thalamus).

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[7] Buffalo Bill's character is loosely based on convicted killer Eddie Gein, diagnosed with schizophrenia, who used the skins of corpses and murder victims in a similar fashion. Gein is also the inspiration for Norman Bates, the paradigmatic "psychokiller."

Lobotomy was once heralded as a successful treatment for schizophrenia and certain behavioral disorders. In 1949, Dr. Antonio Egas Moniz won the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine for developing the prefrontal leucotomy (lobotomy) procedure. In the United States, Walter Freeman, the chief popularizer of lobotomy, streamlined Moniz's procedure: instead of trepanning two sides of the brain, which he found too time consuming, Freeman used an ice pick which he inserted through the patient's eye socket. In this fashion, Freeman was able to perform the surgery more quickly and more often. According to one source, Freeman even kept a photograph of himself performing a lobotomy on his most famous patient, actress Frances Farmer (Youngson and Schott 255).[8] Despite the initial enthusiasm for lobotomy as a wonder-cure, critics of psychiatry were fairly quick to identify lobotomy as a technology of social control. For example, the film *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959) tells the story of a woman who is threatened with a lobotomy because she knows too much about a family member's death. Lobotomy today continues to represent one of the most frightening abuses of psychiatric power—seconded in the popular imagination perhaps only by electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) or involuntary committal to a mental institution.

The fact that Paul the FBI agent eats part of his own brain unwittingly illustrates the violence intrinsic to past involuntary psychiatric treatments like lobotomy. This feeding scene is also distasteful from a more contemporary perspective. People with mental illness undergoing psychiatric treatment used to be called "patients." Then, in an attempt to de-pathologize this relationship, they became "clients." The current label of choice in the clinical treatment of people with mental illness is "consumer." When he consumes his own brain, Paul becomes an involuntary consumer of Dr. Lecter's psychiatric treatment. Hannibal's cannibalism, furthermore, suggests psychiatry's circular nature and its ability to feed off of itself: remember that *The Silence of the Lambs* ends with one psychiatrist planning to eat another psychiatrist, with fava beans and a nice Chianti.[9]

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[8] See Jack D. Pressman's *The Last Resort: Psychosurgery and the Limits of Medicine* for the history of lobotomy. The film *Frances* portrays Farmer's life, including the lobotomy and other abuses she suffered while undergoing involuntary psychiatric treatment.

[9] Dr. Lecter plans to eat the psychiatrist who directed the state forensic hospital where he was incarcerated. This doctor harbored professional jealousies against Lecter and treated him unfairly.

II. Schizophrenic Subjects

The term "schizophrenic" often appears as a metaphor in a variety of non-clinical contexts. For example, a CNBC reporter says the stock market is "schizophrenic" when it is volatile. An English professor says a text is "schizophrenic" when it has two seemingly disparate purposes. Schizophrenia is also often confused with multiple personality disorder (or dissociative identity disorder): one can enter a gift shop and buy a shirt or coffee mug that reads "I'm schizophrenic. And so am I." This confusion surrounding the meaning of schizophrenia is, unfortunately, not limited to the sphere of popular public discourse. Schizophrenia is arguably one of the most contested psychiatric diagnoses; it has a fraught past and will, more than likely, have an equally fraught future.[10] Even though medical definitions of schizophrenia have been to a certain extent historically mutable, many consider schizophrenia the most serious of the major mental illnesses. Affecting approximately 1% of the world's population, schizophrenia is an incurable, but treatable, mental illness of undetermined etiology.[11] The illness itself can be as mysterious as its causes: schizophrenia can be severe, chronic, and disabling to various degrees. The diagnostic bible of psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM IV-R*), describes both positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia. Negative symptoms include blunted affect, social withdrawal, and apathy. Positive symptoms include those commonly associated with active psychotic states: disordered thinking, delusional beliefs, and visual and auditory hallucinations, such as the hallmark of schizophrenia, hearing voices.

A person with these symptoms presents an interpretive dilemma for the psychiatric gaze. As historian S.P. Fullinwinder notes, "Certain

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[10] In part because there is currently no physical, biological test for schizophrenia, its "realness" is contested by Szaz and others. Keeping these critiques in mind, in the context of the "psychiatric gaze" I work with the assumption and the belief that schizophrenia is a neurobiological disorder. This theory of schizophrenia is widely accepted by psychiatrists, physicians, and advocacy groups such as NAMI (National Alliance of the Mentally Ill), an organization composed primarily of family members of people diagnosed with mental illness, of which I am a member. (I have two close family members who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia.)

[11] The development of schizophrenia has been linked to genetic predisposition and environmental stressors. Research involving identical, monozygotic twins indicates a 50% discordancy rate for identical twins: if one twin has schizophrenia, the second twin has an approximately 50% chance of also developing schizophrenia. The rate of schizophrenia in the offspring of discordant identical twins is exactly the same, 13%: even if the twin is unaffected by schizophrenia the genetic liability passed on to the children remains the same (Gottesman 124).

sorts of people—those the profession learned to call schizophrenics—place an almost unbearable perceptual strain on the psychiatrist. As the doctor confronts the patient he feels his world break apart. He begins to lose perceptual control over his environment" (quoted in Prendergast 58). Both *Fight Club* and *A Beautiful Mind* are films about schizophrenic subjects: by narrating the experience of psychosis they imitate this loss of perceptual control and then, to various degrees, they restore order to the narrative through a psychiatric gaze.

Although *Fight Club* does not take place in an asylum, and the main character is never officially diagnosed, *Fight Club* is a film about the experience of mental illness, among other things. The film begins, literally and figuratively, in the narrator's brain, at the level of the neuron. Careening among soma, dendrites, and the myelin sheaths of axons, the camera speeds across the interior nerves of the brain as if it were following the path of neurotransmitters through synapses. The camera eventually pierces through the scalp and runs out along the barrel of a gun stuffed into Jack's, the narrator's, mouth. The interior landscape of the brain is a fitting place for the film to begin because Tyler Durden, the man holding the gun, is the narrator's hallucination, though this fact is not revealed until much later in the film.

Fight Club relentlessly parodies medical practices and the roles of patient and consumer. Like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Fight Club* also offers an alternate, hypermasculine version of group therapy. Jack, who hasn't slept in six months, suffers from an undiagnosed dis-ease. When he seeks treatment for his insomnia, his doctor tells him to "lighten up" and chew valerian root. Jack, who clearly wants medication, presses the issue and complains of his pain, but the doctor replies: "You want to see pain? Swing by the First Methodists Tuesday nights. See the guys with testicular cancer. That's pain." Jack follows his prescription and attends "Remaining Men Together," a support group for men with testicular cancer. There he meets "Bitch Tit Bob," a former "juicer" (steroid-taking bodybuilder) whose body has responded to his testosterone treatment by manufacturing more estrogen, which causes him to develop breasts. During this group therapy, Jack buries his head between Bob's breasts and cries like a baby. Later that night he sleeps like a baby, for the first time in six months. Jack immediately becomes addicted to support group meetings: he "passes" as a patient, attending meetings with names like "Free and Clear," "Seize the Day," and "Hope," for conditions such as bowel cancer, blood parasites, brain parasites, lymphoma, tuberculosis, sickle-cell anemia, and organic brain dementia. Jack is addicted to these sessions because they allow him a cathartic release. Although Jack temporarily assumes the identity of a patient in

"Remaining Men," once each group therapy session ends, his association with the illness ends. He moves securely back to the "normal," non-diseased, non-disabled self that he wishes to be.

This feeling of catharsis ends when Marla Singer, a woman who is probably another one of Jack's hallucinations, starts attending "Remaining Men." Marla eventually drives Jack away from these group sessions and he becomes increasingly dependent on "Fight Club," a network of secret meetings organized by Tyler Durden. With Jack's encouragement, even Bitch Tit Bob becomes a member. "Fight Club," where men meet in order to fight each other, is a spontaneous grassroots group therapy for masculinity in crisis, in the tradition of Randall Patrick McMurphy.

The most noteworthy aspect of *Fight Club* as a mental illness film, however, is the revelation that Tyler Durden is not "real." Tyler is a character in an elaborate delusional world that Jack has created.[12] Tyler is *Fight Club*'s equivalent to *A Beautiful Mind*'s Charles Herman, one of the hallucinated characters that director Ron Howard uses to personify or embody John Nash's delusional thinking. Both films hinge on the same plot twist: the vision of the main character, previously accepted as an accurate perception of reality, is revealed to be false, or at least not always accurate. In *Fight Club*, Jack suddenly realizes that Tyler doesn't exist and flashes back to the scene of their first fight: this time Jack sees himself from a distance, fighting alone. The accuracy of Jack's second sight is reinforced in a later scene when Jack confronts Tyler in a parking garage. Although Jack can see Tyler at this moment, a glimpse from an observing security camera reveals Jack alone, fighting only himself. The objective view of the surveillance camera reorients the spectator. Similarly, in *A Beautiful Mind*, a significant element of the plot is Nash's clandestine work as an intelligence agent for William Archer.[13] At Archer's urging, Nash reads newspapers and magazines voraciously in search of secret codes. Late at night Nash delivers the results of this work to a private drop-off box. However, once Nash's wife suspects that something may be wrong with her husband, she visits this drop-off point during

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[12] *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (1977) depicts the rich and frightening interior world of a young schizophrenic woman in a somewhat similar fashion. In this film the interior schizophrenic world is, however, more clearly distinct from the exterior world of "normal" life.

[13] There is no William Archer in Sylvia Nasar's biography of Nash, upon which this film is supposedly based. The fictional delusional characters William Archer, Marcy, and Charles Herman are devices the film employs to simplify the representation of Nash's very real and complex delusional thinking.

the day and finds an abandoned building instead of the embassy-like mansion that the spectator has seen during Nash's nighttime visits. Nash's deviant psychotic vision, which has earlier seemed nothing more than a reflection of a collective Cold War paranoia, is thereby corrected through the eyes of his "normal" wife. Similarly, *Fight Club*'s surveillance cameras remedied Jack's psychotic vision. At these moments, the psychiatric gaze of the camera restores for the spectator what the schizophrenic subject threatens to destroy: reliable perception.

III. Self/Diagnosis

In addition to healing the wounds of spectators who witness severe mental illness, the psychiatric gaze is also marketed as a technology of normalcy. A recent Bipolar Disorder Awareness advertisement, funded by Lilly pharmaceuticals, contrasts the depressed self the doctor sees with the manic self who frantically shops, dances all night, or, when not painting the town red, literally re-paints her apartment red. The depressed self the doctor sees has been medicated, but the hidden manic self goes untreated. This manic self has somewhat devilishly escaped the panoptic medical gaze, and the targeted audience, who are people already taking medicine for depression, is urged to reveal this intransigent self to their doctors.

This bipolar ad builds off of imagery already familiar to the public via several ad campaigns for depression medications, though the specific bifurcation of the bipolar self (into medicated depressed self and unmedicated manic self) is unique. Most depressants are marketed as instruments to regain a lost self. For example, Zoloft ads, which cleverly encourage consumers to self-diagnose, state: "You know when you don't feel quite yourself." Meanwhile a sad bubble bumps despondently, until its serotonin-reuptake receptors are properly balanced by Zoloft. Then the bubble bounces back to a happy face. Zoloft helps you feel like "yourself"--an original healthy self is regained and a natural balance is restored, albeit synthetically. Though Paxil ads rely far less on self-examination and much more on peer pressure, these ads employ a similar language and narrative strategy. In one widely and regularly broadcast Paxil ad, concerned family members and friends speak directly into the camera and ask: "Honey, why are you so tense?" "Daddy, are you mad at me?" The spectator is interpellated by pharmaceuticals, hailed into a world in which the self is vigorously monitored, mediated, and medicated. After treatment with Paxil, the ad concludes with an exuberant, "I remember you!" Yes, one might respond, "I'm back to being me."

The true, original self is restored.

In *Listening to Prozac*, Peter Kramer struggles with the very fact that in practice antidepressants do not conform to this narrative. Prozac seems not to restore, but to alter the self. Although Prozac patients sometimes say, “I’m back to being me.” Kramer, the psychiatrist, often seems to think, “You’re the you you never were.” In her best-selling *Prozac Diary*, Lauren Slater describes her experiences with depression and Prozac similarly. Although Prozac alleviates her depressed feelings, it does not “restore” her self. She tells her doctor, “I don’t feel like me . . . . I mean, I feel more like me in some ways and less like me in others” (Slater 48). Slater, furthermore, experiences the loss of her original self and alienation from her Prozac-induced self: “I was thinking of stopping Prozac altogether, torn between my desire for my old self and my enthusiasm for the new. I was concerned that Prozac, and the health it spawned, could take away not only my creativity but my very identity. . . . I was a different person now, both more and less like me, fulfilling one possibility while swerving from another” (49). Kramer’s clinical observations and Slater’s first-person account suggest that, at least in some cases, an antidepressant functions not as a method to restore health but as technology of normalcy, a key concept in disability studies theory.

“The concept of a norm,” Lennard Davis writes, “implies that the majority of the population must or should somehow be a part of the norm. The norm pins down that majority of the population that falls under the arch of the standard bell-shaped curve” (13). Depressive states are depicted in antidepressant ads as uncharacteristic of the normal self. Yet, as Davis points out, for the majority of the population this norm is a hypothetical state, not a former condition that can be regained.

The current strategies of marketing antidepressants help transform psychiatric diagnosis into self-diagnosis. In so doing, psychiatric categories become occasions for educated consumers to exercise their (limited) freedom to choose what services and medications they receive from their health-care providers. Websites devoted to specific brand name antidepressants, such as Prozac and Celexa, include interactive self-assessment tools to encourage consumers’ interest in their product. Infommercial web sites, like WebMD, also include self-assessment tests and likewise reinforce this dynamic. This marketing strategy serves to further decentralize and expand the psychiatric gaze’s power.

Perhaps it is ironic that psychiatrists and psychiatry as a discipline cannot control this development. As one critic of psychiatric research notes, "primary care physicians write about 80 percent of the prescriptions for antidepressants, and they prescribe significantly more psychotherapeutic drugs, in general, than any other medical group, including psychiatrists. Primary care physicians care for about 70 percent of the people who have mental disorders" (Valenstein 183). The ability to write prescriptions for psychiatric medication may even one day be extended to psychologists. In March 2002, Nevada passed House Bill 170, a program designed to create "prescribing psychologists." This type of legislation helps to achieve the mission of the American Society for the Advancement of Pharmacotherapy, a division of the American Psychological Association. A healthy fear of Hannibal Lecter, therefore, does not prevent one from seeking and obtaining psychiatric medications; there are plenty of other non-psychiatrist doctors to take his place. Furthermore, a pervasive anxiety about psychiatry and psychiatrists will not preclude, and may even foster, the increased use of psychiatric medications.

While few may lament the decentralization of psychiatric power, this decentralization seems inextricably bound to the expansion of the psychiatric gaze, and while consumers may in some cases benefit from this development, it seems more likely that pharmaceutical companies are positioned to become the primary beneficiaries. Currently, would-be consumers are assimilated to a psychiatric gaze that reinforces a hegemony of normalcy at the expense of people disabled by severe psychiatric disorders. Although *A Beautiful Mind*[14] may suggest that a person with schizophrenia can find acceptance—especially if that person is a genius, or if the person "recovers" from mental illness, or, better yet, if both occur—the psychiatric gaze reinforces the hegemony of normalcy in popular attitudes toward mental illness. There are no television ads for schizophrenia medications, and no schizophrenia self-assessment tests on drug websites. The schizophrenic subject remains deviant, the abject element that categories of normalcy and mental health are positioned against. Whatever its future incarnations may be, the psychiatric gaze cannot become truly therapeutic while people disabled by schizophrenia remain the abject that sustain our concepts of the normal.

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[14] The film, *The Caveman's Valentine*, and the television series, *Monk*, also depict men of exceptional talents who are disabled, but not destroyed, by mental illness.

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"OUTSIDE OF OR BEYOND THE HUMAN": GUNTHER VON HAGENS' ANATOMY EXHIBIT "KÖRPERWELTEN—BODY WORLDS" AS CONTEMPORARY FREAK SHOW

Éva Tettenborn

Visitors to "Körperwelten—Body Worlds," a contemporary traveling anatomy exhibit, may expect to witness a spectacle that clearly recalls the disturbing traditions of the freak show. German anatomist Gunther von Hagens showcases preserved human corpses arranged in often bizarre and grotesque positions. The exhibit includes a running corpse whose muscles are partially detached so that they seem to flap in the wind. This corpse is joined by an upright skeleton that taps its own standing muscular shell on the shoulder from behind. Also on display is a pregnant woman whose womb has been cut open to display the fetus while she is stretched out and leisurely propped up on one elbow, as if casually resting on a couch. Highly controversial are also the corpse holding up his own skin and a male body with Dalí-like drawers in his torso. These largely intact bodies are joined by some that recall acts of mutilation. Among these is the corpse stretched beyond recognition, resembling a telescope. Likewise fragmented is the corpse that was completely taken apart to be suspended from the ceiling of a giant cube, thus forming a human wind chime. The exhibit is completed by a display of fetuses with disabilities: cuddled in black fabric, they "sit" on a round rotating structure with several levels. The structure revolves for the convenience of the visitor, and thus one may, in the tradition of the true freak show, shudder and marvel at von Hagens' collection of monstrous anomalies and actively disfigured and disabled corpses ("Körperwelten: Die Faszination des Echten").

"Körperwelten—Body Worlds" has been on display in several Asian and European countries since 1998, with exhibits in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, and, most recently, Taiwan. More than a passing phenomenon, it has attracted over 14.5 million visitors ("Past Exhibitions"), and the anatomist claims that he will open a permanent exhibit in the United States in the near future ("News"). I argue that what makes millions flock to these exhibits is not von Hagens' professed aim "to inform visitors and to open up the opportunity particularly to medical laymen to better understand their body and its functions" ("Aim of the Exhibition"). Neither does the exhibit serve to democratize anatomy, as often proclaimed by the anatomist (Jeffries 2). Rather than engendering the arguably needed democratization of anatomy and medicine, the exhibit in fact capitalizes on the sensationalist contrasting of what the discourse of disability studies has identified as normalcy and enfreakment (see Davis, Fiedler, Thomson). "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" effectively functions as a contemporary, updated, and postmodern form of the freak show.[1] The function of the exhibit, I argue, is twofold and presents a paradox. "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" promotes the normal and simultaneously presents the drastically different as a possible escape from normalcy, for this is likely the first freak show that invites its visitors to turn themselves into freaks in the future.

The exhibit displays non-normative bodies that have become dramatically different not because of illness or congenital disability, but through the processes of dissection and plastination. Invented by von Hagens, plastination is a sophisticated method of tissue preservation through which all fluids of an organ or a body are replaced by first acetone and later plastic. As a result the organ or body is preserved virtually eternally and looks more life-like than remains preserved using other methods (Hagens, "Der Plastinierte Mensch" 221-226). An organ or corpse preserved through plastination—called *das Plastinat*—can easily be displayed as a whole or cut into thin, translucent slices to represent certain layers. This revolutionary preservation process certainly offers valuable opportunities for those studying anatomy. What is less scientifically justifiable or even valuable is von Hagens' preference for arranging the plastinated corpses not in natural and possibly educational ways, but in ways that effectively show the dead *as* freaks. A dead, mutilated body that will never decay is perhaps the most different body humans can encounter, and its difference is amplified by the bizarre way in which it is displayed.

Von Hagens' dead bodies meet all the definitions of a freak as put forth by Leslie Fiedler. Fiedler defines the freak in *Freaks: Myths*

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[1] This similarity has not escaped the press: recent British and American reviews of his exhibits have compared von Hagens to P. T. Barnum and his work to a "freak show" (Jeffries 2; Landler A4).

and Images of the Secret Self by stating that "the true Freak challenges the conventional boundaries . . . between reality and illusion, experience and fantasy, fact and myth" (24). The bodies on display in "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" obviously possess these transgressive qualities because they exist in a place between life and death, human and object, wholeness and fragmentation, health and illness, and integrity and decomposition. Owing to von Hagens' invention, the dead body suddenly can hover perpetually in the non-place that exists between two absolutes, life and death.

Additionally, the *Plastinat* exceeds traditional definitions of the freak. Elisabeth Grosz includes the challenging of the boundaries between life and death when defining the living freak in "Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at the Limit":

> Freaks are those human beings who exist outside and in defiance of the structure of binary oppositions that govern our basic concepts and modes of self-definition. They occupy the impossible middle ground between the oppositions dividing [among other classes] the living and the dead (human skeleton). Freaks cross the borders that divide the subject from all ambiguities, interconnections, and reciprocal classifications, outside of or beyond the human. (57)

While "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" does not feature any living freaks, the exhibit actively explores the place that exists between death and decay, lively positions and dead bodies. This is underscored by von Hagens' proclamation that the *Plastinat* is "erstarrt zwischen Sterben und Verwesung," i.e., captured or frozen between death and decay ("Der Plastinierte Mensch" 211). The *Plastinat* challenges the boundaries of corporeal integrity by presenting itself as an intact body and yet as an already disintegrating entity. The *Plastinat* can therefore be termed an extraordinary freak.

Like its traditional, nineteenth-century predecessors, the freak show "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" has the paradoxical effect of promoting the normal. Rosemarie Garland Thomson writes in *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* about the nineteenth-century American freak show that "The freak simultaneously testified to the physical and ideological normalcy of the spectator and witnessed the implicit agreement assigning a coercive deviance to the spectacle" (62). Furthermore, in "Introduction: From Wonder to Error—A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity," Thomson emphasizes that a "freak show's cultural work is to make the physical particularity of the freak into a hypervisible text against which the viewer's indistinguishable body fades into a seemingly neutral, tractable, and invulnerable instrument of autonomous will, suitable to the uniform abstract citizenry democracy institutes" (10). Thomson's argument that the exhibition of the abnormal serves to reaffirm normality in the gazing masses certainly applies to "Körperwelten—Body Worlds." The exhibit in part serves to establish a feeling of normality in the gazing visitor who comes to behold the *Plastinat* captured in most unnatural positions and mutilated states. No matter how diverse the population of the visitors may be, no living human can resemble the *Plastinats*, and yet they are perceived as human. The exhibit homogenizes the mass of gazers; reassured of their own normalcy, in unity they stare, that is, they indulge in what Thomson has termed "the gaze intensified" (*Extraordinary Bodies* 26).

This claim is validated further when considering the role of von Hagens' corporeal fragmentation of the dead in relation to the psychological processes at work when envisioning one's own body as whole, complete, and unified. In *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body,* Lennard J. Davis explores Lacanian theories of the formation of the body image in conjunction with the different body, or the body with a disability. Davis argues about the concept of our own image that "we all—first and foremost—have fragmented bodies" (141), but that during the Lacanian mirror stage this fragmentation is repressed when in the mirror, "the child recognizes (actually misrecognizes) that unified image as his or her self. That identification is really the donning of an identity, an 'armor' against the chaotic or fragmented body" (139). When the so-called normal subject is then confronted with a different body, it "sees the repressed fragmented body; rather than seeing the object of desire, as controlled by the Other, the subject sees the true self of the fragmented body" (139). The abnormal thus disturbs the normal by threatening a reversal of the mirror stage and by recalling repressed notions of the chaotic and uncontrolled body.

Von Hagen's carousel of fetuses with disabilities certainly mocks the different while at the same time shocking the visitor's unified self image by displaying what is deemed abnormal. Additionally, the threat of the always already disintegrated body becomes reality through "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" in another regard, the gazing at the mutilated adult *Plastinats*. However, after the initial shock, the visitor is allowed to conclude about his or her own corporeal identity that he or she, as opposed to the Other on display, is in fact intact, unified, whole, healthy, and, above all, *normal*.

As opposed to the visitor's presumed normalcy, the *Plastinats* are assigned the status of ultimate disability. This state of disability is further underlined and framed by the fact that these corpses, even if their return to life were fantasized by the visitor, would lack what the healthy and normal body owns.[2] Most of the *Plastinats* were skinned; a great number of them were cut up into thin slices that allow anatomists and other specialists to read the body like an image rendered by computer tomography. In essence, the corpses of "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" are not simply dead bodies. Their death has been twice secured and ensured through all the procedures that seem to recall killings, yet their death is also contradicted by the nature of their display. These corpses emerge as the ultimate dead who were absolutely disabled by von Hagens.

While the exhibit mostly features bodies that appear "normal" (i.e., they do not seem to have disabilities), it also showcases illnesses. In "Plastination: neue Körperpräparate," von Hagens stresses the normative function of the abnormal plastinated body when he states that illnesses on display "führen uns unsere Verletzlichkeit vor Augen und erhöhen unser Gesundheitsbewußtsein" (71). That is, he explains that the plastinated bodies of donors with illnesses show the viewer his or her own vulnerability and that this in turn increases the viewer's health consciousness. The different body on display thus serves as a background in front of which the visitor is supposed to renew his or her own vow to become and stay healthy and therefore normal. The *Verletzlichkeit*, the vulnerability of the body, becomes especially emphasized through the torture-like mutilation of the corpses.[3]

The actual display of organs altered by illness seems to gain only secondary status, but visitors may inspect both healthy and diseased organs. (What the visitor will, however, notice and remember first and foremost is the vulnerability of the normal body on the macroscopic level by looking at severed limbs and completely fragmented bodies.) In regard to the display of organs, Edmund L. Andrews points out that von Hagens argues that visitors "can inspect the damage to a lung or to a liver shriveled by alcohol poisoning" (A4), thus upholding the notion of the responsibility of the donor for the state of his or her body. The anatomist points out that through plastination, one recognizes medical conditions or abnormal organ developments more easily (Sheytt 55). The display and visibility of the abnormal is

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[2] I want to suggest that this fantasy is invited and encouraged by the lively poses of the dead on display, especially the corpses engaged in athletic or intellectual activities like fencing, running, or playing chess ("Körperwelten: Die Faszination des Echten").

[3] For a discussion of the relationship between disability and perceived vulnerability see also Thomson (*Extraordinary Bodies* 106). For cultural assumptions about the body with a disability as "damaged," see Davis (14).

hence deemed highly important. Through the *Plastinat*, the abnormal can be conquered, carefully displayed and read, and then checked against one's own state of health.

Furthermore, abnormality may be mocked in von Hagens' freak show. Corporeal difference, whether acquired or congenital, may be underlined by humor. This does not only happen in the case of the carousel of dead fetuses or the leisurely lounging pregnant woman. The exhibit also displays the body of a former smoker. The ribcage is opened up so that one may look at the black lungs. The smoker stands, holding one hand up in a relaxed pose, as if holding a cigarette while standing around carelessly, engaged in a conversation.

The readability of the body is a paramount goal of the exhibit. About the identity of the *Plastinats* Sheytt quotes von Hagens: "Jeder Körper hat seine Geheimnisse—Krankheiten, anatomische Besonderheiten, die sich nach und nach offenbaren" (55). He argues that each body has secrets about its health or difference. It appears to be von Hagens' vocation to reveal them and to point them out in opposition to the norm. Obviously, this statement may be understood as a way of inviting the exhibit's visitor to inquire into his or her own personal history and to determine to what extent his or her own body deviates from the medically established norm of the healthy and ordinary body. This ordinary and normal body remains unseen and invisible: it is not on display but looms large over the exhibit as an ideal that can be imagined but is not met by any of the *Plastinats*.[4]

The normative function of this exhibit also relates to von Hagens' attempts at completely controlling death and decay. While traditional freak shows mostly displayed living freaks, the display of dead animals or humans is by no means a new trend in freak shows. Edward L. Schwarzschild examines in "Death-Defying/Defining Spectacles: Charles Willson Peale as Early American Freak Showman" how Peale, who lived from 1741 to 1827, tried to establish a dominance over death by exhibiting the preserved cadavers of animals. This mission to "[display] a dramatic control over human mortality" resulted in his attempt "to both evoke and erase the effects of death" (82). He even tried to exhibit an embalmed child once (87).[5] According to

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[4] For an analysis of the relationship between ideal and normal bodies and the conflation of the ideal with the normal see Davis (34-35).

[5] Another precedent for the display of dead freaks was the exhibition of Julia Pastrana's body: after the woman (who was part of a freak show because of her excess facial and body hair) died in childbirth in 1860, her husband/manager had her body and the body of the stillborn infant embalmed. He then continued to exhibit both bodies and also loaned them to museums (Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies* 77).

Schwarzschild, Peale also “presents himself in complete control” whenever broaching the subject of death and its effects (84). In the case of von Hagens’ exhibit, the message of this show is that the normal, represented by the anatomist, is fully in control of the extraordinary and different, the plastinated corpse.

Aside from preserving something previously very vulnerable to disintegration and decay, von Hagens also dominates the body by taking it apart and rearranging it in unusual ways. Much like his present-day colleague von Hagens, “Peale was concerned with preserving death in such a way that he could make of it a controlled spectacle, something he could aestheticize and from which he could distance himself” (93). Von Hagens points out that the aestheticism he uses to create his plastinats serves to avert the visitor’s potential fear of looking at the corpses (Reimer 12). Thus, his aestheticizing work controls and norms the *Plastinat* as well as the behavior of the visitor.

The normative function of the *Plastinat* has been contextualized in a historical framework by Uli Linke in *German Bodies: Race and Representation After Hitler*. Linke makes the following argument in her explanation of the book’s frontispiece, the plastinated man holding his own skin:

> Plastinated preservation remakes the corpse, a German body, into an aesthetic object: With his flesh restored and made immortal, the new man stands transfixed, focused on himself. A set of motifs, which typify the figuration of this corpse—white skin, the muscled body, the heroic pose—reveal a return to an uncanny fascination with fascist masculinity.(Information on Frontispiece)

The anatomist therefore performs a double move of norming. The exhibit is strongly rooted in the freak show’s tradition of defining and reinforcing the normal by exhibiting the abnormal. At the same time, the displayed abnormal bodies speak of normalcy to the visitor by becoming aestheticized embodiments of what Linke calls the “fascist”—and hence highly normative—body. The abnormal thus norms both directly and indirectly.

The most innovative aspect of von Hagens’ freak show is that it transcends previous limits of such shows by marketing itself as an arena of wish fulfillment: unlike other freak shows, this exhibit allows the visitor to transgress and to move from normalcy to enfreakment. Thomson points out that this may have been a fantasy of freak show visitors in the past: “although the anarchic body of the domesticated freak reassured audiences of their commonality, at the same time the extraordinary body symbolized a potential for individual freedom denied by cultural pressures toward standardization" (*Extraordinary Bodies* 68). Thomson also asserts: "Bound together by their purchased assurance that they are not freaks, the fascinated onlookers perhaps longed in some sense to be extraordinary marvels instead of mundane, even banal, democrats in a confusing cultural moment" ("Introduction" 10). "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" fulfills a similar purpose by taking the nineteenth-century freak show one step further: not only does the exhibit arouse fantasies of extraordinary individuality; this time, the visitor can, in the end, *become* the freak by signing up for body donation and posthumous plastination. Enfreakment suddenly becomes a promise to the visitor who is presumably perceived as normal. This may have been a subconscious motivation for the close to 6,000 prospective donors who have already committed their bodies to von Hagens' future plastination projects (Marcus A8).

The exhibit plays with the fear of corporeal fragmentation but manages to make it seem attractive. As explained above, Davis underlines that the moment of viewing the different body poses a threat to the self. In the case of "Körperwelten—Body Worlds," this may very well be a motivation that moves visitors to donate their bodies. It can be argued that the exhibit lures donors through the promise of fragmentation. Body donation, plastination, and fragmentation become acts of liberation. The prospective donor holds control over the unified body image in life. However, in death, the donor will permit the "repressed double—the fragmented body" to take control (Davis 140). After all, almost all of the corpses on display are heavily mutilated, skinned, expanded, stretched, sliced open, taken apart. To sign up for this kind of treatment after death means to indulge in the forbidden fantasy of fragmentation after a life of closely monitored normalcy and unification. Von Hagens himself wishes to be plastinated after his death (Scheytt, Singh).[6] This appears to be individualism at its fullest.

Plastination, as practiced by von Hagens, is not merely an aggression directed against one's own body but also an aggressive act against other prospective visitors. If the donor chooses posthumous fragmentation, she or he can exploit the fact that seeing corporeal fragmentation, as explained by Davis, threatens the starer's self image. Thomson calls the different body a perceived "visual assault"

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[6] Von Hagens has previously declared that he wants to be cut up into thin slices while wearing his trademark black hat and then be donated to various anatomical institutes around the world (Sheytt 55). More recently he has been quoted as saying that as a *Plastinat*, he wants "to be shown dissecting his own father," an option he has supposedly discussed with his father (Singh 468).

on the normal (*Extraordinary Bodies* 26). If one were to become fragmented, this would surely be a great source of power and control over the self image of others. One could perhaps even reverse the power that lies in the objectifying gaze and stare by posing a threat to the starer's image of his or her unified self.

Perhaps equally tempting is the assertion of the donor's (sometimes altered) individuality through "Körperwelten—Body Worlds." About the individuality of the *Plastinats* the anatomist himself states that it remains "lebensnah erhalten" i.e., it is preserved close to life ("Plastination: neue Körperpräparate" 67). Not quite so elaborate as former freak show directors, yet also curious, the anatomist seems to be interested in the narrative of the *Plastinat* or its donor. Thomson discusses the life narrative of the freak, stating that "[t]hese souvenir narratives embellished the freak's exotic history, endorsed the exhibit's veracity, and described the freak's physical condition from a scientific or medical perspective" (*Extraordinary Bodies* 61). Von Hagens maintains that because plastination fully exposes the dead body to the visitor of the exhibit, each donor should receive a "neue, aber auch charakteristische Identität," i.e., a new yet characteristic identity ("Plastination: neue Körperpräparate" 71). He seems to propose that each *Plastinat's* identity be reinvented on (and thus reduced to) the basis of its anatomical and corporeal characteristics.

In von Hagen's world of bodies, identity becomes synonymous with the form and characteristics of the body. The pregnant woman with her opened womb will always be just that. The corpse with the black lungs will always be the smoker, nothing more, and his pose underscores this. While I do not wish to argue that von Hagens is not correct when he points out that each *Plastinat* is anatomically different from the next, an approach that focuses on corporeality as the sole marker of identity is nevertheless highly reductionist. Davis has written about the introduction of fingerprinting that "the person enters in an identical relationship with the body, the body forms the identity" (31), and the same process, I argue, is at work in von Hagens' exhibits. Sheytt points out that the anatomist gives the donors he does not personally know names: one is called "Ballerina" due to the shapely feet, another one "Herkules" because of its muscles (55). In this way, von Hagens continues the practices of past freak shows. As Thomson writes, "On the freak show stage, a single, highlighted characteristic circumscribed and reduced the inherent human complexity" of the displayed person (*Extraordinary Bodies* 61). In von Hagens' anatomical exhibits identity becomes synonymous with corporeality, and the exhibit is a reductionist narrative of the life and corporeal particularities of the donors.

The question of identity is, however, not only posed by the anatomist himself. While they want to remain anonymous after their deaths, many prospective donors would also welcome clarifying information about the *Plastinats* concerning age, cause of death, or even profession to better understand the objects on display (Eberhardt 1). This also relates to the life narrative of the freak so essential to the traditional freak show. One's existence—even in death—must be explained, justified, and made understandable.

In essence, it seems to be precisely this often hidden particularity of the body donor that can be revealed through von Hagens' process of plastination. It is possible that this adventure of the exposure of the personal anatomical difference is one component of the exhibit's immense power to attract prospective donors. The donor's desire to be unique is satisfied by the obvious state of difference his or her plastinated body will be assigned when it assumes a highly unusual shape or pose, resisting the hegemony of both corporeal wholeness (demanded of the living) and complete disintegration (expected of the dead). Instead of the traditionally cited equality, death suddenly promises difference, individuality, and resistance to cultural expectations.

It becomes obvious that "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" emerges as a paradox: it is a normative promise of individuality. Its normative effect becomes apparent through its indirect reinforcement of homogeneity through the display of the socially forbidden, the absolute otherness. At the same time, it strives for aesthetic appeal, establishing a new norm of beauty for the dead. Its promise of difference is reflected in its power to recruit prospective body donors who wish to become what the normalizing societal values deem impossible: the absolute individual who becomes the extraordinary dead body with an outrageous individuality through plastination. The plastinated body is at once the most normal and the most drastically different body that exists. "Körperwelten—Body Worlds" thus presents a complex narrative of seduction to *become* the Other, far superseding the aims of any nineteenth-century freak show.

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United States of America

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THE POSTMODERN TURN IN DISABILITY STUDIES

Rob Mawyer

Like the category “disabled” itself, disability studies as a field of inquiry is porous, encompassing a wide range of disciplinary concerns, theoretical frameworks, and political projects. While the condition of being “disabled”—broadly and in intentionally fraught language, of being “disfigured,” “ill,” “deviant,” “slow,” “dumb,” “retarded,” “simple,” among innumerable other tags and labels—and its ontological and metaphysical meanings have concerned thinkers and cultural workers as far back as ancient Greece,[1] and while “disability” has long been a concern in the fields of medicine and the social sciences, there has occurred in roughly the past twenty years a significant interrogation in the humanities of cultural constructions of disability. In his introduction to *The Disability Studies Reader*, Lennard J. Davis, arguably the best-known disability scholar in America, refers to a “newer generation of writers and scholars,” many of them influenced by postmodern critical theories, working in disability studies today (4). Indeed, Disability Studies in recent years has found a home in the humanities, generally, and in English departments, specifically.

The genesis and maturation of a humanities-based disability studies in the United States corresponds, in fact, to the profound shift in dominance in so-called First World countries from industrial to postindustrial modes of labor and production. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri characterize this shift as one from industry to service:

> Services cover a wide range of activities from health care, education, and finance to transportation, entertainment, and advertising. The jobs for the most part are highly mobile and involve flexible skills. More important, they are characterized in general by the central role played by knowledge, information, affect, and communication. In this sense many call the postindustrial economy an informational economy. (285)

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[1] For a review of disability in antiquity, see Martha Edwards’s “Deaf and Dumb in Ancient Greece” in Davis, *The Disability Studies Reader*, 29-51.

In this postindustrial economy, and in the social and cultural conditions it informs, there would seem to be greater freedom and opportunity available for people with disabilities. The physically disabled, for instance, long deemed incapable of valuable industrial labor, would seem in many ways perfectly "able" to manipulate knowledge and information, particularly where computerized technology is involved.[2] Advances in visual and auditory technology make communicating possible for more and more people who are deaf, blind, and mute. Finally, innovations in the way work gets done in the service sector allow for greater employment opportunities for those diagnosed with severe learning, mental, and developmental disabilities. In such a shifting economic milieu, when dominant ideas of what constitutes work and who can adequately perform it are open for interrogation, it comes as no surprise that cultural images and meanings of disability have become an area of increased intellectual and political concern for academics.

Sadly, however, and not shockingly, the potential for greater equality for the disabled has not yet been realized, despite the continued efforts of academics and social activists. As the following article will show, the postmodern turn in Disability Studies, while important and necessary, operates within a limited conceptual and methodological framework. For while most contemporary theorists of disability rightly conceive of it as a social relationship rather than merely a biological condition, the poststructuralist resistance to positing "root causes" effectively cuts off disability from its material, lived reality. To this end, postmodern disability studies, while masquerading as radical and progressive, only reifies the unequal social relations structured into a global capitalist economic paradigm. Or, to borrow from Fredric Jameson, disability studies attempts to take the temperature of an age without the proper instruments (*Postmodernism* xi). Disability studies, then, has become a progressive gesture, but until it embraces a needed materialist critique of the structural oppression and exploitation in capitalism, Disability Studies will remain *only* a gesture and little more.

In *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* Rosemary Hennessy offers a sustained materialist critique of post-structural feminist theory. She describes the conservative turn in feminism to "post-marxist" methods like cultural materialism, which, she claims, theorize the "cultural-ideological" manifestations of sex, gender, and

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[2] See Bryan's *The Sociopolitical Aspects of Disability*.

sexuality without adequate consideration of the economic base that informs them. To Hennessy, cultural materialists “maintain that culture may be historical and political, but it is not shaped by capitalism’s division of labor in any determinate way” (80). This poststructuralist denigration of Marxist determinism, far from strengthening cultural materialism and its institutional and professional practice—culture studies—actually weakens its position. Hennessy writes,

> It seems to me that no analysis of cultural forms that professes to critically intervene in the violence taking place in the wake of neoliberal social policies can evade the historical relationships between culture and capital. In promoting a view of culture severed from any ties to the fundamental structures of capitalism, cultural studies is helping to reproduce forms of consciousness that supplement neoliberalism’s conservative individualism. (83)

While culture studies might at the surface seem to oppose neoliberal logic, it nevertheless reiterates, in its tendency to “exile meaning-making and identity in the realm of culture, sheltered from any link to capital or class,” neoliberalism’s potent ideology (83). In other words, cultural materialist methods deal only in the realm of culture without penetrating to the ways in which social relations are structured and ways of knowing, along with goods and profit, are produced.

It is this critique of cultural materialism that Hennessy brings to bear on Judith Butler’s poststructuralist feminist theories. In both *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*, Butler analyzes the performativity of identity by incorporating it into a cultural materialist conceptual model. However, Hennessy notes how for Butler materiality is “simply a matter of norms” (56) and then argues that “understanding the materiality of social life as so exclusively normative … limits social relations to the domains of culture and law” (57). This cultural view of materiality, then, by refusing to acknowledge the extent to which capitalist divisions of labor overdetermine human relations, only masquerades as a critique of social oppression and injustice. By ignoring the root causes of social relations, cultural materialists like Butler reify capitalist social structures.

As a corrective to this postmodernist tendency to abstract social theory out of the logic of capitalist determinism, Hennessy proposes a historical materialist frame. “Historical materialism,” she writes,

> understands social life to be historically and materially produced through relations of labor through which people make what is needed to survive. But this process does not happen without the ways of making sense, normative practices (culture-ideology), and the laws (state organization) that are part of the material production of social life. (59)

In other words, Hennessy's historical materialist method accounts for normative and juridical analyses, but still makes possible valuable critiques of capitalist ways of knowing. In general, then, Hennessy's historical materialist frame is not afraid to seek answers to the "why" questions that postmodern theory—what Jameson has termed the cultural logic of late capitalism—effectively occludes.

It is this critique that I would now like to aim at disability studies, for there seems to be a disjunction between its political project and its dominant theoretical paradigm. First, though, a brief discussion of the field's trajectory might be useful. Some of the most significant contributions to the field of humanities-based disability studies investigate the ways in which "disability" refers not to a human being's capacity to perform certain tasks or adopt certain behaviors, but rather to an individual's location within a social system. This insight challenges the traditional discourses of disability produced in the medical and clinical fields, and indeed much work in the humanities-based disability studies labors to reclaim "disability" from its medical/clinical articulations. "Disability," in other words, signifies to many scholars in disability studies a social standing and a web of cultural meanings rather than actual physical or mental ability.

In *Claiming Disability* Simi Linton maps the course of disability studies in the humanities. She maintains that disability studies "is an interdisciplinary field based on a sociopolitical analysis of disability and informed both by the knowledge base and methodologies used in traditional liberal arts, and by conceptualizations and approaches developed in areas of the new scholarship" (2). She goes on to note that "[these] scholarly explorations and the initiatives undertaken by the disability rights movement have resulted in new paradigms used to understand disability as a social, political, and cultural phenomenon" (2). However, Linton curiously abandons this social-political frame in favor of a primarily cultural-based inquiry. The first goal of disability studies, she states, should be to continue the valuable task of destabilizing the easy binary of able/disabled. The second and third related goals suggest that theorists of disability begin to articulate how disability might inform *all* content areas of education and then displace disability studies from the epistemologies of medicine, law, and other applied sciences. Instead, Linton advocates grounding disability studies more firmly in the epistemologies of the humanities (120-125). Clearly, these first goals incorporate in various ways the political and social aspects of disability that Linton claims *must* be part of disability studies' larger project. However, her move to ground disability studies in humanities-oriented epistemologies anticipates her fourth goal for the field: a postmodern interrogation and deconstruction of “the vast realm of meaning-making that occurs in metaphysic and symbolic uses of disability” (125). She writes that these meaning-making devices “need to be analyzed in an array of cultural products to understand their meaning and functions, and to subvert their power” (125). Humanities-based disability studies, and particularly the literary analysis of disability, in Linton’s estimation, must deal with the cultural and artistic uses of disability in order to demystify them of their oppressive power and totalizing logic.

One of the first and most important works to take up the project of analyzing the “metaphysic and symbolic uses of disability” is Rosemarie Garland Thomson’s *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. Thomson investigates, in her own words, “how representation attaches meaning to bodies” (5). Noting how recent scholarship has delineated perceptions of otherness with regard to gender, race, and sexuality, she attempts to repair the oversight of physical disability by studying the “physically extraordinary figure.” Throughout her book, she deconstructs the figures of the cripple, the invalid, and the freak in order to “interrogate the conventions of representation and unravel the complexities of identity production within social narratives of bodily difference” (5). The first part of *Extraordinary Bodies* theorizes the operation of disability in cultural and literary representations, while the second, more substantial part of the book focuses on American freak shows, social protest novels, and twentieth-century, women-centered, African American liberatory novels as sites that construct disability. While this second part is useful for its detailed readings of cultural products, it is the first part of Thomson’s book that must be examined here in more detail.

Early in her book, Thomson brings together the discourses of feminist studies and disability studies in order to determine how other forms of cultural otherness might enrich investigations of representations of disability. While the parallels between the two fields are not one-to-one, she concedes, women and the disabled are the negative terms opposing a culturally privileged ideal. Women are opposite the narrowly prescribed ideal of men; the disabled are the negative of an able-bodied ideal. Thomson deftly complicates this formulation, however, by noting that the “normative female body … occupies a dual and paradoxical cultural role: it is the negative term opposing the male body, but it is the privileged term opposing the abnormalized female body” (28). Thomson expands this reading in “Feminist Theory, the Body, and the Disabled Figure,” an essay collected in Lennard Davis’s *Disability Studies Reader*. Here, Thomson furthers her taxonomy of disability and feminism:

> Both feminism and the interrogation of disability I am undertaking challenge existing social relations; both resist interpretations of certain bodily configurations and functioning as deviant; both question the ways that particularity or difference is invested with meaning; both examine the enforcement of universalizing norms; both interrogate the politics of appearance; both explore the politics of naming; both participate in positive identity politics. (281)

Drawing upon her earlier complication of the two discourses in *Extraordinary Bodies*, she concludes that the disabled woman is "a cultural third term, a figure constituted by the originary binary pair of the masculine figure and the feminine figure" (288). She concludes by arguing that since "representation structures reality, the cultural figures that haunt the days of the living must … be wrestled to the floor before even modest self-definition, let alone political action, can proceed" (288).

Later in the first section of her book, Thomson draws upon sociological and anthropological discourses to theorize disability further. First, she discusses "stigma theory," an "interactive social process in which human traits are deemed not only different but deviant" (31). The process of stigmatization, which is an intrinsic part of collective acculturation, creates a "shared, socially maintained and determined conception of the normal individual" (31). Thus, stigmatization "legitimates the status quo, naturalizes attributions of inherent inferiority and superiority, and obscures the socially constructed quality of both categories" (31).

While stigma theory offers no explanation of how attitudes about bodies change or, for that matter, how cultural norms change, Thomson quickly moves to Foucault's familiar theorization of "docile bodies" that are disciplined and controlled by cultural discourses of power. Whereas stigma theory does not historicize bodily norms, Foucault locates the modern context of disability, Thomson maintains, in the shift to the rationalistic, Enlightenment concepts of the body, which ultimately produced "the rigid taxonomies so fundamental to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western science and medicine's project of distributing human characteristics in discrete and hierarchical relations to one another" (39). Those individuals who participate, in other words, in the privileged segments of the hierarchy—those individuals who are not marked as deviating from the norm—do not have to bear the weight of "otherness." Thus, Foucault's historicization of shifting discourses of power helps Thomson effectively "post-structuralize" stigma theory in order to explain the formation of social hierarchies.

Of course, despite Thomson's reading of Foucault and stigma theory together and her provocative discussion of disability within a feminist frame, the question of how norms actually get established remains. In fact, left unsaid here, but what underwrites Thomson's logic, is the simple premise that, from a social systems perspective, disabled people merely look differently and act differently and therefore are stigmatized. Stigma theory would leave the matter at that, and Foucault's historicization of docile bodies does not change this weakness. Thomson, however, does not need to understand *why* the norms are in place to commence with her analysis of cultural representations disability. Her analyses, of course, are informed by a postmodern logic that would have us disregard the project of developing a supple vocabulary to explain how, in Jameson's words, "the interrelationship of culture and the economic … is not a one way street but a continuous reciprocal interaction and feedback loop" (xv). Thomson gives us here—even in her analysis of freak shows—an interrogation of cultural forms entirely divorced from capitalist divisions of labor and social structures.

I agree that representations must be contended with within a broader, progressive political movement. However, I disagree with Thomson's too easy assertion that representation structures reality. Rather, I would suggest that the structures of reality are apprehended *through* representation. Thus, we must not stop at the level of representation but rather must interrogate the reasons for the representations. For while Thomson's theorization of disability in *Extraordinary Bodies* and in "Feminist Theory, the Body, and the Disabled Figure" is important for its exploration of heretofore uncharted territory, it is clearly limited in its scope. At no point does Thomson ask the "Why" questions. Why, for example, do these ideals exist? Why do negative representations proliferate? Thomson analysis lacks a firm grounding in the material, lived reality of disabled people. By focusing solely on cultural representation of disability, Thomson ignores the larger and more pressing issue of the extent to which "able" bodies are profitable ones in a capitalist economy and how certain "disabled" bodies are either tossed away as burdensome or, in the case of freak shows, are reincorporated when deemed profitable. The wage labor that disabled individuals sell as commodity, in this case, is their own "grotesque" appearance.

Indeed, Thomson's lack here ultimately goes far beyond a simple conceptual limitation but rather belies an entire ideology. As Hennessy so persuasively demonstrates, cultural-ideological frameworks, of which Thomson's is certainly one, are actually conservative in that they abstract a "reality" out of the actual social relations at stake in global capitalism. The inability, or refusal, to ask "Why" questions—in short, the sole focus on representations of disability—guarantees that the unequal social relationships and exploitation necessitated by capitalism will not be fully engaged. Cultural studies such as Thomson's, while at least initially useful, are truly a capitalist way of knowing that ultimately cannot enact a progressive politics. Thus, the grand aims of Thomson's project—to unravel the complexities of bodily difference—and of Linton's vision for disability studies—to demystify and disempower the symbolic uses of disability—are never fully realized precisely because they never attempt to go beyond the logic of capitalism.

Linton's goal for disability studies and Thomson's theoretical and conceptual framework for analyzing "metaphysic and symbolic uses of disability" has influenced the "newer generation of writers and scholars" that Davis refers to in his introduction to *The Disability Studies Reader*. Philip K. Wilson, for example, in his recent essay on "monsters" and "freaks" connects eighteenth- and nineteenth-century medical and popular discourses on disability in Great Britain and the US. He traces the shifting perceptions of and attitudes toward children who had supposedly been marked *in utero* by their mother's imagination. He writes,

> In both the medical and popular writings of Enlightenment Britain, visible skin markings on children were rarely perceived as more than superficial blemishes often caused, during fetal development, by maternal imagination. True, they were read as signs of stigmatizing and ostracizing deformities, leading children to be classified among *homo monstrous*. Yet, however indelible, the markings adhered to the surface layer. In the following century, the markings begin figuratively to metastasize inwardly, where they became markings of an inborn immortality. (10-11)

Eighteenth-century "monsters," then, stigmatized by their outward physical appearance, became the immoral, sullied "freaks" of the nineteenth-century. Inexplicably, what is missing from Wilson's argument is an analysis that would yield insight into possible causes, aside from differences in physical appearance, for the unprecedented correlation in the nineteenth-century between physical deformity and morality. While he almost connects nineteenth-century constructions of disability and immorality to the Industrial Revolution's need to produce and reproduce exemplary, profitable workers, he oddly fails, like Thomson does, to note how "freaks" are suddenly less marginalized but exploited more when they become profitable, like at freak shows and carnivales.

In "Modernist Freaks and Postmodernist Geeks" David Mitchell examines the literary grotesque as "an artistic fantasy that invokes physical aberrancy as a visible symptom of social disorganization and collapse," and which also "turns disability into a shorthand method of characterization that simplistically reveals the intangible secrets of a psyche in conflict" (348). Noting that traditional readings of the literary grotesque reinscribe biology rather than social institutions as the cause of physical aberrancy, Mitchell hopes to establish "a definitively postmodern subjectivity to an expanding repertoire of disability studies models for representing physical difference as a cultural process rather than a static biological condition" (349). He compares the modernist use of the grotesque in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* to a postmodernist deployment in Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love*. The modernist freaks of Anderson's novel, who characterize a "largely defoliated, alien, and imperfect world" are surpassed by the artist's imagination, which seeks to "shore up and reverse the monstrosities of nature" (351). The artist, then, works in opposition to the natural world, which is characterized as ugly, deformed, disabled. In contrast, the geeks of Dunn's novel embrace monstrosity and perform artistic perversity in order to "provide a space within which to interrogate the mythic packaging of desires" (362). In other words, postmodern subjectivity, in Mitchell's view, denies the possibility of a somehow pure, unsullied social actor juxtaposed against a corrupted world. Rather, the literary grotesque comes to signify the postmodernist artist's complicity with a "disabled" reality. As such, a postmodern subjectivity opens up a space for the interrogation of physical deformity as a cultural process rather than a biological "freak" occurrence.

Mitchell's evocation of the packaging of desires seems vaguely to suggest a Marxist methodology, when in fact precisely what is missing from his analysis is an engagement with the material production of social relations. To Mitchell, "modern" and "postmodern" are primarily aesthetic categories with little connection to the organization of labor informing these categories. Mitchell's analysis lacks the more supple ways of reading modern and postmodern aesthetics offered by David Harvey in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, for example, and by Jameson in a variety of places, among other notable writers.

The employment of Disability Studies in analyzing literary and cultural texts is currently mired in a theoretical and conceptual dead-end. The insistence on focusing on "representations" of disability in order, as Thomson and Linton suggest in different ways, to disarm them belies a political project that understandably and amiably hopes to elevate the status of disabled people in America. I see at least two limitations here. First, disability studies hopes to repair the status of disabled people *within* the framework of a global capitalist system. The politics suggested in Thomson's work are at every point underwritten by notions of identity that are distinctly capitalist ways of knowing. Further, she underestimates the trenchant capacity for exploitation and oppression that capitalism fosters and needs. In fact, disability studies currently aims for the disabled to be slightly less exploited or, at worst, to join the ranks of exploiter, all of which seems incommensurate with a truly radical politics.

Second, Disability Studies currently suffers from the logics of localization and particularization, which are also capitalist ways of knowing. In *Empire* Hardt and Negri write,

> In the decades of the current crisis of the communist, socialist, and liberal Left that has followed the 1960s, a large portion of critical thought, both in the dominant countries of capitalist development and in the subordinated ones, has sought to recompose sites of resistance that are founded on the identities of social subjects or national and regional groups, often grounding political analysis on the *localization of struggles*. (44)

This localist position, Hardt and Negri maintain, must be critiqued, as must the "the social machines that create and recreate the identities and differences that are understood to be local" (45). Currently, the political project of disability studies suffers from the localization of struggles, which effectively prevents the plights of the disabled in overdeveloped areas of the world, say, from ever being theorized next to those of the disabled in disadvantaged areas. This is not to say, however, that disability studies does not enjoy a productive cross-continental communication, for while clearly disability theorists in the US and abroad influence each other intellectually, as yet no political project has been posited linking the concerns of the disabled worldwide.[3] This lack is coterminous with currently insufficient accounts in disability studies of the complex sets of social relations determined by capitalist modes of production.

At the heart of the matter, though, is a general abstraction of "disability" from its materiality—from its rootedness in daily life—and it is here that we must begin to make amends. Little is made, for example, of the "near total [economic] dependency" of the disabled and how

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[3] Two collections in particular—*Disability/Postmodernity*, ed. by Mairian Corker and Tom Shakespeare, and *Mind and Body Spaces*, ed. by Ruth Butler and Hester Parr—help capture the intellectual energy of continental disability studies. Alongside Davis's *The Disability Studies Reader*, these texts demonstrate both a transoceanic academic conversation among disability scholars and, demonstrably, an indebtedness to postmodern cultural materialist paradigms.

that corresponds to the transformation in modes of production from agrarian to industrial, creating a workforce of interested individuals competing to sell their wage labor (Nibert 70). Or, for example, on how the concentration and centralization of wealth under capitalism underwrites the ideologies of the free individual while making increasingly difficult the possibility of self-reliance, social mobility, or true, lived equality (Nibert 75-76).

To this end, I find promise in the works of Lennard J. Davis. In "Constructing Normalcy," Davis too focuses on norms and analyzes the historical "invention" of "normalcy" in the nineteenth century.[4] He locates the advent of body norms in industrialization and the concomitant set of practices and discourses linked to late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century notions of race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and criminality. Whereas before industrialization in the Western world, Davis asserts, images of the *ideal body* are bound to divinity and artistic traditions working to visualize the gods' bodies, processes of modernization establish a link between the body and industry and eventually result in the formulation of a "common man" (11). The pre-modern ideal body is the divine body and thus "not attainable by a human" (10); the assertion of an "average" or "normal" body, rationalized, Davis suggests, by the field of statistics and then disciplined and enforced by medico-scientific fields like eugenics, "implies that the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm" (13). The establishment of a "norm," then, divides bodies into standard and nonstandard categories.

This new knowledge in the nineteenth century that bodies can be normed and standardized, according to Davis, carries with it harsh consequences. Davis emphasizes the consequences of one particular field legitimated by modernity—fingerprinting. Modern systems of fingerprinting for personal identification are founded on the notion that physical traits could be inherited, and fingerprints themselves were often thought to be physical marks of parentage. The fingerprint, then, suggests a body's identity, which, Davis concludes, "coincides with its [the body's] essence and cannot be altered by moral, artistic, or human will" (15). He writes,

> By this logic, the person enters into an identical relationship with the body, the body forms the identity, and the identity is unchangeable and indelible as one's place on the normal curve. For our purposes, then, this fingerprinting of the body means that the marks of physical difference become synonymous with the identity of the person. (15)

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[4] "Constructing Normalcy" is excerpted from Davis's longer work, *Enforcing Normalcy*, which at the time of printing I had not yet obtained. I acknowledge that a review of the full text is in order.

With this new discourse on the body in place, deviance from the norm soon can be identified with weakness, uselessness, and criminality. Thus suddenly and quite easily in the nineteenth century, "criminals, the poor, and people with disabilities might be mentioned in the same breath" (17).

Davis picks up this idea again in his more recent book, *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions*. This time, however, he ties the construction of normalcy more explicitly to social relations overdetermined by capitalist divisions of labor. Once again he draws upon "knowledge" rationalized by the field of statistics, which, he claims, following the logic of capitalism severed notions of equality among citizens from ethical considerations and placed them more fully within quasi-scientific considerations. Using Habermas's delineation of the fundamental paradox in Enlightenment thinking between the philosophical/ethical goal of establishing societies of equality, freedom, and liberty and capitalism's drive to distribute wealth unequally, Davis traces how advances in math and science were used to rationalize this paradox. Statistics, which could posit the bell curve as a natural law, "proved" that the distribution of wealth must also fall along this same curve. Thus, "the very theory that allows the individual to be instantiated in the collective on an equal basis also allows for wealth to be unequally distributed" (111). Davis writes further that

> Once the ethical notion [of equality] is reconditioned by the statistical one, the notion of equality is transformed. Indeed, the operative notion of equality, especially as it applies to the working classes, is really one of interchangeability. As the average man can be constructed, so can the average worker. All working bodies are equal to all other working bodies because they are interchangeable. This interchangeability, particularly in nineteenth-century factories, means that workers' bodies are conceptualized as identical. So the term "able-bodied" workers came to be interchangeable with able-bodied citizens. This ideological module has obvious references to the issue of disability. (111)

Thus, in *Bending Over Backwards* Davis begins the much needed project in humanities-based disability studies of delineating how capitalism overdetermines social relations, bodily norms, and human ways of knowing. His work, like Hennessy's in feminist studies, begins to theorize materiality as not just discursive and normative. While his theories are certainly open to critique—he consistently narrows his focus to deafness, which might suggest another instance of the localization of struggles—Davis steadfastly refuses to allow mere *representations* of disability to be the object of study.[5] This aspect of

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[5] Another significant flaw in Davis's work is the subtle indication that disability

Davis's theories initiates, I believe, a truly progressive project.

While Davis is among the best-known disability studies scholars, his conceptual framework is certainly not representative of the field as a whole. Indeed, Davis even repeatedly praises the work done by scholars like Thomson. Ultimately, I attribute this to the postmodern turn in theory, generally, and in disability studies, particularly, which would make causality problematic and unfashionable. Do I support a return to some of the nastier consequences of modernism's totalizing logic? Of course not. What I propose, however, is a full and sustained critique of the limits of postmodern projects. Specifically, I want us to acknowledge, as Hardt and Negri and Hennessy suggest in various ways, how the localizing tendencies of postmodern thought effectively occlude the possibility of radical structural change. As Jameson writes, the

> unforeseeable return of narrative as the narrative of the end of narratives, this return of history in the midst of the prognosis of the demise of historical telos, suggests … the way in which virtually any observation about the present can be mobilized in the very search for the present itself and pressed into service as a symptom and an index of the deeper logic of the postmodern, which imperceptibly turns into its own theory and theory of itself. How could it be otherwise when there no longer exists any such "deeper logic" for the surface to manifest and when the symptom has become its own disease (and vice versa, no doubt)? (*Postmodernism* xii)

The time has come for disability studies to cease mobilizing its historicization in a search for the present—which ultimately is what cultural materialist projects undertake—and begin indexing what in *A Singular Modernity* Jameson refers to as an "ontology of the present." The time has come for disability studies to enact a truly radical project first by critiquing capitalist ways of knowing and then by recovering a Utopian narrative outside of the current structures of oppression and

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studies is most effective when "owned by the disability community as opposed to [being] written about by 'normals'" ("Introduction" 1). This kind of statement—couched in the capitalist rhetoric of property and abiding a logic of exclusion—seems both politically and theoretically short-sighted.

This does, however, raise the pressing question of my own credibility here. How am I, a socially and culturally privileged "able" white male, authorized to critique the trajectory of disability studies? To answer this question, I refer to the porous category "disabled" itself. In a way, disability is a narrative of being human: all human beings are touched immediately, if not by disability itself, then by its *potential*. For old age, illness, and injury are themselves inevitable or unpredictable disabling consequences of being human. To this end, then, disability studies is not, *must not*, be the private property of "the disabled community."

exploitation. Capitalism makes all people “bend over backwards”; a truly radical disability studies can help us acknowledge that.

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PERFORMING IMPAIRMENT:
THE CULTURAL ENACTMENT OF DISABILITY

Colin Counsell and Peri Stanley

It was Judith Butler who did most to establish the principle of identity as born in a process of enactment. While theorists such as Foucault acknowledged the role played by the discourse-bearing body in the formation of selfhood,[1] it was nevertheless Butler's formulation of gender as a "stylized repetition of acts" that definitively rooted the social subject in concrete physical behaviours. Writing in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* of the relationship between *soma* and *psyche*, she explained:

> words, acts, gestures and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. (Butler 136)

Whereas behaviour is popularly conceived as the product of one's innate selfhood, for Butler it is real actions, culturally coded, that foster the illusion of an essential self as their origin. This formulation proved critical for theorists of certain marginalized identities, not only providing a counter to reactionary essentialism but offering a means of practical political resistance: if hegemonic identity was performed, to recognize this was to be empowered to perform differently, to enact models of selfhood which were both liberating and inherently challenging to the status quo. While this was so for gender and sexuality, however, it did not appear true for other marginalized social identities,

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[1] Perhaps one's first inclination is to cite the three volumes of Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (trans. Robert Hurley, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979, 1987 and 1988). However, Foucault offered a comprehensive outline of the formation of identity, performative in all but name, in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).

notably that of "disabled." Although the everyday actions of many people with physical impairments do indeed serve to identify them as "disabled," it seems clear that these are not the product of any culturally derived regime but are biomechanical in nature, the result of genuine physical difference. Moreover, given that such behaviours are not learned but innate, individuals are not free to behave in alternative ways: performativity offers no emancipation for impaired bodies. Thus there can be no "textual" status to disabled identity, for the semiotic foundation to Butler's work, that crucial *arbitrariness* of her Saussurean yoking of real material objects to culturally derived meanings, in this case prevents its application. Rooted in unwitting actions, disability apparently resists all attempts to incorporate it in the realm of semiosis.

It is this proposition we will seek to challenge in the following article, examining the way the cognitive categories of "able-bodied" and "disabled" are constructed around historically specific acts. This will entail addressing such bodies as not simply the bearers of signification but its generators, a project for which there are surprisingly few antecedents. Although Disability Studies has now amassed its own catalogue of "key texts," theoretical writings underpinning contemporary analysis, the perspectives of most are sociological, concerned more with constraints on social action than projections of cultural meaning.[2] While there are studies that consider the meanings *fixed upon* impairment,[3] few have examined how the material objects that are impaired bodies were made to signify those *cultural* objects which are able and disabled bodies. It is this process we will consider here, seeking the moment of those bodies' manufacture by tracing their modern history as what Butler might term "corporeal styles." For illustrative purposes, we will refer mainly to industrial Britain of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, but the trajectory of the analysis may be taken as paradigmatic of this history in developed societies generally. Our project is thus a basic one: rather than deal with representations of disability, we wish to consider the creation of that semiotic marker that *is* the able/disabled body, trace the way in

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[2] For an excellent introduction to the range of perspectives in use see Mike Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

[3] See for example Rosemarie Garland Thompson, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (NY: New York University Press, 1997); David Hevey, *The Creatures that Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery* (London: Routledge, 1992); Martin F. Norden, *The Cinema of Isolation: The History of Physical Disability in Movies* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994); J. Quicke, *Disability in Modern Children's Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

which kinesic regimes of the industrial age became codes to "write" a new paradigm of human physicality.

I

While the march of industrialization in Britain and elsewhere was by no means linear, being composed of steps discontinuous in time and across industries, its overall trajectory can nevertheless be charted via a series of representative developments. One of the earliest of these was the late eighteenth-century adoption of the "table system." Arranging workers at intervals around a large bench or table, each assigned a separate task, the system "rationalized" the production process into a sequence of distinct stages—the first employee beating pewter into a bulb, perhaps, the second soldering a truncated cone onto its base, a third drilling holes to affix a handle, and so on, until the object had passed through the entire circle of artisans and a finished tankard was produced. Production was thus linearized via the simultaneous segmentation of process and environment. The proletarian's "alienation" from the object of his labours described by Marx was by no means a side effect of the new mode of production,[4] for the atomization of space, process and personnel was the logic on which industrialization was founded, the rationale at the very root of its reorganization of human effort.[5]

The significance of this principle, the analysis of process via dissections of space, was evident at the time, Adam Smith noting in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) how it laid the foundations for industry's further development. The same principle underpinned the rise of the manufactory. More than a building to house machines, the "factory" comprised a supremely instrumental, *modular* environment, raw

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[4] See Marx's account in the *Grundrisse*, for example, reproduced in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (ed. David McLellan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 365-70.

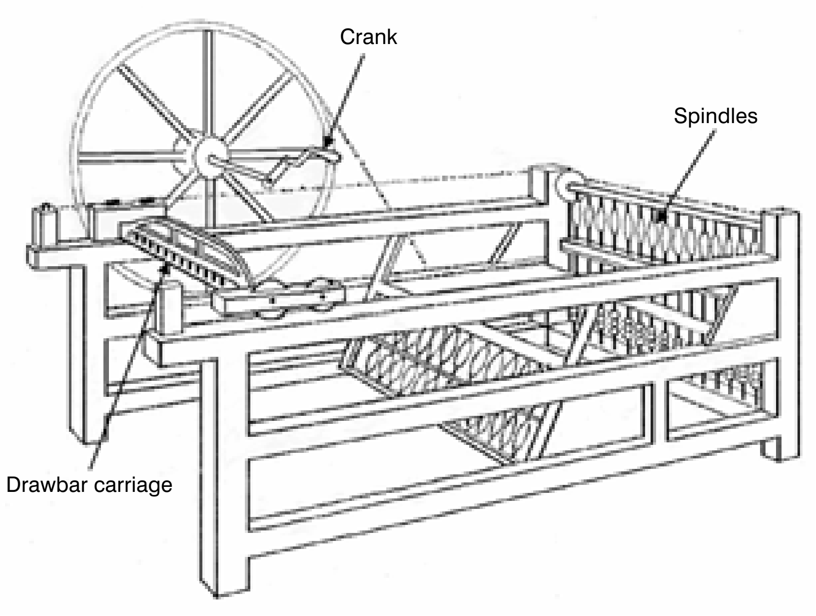
[5] Bernard Doray notes: "The sub-division of tasks in the table system, and their serial organization, implied a form of work analysis: the requisite operations had to be identified and the time taken to perform them had to be evaluated in terms of each other. This system of dividing up tasks offered industrialists major advantages. The 'virtuosity' acquired by workers allowed them to carry out their tasks more quickly. They were also easier to supervise and control; the foreman could easily check the workrate or see if anyone was slowing down the table or working erratically. One table's output could be compared to another, or daily output compared to the average, etc." For Doray, then, as for Adam Smith two centuries before, the "purely practical" organization of proto-industrial work was always already a conceptual act. *From Taylorism to Fordism: A Rational Madness* (trans. David MacEy, London: Free Association Books, 1994), p. 40.

materials entering at one point, passing through the segmented stages of a production circuit, to finally emerge with labour value added: as commodities. A comparable ethos was soon to extend beyond the walls of the individual workplace. Following that second phase of industrial development started in the 1880s, a growing proportion of manufacture took place within large networks, the finished commodity using components from numerous other productive *loci*, such that industry effectively operated on a national—and, by the middle of the twentieth century, international—level. The corresponding compartmentalization of human effort had reached its zenith in the first third of the twentieth century with the advent of the Fordist "production line." Far removed from the days of artisan's skills, production line workers possessed competencies specific to the factory process, and stood at their "station" while the partly completed commodity rolled by: workers were no longer organized *in* space but were now themselves instruments for its traversal. Paradoxically, it was this ever more detailed breakdown of manufacturing into component phases which facilitated the ultimate mechanization of production in the 1980s and early '90s, increased segmentation permitting production to be parceled out to an expanded number of computer-based stations in what has somewhat erroneously been termed the "post-industrial age."

While this sequence demonstrates industry's development in terms of new processes and technologies, less obvious perhaps are the changes wrought in another domain, the somatic. The segmentation of production, the breaking down of complex procedures into specific, narrowly-conceived tasks, impacted most directly on bodily kinetics, imposing a set of physical behaviours characterised most of all by their limits. Even the table system, a comparatively crude industrial regime with many of the features of cottage industry, involved a marked reduction in the range of physical actions required by any segment of the process: the raising and dropping of a hammer over a shaping "last" for one stage, drilling or soldering actions for another. Such limitation resulted from more than the specifics of a given task, it was also an effect of organization *per se*, for workers' stances, the positioning of their bodies in the working space, and the speed, pace and effort of their actions were also given, not to be abandoned without affecting productivity in the entire circuit. In a quite literal sense, workers' kinesics were determined by production, their postures, gestures and patterns of effort predicted with a precision and inflexibility that was, for most, historically unprecedented.

The level of kinesic discipline imposed by the table system would seem minimal when compared to that demanded by industrial machines, however, for even early, relatively primitive machinery could dictate its operators' actions minutely. The expansion of that industry which powered Britain's productive revolution, cotton manufacture, is popularly held to have been made possible by James Hargreaves' invention of the "Spinning Jenny" (c.1764).[6] The jenny is simple in operation (see plate). Having released a short length of roving[7] through the drawbar, the spinner, most often a woman, moved backwards, pulling the drawbar and carriage with her left hand, stretching and tightening the line of fibres as she went. Reaching the limit of the carriage's movement, she hand-cranked the large flywheel with her right hand, this energy being transferred by belt to rotate the spindles and gather the spun yarn.[8] The actions required—lean back, pull

The Spinning Jenny



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[6] In fact Richard Arkwright's "jenny" played at least as great a role, for not only did it spin and wind the yarn in one continuous action, it lent itself to water power, and then to steam. See Stanley Chapman's "The Cotton Industry and the Industrial Revolution," 2nd edition (1987), reproduced in Leslie A. Clarkson (ed.) *The Industrial Revolution: A Compendium* (Basingstoke: Macmillans, 1990).

[7] "Roving" is the crude, uncompacted rope of cotton fibres, created when the raw material had been combed and cleaned by "carding," from which cotton yarn would be spun.

[8] For a more detailed description of the working process, see Anna P. Benson, *Textile Machines* (Princes Risborough, Bucks: Shire Books, 2002).

on the carriage, pinch the roving, turn the wheel—are repetitive and exceedingly narrow in scope. They are also prescribed. The height at which the carriage sits, the path and angle along which it moves, the precise distance of that movement, the diameter of the circle one's hand describes when cranking—all specify routes through space that are fixed to the millimeter. The dynamics required—the poundage to be exerted upon the crank handle, the friction pressed by finger and thumb onto the roving—are written no less precisely into the process. The hammering of pewter over a last still permits variation of action and effort, but industrial machines presume a quite different order of kinetic control.[9]

This corporeal control was extended when spinning and other processes became powered by external means, first by water, with mechanisms like Richard Arkwright's "Water Frame" (1771), and later by steam.[10] For while early machines like the Spinning Jenny were used in homes and small workshops, water and steam power were available only in mills, condensed environments that brought with them their own behavioural strictures. These tended not to be drawn on the same somatic micro-scale as pulling a carriage or pinching a thread, but were no less defined. For if mill and factory were spaces modularized to facilitate an atomized process, realizing that process meant fitting the body *around* that space—slotting oneself within the kinetic paths etched by a machine's movements; operating in and out of spatial segments; working for externally determined periods without pause, and at an externally determined rate.[11] Such requirements

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[9] Particularly alert to this somatic shaping, Marx notes: "In Manufacture it is the workmen who, with their manual implements, must, either singly or in groups, carry on each particular detail process. If, on the one hand, the workman becomes adapted to the process, on the other, the process was previously made suitable to the workman. This subjective principle of the division of labour no longer exists in production by machinery. Here, the process as a whole is examined objectively, in itself, that is to say, without regard to the question of its execution by human hands, it is analyzed into its constituent phases; and the problem, how to execute each detail process, and bind them into a whole, is solved by the aid of machines, chemistry, *etc*." *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1 [1887] (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1954), p.434-5. All through *Capital*, Marx displays an awareness of the supremely *corporeal* requirements forced on workers by industrial manufacturing, an engagement with the physical immediacy of labour that has perhaps been obscured by a century of focus on his abstract theory.

[10] See Chris Aspin, *The Cotton Industry* (Princes Risborough, Bucks: Shire Books, 2002).

[11] The effective control by machines of the pace of work was one of the things most immediately appreciated, and despised, by contemporaries. Writing in 1832 in "The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Class Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester," James Kay-Shuttleworth noted that "Whilst the engine

usually go unacknowledged but the act of cataloguing them reveals their range and detail.[12] While other forms of production presented their own corporeal demands, industrial processes were unique both because they permitted so little kinesic modification, being so precise, and because they became the norm not for one profession but for an entire class.

In practice, somatic demands of this kind extended beyond working hours and spaces. For as manufactories became larger, using greater numbers of workers, the domiciliary areas surrounding them grew in proportion, demanding a corresponding development of urban infrastructures. The resulting changes in housing, transport, communications, *etc.,* brought with them yet more kinesic impositions, even in terms of the height and shape of the steps necessary to negotiate a given size of curb, the amount of space one may occupy in walking a pavement or using a tram. This reshaping of physical existence did not end with "hard" environments, for as new spaces and practices proliferated, corporeal strictures became embedded in the social *habitus,*[13] the very logic shaping lived experience. Workers in factories—and those in industries ancillary to them: the bakers who made factory employees' bread, the carters who delivered their coal—must "logically" sleep and rise at given times, travel home on streets clogged with their fellows, and structure their day according to the wider demands of industry: on the macro scale no less that the micro, the detail of somatic existence was externally arranged.

II

From a broadly sociological viewpoint, perhaps the most significant effect of this redesign of the material world was exclusion. In requiring of its operators a set of precisely defined actions, even a simple machine like the Spinning Jenny made numerous assump-

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runs, the people must work – men, women and children are yoked together with iron and steam. The animal machine… is chained to the iron machine, which knows no suffering and no weariness."

[12] It was precisely the possibility of cataloguing these precise demands that permittted F. W. Taylor, among others, to produce the kind of analytical breakdowns of factory work in *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) that would be quite impossible for, say, farming or carpentry.

[13] The term *habitus* is used here in the general sense established by Pierre Bourdieu, describing physical life, the unconsidered actions that comprise everyday existence, combined with its usually unspoken rationales. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

tions about their physical being: that they were within a height range enabling them to crank the wheel, possessed the required flexibility and length of limb to reach the roving, and so on. Such assumptions were embedded in all the environments and processes workers had to negotiate, with machines, factories and processes, living arrangements and public spaces tacitly presuming their users possessed a given set of physical and sensory characteristics. Collectively, they sketched the shape of the new world's preferred worker—with the verso consequence of excluding all who did not meet those expectations, banishing other physical types from the sphere of industrial production and denying them its economic benefits. This conclusion is by no means novel, of course, and if it evokes the much discussed but rather ill-defined "social model" of disability,[14] it perhaps more usefully describes what Vic Finkelstein has termed "phase two" society.[15] While those with impairments have always experienced economic disadvantage, Finkelstein argues, it is with industrialization that this became a structural feature of society, the need to fit man to machine fostering a fundamental socio-economic division.

Another consequence, just as profound in its political effect, is of more pressing significance here. The narrowing of productive, somatic life fostered by machines in fact reflected a central impulse of industrial society. Industry's drive was from the outset towards uniformity, its very rationalization of process favouring identical commodities—and, later, interchangeable components from which those commodities were built. The same impetus came to encompass consumers, and even the images they consumed, the "spectacle" of mid and late twentieth-century Western culture working to instill in individuals a common and uniform desire for the same, mass-produced objects.[16] If the interchangeability of products and consum-

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[14] Perhaps the most formative of the early, rigorous formulations of the social model was provided by Mike Oliver, *Social Work with Disabled People* (Basingstoke: Macmillans, 1983), although his "The Individual and Social Model of Disability," a paper given to the Joint Workshop of the Living Options Group and the Research Unit of the Royal College of Physicians (1990), represents a substantial refinement. An interesting critique of the model in general is provided by Tom Shakespeare "The Social Model of Disability: An Outdated Ideology?" *Research in Social Science and Disability*, vol. 2 (2002), pp.9-28.

[15] Vic Finkelstein, *Attitudes and Disabled People: Issues for Discussion* (New York: World Rehabilitation Fund, 1980).

[16] We refer here of course to Guy Debord's seminal analysis of the cultural logic of late capitalism in *The Society of the Spectacle* (revised edition, Detroit: Red and Black, 1977). That said, one could easily extrapolate the point in numerous directions, from Simmel or Benjamin's meditations on the nature of the mass produced object

ers has become a commonplace of social analysis, it is perhaps less apparent that this drive also favoured interchangeable workers. For as machines, processes and environments demanded of their users common attributes, they collectively described a new "user spec," defining in very far ranging detail a notional worker-type on the basis of their capacity to be productive in the new age. The same forces that led to uniform commodities also made for standardized employees.

Crucial in this respect is the nature of the forces driving this process. Concerned as it is with bodily attributes, it is easy to assume that any standardization of human physicality resulted from some generalized impulse towards categorization or "norms." [17] Dealing in somatic shaping, Foucault's principle of "discipline" and Lacan's concept of the homunculus on which notions of the "abject" ultimately rest also offer themselves as likely explanatory frames. In reality, however, the kinesic narrowing described, and the corporeal normalization resulting from it, were products of forces of an unequivocally economic order. In an industrial process that was segmented and behaviourally regimented, the value of all workers rested on their economic *equivalence*, an interchangeability founded precisely in their capacity to perform the same acts. With bodies divided into those "able" to invest the object with added labour value and those that were not *in the specific circumstances of industrial production*, a cognitive binary separating the exploitable from those resistant to exploitation was created.

It was on this basis that a newly marked body entered semiosis. As industry's environments and processes were negotiated by successful workers, those workers inevitably made manifest their own defining characteristics. With individuals effectively demonstrating their exploitability via their ordinary actions, social space became the canvas on which a novel corporeal paradigm was inscribed. This inscription took the form of kinesic signatures—postures, gestures, tempi and rhythms, ways of holding the body and of negotiating obstacles, and so on; a pool of micro-behaviours reproduced when-

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and the arcade to, in more recent times, the concern for the positioning of subjects in writings by authors as diverse as Althusser and Mulvey.

[17] Lennard Davis, in *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (London: Verso, 1995), argues quite convincingly that a general nineteenth-century shift in favour of statistical conceptualizations of the social world underpins the creation of new notions of "normal" bodies. While it is difficult to counter his argument in its own terms, we feel that any account that offers no political or economic gains for the able-bodied, effecting socio-cultural structuring as its own end, is likely to be less than the whole story.

ever workers functioned in the newly shaped spaces. Semically the principle is, of course, tautological: able bodies are those capable of navigating the new environments; it is in navigating those environments that bodies prove their able-ness. Nevertheless, the result was a recognizable *vocabulary*, with the modes and shapes of movement emblematic of a new species of workers coming to identify them. As the forms of the exploitable body were endlessly reproduced in the multiplying environments of the modern world, etched into time and space by any number of individual actions, its remodeling of human physicality *per se* was disseminated.

III

What emerges, then, is a quite distinct socio-semiotic process, one that entails some deviation from performative models like Butler's. In the dynamic she describes, the stylized acts representative of gender and sexual identity are disseminated by a kind of cultural copycatting, subjects encountering them on social terrain and reproducing them as tokens of self-identification. The meanings ascribed these behaviours are arbitrary, and the acts are, until the moment of political self-reflection, unwitting: identity is written on the body's surface but is seen as an inner essence by viewer and viewed. With the "able-bodied" subject, however, a different mechanism is evident. There is no subconscious adoption of codes, for behaviours are shaped in the body's encounter with processes and spaces: the kinesic signs relate to—take their meanings *from*—a socially formed environment. In negotiating modern spaces subjects perform common, recognizable behaviours, "stylized acts" that, although derived from the functional, operate as tokens of identity.

But if this traces the manufacture of a new set of somatic images and meanings, it does not yet constitute a semiotic, a structure of semically loaded terms with which meaning may be *made*. For the relations described are all syntagmatic, with spaces and machines leading on to bodies, actions of the factory to those of social space. The principle is one of combination, the sequence of signs, material actions with associated cultural meanings, forming an "utterance" to speak the hale worker's body. To function as a complete semiotic, combination must coexist with relations of a paradigmatic kind, rooted not in sequence but in selection and *difference*, just as Butler's gendered and sexualised subjects are defined in implicit counterpoint to those coded as their other. There is no primacy in this, and can be none, for each is the prerequisite for the other's conceptual existence, defining the other in its difference. The process of the able body similarly required for its semiotic functioning a systematic, paradigmatic alternative.

The structural, paradigmatic counterpart of industrial space arose as a result of another, apparently unrelated response to industrialization in the form of the 1834 rewriting of the British Poor Law.[18] For one of the provisions of this was the creation of a network of institutions to house and feed the destitute, the "workhouses" or "poorhouses"[19]. In line with an economic rationale rooted in the writings of Smith, Ricardo and Malthus, the poorhouses offered two regimes: a comparatively easy regime for the "deserving poor," comprising the aged and the "infirm," and a much more spartan one, requiring harder work and offering fewer comforts, for the able-bodied unemployed, the "undeserving poor." The distinction was absolutely fundamental to the poorhouse project,[20] entailing detailed quantifications of both bodies and regimes, for providing an uncomfortable life for the able-bodied would, it was anticipated, prompt them to seek work.[21] This goal was also promoted via poorhouse architecture. As specified by the Poor Law Commission, the buildings were to be designed to appear forbidding, signalling that they were to be entered only in circumstances of dire need.[22] Geographical position was also to play a role, a high

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[18] Although bad harvests and war also supported the creation of new legislation, this was in a context in which industrialization had already brought the existing Poor Law into crisis. See Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State* (Basingstoke: Macmillans, 1984), p.35.

[19] More precisely, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

[20] Categorization played a key role in the system. The new Poor Law originally divided potential users into four groups: able-bodied males, able-bodied females, the infirm and the aged. Within a few years, however, the rapid medicalization of the non able-bodied would prompt a further, four-part classification, comprising the sick, the insane, "defectives," and the aged/infirm. All through this, the most fundamental distinction, between the abled bodied and infirm, persists. See Colin Barnes, *Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination: A Case for Anti-Discrimination Legislation* (London: Hurst & Co., 1992), pp.17-18.

[21] The Poor Law Report of 1832 was explicit, claiming "The strict discipline of the well-regulated workhouses, and in particular the restrictions to which inmates are subject… are intolerable to the indolent and disorderly, while to the aged, the feeble and other proper objects of relief, the regularity and discipline render the workhouse a place of comparative comfort." Quoted in M. A. Crowther *The Workhouse System 1834-1929: The History of an English Social Institution* (London: Methuen, 1983), p.29.

[22] See Norman Longmate, *The Workhouse* (London: Temple Smith, 1974), pp.88-94, where he describes the intentionally prison-like appearance of nineteenth-century workhouses, effected by a deliberate rejection of "comforting" curved architectural lines and decorative additions. Also, M. A. Crowther in *The Workhouse System,* p.40, notes that in addition to being visibly daunting structures, poorhouses displayed generic similarities to the "Panopticon" prison design described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*.

proportion of buildings being sited beyond the limits of the town or local community. As well as providing means of subsistence, then, poorhouses were to perform key acts of representation, symbolically positioning their users outside the society of others.

In economic terms, the poorhouses were a failure, not least because their founding rationale derived from ignorance of industrial economies. The poorhouse system was based on a rural, agricultural model of poverty,[23] the key characteristic of which was consistency, levels of poverty in pre-industrial societies tending to remain relatively stable except in times of genuine economic catastrophe. It was upon this stability that the previous Poor Law system of "outdoor relief" had been based, with parishes only able to plan and deliver maintenance for the local poor if their number was broadly predictable.[24] The defining characteristic of industrial poverty, however, is change, cycles of boom and bust entailing massive swings in levels of production and employment. In this context the poorhouses proved entirely inadequate, for in times of economic decline they were hopelessly small to accommodate the vast numbers destitute, while in boom times they lay all but empty.[25]

This very failure made the system successful in its goal of representation, however. The poorhouses were never entirely empty, for even in periods of economic buoyancy, when work was plentiful, they were still home to those permanently excluded from the industrial workforce, the "deserving poor."[26] The ephemerality of the *un*deserving poor as a group, and the inability of the institutions to

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[23] Indeed, the misperception was compounded by a North-South mismatch, the Poor Law Commission's original 1832 analysis being of largely rural southern England while its conclusions were applied to Lancashire, West Riding and the East Midlands, the textile manufacturing regions of the North which experienced some of the most savage temporary unemployment. See Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*, p.129.

[24] A key feature of the Elizabethan Poor Laws (1597 and 1601) in this respect was their restriction of movement, effectively guaranteeing that no parish would be swamped by newcomers seeking financial relief. While such provision was useful in a society in which very large numbers of people were still employed in agriculture, and "legitimate" geographical mobility was relatively unusual, it was actively disadvantageous to an industrial economy that relied on a flexible and mobile workforce.

[25] See Derek Fraser *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*, p.133.

[26] Norman Longmate in *The Workhouse*, for example, notes: "By 1863 forty-six London workhouses were "handling" 50,000 sick people a year. Analysis of the occupants of one of them shows how it had become a dumping ground for every type of unfortunate – only the able-bodied, for whom it had primarily been created, being almost totally absent," p.197. Of the 586 inmates of that institution, he explains, less than one in ten were considered able-bodied.

accommodate them when numbers grew, meant that the poorhouses became associated instead with these other long-term occupants. It was therefore the aged and the impaired, those who were inherently and permanently resistant to that form of production that gave rise to the poorhouses, that became the recipients of symbolic exclusion, the buildings' design and location signaling their position beyond the social whole.

If this was effected by the semiotics of space and architecture, however, a far more significant role was played by corporeal actions. For if poorhouses were places in which people did not work, they did not work in very precisely differentiated ways, the institutions' two distinct regimes ensuring that the "idleness" of the deserving poor was measurably different from that of the undeserving. This was a feature of all facets of life within the institution, shaping the work inmates were required to undertake, the comforts they could enjoy, their food, habitation, freedom and even their social interactions.[27] Redolent of the factory's materialistic rationalization of effort, the tightness of the poorhouses' two living regimes was widely known beyond its walls. If this knowledge was the basis of the poorhouse system's demonization, it more importantly allowed the resulting corporeal behaviours to signify, to function as markers of an identity that was initially institutional but ultimately disseminated through culture at large.

Thus a new notion of physical capacity was once again enacted via kinesic means. Just as the spaces and processes of the industrial world caused exploitable workers to move in given ways, effectively enacting a new cultural identity, so the environments that were the poorhouses worked to define inmates by what they did: and like the table system and the manufactory, they too constituted environments formed by measurement and fragmentation. In both cases the resulting kinesic "norm" is in reality arbitrary: just as exploitable workers can move in ways more varied than their interactions with industrial environments suggest, so the actions of impaired individuals as a group are hugely diverse, for the kinesic qualities notionally common to them arise purely in interaction with the "environment" of the poorhouse regime. If the corporeal practices distinguishing impaired bodies were apparently less open to view, hidden behind the institution's walls, the minutiae of the life they led, so systematically distinguished from that of the merely unemployed, was if fact generally understood, and widely feared, constituting a potent form of cultural "knowing."

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[27] See Norman Longmate, *The Workhouse.*

IV

Thus poorhouses were part of the continuum of industrial space, all differences in fact constituting systematic relations. It is on this basis that we can postulate not merely an imagery or iconography of able and disabled bodies but a semiotics—not a set of meanings attached to corporealities but a *difference* that enables meaning to be made. Deployed paradigmatically, diverse bodies, actions, spaces and processes formed the material basis for a semiotic continuum, a field of signifiers via which new politically- and economically-based signifieds could be circulated. The most obvious result is a conceptual binary that divided bodies into distinct groups, creating the conditions for what would come to be known as "disability."

Not reproducing old economies of meaning but creating a new one, this structural opposition was semically constructive, effecting a shift of the most fundamental kind. As Saussure made clear, all semiotic systems rest ultimately on an act of arbitrary division, the breakup of a material continuum—sound, colour—into separate segments, distinguished via material difference. This is simultaneous with the corresponding *conceptual* distinctions, signifiers and signifieds always emerging together, each a function of the other.[28] Thus on a political canvas, in Butler's model repression tellingly consists of the imposition of a limited catalogue of gendered sexualities upon the greater, unbordered continuum of desire, all politically loaded: there can be no neutral structure, for the act of division and nomination, of creating *types*, she assumes, always already presumes relations of power. The (dis)abled body similarly broke up what was previously a continuum, for although meanings were attached to impaired bodies in preindustrial culture, these did not mark oppositions but were merely points on an axis which had the youthful and hale at one of its poles and the aged and infirm at the other.[29] It was as a result of industrial changes described that the forms enacted by bodies joined with the meanings ascribed them.

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[28] Saussure explains: "The characteristic role of language with respect to thought is not to create a material phonic means for expressing ideas but to serve as a link between thought and sound, under conditions that of necessity bring about the reciprocal delimitations of units. Thought, chaotic by nature, has to become ordered in the process of its decomposition. Neither are thoughts given material form nor are sounds transformed into mental entities: the somewhat mysterious fact is that rather 'thought-sound' implies division." Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (trans. Wade Baskin, London: Fontana, 1974), p.112.

[29] Vic Finkelstein, *Attitudes and Disabled People.*

This was of course the semiotic means to a political end. The ultimate result was a redefinition of those specific qualities that made bodies exploitable in *particular* historical circumstances into signs of a universalized "able-ness," and the recoding of unexploitable bodies as inherently without value. It is as part of this moment that the ultimate ideological refiguring takes place. Working to naturalize itself, Ideology always presents its precepts not as constructions, the products of a particular, man-made and ephemeral social order, but as natural, obvious and common sense, the Way of the World. By this means the interpellated subject is disempowered, for the World is immutable, attempts to challenge it inherently futile. Similarly, in redefining bodies exploitable in specific conditions as the able body *per se*, and economically resistant bodies as the universally dis-abled, the constructed nature of that division is hidden. Thus is propagated the notion that impaired bodies are disempowered by their own corporeality rather than by the conditions in which they find themselves. The possibility of recognizing the artificiality of this situation, as something that may be changed, is effaced, the discursive underpinnings of "disability" reaffirmed for the next generation. While this is so, every kinesic act effectively becomes part of the reproduction of the material means of production, perpetuating not technologies but the social processes that enable those technologies to be utilized. This must continue to be the case until we culturally recognize the constructedness of the very terms able-bodied and disabled, and so view their markers through a different lens.

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“IF YOU SHOULD EVER WANT AN ARM”: DISABILITY AND DEPENDENCY IN EDGAR ALLAN POE’S “THE MAN THAT WAS USED UP”

Vanessa Warne

In his 1839 short story “The Man that Was Used Up,” Edgar Allan Poe enlists the body of a military hero to examine connections between colonial conflict and technological innovation. At a public meeting, the tale’s narrator meets Brevet Brigadier General John A.B.C. Smith, a veteran of territorial battles with the Kickapoo and Bugaboo tribes. Fascinated by Smith’s handsome appearance and reputation for bravery, the narrator is anxious to learn more about him. When acquaintances fail to provide adequate information, he visits the General at home. There, in the private space of Smith’s dressing room, he is made privy to disturbing truths about the war hero: the General, whose body appears attractive and robust in public, has been radically transformed by war. Reduced to a “large and exceedingly odd looking bundle” (135), he lacks arms, shoulders and legs; is missing his tongue, palate, teeth and scalp; and has lost both eyes. As the horrified narrator looks on, a black valet named Pompey installs a series of prostheses, returning the dismembered veteran’s body to an appearance of wholeness and health. The story ends with the narrator’s proclamation that “General John A.B.C. Smith was the man—was *the man that was used up*” (137).

Critics have identified various historical sources for Poe’s tale. William Whipple has, for example, read the story as a political satire targeting Richard M. Johnson, Martin Van Buren’s vice-presidential running mate and a veteran of several violent campaigns against Native peoples. Elmer Pry takes a different approach, arguing that the story draws on early American folktales about army captains and settlers who removed false teeth, a wig and a cork leg in order to astonish and intimidate Indian adversaries. Critics have also noted the tale’s engagement with the history of slavery. While David Leverenz has commented on the tale’s comic representation of a slave figure, Joan Dayan has examined the General's dependence on Pompey and the slave class he represents. Dependency of a different kind has been discussed by critics interested in Poe's portrayal of the General's prostheses. Klaus Benesch has paid particular attention to the General's reliance on technology, arguing that the tale is one in which "history and technology are brought into conjunction through the cybernetic body of an authentic historical figure" (109-110).

Benesch's vision of the General as cyborg, as a hybrid of the human and the machine, characterizes his prostheses as essential parts of his body and, by extension, his identity. Joan Tyler Mead strikes a similar note when she labels the General "a robot" (281), as does Daniel Hoffmann when he describes Smith as "a mechanismus, a puppet" (199). This article offers a different reading of Poe's tale, one that understands prosthesis not as integral but as supplemental to Smith's disabled body. Shifting the focus from technology to disability, I argue that Poe uses the wounded body of the General to explore and express a range of anxieties about disability and dependency. I also propose ways in which Poe's portrayal of disability can be read as a critique of contemporary economic transformations in the new American nation, notable among them, the early nineteenth-century development of a modern capitalist marketplace.

* * *

The delayed discovery of the General's disability both provides Poe with a climactic ending to his tale and works to characterize disability as secret and mysterious. When he first sees Smith, the narrator admires the apparent perfection of the General's body. Unaware of his severe injuries and unable to perceive signs of disability, he views the General as a model of masculine beauty and strength. Indeed, the narrator's comments suggest that the prostheses not only mask the General's injuries, but also make him unusually attractive:

> His head of hair would have done honor to a Brutus;—nothing could be more richly flowing, or possess a higher gloss. It was of jetty black;—which was also the color, or more properly the no colour, of his unimaginable whiskers. You perceive that I cannot speak of the latter without enthusiasm; it was not too much to say that they were the handsomest pair of whiskers under the sun. At all events, they encircled, and at times partially overshadowed, a mouth utterly unequalled. Here were the most entirely even, and the most brilliantly white of all conceivable teeth. (127-128)

The narrator's admiring and desirous description does not end with the General's face: his bust is "the finest bust I ever saw," the shoulders are “perfection,” and the legs are pronounced “the *ne plus ultra* of good legs” (128). In a particularly telling passage, the narrator exclaims, “In the matter of eyes, also, my acquaintance was pre-eminently endowed. Either one of such a pair was worth a couple of the ordinary ocular organs” (128). Instinctively transforming what he believes to be bodily organs into commodities, the narrator describes Smith’s eyes as exchangeable items. It is only at the end of the story that both he and the reader learn that this response is perfectly appropriate: the General’s eyes have indeed been purchased to replace the natural ones he lost to the colonial endeavour.

The narrator’s commodification of Smith’s eyes is one indication that the General’s hidden disabilities are intuited but not fully recognized by the narrator. The narrator’s description of the “rectangular precision, attending his every movement” (129) is also suggestive of this intuition, as is his discussion of the artistic quality of Smith’s body parts. He explains, for instance, that the General’s shoulders would have “called up a blush of conscious inferiority into the countenance of the marble Apollo” (128). The comparison of Smith to a statue and the narrator’s image of blushing stone are revealing. Figuring Smith and the statue as competing models of human perfection, the narrator obscures the boundary between the artificial and the real, a form of confusion echoed by his description of the General’s arms as “admirably modelled” (128). Artistic discourse continues to inform his description of Smith’s body when he explains that “Every connoisseur in such matters admitted the legs to be good” (128) and when he wishes “to God my young and talented friend Chiponchipino, the sculptor, had but seen the legs” (128). Revealing more than an aesthete’s admiration for idealized forms of physical beauty, the narrator’s alignment of Smith’s body with works of high art blurs the distinction between flesh and stone, and demonstrates his preference for the artificial and the inanimate.

In sharp contrast to the narrator, who gives detailed, almost obsessive descriptions of the General, the other characters in the tale only manage to make vague and incomplete statements about Smith. In a pattern that is repeated six times, the narrator asks an acquaintance about the General but receives only vague responses concerning his valour and renown. Without exception, those he asks for information eventually begin to explain “he’s the man…” but are interrupted before they can complete the sentence. A preacher in church, an actor at the theatre, a gossipy partygoer, a woman with a question about Byron, the narrator and even Smith himself interrupt them, stopping the flow of information about the General and preventing the full revelation of Smith’s history and disability.

Significantly, these conversations are marked by a prosthetic quality of their own. With the exception of the narrator, speakers who stop the exchange of information begin their interruptions with the word "man." Echoing the last word of the speaker they interrupt, they rely upon part of another statement to make a statement of their own, and, through repetition, create the illusion of an organic whole. The fragmented conversations that result frustrate the narrator but hint at and parallel the injuries done to the General's body. Linguistic equivalents of the amputated body, they manifest facts about the General that are not expressed in language. Defined by broken sentences, incomplete explanations, and competing discourses, the society Poe portrays is one in which disability is discussed with difficulty, if at all. Only in the last line of the story, when he has witnessed the General's prosthetic parts being put in place, can the narrator finally complete the oft-repeated but consistently unfinished phrase and announce, "Smith was the man—was *the man that was used up*" (137).

The completion of this statement, a statement which characterizes Smith as exhausted and consumed by war, is revealing. The transformation of fragments to something with the appearance of wholeness is both Poe's subject and his primary narrative technique. Constructing disability as a secret to be uncovered, a mystery to be solved, Poe fetishizes the General's bodily difference, portraying and stimulating curiosity about his body but reserving the revelation of his disability for the story's conclusion. Significantly, the fact of Smith's disability, disguised and hidden from the public gaze, is only revealed in the private, closeted space of a dressing room. Despite the domestic setting, the revelation of Smith's injured state begins with impersonal violence and ends in spectacle:

> As I entered the chamber, I looked about, of course, for the occupant, but did not immediately perceive him. There was a large and exceedingly odd looking bundle of something which lay close by my feet on the floor, and, as I was not in the best humor in the world, I gave it a kick out of the way.
>
> 'Hem! ahem! rather civil that, I should say!' said the bundle, in one of the smallest, and altogether the funniest little voices, between a squeak and a whistle, that I ever heard in all the days of my existence.
>
> 'Ahem! rather civil that, I should observe.'
>
> I fairly shouted with terror, and made off, at a tangent, into the farthest extremity of the room.
>
> 'God bless me! My dear fellow,' here again whistled the bundle, 'what—what—what – why, what *is* the matter? I really believe you don't know me at all.'
>
> What *could* I say to this – what *could* I? I staggered into an arm-

> chair, and, with staring eyes and open mouth, awaited the solution of the wonder. (135)

As if attending a private, one-man sideshow, the narrator finally sees what he had failed to "immediately perceive." Watching Pompey install the General's prostheses, the narrator refers to Smith as "the nondescript" (135), "the thing" (135) and "the object" (136). Fearful, characterized by violence, his reaction to bodily difference is problematic but highly predictable. Poe's response to the disabled body is, however, more complicated. A fantasy about the amelioration of disability, his tale imagines artificial organs and limbs that can function in the place of missing body parts, allowing the General to perform actions, such as seeing, walking and talking, that would otherwise be impossible. Indeed, once fully equipped with artificial parts, the General is not—at least in any traditional sense of the word—disabled: fully mobile and sensate, he is freed of his dependence on Pompey and of the physical limitations resulting from his injuries.

This is, of course, a transparent fantasy of normalization, of a return of the disabled body not only to mobility and full sensory experience but also to a socially palatable appearance. Such a fantasy is necessarily bound up with a range of messages about disabled people. For Poe, disability is not simply a problem to be solved; it is also a secret to be kept and a condition to be hidden from the public gaze. Nor is this highly problematic fantasy lacking nightmarish dimensions. While the "odd looking bundle" is figured as grotesque and terrifies the narrator, the fully equipped General, heavily reliant on uncanny prostheses, provokes a different kind of fear. Presenting a powerfully deceptive appearance, he makes inanimate objects seem alive and, in doing so, obscures not only his injuries but also the distinction between the living and the dead. As such, he exists in stark contrast to later and more positive conceptions of the prosthetic body, notable among them Sigmund Freud's vision of a prosthetic god and Donna Haraway's theorization of a liberating cyborg body.[1] Poe's tale imagines an escape from the appearance of disability, from immobility and from sensory limitations but it does not envision a parallel escape from the dehumanizing effects of dependency on prosthetic technology.

It is worth noting that the General is reliant not only on his prostheses but also on the economic system which produces and circulates

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[1] For Freud on prosthesis, see Chapter 3 of *Civilization and its Discontents* (London: Hogarth, 1930). For Donna Haraway on the cyborg, see *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

them. In this tale, the normalization of a disabled body is an emphatically commercial enterprise. Manufactured, advertised, and offered up for sale, the General's prostheses are clearly identified as commodities in a market economy. As Pompey installs his artificial parts, Smith expresses his high regard for the limbs and mechanisms that hide his losses. Creating a polemical distinction between bloodthirsty colonized and industrious colonizer, he explains,

> 'D—n the vagabonds! they not only knocked in the roof of my mouth, but took the trouble to cut off at least seven-eighths of my tongue. There isn't Bonfanti's equal, however, in America, for really good articles of this description. I can recommend you to him with confidence,' (here the General bowed,) 'and assure you that I have the greatest pleasure in so doing.' (137)

The General's characterization of native culture as violent is predictable, as is his characterization of the Bugaboo and Kickapoo as vagabonds. His pleasure in recommending a manufacturer of "really good" prosthetic limbs to the narrator is more curious. Naming the best makers and retailers, highlighting the various advantages of their products, and commenting on their competitors and prices, the General advertises his prosthetic parts to a man who has no need for them. He asserts, for instance, "that "Pettitt makes the best shoulders, but for a bosom you will have to go to Ducrow" (136). As his teeth are installed, he notes that "For a *good* set of these you had better go to Parmly's at once; high prices, but excellent work" (136). He also explains that "Thomas' … is decidedly the best hand at a cork leg; but if you should ever want an arm, my dear fellow, you must really let me recommend you to Bishop" (135-136). These comments evoke a large and flourishing prostheses industry, an industry characterized by innovation, specialization and competition.

General Smith's recommendation of prosthetic limb manufacturers to a man with two legs and two arms may not be as misdirected as it initially seems. Poe's use of the word "want" in relation to an artificial arm plays on the word's dual meanings of "lack" and "desire," drawing attention to their confusion in a commodity culture. Indeed, the narrator's reaction to these statements, and to Smith more generally, reveals that the wanting of an artificial arm is not altogether outside of his experience. Although shocked by what he has seen, the narrator thanks Smith for his recommendations and describes himself as grateful for the General's advice. He is, in fact, strangely attracted to the General's artificial appendages. When Smith asks Pompey to attach one of his legs, the narrator admires its appearance and conveniences, explaining, "Pompey handed the bundle a very capital cork leg, already dressed, which it screwed on in a trice"

(135). Clearly impressed by the leg, the narrator, who is disgusted by the General's natural body, has nothing but praise for his prostheses. His attraction to the General's prostheses is, of course, most obvious in his initial, unwitting adoration of the General's artificial hair, teeth, eyes, shoulders and limbs. It is also apparent in the style of his introductory comments on the General: authoring a *blason du corps* worthy of a courtly lover, he praises the General in parts, starting with his hair and finishing with his legs.

What might a non-disabled narrator's attraction to a disabled soldier's prostheses mean? Broadly speaking, Poe's tale seeks to promote a reconsideration of how and why bodies are valued and desired. The reconsideration is not, however, limited to, or even focused on, issues of bodily difference. In this tale, Poe explores the ability of prosthetic parts to inspire desire in a narrator in order to offer up a multifaceted condemnation of the new marketplaces of early nineteenth-century America. Disability is, in other words, a useful tool for Poe, a means of investigating dependency and desire in the economic realm and, more specifically, in capitalist economies. A fascinating prefiguration of Marxist theorizations of commodity fetishism, Poe's story defines capitalist economies as dependent on desire rather than need, on want rather than lack. It can be read more narrowly as a response to the massive economic developments of the first four decades of the 1800s, when, caught up in a process that historian Charles Sellers has identified as "market revolution" (5), America witnessed a movement away from the self-sufficiencies of agricultural landownership and towards an integrated, specialized, and competitive manufacturing-based economy.

The years immediately preceding the composition of Poe's story were a particularly difficult stage in this larger transition. Currency problems and a banking crisis, paired with a severe depression, had prompted a re-evaluation of the new market model. Read in this context, the tale functions as a warning to formerly self-sufficient citizens who were—in the view of many contemporary social commentators—becoming quickly, unwittingly and dangerously caught up in the market, and in its conveniences and pleasures.[2] Whether aligned with the General, who must buy what he lacks, or the narrator, who desires what he doesn't need, consumers are being cautioned against forms of economic dependency. Caricatured as a system in

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[2] For more information on Jacksonian economics, see Sellers. See also Hal Barron's *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1984) and Susan Previant and Peter Passell's *A New Economic View of American History* (New York: Norton, 1979).

which a cork leg can be advertised to and desired by a two-legged man, capitalist culture is scathingly satirized.[3]

Mobilizing the trope of physical disability in order to condemn the prosthetic and dependent nature of modern economic relations, Poe comments not only on the emergence of a culture of capitalist consumption but also on the related project of nation formation. Simultaneously an emblem of progress and of chaos, of gains and of losses, the disabled body of the General is an obvious synecdochic figure for the body politic of the American nation. The General's mundane name, 'John A.B.C. Smith,' clearly marks him as an everyman. As a General, he is also a direct representative of state power. If the disabled body of the General is understood as a body politic and privileged metaphor for America, a bleak picture emerges. The General reads his own body as a product of both the barbarism of the colonized and the inventiveness of colonizers. Critics of the story have, however, read it as emblematic of the violent and dehumanizing racial politics of nineteenth-century America. For instance, Joan Dayan has shown that the General's reliance on Pompey highlights the extent to which the formation of nation was related to and dependent on both the violent subjugation of native Indians and the labour of enslaved Africans. It is thus fitting that General A.B.C. Smith's body is not aligned with a conglomerate body made up of individual citizens bound together by their commitment to the common good. It is instead a fractured and dependent body, some parts of it destroyed by the violence of conquest, others gathered up and installed by slave labour.

Interestingly, the General's conversation counters, or at least attempts to counter, the messages about America communicated by his body. The General's volubility on the theme of progress contrasts the social silence surrounding his disability. While his injuries express the aftermath of colonial violence and the dependencies of slavery and of capitalism, the General's speech celebrates the innovations of

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[3] It is also possible to see the tale as an expression of more narrow anxieties about corporations. The decades preceding the publication of this tale witnessed significant changes in the legal status of the incorporated business. Referred to as "artificial beings" by Chief Justice John Marshall, corporations were a contentious form of economic conglomeration (qtd. in Sellers, 87). Viewed by opponents as too powerful and as unnaturally immortal (because they were capable of outliving individual investors), corporations have a surprising amount in common with the General. Most obviously, his artificially restored public body is a corporation in the sense that it incorporates the labour and talents of various individuals. For more information on the controversy concerning corporations, see Bray Hammond's *Banks and Politics in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton: 1957).

the age. The narrator notes the General's passion for progress and explains that "he delighted, especially, in commenting upon the rapid march of invention. Indeed, lead him where I would, this was a point to which he invariably came back" (130). The comments he makes on this theme are extensive and extravagant:

> we are a wonderful people, and live in a wonderful age. Parachutes and rail-roads—man-traps and spring-guns! Our steam-boats are upon every sea, and the Nassau balloon packet is about to run regular trips (fare either way only twenty pounds sterling) between London and Timbuctoo. And who shall calculate the immense influence upon social life—upon arts—upon commerce—upon literature—which will be the immediate result of the great principles of electro-magnetics! Nor is this all, let me assure you! There is really no end to the march of invention. The most wonderful—the most ingenious— … let me add, I say, the most *useful*—the most truly *useful* mechanical contrivances, are daily springing up like mushrooms, if I may so express myself, or, more figuratively, like—ah —grasshoppers, like grasshoppers … about us and ah—ah—ah— around us! (130)

Targeting a selection of recent inventions, the General emphasizes the extent to which innovation affects an entire society, transforming not only its commerce but also its cultural and social life. Fittingly, his speech echoes the language of advertising; piling up adjectives, quoting prices and using repetition for emphasis, he is a salesman of the age. His panegyric to progress is, however, far from convincing. His celebration of weaponry, of "man-traps" and "spring-guns," as the pinnacle of modern technology, links innovation with injury and violence. This link is reinforced by the comparison of "mechanical contrivances" to grasshoppers, insects associated with consumption rather than production and with the devastation of agricultural resources. In short, his conversation, not unlike his body, communicates a range of conflicting messages about nineteenth-century America: it documents the accomplishments of the age while simultaneously revealing the price of progress.[4]

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[4] Poe's commentary on progress can also be understood in terms of his sometimes troubled relationship with literary innovation and changing public taste. Poe was conscious of consumer trends and, as David Reynolds and others have noted, he was eager "to exploit the new market for sensational literature" (qtd. in Reynolds 231). Although aware of the connection between innovation and commercial success, Poe was not always able to profit from market trends. In the years immediately following the completion of "The Man that Was Used Up," he criticized "the onward and tumultuous spirit of the age" and attributed various publishing failures to an inability to keep up with "the rush of the age" (qtd. in Reynolds 231). Comments such as these share common ground with the critique of the "rapid march of mechanical invention" offered up in this short story. Poe's decision to express his scepticism about both innovations and new markets by producing an innovative tale targeting a new market is, however, like the tale itself, both surprising and revealing.

Published twenty years before the outbreak of the Civil War, Poe's story proved prophetic. Faced with the challenges of rehabilitating and reintegrating thousands of war amputees, post-bellum America made significant advancements in the design and manufacture of artificial limbs. As Lisa Herschbach and Erin O'Connor have shown, the makers of these limbs also developed elaborate strategies for marketing their products to amputees. Poe's story anticipates both of these developments, accurately envisioning the commercialism, technological character, and normalizing goals of post-bellum America's response to disabled war veterans.

An ability to foresee social responses to disability does not preclude Poe from participating in them. Although far from conventional, Poe's story is typical of nineteenth-century American literature's use of the disabled body as symbol. Canonical texts such as Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851) and Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand" (1851), together with more minor works, such as Silas Weir Mitchell's "The Case of George Dedlow" (1866), demonstrate widespread interest in the disabled body. They also demonstrate disability's symbolic potential. In *Extraordinary Bodies*, Rosemarie Garland Thomson examines disability in American culture and argues, "constructed as the embodiment of corporeal insufficiency and deviance, the physically disabled body becomes a repository for social anxieties about vulnerability, control and identity" (6). In *Narrative Prosthesis*, David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder go so far as to claim that literature has come to depend on disability. "Disability has," they argue, "been used throughout history as a crutch upon which literary narratives lean for representational power, disruptive potential and analytical insight" (49).

Poe's story, a case study in American literature's employment and deployment of disability, exemplifies Mitchell and Snyder's vision of disability as cultural crutch. In Poe's "The Man that Was Used Up," disability serves a prosthetic function. Pairing progress with prosthesis and the building of a nation with amputation, this tale imagines disability, using it as a malleable symbol, and, in the process, evacuating the disabled body of any kind of essential value or meaning. The result is a story that, like the society it portrays, and the culture in which it was produced, elides the lived experiences of disabled people, but, ironically, relies on artificial limbs and organs as much, if not more, than the disabled war veteran around whom it is centred.

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RESISTING "GOOD IMPERIALISM": READING DISABILITY AS RADICAL VULNERABILITY

Michelle Jarman

During a recent conference on "Generations of Feminism" in Chicago, Gayatri Spivak critiqued western feminists' tendency to impose their own cultural biases upon women's issues in non-western countries, arguing that any meaningful assistance must emerge from an understanding of the language, customs, and historical context of the cultures involved. Otherwise, Spivak said, we are simply replacing "bad imperialism" with "good imperialism." At the time, it struck me that "good imperialism" provided an apt designation for much of the charity work peddled to westerners for the sake of improving the lives of people in underdeveloped regions. I am specifically interested in exploring how disability and its eradication figure prominently in such "benevolent" projects, and want to suggest certain methods disability studies scholarship might use to critically challenge the ways impairment, aesthetic difference, and other forms of social disability are foregrounded to mobilize "ethical" interventions from the West. This article considers one non-profit organization's mission of providing surgeries for cleft lip and palate in an effort to provide a framework for reading disability more widely within postcolonial contexts.

For some scholars committed to challenging discriminatory and oppressive practices upon people with disabilities, postcolonial theory has offered a perspective from which to theorize the marginalized position of disability in contemporary Euro-American cultures. Arthur Frank, for example, explains illness and disability as "medical colonization" in that modern medicine lays claim to the patient's body as its own territory. However, while this parallel is productive to thinking about disability in developed nations, such theorizing also runs the danger of effacing the very real differences between the social understandings and lived experience of disability in specific non-western contexts from those driven by medical models in the West. In order to avoid projecting a globalizing concept of disability that might mask the culturally specific issues of disability it seeks to understand, following Cindy LaCom, this article explores the complicated terrain of reading the *disabled colonized* body. Like her, I ask how such bodies fit into the "dialectic between colonizer and colonized and into the transaction of the post-colonial world" (139). So, rather than asking how the social positioning of disability in highly developed cultures mirrors the oppressive context of colonialism, I am suggesting that the articulation of disability by the West upon the bodies of "Third World" others often perpetuates and participates in projects of good imperialism.

In the familiar guise of charity and benevolent liberalism, disability marks an essentialized vulnerability which functions as the representative borderline between the limitless potentialities of the "First World" sharply contrasted with the inevitable suffering and limited existence available in "Third World" contexts. Within this problematic binary, vulnerability functions discursively to perpetuate an artificial and monolithic First-Third World divide. I am interested in deciphering the meaning of western dependency upon this discursive deployment of disability, not only in terms of defining non-western others, but in the continued construction of U.S. national identity in terms of the purifying eradication of physiological and aesthetic difference. From a disability studies perspective, I am suggesting a transgressive reading of vulnerability which not only critiques these discursive practices, but also understands vulnerability as a radical element in forging cross-identity, cross-cultural alliances committed to exposing and interrogating the ways western values become inscribed upon the bodies of "Third World" subjects.

Margrit Shildrick's insightful work on western constructions of "monstrous bodies" is grounded upon an understanding of vulnerability germane to this notion of a transgressive reading of disability. Shildrick points out that bodies designated as monstrous reflect a threatening opposition to the paradigms of human corporeality "marked by self-possession" (5). In order to claim the security of individual identity, the monstrous is rejected and held forth to exemplify that which is not the self. However, following the logic of deconstruction, "at the very moment of [self] definition, the subject is marked by its excluded other" (5). In other words, the excluded other is at the very heart of the self; it is both projected out and dwelling within. The western ideals of the sovereign self or the contained body, then, depend upon an exclusion of corporeal vulnerability, but as Shildrick points out, this exclusion is actually always incomplete. She argues instead that anomalous bodies designated as monstrous—often those with disabilities—actually reflect a vulnerability inherent in all of us:

> In the encounter with the disabled or damaged body, the shock is not that of the unknown or unfamiliar, but rather of the psychic evocation of a primal lack of unity as the condition of all. But as something unacknowledged and unacknowledgable, that vulnerability is projected onto the other, who must then be avoided for fear of contamination. ("Becoming Vulnerable" 224)

While most of us would readily admit our bodies are vulnerable—to disease, illness, infection, accident, or other alteration—corporeal vulnerability is still largely seen as weakness. Medical discourse intercedes at this juncture, attempting to shore up the inevitable (yet effaced) vulnerabilities of bodies with strategies of prevention and cure, and disability is often the featured representative trope within the borders between excluded other and successful medical intervention. In this sense, disability itself is a highly disruptive discursive element. If we think of disability in terms of radical vulnerability, we insist not only upon a critical reading of the figure presented as innately vulnerable, but more importantly, upon exposing the concealed fears and desires mirrored by the discursive drive to exclude, efface, or eradicate.

In order to further discuss the problematic intersections between medical discourse, the postcolonial body, and disability, I want to refer to a mainstream advertisement for a non-profit organization called the Smile Train—which draws heavily upon troubling assumptions about "First" and "Third World" divisions. The full-page, color, advertisement described below was positioned within the cover story in a recent issue of *Newsweek* (April 7, 2004) in the U.S. Similar ads, often featuring photos of different infants and children, are regularly featured in other mainstream newsweeklies and popular magazines. Visually, the advertisement features two photographs of the same child, one before and one after a surgical procedure to correct the child's cleft lip and palate. Following in the tradition of Edward Said, rather than attempt to unearth the hidden meaning of the images, I want to explore the discursive authority on the surface, to expose, in his words, "its exteriority to what it describes" (20). Said taught us that colonial representations reveal far more about the colonizer than the colonized. With this in mind, the advertisement, while projecting vivid portraits of an aesthetically marked infant, reveals more about the imposition of western moral and medical authority than it does the desires of the child. The child itself—who remains nameless, raceless (although dark-skinned), nationless, and genderless—is apparent but unheard. In fact, the effectiveness of the advertisement depends on the child's silence and transparency. In other words, these striking "before and after" images provide the blank surface upon which the western "ad copy" can be inscribed. Said explained why such a process of silencing must occur: it is the western observer who "makes the Orient speak," who "renders its mysteries plain for and to the West." Orientalism as a system of discursive representation reflects western hegemonic constructions of "Orientals, their race, character, culture, history, traditions, society, and possibilities" (20-1). In much the same way, many current western constructions of Third World subjects attempt to perpetuate this problematic endeavor.

The text of the advertisement, for example, attempts to evoke a sense of immanent tragedy and suffering that can only be ameliorated through an immediate response by western charity. A large, bold lettered headline provides a simple admonishment to readers: "Give A Child With A Cleft A Second Chance At Life." Beneath this appeal sit the two images of the same smiling child, the second (post-operative) image apparently representative of a child now ready to embark upon the "second chance" promised by the organization. The rhetoric of this promise is especially telling in the fine print: "Today, millions of children in developing countries are suffering with cleft lip and palate. Condemned to a lifetime of malnutrition, shame and isolation." Further along, we see that these children come from all parts of the world, but readers are still presented with a troubling truism: regardless of individual cultural differences, the universal response to disability and aesthetic difference of cleft lip in developing countries is represented as absolute social rejection.

The tragic inevitability of suffering by such children is further described on the organization's website, but again, cultural specifics are replaced with essentialized stories of isolation and despair. Children with cleft lip and palate are described as suffering a "long nightmare," enduring "lives [that] will never be lived." And regardless of whether the child is born in Asia, Africa, South America, Russia, or other areas, Smile Train newsletters bear witness to a global fate: "they will suffer their entire lives in silence as the world looks the other way. Trying to survive in a society that pretends they don't exist." Ironically, the silencing that Smile Train purportedly ameliorates is actually reinstantiated through its own marketing materials. Even more troubling, the ubiquitous "society" of the developing world is discursively sewn together by the presence—and suggested prevalence—of disability, as well as by its shared aversion and rejection of the innocent victims "suffering with cleft lip and palate." By focusing upon cleft lip, a difference which is widely corrected in the United States (although within the deeper layers of their literature, this organization admits to providing resources to poorer families in the U.S. as well), the Smile Train organization presents the prevalence of disability as evidence of developing nations' immeasurable lack—lack of resources, technology, and more insidiously, of understanding. In this way, the First and Third World divisions are re-solidified, and "we" of the overdeveloped nations are positioned as superior—with greater economic power, medical knowledge, and even compassion. This division impedes the formation of partnerships between groups of disabled people within highly developed and underdeveloped nations. The "tragedy" and "suffering" of these children is displaced upon a falsely unified "society" of developing nations, which allows western readers of the advertisement to understand these undifferentiated cultures as cruel or less advanced—as atavistic versions of our own culture in need of our paternalistic guidance. As Susan Wendell has warned, the desire to eliminate differences that might be feared, misunderstood, or seen as signs of inferior status often "masquerades as the compassionate desire to prevent or stop suffering" (156). In effect, Smile Train packages these children and the societies that have isolated and abandoned them without treatment as those in need while American readers, especially those who offer donations, are congratulated as benevolent providers. Within this rubric, disability, an essentialized trope of dependency, provides evidence to perpetuate the long-standing paternalistic hierarchy between underdeveloped and overdeveloped nations, and also serves as a foil to the actual western desire of erasing differences that exceed the perceived boundaries of "normal" corporeality.

Further, the charity's decision to focus upon the erasure of cleft lip and palate has specific racial underpinnings which should not be overlooked. Troy Duster's examination of contemporary genetic screening procedures illustrates how a discourse which presents itself as neutral, scientific, and beneficial towards health can subtly reinforce oppressive attitudes about race, ethnicity, and disability. Duster notes that cleft palate has a higher incidence among Japanese people and North American Indians, arguing that public health responses to such conditions are often underpinned by political, social, and scientific discourses which introduce what he calls "eugenics by the back door" (114). Using Duster's framework, it could be argued that the whole desire to rid ourselves of cleft lip and palate is itself a thoroughly Orientalist project because this condition occurs disproportionately in non-white ethnic groups. However, the medicalized discourse of public health responses including those organized by charities such as the Smile Train elides their own racism and ableism. In this advertisement, Smile Train uses the additional discourse of pleasure—after all, who could be opposed to the fulfillment of happiness represented by a smile? Of course, in asserting that the second image represents the only real smile, the advertisement effaces the fact that people with cleft palate can and do smile—as the first image clearly demonstrates.

Abby Wilkerson's research into the moral authority of medicine draws from Foucault to point out that modern medical discourse introduced the concepts of the objective, detached medical gaze to solidify its own discursive influence:

> In this epistemic process, medicine acquires the status of cultural healer, a purity that is epistemically rather than religiously or spiritually certified, and that helps to resolve society's deep ambivalence toward science and technology, so frequently perceived as out of control. Based on this epistemic certification, medicine serves as the locus of ritual for creating, maintaining, and restoring social order. (63)

Objective detachment provided medicine with an invisible subjectivity, which has been translated to a profound authority that has only increased over time. In contrast to the religious and cultural colonization practiced by imperialist nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, medicine and technology provide a powerful ethical authority to what might be called postmodern missionary projects. If local cultures accept and adopt "our" technology and commit themselves to the erasure of cleft lip, they prove themselves to be "progressive" and "forward-thinking." Within Smile Train's literature, there is no suggestion that local responses to the health issues of cleft lip and palate are in place. The tacit assumption is that without intervention from western charity organizations to teach this surgical procedure to local doctors, thereby "empowering" them to respond to the issue appropriately—in other words, to respond with "corrective" surgery as doctors in the West have been trained to do—their children will be condemned to social death.

The discursive implication is that medical erasure of the cleft promises also to seamlessly erase the social issues connected to shame and isolation without having to address them directly. Not only is disability rehabilitated, but the troubling social reality accompanying aesthetic difference is putatively solved as well through the power of medical technology. In its promise to offer a "second chance" to individual children through surgical procedures, the Smile Train also suggests a rehabilitative strategy for cultural advancement: regardless of local understanding of disability, cleft palate, and local health systems, advancement always follows the trajectory of western knowledge.

More powerful than the textual arguments made by the advertisement are the double images of the infant's face which attempt to package "hope" and "possibility" in aesthetic adjustment. The child's body becomes the biopolitical terrain upon which the West attempts to construct vulnerability in terms it can manage. While individual bodies resist absolute definition, the aesthetic marker of disability discursively suggests the child's smile as the negotiating surface upon which global inequities will be rectified. In a sweeping gesture, economic imbalances, poverty, national tensions, unequal access to knowledge and technology, and myriad other social issues are projected onto one malleable bodily surface. These larger—and arguably more pressing—problems become tacitly contained within the rehabilitated smile in the second image. In this process, the surgical erasure of the cleft lip becomes highly symbolic of western charity's attempt to mask broad-scale inequities through medical production of aesthetically standardized smiles.

Abby Wilkerson points out that the framework of liberalism often fails to understand illness, disease or disability within the social milieu in which they reside: "liberal theorists often overlook the material circumstances that constrain these [medical] choices for oppressed groups, and that strongly influence their physical and emotional health and well-being" (112). She argues that we must move beyond dichotomous thinking which attempts to split the "natural" experience of the human organism from the "social" order. Instead, Wilkerson favors a "material-semiotic" approach to health disparity, which takes into account the social, economic, and prejudicial forces facing individuals and groups in their access to medical services. While Wilkerson is looking primarily at oppressed groups in western societies, her insights are useful to this discussion. The Smile Train organization actually writes extensively about the deplorable economic conditions most of these children live in, but the literature superficially suggests that the medical miracle of surgery for cleft lip and palate will provide the child with all the resources he or she needs to compete equally with other children in the region. One story on the organization's website features Aira Hernandez, a Filipino girl born in 2001. Her family lives next to a garbage dump, where her father works to scavenge food and clothing for his wife and children, struggling to pay five dollars rent every month. Through a social worker, Aira was enrolled in the Smile Train program, and received the free surgery. According to their newsletter, her family's reaction is grateful relief for a "dream come true": "This is her chance to be normal and to go to school…We were so worried about what would become of her, but now we know she will be okay" (online newsletter 4.1). While the poverty of Aira's family is profound, it is only highlighted to explain their inability to afford the cleft surgery, and Smile Train implies that with hard work, now that Aira has been medically restored to normalcy, her whole family will be better equipped to surmount the socio-economic barriers ahead of them.

Such displacement of social and material forces onto bodily surfaces calls into relief the interplay of power between individual subjectivity and the political structures of objective definition. In some of Foucault's later writings, he focuses his analysis of power upon the tension between *political techniques*—processes by which the state assumes the care of individuals—and *technologies of the self*—processes of subjectivization which allow the individual to define his/her own identity and also attach this identity to an external authority. Georgio Agamben frames Foucault's argument as follows:

> "[T]he modern Western state has integrated techniques of subjective individualization with procedures of objective totalization to an unprecedented degree, and [Foucault] speaks of a real 'double bind,' constituted by individualization and the simultaneous totalization of structures of modern power." (5)

Modernity's problematic "double-bind" might be useful in considering the interplay between the modern western state and its totalizing definition of disability and the subjectivity of the very specific yet unnamed child. Because of the cleft lip and palate and the unique resources this child is said to demand, he or she is projected to the western readership in a state of hyper-individuality, and yet the very source of this unique subjectivity is the facial difference that has already been removed. As Rosemarie Garland Thomson has argued, the hypervisibility of certain disabled people (such as this child) can only occur in a wider context of the cultural invisibility of disabled people in general. Further, the individuality that disability provides also represents the totalizing objectification enacted by the Smile Train organization upon the body of this manifestly anonymous infant. To the charity organization, the child represents the tragedy of disability interrupted by the benevolent wisdom of western medicine. The "double-bind," in this case, is not so much this child's subjectivity in relation to totalizing power, but the problematic projection of individual subjectivity onto an unknown and unknowable body.

In her seminal essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Spivak argues that because the western understanding of subaltern voices—especially those of women—is inevitably based upon projections of an interior voice from the West, the subaltern, in effect, cannot speak. Furthermore, the West's need to solidify itself as benevolent provider and ethical leader demands that subaltern subjects be represented as fundamentally at odds with their own cultures. After all, in order to provide, the West must establish an urgent need that is not being met locally. As Spivak states, "Imperialism's image as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of the woman as *object* of protection from her own kind" (299). Similarly, the implication of Smile Train's interventions is that the fate of these children cannot be entrusted to their own families, villages, and societies, but that their very survival depends upon an immediate western response. In other words, western ethical subjectivity continues to depend upon a voiceless subaltern, and the voicelessness, in turn, is dependent upon the assumed vulnerability of culturally dislocated disability.

My intention is not to assert that all western medical interventions are inherently wrong. Many of these children and families appreciate and benefit from the free surgeries offered by Smile Train. However, I am arguing that western scholars have a responsibility to interrogate the imposition of culturally specific values upon non-western cultures, especially the exploitation of disabled bodies in the marketing of good imperialism. Abby Wilkerson reminds us that our well-resourced, western conception of illness, disability, or disease as elements dwelling outside the realm of the ordinary is actually a very privileged perspective, and while western scholars often cite our own privilege, we must vigilantly guard against subtle practices of perpetuating the very problems we critique. I want to suggest that disability studies scholars, in particular, might reach across cultural boundaries to gain more insight about the different meanings of disability in specific locations in order to provide a counter-narrative to the potentially monolithic western discourse of medical (social) rehabilitation.

As the child in the Smile Train advertisement clearly illustrates, the disabled body functions as a powerful discursive site upon which various anxieties are projected and where wider cultural, social and political interests battle for hegemony. The "radical vulnerability" of disabled bodies has the potential to be read in two directions—across the surface of the image into the reflected desires and motivations behind the broader hegemonic projects. In this small example, we have seen hegemonic concerns over such wide-ranging issues as aesthetics, embodiment, medical and technological "progress," cultural differences, the personal and political, economic development, and globalization. Such anxieties and projections demonstrate the importance of a fuller engagement between disability studies and postcolonial theory in order to challenge the continued production of Third World disability for First World consumption.

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SUPPORT CHOICE, SUPPORT PEOPLE: AN ARGUMENT FOR THE STUDY OF PRO-ANOREXIA WEBSITES

Roxanne Kirkwood

In this article I investigate the way the media portrays disability, both in a positive and negative light, but mostly the way disability and disabled people are over-simplified. While other identity markers are usually fixed—you either do or do not have the marker—disability is flexible, fluid, coming into the lives of people who never thought of themselves as disabled. If age and the conditions which come with advanced age are disabilities, then most people will become disabled during their lives. Even more slippery to grasp, however, is the placement of the disability label on groups who would not claim it for themselves if not required to do so for political reasons. For example, the Deaf community do not view themselves as disabled; however, in order to receive services such as interpreters at schools, the community has chosen to assume the label for power reasons. For the same types of reasons, I argue that the pro-anorexia community, those who argue that anorexia is a choice and a lifestyle instead of an illness, will have to adopt the disability label to obtain the right to their own voice. Further, I believe that disability studies provides an important lens for discussing the pro-ana web sites.

Making an argument for the right to voice for the pro-ana community is not advocating the practice of pro-ana. Quite the contrary, I believe that people, particularly the adolescent women I have studied, who call themselves pro-ana are actually attempting to engage in a dialogue towards recovery. These girls, for whom I do not intend derogatory inferences but rather a gender and age differentiation, are expressing the complicatedness of their condition—one which they are telling the medical profession is not just about eating. Further, they seem to understand that their “illness” is more like depression, anxiety and alcoholism than the doctors may have previously thought. Anorexia is not a fad for these girls. It is part of who they are—how they define themselves. Most, as research has shown, will struggle with it for their entire lives. Like alcoholics, there will be good days and bad and there will be stumbles. It is a daily and conscious battle. Up to this point in this article, few non-anorexics would be troubled by what they have read. The frustration, shock, and outrage seem to stem from the boldness with which these girls claim their identity and share it, though not necessarily promote it. No site I have seen yet actually promotes beginning the lifestyle, but rather how to be successful at it once it has begun. The careful and elaborate disclaimers fronting most sites actually discourage new people from joining and people in recovery or wanting recovery from entering the sites. At this point the girls almost negate their own argument that pro-ana is a choice. In fact, the pages don't seem to argue so much for choosing the lifestyle so much as accepting it—surviving in it. The choice to survive and lead a successful and fulfilling life is where I begin my argument to view these girls, their websites and their choices through a disability studies lens—even though the girls themselves would adamantly reject a label of disabled. Further, I am interested in the reactions by the medical community to pro-ana girls. Rather than establishing open lines of communication, the doctors and psychiatrists who focus their work on anorexia and its new sister pro-anorexics, attempt to discredit and demonize these girls, pushing them further underground and making them more combative in an attempt to defend what they see as an integral part of themselves.

Dinitia Smith, leaning on historians and cultural critics who have studied fat, claims that "[i]nsidious attitudes about politics, sex, race or class are at the heart of the frenzy over obesity" and compares our current attitudes about fat to the Salem witch trials (B7). The researchers to whom Smith refers are now focusing on the ways that the definition of obesity has "shifted, often arbitrarily, throughout history." Discussions of fatness or obesity in American culture are directly relational to this discussion of pro-anorexia. When women of size propose a motto of size-acceptance, people will snicker thinking that these women *have* to argue for that because they are already large. Few, however, hold similar views of pro-anas. Instead, ideas of mental illness and denial fill the mind.

In his essay "The Media Role in Building the Disability Community," Jack A. Nelson recalls the history of the disability community. He argues that "those who have been most isolated and with the greatest sense of alienation have been people with serious disabilities" (181). Similarly, teenage girls have used the pro-ana websites to create a sense of community for an otherwise silent "disease." Eating disorders revolve around privacy and secrets. The web sites allow the girls to develop relationships with others as well as an opportunity to brag about their strategies for weight loss and hiding it. Nelson, after reviewing the social changes for people with disabilities, argues that the responsibility "remained for the media to take a large hand in changing the views of the public and the lawmakers to bring about legislation that was right and just for an ethically oriented society" (181). Ironically, while images of people with disabilities have steadily, albeit slowly, improved in the media, popular television has completely rejected pro-anorexia. Shows such as *Boston Public* and *Judging Amy* ignore the complexity by using technicalities related to the operation of the web sites to avoid the whos and whys of pro-anorexia. This discussion will be returned to later.

Major motion pictures seem to be making efforts towards improving the image of disabled people. As Claude J. Smith Jr. recalls in his essay "Finding a Warm Place for Someone We Know," the way facilities that care for disabled people are portrayed is a direct link to how the general public views these institutions and indirectly the people who live in them. Smith argues that since more Americans are dealing with elderly family members they are both more educated about diseases which might warrant professional care, such as Alzheimer's, and more likely to be responsible for finding that care because of the breakdown of families. This theory suggests that Hollywood is not just putting out better images of institutions, but that this change is occurring because of social attitudes and the reluctance of the general public to accept negative images of places where their family members are living. But these positive images are not conclusive. There are still plenty of films released each year which are damaging and hurtful to disabled people. Kathi Wolfe recounts several of her first-hand experiences going into the movie theaters in "Ordinary People: Why the Disabled Aren't So Different." On her way into *Dumb and Dumber* a teenage girl commented to her friends that Wolfe must be "stupid." When asked why she would think that, the girl answered because the blind girl in the film was stupid. Wolfe then asked the girl if movies show how people really are and the girl agreed. "Those rude kids were on to something," Wolf argues. "The media do shape our attitudes" (32).

It is with this tenet in mind that I hereby charge the media, in all of its forms to accept this truth and act responsibly upon it. I recognize, respect and support the creative will of artists be they writers, painters, movie makers or what not. I certainly acknowledge a place for humor and never using disabled people as subject matter for humor only creates another type of otherness. However, when the routine image of disabled people is a stereotypical one, then these artists are being neither responsible nor original. When Disney produces movies such as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* under the advisement and warning of disabled advocacy groups as Wolfe reports, it continues to propagate the dichotomy of "normal" and "disabled." My argument is not an over-reaction nor are the feelings of people who experience the repercussions. Wolfe describes visiting a Disney store where children ask for the doll by the disability and clerks respond with comments like "We're out of the stuffed Quasimodo. The kids love to touch his hump" (32). Out of context this could sound like a positive step, but when grouped with other reactions of fear and disgust against both the character and a real person with a similar disfigurement, these stories provide the substance to a legitimate call for action.

Sometimes the media attempts consciously to include disabled people into their coverage. In an editorial in *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, Christa Van Kraayenoord takes issue with newspaper coverage printed on Mother's Day of three disabled women who had children. The story centered on their amazing ability to be mothers against all of the obstacles in their lives rather than on their mothering, a typical subject for such a holiday. Hence the discussion over whether it is better to have no representation in popular media rather than negative representation continues. While it is commendable for the newspaper writer to seek out disabled mothers and represent them (it certainly acknowledges that these women are sexual beings—a trait which is often ignored), it is done in a way to set them up as heroes or as role models. Okay, so there is good with the bad. Can we really ask for more? Certainly. And even if our full expectations cannot be met, we should engage in conversations about the complex ways in which identity representation in the media is done and understood.

Karen Ross works to get to the core of this complicated problem in her essay "But Where's Me in It? Disability, Broadcasting, and the Audience." By asking disabled viewers to discuss the way in which they are represented on British television, Ross is able to foreground the issues that are most disturbing to those who are affected most. Her respondents were troubled that "[t]he real-life experiences of working *through* disability and leading ordinary, if restricted (by non-disabled society's standards) lifestyles or of recovering from a disability illness such as depression are rarely portrayed" (671). By focusing on the disability instead of the person, the shows viewed did not provide "realistic portrayals" of people in day-to-day interactions which all people have. While the disabled viewers wanted to see disabled characters living "normal" lives, they also wanted the reality of their lives to be evident. "[T]here was general annoyance at the apparent ease with which disabled characters in the world of television live their lives, never having problems with accessing buildings or shops, never needing help to get up stairs, go to the lavatory or travel on public transport" (672). Most frustrating of all to the viewers, however, was the absence of disability in most shows. Simply providing what these viewers want—disabled characters leading lives like everyone else's with both the routine and the struggle—would work to provide the general audience a more accurate view of disability which could both educate and inform (673).

Recent research done by Olan Farnall and Kim A. Smith was reported in their article "Reactions to People with Disabilities: Personal Contact Versus Viewing of Specific Media Portrayals," which shows that "viewing of positive portrayals in the media of characters with disabilities would be related to more frequent perceptions of discrimination" (664) Their findings also suggest that viewing positive images would lead to positive emotional reactions, but did not lead to a greater comfort level with interacting with disabled people (666). A contradiction here is not necessarily bad. As is often the case with scientific studies, Farnall and Smith did an excellent job of unearthing numbers, but not the reasons for the numbers. For instance, if people are more aware of forms of discrimination and are having positive emotional reactions, it could be that their discomfort stems from their own lack of understanding of how to interact in such situations. I do not mean to insinuate that disabled people are so different that there are special rules for interacting with them; yet, our culture has led many people to believe this is the case. When told that staring is impolite and offensive, many people will respond by ignoring. And of course, there are racks of research on the psychology of nondisabled people's reactions to disability which factors into this discussion. The point for this article is simply that if more representation were provided in the media, the general public might then also learn how to interact, making these numbers compute a little differently.

We must be careful, however, with what we do with information on disability and the media. For instance, Stephen P. Safran provides a fairly complete review of the subject in his article "The First Century of Disability Portrayal in Film: An Analysis of the Literature", but he provides this information as an instructional aid for special education teachers so that they can "[encourage] positive attitudes and social acceptance" for the purposes of inclusion (467). And while I recognize inclusion as important for social development, his purpose seems to be to provide a roadmap by studying movies. I appreciate his advocacy of valuing popular media as a way to gauge public response, but I think he misuses it when he suggests that it be used as a guide rather than a reflection. He claims that "[b]y understanding motion pictures, professionals can help inform teachers, students, and parents about individual abilities and social barriers, while also gauging public knowledge and expectations of persons with disabilities" (476). Surely he is not suggesting that *Rain Man* be used to explore the lives of people with autism? Yet this appears to be his argument, causing me further concern over the expectations and motivations for the "experts" who work with disabled people. This concern—distrust if you will—helps to drive this article and my interpretation of pro-ana websites.

The pro-ana participants rock the medical community to their core in two ways: by refusing to play the role of "sick" by denouncing their medical label and by searching for "treatment" in each other instead of through traditional medicinal avenues. Modern culture has developed a highly sophisticated system to "manage" illness and pro-anas reject that system completely. Talcott Parson's theory of this system is reviewed in *Exploring Disability: A Sociological Introduction* (Barnes 40). He asserts that there are two responsibilities for the sick person. "First, at the point of becoming ill, the sick person is required to seek medical confirmation. The individual is then obligated to co-operate fully with the doctor in order to get better. Second, the sick person is expected to view their condition as both undesirable and 'abhorrent'" (qtd. in Barnes 40). These responsibilities are accompanied by two rights which are that they are "relieved of all normal social role expectations and responsibilities" and they are not "expected to recover simply through an active decision of free will" nor are they "held responsible for their illness" (40). Interestingly, the girls who have claimed the title of pro-ana seem to be saying they were offered the responsibilities, but not the rights. Whether or not this is true, the girls have effectively refused all of the strings which come attached to medical treatment.

Trying to distinguish disability studies from other fields of study may seem at first to be difficult, but the truth is it just does what it claims, plus more. "It is people with disabilities making themselves heard politically, socially, culturally" (Swan 283). In disability studies, voices are not considered valuable only if they are shared publicly in the courts, although they often are, but also through "autobiography, criticism, poetry, fiction, and drama" (283). The pro-ana voice has chosen the internet as its outlet and it is reverberating off of every computer. The acceptance of disability as described above in addition to its open policy of inclusiveness (you are disabled if you say you are) help to make it an ideal lens with which to look at pro-ana sites. Pro-anas are not easily labeled disabled, but neither are they easily labeled as “normal.” In fact, they provide an ideal case for the complexity that Jim Swan describes in his assertion that “the relation that people actually experience is a continuum and a mixture of impairments and abilities, which is probably why we have so much trouble naming the opposite of *disabled*” (285-286). What do you call someone who self-discloses that she has been identified and diagnosed with an eating disorder and who claims that while the facts are true, she is not sick? Can you be disabled and not consider yourself so? In this regard, the pro-ana community seems closely related to the Deaf community who have denied that they have a disability yet claim membership to the community often out of force (providence of interpreters at school) and sometimes out of necessity (social change, political action). My argument does not hinge on whether or not pro-ana participants are “sick” or “confused”, but rather on how they wish to be treated while in the throes of their “condition” much like how discussions surrounding the Deaf community are often reduced to whether or not cochlear implants would solve the “problem.”

Historically, we know that people with disabilities were first cared for by family members and “lived in the context of kinship networks and communities” (Scotch 377). Later, group homes (asylums, institutions, nursing homes, etc.) replaced the family care and were used as storage facilities until the people died (377). During the 1960s, disability policies began taking shape which would move the focus from the medicalization of disability to the protection of the rights of disabled people. Some of the first civil rights legislation, for instance, called for equal access for blind people (383). Because of the convenience and availability of the internet, pro-anorexics have used this tool to create a new network for support, one which is often not sought out nor given in the person’s real life. Anorexia, like other eating disorders, is often viewed by the general public as a personal failure. The blame assigned to these girls is not hidden, adding to the guilt already self-imposed for failure to meet the ideal. For this reason and many others, anorexia is often ignored by family and friends and the popular media sees it as simple. On occasion, “some personal troubles come to be regarded as public issues requiring public action” (Scotch 383). And such is the case with pro-ana sites. The general public seems at ease with anorexia and all of the contributing factors to it, but is troubled when the girls themselves claim ownership of it. We are not as troubled by conditions which help to create anorexia or with anorexia itself or else we would be working as actively to prevent it as some do to remove the web sites. With pro-ana as with disability in general, “public policies reflect assumptions about the nature of disability and the *appropriate place* of people with disabilities in our society" (Scotch 385; my emphasis). Thus, we challenge the web sites' creators on their right not only to have the sites, but to have the views which are represented.

The hypocrisy of our culture is entirely represented in the example of pro-ana websites. First, we bombard teenage girls (and everyone else) with images and expectations of what their bodies should look like. To these expectations we add the pressures from school, family, and relationships—both platonic and romantic—all of which create demands. Then, when the girls respond in a way that seems appropriate (do whatever you can to *look* ideal), we judge their response as inappropriate. When they claim the label pro-ana and throw our mixed messages back into our collective faces, we accuse them of being extremely ill and pathologized to the point where we, as a society, must step in and make decisions for them (removing their websites, forced therapy, etc.) as a step to *protect* them. These girls are not oblivious to the irony that they only need protection after they are diagnosed as "sick" and not when they are being exposed to the condition which caused the "sickness." The assumed underlying message then is that a good, healthy person would be able to work within this potentially hazardous space without becoming injured and if you do, then it's your own fault. After all, aren't we all subjected to these messages? And we don't become anorexic. Therefore, *something is wrong with you*!

In his book *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body*, Lennard J. Davis recollects all of the norms with which modern Americans rank themselves against: intelligence, health (cholesterol, blood pressure, etc.), weight, height, sex drive, school testings and more. Davis argues that "the 'problem' is not the person with disabilities; the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the 'problem' of the disabled person" (24).

Simi Linton's construct of disability as "a social, political and cultural phenomenon" allows anorexia, and its counterpart pro-anorexia, to be viewed differently (2). In this light, pro-anorexia becomes less about a girl who might or might not be making bad decisions and more about a group of people who feel isolated, medicalized and judged, and how their collective voices could reduce those feelings so that real choices can be made. The "choice" to be anorexic does not seem to reflect so much the decision to eat or not, but rather the choice to define oneself. Linton claims that "[a]lthough the dominant culture describes that atypical experience as deficit and loss, the disabled community's narrative recounts it in more complex ways.

The cultural stuff of the community is the creative response to atypical experience, the adaptive maneuvers through a world configured for nondisabled people. The material that binds us is the art of finding one another, of identifying and naming disability in a world reluctant to discuss it, and of unearthing historically and culturally significant material that relates to our experience" (5). For pro-anas this can mean finding one's way through a world which both demands bodily perfection but rejects one's methods for achieving it. In such an isolated and at the same time self-righteous place, these people seek connection. They search for a group who feels like they do about themselves—both proud and embarrassed. Their identity has been named and claimed, albeit a complicated and problematic one, but then again this label is not about other people and their comfort level. It is about their own experiences and feelings. Hence disability studies becomes the ideal lens with which to view these sites, for while psychology and traditional medicine seek to find out what is wrong with each individual girl, disability studies "focuses on the external variables; the social, political, and intellectual contingencies that shape meaning and behavior" (6). Through disability studies, I am able to ask the questions that interest me as a rhetorician about these sites. What causes someone to become pro-ana? What is the purpose of being pro-ana? Is there greater social meaning to pro-ana? And perhaps what intrigues me most is a common theme in life—choosing a name, a label, for the group. Have these girls performed a very sophisticated move, like other groups before them, by claiming their title? Is "pro-ana" akin to "crips" or "blacks"? Is this name a "personally and politically useful as a means to comment on oppression because they assert [their] right to name experience" (Linton 17). The goal of this article is not specifically to answer each of these questions, but rather to show that disability studies provides a way to look at a more constructive way to create conversation with the pro-ana participants than ridicule and blame.

In academic circles, the topic of pro-ana and the websites that share these beliefs are relatively new conversations. I have seen the reactions to the sites myself through two scholarly conferences within the last year. At Feminisms and Rhetorics in the fall of 2003, a room full of women gasped and cringed as my panel slowly walked through the medicalization of the disease, the sites themselves, the connections between pro-anorexia and other "dangerous" practices, and a teaching tool for how to have these kinds of conversations in our classrooms. As a whole, the initial reaction from feminists was a dismissal of the girls' voices as authentic in favor of a patriarchy indoctrinization of which the girls were unaware. After some discussion however, most of the session attendees were convinced of the validity of our argument that pro-ana sites are worthy of real investigation and should not be dismissed as silly girl talk. This assertion is occurring apparently in more than just rhetoric circles. One of the few scholarly pieces directly to address pro-ana is Karen Dias' essay "The Ana Sanctuary: Women's Pro-Anorexia Narratives in Cyberspace," which appeared in 2003 in the *Journal of International Women's Studies*. It is no surprise that women's studies is discussing this topic nor the method used by Dias. She relies on Third Wave Feminism to support the assertion that the stories told by pro-anas should be considered valuable tools for listening to and understanding the women behind them. And while this is admirable work and I agree on the validity of the stories, I take exception to two premises in her research. First, I think truly to understand the movement we have to look beyond the individual to the social, historical, cultural and political biases leading up to such claims as "I am pro-ana." I have solved this problem for myself in this article by offering disability studies as a lens with which to view the sites. Second, in an attempt to protect their individual identities, Dias does not use any names, which is understandable, but she also does not use any personal communications including interviews with any of the proponents. I question how well one can represent an individual's voice by clipping their words off of a chatroom board and denying audiences any other access to the community. Dias self-discloses her own eating disorder and by doing so seems to offer herself as an example, except that she never once provides her own views or insights. Since my purpose is slightly different from hers—I support the call for pro-ana voices to be heard and respected, but I do not intend to engage in discussion over whether or not their narratives are valid because I assume that they are unequivocally —I have not attempted to discuss the medicalization of anorexia nor have I attempted to validate pro-anorexia as an act of transgression against traditional medicine. I concede that both of these points are true and directly lead to the discussion of the importance of the pro-ana sites.

At the Popular Culture Association conference in the spring of 2004, I, like the rest of my panel, expected a much more hip, up-to-date, and open audience. In fact, we got just the opposite. After our initial presentation, the assigned chair of our panel immediately began to challenge us and the pro-ana girls on the right to post such "harmful" ideas. He reduced the entire conversation to pathology. Yes, our adamant protester was a man and he was one of two men who completely rejected our argument. I'm not even sure if he rejected it because I'm not sure he heard it. When an audience member challenged him by asking if he would like to close down all tobacco companies, he said he would. She informed him that these were fortunately not his decisions to make. Although speaking in the heat of the moment, our female defender did provide the impetus for this article. If we continue to think about disability, and pro-anorexia in particular, as an “illness” only to be viewed through medical lenses then we will never be able to create the kind of social change which is needed. That is, we cannot make decisions for other people simply because we do not like their choices or because we don’t think they are capable of making them on their own. These decisions seem simple and easy only when they are reduced to their most rudimentary parts which is what popular media has done to pro-ana.

Pro-ana web sites have been storylines in two popular television shows recently. The first show to approach the topic was *Judging Amy*. The show quickly and effectively cuts off any complex conversation about the topic in the first few scenes. Amy walks into her office to find two of her co-workers preparing cases, one of which involves a girl who is running a pro-ana site. One of the characters cites the First Amendment and free speech, but the show’s creators erase this concern by having the teenage girl charge for access to the site thus skirting the issue. She is charged with offering medical advice without a license. The rest of the show remains anti-climactic since the web site creator quickly realizes the errors of her ways after seeing a girl who had used her site die from anorexia.While this story only skims the issue of pro-ana web sites, it completely disregards any conversation about pro-ana itself. The topic is used merely as an opportunity to lecture to teens about the dangers of eating disorders. Responsible media behavior? No. When the disability is reduced to something equivalent to “Just say no to drugs”, they might as well have not even addressed the topic.

The second show to address the topic was *Boston Public*. Again, the show avoids any real discussion by having the web site run through the school’s server thus making them liable. To avoid punitive situations, the school removes the site. One teacher discloses to the site creator that she had struggled with an eating disorder and wants to help the girl. *Boston Public* very quickly slips into the “I know just how you feel mentality” leaving no room for variations of experience or stages of recovery. She was sick. She got help. Now she’s better. No discussion about the complicatedness of anorexia took place, nor did the show attempt to discuss any of the reasons that someone might choose pro-ana for themselves. Again, the show used the topic of pro-anorexia as an exciting attention grabber, but failed to expose any of the realness.

Weekly television shows aren't the only media venues discussing pro-ana web sites. The very popular *Oprah Winfrey Show* highlighted this issue by sharing two "heartbreaking stories" and the views of experts on eating disorders. One of the experts was Holly Huff, from the National Eating Disorder Association, who said that "With the pressures to be thin in our culture, [these websites are] like placing a loaded gun in the hands of someone who is feeling suicidal." Because of this attitude, Huff actively worked to have pro-ana sites removed from Yahoo! and other search engines. Yahoo! has complied and removed the sites although a quick search for "get drunk fast" yielded 2,200,000 links. Shows like this one highlight the attitudes that professionals hold about their subjects. Other discussions have emerged in magazines such as *People* and will continue to appear as the web sites gain more notoriety. Hopefully, critical discussions of pro-ana in the media can not only affect the general public's view, but also that of the medical community.

Quite simply, I see several steps which need to happen. First, I believe that real intellectual conversations about pro-anorexia and the medium of choice, web sites, need to take place. Disability studies offers an effective frame for that conversation. Next, the media needs to take a responsible role in identifying, representing and discussing this topic. Finally, I assert that the pro-ana community should claim the label disability for political, cultural and social reasons—not because I believe they are "sick." Once associated with a larger, established community pro-ana participants will be able to organize an agenda in which their concerns can be heard and shared in a fair and representative way. This process is circular and would in turn lead to more conversations, more representation and a more recognized voice. While I am interested specifically in pro-ana sites for the sheer volume with which these voices scream, I believe the process of discussing and exposing, not exploiting, this community provides an opportunity for individuals and classrooms to learn how to engage with people who are different from themselves. Creating understanding leads to social change, which is ultimately my life goal.

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CULTURE, DISABILITY, AND DISABILITY COMMUNITY: NOTES ON DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES

Miho Iwakuma

I. Introduction

As a disabled person who often travels cross-culturally, I prepare myself to adjust to the differences when the airplane lands in Narita International Airport, Japan. My first realization of “I’m home” starts immediately after I leave the airplane, accompanied by an airport attendant. An attendant navigates me, since the airport building provides a different route, a backstage path, for people with disabilities (PWDs) to use. The airport facility is wheelchair usable, but not inclusive of other passengers without disabilities. This subtle, unconscious divide between the disabled and non-disabled is one of many cultural differences that can be noticed between Japan and the U.S. This article outlines several cultural differences as well as universal aspects of disability across cultures.

II: “Shogaisha:” People with Disabilities in Japanese

An invention and change of terminology is not isolated from cultural and historical perceptions of the natives toward a phenomenon, including a category of people (Devlieger 52, Iwakuma 247). One striking difference between English and Japanese concerning disability lies in the terminology ascribed to the disabled. A noun in Japanese referring to people who have disabilities is “Sho-gai-sha.” It must be recalled that each Chinese character chosen signifies a specific meaning. For example, “sha” means a person or people. The fist character, *sho*, refers to something such as an obstacle or hardship, while the second one, *gai*, means “a harm, disaster, or pollution.”

Therefore, it can be speculated that “shogaisha” signifies, at least etymologically, and unveils how the non-disabled have viewed those with disabilities, that is, “people with obstacles or hardships, or the polluted.” Moreover, in the United States, whenever a term becomes too old-fashioned or stigmatizing, it has constantly changed, for instance, from “the muted,” to “the handicapped,” to “the disabled,” then to “people with disabilities, and now to “the differently ablebodied.” Conversely, it is interesting to note that in Japan this reference of “shogaisha” has not changed for at least fifty years.

III. Two Disability Discourses: “Try Harder” and “Don’t Be a Burden on Others”

When returning to Japan, I always become conscious of Japanese expectations for PWDs that are different from those in the U.S. people, and I adjust my mind along with the language I speak. According to Phillips, in the U.S. the philosophy of “try harder” prevails. People in the U.S. are not supposed to be satisfied with what they have accomplished or who they are—they are expected to better themselves in any given circumstance. “Sky is the limit” or “push the envelope” is a mantra for people in the U.S. When this “try harder” philosophy is applied to PWDs (especially to those who acquired disabilities later in their lives), however, it perpetuates the achievement of normalization and the idealization of “normal” (Phillips 257-60). Individuals with disabilities are pressured to “try harder” in order to lessen their disabilities, restore independence, and most of all, to become one of “the normal” again. In this notion, one’s disability is thought of as something that is an entity isolated from the self. To become one of “the cured” is the most desirable outcome and the highest accomplishment for PWDs. Accordingly, accepting one’s disability is somewhat synonymous with “giving up;” thus, coming to terms with one’s disability is considered to be second best to finding the cure. (This mindset may be correlated with rehabilitation’s lower status in the medical industry, in general.)

This “try harder” theme powerfully operates in Japan, too. One of the participants in my dissertation project was a woman who wore prosthesis for her amputated leg below the knee. The elderly at hospital once told her that because the woman could walk like the ablebodied, she should wear a pair of long pants to hide the prosthesis, which is the only reminder of her disability. My participant felt puzzled by the fact that she was no longer seen as who she was, but rather she was labeled as “disabled” by the society. Additionally, she was reminded of an implicit social manner expected for the disabled.

That is, if the cure is not feasible, PWDs should put their effort into looking, behaving, and assimilating as the ablebodied.

However, in Japan, another rhetoric is often used in dealing with PWDs. That is, "do not be a burden on others," or "don't burden others." Although they may appear similar, the "don't be a burden" theme differs from the "trying harder" ethos. The "try harder" ethos encourages people to be independent and self-reliant. On the other hand, "don't be a burden" comes from a Japanese group-oriented, collective tendency which harshly criticizes disturbing the group harmony and not following cultural scripts. More precisely, a "burden" (*meiwaku*) refers to being different from others, or doing something that violates cultural norms and expectations. The "don't be a burden" philosophy has been a powerful gravitational force dictating the lives of PWDs and their environment, the dimension of this essay explored hereafter.

IV: A History of the Japanese Disability Community and Independent Living Movement:

Hayashi details a history of PWDs in Japan from the 19th century to today. For a long time, PWDs had been restricted to either living with their relatives, mostly parents, or they were confined in institutions. Regardless of differences in these living conditions, individuals with disabilities were commonly viewed as subordinates to the authority figures (parents or institutional staff) and child-like people who could not look after themselves. Since PWDs were not considered productive members of society, they were repeatedly told that the least they could do was to try not to burden others.

Before the 1970s, prior to the dawn of the Japanese disability movement, the nation's approach toward PWDs had been oriented to protecting, patronizing, segregating, and rehabilitating (Hayashi 855-59). The long road to Japan's disability movements, which emerged in the 1970s, was punctuated with several important turns of event, such as the Fuchu Ryoiku Center case and the incident of a counter-petition against a mother who killed her disabled child. The Fuchu Ryoiku Center incident made public how—for the sake of medical research—disabled individuals were kept under inhumane conditions at an institution where residents were abused by staff, prohibited to go out for months, and/or received lobotomies or autopsies without consent, just to name few such abuses. The dreaded and loathed residents' hunger strikes followed by sit-ins caught some media attention. Another turning point, the counter-petition against the child killing, was initiated by a radical disability group called Aoi Shiba, mainly comprised of people with cerebral palsy (CP), that disdained the disabled's parents group that asked for a petition against the mother. Members of Aoi Shiba harshly criticized the underlying connotation of the petition that the lives of the disabled are not worth living; thus, killing them, although out of desperation, is understandable (Hayashi 861). An early period of Japan's disability movement, along with other social movements in the '60s and '70s, was depicted as aggressive, radical, and anti-social (Hayashi 859-62). Exposed to the humiliating living conditions, people with disabilities, either in institutions or at home, started to look for an alternative way of life: living independently in community.

The next era, the 1980s, was meaningful in many ways for Japan's disability movement. Under the slogan of "Full Participation and Equality," the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons started and the Japanese disability movement turned another corner (Hayashi 865, Tateiwa 205). In order to meet the United Nations mandate, the Japanese government followed through by establishing several agencies, and some disabled persons were invited to join (Tateiwa 206). During the national Diet in 1980, the term "normalization" was used for the first time by a disabled congressperson, Eita Yashiro (Tateiwa 206-207). Most notably, that international year prompted dialogue between the government and disability groups, which previously had been antagonistic (Tateiwa 208).

In addition to the aforementioned domestic changes in the 1980s, Japan's disability movement met the west (Hayashi 865-866, Asaka 37-47). Many well-known U.S. activists such as Ed Roberts and Judy Heumann were invited to Japan to hold symposia and conferences in many cities. In turn, some disabled individuals from Japan went to the U.S. and worked as interns at CIL (Center for Independent Living) offices to embody the philosophy of the independent living movement. Today's many disability leaders in Japan were those returnees, and Asaka is one of them. Born with osteogenesis imperfecta, Asaka lived in the U.S. for six months in Berkeley, CA. During her stay, she seems to have experienced fundamental differences on disability between the two countries (Asaka 37-48). She was stunned by the "business-like" attitudes of CIL workers who closed the office and went home at five o'clock. In Japan, disability activism was Asaka's life itself for 24/7; there was also no distinction between her private life and public life as an activist (Asaka 46-47). Her identity embodied the activism and vice versa. In addition, she observed the harsh reality of the full-measured meritocracy of U.S. society in which there were many young homeless women and people with mental disorders living and sleeping on the U.C. Berkeley campus.

When she tried to apply what she had learned from living in the U.S., Asaka experienced friction with local activists in Japan (Asaka 47). The difficulties she met came from cross-cultural differences regarding disability that exist between the U.S. and Japan. Such concepts as self-determination, assertiveness, human rights, or community living—all central doctrines of the U.S. disability movements—sounded foreign in a Japanese cultural context. For example, in the United States, a grown child's independent living is considered a sign of adulthood and maturity; thus, it is socially accepted. Contrarily, a group-orientation, modesty, and respect for the social structure and authority dictate people's courses of action in Japan. In such a cultural milieu, even college seniors, especially female students, are encouraged to commute from home to work until their marriage. Therefore, it was even harder to fully comprehend what the human rights, independence, and so on should be for PWDs who were always told not to burden others and to be thankful and apologetic for benevolence from the non-disabled. Knowing these fundamental differences, the disabled returnees who were pioneers of Japanese CILs had to start by laying the ground work of making foreign notions less frightening and more culturally appropriate to Japan (Heyer 18). Indeed, the current situation of the U.S. and Iraq points out that transferring a culturally ingrained notion like democracy to another soil requires patience, modification, compromise, and creativity.

Heyer points out that the disability indices of Japan and the U.S. are deeply rooted in cultural, social, and political norms of equality and disability (2). According to her research, the U.S. disability doctrine adheres to a premise of equality of opportunity, while the Japanese approach traditionally is concerned with equality of results.[1]

> The American disability rights movement very clearly and self-consciously builds on [the] rights tradition developed by its own civil rights movement… The ADA's interpretation of equality is one that emphasizes sameness and non-discrimination. The emphasis is on the removal of barriers that prevent equality of opportunities.... Japanese registration has emphasized different needs over equal rights…the right to be different is well protected and supported in Japan. Especially in the areas of education and employment policy, the emphasis on different and special needs has resulted in well equipped but nonetheless separate facilities. (Heyer 23)

This cultural, philosophical difference reminds me of my own experiences at the airports. In the U.S., no matter how small or rural,

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[1] Similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act, Affirmative Action is also based on a premise of equal opportunity, rather than equal result.

I can expect an airport to be accessible so that everyone, including a person with a wheelchair, can use the same facility (equal opportunity). Beyond this guaranteed equal opportunity, however, I rarely receive special consideration in the U.S. Therefore, anything else, such as finding the nearest elevator or a gate for the flight or making it on time to board the plane, becomes a lesser issue: I'm fully responsible for these matters. On the other hand, as I mentioned earlier, in any Japanese airport an attendant always escorts me while I am using the facility. That is because the airport authorities acknowledge my difference and special needs so that everything is arranged before my arrival. They strive for an equal *result* in my use of the facility by giving me special treatment. In Japan, therefore, I never have to look for an elevator or gate or miss my plane. The airport staff does everything in the least painful and most efficient way, which compensates for my having to use a different, segregated route from everyone else in the same airport.

V: "Independence" for People with Disabilities

One might think that being put in an institution and treated like a caged animal must surely be humiliating, and thus it makes sense that the disabled rebelled against it. But why would someone with a disability wish to leave his or her home where parents would do anything with unconditional love? Indeed, the parents love their children and would fight to the end for them. The parents of children with disabilities may even have a stronger determination to protect them from any outside harm.

Harris and Long point out that in a caregiving context, while "intimacy, but [with] a distance" (243) is a primary virtue in the U.S., Japanese caregivers tend to idealize what is called "totalizing care" (249). In the notion of totalizing care, there is no such concept as "secondary caregiver"; thus, a caregiver takes on all of the responsibilities and is thereby at risk of burnout. Such totalizing care is framed from within the Japanese family unit, which is called "*ie.*" This family unit identifies the mother (or wife) as a primary caregiver and is bolstered firmly by a culture of shame. Shame is an instrument of the group-identity of self in Japan, and anything or anybody who brings shame to an in-group is subject to sanction by its members (Ishi *et al*. 30). For a family with a disabled child, sometimes parents withdraw and alienate themselves from others due to a strong sense of shame that they brought the disabled child into the world. Particularly, the mother often becomes a target of shame to the immediate and extended family as someone who could not bear a healthy, “normal” child. Isolated from the outside world and overwhelmed by the pressure of totalizing care for the disabled child, a mother-child relationship becomes extremely introverted and closed. In an extreme case, this spiraled, closed relation pushes parent(s) to the edge and triggers the unthinkable, the killing of a child by the parent of which Aoi Shiba was violently accused in the 1960s.

Two decades have passed since their protest, yet in the ‘80s (and even today) the same tragedy is reproduced. In 1984, a child with autism was killed by his mother (Okahara 78). The mother tried to purge her emotions in the following statement: “I used to wish that you (the child) would never grow and stay as a child so that I could’ve taken care of you forever. Since you’ve gotten older, gone beyond my protection, I started thinking about terminating your life…. You had your own right to live…. I became emotionally disturbed. I was in a state of insanity” (Okahara 79). Many people with disabilities instinctively know that sometimes the parents’ (especially the mother’s) affection imprisons and suffocates them. Therefore, an interviewee in Okahara’s study urgently declares “post-family” orientation: “[we need to] distance ourselves from our own parents. Their overwhelming affection coils around us and leaves us nothing” (Okahara 80).

Shikano was such an individual, who chose to live in a community supported by a group of non-relatives, such as volunteers and paid caregivers (Watanabe 18-24). Watanabe detailed the last two years of Shikano’s everyday life until he died from muscular dystrophy in August 2002. Shikano could not live even a day without someone else’s help; his every move was accomplished with others’ assistance. To that end, he could never enjoy a moment of privacy. (Even when masturbating, Shikano was assisted by a helper who set and started a video, pulled his client’s pants down, and gave him a handful of Kleenex before leaving the room.) People entered and left his apartment every few hours, which sometimes fatigued Shikano (Watanabe 374-375). Shikano knew how difficult it is to share every inch of one’s life with a stranger.

Known as short-tempered, self-indulgent, weak, and tenacious about living, Shikano was not a “typical” disabled person. He was never thankful, apologetic, angelic or heroic (Watanabe 89-102). Some volunteers left Shikano because he never let them do things in their way, but many more were drawn to him for who he was. Shikano educated newcomers to the notion of “his way or the high way.” For example, Shikano awakened one of his volunteers in the middle of the night at hospital (Watanabe 32). The volunteer had been exhausted from his daytime work and was irritated by Shikano’s request to eat a ripe banana. Though frustrated, the volunteer peeled the skin without a word, held the banana to Shikano's mouth, and waited patiently until he finished eating. As soon as Shikano finished, the volunteer crawled into his bed, half-asleep, but was brought back to reality by Shikano's voice, "Another one!" Shikano never compromised on what he wanted.

Many accounts of volunteers and caregivers begin by saying that Shikano was selfish because he persisted in his ways (Watanabe 305-320). Watanabe notes that when one's physical functioning is restricted and help needed by others, the dependent person is expected to be appreciative and humble (25). Such pressure is strong in Japan where the maxim "don't be a burden on others" is one of the golden rules. Asaka remembers from her own childhood that people with congenital disabilities were taught two things: first, "being a burden" is the most shameful state in which to find themselves and, second, when receiving benevolence from others, there is no room for arguing, just be thankful. For this reason, a "picky" helpee is accused of being selfish or inconsiderate of others. As we say in English, "beggars cannot be choosers"—anyone who is not independent, financially or physically, is pressured to swallow his or her needs, not to mention wants.

The ideology of independence fosters a strong sense of physical autonomy and self-sufficiency in individuals. For instance, during the childhood years, a child is trained and gradually expected to maximize his or her physical independence, thereby transforming him- or herself from an infant to a child. Later, during the school years, the young adult prepares to become a full-fledged societal member by obtaining paid employment status. However, this cultural assumption of "independence" has ostracized a group of people with disabilities, who fall short of being (physically and economically) independent. In today's capitalistic society, being physically dependent or unable to contribute directly to the labor market has stigmatizing moral connotations, such as the implication that such a person is "lazy" "needy" or "unmotivated."

VI: Disability Culture: A Common Bond Uniting Us

When I started participating in conferences on disability and meeting other disabled individuals around the world, I was often amazed by our common daily experiences despite the cultural differences. Several years ago, when attending a conference in Washington, D.C., I stayed at a conference hotel in which my room had a bathroom entrance too narrow for my manual wheelchair. I mentioned my situation to a fellow disabled participant who was a long-time disability activist in the U.S. He suggested to me that I ask the hotel maintenance staff to unbolt the bathroom door to spare some space. Indeed, with the door removed, the bathroom entrance became two inches wider! His advice was eye opening. I could not have come up with the idea by myself and, more importantly, the incident made me conscious of habitus, which is "constituted in practice and is always oriented toward practical functions" and "associated with a particular class of conditions of existence" (Bourdieu 52, 53). Using the notion of habitus, the characteristics of wheelchair users produce a unique habitus accompanied by a creative problem solving strategy (practice). Recognizing the common conditions of existence, or habitus, among PWDs presents a valuable opportunity to view the ontology of disability as well as a formation of disability culture that overcomes national sovereignties. Hereafter, I outline a theory of disability adjustment that seems to be common to Japan and the U.S.

Charlene DeLoach and Bobby Greer theorize the ways in which a person adjusts to a severe disability, such as a spinal cord injury, suggesting that there are three stages that a newly disabled person goes through: stigma isolation, stigma recognition, and stigma incorporation. Although DeLoach and Greer did not research the subject cross-culturally, the data derived from my Japanese participants with disabilities supports the identified process (Iwakuma 13-17).

Stigma isolation states that in the aftermath of a disabling incident, a newly disabled person encounters numerous frustrating incidents, including being deserted by old friends, but the person is unaware that the change originates from his having a disability. For example, many interviewees in my study recalled that after being flooded by visitors for the first few weeks, a majority of the friends stopped coming to the hospital after the first visitation. When discharged from the hospital, the participants found themselves being isolated from their pre-injury friends. Mr. K., with severe quadriplegia, lost contact with all of his baseball friends. He attributed this change to the fact that his old friends became extremely uneasy with him since he could no longer do anything by himself besides talk. Mr. K. felt his non-disabled friends saw him as the embodiment of "a fate worse than death." The disabled participants sensed such uneasiness, or even fear, on the part of the non-disabled individuals, and their communication required much effort. Influenced by the works of Mary Douglas and Talcott Parsons, Robert Murphy uses the concept of "liminality" (131) to account for such ragged communication between the two parties:

> The long-term physically impaired are neither sick or nor well, neither dead nor fully alive, neither out of society nor wholly in it. They are human beings but their bodies are warped or malfunctioning, leaving their humanity in doubt. They are not ill, for illness is transitional, to either death or recovery…. The sick person lives in a state of social suspension until he or she gets better. The disabled spend a lifetime in a similar suspended state… they exist in partial isolation from society as undefined, ambiguous people. This undefined quality, an existential departure from normality, contributes to the widespread aversion to the disabled…. (Murphy 131)

It is this ambivalent social standing of PWDs that makes the non-disabled feel rather uncomfortable and causes them to avoid PWDs.

DeLoach and Greer's second stage, stigma recognition, explains that the newly disabled individual comes to realize what his or her new identity as disabled brings to life. The person becomes conscious of social meanings of being disabled at this stage (Iwakuma 14). For example, one of the participants witnessed a child pointing a finger at him and the mother yanking the child, and another participant felt devastated to hear a parent saying to a child, "Be good or you'll be like that person." In this phase, the newly disabled person learns the discredited, stigmatized identity of the disabled in society. In the aforementioned episode of a woman who was advised to wear a pair of long pants, a disabled person learned the stigma attached to her prosthesis and the proper conduct for someone disabled: conceal one's identity as disabled to avoid making the non-disabled feel uncomfortable.

The last stage of disability adjustment is stigma incorporation, in which the newly disabled person assimilates his or her disability to the self. By this stage, the person knows not only both the disadvantages and advantages of disability, but also practical strategies to ameliorate negative consequences of a disability. Acquainted with others with disabilities at hospital or through disability sports seems to promote "feeling comfortable in one's own skin." I also observed a process in which some participants changed their perception of the wheelchair as they adjusted to a disability (Iwakuma 16). Mr. S., who has paraplegia, used to hate being in a wheelchair and insisted that he walk by dragging his legs. The next year, I saw him completely changed, and he told me that seeing wheelchair basketball players helped him accept his own chair. By reaching this stigma recognition stage, the person has developed creative ways of dealing with common scenarios such as receiving unwanted help, others' staring, or negotiating about inaccessible environments. My own experience at the conference hotel, removal of the bathroom door, is one such problem-solving strategy. Additionally, it seems that some PWDs in this stage develop a sense of group solidarity—a "we" identity (Iwakuma 17). For example, Mrs. F., who plays wheelchair tennis and was once featured in a nationally televised car commercial, receives many questions about lives of PWDs in general. As someone representing a group of PWDs, she feels a sense of responsibility in fielding questions. On behalf of those silenced, she also raises her voice against non-disabled who park cars at spaces reserved for PWDs. Another participant, Mr. K., emphasized that communicating among the disabled is very crucial, since we have so much to learn from each other's experiences. The disability community seems to function as a safety net and buffer zone for people with disabilities to adjust to dual membership in the world of PWDs and that of the non-disabled. The community also nurtures a positive, self-affirming identity.

VII: Concluding Remarks

In my early graduate years at the University of Oklahoma, I became interested in the literature of cultural studies regarding disability. Although I am a native of Japan, my "disabledness" sets me apart from the Japanese mainstream culture, and the disability literature suggests where my estrangement originates. I do not deny the fact that paralysis sometimes sets limits on me. Nevertheless, without a doubt, my physical configuration has opened many avenues for me as a student, researcher, and private person. I became curious about this wonder. The literature has given me a sense of history concerning how disability is constructed and of how the social structure in which interaction with persons of disability is managed and maintained. To this end, the literature offers me a compass; this article aims to share that compass with others who also need a sense-making instrument to guide them in this seemingly chaotic world of disability.

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THE WHEEL-CHAIRED SPECTATOR: DISABILITY AS AN ALLEGORY OF “PER-VERSIVE” VIEWING PLEASURES IN *SUITE 16*[1]

Lili Hsieh

“In the average European oil painting of the nude, the principal protagonist is never painted. He is the spectator in front of the picture and he is presumed to be a man. Everything is addressed to him. Everything must appear to be the result of his being there. It is for him that the figures have assumed their nudity. But he, by definition, is a stranger with his clothes still on.” This passage, quoted from John Berger’s thought-provoking book, *Ways of Seeing*, by Linda Williams in the very beginning of her introduction to the anthology, *Viewing Positions*, may serve as a good overture to the film *Suite 16*.[2] For John Berger, both the nude woman and the boy in Bronzino’s (1503-1572) *Allegory of Time and Love* exist, pose, and are displayed for one single purpose—the gaze of the viewer, to “appeal to *his* sexuality” (Berger 55; emphasis Berger’s). No matter what the woman does, how the boy kisses the woman, it “has nothing to do with her sexuality,” and, we may add, to “his”—the boy’s—sexuality, because both of them are *objects* of the *invisible viewer*, presumably and invariably a *male*. Moreover, expression of passions (e.g., “hair is associated with sexual power, with passion”) in these objects is monopolized by the man who is looking at her, without her knowing it. It is dependent on the appetite of the man’s sexuality that the passions in these objects are minimized or magnified. In other words, the passions displayed by the objects must remain exchangeable, malleable, manageable,

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[1] *Suite 16*, directed by Dominique Deruddere, written by Charles Higson and Lise Mayer, was produced in the United Kingdom and Belgium in 1994. The cast includes Pete Postlethwaite, Antonie Kamerling, *et al*. It is copyrighted by Filmopolis Pictures Inc./ Stranger Than Fiction in 1996 and distributed by A-Pix Entertainment. An outline of the story and a review of this film can be found in *Sight and Sound* (London, August 1995 and May 1996).

[2] See Williams, *Viewing* 1; quoted in *Ways of Seeing*, 54.

and "re-channelable." Although Berger's analysis is based on the still image, the validity of his arguments for Linda Williams can be elaborated in the hypothetical spectatorship of cinema obscura. We see the same argument in Laura Mulvey's famous article which scrutinizes a double 'perversion' in the cinematic gaze, voyeurism and fetishism, in Christian Metz's *Imaginary Signifier* which formulates the encompassing gaze that hooks up the "spectator-fish" with the "invisible thread of sight" (97), and in Vivian Sobchack's theorization of 'film body' in which the male gaze is transformed into a kind of "giant, disembodied set of eyes" (269). In other words, decades of spectatorship theories have glorified the virile eyes of a male voyeur, while downplaying the rest of his body as secondary and as redundant as the objects of his gaze. Dominique Dereddere's curiously ignored film, *Suite 16*, offers an interesting dramatization of modern spectatorship theories through the allegory of an aging, impotent man trespassing the hot field of sex and death. In *Suite 16*, the "per-versive" viewing pleasure, as it conjoins perversity with subversiveness, invites us to rethink our own melancholic identification with the voyeur/murderer, and the complex nature of our ecstatic pleasures ingrained in our arm-chair spectatorship.

Carol J. Clover in her article "The Eye of Horror"[3] has directly linked the act of seeing—more specifically, the eyes—with horror cinema. In horror films, Clover states, it is not only "the look-at-the-monster' which constitutes the fear and distorted pleasures, but more importantly, the "look-at-the-movie" (185). In horror films, such as Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*,[4] the act of looking is insinuated as morbid and dangerous—in the film the camera literally kills. As Linda Williams suggests in her article, "When the Woman Looks," only by turning away from the camera does the woman escape from her victimhood. This alignment of camera eye with killing is interesting, for it signals a kind of spectatorship—we can almost call it *critical spectatorship*—which is overwhelmed by the gaze, becomes highly conscious of it, enjoys it but at the same time feels threatened by it. As Metz puts it, for those who desire not only to 'love the cinema' but also to 'understand the cinema,' for the theoreticians who swing between the absurd opposition between 'the affective' and 'the intellectual,' there is necessarily sadistic pleasure which strives to persecute the bad object—the cinema—for the sake of the good object—knowledge (Metz 80). Now one dissects film as one dissects a body—for

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[3] Excerpted in *Viewing Positions*, ed. by Linda Williams, 184-230.

[4] *Peeping Tom* (1960) is directed by Michael Powell, starring Carl Boehm, Moira Shearer, Anna Massey *et al*.

the sake of knowledge. Behind films such as *Peeping Tom*, there is a fantasy of sadistic nature. We spectators are to beware of the danger of the camera, disarm it, and have our redemption by turning away from (or destroying) the overpowering apparatus. This apparatus is a "killer camera" (Clover in Williams, *Viewing* 186).

In *Suite 16*, however, the apparatus appears slightly different. It is still a morbid apparatus, but instead of bringing the threat of killing, it copulates the spectator with its objects, grants *him* (still, this viewer is primarily male) sexual pleasures which nonetheless are not objectal but autoerotic, and proffers the literally impotent viewer with the gratification which, while supposedly gained only through action, is now transmitted through his surrogate. We viewers are allegorized as an old, paraplegic in a wheelchair (Glover), who has no mobility and sinisterly pays for someone (in the film, the gigolo/thief Chris) to act—in both senses of the word— for the sake of our viewing pleasures. The apparatus (the surveillance camera with its complicity, the shooting camera), is not perverse but *perversive*: it enables the impotent wheeler to enjoy, despite the inaccessibility of the "real" objects. Unlike the malicious camera in *Peeping Tom*, the apparatus in *Suite 16* is almost Dionysian (just note how many glasses of wine Glover drinks when he takes pleasure in watching the sexual play of Chris and the prostitutes). The camera here is pleasure-seeking.

At first glance, both *Peeping Tom* and *Sweet 16* are about voyeurism. The word "scopophilia" appears in *Peeping Tom* when Mark, after talking to Helen's blind mother, tries to get help from the psychologist consultant. In *Suite 16* the contractual relation between Glover and Chris is based on seeing and being seen. However, spectators of these two films may have a different relationship with their voyeuristic gazes. In *Peeping Tom*, we see through the cinematographer, Mark's camera, but it is not until the last moment when we follow the female protagonist Helen that we know Mark's trick. We know Mark kills, we see with Mark the petrified faces of the victims, but we do not know *how* we see them. There is something that distances us spectators from Mark's viewing position, "the narrative cuts" (Clover in Williams, *Viewing* 185). This cut cracks the viewers' identification with Mark. This incomplete identification results not only from the psychotic nature of the protagonist, but, more importantly, it also comes from the language of images. When Mark carries his camera, approaching his prey, we see frame within frame, or 'over-framing'[5] on our TV screen,

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[5] I am using Jacques Aument's definitions here. In cinema the inclusion of another frame is called "frames within frames" or "over-framing" (Aument 115).

with a big cross indicating the focusing of the camera. Unlike the film *Lady in the Lake*, a broad black frame surrounding the image always appears to disentangle the embodied image. With the director's cut, spiced with de-suturing over-framing technique, the spectators are in fact saved from sinking into the killer's viewing position. Our view is not an "assaultive and reactive" gaze like Mark's; part of us is sympathizing or identifying with the female victims: we see horror films "in order to be scared," to play the Freudian children's game of *fort-da*, to prove that despite our anxiety, the good object always comes back. The case of over-framing is different in *Suite 16*. Unlike Mark who is mobile and threatening, Glover's view is transfixed on the motor wheel, which is physically more analogous to the position of the cinematic viewers. However, unlike the over-framing with a broad black frame around the centered frame, we have access to Glover's view more directly—we see Glover seated in the wheelchair watching the TV with the images of Chris's sexual scenes, then immediately the TV frame is removed so that we see *as* Glover seeing Chris. Our TV/screen frame coincides with Glover's TV frame, as if we were implanted in Glover's wheel chair. In *Suite 16* the voyeuristic view is produced not only in the form of frame within frame, but a 'double frame'—by which I mean a duplicated frame, or two frames which coincide with each other and thereby reduced to one. By being one, the identification or suture[6] is more seamlessly formed. As Stephen Heath points out, the first stage of reading a film, which consists of the moments of "sheer jubilation in the image" (87), is to be followed by the second stage, the awareness of the frame which breaks the initial relation. The limit of the image is revealed[7]—"the fourth wall" is re-discovered. With the realization of the fourth wall and the "absent one" outside the diegetic images, the cinema turns into a discourse, the images slip into the order of signifier, while the viewing subject "fills in" the absence with its movement of continuity and articulation. The crucial moment of filling in as suture is significant in *Suite 16*. As the viewer sneakily sees the private view of Glover without the distancing of the over-framing as in *Peeping Tom*, the space for "the Absent One" is abolished; we become the other, we *are* the voyeur in his wheelchair, Glover.

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[6] There is already rich literature on the issues of identification and suture. Readers can refer to Laplanche and Pontalis' classic definition of "identification" in their *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*. On suture, see Oudart's article "La suture" in *Cahiers du cinema*, no. 211, May 1969.

[7] Let us recall what Jacques Aumount says in *Image*, that frames, no matter in the case of painting or in cinema, accentuate the limit of image—all images have frames, all images are bound to be limited. Aumount also defines limit-frame for differentiation from the object frame of paintings (114-5).

However, some questions may arise from this interpretation of identification or suture. First, in viewing this film, do we have just one viewing position, the one analogous to Glover's? Or do we have multiple viewing positions? Do we viewers have to identify with the viewer in the film, so that our viewing is an "identification in a univocal sense," or, as Judith Mayne suggests, can we have alternative viewing positions in which our fantasy facilitates a mobile "oscillation rather than identification" (Mayne 86)? In fact, in this film we are offered two different viewing positions as we see through the director's shooting camera to see Glover's voyeuristic surveillance camera: one that parallels Glover's limited, morbidly voyeuristic viewing, and the other one a more liberal, omnipotent, and omnipresent shooting camera viewing. We can ask by the analogy: to what extent are they identical? Or are we prevented from being the amputated viewer?

The analogy between the cinematic spectators and the impotent wheelchair-user interestingly brings us back to a primal point of the theory of gaze—Plato's metaphor of cave in his *Republic*. In Plato's theory, in which seeing is hopelessly illusory, the subjects of viewing are prisoners in the cave, fettered and tied to the chair. The setting of the cave interestingly reflects Glover's position of a fixated, handicapped viewer. Let us see how Plato sets up the imprisoned viewers:

> Imagine human beings living in an underground, cavelike dwelling, with an entrance a long way up, which is both open to the light and as wide as the cave itself. They've been there since childhood, fixed in the same place, with their necks and legs fettered, able to see only in front of them, because their bonds prevent them from turning their heads around. Light is provided by a fire burning far above and behind them… (Plato 186)

Isn't it already a parody that our double, the old, impotent Glover, happens to live in his luxurious suite, a "cavelike dwelling" which is isolated from the external world? The dim orange light of the layout of the suite characterizes its closure: the suite is like a cave, or a womb, even a pre-life monad[8] that no *other* is ever needed. Glover, as a dweller in this cave, is fettered like the cave prisoners in Plato's allegory. Plato's cave metaphor suggests to cinematic theorization of gaze that what we see as real is only mimesis: "shadows of shadows," three layers removed from the reality. However, confined to

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[8] In the British psychoanalyst Balint's theory, 'monad' is the pre-subjectal stage from which narcissism is registered. In this monad, one is self-contained and self-sufficient. It is at the moment of birth— the birth-trauma— that the closure is broken. However, the fantasy of a self-sufficient closure sustains and inaugurates narcissism. See Balint, *Basic Fault* (London: Hogarth, 1972).

the wheel chair, the "real world" turns its back against us the fettered cave-dwellers. We are fated to take shadows for reality.

However, following Jonathan Crary in his article "Modernizing Vision,"[9] we may find a way out of the Platonic cave. Crary does not outflank the tradition of the gaze theory from Plato, Euclid, Aristotle, Roger Bacon, Leonardo, *et al*. For Crary there is an "evolutionary ladder" by which a modernized vision is to emerge in cinema obscura as not only an "isolated space of metaphysic interiority" but also a "socially constructed artifact" (Crary in Williams, *Viewing* 24). To jump out from the Platonic cave which degrades the viewers as prisoners of visions of shadows, a position the film *Suite 16* in a similar way implicitly insinuates, we have to examine the irreducible materiality in the images, the body or corporeality of the film. In this way, following Sobchock, we blur the distinction between viewing subject and viewed object, break down the "traditional oppositions between …mind and body, the visual act and the visible object" (Williams, *Viewing* 9), and, at least strategically, disenchant ourselves from the call for the real which Plato invites us to imagine (or hallucinate).

In *Suite 16*, an episode of Glover's overseeing Chris's erotic scenes deserves further analysis as in the fluidity of their position-exchange we see omnipotence emerging in the seat of impotence. In this episode, right after Chris's discovery of the existence of the surveillance camera, Glover offers to give Chris the money he needs to realize his dream on the condition that Chris performs sexual acts for his viewing. The formerly dissipated, bored Chris, ironically, is suddenly energized on his bed/stage and becomes a more virile performer in bed. We first see Chris making love with the woman, and then the camera zooms in to focus on the intertwined bodies. We see the bodies, the flesh, the faces, and every expression of their *jouissance*. Then the camera takes us back to Glover. We see him watching Chris and the naked woman, agitatedly. His inability to cope with this excessively pleasurable vision is conspicuous to us: he drinks a lot of wine, which his poor health forbids. Our vision swings freely between Glover's surveillance camera and our TV screen; the two frames of these images are exchangeable. However, compared to the frame of Glover's viewing, which always has a fixed distance, and a more superficial orange color, we are directed by the shooting camera to see more, to know more, and to enjoy more—and more comfortably. In our exchange with Glover's position, we may forget that ours is not totally identical with his. However, the cinematic

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[9] In Williams, ed. *Viewing*, 23-35.

apparatus does grant something that may be eternally denied to Glover: the elimination of distance from the body, the flesh. While we see the close-ups of Chris, we are the real omnipotent viewers overseeing every actor's—Glover's as much as Chris's—virility as well as impotency.

Paradoxically, in *Suite 16* the relationship between the viewer (Glover) and the object (Chris) allegorizes film spectatorship, yet the thematic proximity between the film viewer and the wheel-chaired Glover is not without its discontents. We the "*savoir-tout*" and "*jouir-tout*" viewers ask how we *armed-chaired* spectator may be morally and aesthetically superior to the *wheel-chaired* spectator, who is himself our viewing object. From the oscillation of frames and viewing positions, we strive to deny our "*alter ego*," our "other self"[10] to become what he is *not*. We strive to be *not* impotent, but *omnipotent*. In a sense, this desire of being what our other self is *not* reveals the fantasy behind the erotic and epistemophilic gaze: the fantasy that we are not within film,[11] but we *are* the film. Nevertheless, what else can film industry be except its ability to turn the doomed "great expectation" into a great fantasization?

Let us then return to the issue of impotence. What further characterizes the episode of Glover's viewing is that Chris functions not only as an object for Glover's voyeuristic pleasures, but he is also the surrogate of Glover. The two characters have a direct, immediate relation: Glover is watching *live* performance happening just a room away. Although his viewing position is fixed, his relation to the image is more direct. We can see that Chris waves, poses for Glover, and exchanges looks with Glover through the frame that confines him. This surrogatehood is symbolized by a video game. In a previous scene, Chris was sitting on the floor playing a video game while Glover watches him play. Analogously, with their mutual consent, Chris *acts out* what Glover desires and represses—he plunges himself into the TV-frame so that Glover can watch him "play." Furthermore, the relation between the subject and his surrogate becomes more and more real as Glover's fantasy grows. After exploring almost all potentials of Chris' surrogatehood, Glover desires something beyond a video game: now he wants reality TV. He comes up with a final proposal:

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[10] For an interesting discussion on the double as our *alter ego* (other self), cf. Otto Rank's *The Double: A Psychoanalytical Study* (trans. & ed. by Harry Tucker, Jr., Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1971) and "The Double as Immortal Self" in *Beyond Psychology* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1941).

[11] The idea that the spectators are "in" the work comes mainly from John Berger and the gaze theory through 1970s and 1980s.

Chris would go out of the suite to seduce a girl and kill her. When Chris goes out wearing a microphone that transmits every sound and conversation, we feel the thrill of Glover at this new receptive position situated more in the real than in reality. The "sonic vraisemblable" (Silverman 45) suggests a more direct immediacy and presence than the "visual vraisemblable," as Charles Affron has shown:

> [S]ound … guarantees immediacy and presence in the system of absence that is cinema. Images that constantly remind us of the distance in time and space between their making and their viewing are charged, through voice, with the presence both that uttered words require for their transmission and that they lend to our viewing of the art. (qtd. in Silverman 43)

When sounds are transmitted through the microphone to Glover's headphones, a different sense of "here and now" from Glover's voyeuristic viewing is constituted. Not only is there no lapse of time, there is no mediation—the acoustic apparatus is almost non-representational. Chris and Glover are in this sense both *in* the scene, collaborating in the seduction and murder of Helen, and finally Glover's suicide (beyond the pleasure principle?) as the ending of the story.

While Chris and Glover become the collaborators/co-actors, we viewers become the ultimate agents of their representations. While Glover strives for the effect of reality—the progression of the plot impinges on his demand for proximity to the real object—we opt for the symbolic real. Surrounded by diegetic as well as non-diegetic sounds, we enjoy without fussing over the ability to make love to or kill an object out there—through the viewing, love and death take on a new light and start to make sense to us, despite the disappearance of the shadowy images on the fourth screen.

Our relationship to the actors, therefore, is beyond that of surrogatehood. The actors are not our objects, nor our representatives: they are at most our *objet petit a*. As Chris addresses his viewer, gestures for and exchanges looks with Glover, we see through the frame between the two males as an outsider (a viewing subject off frame). We don't exchange looks. As Glover's look, reactive like that in *Peeping Tom*, is both "penetrated and penetrating" (Clover in Williams, *Viewing* 197), ours is not confined by the looks inside the frames. Our look only interacts with the "fourth look"[12]—the look of

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[12] Willemen theorizes the look between characters as the third look, and the look of the character to the audience as the "fourth look." Cf. Willemen, "The Fourth Look," in *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; London: British Film Institute, 1994, 99-123.

the film, the cinematic gaze. What I am suggesting is that our relation to the cinema obscura cannot be simplified as one between a surrogate and an alibi, between "lord and bondsman," such as the one between video game player and the game itself. The cinema does not present images so that we can fling ourselves into them by means of *projection*. Rather, what is overpowered and what imprints on "the fourth look" is an 'afterimage,' as in the psychical mechanism of *introjection*.

Psychoanalytically speaking, projection is the mechanism in which the "privatized isolated subject enclosed in a quasi-domestic space separated from a public exterior world" (Crary in Williams, *Viewing* 26) expels some elements, qualities, feelings, wishes of his own and finds them "displaced and relocated in an *external* position" and in so doing passes "from center to periphery" or "from subject to object" (Laplanche & Pontalis 349; emphasis added). Projection theory leads us to Plato's cave, where the observer is a static, motionless individual, and what he sees on the wall as *external* is but solipsist shadows *projected* on the wall. Contrary to this, I propose, images in cinema obscura work as our *introjections*. Introjection, according to Sandor Ferenczi and later elaborated by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, denotes a process of taking in:[13] "Introjecting a desire, a pain, a situation means channeling them through language into a communion of empty mouths" (Abraham & Torok 128). What Crary calls "afterimages" of camera obscura—the shadowy images which linger after one stares at the blinding sun—can be translated psychoanalytically into what Abraham and Torok call "the exquisite corpse"—the undying dead who bear the ultimate truth of our subjectivity.[14] If the wheel-chaired Glover watches to kill, we arm-chair spectators watch to bring to life the dead so that the exquisite corpse, such as the ghost of Hamlet's father, will again speak the truth.

If the murderous voyeurs in *Suite 16* and *Peeping Tom* are viewed as monsters by the films' viewers, it is because by such a projection we can expel and exorcize what is uncannily monstrous in us. This is why the representation of Glover is so ambivalent and double-sided.

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[13] Cf. Ferenczi, 1955; Abraham and Torok, 1994.

[14] Cf. Abraham & Torok; also see Derrida's discussions on the "exquisite corpse" in his "*Fors*: The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok," Forwards, trans. Barbara Johnson, to *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, By Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, trans. Nicholas T. Rand, pp. xi- xlviii. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

On the one hand his amputation and his disproportionate desire add up to give us a monstrous picture of the disabled—as if we had not been and would never be in the infantile position characteristic of the same voraciousness and helplessness. On the other hand, Glover's monstrosity cannot but appear human: the melancholy on his face, therefore, testifies to an unconscious loss in our disidentification. It is insofar as we introject the exquisite corpse that Glover—our projection—has to kill; it is insofar as we enjoy transcending our monstrosity that Glover enjoys transcending his disability. After all, the answer to Metz's question why people still go to the cinema, can be answered, admittedly naively, but not nonsensically: to enjoy. We go to the cinema to enjoy both the pleasures ascribed to us and those outside our reach—the "per-versive" pleasures.

The pleasures of film-viewing are not only subversive but *per-ver*-sive. As mentioned, the theory of surrogatehood is definitely at play, but it is not a sufficient account of film spectatorship. One way to rethink this surrogatehood is to look at its "soft core" images: I use this term because, to some extent, the images we have seen in *Suite 16* are similar to those in *hard core* pornographic films. In *Suite 16*, the hard-core-ness is dissolved and softened by its attempts at artistry, which can be detected from its 'academic-ness' in the exposure of frames (as Jacques Aumont notes, the device of overframing or reframing is a "hangover from academic expression") as well as the stardom of the cast, especially the internationally acclaimed actor Pete Postlethwaite. In *Suite 16*, as in pornography, we see the close-ups of flesh, of the arching of female bodies, and we hear the sounds of their moaning, the clash of two bodies, and even the rattle of the bed springs (the acoustic verisimilitude). In what way is it different from pornography? In such a reverse parody, our viewing experience returns us to "pervert" the prejudice against pornography: if pornography compensates for the inactiveness and impotency inscribed to the viewing position with perverse viewing pleasures, *Suite 16* makes both the viewing pleasures and the impotency a pain. While pornography-viewing can be a form of fore-play, the fore-pleasure of watching *Suite 16* is such that it suspends such pleasures connected exclusively with the deed itself to fixate only on the act of watching. Therefore, although Glover is placed in another room and his pleasure has to be mediated through surrogatehood, he is actually present in a sense; he is what Chris' fabulous performance is intended for. The present-ness of Glover, interestingly, reverses the ostensible opposition of potency and disability. For Chris the ensuing love-making is not so much about sex as about performance, which is an indication that the erotic scenes in the film are closer to those of strip-dancing than to those of hard-core pornography.[15] We may recall that without Glover's presentness, i.e., before Chris ever knows that Glover is watching, he just sits on the bed with the prostitute, bored and *impotent*. It is Glover's present-ness that energizes him, and it is for Glover that he *performs* (in double sense of the word) sex; later on, it is for Glover that he gropes Helen, touching her in front of Glover, to show that he can do what Glover can only watch. This surrogatehood binds them together, as if Glover's final act of killing Helen is just to complete what Chris leaves behind in their collaboration. It is, in a word, for the sake of the view that Chris *acts* (in both senses of the word). Who, we might ask, is the one really disabled?

Our viewing position differs from Glover's in that we are not present in any mediated way. The soft-core images foreclose the "money shot," so unlike Glover whose potency consists primarily in his power to buy, we pay *not* to see what we desire to see— *not* to enjoy the "climax." By digressing our capital from the one-way street of consumptive pleasures, we create a circuit of unconsummated yet insurmountable desires.

If the image of disability becomes a perfect allegory of such a paradoxical law of desire, it is because in real life we are all threatened by finitude. As much as the fourth wall reappears the moment when the lights in a cinema are on, so the omnipotence of spectatorship diminishes when we get up and walk away from the arm-chairs. The wheel-chaired spectator is a melancholic reminder of how impotent we still are in our seat of subjectivity, despite the per-versiveness of our desires.

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[15] Linda Williams in her book *Hard Core* makes the point that the differencebetween porn and the strip-dancing club lies in the characteristic of present-ness in the case of strip-dancing.

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DWARFS AS SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CYNICS AT THE COURT OF PHILIP IV OF SPAIN: A STUDY OF VELÁZQUEZ' PORTRAITS OF PALACE DWARFS

Catherine Closet-Crane

In 1644, Velázquez painted individual portraits of the court dwarfs Francisco Lezcano, Don Diego de Acedo and Sebastian de Morra. Now in the Prado Museum in Madrid, these portraits are believed to be those recorded in the 1701 inventory of the Torre de la Parada, the King's hunting lodge at El Pardo. They differ significantly from the then common genre of paintings depicting people with physical deformities. Velázquez did not portray the dwarfs as "human attractions" or grotesque entertainers but as individualized characters. Yet Enriqueta Harris wrote that the portraits of the dwarfs were not "suitable" subject matter to be seen in the company of Velázquez' painting *Philip IV Hunting the Wild Boar* (1635-37, London, National Gallery) and other paintings with classical themes displayed at the Torre (Harris 132). Contrary to her unfounded assertion, I argue that they were indeed suitable subjects, and that they were intended to be seen together with Velázquez' portraits of the Cynic philosopher Menippus and of Aesop the moralist (both 1636-40, Prado Museum), as well as with Rubens' portraits of the philosophers Democritus and Heraclitus (both 1635-37, Prado), which were then hanging at the Torre.[1]

In his portraits of the dwarfs Velázquez did not simply reaffirm the three men's humanity; he symbolically elevated them above their contemporary fellow men at court. In this article I demonstrate how Velázquez used Baroque rhetorical devices to identify the men Lezcano, De Acedo and De Morra, who happened to be dwarfs, with the philosophical tradition represented by the Greek Cynics. The

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[1] Rubens' paintings of the Greek philosophers and Velázquez' Aesop are briefly discussed by Antonio Domínguez Ortiz' in his *Velázquez* (New York: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989): 203-9.

conceits that Velázquez employed for his portraits of the dwarfs as well as the social commentary and the symbolic meaning embedded in these images have remained largely unnoticed by scholars who have mostly commented on the dwarfs' physical abnormalities and speculated negatively about their mental capabilities. I will show how Velázquez manipulated Baroque visual rhetoric and the device of *concettismo* to characterize the dwarfs as hermits in the tradition of the Desert Fathers of Egypt, in order to further characterize them as Cynics in the classical sense of the term.

I. Analysis of the portraits of Lezcano, de Acedo and de Morra.

The Dwarf Francisco Lezcano "El Vizcaíno" (oil on canvas, 107x83 cm, ca. 1644. Prado) is the portrait of a dwarf who is recorded to have entered the service of Prince Baltazar Carlos in 1634 and died in 1649 after the death of the prince. Lezcano's arms and legs are short and his forehead and nose are prominent features; those physical characteristics are those of achondroplasia which is also called short limb dwarfism.[2]

The focus in Velázquez' portrait is on the man's face and hands which are illuminated by sunlight coming from the left behind the viewer. Lezcano is holding what could be a deck of cards or a very small book. A number of authors have interpreted his facial expression and his fingering of the object as the demeanor of a mentally deficient individual.[3] I find this shallow interpretation profoundly shocking as Velázquez' portrait of Lezcano gives no clues as to the dwarf's mental development and intelligence. Lezcano's attitude can merely be interpreted as pensive as if he were pausing while in a conversation with his portraitist; and there is perhaps a trace of arrogance or amusement in the tilt of his head.

Lezcano is seated on a promontory, his figure standing out against a background rendered in loose painterly strokes of dark

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[2] Of the hundreds of forms of dwarfism, achondroplasia is the most common and the least debilitating. Representations of dwarfs presenting the characteristics of achondroplasia are recorded throughout the history of art as far back as the Old Kingdom of Ancient Egypt.

[3] As reported by Ortiz citing the 1828 Prado Catalogue and the Velázquez scholar Moragas: 218, 222.

In 1957, the German author E. Tietze Conrat wrote: "Nino de Vallecas does not look as if he could learn anything . . ." (*Dwarfs and Jesters in Art*, trans. Elizabeth Osborne. New York: Phaidon, 1957): 30-31.

earthen browns. Without realistically depicting geological features Velázquez implies an overhang, a rocky outcropping and a distant mountainous landscape. Space directly behind Lezcano seems to recede into the depths of a cave. In the portrait of the dwarf, the rock overhang acts a visual metaphor for the hermit's cave. [4]

When one compares the landscapes in Velázquez' portrait of Lezcano and his *Saint Anthony Abbot and Saint Paul the Hermit* (ca. 1634, Prado), it is obvious that their composition follows the rules of the same iconographic tradition. Both St. Paul and St. Anthony were *anchorites* and became the first of the Christian hermits known as the Egyptian Desert Fathers.[5] *Anchorites* were early Christian ascetics who from the end of the second century onwards refused to fulfill their civic duties and exiled themselves from cities to live in the Egyptian desert. Renouncing their possessions and abandoning civilized conventions, *anchorites* embraced a lifestyle which was similar to that of the Greek Cynics although their ideological pursuits were ultimately different.[6] I propose that in Lezcano's portrait Velázquez made use of the landscape as a pictorial rhetorical device to allude to the philosophical tradition of the Greek Cynics. Exploiting Baroque *concettismo* and adapting the literary device of metalepsis, Velázquez compressed in Lezcano's portrait a sequence of metaphors and allusions to make a social comparison between the dwarf court entertainer and the Greek Cynics via the visual allusion to the eremitic tradition. By rejecting the established social order, the early Christian hermits sought purity, while the Cynics sought freedom from restraint by assuming that their "special mission was to rebuke rulers and public officials" and that their special privilege was to exercise freedom of speech.[7] In the case of the court dwarfs it is not so much that they rejected society and its established order but that because of their deformity they were confined in a microcosm where they were given freedom of speech as their special privilege in order to amuse the court.

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[4] Ortiz citing Gallego mentions the appearance of this geological feature but he does not pursue his analysis further: "the cave or shelter is a propitious setting for meditation, of the kind that Ribera's hermits usually seek": 221.

[5] St. Paul the Hermit died ca. 342 A.D. St. Anthony Abbot, Anthony of Egypt, founded his first hermitage in the desert wilderness in 305 A.D. and died ca. 356 A.D.

[6] Like the Cynics, the anchorites were rebels; in the cities they would riot to criticize the ways of life of their contemporaries and to attract followers. In the Fourth century, encouraged by Theophilus, anchorites marched to Alexandria to destroy pagan temples and build churches in their place.

[7] Farraud Sayre, *Diogenes of Sinope*, (Baltimore: J.H. Frust, 1938): 7-13. For a discussion of Greek Cynicism and the early Christians see Gerald F. Downing, *Cynics and Christian Origins* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992).

Lezcano's deformity had gained him the social privilege of becoming a member of the king's entourage and of observing life at court. His apparently innocuous role of court entertainer gave him a powerful intellectual weapon in the form of freedom of speech. Lezcano could mock and criticize the ills of court society through play, parody and satire. The dwarf enjoyed the brash freedom of speech that the Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope demonstrated in his legendary interaction with Alexander. A conceptual link is thus established between Lezcano, Menippus the Cynic and Aesop the moralist who enjoyed that same freedom of speech.

The Dwarf Don Diego de Acedo, 'El Primo' (oil on canvas, 107x82 cm, 1644. Prado) portrays a court secretary suffering from diastrophic dysplasia also called proportionate dwarfism. Technically, Diego de Acedo was not a dwarf but a midget; he was short but normally proportioned. De Acedo is recorded to have been present at the court of Philip IV from 1635 until his death in 1660; he held the position of King's Undersecretary and Keeper of the Seal. According to Enriqueta Harris, the portrait was painted at Fraga in 1644.[8] Velázquez might have painted the Undersecretary while he was recording details of the battlefield to recount the victory over the French for the royal annals.

Like Lezcano, Diego de Acedo is portrayed in the outdoors seated on a promontory. De Acedo is dressed like a gentleman of the court and wears a hat which is a sign of his elevated status. The gaze of Diego de Acedo is impenetrable; he seems weary and lost in his thoughts perhaps pondering upon the necessity of wars. To the right of the sitter, faint light colored horizontal strokes allude to a mountain ridge. The atmospheric depiction of a very distant landscape does not betray the small stature of Diego de Acedo; dignified and rather princely, he appears to dominate this natural environment. The presence around him of books, inkwell and pen seems incongruous but these objects have multifarious narrative functions. On the most basic level, these attributes of de Acedo's office are a reference to the dwarf's social standing. The objects are also visual cues that make the viewer aware of de Acedo's deformity: the man's tiny hands are resting on an enormous book open in his lap that functions as a proportioning device. Lastly, in the otherwise desert landscape, the books are a visual metaphor that alludes to the iconography of St.

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[8] After the defeat of the French, Philip IV traveled to the battle site at Fraga with de Acedo and Velázquez in order to be portrayed in the same grand manner as his victorious ancestor Charles V was painted by Titian after the Battle of Mühlberg. (Harris 113).

Jerome and to classical portraits of philosophers. By adapting the literary device *of mise-en-abîme*, Velázquez was able to associate de Acedo to the hermit saint and the ‘Desert Fathers’; the erudite viewer, in the context of the Torre de la Parada, could take the *concetto* further and connect de Acedo and the Greek philosophers.

The Dwarf Sebastian de Morra (oil on canvas, 106x81 cm, 1644. Prado) is the portrait of a short-limbed dwarf with achondroplasia. Sebastian de Morra came to Madrid in 1643 from the service of the Cardinal Infante Ferdinand to the service of Prince Baltasar Carlos; he died in 1649. According to the literature de Morra was Baltasar Carlos’ buffoon.

De Morra’s figure is set against a non-descript dark background varying from light brown to greenish brown. The expensive white lace collar and cuffs of his outfit bring attention to his face and hands. His red cape trimmed with gold creates a dramatic contrast and acts as a *repoussoir* by bringing the focus on De Morra’s face. The dwarf would seem to be “floating” except for the play of light which allows the viewer to make out the horizontal plane on which the man is sitting. This type of background is atypical of the idea of Baroque space as plenum; De Morra seems to exist in a vacuum which is filled with his psychological presence. Sebastian de Morra looks straight ahead. His stunted legs project forward resting on a horizontal plane which brings him eye level with the viewer. De Morra’s hands, whose fingers cannot be seen, rest on his sides close to his waist. The body language of the dwarf expresses defiance and contained anger or revolt. His grave expression, his somber eyes and his penetrating gaze have a dramatic impact. De Morra remains inexorably remote in the shadows of an empty space and symbolizes both the quintessential hermit and Cynic who have completely detached themselves from the physical world.

II. Velázquez’ psychological characterization of dwarfs as Cynics

During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, there was a renewed interest in the portrayal of individualized types both in literature as well as in character and genre paintings.[9] Characterization typical

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[9] In Spanish literature: Quevedo, *La Vida del Buscón* (1626, “The Life of a Scoundrel”). In French literature: La Bruyère, *Les Caractères ou les moeurs de ce siècle,* first published 1688, “The Characters, or Manners of the Age.” Second publication with the addition in 1699 of *Les Caractères de Theophraste traduits du grec* (“The Characters of Theophrastus translated from the Greek”).

of Hellenistic art and classical comedy was transmitted to Spain of the Golden Age through the treatises of Theophrastus (third century B.C.E.). In the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Spanish writer Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645) wrote *La Vida del Buscón Llamado Paco* (The Life of a Scoundrel Named Paco) a picaresque novel which offered a corrosive vision of society as seen through the eyes of a vagabond characterized as a scoundrel. As genre paintings Velázquez' *bodegones* are characterizations of popular types, they are the visual equivalent of Quevedo's literary depictions of vernacular Spanish life. Like the writer of the picaresque novel Velázquez used rhetorical devices to introduce different levels of meaning in the narrative of his genre paintings. In appearance Velázquez' *Old Woman Frying Eggs* (1618. National Gallery, Edinburgh) and his *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (1618. National Gallery, London) are both kitchen scenes; a closer analysis reveals in the background of *Christ in the House of Martha and Mar*y the religious scene that gave the painting its title. The device used to introduce the religious narrative is a visual *mise-en-abîme*: a picture within the picture destined to an erudite audience.

Velázquez' portraits of Lezcano, de Acedo and de Morra have in common with his *bodegones* the use of rhetorical devices. In the portraits of the three men Velázquez' use of *concettismo* is complex and involves educated imaginative leaps from the visual to the conceptual. It is only by studying the portraits of the dwarfs as a group and in the context of the Torre de La Parada alongside the portraits of Menippus and Aesop that one is able to reconstruct the narrative that reveals the ideological message contained in the paintings. In the portrait of Lezcano, there is a specific pictorial allusion to the lives of hermits and to St Paul's cave. In the portrait of Don Diego de Acedo the allusion to the cave is replaced by the conceit of the hermit as sage in the iconographic tradition of paintings of St. Jerome at work. In the portrait of Sebastian de Morra the alienation from social life and mundane pursuits is further abstracted through the total lack of a recognizable environment; Velázquez presents De Morra as existing only in an intensely emotional psychological realm (inside the cave of the hermit/philosopher).

The particularity of these three portraits resides in the fact that the dwarfs appear to us as Velázquez saw them: not as the grotesque court entertainers or buffoons of Renaissance paintings, not as curiosities, but as individualized characters sufficiently removed from the social environment of the court to be visually characterized as hermits, and psychologically and ideologically characterized as Cynics. I propose that in the portraits of the dwarfs Lezcano, de Acedo and de Morra, Velázquez was alluding to the freedom of speech and intellectual stance of the Greek Cynics, a minor Socratic school founded in the fourth century B.C.E. who favored diatribe, humor and satire over philosophical argumentation.

The Greek Cynics believed in living life according to what nature had intended. They were noted for their austere lives and their scorn for social customs and conventions. Because there were similarities in the ways of life and ideology of later Cynics and of the first Christians, the Greek Cynics are considered to be the precursors of the *anchorites* and of the Desert Fathers of the fourth century. This helps explain why Velázquez characterized the dwarfs as hermits; it also refutes Enriqueta Harris' proposition that the portraits of the dwarfs did not belong in the company of such distinguished Greek philosophers as Democritus, Heraclitus, Menippus and Aesop in the Torre de la Parada.

Menippus of Gadara was a third-century B.C.E. philosopher who followed the Cynic philosophy of Diogenes of Sinope. He was a slave by birth and later purchased his freedom. Menippus developed a literary genre to criticize contemporary institutions, conventions and ideas in a mocking satiric style that combined prose and verse. This literary genre was revived in the sixteenth century and became extremely fashionable in Golden Age Spain; it was called Menippean satire.

According to Herodotus, Aesop was a slave who lived in the sixth century B.C.E. He gained freedom from his master and went to Babylon as a riddle solver to King Licurgus. Aesop was the author of moralizing fables featuring beasts, which he used as political arguments.[10] While there is no record of the physical appearance of Menippus, Aesop was reputed to be ugly but wise and tradition described him to be a dwarf.[11]

At Pacheco's Academia in Seville Velázquez interacted with painters, poets and writers and was educated in the study of letters. Velázquez was an erudite man; he read the classics as well as the works in prose and verse of his contemporaries. It is very likely that in Madrid he met the Castilian humanist and satirist Francisco de

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[10] The first known collection of his fables was produced by Demetrius Phalareus in the fourth century B.C.E. In the seventeenth century, Aesop's fables inspired the fables of Jean de La Fontaine.

[11] The central medallion of a kylix from the fifth century B.C.E. depicting Aesop with a fox portrays the moralist as a dwarf with achondroplasia holding a walking stick (The Vatican, Gregorian Museum); it corroborates the tradition.

Quevedo who was the master of a complicated form of expression called *concettismo* depending on puns and elaborated conceits.[12] In such a cultural context, it is plausible that Velázquez saw the analogy between the Greek philosopher Menippus, the moralist Aesop and the palace dwarfs who also used mockery and satire in their social function. Thus it makes sense that Velázquez would chose *concettismo* and metaphor to characterize the dwarfs as seventeenth-century Cynics. It can be argued that the painter translated visually the rhetorical form of the Menippean satire to make his point. In his naturalistic portraits of the dwarfs Lezcano and de Acedo, Velázquez painted "the truth" without embellishments; at the same time he quoted a religious iconographic model bringing together disjointed images of the dwarf and the hermit. In the larger context of the pictorial program for the decoration of the Torre de la Parada, the portraits of the dwarfs were juxtaposed to the portraits of Greek thinkers, thus creating a new set of apparently disjointed images. Armed with the knowledge (available through translations from the Greek) of the ideological continuity from the Greek Cynics to the early Christians and the Desert Fathers, the erudite viewer could reconstruct Velázquez' story.

The dwarfs Lezcano, de Acedo and de Morra were at the court of Philip IV primarily because of their deformity; it was for them a better alternative than life outside the court. They were never enslaved but their predicament was similar to that of Menippus and Aesop; their role was to keep company to the royal family in exchange for being well fed and clothed. Lezcano and de Morra in particular, had to entertain and amuse the little prince. The dominant mode of cultural production during the Golden Age was the burlesque mode (Contag 56); the dwarfs and the buffoons provided the court with an element of burlesque because of their deviation from the norm. Velázquez saw the burlesque of the situation differently; prisoners of deformed bodies, the palace dwarfs had in his eyes acquired a noble status because they had the intellectual freedom of philosophers, poets and writers. They could caricature, mock and openly criticize what they observed in their environment. They had unrestrained freedom of speech because they were thought to be fools. Their satire could be blunt and more direct than Baroque writers' satirical prose and poems. The writers had to navigate cautiously in order to keep their

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[12] For discussions of Velázquez, Góngora and Quevedo refer to Lía Schwartz' "Velázquez and two poets of the Baroque" (*The Cambridge Companion to Velázquez,* ed. Suzanne Stratton Pruitt. Cambridge: Cambridge University. Press, 2002). For further readings: Ignacio Navarette, "Góngora, Quevedo, and the End of Petrarchism in Spain" (*Orphans of Petrarch. Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

patronage. The dwarfs were “part of the family”; at worst the dwarfs could be reprimanded but mostly they were for the king a truthful if impertinent voice unencumbered by the weight of social etiquette. Following in the footsteps of Diogenes of Sinope the dwarfs were the king’s friends and, like Velázquez his painter, they were the only people in his entourage the king could trust to give him an uncensored view of reality.

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PERSONAJES DISCAPACITADOS EN LA LITERATURA INFANTIL Y JUVENIL

Cristina Cañamares

La discapacidad ha sido un tema recurrente en la literatura infantil desde hace mucho tiempo e incluso en la literatura infantil de corte popular (tanto en el cancionero infantil como en los cuentos populares) ya encontramos personajes discapacitados. En este artículo veremos cómo se ha retratado a estos personajes y si la forma de presentarlos ha variado a lo largo del tiempo; para ello hemos revisado obras infantiles publicadas durante los siglos XIX y XX.

Según Louis Keith, en el siglo XIX los personajes discapacitados se utilizaban para servir a dos objetivos: crear pena y caridad o llevar soterrada una enseñanza moralizante ya que la minusvalía suele ser un castigo ante un mal comportamiento y a menudo el relato termina con la milagrosa recuperación tanto física como moral del protagonista. Esta tendencia refleja la ideología imperante en el siglo XIX: el Patriarcalismo, un proteccionismo absoluto, pues se suponía que eran seres que no podían cuidar de sí mismos.

Hay una serie de características que se repetirán hasta la saciedad en varios relatos con personajes discapacitados del siglo XIX, y que —en algunos casos— seguirán reproduciéndose en obras literarias del siglo XX: la forma estereotipada de presentar a estos personajes, la ausencia del padre, la superprotección de los enfermos, la intervención de otros personajes como piezas fundamentales en el proceso de rehabilitación y el desenlace con la muerte o con la cura "milagrosa" del protagonista. Normalmente es un narrador omnisciente en tercera persona quien nos describe a estos personajes bien como un ser angelical y un ejemplo de resignación que se utiliza para crear en el lector un hondo sentimiento de compasión, pena y caridad, o bien como un personaje rebelde que sufre durante sus años de adolescencia graves enfermedades como castigo a su mal comportamiento o al de sus padres. Estos personajes sufren en sí mismos las consecuencias de los actos de los demás y pagan con sus enfermedades las faltas o los pecados cometidos.

En la forma dramática de presentar a estos personajes en ocasiones los retratan como “diferentes” a los de su especie (Haberl 23). En primer lugar el autor presenta un grupo en el que todos son exactamente iguales, para añadir más adelante que si observamos con atención vemos a uno distinto a los demás que es aquel que presenta una mella, un defecto, que lo distingue del resto de sus compañeros. Este modo de retratar a estos personajes es el que se utiliza en *El soldadito de plomo* de Andersen y en *El caballito que quería volar* de Marta Osorio. Andersen destaca a su protagonista como al que le falta una pierna y Marta Osorio a su caballo de tiovivo como al que tiene el cuello algo deforme y torcido. Esta insistente preocupación de que todos seamos iguales aparece en *Konrad o el niño que salió de una lata de conservas*, en el que se retrata el deseo de los adultos de tener hijos perfectos y se defiende la autonomía e individualidad de los niños contra la uniformidad.

Suele constatarse la ausencia de uno de los progenitores, normalmente el padre del personaje, que siempre está de viaje o que vive en otro lugar. Estas ausencias prolongadas del hogar se inician con la enfermedad del personaje discapacitado. Se produce una superprotección de los enfermos que en muchos de los casos lleva aparejada un aislamiento. Estos enfermos han estado sometidos a una férrea vigilancia por su estado de salud y no les han dejado hacer nada por sí mismos para que su enfermedad no empeorara. Esta situación provoca que estos personajes se crean capaces de hacer menos cosas de las que realmente pueden, y es que, en muchas ocasiones, estos enfermos están más limitados por causas emocionales que por físicas.

La mejoría del discapacitado comienza cuando cambia la visión que tiene sobre sí mismo y renuncia al rol de discapacitado gracias a la amistad que establece con otros personajes del relato (normalmente niños que cooperan en la rehabilitación del discapacitado y lo ayudan a salir de su aislamiento) y es que la enfermedad aparece como un periodo de sufrimiento e inmovilidad durante el que aprenden una “enseñanza moral”. El desenlace de la historia alterna entre una repentina (en ocasiones milagrosa) cura física que coincide con un cambio de actitud moral en el personaje y en otras ocasiones muere y pasa a ser ejemplo de sufrimiento y resignación para sus posibles lectores.

Durante el siglo XX han aparecido varias publicaciones que, más que Literatura Infantil, podríamos considerarlas libros informativos en los que los protagonistas reales cuentan su historia y enfatizan en sus necesidades y problemas para concienciar a la sociedad como en *People with Disabilities* o en *Living with Cerebral Palsy*. Tanto en estos libros informativos como en aquéllos que podemos considerar Literatura Infantil y Juvenil, no es raro encontrar epílogos o prólogos que muestran a los lectores los problemas y necesidades de estos enfermos, informan sobre cómo podemos ayudarlos, denuncian la existencia de barreras arquitectónicas y llevan anexa listados de instituciones, glosarios con términos desconocidos e incluso algunos títulos incluyen una guía didáctica dirigida a padres y profesores sobre cómo utilizar el libro en cuestión.

Algunos títulos publicados durante el siglo XX perpetúan los usos que, sobre este tipo de personajes, se hacían en el siglo XIX como *Último curso en Torres de Mallory* (1951) o *Han raptado a Ney* (1972). Y además, en algunos casos, siguen reproduciéndose las características que hemos destacado anteriormente como reiterativas en la mayoría de los títulos del siglo XIX centrados en este tipo de personajes. Afortunadamente, a lo largo del siglo XX, han aparecido libros con imágenes positivas de la discapacidad que defienden la igualdad entre los discapacitados y el resto de personajes.

En la gran mayoría de los títulos sigue siendo un narrador omnisciente en tercera persona quien retrata al personaje discapacitado aunque también aparece la narración en primera persona como en *Voy a vivir* y en *La piedra de toque* por medio de la cual se intenta propiciar, aun más si cabe, la identificación del lector con el protagonista de la historia. Muchos relatos son autobiográficos y es usual utilizar trasuntos literarios para contar vivencias personales del autor como sucede en *Los niños de los ojos cerrados* donde Lida Durdikova relata su personal descubrimiento de los sentidos junto a un grupo de niños ciegos. En otros casos se utiliza un narrador testigo que mantiene una relación muy cercana con nuestros protagonistas: su maestra en *Quisco, mi amigo*; uno de sus hermanos en *Un tiesto lleno de lápices*; o uno de sus hijos en *Daughter*. En el álbum ilustrado la descripción de estos personajes suele hacerse por medio de la ilustración que, en ocasiones, es el recurso que presenta exclusivamente esta información ya que el texto omite cualquier referencia a ello como sucede en *Seal Surfer* donde la ilustración de la última página es la que revela la discapacidad del protagonista.

En los relatos en los que aparece un personaje discapacitado, generalmente, éste es el protagonista de la historia. Está muy bien definido y se perfila desde la realidad de su mundo interior y de sus múltiples superaciones físicas o morales. Suele ser un niño de edad similar a la de su hipotético lector porque, en muchos casos, intentan provocar la identificación del lector con el protagonista. Únicamente podemos citar *El caballito que quería volar* y *Color de fuego* por ser animales sus protagonistas. En otras ocasiones este personaje es coprotagonista y aparece en muy pocas situaciones, casi siempre relacionadas con su enfermedad que se describe según una concepción tradicional de la discapacidad: cargada de ideas, creencias y prejuicios negativos y estereotipados. En otros libros —los menos— la discapacidad la sufre un personaje secundario como el padre del protagonista (*El estanque de las libélulas*) o uno de sus hermanos (*Un tiesto lleno de lápices*).

En la descripción de los discapacitados se alterna entre dos polos opuestos dependiendo de si se persigue crear empatía entre el lector y estos personajes o si se intenta promover sentimientos como paternalismo, pena, compasión o rechazo en los lectores. Así pues los títulos que promueven imágenes positivas del discapacitado, rechazan los estereotipos asociados a sus dolencias y lo presentan como “uno de nosotros”; suelen enfatizar en el éxito del protagonista al que presentan como una persona que participa en la vida pública de una sociedad determinada en la que es aceptado plenamente. Por ejemplo, en las obras de Verna Wilkins se describe a los personajes discapacitados como personas normales que realizan acciones cotidianas como asistir a la boda de su hija en *Boots for a Bridesmaid* o ir con sus hijos al zoológico en *Are we there yet?*

Al contrario, los títulos que buscan la conmiseración del lector presentan al discapacitado como una carga, un sujeto inmerso en un ambiente de burla y de rechazo por parte de su entorno más cercano, e inciden en las dificultades y fracasos del protagonista para realizar cualquier actividad. Estos personajes suelen formar parte de familias rotas y la ausencia de uno de los progenitores —sobre todo del padre— comienza con la enfermedad del protagonista. Este comportamiento afecta seriamente al personaje discapacitado pues se siente culpable de esta situación. Podemos citar varios relatos en los que se produce el alejamiento del hogar del padre como en *Killing the demons*, *Watcher at the window*, *El verano de los cisnes, Las palabras mágicas, A trompicones, Senén* o *Delfines en la ciudad*. Por ejemplo en *El verano de los cisnes*, el padre del protagonista trabaja fuera de casa y desde que el niño enfermó únicamente visita a su familia los fines de semana:

> Todas esas fotografías de un padre feliz y de sus adoradas hijas fueron hechas antes de la enfermedad de Charlie y de la muerte de su madre. Después, no había ni una sola fotografía de la familia, ni alegre, ni triste. (Byars, *El verano de los cisnes* 69)

En la relación de los discapacitados con otros personajes se alterna entre dos posturas antagónicas. Por un lado, aparecen personajes que desarrollan acciones de rechazo ante el discapacitado, a quien someten a continuas vejaciones e insultos (en *La cicatriz* o en *La gorra*) y, muchas veces, el personaje que más atacaba al discapacitado se convierte al final del relato en su mejor amigo como sucede en *Andrés y el niño nuevo*, *Cool Simon* y en *Killing the demons*. Por otro lado sigue reproduciéndose como tradición heredada del siglo XIX la figura de otros niños que ayudan al discapacitado en su recuperación, o al menos, establecen vínculos amistosos con él y consiguen que salga de su aislamiento. En ocasiones también aparece el tema de la superprotección de los enfermos por la que el protagonista cree ser incapaz de hacer cualquier cosa por sí mismo como en *Tillie McGuillie's fantastical chair*.

El continuo trato degradante hacia el discapacitado que aparece en algunos títulos hace que este personaje se vuelva hosco y huraño. En *La cicatriz* y en *A trompicones* los respectivos protagonistas, debido a sus problemas físicos no cesan de mortificarse y acomplejarse, hasta que el suicidio de sus hermanos los hace salir de su estado y comprender que los problemas de los demás son tan importantes como los suyos. En un intento de proteger a estos niños de las burlas de sus compañeros, las personas de su entorno y sobre todo sus hermanos suelen llevar una vida muy solitaria y rehúyen la compañía y amistad de otros niños. Finalmente, la intervención de un personaje que los ayuda a cuidar del discapacitado les hará salir de su aislamiento, como sucede en *Alas de dragón* y en *El verano de los cisnes*. Los chicos que asisten al personaje discapacitado lo ayudan en su recuperación física y anímica, pues en muchas obras se sigue otorgando una gran importancia al malestar emocional, así que únicamente cuando reconocen sus problemas es cuando sus amigos los ayudan a salir de su aislamiento y pueden rehabilitarse. En otras ocasiones la recuperación se produce cuando el discapacitado se preocupa de cuidar a otro enfermo en peores circunstancias que él: un manzano en *The little apple tree*, un perro en *Han raptado a Ney*, un caballo en *A pony in distress* u otros discapacitados en *Killing the demons*.

Muchas obras publicadas en el siglo XX alaban el trabajo que, junto a las personas del entorno más próximo al enfermo, realizan algunas instituciones en la rehabilitación y apoyo de estos niños. Como norma general, al principio de relatos como *Stop pretending* o *Daughter,* los personajes se niegan a aceptar cualquier ayuda que provenga de fuera del entorno familiar pero al final de la historia acaban aceptándola ya que se presenta como más valiosa que la que los familiares ofrecen. En *No os llevéis a Teddy* o *Delfines en la ciudad* se defiende que lo mejor para estos enfermos es estar atendido y rodeado por personas que tienen sus mismos problemas para que aprendan a valerse por sí solos. De igual forma el personaje discapacitado rechaza las prótesis o sillas de ruedas al principio de las historias para finalmente aceptarlas y comprobar que aumentan su calidad de vida y le permiten integrarse en la sociedad. Las ayudas técnicas que aparecen abarcan desde unas gafas en *Papirofobia*, a una mano ortopédica o un coche adaptado a discapacitados en *Cricketer*.

Generalmente estas historias se sitúan en un contexto actual pero en nuestro corpus hay un par de relatos que se enmarcan en épocas históricas como *Muletas* de Peter Härtling y *La fortaleza* de Mollie Hunter. El primero discurre en la Europa inmediatamente posterior a la Segunda Guerra Mundial y el otro en la Bretaña celta. Ambos están protagonizados por un personaje que se siente inútil para los suyos porque, tras ser herido en el frente, ya no puede luchar en la guerra. Al final del relato demuestra ser de gran utilidad a la comunidad de la que forma parte.

En muchas obras del siglo XX el deseado final feliz de la historia sigue siendo la cura más o menos “milagrosa” del protagonista aunque en otras ocasiones esta feliz resolución se ofrece como la aceptación de su nueva vida bien porque ha vuelto a casa tras pasar por diversas instituciones y ha aprendido a vivir en el “mundo real” como en *Mine for keeps* o en *Welcome home, Jellybean*, o bien porque ha renunciado a sus anteriores aficiones e intereses y los ha cambiado por otros como en *Retrato del sábado* y *Lejos del polvo*.

Ya hemos comentado que algunos títulos publicados en el siglo XX siguen la ideología imperante en el siglo XIX como *Último curso en Torres de Mallory* y *Han raptado a Ney*. Torres de Mallory es un internado inglés para señoritas en el que, además de las materias y deportes propios de la escuela, enseñan a sus alumnas (y posibles lectoras) los valores sociales más en consonancia con los decimonónicos que con los imperantes en su época. A lo largo de la historia se castiga el egoísmo de Gwen, el orgullo de Jo, la incorregibilidad de June y la desobediencia de Amanda. En el ámbito español *Han raptado a Ney* de María Marcela Sánchez Coquillat retoma los usos que, sobre este tipo de personajes, se hacían en el siglo XIX, pues la descripción de la niña protagonista provoca en los otros personajes y probablemente en el lector, sentimientos muy en boga en el siglo XIX: lástima y caridad.

Otros títulos publicados en el siglo XX retoman estas creencias falsas o prejuicios, pero para combatirlos y, al mismo tiempo, ofrecen información sobre las dolencias que sufren los personajes como en *El camino del arco iris* y en *La hija de la mañana*, criticando y desmitificando las ideas preconcebidas en torno a los enfermos mentales y la epilepsia, respectivamente. Otros títulos denuncian la situación de los discapacitados —*El mundo de Ben Lighthart*—, la existencia de barreras arquitectónicas que limitan el acceso de estas personas a diversos establecimientos e instituciones públicas —*Going shopping* y en *Clo and the albatros*—, la crueldad de algunas personas —*Las palabras mágicas*— o la denuncia social en *Paulina* (Cañamares, "El personaje minusválido en la LIJ" 477-484).

En ocasiones los personajes discapacitados, lejos de utilizarse para denunciar una situación dada, sirven para adentrarnos en historias de misterio pues, en ellas, estos protagonistas, al tener mermadas ciertas capacidades, han desarrollado otras "habilidades" como tener sensaciones que pasan desapercibidas para los demás en *Secret Heart*, juzgar a las personas por lo que realmente son y no por su apariencia exterior en *El mundo de Ben Lighthart* o comunicarse con fantasmas *En la oscuridad*. En cuanto al tipo de discapacidad que aparece en las obras de nuestro corpus podemos destacar cuatro grupos: física, psíquica, sensorial y enfermedades. La discapacidad física ha servido como motivo en el 55% de los títulos a los que hemos de añadir aquellos que presentan personajes que, aun presentando problemas físicos, éstos no constituyen su principal barrera a la integración como, por ejemplo, los personajes que sufren parálisis cerebral a quienes hemos contemplado como discapacitados psíquicos.

En importancia (un 17% y un 16%, respectivamente) le siguen la discapacidad psíquica (donde incluimos desde la parálisis cerebral a la depresión) y la sensorial. Dentro de esta última destaca la gran cantidad de relatos centrados en personajes con algún tipo de ceguera y los que sufren problemas auditivos. En el resto de las obras de nuestro corpus —el 12%— la problemática que se presenta es más variada y aparecen personajes con defectos físicos —cicatrices (*La cicatriz*) o jorobas (*Chepita*)—, libros centrados en un periodo de hospitalización, enfermedades de difícil curación —poliomelitis (*Jugar con fuego)*, epilepsia (*La hija de la mañana*, *¡Qué más da!* o *Loco como un pájaro),* eneuresis (*Las palabras mágicas),* microcefalia (*Los sueños de Bruno)* Alzheimer *(Daughter)* o cáncer (*La gorra*).

La mayoría de estos títulos se dirigen a niños con edades comprendidas entre los 12 y los 14 años. A los primeros lectores sólo les destinan un pequeño porcentaje que va aumentando progresivamente a medida que se incrementa la edad del lector hasta los 12 y 14 años (que es cuando más libros centrados en esta problemática aparecen) para que vuelvan a caer los porcentajes en títulos dirigidos a lectores mayores de 14 años. Esta diferente proporción entre los grupos de edad se debe en gran parte a una censura que se ejerce por ocultamiento o indiferencia ante este tema.

Podemos concluir este artículo afirmando que la lectura en general y la literatura infantil en particular, es uno de los métodos más eficaces para la transmisión de actitudes y valores y permite la formación y/o modificación de creencias, actitudes y opiniones. Aunque algunos de los títulos publicados en el siglo XX perpetúan los usos que, sobre los discapacitados, se hacían en el siglo XIX, generalmente, se suelen utilizar para enfatizar en la similitud que hay entre este tipo de personajes y los demás o para criticar el trato malsano que sufren los discapacitados por los otros personajes. Este cambio en el tratamiento de los personajes revela el paso de un pensamiento proteccionista (patriarcalista) típico del siglo XIX a un pensamiento "normalizador" que proclama la integración del discapacitado en su entorno.

Cuando aparece un personaje discapacitado, éste es el protagonista de la historia y en menos ocasiones es el coprotagonista o un personaje secundario. En su descripción se intenta provocar la identificación del lector tanto por la forma de retratarlo (de edad similar a la del receptor de la obra) como por la utilización de la narración en primera persona. Se suele retratar al personaje discapacitado al modo decimonónico: de forma dramática, dependiente de los demás y revestido de bondad extrema. Otro tópico que se repite continuamente es la búsqueda de un culpable pues la discapacidad sigue viéndose como un castigo "divino" ante un mal comportamiento o un pecado cometido por sí mismos o por sus padres.

En estos títulos aparece como coprotagonista otro niño que comparte la situación y facilita modos de superarla. Estos niños son creativos, abiertos, con una singular capacidad de comprensión y con mucho de fantasía: Heidi, Paulina, Sara o Paloma y sus hermanos. También aparecen como coprotagonistas la madre y los hermanos. El padre muy raras veces, porque desde que comenzó la enfermedad del protagonista vive fuera del hogar.

En muchas ocasiones el trato degradante y las continuas burlas que sufren los personajes discapacitados hacen que se vuelvan hoscos y huraños, incluso en ocasiones, los miembros de la familia del discapacitado, en un intento de proteger al protagonista de un posible trato indigno, llevan una vida muy solitaria hasta que alguien les ayuda a salir de su aislamiento.

Por otro lado, si el esquema general de las narraciones infantiles es presentar a un personaje con la fórmula de los cuentos tradicionales que vive una serie de aventuras o pruebas y termina con el restablecimiento del héroe y el premio final, alternando de la dependencia a la independencia; en los relatos protagonizados por niños minusválidos este paradigma se altera radicalmente, pues al final de la aventura el niño vuelve a casa desfallecido o muy enfermo y en lugar de ser más independiente pasa a una dependencia más acentuada como sucede en *No os llevéis a Teddy* y en *El verano de los cisnes*.

Actualmente la literatura infantil se utiliza cada vez más para tratar muchos temas transversales y la enseñanza de actitudes y valores. Tras el "boom" de los 80 es en los últimos años cuando más libros centrados en la discapacidad se han publicado aunque la presencia de estos personajes sigue siendo escasa y vemos que la mayoría de los títulos que forman nuestro corpus de estudio se centran en la discapacidad motora y la sensorial (problemas visuales). ¿Nos harán más solidarios?

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AFTERWORD: THE MAYAGÜEZ CONFERENCE ON THE DISCOURSE OF DISABILITY REVISITED, TWELVE YEARS LATER

Nandita Batra

It is with considerable pleasure that I put together this special edition on the discourse of disability for *Atenea*, the journal of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. Twelve years ago, in March 1993, our campus hosted the first conference ever to be held on disability and the arts. Although we were extremely pleased to have our venture described as "ground-breaking" and "seminal," we were at the time unaware of the impact that it would have in the coming years. When Pierre-Etienne Cudmore and I (the coordinators) started planning the conference, in January 1992, our aims were ambitious but modest. Our stated goal—free from a specific theoretic perspective—was to unite the global and the local, and thus to raise issues and questions about the discourse of disability in both general and specific contexts. In this sense, certainly, the conference was most successful in that it attracted international participants from various countries—Canada, France, Greece, India, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, and the United States—and did indeed produce an impact on both the global academic community as well as the local community on the island. We had made a determined effort not to focus on one at the expense of the other, and holding the conference on an island that is bilingual and (at least) tri-cultural highlighted some of these issues. When we coined the title "The Discourse of Disability,"[1] we felt it would not translate into Spanish. The Spanish title we chose for the conference, "Congreso Otras Habilidades," was, therefore, an independent title and not a translation. The

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[1] It later struck me that the title echoed Valentine's advice to Silvia to "leave off discourse of disability" in Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Act II Sc. iv), but this echo was quite unintentional —our goal had been, of course, to explore rather than "leave off" such a discourse.

complexities of the bilingual issues that we encountered mirrored the cultural complexities of the discourse(s) of disability when seen in a global light, making us aware that there was no *one* discourse of disability.

In keeping with our aim to unite the general and the specific, we attempted to bring together not only artists of international renown and academics from a wide variety of disciplines but also local individuals and non-academics who could lend their own expertise to the discussions on the subject of disability. The cultural events of the conference—a book exhibit, a theatrical performance of Gillian Plowman's "Cecily," a film festival of popular and documentary films about disability, and a musical performance—were integral parts of the conference. The Mayor of the city of Mayagüez, José Guillermo Rodríguez, gave us his full support, providing the city's Yagüez Theatre to us for a free violin concert by Henry Hutchinson Negrón and Luz Negrón de Hutchinson. The concert featured works by composers with disabilities, and was followed by a reception at the Town Hall, hosted by the Mayor.

The conference therefore successfully addressed the discourse of disability in its widest sense. What had initially appeared to be circumscription—the initial proposal we gave the University Administration stated that "the conference would focus on the humanistic rather than the therapeutic aspects of disability"—proved to provide discursive expansion while demonstrating that the line could not always be drawn: today's humanism grows out of yesterday's therapy, and vice versa. These discussions took place in both the academic and the quotidian contexts, as we discovered that in spite of the recently passed ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), our campus was still far from accessible. Faced with the immediacy of a paucity of ramps, elevators, and wide-access bathrooms, and the absence of wheelchair-accessible transport, we were advised by many of our colleagues to call off the conference on the grounds that "This will end up being an embarrassment; our campus is simply not ready to host an event of this nature," but we decided we had to take this risk. At the time, they were right. One month before the conference we were indeed "not ready."

In the weeks immediately preceeding the conference, however, ramps were built, TTY machines were acquired, old bathrooms were modified and new ones were built, and vans were ordered. These were welcome but nonetheless not unexpected changes. Thus one of the goals of the conference—to create an immediate, local impact—saw prompt success. The wider and long-term impact of the conference was much less expected.

Several issues that have since then become key points in Disability Studies were confronted at the conference. To promote a genuine exchange of ideas, we decided not to hold any sessions simultaneously, and in addition to giving the conference a sense of intimacy that our participants valued, this decision contributed to the cross-cultural understanding we wanted the conference to generate. The participants adopted a wide range of perspectives to look at the complex ways in which art and disability have been interconnected. These multiple viewpoints allowed a full interpretation of the relationship between the two, and as conference organizers we did not adopt any one official ideological or theoretic position. By opening with Ved Mehta's keynote address, the first plenary session addressed the issues of the differing cultural attitudes towards disability in developed and developing countries, issues that Mehta illustrated by describing his own experiences. The session also raised the issue of whether separatism would promote or deter the rights of people with disabilities, and especially, whether a "separatist affiliation" in a disabled artist was desirable or not. Mehta, who was born in British India and has been blind since childhood, chose to dissociate himself from the separatist aspects of the disability rights movement. As an artist he believed that his blindness would be an integral part of his art were he writing an autobiography but would have no bearing on his work if he were writing, say, a biography of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India.

Not all members of the audience agreed with this position, and the papers that followed reflected the variety of positions and interpretations globally present. Following Mehta's address, Harlan Hahn's paper, "Toward an Aesthetics of Disability: Classical and Evolving Western Images," was a more radical endorsement of the separatist position, emphasizing the "intimate connection between disability and esthetic issues." Hahn foresaw the "eventual emergence of a 'disabilityst' perspective" comparable to those of the perspectives of feminism and ethnic minorities, and he endorsed the position that "viewpoints derived from extensive personal experience with disability could eventually have a significant impact on the canons of art and literature."

Several papers explored the intersections between disability, gender, and sexuality, again from a variety of perspectives. Chris Bullock's "Reflections on Blindness and Masculinity in Raymond Carver's 'Cathedral'" argued that in addition to the theme of "figurative blindness" that dominated interpretation of "Cathedral," the story illustrated the traps of gender stereotypes from which Robert, the blind character, was free. Both Martha Stoddard-Holmes ("'My Old Delightful Sensation': Blindness and Sexuality in Wilkie Collins's *Poor Miss Finch*") and Cindy LaCom ("'It is More than Lame': Physical Disability in Charlotte Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family* and Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*") focused on Victorian attitudes towards disability in women, examining the "sweetness," "purity," and asexuality of the Victorian stereotype as well as the exceptions to this stereotype who appear as marginalized but sexually dynamic characters. Rosemarie Garland Thomson's "How to Represent a 'Powerful Woman': The Disabled Figure in Twentieth-Century Novels of African-American Identity" examined novels by Ann Petry, Toni Morrison, and Audre Lord, tracing the historical shift from the "modernist rhetoric of despair" that dominated Petry to the "rhetoric of positive identity politics" in Morrison and Lord. Maria Anastaspoulou examined the mutilation of the male in nineteenth-century British novels by women, including Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Going beyond the canon, Brenda Robert's "Disabled Women Writers: In Search of a Text of Their Own" demonstrated how autobiographical narratives by disabled women reflected the impact of patriarchy on their lives. Rebecca Bell-Metereau's paper "Film Images: The Un-Perfect Body" contrasted the portrayal of disabilities in men and women in film: in films like "Wait Until Dark" and "Children of a Lesser God," the disabled female protagonists (played by Audrey Hepburn and Marlee Matlin, respectively) generally look good, whereas men are often shown unshaven and unkempt (like Tom Cruise in "Born on the Fourth of July"), or even covered with urine (like Jon Voight in "Coming Home").

John Woodcock's paper "Sexual Loss and Personal Identity in Two Films: 'Whose Life Is It Anyway?' and 'Born on the Fourth of July'" was read in absentia. It examined the portrayal of male "impotence" in recent American film—with many members of the audience questioning the equation of erectile (dys)function with (dis)ability—while Katie Krohn's provocative paper "Images of Disability on Living Canvas: Men who Cross-Dress as Disabled Women" first explored the link between amputation and sexuality in folklore and mythology, and then examined the prevalent, documented practice of men who seek self-amputation in order to cross-dress as disabled women.

Another equally political issue that the conference raised was the nexus of disability and war. Our second plenary session featured a keynote address in Spanish by the late Sotero Rivera-Avilés, who died a few months after the conference. Born in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, Rivera-Avilés was a veteran of the U.S.-Korea war whose poetry and non-fiction challenge the colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. This theme was continued in Lou Thompson's paper “The Wounds of War: Literary Representations of Disabled Vietnam Veterans,” which examined the physical and psychological challenges confronting disabled Vietnam War veterans in Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July*, David Rabe's *Sticks and Bones*, Lanford Wilson’s *Fifth of July*, Joyce Carol Oates’ *Out of Place* and films such as “Coming Home.” The relationship between war and politics was also examined by Alberto Traldi and Josef Modzelewski in their analyses of the Italian novelist Ignazio Silone and the Czech-born German novelist Libuse Monikova, respectively.

Another group of speakers examined the ways in which disability defined the work of writers and artists with physical disabilities. Margaret Bruzelius’ “An Altered World: Abilities and Disabilities—A Series of Drawings by Marcy Hermansader” focused on the ways in which the American artist Marcy Hermansader used the “banality” of the wheelchair pictograph to “destabilize the viewer’s way of imagining the human body,” while Jeffrey Folks’s “‘The Enduring Chill’: Physical Disability in Flannery O’Connor’s *Everything that Rises Must Converge*” demonstrated how disability provided “unique psychological insights” for O’Connor. María Solá and Loreina Santos examined the impact of disability on the art of Puerto Rican artists Jeannette Blasini and Jorge Luis Morales, respectively. Solá’s paper illustrated the ways in which Blasini had drawn on Frida Kahlo in her own painting.

Several speakers focused on the pervasive stereotyping of disabled people that has manifested itself in literary texts. Nancy Wurzel's paper on Willa Cather examined *Lucy Gayheart* and *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* to show how Cather exploits the superstitious fear that her disabled characters may provide. Barbara Bergquist’s “From Fear to Acceptance: The Physically Disabled Come Out of the Closet” examined the recent changes in self-representation by people with disabilities, while Karen Gutman’s paper addressed the sentimental portrayal of blindness in Leonard Gershe’s play “Butterflies are Free.” On the other hand, David Richman's “Yeats and the Sightless Vision” demonstrated the absence of sentimental stereotyping in W.B. Yeats, whose disabled characters are even portrayed as swindlers or thieves. Likewise, a group of papers explored the portrayal of disability for subversive purposes, such as Irene Mizrahi’s paper on blindness in contemporary theatre, Eileen Howe’s paper on Manuel Puig, and Alain Vizier’s paper on Antonin Artaud’s correspondence with Jacques Rivière. Juliette Parnell-Smith considered the way in which physical blindness was used as a metaphor by André Gide

(“Blindness: A Physical or Perceptual Characteristic? A Study of André Gide’s Novellas”).

Another theme, which we had originally considered for a separate panel, was the relationship between disability and eating disorders, represented at the conference by Marcy Epstein’s “Dis/ability as Dis/course: Eating Dis/order and the Challenged Culture.” This topic would have also been explored by Kristina Chew’s “Bodily Loss: Anorexia and Amputation” and Ellen Whittier’s paper on Byron (which had intended to explore the relationship between Byron’s own eating disorders and his play, “The Deformed Transformed”). Unfortunately, the latter two were unable to attend the conference.

The intersection of disability with language was explored by a separate panel. H-Dirksen Bauman's paper, “Dancing Hands: Toward a Poetics of American Sign Language Poetry.” In addition to providing an introduction to American Sign Language for the audience, Bauman’s paper showed that its “potency stems from the performative immediacy of its haiku-like concrete imagery.” Tess Lloyd looked at the “Wild Child” metaphor in Herman Melville’s *Pierre*, while Patrick McDonagh, examining the work of the Irish writer Christy Brown, analyzed the relationship between cerebral palsy and political resistance.

Some of these problematics and complexities were traced to the construction of the Western subject, which marginalizes disability through its conceptual links to mainstream abilities. Scott Pollard scrutinized the way in which the Chilean writer José Donoso's apparently subversive disabled characters actually reinforce the link between the traditional subject and the bourgeois social ideal through the novel's “location of this ideal in a perfect human body” in his paper “Disability and Subjectivity in José Donoso's *The Obscene Bird of the Night.*” The subversiveness of this text was also examined by Victoria Cox in her paper “Otro cuerpo y otra sociedad proponen los seres con ‘diferentes’ capacidades en la novela *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*.” David Mitchell’s “The Cultural (Dis)Logic of Disability” examined many of the cultural expectations that have led to the construction of “disability.” Susan Crutchfield's “Take Me To Your Cinema: Blind/Sighted Discourse(s) in Narrative Film,” focusing on the 1991 Australian film “Proof,” deconstructed the ways in which blind and sighted discourse appear in narrative film. In contrast, Maura Brady's paper “Artists and Surgeons: The Physically Disabled Subject in Dunn’s *Geek Love*” showed how Katherine Dunn’s characters attempt to “construct themselves as subjects in a culture that has denied them this power.”

Although from a number of disciplines, the speakers at the conference were, by and large, academics, and we had therefore especially looked forward to Rus Cooper-Dowda's paper, since her examination of the Independent Living Movement would provide an activist's perspective. Although unfortunately she could not attend the conference, we were able to read excerpts from her paper, which compared the transformation of the beast in Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" to portrayals of people with disabilities. John Carbutt also examined the political implications of filming disability in New Zealand, using a number of documentary films as examples. Some of these films, such as "Doc," "Miles Turns 21," and "See What I Mean," had been screened as part of the conference's film festival.

Finally, Ann Cooper Albright's "Moving Across Difference: Dance and Disability," the closing paper of the last panel of the conference, provided a challenging deconstruction of ability and disability. By exploring the impact of physically disabled dancers on various dance communities across the United States, Albright demonstrated the ways in which these dancers "radically deconstruct prevailing notions of beauty, grace, and physical ability in order to reconstruct the meaning of dance."

We titled this last panel "Towards a Poetics of Disabity," which was also the title we later selected for the proceedings of the conference that we had hoped to publish. Unfortunately this project did not materialize: funding and released time were difficult to get at the time, and by the time they became available it seemed that Disability Studies had become an established field and the need for a book with papers from a past conference had been obviated. Our plans to repeat the conference six years later were squelched by Hurricane Georges, which had a devastating impact on the island and the University campus. This brief overview cannot capture the actual spirit of the conference nor the engaging discussions that it provoked, but the conference programme has been reproduced in its entirety as an Appendix in this journal issue, and we hope that it will provide a sense of the conference as a whole.

Nandita Batra
University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez
Puerto Rico

POEMAS / *POEMS*

APOLOGIA

Jim Ferris

This poem
does not need
to march
across
the page.
This poem
is free
to lean
and limp
and lurch
and tap the
ground.

This poem will just be
here,
as it claims
a place
on this
page, in this
space, in this rolling,
stumbling,
stuttering,
blinking,
fresh and stinking
world of great

pain
and promise:
this poem
does not explain
its shape,
its struggles,
its joys.
Explain yourself,
if you like,
and that
is yours.
This poem
is home
with every poem
and with all
sparks
seeking a place
to light.

The Way of the Cross

In more myths than I can count the hero
back from the underworld returns lame,
scarred, crippled. Marked. Maybe this is why
they fear us so: in their bones they know
we know things, we have wrestled with the dark
and the light, we have come limping back.
Never again one of the crowd, we stand,
sit, lie apart, distinguished by where
we have been, by what we have come through.
This is why they fear us so —
it’s what they fear we know.

Jim Ferris
University of Wisconsin – Madison
United States of America

RESEÑA / *REVIEW*

Bob Guter and John R. Killacky (Eds). *Queer Crips: Disabled Gay Men and Their Stories*. New York: Harrington Park Press, 2003. 225pp.

Chris Bell

Queer Crips is primarily comprised of reprinted material, most of which originally appeared in Guter's online periodical *BENT: A Journal of Cripgay Voices*. The overarching aim of that journal, and by extension this text, might be found in Samuel Lurie's essay "Loving You Loving Me," wherein Lurie asks, "How do we create a language to normalize who we are? Just how do we take hold of our unique bodies, reframe a lifetime of shame into one of comfort and pride? How do we actively love and celebrate, not just accept, our unique selves?" (86). The questionable discourse of normalization (read: the coded desire to appear and/or be "normal," however that is defined) notwithstanding, Lurie is onto something and it is that something that *Queer Crips* tries to define and examine.

The intersection this text speaks to—the ontology of disabled gay subjectivities—is an important one that has, to date, been left out of the literature about, respectively, gay and disabled subjects. That said, this reviewer is perplexed by the overemphasis on sexual activity in the text. One reason for this focus might be to prove that disabled men have sex lives, but the emphasis also has the attendant effect of reinforcing stereotypes about gay male promiscuity. Representations of sexual activity are always already complicated, yet the editors have overstepped in their attempt to celebrate the sex lives of disabled gay men.

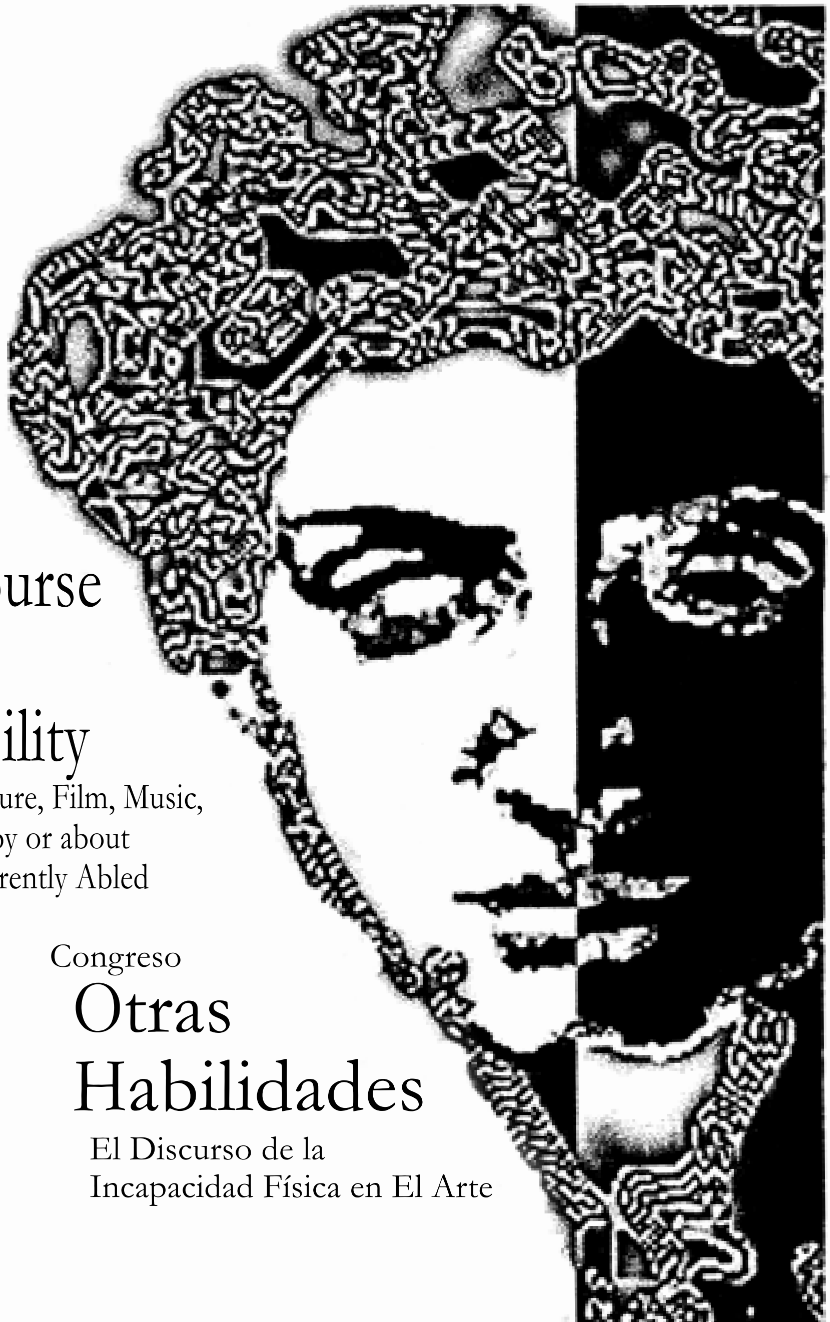
The stories in *Queer Crips* are a mixed bag: some sparkle, while others fizzle. The opener, Greg Walloch's "Two Performance Pieces," does not translate well onto the page. The pieces are better experienced in a visual medium, e.g. in the films "Crip Shots" and "Fuck the Disabled." In contrast, a particularly striking piece is Carmelo Gonzalez's "Rolling On," in which Gonzalez recalls his repeated sexual violation as a boy by an adult figure. The text becomes mired in tedium with two interviews, "How to Find Love with a Fetishist: Bob Guter Interviews Alan Sable" and "Dancing Toward the Light: Bob Guter Interviews Thomas Metz and Michael Perrault." The fact that Sable does not identify as disabled immediately causes the reader to question his inclusion in the anthology. It also doesn't help that Sable speaks clinically (as the psychotherapist he is) as well as Socratically. The reader has the impression that this interview is a replication of a Platonic dialogue, with Guter filling the unenviable role of the dupe forced to respond to Socrates' (in this case, Sable's) all-knowing interrogatories. Metz and Perrault do identify as disabled gay men. The problem with their interview is that the reader feels compelled to be in the interview space in order to grasp the entirety of the exchange. Indeed, throughout the interview, Guter interrupts the two to ask why they are sharing laughter and exchanging glances. He frequently points out to them that he will have difficulty translating the importance of their interactions to the reader. He is correct. It is instructive to contrast these interviews with the lively "Nasty Habits: Bob Guter Interviews Gordon Elkins." Elkins (aka Sister Anal Receptive, a member of the (in)famous Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Inc., a cadre of socially-active drag queens) engages in a dialogue that is witty and engaging in contradistinction to an exercise in didacticsm (Sable) and/or confusion (Metz and Perrault).

As previously stated, *Queer Crips* is unique because of the identity intersection it speaks to. It is interesting how often racial identity becomes imbricated into this intersection as well, although the editors do very little to parse it. For instance, in "A Meeting with George Dureau," Max Verga describes Dureau's photography: "In one, an African-American man uses a stick to maintain his balance while crossing his stump over his undamaged leg" (89). Verga begins the next paragraph by noting "The same holds true for George's image of Wally Sherwood. Wally is a man with a strong, beautiful face; his arms and legs defy ordinary proportions and thus say 'dwarf'" (ibid). It is worth considering that Wally is "a man" while the other unnamed (tellingly) individual is marked as "an African-American man." That Verga does not speak to this disconnect in representation is significant, evidentiary of an awareness of (albeit an unwillingness to consider) the racialized subject. In fact, there are numerous echoes and reverberations of racialized identities in *Queer Crips*, especially African-American subjectivities. A case in point is the final story, Guter's own "Destination *Bent,*" in which he hyperbolically asserts, "I was the crip equivalent of the House Nigger, the Tom" (223). Such a comparison is necessarily questionable, and causes the reader to wonder why there is such a palpable dearth of stories by disabled gay men of color in the collection.

Queer Crips is a problematic text. In addition to the fraught presence of the racialized subject (a presence predicated on the fact that this subject is written about but rarely gets to represent itself), there is the presence of an absence insofar as non-physical or "hidden" disabilities. The overwhelming majority of the contributors have physical disabilities, which marginalizes those individuals with cognitive disabilities. Ultimately, *Queer Crips* does not represent the myriad voices within this putative community of disabled gay men. Writing in the Preface, Guter observes, “This is a book full of characters, drama, conflict, narrative—in short, a book of stories” (xvii). Taking into account the absences in the text, the stories that comprise *Queer Crips* are inexplicably, inexcusably, incomplete.

Chris Bell
University of Illinois at Chicago
United States of America

APÉNDICE / *APPENDIX*



The Discourse of Disability

in Literature, Film, Music,
and Art by or about
the Differently Abled

Congreso

Otras Habilidades

El Discurso de la
Incapacidad Física en El Arte

**University of Puerto Rico at
Mayagüez, Puerto Rico
March 3-6 1993**

The conference was made possible by the generous contributions of the following individuals, associations, and corporations:

Alejandro Ruiz, Chancellor,
Olga Hernández, Dean of Arts and Sciences,
The Department of English and the Department of Humanities,
The Office of International Programs,
University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez

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Arrangements for the appearance of Mr. Ved Mehta were made through
Program Corporation of America, White Plains, New York

Conference Program

Ongoing events: Monday, 22 February - Sunday, 7 March

Book exhibit, Biblioteca General, UPR-RUM

Film Festival, Chardón 317

Thursday, 25 February 7:00 p.m.:	"Proof"
Friday, 26 February, 7:00 pm.:	"My Left Foot"
Saturday, 27 February 5:00 p.m.	"Children of a Lesser God"
Sunday, 28 February, 5:00 pm.:	"Born on the Fourth of July"
Monday, 1 March 7:00 p.m.:	"Waterdance"
Tuesday, 2 March 4:00 p.m.:	New Zealand documentaries "Doc," "Miles Turns 21," "See What I Mean"

Tuesday, 2 March:

Site: Edificio Enfermería, Patio

7-9 pm	Welcoming Reception
	Greetings by Nandita Batra and Pierre-Etienne Cudmore Conference Co-Directors

Wednesday, 3 March:

Site: Edificio Enfermería

8:00-8:30	Continental Breakfast
8:30-9:00	On-Site Conference Registration
9:00-9:15	Greetings: Alejandro Ruiz, Chancellor, UPR-Mayagüez Olga Hernández, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
9:30-11:00	Plenary Session A
	Introduction: Mary Martin-Betancourt, Director, Department of English, UPR-Mayagüez

Keynote Speaker: Ved Mehta

11:00-11:15	Coffee Break

11:15-12:15	Session I - **Representations of Disability: Historical Perspectives** Moderator: Nandita Batra Barbara Bergquist (University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras): “From Fear to Acceptance: The Physically Disabled Come Out of the Closet” Harlan Hahn (University of Southern California): “Toward an Aesthetics of Disability: Classical and Evolving Western Images”
12:15-1:30	Lunch
1:30-4:00	Session II - **The Differently Abled and the Aesthetic Experience** Moderator: Héctor Huyke Margaret Bruzelius (Yale University): “‘An Altered World’: Abilities and Disabilities, Drawings by Marcy Hermansader” Jeffrey Folks (Tennessee Wesleyan College): “‘The Enduring Chill’: Physical Disability in Flannery O’Connor’s *Everything Must Converge*” Mariá Solá (University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez): “Sobre la piel y el lienzo su cocienca: lo que se ve ye se siente en la pintura de Jeannette Blasini” Ellen Whittier (SUNY Buffalo): “Physical Disability as Creative Dynamic in Lord Byron’s *The Deformed Transformed*” Loreina Santos (University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez): “‘Obelisco, diosa madre poesía’ o el materialismo místico de Jorge Luis Morales”
4:00-4:15	Coffee Break
4:15-5:30	Session III - **Representations of Disability in Film** Moderator: Mary Leonard John Carbutt (University of Auckland, New Zealand): “Camouflage and Compromise: The Politics of Filming Disability in New Zealand” Susan Crutchfield (University of Michigan): “Take Me to Your Cinema: Blind/Sighted Discourse(s) in Narrative Film”

8:30-10:00 Performance of Gillian Plowman's 'Cecily' by University of Puerto Rico students, directed by Darnyd Ortiz, at Teatrito auditorium, Chardón 122

Thursday, 4 March:

Site: Edificio Enfermería

8:00-8:30 Continental Breakfast

8:30-10:30 Session IV - **Representations of Disability: Deconstructing Stereotypes**

Moderator: Fabio Farsi

Maura Brady (University of Iowa): "Artists and Surgeons: The Physically Disabled Subject in Dunn's *Geek Love*"

Karen Gutman (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill): "*Butterflies are Free*: Leonard Gershe and the Discourse and Dramatization of Disability"

David Richman (University of New Hampshire): "Yeats and the Sightless Vision"

Nancy Wurzel (University of South Carolina): "Willa Cather's Symbolic Representations of Disability: *Lucy Gayheart* and *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*"

10:30-10:45 Coffee Break

10:45-12:00 Session V - **Cinema and the Perfect Body**

Moderator: Pierre-Etienne Cudmore

Rus Cooper-Dowda (World Institute on Disability) "...So...like, the Beast's Castle is Like the Hospital Where Disabled People Have to Stay, Right?'... or When Disney Meets the Independent Living Movement"

Rebecca Bell-Meterau (Southwest Texas State University): "Film Images: The Un-Perfect Body"

12:00-1:15 Lunch

1:15-3:45 Session VI - **Gender and Disability**

Moderator: Elizabeth Dayton

Lynda Hoffman-Jeep (University of Chicago): "Female Disability Portrayed as Double: Beatriz Guido's *Usurpación* and Carmen Naranjo's *Ondina*"

Cindy LaCom (University of Oregon): “It is more than Lame: Physical Disability in Charlotte Yonge’s *The Clever Woman of the Family* and Anthony Trollope’s *Barchester Towers*”

Brenda Robert (Montgomery College): “Disabled Women Writers: In Search of a Text of Their Own”

Rosemarie Thomson (Howard University): “How to Represent a ‘Powerful Woman’: The Disabled Figure in Twentieth-Century Novels of African-American Identity”

Maria Anastasopolou (University of Athens, Greece): “The Mutilation of the Male: The Discourse of Disability in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Novels”

3:45-4:00 Coffee Break

4:00-5:30 Session VII - **Language and the Discourse of Disability**

Moderator: Anthony Hunt

H.-Dirksen Bauman (SUNY Binghampton): “Dancing Hands: Toward a Poetics of American Sign Language Poetry”

Tess Lloyd (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill): “The Wild Child as Metaphor in Melville’s *Pierre*”

Patrick McDonagh (Concordia University): “Tongue-Tied?: Cerebral Palsy and the Politics of Resistance”

8:30-10:00 pm Site: Teatro Yagüez, Calle Mendez Vigo
Violin Concert by Henry Hutchinson Negrón and Luz Negrón de Hutchinson

10:00 pm Site: Mayagüez Town Hall
Reception hosted by the Honorable José Guillermo Rodríguez, Mayor of the City of Mayagüez

Friday, 5 March

Site: Edificio Enfermería

8:00-8:30 Continental Breakfast

8:30-10:00 Session VIII - **Disability as Subversion**

Moderator: Magda Graniela

Irene Mizrahi (Boston College): “La ceguera en el teatro español del siglo XX"

Scott Pollard (Christopher Newport University): “Disability and Subjectivity in José Donoso’s *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*”

Victoria Cox (University of Maryland): “Otro cuerpo y otra sociedad proponen los seres con ‘diferentes’ capacidades en la novela: *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*”

10:00-10:15 Coffee Break

10:15-11:45 Plenary Session B

Introduction: Héctor Huyke, Director, Department of Humanities, UPR-Mayagüez

Keynote Speaker: Sotero Rivera Avilés

11:45-1:00 Lunch

1:00-3:00 Session IX - **Disability as Metaphor**

Moderator: Halley Sánchez

Marcy Epstein (University of Michigan) “Dis/ability as Dis/course: Eating Dis/order and the Challenged Culture”

Juliette Parnell-Smith (University of Nebraska): “Blindness: A Physical or Perceptual Characteristic? A Study of André Gide’s Novellas”

Eileen Howe (Charleston College): “Manuel Puig y su discurso en la novela *Eternal Curse on the Reader of these Pages*”

Chris Bullock (University of Alberta, Canada): “Reflections on Blindness in Raymond Carver’s *Cathedral*”

3:00-3:15 Coffee Break

3:15-4:45 Session X - **Disability and Sexuality**

Moderator: Ursula Acosta

John Woodcock (Indiana University): “Sexual Loss and Personal Identity in Two Films: ‘Whose Life is it Anyway?’ and ‘Born on the Fourth of July’”

Martha Stoddard Holmes (University of Colorado, Boulder): “’My Old Delightful Sensation’: Blindness and Sexuality in Wilkie Collins’ *Poor Miss Finch*”

Katie Krohn (Texas A & M University): “Images of Disability on Living Canvas: Men who Cross-Dress as Disabled Women”

Saturday, 6 March:

Site: Edificio Enfermería

8:00-8:30 Continental Breakfast

8:30-10:00 Session XI - **The Discourse of Disability and the Body Politic**

Moderator: Alfonso Latoni

Alberto Traldi (University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez): “El sordomudo especial de Ignazio Silone”

Jozef Modzelewski (College of Charleston): “Physical and Psychological Disability: Blessing or Curse? Libuse Monikova’s *Pavane für eine verstorbene Infantin*”

Lou Thompson (Texas Woman’s University): “The Wounds of War: Literary Representations of Disabled Vietnam Veterans”

10:00-10:15 Coffee Break

10:15-12:15 Session XII - **Towards a Poetics of Disability**

Kristina Chew (Yale University): “Bodily Loss: Anorexia and Amputation”

David Mitchell (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor): “The Cultural (Dis)Logic of Disability”

Alain Vizier (Tulane University): “Artaud’s Letters to Rivière: Disability and Subversion"

Ann Cooper Albright (Oberlin College) "Moving Across Difference: Dance and Disability"

12:15 Visit to Aguada beach
Beach lunch at the Shady Palm, Aguada
Farewell Remarks by Conference Co-Directors

The Conference Co-Directors, Nandita Batra and Pierre-Etienne Cudmore, wish to thank the following people for helping to organize the conference:

Committees:

Computer Image and Design: David Dayton and José Irizarry

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Moderators

Ursula Acosta, Elizabeth Dayton, Fabio Farsi, Magda Graniela,
Anthony Hunt, Héctor Huyke, Alfonso Latoni, Halley Sánchez

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Humanities Department Student Assocation

René Ramirez, Director of the Office of Social and Cultural Activiaties,
University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez

NÚMERO ESPECIAL - CONVOCATORIA

LA JUNTA EDITORIAL CONVOCA A LA ENTREGA DE TRABAJOS (ensayos, poemas, cuentos, reseñas) relacionados con **los humanos y el ambiente** para la publicación de un número especial (junio 2006) de la revista.

Los ensayos pueden referirse a una amplia variedad de tópicos relacionados con el ambiente (incluyéndo, pero no limitándose sólo a esos temas), tanto el ecocriticismo y el ecofeminismo así como la relación de los asuntos ambientales con la literatura, la política, el postcolonialismo, el género, la globalización, el capitalismo, el marxismo, los alimentos y los derechos de los animales

Fecha límite para entrega: 1 de septiembre de 2005. Véase las normas para entrega de manuscritos en http://www.uprm.edu/atenea para información sobre el formato de manuscritos.

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Essays may address a wide variety of topics related to environmental discourse including (but not limited to) ecocriticism and ecofeminism as well as the intersection of environmental issues with literature, politics, postcolonialism, gender, globalization, capitalism, Marxism, food, and animal rights.

Submissions for this issue must be received by 1 September 2005. See submission guidelines at http://www.uprm.edu/atenea for details about the format of manuscripts.

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