

UC Berkeley

UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Ability Underneath: Bodies in the Literary Imagination

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8793j2j5>

Author

Bednarska, Dominika

Publication Date

2011

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

Ability Underneath: Bodies in the Literary Imagination

By

Dominika Bednarska

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

In the

Graduate Division

Of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Susan Schweik, Chair

Professor Elizabeth Abel

Professor Judith Butler

Fall 2011

Abstract

Ability Underneath: Bodies in the Literary Imagination

by

Dominika Bednarska

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Susan Schweik, Chair

My dissertation explores conceptions of ability and ableization—a term I coin to describe the way in which ability norms can inform and influence and underlie conceptions of aesthetics—in trans-Atlantic twentieth-century literature. I contend that ability not only underlies fundamental understandings of aesthetics, but also of gender and sexuality as well as temporality. By ability, I mean the way that bodies are conceived or perceived as able. Constructions of ability can be relatively narrow, privileging those with specific kinds of bodies and limiting or discounting those without them. But they can also include a broad construction of ability that makes space for a variety of bodies: different ways of functioning and of using the body to perceive the world. I view ability (and its concomitant, disability) as a broad-reaching term which functions as a unifier for a range of practices, attitudes, and discourses around bodily and psychological variations in function or perceptions of those variations. My project is one of the few to explore multiple conceptions of ability and their impact on textual representation as well as on issues in queer and gender studies. Robert McRuer’s work in *Crip Theory* applies queer theory to concepts of disability, but focuses on how these ideologies are formed within and against neo-liberal capitalism. While I utilize queer theory, my work seeks to get at a more nuanced understanding of how disability and sexuality interact as well as how considering disability can reformulate our understandings of temporality.

1. A Crippled Erotic: Gender and Disability in James Joyce’s “Nausicaa”

I argue that “Nausicaa” in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* produces what I call a “crippled erotic” through its counter-narrative to disabled sexuality, and also challenges ocularcentric constructions of desire and heteronormative constructions of sex itself. Past critical interpretations have focused on Gerty’s disempowerment and Bloom’s objectification of her, in a scene which describes, from both characters’ perspectives, Bloom watching Gerty on a swing while fantasizing about her. Moving beyond the view of Gerty as a passive victim, more recent critics have highlighted her agency in the scene. My reading looks at these most recent interpretations and examines how considering Gerty’s limp complicates the ways in which her objectification functions. When it is considered in relation to assumptions about the asexuality and undesirability of people with disabilities,

Gerty's objectification and seemingly narcissistic tendencies take on a very different meaning. Both Bloom's and Gerty's oscillations about disability's relationship to desirability reveal that norms of gender are built upon norms of ability. The performative nature of both of these sets of norms allows for a gendered disabled subjectivity.

2. Crippling Time: From Woolf to Haraway

I use Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *On Being Ill* to examine how disability and queerness function in conjunction with one another to critique (hetero)normative temporal modes. I also consider how disability fails to conform entirely to queer time, perhaps suggesting that the embodiment of illness and disability reconfigures these theories. *Mrs. Dalloway* and *On Being Ill* lay the groundwork for theorizing disability and temporality. I argue for both the inextricability of gender and ability norms and how Woolf's writing can be brought into conversation with contemporary theories on queer temporality and futurity. Woolf's work suggests that illness constructs an alternate sense of temporality that contradicts masculine norms of public time. Here, I build on and critique Judith Halberstam's work on queer time and also draw on Donna Haraway's work to theorize a disability or "crip" temporality.

3. Playing with Difference: Disability in Toni Morrison's Novels

Toni Morrison's novels *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved*, *Sula*, and *Tar Baby* demonstrate a narrow conception of ability that stems from an appropriation of disability. As Morrison explores how racialization functions in texts by white authors, I examine how ableization functions in her own texts. Disability functions as a stand-in for other identities, specifically race and class. I apply Morrison's writing on the under-acknowledgement and appropriation of race within white-authored canonical American literature to her own writing with regard to disability, arguing that her use of disability as a metaphor mimics the same kind of ideological strategies that she is critical of in relation to white-authored canonical texts. My extensive critique of Morrison differs dramatically from the celebratory way her novels have been read by major disability studies scholars, Ato Quayson and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson. I argue that she uses disabled characters to enable the plot and highlight nondisabled protagonists, and that when Morrison de-emphasizes disability her characters are more fully developed.

4. Written on Several Bodies: Examining Ideologies of Gender, Sexuality and Ability in Jeanette Winterson

My final chapter, on Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*, complicates the neat division between broad and narrow constructions of ability. In placing the novel alongside Winterson's editorial about deaf lesbians attempting to have a deaf child, we can see the ways in which heteronormativity and ableism are linked as oppressive structures. The novel makes an extensive critique of the medicalization of the body and connects this critique to heteronormative logics and structures of reproduction. In contrast, Winterson's public objection works by affirming rather than criticizing these same connections. Part of the reason for this reversal is seen in Winterson's own writings

about the nature of art and her perception that modernist writing relies upon an able body in order to be appreciated. Ironically, the authors that Winterson uses to support her claims include both Woolf and Joyce. *Deaf poetics, I show*, provides an alternative to Winterson's conception of the aesthetic and helps to further theorize what possibilities a broader conception of ability might bring to our understandings of art.

This project not only asks what kinds of bodies are imagined within a text, but what kind of bodies we imagine reading the text. This dissertation takes familiar concepts such as theorizations of queer temporality, and expands them to include disability as an experience which not only broadens the scope of these ideas but challenges them. It is one of the first projects in literary representation to examine disability beyond character depiction and examine a text's sensory schema as a commentary on ability itself.

Table of Contents

Introduction – 1

Chapter One: A Crippled Erotic: Gender and Disability in James Joyce’s “Nausicaa” – 15

Chapter Two: Crippling Time: From Woolf to Haraway – 30

Chapter Three: Playing with Difference: Disability in Toni Morrison’s Novels – 53

Chapter Four: Written on Several Bodies: Ideologies of Gender, Sexuality and Ability in the Writing of Jeanette Winterson – 80

Endnotes – 99

Works Cited – 105

DOMINIKA BEDNARSKA
 1601 Allston Way
 Berkeley, CA 94703
 (718) 877 4648
 dominikaberkeley@gmail.com

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

MA/Ph.D., English, University of California, Berkeley, expected 2011

- Dissertation: “Ability Underneath: Bodies in the Literary Imagination” Committee: Susan Schweik (Director), Elizabeth Abel, Judith Butler (Rhetoric).

B.A., English Literature, Brown University, Providence, RI, With Honors 2002

ACADEMIC HONORS

- Holloway Postdoctoral Fellowship, UC Berkeley, 2011-2012
- Dean’s Normative Time Fellowship, UC Berkeley, 2008-2009
- Bergen Travel Grant – full expenses and tuition paid for an international 10-day course on disability, illness, poverty and gender at the University of Bergen in Bergen, Norway, 2008
- Graduate Equal Opportunity Multi-Year Fellowship, UC Berkeley, 2003-2008
- Research-At-Brown Grant, Brown University, 2002
- Nomination by Honors Director to university-wide thesis competition, Brown University, 2002
- Lotte Kaliski Scholarship, 1998-2002

PUBLICATIONS

- “What They See is What You Get: How Perceptions of Disability and Queerness Shape Medical Treatment.” *Journal of Medical Humanities*. Submitted.
- “A Crippled Erotic: Gender and Disability in James Joyce’s ‘Nausicaa.’” *James Joyce Quarterly*. Submitted.
- Poetry published in *Wordgathering* (forthcoming), *Ghosting the Atom: Reflections After the Bomb* (2006), *What I Want From You: An Anthology of East Bay Lesbian Poets* (2006) and *Bellevue Literary Review* (2008).
- “Expanding Under the Radar: Reflecting on Jess Curtis’ *Gravity*.” *Niet Normaal: Difference On Display*. Eds. Ine Gevers et al. Amsterdam: NAI Publishers (forthcoming).
- “Rethinking Access: Why Technology Isn’t the Only Answer.” *The Culture of Efficiency* Ed. Sharon Kleinman. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009. 158-169.
- “*This Book Will Save Your Life* by A.M. Homes.” (Book Review). *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Fiction*. Fact on File (forthcoming).
- “Passing Last Summer” *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity*. Ed. Mattilda a.k.a. Matt Bernstein Sycamore. Emeryville: Seal Press, 2006. 71-82.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “A Crippled Erotic: Gender and Disability in James Joyce’s ‘Nausicaa.’” Society for Disability Studies. San Jose, CA. June 2011.
- “Disability and Femme Identity.” Femme No Restrictions, Oakland, CA. August 2010.
- “Enabling What? Exploring Disability, Gender and Sexuality.” Butch Voices, Oakland, CA. August 2009.
- “Theorizing Crip Time.” Society for Disability Studies, Tucson, AZ. June 2009.
- “Temporality, Gender and Disability in Mrs. Dalloway.” Society for Disability Studies, CUNY Baruch. June 2008.
- “Landscape in James Joyce’s ‘Nausicaa’: Rethinking Desire in *Ulysses*.” Berkeley-Stanford Conference, UC Berkeley. May 2008.
- “Critique Through the City: Examining Ideologies of Gender and Disability in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*.” (dis)junctions 2008, UC Riverside. April 2008.
- “Critique Through the City: Examining Ideologies of Gender and Disability in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*.” Remapping Intellectual Spaces. Intermountain Graduate Conference, Logan, UT. April 2008.
- “Written on Several Bodies: Examining Ideologies of Gender, Sexuality and Ability in Jeanette Winterson.” Biocultures: Science, Technology, Culture, Humanity. UIC Chicago, IL. November 2007.
- “Written on Several Bodies: Examining Ideologies of Gender, Sexuality and Ability in Jeannette Winterson.” Northeast Popular/American Culture Association, Worcester MA. October 2007.
- “Misappropriating Disability: The Limits of Morrison’s Novels.” Rewriting the Body, UC Riverside. April 2007.
- “Physical Disability as Metaphor in Toni Morrison’s *Tar Baby*.” Society for Disability Studies, Baltimore, MD. June 2003.
- “Breaking Down Binaries: Using Judith Butler to Theorize Disability.” Society for Disability Studies, Oakland, CA. June 2002.

READINGS AND PERFORMANCES

- Performer, “My Body Love Story.” Society for Disability Studies. San Jose, CA. June 2011.
- Performer, “My Body Love Story.” CounterPULSE. San Francisco, CA. May 2011.
- Performer, “My Body Love Story.” The Marsh. San Francisco, CA. November 2010.
- Performer, Readings by and About Lesbians with Disabilities. San Francisco, CA. October 2010.
- Performer, Modern Times Bookshow. Modern Times. San Francisco, CA. September 2010.
- Performer. “My Body Love Story.” Femme 2010 No Restrictions. Oakland, CA. August 2010.
- Artist in Residence. AIRspace Residency Program. Garage Theater. San Francisco. January 2010 – June 2010.
- Performer. “My Body Love Story” The Garage Allstars. San Francisco. June 2010.
- Performer. Krip Salon. LGBT Center. San Francisco, CA. June 2010.
- Feature. Queer Open Mic. Modern Times Bookstore. San Francisco, CA. May 2010.
- Reading. Contributing Artist for Lineage Project: Matchmaking in the Archives. LGBT Historical Society. San Francisco, CA. November 2009.
- Performer. Krip Salon. LGBT Historical Society. San Francisco, CA. June 2009.

- Feature. Works In Progress reading series. San Leandro Community Church. San Leandro, CA. March 2009.
- Performer. Krip Salon. Femina Potens. San Francisco, CA. November 2008.
- “Expanding Under the Radar: Reflecting on Jess Curtis’ *Gravity*.” Dance Under Construction, UC Berkeley. April 2008.
- “Expanding Under the Radar: Reflecting on Jess Curtis’ *Gravity*.” SF Marsh, San Francisco. May 2007.
- “Expanding Under the Radar: Reflecting on Jess Curtis’ *Gravity*.” Sins Invalid, San Francisco. April 2007.
- Feature. Holloway Poetry Series. March 2005.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses as Primary Instructor: Chose readings, designed syllabus, taught grammar and style, conducted discussion, and evaluated essays as principal instructor for composition course.

“The Power of I: Literary Constructions of the Self” (Introductory Composition) Fall 2009 – Fall 2010

Readings included Karr’s *The Liar’s Club*, Kincaid’s *My Brother*, Frankfurt’s *On Bullshit*, Hillman’s *Intersex: For Lack of a Better Word*.

“Getting Real: Exploring Passing and Authenticity” (Introductory Composition) Fall 2007

Readings included Larsen’s *Passing*, Morrison’s *Tar Baby*, The Crafts’, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, and Clare’s *Exile and Pride*.

Courses Taught as a Teaching Assistant: Conducted discussion sections and evaluated undergraduate essays under the supervision of a faculty member.

“Literature in English: Mid-19th Through the 20th Century” Fall 2006

Readings included: Stein’s *Three Lives and QED*, Toomer’s *Cane*, Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, Mullen’s *Sleeping with the Dictionary*, Poetry by John Ashby, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Audre Lorde, William Carlos Williams, and Ezra Pound.

“American Literature: 1900 – 1945” Spring 2006

Readings included: Elliot’s *The Wasteland*, Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Hammett’s *The Red Harvest*, Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*, and Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Writing Mentor, New Urban Arts, Providence RI
2000-2002

Taught poetry and fiction writing twice weekly to high school students, designed lesson plans and projects, facilitated student-designed group and individual projects.

Teaching Assistant, Dabrowski High School, Pozan, Poland
Summer ‘99

Taught English as a Second Language (ESL) to high school students, independently and with supervision, created lesson plans and tutored students one-on-one for University qualifying exams.

Community Involvement and Academic Service

Society for Disability Studies, Graduate Student Development Panel Chair, June 2009.

Lineage Project LGBT Historical Society, Contributing Artist/Writer, Spring 2009.

Ethnographica: Journal of Disability and Culture, Reviewer, 2009-2014.

Fabled Asp—Fabulous/ Activist Bay Area Lesbians with Disabilities: A Storytelling Project, Event Committee and Museum Project, Ongoing.

Queer Bonds Conference, Program Committee, Spring 2009.

Disability Awareness Week, Speaker, UC Berkeley, Fall 2007.

Society for Disability Studies, Program Committee, 2002-03.

Queer Disability Conference, Panel Chair, San Francisco, CA. June 2002.

American Association of People with Disabilities, Programs Coordinator, Washington DC, Summer '02.

National Coalitional for Students with Disabilities, President and Project Administrator, Fairfax VA, Summers '01 – 2.

Tracey Chapman Benefit Concert, Publicity Coordinator, Brown University, Spring '00.

V. Monologues Post-Show Coordinator, Brown University, Spring '99.

Reader's Theatre, Founding Member and Group Coordinator, Brown University, '98- 99.

LANGUAGES

French, Spanish, Polish (native speaker)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Disability Studies

Modern Language Association

RESEARCH/TEACHING INTERESTS

Twentieth-century literature (American and British); theories of embodiment; disability studies; medical humanities; queer theory; gender and sexuality studies; poetry and performance; race and ethnicity; minority literature; literary theory; creative writing.

REFERENCES

PROFESSOR SUSAN SCHWEIK (advisor)
English Department
322 Wheeler Hall
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California 94720
510-642-4333
sschweik@berkeley.edu

PROFESSOR DAVID T. MITCHELL
Executive Director, Institute on Disabilities
1601 N. Broad Street
University Services Building, Suite 610
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA 19122
(v/tty) 215-204-1356
(f) 215-204-6336
dmitch02@temple.edu

PROFESSOR CAROLYN PORTER
(teaching letter)
English Department
322 Wheeler Hall
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California 94720
cporter@berkeley.edu

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH ABEL
English Department
322 Wheeler Hall
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California 94720
510-642-2906
eabel@berkeley.edu

PROFESSOR JUDITH BUTLER
Rhetoric Department
7408 Dwinelle Hall
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720
510-642-2392
jpbutler@berkeley.edu

PROFESSOR LYNN HEJINIAN
(teaching letter)
English Department
322 Wheeler Hall
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California 94720
510-642-3373
lynnhejinian@earthlink.net

Introduction

“So is that actually a field?” is the reaction I got when I first began working in disability studies. Ironically, around this time, in the late 90’s, disability studies was finally garnering enough attention to encounter mainstream criticism. This criticism has subsequently been cited and refuted by multiple scholars within disability studies.¹ I want to begin by revisiting one of these critics, not to echo the critique of scholars who have come before me, but to argue that, however clumsily and problematically, she articulates questions that need to be addressed within disability studies, questions about the complexity of ability and disability that this dissertation will explore.

In her essay “Enabling Disabled Scholarship” on Salon.com, Norah Vincent asks:

How can we say that Western culture has demonized, oppressed or ignored the disabled and then turn around and claim that many of the great works of Western culture were created by illustrious disabled people whose disabilities deeply influenced their work? In this scenario, your Dead White Male hegemony turns out to be Dead, White, Male and Disabled. Now who’s oppressing whom? (4)

Vincent articulates what she perceives to be a paradox here. How can disability at once be the subject of or at least an influence on great art while at the same time being demonized, oppressed or ignored by Western culture? For Vincent, apparently, simply to use or acknowledge disability, whether it be in an artistic work or in the life of the artist or author, is automatically to erase oppression and demonization, and presumably to fully acknowledge it is one of the assertions that this project seeks to challenge. I will go on to argue that one can use images of disability without considering disability; one can even be simultaneously disabled and ableist. And although Vincent seems baffled by the concept that one can function simultaneously as the oppressor and the oppressed, there is no reason why our understandings of ability and disability should exist in such a neat binary construction. Most of Vincent’s essay is focused on exposing disability studies as extreme and “obfuscate[ing] an unpleasant truth with feel-good oxymorons,” but the question she raises is one that disability studies still needs to grapple with, not because it poses a contradiction but because the complex and contradictory ways that we talk about ability need to be more fully understood. When are we generally discussing conceptions of ability and disability and when are we merely employing ideas about disability and disabled bodies to make other ideological points? Rather than it being a question of “who’s oppressing whom,” who’s representing whom? That is to say, when is ability being directly engaged with rather than alluded to, invoked, or mythologized? What does the simultaneity of producing and receiving ableism and the wide variety of disabilities mean for our theorizations of ability?

The chapters that follow turn from expanding conceptions of ability indicated by my use of “crip” and “cripping” to examining representation that is more limited and focused on disability to looking at how ideologies of ability are often contradicting. This dissertation explores conceptions of ability and ableization, especially in relation to sexuality, temporality, representation and aesthetics. I explore these issues through writings by several modern and contemporary authors. This dissertation uses works by James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison and Jeanette Winterson to explore how

ability is conceptualized and used differently within particular texts and how these relate to the concepts listed above. My focus is on how ability, rather than disability, is constructed. Ableization is a term I coin to describe the subtle and pervasive way that ability norms underlie our understandings of basic concepts such as sex, gender, time and aesthetics. Some of the texts I examine construct ability in a broad and multifarious manner, while others conceive of ability more narrowly. I begin with a text that has expansive notions of ability. An examination of the Nausicaa episode in James Joyce's *Ulysses* reveals how an alternative sexual sensibility that I call a "cripped erotic" is created through, as well as against, gender norms. I argue that this text not only produces a counter-narrative to disabled asexuality, but also challenges ocularcentrism and heteronormative constructions of sex itself, replacing them with an emphasis on pleasure and fantasy. In a similarly expansive text, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* adds a focus on temporality to conceptions of ability, and I draw on the work of Judith Halberstam and Donna Haraway to further develop the critiques of temporality that Woolf suggests.

My chapter on Toni Morrison's novels demonstrates how a more narrow construction of ability can lead to more limited textual representation. Disability functions as a stand-in for racial identity. I apply Morrison's writing on the appropriation of race within canonical American literature to her own writing with regard to disability. She deploys disability in a way that mimics the complex and problematic deployments of Africanism she finds within canonical American literature. In a chapter on Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*, I argue that despite her critique of normative conceptions of embodiment in relation to illness, disability and gender, Winterson's later editorial objection to deaf lesbians using a sperm donor reverses these critiques. Bringing my dissertation full circle, this reversal occurs through an aesthetic conception that privileges certain senses, and Winterson utilizes the work of Joyce and Woolf to do so. This final chapter utilizes deaf poetics as a way of challenging fundamental presumptions about art and aesthetics.

In fact, aesthetic concerns relating to disability underlie all of these texts. In the chapter on Joyce, for example, his aesthetic construction creates a "crip erotic." In the chapter on Virginia Woolf, I discuss Woolf's notion of illness as creatively productive, exploring her aestheticization of "crip time." The chapter on Toni Morrison's novels focuses on representation, and argues that Morrison's use of disability parallels her own critiques of the way race is used by white canonical authors. Rather than move outward, towards a focus on broader theoretical understandings of sexuality or time, the Morrison chapter stays closely focused on Morrison's own writing and her use of disability as a way of discussing race. In the chapter on Jeanette Winterson, I explore how Winterson's investment in an ableized aesthetic informs her public editorial objections to the deaf lesbians selecting a deaf sperm donor.

In part, I juxtapose these specific authors because both Morrison and Winterson have cited Woolf's writing as a specific source of inspiration, and Winterson also directly discusses Joyce in her writing on art and aesthetics, but more importantly, I have selected these texts because they allow readings that can intervene in conceptions of ability. Through reframing how we see ability, they also reframe how we see time, aesthetics, representation and sexuality.

I do think it's worth noting that the earlier texts which emerged around the time of World War I, prior to a contemporary disability consciousness, have much more fluid and

expansive understandings of ability as a category. Particularly in the case of the Woolf, I believe this is in part due to the larger number of disabled bodies that are being created as a result of the war and the increased bureaucratic and medical mechanisms that emerged to control such bodies. Yet I am not making the broad and sweeping generalization that all modern texts are more progressive with regard to disability than contemporary ones. In fact, one of the aims of this project is to demonstrate that the ways that we think about ability are so complex and contradictory that it is sometimes impossible to make one clear overarching claim about ability as a category, without exception, even as it pertains to one writer – let alone an entire historical period.

The Ability We Imagine

I use the term “literary imagination” in the title to emphasize the project’s focus on what is imagined by the writer of each text in terms of how ability is constructed. “Literary imagination” speaks to the literary sphere as a space for possibility, for imagining what is possible by bringing forth new images and by reimagining how we understand and perceive those images. One response that I often get when critiquing the way that ability is depicted in a particular text is that this is a common or realistic way to perceive the disabled body. This is language or imagery so ingrained in the culture that it is not worthy of note or critique. However, one of the truly powerful aspects of literature is that it is a sphere which is not limited to the common or the real as ways to construct itself. One need not resort to hyperrealism in order to create a real connection to social critique, experience, or ideology. What is most powerful about literature is the space it allows for the imaginary – not in the sense of what is unreal, but of what can be envisioned.

This study not only asks what kinds of bodies are imagined within the text but also what kind of bodies do we imagine reading the text. In the Winterson chapter, for example, I argue that she envisions the reader, the viewer, and in fact the audience of art as able-bodied. Morrison’s work on disability, I argue, also utilizes nondisabled fantasies of the disability experience – these extend to issues of mythologization, fetishization, and disabled characters serving as enablers for ability. Part of the reason for this may be a difficulty in imagining fully developed disabled subjects. This is applicable not just to disabled characters or figures, but also people with disabilities and disabled subjectivity as the subject of theory.

Envisioning disabled subjects as desiring as well as disability as a subject, rather than an extension of current theoretical ideas in queer theory, changes how we imagine disability and how we conceive of the queer body. For readers in queer and women’s studies, this dissertation takes familiar concepts such as theorizations of queer temporality and expands them to include disability as an experience which not only broadens the scope of these ideas but also challenges them. Take, for instance, Judith Halberstam’s theorization of queer temporality that looks at queer time as a way of resisting bourgeoisie markers of adult development. While the disabled subject is barred from these same markers, often in ways that are even more explicit, the disabled body also challenges the very idea of risk and safety and childhood/adulthood in ways that can encompass, but also extend beyond and differ from, the queer body. In stressing the importance of the imaginary, or how we imagine the disabled subject as audience

theoretical subject or object of desire, it is equally important to stress the real-world impact of our ideas about disability and sexuality. To this end, I will outline some of my claims about disabled sexuality and connect them with recent court cases in which ideas about ability and sexuality in fact shaped judicial ruling.

Disabled sexuality can often be seen as invisible or a contradiction in terms, whereas queer sexuality often has a certain level of redundancy in that queerness is often seen as a hypersexuality.² I link these ideas to risk in the chapter on *Mrs. Dalloway* when I discuss the work of disabled writer Danny Kodmur, who argues that relationships with disabled partners are particularly threatening for nondisabled people because of their heightened level of risk. Similarly, I look at the idea of female agency and the duality of the object/subject division in the Nausicaa chapter of *Ulysses* in a way that takes on new significance when it is considered in relation to disability. What does objectification mean in a context where any kind of sexual subjectification is absent? I also argue that sexual objectification occurs for the disabled subject through a process of ambiguity and oscillation in which the viewer swings back and forth between desire and rejection in relation to ableist norms.

For one glaring example of how ableized notions of sexuality have real world impact, take the case of Wayne Schifelbine, who was charged with the purchasing and viewing of child pornography. Upon learning that Schifelbine is a quadriplegic, the US Attorney Terrance P. Flynn decided not to criminally prosecute him. Instead of ten years or more in federal prison, Schifelbine will forfeit \$50,000 to the federal government and his use of the internet will be restricted.

This case intersects with conceptions of ability in several significant ways. There is a discourse around the tragedy of the man's situation, one that you would be unlikely to find in most prosecutions of child pornography. In fact, Flynn went so far as to say "we came to the conclusion that no punishment in federal prison could compare to the punishment that has already been inflicted on this man. You could say that he is already in prison for life" (Herbeck 1). The idea that Schifelbine's body is more of a prison than prison is a dramatic example of disability phobia. But, perhaps even more interesting for our purposes here is the idea that Schifelbine's crimes were irrelevant because he could not act on them and does not have access to sex, according to the prosecutors, and therefore does not have access to a sexual subjectivity that needs to be policed. Prosecution for his crimes is suspended because he is not perceived as someone who can have sex, and therefore he cannot be a sexual threat. Even Patrice McLean, the western New York program director for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, backed Flynn's decision not to prosecute despite their usual track record of being tough on child porn offenders. McLean said "there are extenuating circumstances" (Herbeck 2). A legal blog by lawyer Douglas A. Berman begins with the headline "An Understandable (but debatable?) Child Porn Declination Decision by Federal Prosecutors." Berman is not even sure whether there is enough controversy in this issue to merit a debate.

The statement "the federal prison system could have made accommodations for this man" is also worth noting because it raises the question as to whether providing accommodations was a factor in this decision. Schifelbine requires twenty-four hour nursing care which, if he were incarcerated, the state would be obligated to provide. Only just recently did the Sacramento Appeals Court overturn a ruling that found an

inmate could be released because of being a quadriplegic. This is based on a compassionate release program for the terminally ill that has been extended to include those with permanent disabilities. Governor Schwarzenegger signed this program into law in 2008 (Egelko). I am aware that using this as an example of a real world theoretical application of the ideas that will be further developed within this dissertation may in some sense seem limiting, given that this example may seem like a fairly specific and infrequent occurrence. However, my use of disability extends far beyond those bodies we may instantly identify as disabled – those using wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and other visible markers of disability. A broader, more expansive meaning to disability, of course, raises the question of how we are to understand what disability is.

Defining Terms: Disability, Ability, Ableism and Ableization

How one defines disability is not a straightforward question. Robert F. Murphy has claimed that disability is “a distortion of conventional classification and knowing” (qtd. in Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy* 14). As Ellen Samuels points out, “[t]he disabled body presents a unique challenge to an identificatory system based upon classification, as its nonnormativity manifests itself through a vast diversity of form and function” (22). Rosemarie Garland Thomson goes so far as to say that “disability is a heterogeneous group whose only commonality is being considered abnormal” (*Extraordinary Bodies* 24). She goes on to say that “disability confounds any notion of a general, stable, physical subject.” But not all people would describe their disabilities as physical, although many would see even psychological or mental disabilities as somehow rooted in a particular aspect of embodiment. There is tremendous heterogeneity in disability and difficulty in successfully defining, let alone policing, its borders, even using the definitions of disability studies scholars. However, there seem to be commonalities between experiences of an abnormal mind and body that extend far beyond the contemporary historical period in which the idea of disability, disability studies, and disability rights emerged. Through examining Joyce’s and Woolf’s writing, we can see that long before the term emerged, social critiques emerged on behalf of women with limps, soldiers with PTSD, blind people and other disabled subjects.

For my purposes, disability describes the social process of inscribing ability or lack thereof and the process of becoming perceived as able or disabled. Disability exists as a dynamic only through relation to the normative and a symbolic notion of a whole and “fully functional” body and mind. However, this does not reduce the material and social dynamics that produce disability to a mere fiction; nor does it mean that despite the variety of ways that these dynamics can manifest and the variety of bodies with which they engage, the category of disability itself becomes futile. In fact, my analysis hopes to show precisely that there is much to be gained from looking at various instances of disability as illustrations of a major literary theme rather than as unrelated depictions of specific impairments.

By ability, I mean the way that bodies are conceived or perceived as able. I use the term ableization to describe the way in which expectations of ability underlie and influence our perceptions of embodiment and embodiment as a value. Embodiment becomes understood as an experience not only shaped by but predicated upon ability. The term ableist implies a level of explicit bigotry, prejudice or exclusion, whereas the

term ableization gets at the way in which notions of the able body inform our understanding of what the body is as well as what the body should be. I'm suggesting here that ableism is more overt and requires a certain level of intent, whereas ableization functions in a more subtle way that presumes and inscribes ability. For instance, the way that understanding is so often described through a language of vision both presumes that one can see and inscribes seeing as an ability that is necessary for understanding.³ Our understandings of aesthetics or time or sexuality are influenced by the sometimes subtle but always pervasive manner in which ability informs our understanding of what it means to have a body. Constructions of ability can be relatively narrow and privilege those with specific kinds of bodies and limits or discount those without them. But they can also include a broad construction of ability that makes space for a variety of bodies, different ways of functioning and using the body to perceive the world. I use the phrase "ability underneath" in the title because I am interested in the way that ability underlies fundamental ideas in all of these texts: ideas about gender and sex, ideas about time, ideas about art and aesthetics.

In order to further ground my use of ability as a category, I want to turn to Fiona Kumari Campbell's recent *Contours of Ableism: The Production of Disability and Abledness*, one of the first texts to theorize ability. Here, she discusses ableism:

as a conceptual tool, goes beyond procedures, structure, institutions and values of civil society, situates itself clearly within the histories of *knowledge* and is embedded deeply and subliminally within culture. Many people are familiar with the concepts of sexism and racism, to denote negative differentiation on the basis of sex or racial origin; but ableism is generally perceived as a strange and unfamiliar concept and it is important to refute a rigid understanding of ableism from the outset. The intention is not to propose ableism as another explanatory 'grand narrative', a universalized and systematized conception of disability oppression but rather highlight a convergence of networks of association that produce exclusionary categories and ontologies (i.e. ways of being human). (19)

What I find useful in Campbell's definition is the way that her definition of ableism moves out to the way that "categories and ontologies" are produced in an exclusionary way that forecloses certain aspects of being human. However, I don't agree with Campbell's separation of ableism from "a universalized and systematized conception of disability oppression." Rather, I would argue that the same structures that produce disability oppression also produce ableism. This impacts not only disabled subjects but all subjects because ableism is foundational to how we understand the very essence of what it means to be embodied, whether this is through representation and aesthetics, temporality, or gender and sexuality. Campbell defines disablism as "a set of assumptions conscious or unconscious and practices that promote the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities" (4). But I fail to see how this is separate and distinct from ableism generally. Disability is, after all, part of the categorical and ontological network to which Campbell is referring.

I would argue that internalized ableism is a conscious or unconscious social force that we all have regardless of our belief in compulsory able-bodiedness, or what I would call presumptory able-bodiedness, in that ability is always presumed as a specific way of being and as the norm. Rather than having to be able-bodied or perform ability, subjects

are presumed to be abled, even though ability is obviously a kind of phantasmagorical figure that one can never fully attain. “You Can Do It” is often a phrase that is hurled at disabled people as encouragement and condemnation. Ability is not compelled from subjects as something which can and must be brought forth but rather seen as something that is always-already there. In other words, ability is not an outside norm with which we must comply but an inherent property of subjects. We are always able, this line of thinking goes, though possibly not always willing to access our ability.

If ability is something that is always with us (or something that we are always mediated through), then we must further attempt to understand our relationship to it and the set of choices that one is able to make. Campbell does this by asking the following question: “How does the person with a disability negotiate the expectations and compulsions of ableism? In other words, do they choose to conform or hypermimic ableism or do they go it alone and explore alternative ways of being?” (160) In the first chapter of *Contours of Ableism*, Campbell explores “disability as a state of ambivalence” (160). She constructs a choice for the disabled subject between conformity and ableism or exploring alternative ways of being. At the center of my theoretical interventions is a resistance to this kind of overly reductive either/or binary. It would seem to me that subjects can move back and forth within the binary itself as well, as neither entirely conforming to ableism nor entirely embracing alternative communities and living outside of it. In fact, I argue that there is no ‘outside’ of ableism and the binary of ableist conformity or alternative community. Rather, there are moments of failure within the binary of ability/disability that allow for disruptions of the production of ability and disability. Individuals can find outside structures and spaces that invert or subvert this production, but never exist entirely outside of it.

While I obviously find much of Campbell’s work quite useful, I want to move away from a rigid either/or binary construction which posits one as either inside or outside networks of ableism. In fact, I contend that no such outside exists. One may subvert ableism, or invert ableism, seek alternative communities in opposition to the social structures of ableism, but even within those communities ableism still functions as a constitutive social force.

I would argue that it is not a choice as Campbell puts it, between “hypermimicry or going it alone and exploring alternative ways of being” (160). Most people with a disability do some level of both, since disability almost by definition requires an alternative way of being, although one can still be in an alternative way in some sense and still hold to dominant ableized values and ideology in another. In fact, as I will argue in this dissertation, all subjects, whether they are identified as able or disabled and whether it is conscious or unconscious, absorb ableized values that shape their sense of self and other. ‘Going it alone’ also discounts the concept of community which is so very important within disability activism and culture; even in her own analysis, most of the places that Campbell points to as sites of resistance are places of community such as the online devotee community and the transabled community. The example of the conjoined twins that Campbell uses in fact demonstrates my point, because they are neither an example of community or individual singularity. Ableism is something with which we are always negotiating and engaged. As this dissertation will show, it is possible to subvert structures of disability without explicitly thinking about ability as a social or political category, and possible even to write such a text, and then engage in ableist

assertions in another. Thus it is possible to experience internalized ableism, and act from such a place while being highly critical of ableist structures and their enforcement.

Hence my desire to emphasize and introduce the term ableization, which gets at the subtlety of ableism without necessarily stating its curtailment or impact in quite the same way. That is to say, ableized values may or may not result in ableism, whether we use the definition that Campbell does or use ableism as a more expansive term that includes both her definition of ableism and disablism. Whether we look at ableism as a structure that solely impacts our understandings and ontologies of ability, or whether we look at ableism as encompassing the impact that it has on the lives of people who are disabled or not, the term fails to get at the way ableization works as a process that privileges certain kinds of mental, physical, and emotional ways of functioning and being in the world. This may or may not result in exclusionary categories and ontologies, but instead privileges certain bodies, psychologies, and temperaments over others. The notion that there is a proper way for bodies, minds and emotions to function is so deeply ingrained in the culture that it almost seems to be common sense, and these common sense understandings may or may not exclude or prohibit certain subjects or knowledges, but more importantly are indicative of the limitations in how we perceive subjects and knowledge to be constituted in and of themselves.

Although like Campbell, I assert that ableism can “close off certain aspects of the imagination” (19), I am interested in the ways disabled bodies can be imagined -- that is, in the role that the imaginary has in subverting and potentially weakening ableist structures. In discussing the imaginary, Campbell writes

To imagine is to consider desire, to dream of possibilities, to see life differently. Sometimes it is not possible to imagine: maybe there is an overwhelming sense of gloom or maybe the consequences of imagining differently would result in being ridiculed, pathologised or at best, ignored. Butler (1997a) made the point that for systems of thinking to be maintained, certain ways of imagining need to remain unspeakable and unspoken. In some countries, this is achievable due to the actual absence of words in the vocabulary to describe a certain kind of difference. So is it possible to imagine disability outside of the context of tragedy or catastrophe? (19-20)

Is there a redemptive power to the imaginary? Is there a way that the imaginary can be used to posit alternatives to ableist structures and formulations? What can texts that crip and texts that center disability and critiques of ability do to disrupt structures of ableized sexual representation? How do different sensory modalities accessed by writers enable different kinds of bodies and subjectivities to access the text itself? What kind of audiences do we imagine based on the text’s utilization of the visual or the auditory? What impact do these imagined audiences have on our sense of disability as a lived experience and as a kind of lack? How do literary critiques of medicalization for example, engage with broader issues of temporality? How does literature help us imagine and theorize a “crip time”? How does this connect to issues of futurity?

Campbell discusses technology as shifting us away from bodily deficiency to hyperendowment (63). It is the goal of much medical technology to make this a reality; however, it strikes me that little to no attention is paid to the ways in which technology causes its own problems. Like humans, solutions can always fail and malfunction. In

many instances, technology still cannot supplant a human solution. And despite the long-standing association between technology and disability, people with disabilities are never perceived as hyperendowed. Physical and temporal landscapes are constructed in such a way as to enable able bodies, and whatever deficit technology may correct, if it does not correct it in a way that is entirely identical to a non technological solution, which is virtually impossible; the disabled body always maintains the stigma of the other. For example, I get chastised for driving my scooter too quickly as much as I would for walking too slowly. If not being able to use a keyboard is disruptive to the workflow of colleagues, so is the use of a voice recognition system. A man in Britain was prohibited from driving his own wheelchair down a public street because it was deemed “too large” and classified as a tank (Hall; Coles). As I will discuss in the chapter that deals with temporality, the aesthetics of adaptive equipment is a key factor in whether or not people use it.⁴ Just as important, I argue, is the role of ability and disability in our understanding of aesthetics.

The Aesthetics of Ability

Although images of what we now call disability have been included in culture and literature throughout history, examining them in terms of their specific role in shaping aesthetics is fairly new.⁵ Much in the same way as Tobin Siebers in his latest book, *Disability Aesthetics*, I see disability as a central aesthetic component. Siebers writes:

Modern art comes over time to be identified with disability, and to the point where the appearance of the disabled or wounded body signals the presence of the aesthetic itself. No object beyond the figure of disability has a greater capacity to be accepted at the present moment as an aesthetic representation. Disability is not, therefore, one subject of art among others. It is not merely a theme. It is not only a personal or autobiographical response embedded in an artwork. It is not solely a political act. It is all of these things, but it is more. It is more because disability is properly speaking an aesthetic value, which is to say, it participates in a system of knowledge that provides materials for and increases critical consciousness about the way that some bodies make other bodies feel. The idea of disability aesthetics affirms that disability operates both as a critical framework for questioning aesthetic presuppositions in the history of art and as a value in its own right important to future conceptions of what art is. It is only right, then, that we refer, when we acknowledge the role played by disability in modern art, to the idea of disability aesthetics. (19-20)

Siebers is right to assert disability’s primacy in the creation of modern aesthetics; however this project seeks to assert that not all uses of disability are, in fact, utilizing a disability aesthetic. I would argue that disability aesthetics consist not just of a deployment of disability but of a certain kind of conception of disability – a non-normative mind and body aesthetic that pervades the construction of the text. This need not consist primarily of disabled characters or images of the disabled body; what is important here is a kind of construction of disability within the text itself.

This project will show, as in the case of Morrison, that one can in fact use disability without considering disability as a positionality or an aesthetic. Some of the texts I discuss construct this aesthetic through a critique of medicine, while others do, in fact, use disabled characters. What I hope to show, particularly in the last chapter of the dissertation, is that the construction of a disability aesthetic in one text need not point to an overarching understanding of disability or an anti-ableist ideology. In fact, in the Winterson chapter, we see that despite constructing a text that is very radically against the normative body and bodily control, Winterson actively advocates for the superiority of hearing over deaf cultures. Yet the foundational assumptions about the able body versus the disabled body are so thoroughly ingrained within our culture that this is precisely why the term ableization becomes useful. This dissertation attempts not only to elucidate this concept, but also to show a myriad of ways that texts can construct a disability aesthetic and sensibility, while at the same time arguing that use of a disabled body does not necessarily constitute or demonstrate a type of disability aesthetic.

In critiquing previous conceptions of disability and the aesthetic, Siebers critiques the field for falling into an overly simplistic binary that does little beyond critique works for their detrimental prejudices and stereotypes.

The consideration of aesthetic works from the perspective of disability is a relatively new field. It has so far approached its subject matter straightforwardly, tracking the history of representing people with disabilities in art, literature, and film, most often with respect to detrimental prejudices and stereotypes. Sometimes it has challenged the status quo, demanding the inclusion of more positive or authentic images of the disabled body and mind. This is important work, but it misses the opportunity to consider a more vital resource for imagining disability because it accepts that the work of art represents its object transparently and mimetically. Either the art object gets disability right or it doesn't. (84-85)

While I don't want to fall into the problematic dualism of getting disability right or not and having that be the guiding overly simplified principle of my analysis, I do want to draw a distinction between works that engage with the idea of disability and a disabled subjectivity and works that simply deploy disabled bodies for other representational means. Rather than simply look for "positive examples," my work seeks to examine how fully characters are created, what kind of inclusivity the text constructs through its aesthetics and how it engages with social critiques of the normative body. It is not a question of getting disability right or wrong any more than it is a question of analyzing disability aesthetics simply through looking at art objects transparently or mimetically. It is a question of whether or not texts engage with the idea of disability and normativity of the body, or whether they simply use disability as a kind of blank slate without any connection to disability as a subject matter, be that through depicting the lived experience of people with disabilities or critiques of the medical establishment, or constructing an aesthetic that conceives of its audience as having a multitude of embodiments and various sensory schemas for perceiving the work itself.

Thus, I want to both build on Tobin Siebers' construction of the aesthetic while at the same time critique it in order to create a view that is simultaneously more nuanced than right or wrong, but also remains critical of the difference between deploying

disabled bodies and engaging with disability as an idea and guiding principle within the text itself. To merely deploy disability is, after all, very different than engaging disability and utilizing it as a kind of aesthetic.

Fragility of Ability

Siebers claims that disability's role in the aesthetic is not only about human variation but also the fragility of human beings and their susceptibility to "dramatic physical and mental change," but I wonder to what extent our interest in disability ever demonstrated an interest in human variation as much as it demonstrated an interest in what Siebers identifies as the fragility of human beings. I would call this the fragility of ability. In other words, is disability so often mobilized because it provides such a straightforward site from which to dramatize our vulnerability and susceptibility to dramatic physical change and mental loss, rather than from a celebratory place from which we can examine and embrace our diversity? If so, this fragility sheds light on the tension that Siebers identifies between the beautification of the disabled body in art and the lack of beautification of the disabled body in life. In the following quotation, Siebers is discussing Marc Quinn's sculpture in Trafalgar Square, "Alison Lapper Pregnant," which depicts Lapper, a pregnant woman with foreshortened legs and no arms. Lapper's disabled body is juxtaposed with a king, two generals, and a naval hero (41).

The crucial point here is to recognize that Lapper's body, once turned into an aesthetic representation, has a better chance of being accepted as art than a nondisabled body, despite the fact that disabled bodies, outside of aesthetic contexts, are still dismissed as repulsive and ugly. Disability is not merely unwanted content, political or otherwise, introduced into art but a mode of appearance that grows increasingly identifiable over time as the aesthetic itself. (43)

I'm wondering what constitutes an aesthetic context. It seems that there is this contradiction that Siebers repeatedly notes but fails to resolve throughout the text-- the "real life" perception of disability as "repulsive and ugly," or at least undesirable, and the continuous desire for the disabled body in visual art and literary contexts. It would seem that this caveat is more than an incidental exception to his argument, but rather points to a disjuncture between high aesthetic representation and the way that disability is perceived more generally. Is disability appealing artistically only to the extent that it can be depoliticized and located outside of disability as a social and political identity and a lived experience? Does disability function as an aesthetic only so long as the identification of it as disability remains dormant and is replaced with a universalized idea of human fragility, weakness, or vulnerability? Do aesthetics rely upon disability only to the extent that it can be stripped of its specificity? Also, how does this striking disjuncture mitigate Siebers' statements about the role of aesthetics in imagining political community?

What is the effect of imagining a political community then, if what is imagined never makes it to the register of the real? What is it, for example, that makes Winterson's cancer narrative in *Written on the Body* so universal, at least for her, and makes it such an acceptable risk, while for Winterson, a deaf couple having a deaf child becomes totally selfish and unacceptable? Siebers continues:

I am proposing a different dynamic between disability in art and reality. It is not a matter of being able to view disabled people as representing works of art; it is a matter of being able to view works of art as representing disability. This fine distinction is important because it underscores that the difference ascribed to the artwork relies on the difference of disability, and as long as it remains unacknowledged, disability can be used to disqualify and oppress human beings. (44)

But even if it is acknowledged, to what extent can this difference address the disqualification of disabled people? It would seem that this disqualification could still occur even while claiming or critiquing dynamics of disability. My Winterson chapter would be an excellent example - *Written on the Body* is a novel that is tremendously critical of medicine and normative ideologies about the body but although Winterson holds these views in regard to cancer and illness, deafness on the other hand becomes a kind of disability that is unacceptable, and she alludes in her comments to the idea that blindness may be even worse. Thus, even understanding and being critical of dominant ideologies around the body, normativity and illness does not mean that one could not hold disqualifying views of other types of impairments based on ideas about the aesthetic and what is needed to appreciate aesthetics as well as create them.

The texts that have more expansive ideas about ability and by extension more expansive ideas about their audience within this dissertation are decidedly modern canonical texts. While this is not a project that makes a pervasive and historical claim about modernist literature and ability, I would like to briefly consider Siebers' recent claim that the disabled body is a modern one:

The disabled body is the modern body. I also want to suggest that modern art advances through its preoccupation with the disabled body a preoccupation found at another site – the media – and that the fascination of modern art and the media with the disabled body is based on its adaptability to collective representation.” (107)

I would argue that the modern body is disabled. Disability after all, is a product of much of modernity's investments in imperialism and globalism. But the disabled body is not modern. In fact, much of the way that disability is perceived within literature harkens back to very antiquated notions of disability. The disabled body can stand for a villain or divine retribution or divine favor – it can embody a kind of mysticism that eludes modern sensibility. But more precisely it is that disability can mean anything - not in the sense that its materiality can be evaded - but in the sense that disabled bodies can be deployed without considering disability.

It is precisely the adaptability of the disabled body and its deployment within collective representation that allows for the use of disability as a body but not as an idea or experience or ideology or aesthetic. The disabled body in some ways represents the natural order or divine favor. It is neither modern nor antiquated. It is a kind of blank slate that can be deployed by fables and postmodern theorists alike without at all considering disability as an issue. I agree with Siebers' assertion of disability as a foundational aesthetic principle. However, while artists can use aesthetic depictions of disability, this does not necessitate, any more than it precludes, them from dealing with disability as a social and political reality.

Siebers' text focuses primarily on visual art, and although he asserts a claim for disability aesthetic, his readings of representation focus on the image much more than character or the way that senses construct a particular kind of aesthetic sensibility.

My argument here conceives of the disabled body and mind as playing significant roles in the evolution of modern aesthetics, theorizing disability as a unique resource discovered by modern art and then embraced by it as one of its defining concepts. Disability aesthetics refuses to recognize the representation of the healthy body – and its definition of harmony, integrity, and beauty- as the sole determination of the aesthetic. Rather, disability aesthetics embraces beauty that seems by traditional standards to be broken, and yet it is not less beautiful, but more so, as a result. Note that it is not a matter of representing the exclusion of disability from aesthetic history, since no such exclusion has taken place, but of making the influence of disability obvious. This goal may take two forms: (1) to establish disability as a critical framework that questions the presuppositions underlying definitions of aesthetic production and appreciation; (2) to elaborate disability as an aesthetic value in itself worthy of future development.

My claim is that the acceptance of disability enriches and complicates notions of the aesthetic, while the rejection of disability limits definitions of artistic ideas and objects. (2-3)

It is interesting that Siebers' project seeks to focus primarily on visual art, given the predominance of non-visual disabilities. Siebers even goes so far as to claim:

It is more accurate to say that every disability is technically invisible until it becomes visible under the pressure of social convention, which means that the appearance of disability is often linked to violence and prejudice. (129)⁶

This project seeks to critique rather than replicate an ocularcentric understanding of art and aesthetics, and I examine not only the way texts represent disability but the way that ability is constructed through a text's deployment of the senses. By moving away from the focus on what can be seen or heard to how seeing and hearing work in a text, I am trying to develop a way of reading that does not replicate a focus on disabilities that can easily be seen. Most people's disabilities do not have visible markers.⁷ I want to account for this common reality by moving beyond what can be seen as the focus of disability representation.

Although I offer nothing prescriptive about who can or should represent or re-present disability, it seems foolish to think that experience has no role in shaping expertise or understanding of ability. Campbell makes this point, as well.

Taking into account the problematical associations with experience-based arguments, it is clear that people with disabilities *do* possess the daily experience of being a disabled person, negotiating the specter of ableism in its various nuances. Our experience cultivates an inferential insight into the dynamics of ableism in a way that is *distinct* from those whose lives are not infused with impairment. (122)

I too want to claim some kind of situated knowledge of disability and ableism, without necessarily setting up a one-on-one correspondence between experience and knowledge,

since reflectiveness is not a given in connection to experience and there is no one way to reflect, analyze or interpret. But it does seem that being disabled has the potential, at least, to provide access to ways of knowing and experiencing disability that being nondisabled does not. In this dissertation, I offer my experiences as a kind of knowledge, not to suggest that they are all-inclusive, but as a way of supporting this assertion of the relationship between disability, knowledge and experience - as a way of asserting my own personal experiences not only as a disabled person, but also my experiences as a disabled activist and member of disability communities.

What this project does for disability studies is provide a more nuanced theorization of ability, especially in relation to sexuality, temporality, aesthetics, and literary representation. While building somewhat on the recent work of Campbell and Siebers, this dissertation constructs ability as a much more nuanced and complex category than currently exists. It challenges the perhaps commonsense assumption, also upheld in Siebers' work, that representations of disability are increasing over time, especially in their quantity and complexity. I think that the distinction between disability as an aesthetic concern and the use of the disabled body does not remain static or easy to maintain, but it nevertheless seems an important distinction in our critical thinking about disability aesthetics. My project is one of the first to get at the contradictory nature of ableist oppression in the ways in which certain impairments can be accepted and others totally rejected. It is also one of the only works in literary disability studies to utilize one of the complex representational schemas that an author has constructed on that author herself. In doing this, I mean not to fall into criticizing an author simply for prejudice or lack of political correctness but to show the pervasive and complex and unconscious nature of ableized values in aesthetic construction. Although the body of work on disability and sexuality has been increasing, a crip erotic has not been theorized before. This project is one of the only to center on an explicitly non-normative and disabled sense of the erotic. It is one of the first in the field to analyze disability from a place beyond character depiction and take into account a text's sensory schema as a commentary on ability itself.

Chapter One: A Crippled Erotic: Gender and Disability in James Joyce's "Nausicaa"

Suzette Henke once referred to Gerty McDowell as the second most important female character in James Joyce's *Ulysses*; since she made this claim twenty-five years ago, critical interest in the "Nausicaa" chapter, where Gerty appears, has increased considerably ("Joyce's Sentimental Heroine" 132). While issues of gender and sexuality represent a major critical focus of Joyce scholars engaging with "Nausicaa," a discussion of disability as a key part of the chapter's framework remains absent from these conversations. Similarly, no scholars within disability studies have examined Joyce's Gerty.⁸ Several aspects of the chapter, when considered alongside other elements of the novel such as Joyce's use of the blind man character in "Lestrygonians" and the novel's emphasis on the olfactory, can be read as interventions in conceptions of gender, sexuality, and disability. The text constructs an alternative erotic sensibility, or a "crippled erotic," that focuses on pleasure rather than on intercourse and reproduction, as well as on ways of experiencing and understanding pleasure and attraction that extend beyond ocularcentrism. In my reading, the character Gerty McDowell recuperates disability and reveals "ability" as a central component of how gender functions and subjectivity is formed. In addition to making a contribution to interpretations of the "Nausicaa" chapter within literary studies, I seek to demonstrate here how a disability perspective applied to this important chapter of *Ulysses* challenges fundamental assumptions about sexuality and gender, such as the nature of sex and the role of objectification. Also, I intend to show how my analysis works to nuance and complicate contemporary writing about disability, gender, and desire within disability studies.

The "Nausicaa" episode consists primarily of monologues by the two central characters, Gerty McDowell, a young woman with a limp, and Leopold Bloom. The chapter begins with Gerty sitting on the rocks and ends with her swinging and posing suggestively for Bloom. He watches Gerty but never approaches her. The references at the end of the chapter to a stick have been often read by critics as references to Bloom masturbating while watching Gerty:

He flung his wooden pen away. The stick fell in the stilted sand, stuck. Now if you were trying to do that for a week on end you couldn't. Chance. We'll never meet again. But it was lovely. Goodbye, dear. Thanks. Made me feel so young. (*Ulysses* 382)

More recently, critics have suggested that Gerty's activity on the swing has the same sexual implication.

... she was trembling in every limb from being bent so far back he had a full view high up above her knee no-one ever not even on the swing or wading and she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't either to look in that immodest way like that because he couldn't resist the sight of the wonderful revealment... She would fain have cried to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her white brow the cry of a young girls love, a little strangled cry, rung from her, that cry that has rung through the ages. (366)

It is important that we consider two significant points regarding the setup of this encounter that, as of yet, have received virtually no critical attention. Leopold Bloom's

impotence places him outside of normative heterosexual masculinity and gives his ability to gain sexual pleasure a different weight than it would otherwise have. Whether we would use the term disabled to describe Bloom here because of his impotence is less important than the ways in which his impotence alters his experience of sexuality and perception of himself as a sexual being.

The other significant point is that the encounter moves the emphasis away from intercourse and a specific set of actions that constitute a single sex act and towards the pleasure of each of the characters. The text even further suggests that it might not have been enjoyable, or even possible, if it were otherwise, given the unpredictability of Bloom's sexual function and his marriage to Molly. In fact, the pleasure both Bloom and Gerty experience as a result of the encounter, both emotional and physical, could only exist in this economy of the imaginary and in the realm of fantasy, because Gerty is looking for a spouse and Bloom is already married.

Bloom's attraction to Gerty, while at first seeming to hinge on an understanding of her as no different from her other female companions, ultimately expands to incorporate her limp as part of her appeal. I will go on to discuss Bloom's perception of Gerty's limp and its relationship to his perception of Gerty's desirability. There is also the issue of how Gerty's self perception reframes her self image and sexual agency in relation to disability. How does Gerty's limp impact our understanding of her within the chapter? How do questions that this chapter raises not only address the process of gendering, but also the relationship that these processes have to disability?

The critical trajectory of this encounter within Joyce studies has focused on the ways in which Gerty is disempowered by it. Her limp is seen as an extension of this disempowerment and of the idea of limitation within the text. In 1974, Fritz Senn, for instance, characterized her as "passively reactive" and also "lame and incomplete" (283). Senn further posited that the "awkwardness of the prose suggests the awkwardness of her limp" (291). His contemporary Richard Ellmann suggested that Gerty's limp reveals the terrible ways in which the body "fails hope and imagination" (133). Later, in 2004, Suzette Henke read Gerty as searching for a father figure who will remove her "limping inadequacy" ("Joyce's Naughty Nausicaa" 89). Marilyn French echoes her claim, stating that "Gerty's sentimental and romantic notions are an ironic comment on the bleak life she lives and her actual inadequacy, her moral and physical lameness" (168). In other recent interpretations such as those by Barbara Leckie, John Bishop, Katherine Mullin, Kimberly Devlin and Jen Shelton, Gerty has been recognized as having a more performative and active role in the encounter. But although the chapter has been reinterpreted by critics over the past twenty years, the limp has not received the same kind of reconsideration. In most articles that seek to cast Gerty in a different light, the significance of the limp is largely ignored. In one notable recent exception, Leckie points out that Joyce may be utilizing the limp to play upon the myth that masturbation can cause deformity (80). Bishop also sees the limp as connecting Gerty and Bloom as disabled subjects (191-192).

Another mention occurs in an earlier essay by Henke, published in 1982, "Gerty McDowell: Joyce's Sympathetic Heroine," where, for a few lines, she considers the impact that Gerty's disability might have on how she constructs herself and exerts sexual agency: "once we learn of Gerty's lameness, we have to admire the bravado of her sexual exertion in the competitive sexual market of 1904" (134). Yet this admiration, which

alludes problematically to the idea of disabled people as inspirational (an idea that I will go on to argue, is critiqued by the “Nausicaa” chapter itself later on), seems to be abandoned for the rest of the essay. Henke goes on to refer to Gerty as “male identified,” “caught in a trap of self deception,” “naïve,” and overall not a character for whom we should feel much more than pity (135-138). This perspective on the limp and its impact on Gerty’s sexual subjectivity is completely missing from Henke’s revision in 2004 where she argues that the chapter exposes “fakery on both sides of the gender divide” (“Joyce’s Naughty Nausicaa” 85). None of these approaches challenge underlying presumptions about the inherent stigma of disability or engage in a sustained critical way with how disability and gender may impact one another. Therefore, I intend to take on that task by looking at the ways the limp works to defy common assumptions about both gender and disability.

Much writing, both sociological and personal, attests to the perception of people with disabilities as asexual and/or undesirable romantic or sexual partners.⁹ Joyce’s chapter makes a point of disputing these perceptions as it foregrounds both Gerty’s agency and her desirability in the scene itself. Bloom’s recognition of Gerty as a sexual subject who is similar to his wife, and his alignment of her with other women, functions as a way of critiquing the idea that Gerty is unmarriageable as a result of her defect. Although Bloom expresses initial embarrassment and ambivalence about Gerty’s limp, it ultimately does not curtail his interest in her.

We can see from the following passage how quickly this shift takes place. Of Gerty’s limp Bloom thinks “Glad I didn’t know it when she was on show. Hot little devil all the same. Wouldn’t mind. Curiosity like a nun or a negress or a girl with glasses” (368). Here Joyce mobilizes two competing rhetorics around disability. One is more traditional, as shown by Bloom’s expression of guilt or embarrassment around viewing a disabled person as sexual: “Glad I didn’t know it when she was on show.” This is also evoked by comparing her to a nun. Bloom’s comparison becomes more problematic when he compares Gerty to a negress, because of the exoticization and hypersexuality that this comparison implies.¹⁰

Although Gerty, on some level, represents an “other” for Bloom, he is also critiquing the idea of her exclusion and exceptionality by aligning her with “a girl with glasses,” and by extension with a common impairment.¹¹ Bloom’s oscillation quickly moves disability into a category that is not only acceptable but ordinary. The oscillation exemplifies some capacity for movement and flexibility within the process of gendering, in that the gap between idealized female bodies and lived female bodies allows for the incorporation of disability within notions of femininity; it also helps to allow the space for Gerty MacDowell to exist as a sexual subject.

Another way the text destigmatizes Gerty is by framing the limp in a way that minimizes the exceptionality of disability. This is done both by emphasizing the frequency with which disability occurs and emphasizing disability as a variation rather than an extraordinary uniqueness. I am struck by the parallelism between this critique of exceptionalism and the one discussed in critical literature about the chapter with regard to youth. The idea that Gerty functions as a kind of double for Stephen has been repeatedly established in much criticism about the chapter.¹² Gerty, like Stephen, is unaware of her youth, and both have allowed their age to convince them that they are fundamentally unique and in some ways exceptional. Much as this false sense of exceptionality brought

on by youth is highlighted in relation to Gerty, the exceptionalism of disability is undermined. Thus, disability becomes an example of the exceptional being ordinary, much in the same way that youth can offer a false sense of exceptionality. By this I mean that Gerty and Stephen share a sense that they are exceptionally talented and destined for great things by virtue of their youth. The mediocrity of Stephen's writing in Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* functions to undermine this point and highlight his self-delusion.

Similarly, Gerty's inflated sense of herself and of her romantic future with Bloom is undermined through the novel's stylistic parody of Victorian romance novels. "Her sense of singularity is paradoxically conveyed in a style that is imitative, conventional, and heavy with implications of mass production" (Bishop 205). The ordinary, as Bishop goes on to acknowledge, is in no way a category that serves to demean or minimize (205). I would take his claim a step further and argue that in relation to disability, it is a way of erasing stigma. The commonness of Gerty's sense of exceptionality works to challenge misconceptions of disability as well as to redefine the value of the ordinary. Gerty's sense of herself as never being like other women and being "aloof, apart in another sphere" relates both to her age and her disability (*Ulysses* 363). Exceptionalism is critiqued by the style of Gerty's narrative itself. In addition to simulating the nineteenth century romantic novels, Gerty's section integrates advertising rhetoric from around the turn of the century. One need only to look at how she is introduced in the text to find such an example.

But who was Gerty?

Gerty MacDowell who was seated near her companions, lost in thought, gazing far away into the distance, was in very truth as fair a specimen of winsome Irish girlhood as one could wish to see. She was pronounced beautiful by all who knew her though, as folks often said, she was more a Giltrap than a MacDowell. Her figure was slight and graceful, inclining even to fragility but those iron jelloids she had been taking of late had done her a world of good much better than the Widow Welch's female pills and she was much better of those discharges she used to get and that tired feeling. The waxen pallor of her face was almost spiritual in its ivorylike purity though her rosebud mouth was a genuine Cupid's bow, Greekly perfect. (348)

The passage's humor is derived from its discursive juxtapositions, not from the way in which Gerty embodies femininity as a result of her limp, a potentially easy target for comic relief. Yet it is no surprise that given the extreme and pervasive nature of this stylistic choice, critics like Patrick McGee raise the question of whether Gerty is meant to be seen as a character at all or if she is simply meant as a stylistic parody of sentimentalized discourse around romance (306).

Such a reading, however, disregards Gerty's agency in the encounter and the pleasure she derives from it. After all, Bloom's objectification of Gerty is no more important than Gerty's agency in the process of her own objectification.¹³ Gerty functions as a figure consciously in control and deciding to display herself.

and she let him and she saw that he saw and then it went so high it went out of sight a moment and she was trembling in every limb from being bent so far back he had a full view high up above her knee no-one ever not

even on the swing or wading and she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't either to look in that immodest way like that because he couldn't resist ... (366)

Gerty experiences sexual pleasure from the encounter, even though as Bishop has argued she does so less self-consciously than Bloom. "Whitehot passion was in that face, passion silent as the grave, and it had made her his... his hands and face were working and a tremor went over her" (365).

The orgasmic tone of these passages directly contradicts the assessment of several critics who see Gerty as disempowered, commodified and a purely erotic object. Suzette Henke suggests, for instance, that the fact that Gerty does not speak during the encounter is evidence of her entrapment in a masculine narrative ("Joyce's *Naughty Nausicaa*" 91-2). Jules David Law similarly argues that the mutual gaze of the text creates Bloom's projection of himself as a sexual object rather than subject, from which he emerges more fully than Gerty (226). But, his overarching idea of Gerty as a sexual subject still remains submerged in a conceptualization of her as an enactment of patriarchal norms.

One of the more traditional ways the chapter engages with constructing Gerty not only as a sexual object, but as a self, is through its utilization of the mirror.¹⁴ In a scene that reverberates with associations for Lacanian psychoanalysis and of the fairytale Snow White, Gerty describes her own reflection and how a mirror would respond if it could speak.¹⁵ Through her use of this fantasy, she is able to reaffirm her ability to embody sentimentality in a way that is appropriately gendered, and also to maintain her own sense of herself as "lovely."

Her very soul is in her eyes and she would give worlds to be in the privacy of her own familiar chamber where, giving way to tears, she could have a good cry and relieve her pent up feelings. Though not too much because she knew how to cry nicely before the mirror. You are lovely, Gerty, it said. (351)

Gerty's uncomplicated relationship with the mirror privileges an understanding of feminine embodiment that depends upon the gaze and display. To the extent that Gerty can embrace stereotypical embodiments of femininity, she can be understood not only as a woman but also as an adult, which includes, especially for women, the idea of being marriageable as well as sexual. This challenges Law's claim that Gerty does not see the mirror as elucidating the problematic relationship between the subjective and objective self, rather her objectification is part of what enables her subjectification (Law 228). The gendered difference produced and enacted by this self-objectification enables Gerty to be understood as a subject with greater agency. Understanding subjects as gendered is central to their legibility; although gendered norms can often be constraining, they are the lens through which one's agency becomes understood. The use of the mirror also invokes the common perception that people with disabilities are narcissistic – a perception cogently explored by Tobin Siebers in his work on the subject. He argues that "the accusation of narcissism is one of the strongest weapons used against people with disabilities" (43). This instance allows for a narcissistic accusation to be recuperated into an iteration of femininity as agency.

The way in which Gerty uses the visual to reconfigure her own sense of identity and empowerment connects to other uses of the gaze in the novel that trouble traditional expectations of how the gaze should function. The watcher/watched dynamics in the chapter show the way in which binary conceptions of sexual difference are limited, and

they also thwart a simplistic analysis of oppressor/oppressed dynamics because of Gerty's refusal to look back at Bloom. According to Mulvey, the gaze works best when the woman seems inviting and desiring of the gaze. It is important not to read the chapter as a mere embodiment of Mulvey's theories, nor as a denial of Gerty's agency as a spectator. Instead, similar to what Kimberly Devlin has also observed, I see the novel as conflating the category of looked-at-ness with the category of spectator ("The Romantic Heroine Exposed" 393).¹⁶ The narrative, after all, makes clear at several points that Gerty not only invites Bloom's gaze but uses it as fuel for her own desires.

This is not to suggest, however, that Gerty formulates her sense of the erotic female subject outside of limited and potentially limiting constructions of female sexuality. In posing for Bloom, Gerty explicitly cites the postures of pinup girls and alludes to poses found in pornography. It is precisely this citational practice that enables her to become an object of desire for Bloom. The fact that femininity becomes constrained within these commodified and popular visual constructions does not mean that the subject citing such poses lacks either empowerment or choice. Gerty's character recognizes the ways in which female sexuality has been constructed, and she is determined to enter into that discourse, to contrast the perception within the culture at large and within the text's critical reception that she is naïve and less desirable as a result of her limp. To understand Gerty's desire one must also understand the extent to which disabled bodies are frequently de-eroticized and subjects of the medical rather than sexual gaze.¹⁷

Gerty's frequent reliance upon sentimental novels and media constructions as a way of knowing both femininity and conventions of romantic and sexual love reveal that gendered embodiment can only be a citational practice. Rather than expose the ways in which Gerty fails to authentically embody female subjectivity as a result of a patriarchal and phallo-centric economy, "Nausicaa" alludes to the unobtainability of a fully authentic embodiment of gender. That is to say that questions of gender and authenticity are not only deferred but foreclosed altogether. Gerty's character illustrates how attempts to embody a fully authentic femininity must fail, rather than how patriarchal norms are strengthened through gendered conformity.¹⁸ We must therefore examine the ways in which disability interacts with the deferral of questions of authenticity regarding gender and sexuality and the unattainability of gendered authenticity itself. Through revealing the ways in which embodiments of femininity are predicated upon embodiments of gender, "Nausicaa" can be read as exposing the performativity of ability and its inextricability from the performativity of gender. In concealing her limp and trying to appear nondisabled, Gerty demonstrates the ways in which ability, like gender, is also a citational and performative practice.¹⁹ While both processes are contingent upon one another, it is never possible to fully embody either one of them.

Gerty's limp makes plain the ways in which her citation of gender must always appear to be even more incomplete. "The years were slipping by for her, one by one but for the one shortcoming she knew she need fear no competition and that was an accident coming down Dalkey hill and she always tried to conceal it" (364). If no gendered subject fits perfectly within idealized norms of gender, and gender itself is citational and a process of selective display and concealment, then Gerty must perform even more than a nondisabled subject in order to perform and display femininity. Her concealment becomes an even greater challenge and ultimately reveals that notions of gender are

intertwined and predicated upon notions of an able body. This is not to say that disabled subjects cannot be understood in gendered terms but rather that their access to the economy of gendered expression is constrained. This is precisely because that economy is built upon an idealized able body to which they do not have access and which they can never fully perform.²⁰

Gerty represents the contingent and unstable nature of these norms of embodiment as well as their ability to allow for partial conformity. This partial conformity both reinstitutes these norms and calls them into question.²¹ She can be seen as a comment on the process of beautification itself: in that process, gender becomes an always deferred symbol²² that remains, to borrow a phrase from Patrick McGee's reading, "empty until we inform it with desire" (311). This does not place gender outside of already articulated and constrained ideologies, which are both constructed as the embodiments of our desire and as a result of our attempts to approximate these embodiments. The inevitable gap between the attempt and the sought after ideal is not evidence that we can or should aim for abandoning iterations of gendered embodiment. It is precisely such attempts that allow Gerty to formulate herself as a gendered subject.

A salient example in which she reframes her subjectivity and body in relation to other women occurs when she compares herself to some cyclists. We can see from the following example that in redefining her different body as an asset, she performs an alternative assessment of desirability. In reflecting on her relationship with Reggie Wylie, Gerty claims she is "not like the other flighty girls, unfeminine, he had known, those cyclists showing off what they hadn't got..." (358). Here we see Gerty setting herself apart from the other girls, through focusing on her bodily differences as an enhancement of her femininity. The reference to cyclists is particularly important here because the cyclists have athleticized, able bodies which exist in stark contrast to Gerty's that is limping but shapely. In Gerty's comparison, she has the advantage, because her lack of cycling ability, which is associated with her limp, is also part of what makes her more feminine and a more desirable candidate for Bloom. Thus when the women are showing off what they haven't got, Gerty constructs a narrative that privileges her own disabled body as not only desirable but preferable. The passage then proceeds to Gerty's desire to be loved "for herself alone," both connecting her body to her self-identity and suggesting that she wants to be desired for more than her embodiment of femininity, although this claim is easily subsumed by the chapter's focus on appearance and embodiment.

Another way in which the text maintains its focus on Gerty's desirability and disability is through extended and repeated mention of Gerty's footwear and attractive legs. "Her well turned ankle displayed its perfect proportions beneath her skirt and just the proper amount and no more of her shapely limbs encased in finespun hose high spliced heels and wide garter tops..." (350). Bloom also comments on her "well filled hose" in his section (368). Gerty makes allowances for her differences in mobility and makes clear that while she may need to compete with other women; it is not necessary for her to move like them, "but Gerty was adamant. She had no intention of being at their beck and call if they could run like rosies she could sit so she said she could see from where she was..." (365). Sitting also permits her to continue her erotic scene with Bloom and obtain pleasure from it.

This is not to suggest that Gerty only conceptualizes her body and herself in positive terms. We can see her express jealousy when she sees her companion Cissy Caffrey run.

[T]here was a lot of the tomboy about Cissy Caffrey and she was a forward piece whenever she thought she had a good opportunity to show off and just because she was a good runner she ran like that so that he could see all the end of her petticoat running and her skinny shanks up as far as possible. It would have served her just right if she had tripped up over something accidentally on purpose with her crooked French heels on her to make her look tall and got a fine tumble. (359)

Here not only does Gerty become jealous of Cissy, but the jealousy is also located specifically in Cissy's status as a good runner, and this mobility is part of what makes her literally more forward than Gerty as she goes to approach the men. It is also significant that Gerty comments on her shoes, given that French heels would probably be difficult for Gerty to wear. Once again, we see Gerty characterizing athleticism or ability as masculine to highlight her femininity.

Gerty's oscillations about her own desirability, and the advantages and disadvantages of her limp, reveal that she views her disability neither as entirely abject nor as entirely appropriable. Instead these movements show that within the constraints of legible gendered embodiment, she shifts back and forth, as does individual consciousness reflecting a negotiation between idealized gender norms and our own lived embodiments. It is not, therefore, that Gerty represents a monolithic positive representation of disability within the text. Rather the negotiation that she undergoes with her physical difference and with gender norms elucidates both how these norms function and the degree of mobility within them. The process of moving back and forth between perceiving her disability as asset and liability, a source of self consciousness and confidence is what is important, because it is indicative of the continuous reconciliation and unreconciliation of ability and gender norms.

Similarly, while Gerty's romantic narrative clearly establishes her desire for a traditional marriage and children, her distaste for her friends' children subtly undercuts this narrative. In describing Cissy with her boys, Gerty observes:

Cissy came up along the strand with the two twins and their ball with her hat anyhow on her to one side after her run and she did look a steele tugging two kids along with the flimsy blouse she bought only a fortnight before like a rag on her back and a bit of her petticoat hanging like a caricature. (360)

Given how paramount appearance is to Gerty, it is difficult to see her yearning to be in the same position. In the passage Cissy seems disheveled and weighed down in a way Gerty could never imagine. She wishes "to goodness they'd take the snottynosed twins and their baby home..." (361). It may be that for her the fantasy of the security and recognition marriage would provide is more appealing than its reality. After all, it is her freedom from these restraints that allows her to stay after her friends have gone and therefore to reach climax with Bloom.²³

Thus Gerty is further outside of the sexual market economy than critics like Henke and Garry Leonard would suggest. For instance, Leonard claims that Gerty is merely trying to increase her market value (56). Similarly, Henke argues that Gerty sells

herself cheaply as a sexual commodity (91). But it is not that Gerty sells herself cheaply. In fact, Gerty sells herself freely: she comes at no cost to Bloom, which he comments on in his section. “Cheap too. Yours for the asking. Because they want it themselves. Their natural craving...” (368). Gerty’s own pleasure in the encounter raises the value of the exchange considerably, especially when we consider its role in reaffirming her sense of herself as a desirable sexual subject. It is impossible to commodify the value of one’s own subject formation.

The issue of commodification also becomes further complicated by the inclusion of Gerty’s disability. Gerty’s failure to become a commodity, both in terms of employment and marriage, alludes to the broader cultural failure to commodify disabled subjects. For people with disabilities, because of their deviations from normative ideas of bodily and cognitive function (or even the appearance of such deviation), it is increasingly difficult to be recuperated into capitalistic frameworks of profit.²⁴ Disability problematizes the process of commodification because it emphasizes the body’s particularity and idiosyncrasy; this in turn works against capitalist values of reproduction and exchangeability. I mean to suggest that disability alters one’s relationship to capitalistic frameworks and commodification, not to suggest that specific individuals with impairments are not, or cannot be, commodified at a given historical moment. Because disability is often reduced to the idiosyncratic, it fails to be absorbed into market systems and is often dismissed as a coherent and significant category of difference, identity, and human experience.

However, the chapter’s constructions of gender and sexuality can be seen extending beyond Gerty’s character representation. The chapter employs a visually repressive economy that locates the erotic not only in the seen or the said but also in the unseen and the unsaid.²⁵ In doing so, it challenges the privileging of the visual in relation to the erotic. Leckie astutely points out that Gerty’s language creates its erotic charge through its censorship and that the language of the passages calls upon readers to fill in the gaps. For example, “She felt the warm flush, a danger signal always with Gerty MacDowell, surging and flaming into her cheeks. Till then they had only exchanged glances of the most casual...” (356).²⁶ Why the blush occurs and what it means is left for the reader to discern. Its suggestion of eroticism or embarrassment allows not only for two discrete readings but a blurring of the boundary between the two.

It is no wonder then that representation of female sexuality was seen as dangerous in the English sensational novel debate of the eighteen sixties and in the subsequent censorship regulations afterward. The novel’s insistence that the reader fill in the gaps allowed for critics anxious about female sexuality to target the novel rather than men or patriarchal culture. As Leckie has argued, not only did this allow the “problem” of female sexuality to be reframed as an issue of censorship, but it also created a class of readers that needed to be policed (66). One would imagine that these pressures would be far greater for disabled women and other women whose reproduction could be seen as undesirable or even dangerous. Imagination emerges at the center of what needs to be constrained with regard to sexuality. Just as dangerous as the acts that may occur as a result of the representation is the idea that desires and their enactment are unscripted to a certain degree.

Marilyn French identifies concealment as the primary method used in Gerty’s section—a method that forces the reader to insert eroticism into the text, and the

chapter's visual and textual repression grants the imagined more power than the real (French 158). This technique of concealment also decenters the visual in that it relies heavily upon the reader's own process of signification to make the erotic meaning within the text. The text's capacity for representing eroticism relies on the reader not only to fill in the blanks, but also to determine how the entire narrative functions as a kind of blank, which contains the erotic to the extent that the reader uses it to magnify and expand the text. By this I do not mean that the erotic exists in the text only as a result of the will or lack of will of a particular reader, but that the specific erotics of the encounter are, in fact, determined by the reader's own sense of the parameters of what the erotic might contain and signify. This is also true of Bloom's erotic experience while he is masturbating. We never get to know exactly what he fantasizes about because the chapter centers on Gerty while he is masturbating (Bishop 189).

How Joyce conceptualized the erotic in the chapter was greatly influenced by its broad construction in sexual psychologist Havelock Ellis' work. We know Joyce owned a copy of Ellis' *The New Spirit*, and Ellis cites a case of a man attracted to "lame women" in Richard Von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*. The original case involves a man who had his first sexual feelings after seeing a lame woman and thereafter could only be excited by other women who limped. He was advised by Krafft-Ebing that it was impossible for medical science to undo such a long-standing fetish and that his best hope for happiness was to find a limping woman that he could also fall in love with (155-156).²⁷ In the novel's reference to the case, while the limp does not discount the attraction, it is not its sole source. This revision moves the example away from pathology and places it less conspicuously on a spectrum of desire.

How the erotic signifies becomes just as important as what signifies as erotic. For instance, in discussing a blind man, Bloom critiques stereotypes of blindness and puts forth alternative sensory schemas as a possible way of understanding the world. "Or we are surprised they have any brains. Why we think a deformed person or a hunchback clever if he says something we might say. Of course the other senses are more..." (Ulysses 181). Once again, the text raises challenges about how people with disabilities are perceived, such as the idea that we should think the disabled are exceptional for demonstrating intelligence or for thinking or saying the same thing we might. The statement "of course the other senses are more" opens up a space for compensation and even for an alternative sensibility that is just as valuable. The presentation of this alternative sensory schema could be misread as claiming that the blind have a kind of second sight or exceptional or even superhuman senses in other ways. But I believe that the text suggests, as the author knows firsthand through his own visual impairment, that vision is only one source of sensory information from which one can know and understand his or her surroundings. A remark Joyce made to Louis Gillet on the possibility of his going blind: "What the eyes bring is nothing. I have a hundred worlds to create, I am losing only one of them" (Ellmann 664). One must separate this point from the idea that these abilities can be of mythic proportions or lead to mythic levels of understanding. Therefore, I am arguing not for blindness as a kind of "second sight,"²⁸ but for the text as encompassing visual economies but at the same time moving beyond ocularcentrism.²⁹

After all, it is known that Joyce had frequent eyesight problems throughout his life. For instance, Richard Ellmann cites a letter in which Joyce complains "my eyes are

so capricious ... it is has been light but intermittent so that for five weeks I could do nothing but lie near a stove" (*James Joyce* 454). While it is impossible to say that Joyce's problems with his vision, which continued throughout his life, had a simplistic causal relationship with *Ulysses*' engagement of disability, it is unlikely that this experience has no relationship to the way in which disability is deployed in the novel and also to the way in which the novel utilizes the senses.

The way in which Bloom contemplates the blind man in "Lestrygonians" connects this alternative sensory schema to the subject position of blindness and disability directly. As Bloom describes the blind man, he imagines how difficult the situation of blindness must be in relation to women:

Must be strange not to see her. Kind of a form in his mind's eye. The voice temperature when he touches her with fingers must almost see the lines, the curves. His hands on her hair, for instance. Say it was black for instance. Good. We call it black. Then passing over her white skin. Different feel perhaps. Feeling of white. (182)

Yet his contemplation of the difficulty quickly gives way to contemplating how the blind man must differentiate a woman's voice from others. His ability almost to see the lines and curves uses touch as an approximate vision. The different colors of her skin and her hair can be felt through texture, whose differentiations allow the blind man to recognize the woman's experience, as well as to feel colors in a way that Bloom cannot. The statement "we call it black" acknowledges the separation of naming from the thing named. This use of the signifier/signified relationship calls into question the idea of one collective reality and of a uniform way of understanding color specifically and the material world more generally. If Bloom acknowledges that "we call it black," implicit in that recognition is the arbitrariness of the term itself and the possibility of other ways of experiencing and even defining what we term "blackness."

Privileging of sight is challenged by more than just this short passing contemplation of a blind figure. It is also done through expanding the significance of the olfactory in relation to the erotic. Hugh Davis discusses the ways in which olfactory representation has been largely ignored in discussions of *Ulysses*. To the extent that it has been mentioned, its importance has been frequently minimized, despite the fact that earlier work by Richard Brown has pointed out Ellis' influence on *Ulysses*. However Davis' work seeks to put the olfactory at the forefront of his own interpretation. His analysis reveals not only the importance of scent in relation to Joyce's treatment of sexuality, but also the associations that scent evokes as opposed to image. "Personal odors do not, as vision does, give us information that is very largely intellectual; they make an appeal that is mainly of an intimate, emotional, imaginative character" (Ellis 1:3.82). Davis calls attention to how Ellis' emphasis on smell in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* resonates in *Ulysses* and Joyce's writing about his own erotic sensibility to his wife, Nora. Joyce's sexual proclivities have been recorded in their 1909 correspondence, in which he repeatedly discusses his desire for the smell of her perfume and specific parts of her body (*Selected Letters* 157-196). Building upon Davis' claims I want to argue that Joyce's expansion of the erotic beyond the visual reframes not just the role of the olfactory, but also how the erotic functions and what it encompasses. This reframing creates a more expansive notion, not just of what the erotic is, but who can access it.

Despite Ellis' position as a clinical psycho-sexual authority, within Joyce's writing unusual sexual attractions and proclivities are not framed as deviant or disgusting behaviors needing medical intervention but as part and parcel of the stream of consciousness in which we get to know the novel's characters. I would like to focus on the privileging of the olfactory above the visual as more emotional and imaginative. In his writing on the olfactory, Ellis specifically links imagination to smell repeatedly. He writes "olfactory experiences are of no practical significance. They are nonetheless of considerable emotional significance" (1:3.55). It is this particular emotional association with the sense of smell that leads "various writers to describe the sense of smell as above all others the sense of imagination" (1:3.55). What Ellis later describes as the potential plasticity of the force of imagination takes on particular relevance when we apply this same plasticity to an understanding of human sexuality. Like the polymorphous force of imagination, sexual expression also takes on a multifarious quality in the "Nausicaa" chapter and the novel more generally. Ellis asserts "manifestations of sexual psychology are most specifically human" (2:1.113-14) because of their involvement with the human imagination.³⁰

Ellis does not describe the relationship between sight and smell as one of dominance, but one in which smell is associated more with the emotional and unconscious, rather than the intellectual and known. We can see how these ideas influence the way that sexuality is constructed in the "Nausicaa" chapter. For example, Gerty takes care to keep a piece of cotton wool scented with her at all times and even after she leaves, Bloom remembers the scent of her perfume. "That's her perfume. Why she waved her hand. I leave you this to think of me when I'm far away on the pillow" (374). He further ruminates on smell for several paragraphs and smells himself in order to determine what smell women get off of men (375). All of these instances point to smell as part of the chapter's broader considerations of the erotic. This formulation in turn constructs an erotic that is applicable to a wider variety of bodies and desires. The novel's interventions into categories of ability, or rather what constitutes ability in and of itself, occur not only through the use of character but also through positing and privileging alternate sensory schemas that both acknowledge and encourage other ways of understanding the world and expressing desire.

Beyond Nausicaa: Rethinking Desire in Disability Studies

Both characters reveal in this section of *Ulysses* not only the ways in which gender and ability are predicated upon one another but also the slippages in the construction of these identities that allow for their mutation. The implications of my analysis go beyond reinterpreting Joyce's "Nausicaa" or even the novel as a whole however; they provide a way of more broadly reimagining constructions of desire. Understanding the ways in which disability and gender are bound up in one another and the ways in which these ideologies in turn formulate subjectivity connects my analysis of "Nausicaa" closely with Robert McRuer's recent work in *Crip Theory*, which explores the intersection of queer and disability studies. He argues that compulsory able-bodiedness exists much in the same way that compulsory heterosexuality does, and furthermore that these ideologies are contingent upon one another (2). Connecting gender formation to the theorization of compulsory heteronormative and able-bodied

ideologies is a logical extension of McRuer's analysis. However, placing the emphasis upon (hetero)sexuality rather than gender perhaps fails to emphasize that these ideologies are not only linked but mutually constitutive, not simply connected to one another but productive of the very ability to understand people as subjects.

In accordance with the terms he lays out in his introduction, which seeks to look at the ways in which sexual identities have been imagined and composed within and against neoliberalist capitalist frameworks, he analyzes a variety of cultural sites, from film to performance art and legal cases. However, what this emphasis obscures is the ambivalence with which subjects disassociate from dominant ideologies of ability. One example would be his analysis of Karen Thompson's literary memoir of her legal struggles, "Why Can't Sharon Kowalski Come Home?" The memoir chronicles Thompson's closeted lesbian relationship with Sharon Kowalski, and Thompson's struggle after a car accident left Sharon disabled to obtain guardianship of her lover. McRuer's reading of the memoir understandably focuses upon Thompson's transformation. Initially reticent even to call herself a lesbian or connect her experiences to those of other women, Thompson ends up living with Kowalski and another woman, Patty Bresser, in a three-person relationship. Of course, McRuer is right to point out the influence of queer and crip ideologies in Thompson's story.

Yet McRuer's desire to make Thompson's narrative one of becoming "queer and disabled in that generative, adaptive, world-making sense – becoming crip" obscures Thompson's recorded ambivalence about both Kowalski's disability and about the continued viability of their relationship (McRuer 102).

One part of me is grateful to Sharon... Another part hates her for making me dependent [on their connection]... And now I've changed so much, I don't even know if Sharon and I would have gotten together anymore. If we were to meet for the first time, I don't know if we would get together. I want a normal life again. (Thompson 212)

She also expresses these doubts in thoughts directed to her lover.

Would you have fallen in love with this new person,... How have you changed? If time has changed me I'm sure it has changed you.... Will we ever be able to understand one another again? (Thompson 218)

It is significant that both of these instances occur toward the end of the book, after Thompson had claimed to have made peace with herself as a feminist lesbian activist -- words that used to scare her tremendously. A lot of different factors contribute to these doubts. Both Kowalski and Thompson are struggling to incorporate new identities. They are also in a legal battle with Kowalski's parents and in the midst of a two-year separation. But Kowalski's disability is certainly part of Thompson's ambivalence. I am not trying to suggest that Thompson in any way implies that she no longer loves Kowalski, only that even within the commitment of their relationship and unquestionable deep feelings for Kowalski there is some fleeting ambivalence about their possible future. This is also not meant to in any way vilify Thompson for being honest enough to admit her reservations; rather, it is precisely these reservations that contribute to the honesty and integrity of the book. Furthermore, her oscillations are significant because they show not only the degree to which these ideologies are internalized and all-pervasive³¹ but also the possibility of movement within these seemingly rigid understandings of gender and subjectivity.³²

These concepts also have applicability when looking at disability theorist Paul Longmore's analysis of the 1989 Oscar-winning film *My Left Foot*. In discussing a scene where disabled Christy Brown rages because his speech therapist, who he has fallen in love with, is getting married, Longmore defends his reaction:

I have seen professionals play this kind of seductive game with disabled people. Not just women like Eileen playing with disabled men and boys. Males, too, flirting with disabled women and girls. It is cruel and dangerous, not because Christy's sexual and romantic feelings could never be fulfilled, but because people like Eileen evoke such feelings but have no intention of satisfying them. No wonder Christy erupts with rage. (*Why I Burned My Book* 127)

While Longmore empathizes with Christy's response, his own interpretation of the scene fails to take into account the multitude of desires that exist outside of marriage-driven romantic love. When Christy questions why Eileen said she loved him, she insists that she does and he says: "Ah, you mean platonic love. I've had nothing but platonic love all my life. Know what I say? Fuck Plato. Fuck all love that's not one hundred per cent commitment." Christy's comment, like Longmore's analysis, forecloses the possibility of any romantic interest that exists outside of traditional marriage and aligns it with purely platonic interest. It is also far from evident that Eileen was attempting to lead Christy on, which Longmore so vehemently asserts.

As viewers, we do not know what Eileen's feelings really are. The examples that Longmore uses to support his claim that Eileen is toying with Christy are far from clear cut instances of manipulation. It is true that she is friendly with Christy, that they talk on his bed and that she leans on the back of his chair at a gallery opening. It is also true that when Christy tells her he really likes her, she says that she really likes him as well and leaves immediately. When Christy tells her that she is brilliant, she replies "I'm only as brilliant as my patients," both returning the compliment and invoking the professional relationship she has with Christy. It is possible that she doesn't feel any attraction towards Christy beyond a platonic one. It is also possible that she has some level of feeling for Christy that is not equal to his feelings toward her, which she could not act on because of her engagement. It doesn't seem to be a plausible claim that Eileen is deliberately trying to inspire Christy's romantic feelings in order to hurt or manipulate him. Longmore's analysis fails to recognize the quality of ambivalence that accompanies her interactions with Christy.

This same dynamic presents itself with the two other romantic relationships that are depicted in the film—the first with a girl named Rachel, when Christy was presumably a teenager, and the second with Mary Carr. Rachel is forced to kiss Christy during a game of spin the bottle, and she declares "You're the nicest of the lot. You have nice eyes." But after receiving a painting from Christy she is taunted and chased for "being in love with a cripple" and goes to Christy's house to tell him she can't accept the painting. The conversation that Christy has with Mary Carr frames the film, and towards the end of the movie Christy asks her out and she responds "I might." When she refuses to stay on that particular night, Christy continues to pressure her and she leaves. Upon seeing what Christy has inscribed in her copy of his book, she returns and the movie closes with the couple on top of the Dublin mountains watching the dawn, a caption appears saying that they eventually married. Much as Bloom oscillates between the

socially conditioned response of pity and his own attraction, these characters also oscillate between a potential attraction and their own reservations about getting involved romantically with Christy. In all of the cases except for Mary Carr, whom Christy eventually marries, it is unclear exactly how these women felt about Christy, but it is clear that this ambiguity was not intended to be manipulative and that it could very well be indicative of a type of love or attraction that was not, as Christy would put it, based on “one hundred per cent commitment.”³³ *My Left Foot* allows for the possibility of multiple romantic desires but only validates the one that could lead to marriage or “complete commitment.” When we examine this film in conjunction with my analysis of the “Nausicaa” chapter in Joyce it becomes clearer that while desire, especially in relation to disability, is never entirely stable or static, it can occur in multiple ways that exceed the bounds of traditional marriage.

Reconsidering the significance of Gerty’s limp forces us to consider the complex ways that ideologies of ability and gender are informed by one another. When we draw out other elements in the text such as the blind man and the role of the olfactory, it becomes clear that, in a multi-faceted way, the text incorporates the challenges that a disabled subjectivity poses to other more familiar categories of gender and sexuality. A re-examination of Gerty as both the subject and a site of exploration of issues of gender and disability reveals that her episode interrogates predominant assumptions about how sexuality works and what and how it signifies. Underscoring the multiplicity of ways that we experience and perform what we refer to singularly as sex or pleasure has implications that extend far beyond the textual concerns of Joyce scholars. Furthermore, the insights that a constantly shifting relationality between disability and gender can offer to future theorizations of gender within disability studies will allow for more nuanced and complex assessments of how these ideologies function, showing us the spaces that allow for an insertion of subjectivity – a subjectivity which, although it is never entirely unmediated, nevertheless exerts power.

Chapter Two: Crippling Time: From Woolf to Haraway

Just as Joyce's Gerty has been taken up with increased interest, so too has temporality in relation to Virginia Woolf and queer studies. But little work has been done on the way that theorizations of temporality and Virginia Woolf's work may impact disability studies. I see *Mrs. Dalloway* and *On Being Ill* as precursors to theorizations of alternative temporalities. Concepts of queering and alternative temporal and subcultural structures can be mapped onto a "disability identity and experience." In using this phrasing I do not mean to suggest that there is any kind of monolithic or standard experience of disability, only that common to many if not all of the wide variety of experiences that come under the rubric of disability is an alternative sense of time in relation to mental and physical processes such as navigating space, absorbing information, etc. While I would argue that temporality is a huge component in the way that we consciously or unconsciously conceptualize ability, it is a newly-emerging interest in disability studies. This chapter aims to bring the longstanding interest in temporality within queer studies to bear on issues of ability.

Robert McRuer's work in *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* is one of the few to examine the theoretical intersection of disability and queerness. In a work which examines television, film, performance art and memoir, McRuer demonstrates how ability and queerness are intertwined and function in resistant and subversive ways against neo-liberal capitalist ideologies. But temporality does not get explored much in *Crip Theory*. McRuer only mentions crip time peripherally and its relation to Halberstam's work is a footnote in his text (200, 224).³⁴

This chapter will examine how disability and queerness function in conjunction with one another to critique (hetero)normative temporal modes. It also considers how disability fails to conform entirely to what recent theorists have called "queer time," suggesting that the embodiment of illness and disability reconfigures these theories.³⁵ I seek to investigate how disability troubles both normative and subcultural understandings of time, spontaneity and futurity.

I would like to examine *Mrs. Dalloway* and *On Being Ill* as laying the groundwork for theorizing disability and temporality. Thinking about temporality with regard to *Mrs. Dalloway* seems to be an increasing trend, from Michael Cunningham's book and subsequent film adaptation *The Hours*, which Halberstam references in her introduction to *A Queer Time and Place*, to several recent books by Woolf scholars.³⁶ Yet the quantity of literature devoted to this subject still pales in comparison to the amount devoted to issues of sex and gender, World War I and mental health both as a subject of literary concern in the novels and in Woolf's own life. My analysis will tie together those issues while maintaining temporality as its guiding focus.

Carving Up Time: Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway

Shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing, the clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day, counseled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion, until the mound of time was so far diminished that a commercial clock, suspended above a shop in Oxford Street, announced, genially and

fraternally, as if it were a pleasure to Messrs. Rigby and Lowndes to give the information gratis, that it was half-past one. (100)

In this passage taken from the first chapter of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf is describing the role of time in structuring behavior and consumerism but also ability. In their book *Cultural Locations of Disability* David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder describe rehabilitation as defining disability through inability by effectively constructing functional capabilities as those which exist outside of the body. Thus disability and the disabled subject are always conceived of as a site of excessive functional lack. Rehabilitation then exists as a way of constructing this lack through its quantification and documentation. In this passage from *Mrs. Dalloway*, just as the medical establishment divides the body surgically and bureaucratically, “shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing” a phrase used to describe public timepieces also gestures toward the divisions of flesh that are created by the surgeon’s knife. As time divides, so does the body, increasingly carved up through temporality and aging, but also through the shredding and slicing that is imposed upon it. Like Dr Bradshaw, the primary doctor in the narrative, the clocks counsel submission and uphold authority. This parallel continues when the clocks point out in a chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion, which is the primary quality Dr Bradshaw feels is missing from his patients. The mound of time becomes diminished like a mound of flesh until it becomes pleasant and standard, even for commercial venues to give the information regarding the time. The phrase “information gratis” is also significant because it invokes the discourse of payment and commercialism that one would see with doctors as well. The clock, like a sense of proportion, is relied upon throughout the narrative as symbolic of a public all-pervasive sense of time. It also comes to symbolize a public agreed-upon segmentation and regulation of the body.

It is not a surprise that in one of the opening episodes of *Mrs. Dalloway*, a novel that closes with a suicide, we receive a detailed characterization of Big Ben. As Shannon Forbes writes, “Big Ben overcomes, dominates Clarissa and reinstitutes order. It is also significant that Big Ben is gendered male. The implication is that Mrs. Dalloway thrives in London because the patriarchal status quo of the city validates her choice to relinquish her independence and to become Mrs. Richard Dalloway” (42). I will go on to argue that Big Ben not only stands for the patriarchal order, as Forbes points out, or even war and industrialization or modernity itself, but also for the medical establishment and the rehabilitative model of disability.

The central timepiece in *Mrs. Dalloway* demonstrates the blurring of the boundary between the patriarchal order, war, industrialization and the medical establishment, as well in that it personifies the kind of temporal structuring found in the establishment of patriarchy, ableism and heteronormativity. Big Ben’s relationship to the policing nature of medicine and rehabilitation has been largely underexplored, especially from a specifically disability studies perspective. The novel barely opens before Big Ben is introduced as a character. Just before the clock is first mentioned, sickness is as well, when Clarissa discusses how Scrope Purvis passes her on the street and is perched waiting to cross the street having grown “very white since her illness” (4). Thus we are already invited to associate illness with the upcoming mention of the clock. Once again before Big Ben strikes, Clarissa feels “an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, effected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes” (4). Big Ben’s

authority and the authority of doctors who say her heart stopped as a result of influenza make Clarissa doubt her own response to Big Ben and invalidate the anxiety that it creates. According to the passage, this is true not just for Clarissa but for everyone living in Westminster, whether they are in a traffic jam or asleep at home (4).

The fact that the suspense is entirely created by her diagnosed physical defect demonstrates both Clarissa's willingness to submit to the authority of doctors and a medicalized understanding of her own experience, as well as all of the other unyielding disciplinary forces the clock represents. In this passage, she goes on to describe how foolish people are for loving it so, but the "it" remains ambiguous. One can read the "it" in this passage as describing Big Ben since it does "[create] every moment afresh" (4). But in the course of the passage one can also read the "it" as coming to stand for life itself, since the reason for this loving is shared by even "the most dejected of miseries sitting on doorsteps who cannot be dealt with by parliament because they love life." It is this conflation—that of loving the structure that Big Ben provides despite the anxiety it induces—as well as loving life, that demonstrates the inextricable relationship between all the Big Ben represents and modern life itself.

The action of shredding and slicing that is used to describe the clock not only demonstrates the power that Big Ben has upon the materiality of the body and the flesh and the force with which it segments time, but also connects it to the use of knives within the novel. The image of knives is one of the key ways the violence of this regulation gets across. Knives are a recurring image throughout the novel. They are associated not only with the clock itself, but with a certain kind of precision that has destructive possibilities. Like the patriarchal and imperialist privilege for which it stands, Peter's pocket knife is an old possession, one that Clarissa is certain he has owned for the thirty years in which they have known one another. His constant playing with his pocket knife strikes Clarissa as an "extraordinary habit" (43) but it is one that makes her feel, as Peter makes her feel more generally, frivolous and inconsequential. The knife reoccurs then once again like Big Ben as an image which invalidates and subordinates Clarissa, unless it is associated with her and used to describe her state of mind.

Clarissa can only respond to Peter's use of his pocket knife by picking up her needle. The needle, in relation to the knife, functions not only as a weaker weapon, but as a more domesticated and feminized version of self-protection. As Clarissa and Peter talk, she becomes increasingly distraught because Peter is in love with a married younger woman rather than herself. Her rage culminates in an internal exclamation to Peter to leave his knife alone. Clarissa further explains that what annoys her about Peter is his self-absorption: "it was his silly unconventionality, his weakness; his lack of the ghost of a notion of what anyone else was feeling that annoyed her, had always annoyed her; and now at his age how silly!" (45). Peter is silly precisely because he fails to recognize that the economy of marriage is one of the constraints to which societal order, especially in Clarissa's world, is tied.

The knife exists simultaneously as a symbol of the power that Peter's masculinity wields in relation to Clarissa and the domestic sphere she inhabits and also as a threat to the marital economy to which Clarissa is bound and in which she has invested her entire life. Clarissa ponders the arbitrariness such economies force on love when she considers Sally Seton, "her relation in the old days with Sally Seton. Had that not, after all, been love?" (32). She is in no position to step outside of this economy as openly as Peter

Walsh. Peter does recognize a certain fixity to social mores, but it is the fixity of the judgment of Clarissa and her husband rather than an equal amount of social pressure not to pursue a relationship based on romantic love rather than practicality. When Big Ben strikes at the end of this scene, it becomes aligned with Peter's inappropriate behavior and is described as a "strong, indifferent, inconsiderate young man swinging dumb-bells" (47). This same lack of awareness that is embodied through this image becomes symptomatic of the arbitrary and irrational nature of the forces that Big Ben comes to represent.

Peter's knife is evocative of the way he is able to cut through several normative constraints at once. Peter's love interest also transgresses race and class norms. The woman Peter Walsh is in love with is married to the major in an Indian army. The knife, then, becomes associated not just with a patriarchal impulse but an imperialist one as well. One can also see this given the fact that Big Ben releases leaden circles in the air that are evocative of industrialization and the impact of the recently ended war.

However, at some points the knife represents clarity. In describing Clarissa, Woolf writes "she sliced like a knife through everything" (8). This image is followed by a self-realization in which Clarissa finds herself removed from her surroundings and also completely absorbed by them. In this moment her sense of separateness and discrete identity dissolves completely, thus she would not say of Peter or of herself "I am this, I am that" (8). The knife allows her a sharp clarity about her sense of unity and connectedness with what is around her. Here, rather than something that separates and segments, the knife symbolizes a kind of vision that promotes a metaphysical sense of an encompassing self. When associated with Clarissa's understanding, the knife functions in opposition to the clocks and their division of bodies and time.

Yet, in the novel, time exists as more than a mechanism to critique patriarchy, modern alienation and medicine. Shannon Forbes sees Big Ben's role as significant because it "overcomes, dominates Clarissa and reinstates order" (42). Forbes goes on to focus on the fact that Big Ben is gendered male because it validates Clarissa's choice to give up her independence through marriage. While I do not contradict this reading of Big Ben as a symbol of patriarchy, it would also seem that implicit within that patriarchal critique is a critique not just of the ownership of women's private lives by men, but also of people's (regardless of gender) private bodies by the medical establishment. Forbes further points out that Big Ben has "proven himself strong, -even in the face of war and capable of sustaining his authority," yet my reading would suggest that it is not so much that Big Ben remains strong in spite of the war, but rather becomes further strengthened, not just by the increased stringency with which gender roles must be applied after the war, but also by the increased number of disabled bodies now that the war is over.

By disabled bodies, I do not mean only people whose bodies have been visibly altered and now exist within a discourse of physical disability, but also the psychological, psychiatric and chemical impact of war on both the minds and bodies of such soldiers. This increase in what we would now call disability demonstrates that Big Ben survives not in spite of disability, but precisely because of it - in that it offers more bodies, more people to be absorbed into a medical ideology of rehabilitation or proportion, as Woolf would have it. Her character, Septimus Smith, is described by Mark Hussey as being out of time completely.

If the Clarissa-Peter Richard side of *Mrs. Dalloway* exemplifies the common human experience of time, that other strand of the novel, that relates Septimus Smith's final hours, constructs an image of the actual experience of timelessness. This is a paradox the possibility of which is explained only by the breakdown of the limits 'normality' imposes on each individual: Woolf is quite explicit in her diary about the source in her own experience of the contours of Septimus's madness.

Septimus seems to have fallen out of time; he is caught in a perpetual present, a horrific timelessness in which he is no longer sheltered by past and future. The striking clocks of the actual world do not penetrate to Septimus because he experiences himself as beyond time, high above the world where time's 'leaden circles' dissolve. It is peculiarly ironic that Septimus should be taken for 'help' to the clockwork Bradshaw who gives just three quarters of an hour to his patients in his offices on Harley Street, where the clocks shred and slice the day. (124 Woolf as qtd. in Hussey)

More than enact a particular kind of irony in the juxtaposition between Septimus and Dr. Bradshaw's relationship to temporality, Woolf uses this to highlight how far outside experiences of normal temporality Septimus and other shellshock survivors are. As Hussey observes, post-traumatic stress disorder does enact a kind of confusion between the past and the present. However, this is not merely a creation of timelessness but a critique of the social system that breaks down his sense of time, and then tries to reinsert it in a way that is both foreign and oppressive. In describing her project for the novel, Woolf herself says "In this book I have almost too many ideas. I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity; I want to criticize the social system and to show it at work, at its most intense" (*A Writer's Diary* 56). The social system "at its most intense" is what unites these categories, especially sanity and insanity. It is what constructs the way in which these experiences of temporality are viewed and dealt with by the world, rather than merely by the individual. Septimus' experiences of temporality have no place within the existing social order to which he returns. He exposes the way in which time is an imposition and a construction built by the very structures which caused him to lose his normative sense of temporality in the first place.

It is true that shell shock as a specific condition is ill-suited to depicting recovery. Septimus' case is unique because he suffers from a delayed stress response; around Woolf's time, it was assumed that soldiers still having symptoms six months after the war suffered from the traumatic effects of toilet-training rather than combat (Demeester 656). This belief demonstrates the heightened sense of shell shock victims as children. Much like the patriarchal establishment forces Clarissa to relinquish her independence, the medical establishment forces Septimus to relinquish his. In her groundbreaking article "Virginia Woolf's Septimus Smith and Contemporary Perceptions of Shell Shock," Sue Thomas argues that not only can we see Septimus as an angry response to Virginia Woolf's own frustration with the medical establishment, but also an angry response to a report by the war office committee of enquiry into shell shock, presented to the British parliament and publicized several months before Woolf began working on Septimus Smith. Woolf identifies Smith as a victim of shell shock through the frequent doctor's visits, identifying his involvement in the war with subsequent trauma, such as his hypersensitivity to sound (49).

All of Woolf's fictionalized treatments for Septimus are actually real treatments that were used by doctors for shell shock patients and were adaptations of treatments used for hysteria. Thomas argues "Every aspect of Holmes' treatment of Septimus is in accordance with contemporary medical practices in relation to shell shock: this fact undercuts the common critical belief that Holmes simply did not believe in mental illness; he writes it off as a funk" (54). This parallel demonstrates that Woolf is interested in more than a blanket ahistorical critique of the construction of mental illness or in the thesis that mental illness is created by war and medical responses to it. Instead, Thomas' work makes it clear that she was responding to a specific social mandate around how to incorporate the after-effects of the disabling experience of war. Thomas demonstrates the government's investment in diagnosing and ultimately trivializing the experience of shell shocked soldiers. The military becomes aligned with the medical (56) as a way of absolving itself from the responsibility of this emergence of a new type of disability and its consequences. The more shell shock is perceived as a result of inherent individual weakness rather than a common and expected response to inflicted war related trauma, the less the military and the government need to assume responsibility for the financial well being of shell shocked soldiers and their families. If the cures provided are ultimately as simple as getting rest or playing cricket, as is suggested by the report and in the novel itself, then curing oneself becomes both simple and a mere matter of choosing to adopt the appropriate activities. This once again places the onus upon the individual for his or her own mental health, as well as policing even his or her leisure time through the suggested cures.

One of the major ways the novel critiques use of these treatments is through the way it conflates temporalities of past and present. The continuous failure of a social system that fails to reintegrate war veterans and people with disabilities generally becomes just as traumatic as – or perhaps even more traumatic than -- the original trauma to which Septimus is responding. In fact, over time the event, and the social response to the event, become so conflated that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other. Septimus is no longer able to be culturally legible, so he instantiates another way of meaning making in the text and through his suicide communicates his inability or refusal to conform to the temporal model that is enforced by medicine and patriarchy.

Such a critique recalls the work of Michel Foucault. In his work, *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault discusses the way in which temporality functions to create docile bodies. Time becomes regulatory by establishing rhythms, specific occupations, and through the regulation of cycles of repetition (149). Foucault traces the way in which military discipline began to alter conceptions of time in the eighteenth century. The time table made possible not only the analysis of time, but also the analysis of movement. Time in both schools and the military became measured through good quality, that is, "throughout which the body is constantly applied to its exercise. Precision and application are with regularity the fundamental virtues of disciplinary time" (151). Time is used "functionally" to the degree that it enforces the rote and regular accomplishment of specific tasks or activities. This rigid structuring of time increases the duration and regularity of bodily compliance. For Foucault, time is measured to the degree that it increases bodily docility.

Halberstam's much later work on queer temporality seeks to identify an alternative temporal space in which bodies can function as less docile, to the extent that

certain subjects reject and challenge normative temporal markers of the life cycle. The implications of this extend beyond queer subjects to disabled subjects. While disabled subjects have less access to traditional temporal markers of adulthood, I argue that disability can open up a space for subjects to reject and challenge these same normative markers, some of which include work, reproduction, longevity, safety and security. For instance, disabled subjects that do not work (in the traditional capitalist sense of the term anyway, where work involves compensation) and are supported by other means, are free to take up artistic and activist projects that they would not necessarily be able to undertake if they were also working one or more full-time jobs. This could certainly be said for queer subjects as well, who make choices to focus on these projects rather than mandates of reproduction and financial longevity and sustainability. However, most disabled subjects have a more complex relationship with their income and the state. For instance, if one earns over a certain amount of money per month, they lose their disability benefits and any additional benefits of in-home care, health insurance or any other linked services that come with them. As a result, many people with disabilities end up rejecting typical capitalist work structures in favor of a more expansive idea of work. Other people with disabilities oscillate between working full-time, often in environments that will eventually deplete their energy or ability to work for as long as they are able with the knowledge that eventually they will have to return or turn to government programs and subsidies.

Temporality is also significant, not just in terms of the overall life cycle, but the way in which illness or disability can impact one's experience of time. Virginia Woolf's writing recognizes a different temporal pace to times of illness, alongside with opportunities for more reflection and creativity simply because one has more time and time that is taken up by demands of the mind and body, rather than work or other obligations.

Sick Days: Time in Woolf's *On Being Ill*

One watches the church-goers file into those gallant temples where on the bleakest day, in the wettest fields, lamps will be burning, bells will be ringing, and however the autumn leaves may shuffle and the winds sigh outside, hopes and desires will be changed to beliefs and certainties within. Do they look serene? Are their eyes filled with the light of their supreme conviction? Would one of them dare leap straight into Heaven of Beachy Head? None but a simpleton would ask such questions; the little company of believers lags and drags and strays. The mother is worn; the father tired. As for imagining Heaven, they have no time. (17-18)

In Woolf's essay *On Being Ill*, she describes how illness constructs an alternative temporality which frees the ill from the time pressure faced by those that are well, whom she refers to as the "army of the upright." These time pressures not only affect their level of energy but also their capacity for genuine faith and imagination. As we can see from the passage, the church-goers have no time for divinity to give their relationship to the spiritual and mystical its proper focus. In her diary and in *On Being Ill* Woolf asserts that illness has a mystical capacity (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* 287; *On Being Ill* 6). According to Bertrand Russell, one of the fundamental beliefs of mysticism is that "the

belief in insight is against discursive analytic knowledge: the belief in a way of wisdom, sudden, penetrating, coercive, which is contrasted with the slow infallible study of outward appearance by a science” (10). Accordingly, Woolf’s experience of being ill was sudden, pervasive and emerged against medicalized understandings of her physical and mental health.

Illness not only became an interest in her writing, but Woolf claims that it gave an alternative sensibility to the style of writing itself. This claim, of course, relates to an emerging interest in language as a medium for sensuality rather than communication that was emerging amongst modernist writers. While Woolf is currently read unequivocally as a modernist writer, this has not always been the case. Vincent Sherry explains:

Why does Woolf’s place in this modernist company need to be earned? Because the public language through which she records the significant difference of her own moment in history is not hers by conferred right or prior entitlement. She needs thus to re-earn her access to this public tongue continually. An ongoing concern in her career as a female author lies in the difficulty of the public utterance. (283)

And this issue is made even more complicated by the fact that the distinctions between public and private fall away both within Woolf’s own work and the emerging aesthetic that will come to be understood as modernism. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane define modernism as “the art consequent on the disestablishing of communal reality and conventional notions of causality, on the destruction of traditional notions of wholeness of the individual character, on the linguistic chaos that ensues when public notions of language have been discredited and when all realities have become subjective fictions.” (27). While modernism is not about the erosion of a public sphere it certainly engages with the erosion of distinctions between public and private and objective and subjective.

Likewise, Woolf utilizes disability to explain the ways in which a freedom from reason and a state of mind can create an alternative relationship to language and the ability to appreciate language for more than simply its meaning or collectively agreed upon purpose as a form of communication.

We grasp what is beyond their [words] surface meaning, gather instinctively this, that, and the other—a sound, a color, here a stress, there a pause—which the poet, knowing words to be meager in comparison with ideas, has strewn about his page to evoke when collected a state of mind which neither words can express nor the reason explain. (22).

The page, for the poet as for the reader, in illness is not governed by an impulse to narrate or explain but rather to create through appealing to the senses and a kind of intuition about language.³⁷ But, as Woolf so aptly puts it “in illness, meaning does not encroach upon sound” (21). Instead it serves as a kind of catalyst for a rawer appreciation of language that focuses on its linguistic properties rather than literary convention. “But in illness . . . the words give out their scent and distill their flavor, it is all the richer for having come to us sensually first, by way of the palate and nostrils like some queer odor” (22). Here, Woolf emphasizes taste and smell. As we shall see, like Winterson, she also emphasizes the sound properties of language, and this metaphor mixes the visual with the olfactory. She also mixes the abilities of the senses in a way that does not correlate directly with linguistic properties by using taste and smell so that the appreciation of this language is linked to a more general category of illness and disability rather than a

specific body and set of abilities. The focus, for Woolf, is the state of awareness that illness helps to enable rather than a bodily state needed to appreciate language.

Paradoxically, despite the fact that language is of paramount importance to Woolf, she simultaneously highlights the ways in which language cannot adequately communicate pain and individual experience of illness. She opens the essay with the claim that because of the centrality of illness in human experience “it becomes strange indeed that illness has not taken its place with love and battle and jealousy among the prime things of literature” (3-4). But then Woolf explains why this has not happened, chiefly because language inadequately expresses the experience of illness.

“I am in bed with influenza” – but what does that convey of the great experience; how the world has changed its shape; the tools of business grown remote; the sounds of festival become romantic like a merry-go-round heard across far fields; and friends have changed, some putting on a strange beauty, others deformed to the squatness of toads, while the whole landscape of life lies remote and fair, like the shore seen from a ship far out at sea, and he is now exalted on a peak and needs no help from man or God, and now grovels supine on the floor glad of a kick from a housemaid – the experience cannot be imparted and, as is always the way with these dumb things, his own suffering serves but to wake memories in his friends’ minds of *their* influenzas, *their* aches and pains which went unwept last February, and now cry aloud, desperately, clamorously, for the divine relief of sympathy. (8-9)

Language not only cannot adequately express the ways in which our senses and perceptions shift within a state of illness but also ultimately points, as the passage progresses, to the unknowability of one’s internal experience by another person. Language fails to articulate illness precisely because one cannot articulate what Woolf describes as “his own suffering” without referring to the suffering of the person to whom they are speaking. This is because the only true frame of reference that the listener has for experiences of illness is his own experience. Therefore, to talk about the singularity of one’s pain in a way that is recognizable becomes impossible. At best, all the listener can do is imagine what the experience feels like based on his own bodily history.

About sympathy for example—we can do without it. That illusion of a world so shaped that it echoes every groan, of human beings that a twitch at one wrist jerks another, where however strange your experience other people have had it too, where however far you travel in your own mind someone has been there before you—is all an illusion. We do not know our own souls, let alone the souls of others. Human beings do not go hand in hand the whole stretch of the way. (11)

While Woolf is making an argument here with obvious spiritual implications that may not seem to differ from common sense adages such as ‘you’re born alone you die alone’ I would argue that the fact that these statements about sympathy appear in an essay chiefly concerned with illness, pain, and language is no coincidence. In fact, this experience “of the soul,” as Woolf characterizes it, has everything to do with one’s experience of the body groans and twitches. Much as we cannot know someone else’s soul, Woolf is arguing that we cannot know someone else’s body, or more accurately their experience of embodiment.

In contrast, the desire to create sameness in normalized body experience is a way to neutralize the difference and threat of disability. In the example Woolf gives, the listener projects his or her own experiences of illness onto the other person's narrative; the healthy listener is trying to disavow the differences between him and the speaker. Essentially, this can construct for the healthy listener a comforting logic of eventual well-being in which the listener can construct a narrative to support the idea that I-was-once-sick-as-you-are-now-so-you-too-can-be-as-healthy-as-I-am-now. One comes across this kind of construction whenever anyone has managed to overcome a kind of chronic condition or disability and feels the need to project that experience onto a person who is currently ill or disabled. This can also work in the opposite way, in which people who perceive themselves as healthy and do not have experiences in illness and pain want to curtail these narratives from people who do. Contemporary disability theorist Susan Wendell describes this:

For example, if someone tells me she is in pain, she reminds me of the existence of pain, the imperfection and fragility of the body, the possibility of my own pain, the *inevitability* of it. The less willing I am to accept all these, the less I want to know about her pain; if I cannot avoid it in her presence, I will avoid her. I may even blame her for it. I may tell myself that she *could have* avoided it, in order to go on believing that I can avoid it. I want to believe I am not like her; I cling to the differences (268)

Despite the fact that they do so using opposing tactics, both of these ways of constructing disability and identity serve the same purpose: to neutralize and separate the threat of disability from the nondisabled person. Both of these strategies also foreground the normal body and the predictability and knowability of the bodily experience. If the threat of disability is that it highlights instability, disability poses a fundamental disruption to our understandings of what it means to be embodied and the relationship between the body and the self. As we will see in the following section that turns directly to work by contemporary queer theorists on temporality, queer subjectivity is also posited as a major disruption because it disrupts the relationship between heteronormativity and the future. Disability, like queer subjectivity, puts a major emphasis the present.

“No Time Like The Present”: Futurity In Halberstam and Edelman

The constantly diminishing future creates a new emphasis on the here, the present, the now, and while the threat of no future hovers overhead like a storm cloud, the urgency of being also expands the potential of the moment and ... squeezes new possibilities out of the time at hand.
(Halberstam, *In A Queer Time and Place* 2)

While in the quotation Halberstam is speaking of *Heaven's Coast*, a memoir by Mark Doty, the passage provides a clear articulation of the duality of the future she seeks to emphasize: the future's ominous uncertainty, its storm cloud effect and the way in which that uncertainty heightens the emphasis on the present moment and the way in which this pressure on the present expands rather than contracts the possibility for the present. The present at once becomes all-encompassing and transitory. The future, on the other hand, is impending and foreboding, as we can see in this quotation from Edelman's *No Future*.

As the shadow of death that would put out the light of heterosexual reproduction, however, sinthomosexuality provides familial ideology, and the futurity whose cause it serves, with a paradoxical life support system by providing the occasion for both family and future to solicit our compassionate intervention insofar as they seem, like TinyTim [sic], to always be on their last legs. (114)

Edelman's work focuses on how the future is a common source of anxiety for both queer and normative subjects. In the excerpt from *No Future*, the emphasis is upon how sinthomosexuality (a sexuality driven by desire and the death drive rather than driven by a clear symbolic reproductive impulse towards heterosexual futurity) provides a foil against which a heteronormative anxiety about futurity can rail. Edelman also highlights the fragility of this heteronormative fantasy in terms of ability when he uses the phrase "always already on its last legs," and furthers the ability association through his invocation of the cripple. Tiny Tim is invoked repeatedly as the image of the fragile child which these heteronormative logics are meant to prevent and keep as asexual and pure. Disability then becomes aligned with preserving a phantom ideological order which, like Tiny Tim's attempt to stand, is always on the verge of failure. This failure is both because of a denial of Tiny Tim (as representative of children generally) as a sexual subject, and the use of children as representative of a kind of stable and contained future that can never reach fruition – much like the children who are never seen as on their way to adulthood or as consenting sexual subjects, but rather as innocent lives that need to be protected from sexual corruption.

If this is true of children generally, it is also an accurate elaboration on common stereotypes held about people with disabilities.³⁸ "No other symbol of disability is more beloved by Americans than the cute and courageous poster child – or more loathed by people with disabilities themselves" (Shapiro 12). Shapiro even goes so far to explicitly identify the metaphoric image of Tiny Tim as a symbol of this dependency: "rejected is society's deeply held thinking of tin cups and Tiny Tim – the idea that disabled people are childlike, dependent and in need of charity or pity. Consider the cultural site of the telethon and the ways in which disabled people are referred to as children long past their actual childhoods" (14). Shapiro points to the case of Evan Kemp, one of George H. W. Bush's advisors, who encouraged the passage of the ADA. Despite his frequent participation in the MDA telethon as a child, Kemp felt that the telethon fostered stereotypes that muscular dystrophy was a tragedy, and its "victims" were childlike and perpetually sick (Shapiro 21). Shapiro illustrates this example with an anecdote in which Kemp, traveling to give a speech, was met at the airport by an ambulance rather than an accessible van (Shapiro 21). Disability theorist Paul Longmore makes a similar point. "As with Ebenezer Scrooge, Dickens' symbol of rapacious nineteenth century capitalism, aiding Tiny Tim, the literal embodiment of neglected human need, telethon poster children are made the means by which nondisabled people can prove to themselves that they have not been corrupted by an egocentric and materialistic capitalist order" (136). For both Longmore and Edelman, Tiny Tim exists primarily for the "other" as a way of preserving the boundaries either of normative heterosexuality or a containable capitalist order.

Yet, in a way, because of the overlap between children and the cultural infantilization of people with disabilities, Tiny Tim can come to signify the ultimate child

as well as being a symbol for the future--a future which may not make it or is barely making it. Despite a constant falling short and the everpresent possibility of metaphorical collapse, Edelman's image of the future that heteronormative ideologies are attempting to preserve and perpetuate aligns, perhaps inadvertently, with the same kind of future that Halberstam outlines in her characterization. From the perspective of both dominant and subcultural subjects, the future looms with an uncertainty, but for very different reasons. For Edelman, what distinguishes these subjects, the sinthomosexuals, from the heterosexuals is not their ultimate relationship to the future, since for both groups the future exists as tenuous, looming and teetering, but rather that those invested in heteronormative fantasies of futurity (and I certainly do not mean to suggest that this group aligns in any way with any particular individual's sexual orientation) are invested in a kind of stable future that is unobtainable. Yet the fantasy of this future is something in which one group deeply believes and which it works to realize. Perhaps, however, this kind of binary proposes too neat a division between those who believe in a stable, protected future and those who reside in a squeezed, temporal present? The oft-cited adage that "anyone can, and most likely will, become disabled if they live long enough" is used within disability activism to foreground, for the nondisabled, the contingency of their own ability status. However, it does seem accurate--and of course, fundamental to the theoretical aims of this chapter--to assert an alternative kind of relationship that exists for those who are to a greater degree in a constant relationship with this uncertainty and contingency. This contingency exists not only in relation to issues of economics and access to resources, but also in relation to the body and mind as unstable, unreliable entities which exist as both resources and liabilities in various environments and temporalities.

Creating A Crip Time and Place: Using Halberstam To Think Disability

'Queer time' is a term for those specific models of temporality that emerge within postmodernism once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeoisie reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety and inheritance.

(Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place* 6)

In Halberstam's work *A Queer Time and Place*, an alternative relationship to time is created in a different way – by focusing on an alternative to bourgeoisie lifestyle markers – but similar to those Edelman constructs in the sense that Halberstam's work allows subjects a greater freedom to create their own lives outside of dominant bourgeoisie and heteronormative expectations of the lifespan. For Halberstam, queer time exists in opposition to family time as a bourgeoisie heteronormative time with a strong investment in futurity and security. As previously discussed, Edelman is highly critical of these values as well. Like Edelman, Halberstam also turns to the metaphorical figure of the child to make her point. But Halberstam wants to focus on the "in-between" figure of the adolescent. Queer temporality "...is about the potentiality of a life unscripted by conventions of family, inheritance, and child-rearing." (2). But it is the figure of the adolescent that Halberstam uses to describe "queer culture makers." Adolescence allows for more of a sexualized subject than Edelman's prepubescent child, but at the same time maintains a kind of idealistic resistance to "adult" systems of accumulation and organization. Using the adolescent allows Halberstam to create a

theoretical space which resists an either/or (or before/after) construction of child versus adult.

... I explore the stretched out adolescence of queer culture makers that disrupt conventional accounts of subculture, youth culture, adulthood and maturity. The notion of stretched out adolescence, for example, challenges the conventional binary formulation of a life narrative divided by a clear break between youth and adulthood; this narrative charts an obvious transition out of childish dependency through marriage and into adult responsibility through reproduction. (153)

While I appreciate the nuance that Halberstam's use of the adolescent allows for in terms of her critique of temporality and the life cycle, I am concerned about the associations of the child that still remain implicit with the associations of the adolescent: specifically, expectations of naiveté, inexperience, and irresponsibility. What is at stake in reclaiming those associations and the adolescent as a figure, rather than redefining attributes such as responsibility, maturity, dependency etc.? I realize, of course, that as Halberstam points out, many gays and lesbians have chosen to live precisely within the kind of bourgeois temporal frames to which she is referring, and it is essential for her to draw a distinction between the temporality of these subjects and those who live in opposition (willingly or by accident or circumstance) to these very same structures that reward typical middle class accumulation of both capital and of children. But I wonder if by using the adolescent as a figure, Halberstam is unwittingly affirming the very same structures of privilege and value that she hopes to critique. In other words, what is at stake if we cast choosing to live outside of a normal temporal schema for one's life as immature and irresponsible? Does that not affirm these stakes as transient and in some sense flawed, rather than alternatives which expose and critique the way in which time is structured along gendered, heteronormative, racist and classist, as well as ableist presuppositions about how time within the life cycle and daily life should function?

Because of the all pervasive and naturalized way in which temporality is perceived generally, and also because Halberstam is invested in preserving a kind of specificity of queer culture that is different from, say, the projects of Butler or Halperin, which articulate more theoretical critiques of gender, sexuality and materiality, rather than being concerned with preserving a kind of subculture through their academic writing, Halberstam makes a point of identifying specific subjects who live outside of this normative temporal frame and "the logics of capitalist accumulation." She lists as examples "ravers, club kids, HIV positive barebackers, rent boys, sex workers, homeless people, drug dealers, and the unemployed." (10). While this list omits any explicit mention of disability or people with disabilities as a group, it also alludes to the disabled in the sense that Halberstam mentions HIV positive barebackers and relies heavily, in the book, on work done around the AIDS crisis and the writings of HIV positive men. The unemployed are, of course, another group that includes people with disabilities in the sense that people with disabilities experience one of the highest rates of un- and under-employment (Center for an Accessible Society, "Employment" 1; David C. Stapleton and Richard V. Burkhauser 9-10; Myers).

In fact, disability poses a challenge along each of the major aspects which Halberstam posits as indicative of bourgeoisie normative time: reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety and inheritance. People with disabilities (in addition to many other

groups including queers and people of color) have had limited access to traditional modes of reproduction in the sense that they have been sterilized, denied reproductive care, and challenged as unfit parents. People with disabilities face other obstacles as well, such as regulations that prevent those who receive government benefits from marrying without losing their benefits if they marry someone with another source of income (Public Health and Welfare Act, 2006). Also, laws in some states prevent attendants from providing childcare. In Michigan, state officials threatened to take away a child from disabled parents while at the same time the parents, who were not able to afford childcare, could not utilize their attendants for this purpose without breaking the law (Shapiro 1994).³⁹

Disability often affects longevity, depending on the type of disability and impairment. The presumption that disability shortens one's life, and disability's later onset for many people, make it difficult to locate census or statistical data that directly addresses life expectancy for people with disabilities as a whole in the United States. However, the data available is strongly suggestive. For instance, an Australian study found that the lifespans of people with disabilities were often much shorter than the lifespans of those without (Australian Institute 4). When one considers the lack of access to health care amongst people with disabilities in the U.S., it is likely that this would be the case here as well (Dhont; Beatty; Neri; Global health; Lishner; Richardson; Levine, Patrick; Neri, Kroll). To echo Cathy Cohen's ideas in *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*, ill and otherwise marginalized bodies are treated as expendable.

In addition to those barriers to health care and employment that people with disabilities share with other marginalized groups (as well as those that do not), they are also often legally denied the use of savings and inheritance because of resource caps that they may not exceed if they seek access to government funded programs for health care and attendant support.

The perception of people with disabilities as risks to potential employers, insurance companies and even potential partners also resonates along the lines of Halberstam's challenge to the risk/safety binary. As mentioned previously, employment rates for people with disabilities have not gone up significantly despite the passing of anti-discrimination employment legislation over twenty years ago. Paul Steven Miller, a person of short stature who graduated near the top of his class at Harvard Law, could not get a job with any of the over forty law firms to which he applied. Finally, one attorney explained that although they were impressed by his credentials, they feared that clients might think they were "running some sort of circus freak show" (Shapiro 28). Judy Heumann was denied a license to teach in New York City public school. She was also denied her teaching certificate because she failed the medical exam and the physician testing her questioned her ability to use the bathroom independently or help the children out of the building in an emergency. Even after Heumann, who became a leading figure in the disability rights movement, sued the board of education and won, she was unable to get a job until hired by the principal of her elementary school (56-57). What makes these examples noteworthy is not their severity, but their frequency. In my many years as an activist and academic doing disability studies, virtually every person I have encountered who is visibly disabled or discloses their disability has stories of employment discrimination.

This fear of risk that disabled people pose applies in interpersonal relationships as well. Disabled gay writer Danny Kodmur explains:

Men I've been interested in have told me they wouldn't ever want to get involved with me out of fear they'd hurt me. Well, despite their contention that they are looking out for me, this really says more about them. Because they've somehow decided that screwing over a gay cripple puts one in a deeper circle of hell than simply breaking the heart of a regular homo, they would rather not take any risks, because they claim they couldn't live with the consequences.

Yet, disability, at least in a daily experience, often requires a compromise of spontaneity and a consideration of risk versus safety that is very different from the kind of blanket disavowal of safety made in queer critiques of temporality. On the one hand, the disabled subject is routinely denied various traditional attempts at security in the normative financial and familial sense. On the other, risk for disabled people varies in relation to their environment and their bodily condition.

What is seen as a threat to one's safety or a risk that must be negotiated varies greatly from impairment to impairment. The Wry Crips, a disabled women's performance group active in the seventies and eighties, make this point in their piece "You Shut Me Out." Four voices read through various reasons they're denied access to a friend's house, ranging from stairs and narrow doorways to fluorescent lights, cigarette smoke and new carpeting.⁴⁰ People with limited energy often describe needing to gauge the impact of one activity on their ability to engage in other activities later on. For example, a person with a repetitive stress injury might need to choose between pushing groceries at the grocery store or making dinner afterwards. A person with chronic fatigue routinely needs to make choices about what he or she may or may not do in the present based on the potential lack of energy or illness he or she may feel in the future. Any wheelchair user has had to think about the future impact of his current travel when dealing with any kind of battery issue or undiagnosed mechanical problems.

While Halberstam highlights the "lucid temporality created by drugs" in several memoirs⁴¹ and "people who live in rapid bursts," disability is often about an intense slowing down rather than speeding up.⁴² The euphoric present, without a sense of past or future, that drugs can induce fails to account for the heightened consideration of the immediate future, the body and time that disability often entails. As Woolf argues in *On Being Ill*, illness, like the drug induced temporal sensibility that Halberstam refers to, can also alter and intensify one's perception in a way that is not readily accessible in health. In addition to a temporal sense from a body which drags and delays, moves more slowly, whose speech takes longer to understand etc., there is a way in which the disabled body alludes to a kind of speeding up. Woolf herself could be described as having episodes of mania and describes the rapidity of writing *Mrs. Dalloway*

I am now writing as fast and as freely as I have written in the whole of my life; more so – twenty times more so – than any novel yet. I think this is proof that I was on the right path; and that what fruit hangs in my soul is to be reached there. Amusingly, I now invent theories that fertility and fluency are the things; I used to plead for a kind of close, terse effort anyhow this goes on all morning... I live entirely in it and come to the surface rather obscurely... (84)

While Woolf often sees illness as a way of altering her perception and heightening her senses, critics are ambivalent about using this to advance the claim that Woolf makes repeatedly, that illness can function as a tool and a partial asset. “In an important sense, illness itself offers, as we have seen, a means of renewal. Whether such an assumption pertains to her personal life as well as to her art remains an open question” (Ruotolo 102).

I imagine what Lucio Ruotolo is trying to articulate here is that, while Woolf saw her illness as an advantage in relation to her art, it probably did not offer her the same advantage elsewhere in her life. Perhaps in this gesture he is trying not to elide the negative impacts of illness on Virginia Woolf’s life. However, much work has been done to demonstrate the ways in which Virginia Woolf’s work was, in fact, largely based on her personal experience, especially with illness and doctors.⁴³ Asking the reader to imagine a distinction between her personal and professional life presumes a kind of division I’m not sure is really there. One could easily point to Virginia Woolf’s art itself as having a negative impact on her personal life. It was seen by many of her doctors as having a negative impact on her health.⁴⁴ Ruotolo goes on to describe the transformative effects of illness that Woolf articulates in *On Being Ill*:

‘On Being Ill,’ we recall, suggests the advantage one may derive even from a slight case of influenza: ‘how tremendous the spiritual change that it brings, how astonishing, when the lights of health go down, the undiscovered countries that are then disclosed, what wastes and deserts of the soul, ... what ancient and obdurate oaks are uprooted in us by the act of sickness.’ The mind, as if on some imperialistic campaign ‘to civilize the body, to maintain its sovereignty over the senses, ‘With the police off duty,’ the senses are free to roam. Seeing with the eyes of children, ‘we cease to be soldiers in the army of the upright.’ (102)

Here illness is seen as intensifying the senses and as liberatory. It produces an altered state that heightens Woolf’s ability to understand language and produce art.⁴⁵ I will talk more about this relationship later on in the chapter, but now I would like to highlight simply the way that illness takes on an alternate meaning for Woolf than it does in the dominant culture. However, this does not stop critical interpretations such as the one by Patricia Laurence from reading illness as a kind of silence.

How To Speak III: Illness As a Way Of Meaning

What is silence – in the writer or reader’s experience? How does a writer ‘write’ it? How does a critic ‘sound’ it making it into expressive discourse for the reader? Finally how does a reader ‘read’ silence? How as Shoshana Felman asks in *Writing and Madness* can we read the unreadable? Only, she suggests through a modification of the meaning of reading itself: ‘to read on the basis of the unreadable would be, here again, not what does the unreadable mean, but how does the unreadable mean. Not what is the meaning of the letters, but in what way do the letters escape meaning. (3-4, Felman as qtd. in Laurence)

Laurence draws on Shoshana Felman’s ideas about reading the unreadable. The question of how writing “means” has particular salience to Woolf’s work and her use of both the visual and the auditory in her writing. This relates very well to claims that I

make in the chapters on both Winterson and Joyce that utilizing a variety of sensory schemas within the text enables us to imagine the text as being consumed within a broader range of sensory experiences. I mean that Winterson and Joyce presume different kinds of readers and different kinds of sensory and bodily experiences which also create a space for “readers” of art that are “embodied differently.” But for the moment, I would like to focus on the fact that Laurence is utilizing a manner of reading that derives from a consideration of madness. In effect, she is rearticulating one of Woolf’s points in *On Being Ill* that language can become more of an artistic than a communication medium through the lens of illness—that illness can be a catalyst for an alternative understanding of language. If there is a connection between writing and madness in Woolf’s work on which Laurence wishes to rely, it is that madness modifies meaning itself. Understanding illness as a form of silence raises the question: in what ways does language escape meaning? This is significant because although Laurence utilizes this way of examining constructions of silence in Woolf’s texts (which she does quite brilliantly), illness is later seen through her schema as a kind of silence or inertia. In order to locate what she terms “scenes of silence,” Laurence uses “Haule and Smith’s concordance to these works [to] reveal a network and sometimes a progression of related sensations, feelings, and thoughts, a lexicon of silence” (112).

- I. *Silence and Time*: relates to the auditory, including music, repetition, rhythm, and movement (these are further developed in Chapter 5).
 - A. Harmony: silence, pause, quiet, rest;
 - B. Disharmony: interruption, gaps, gulfs, broken syllables, rupture, fragments, scraps;
 - C. Suspension (relates to simultaneity): suspend, fixed moment, tranced, moment of being;
 - D. Repetition: incantation, echoes, simultaneity;
 - E. Degrees of auditory silence: mute, silent, quiet pauses, interruptions, gaps, gulfs muffled, murmur, hum;
 - F. Punctuation: use of ellipses and dashes to present incompleteness, haste, and hurry as a theme or aspect of voice.
- II. *Silence and Space*: relates to the visual, the spatialization of thought, and the body (these are further developed in Chapter 4).
 - A. Degrees of spatial silence: night, absence, emptiness, nothingness, blank, blank space, white space, void / abyss, crack, fissure, crevice, gap / fading, flickering / veil, membrane / sign, shape, scaffolding, structure;
 - B. Movement in space (duration):
 1. Positive: surface, rise, up;
 2. Negative: sink, fall, thud, drop, down, deep;
 - C. Visual repetition: mirror, shadows, simultaneity;
 - D. Punctuation: ..., --, (), [], “”;
 - E. Body silence: paralysis, immobility, sleep, illness, disease, inertia, peace, rest, still, quiet.

(Haule & Smith qtd. in Laurence 112-113)

Note that for Laurence, bodily silence here includes paralysis, immobility, sleep, illness, disease, inertia, peace, rest, still and quiet. This kind of categorization ignores the way in which illness (and one could potentially extend this to other types of disability that are mentioned like paralysis and immobility) in fact provides a way of reading and apprehending language. Illness, for Woolf, does not serve as a category or technique, it is in fact the very perspective from which understanding of language and these other techniques listed on the chart are able to emerge.

One thing that Laurence's association of bodily silence does is highlight the way in which disability is often associated with death, which is referred to in much of the same language that she lists under bodily silence in her chart. (The great sleep, rest in peace etc.) Disability has often been associated with aging and death and triggers anxiety surrounding one's mortality and death. In addition, it is a body that often creates discomfort for others as a result of its associations with an imagined future, the consequences of aging, and the lack of security that such a future potentially holds for anyone. Disability historian Paul Longmore articulates the apprehension that disability provokes in relation to American identity: "People with disabilities provoke anxiety and revulsion because they are defined as literally embodying that which Americans individually and collectively fear most: limitation and dependency, failure and incapacity, loss of control, loss of autonomy at its deepest level, finitude, confinement within the human condition, subjection to fate" ("Conspicuous Contribution" 155). In some cases, disability is seen as a worse fate than death itself. In a recent national survey commissioned by Disaboom, an online community for people dealing with disability, 52 percent of the respondents reported that they would rather die than live with a permanent disability ("Disaboom Survey Reveals").

On the one hand, by manifesting alternate temporalities and embodiments, as well as blurring what once seemed to be clear boundaries between self and other, machine and other, disabled subjects open up a space for futurity and possibility. On the other hand, the material reality of disabled embodiment of bodies, minds and emotions that do not move in a way that we can predict, expect or normalize constrain and inform those possible futures as well. Because of these constraints, they put an increased pressure and expansion on the present, as Halberstam pointed out earlier. I want to simultaneously hold onto the fluidity and mobility of disability as a category and the materiality of disabled bodies as something which nevertheless distinguishes their relationship to dominant temporal modes. I wish to think not only about how disabled bodies intrinsically question dominant values and "slowing things down" through structures outside of traditional work and productivity, as Woolf does in her essay but also about how disabled bodies "speed up" through the incorporation (fusion with the body) of technology and evoke a kind of cyborgian image as well as fantasies and anxieties of an advanced aging process and death.

Real-Life Cyborgs? Disability and Haraway

By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two

joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation.
(Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs” 8)

Donna Haraway’s well known essay “A Manifesto for Cyborgs” (also reprinted under the title “A Cyborg’s Manifesto”) connects the blurring of boundaries between machine and organism and human and animal with time, most specifically with our collective and current time. If the cyborg is about imagination or the possibility of a different kind of embodiment linked with the material reality of bodies, as Haraway claims, these two things not only structure the possibility of transforming present, future and past histories but also explain the duality of disability in temporality.

Disability is unnerving precisely because of its cyborgian status representing bodies that are seen as not entirely organic or inanimate; people with disabilities are often referred to as inanimate objects because of the equipment they use or because of limited abilities to communicate. (For example people in wheelchairs are often referred to as “wheelchairs” or “the wheelchairs” and people with brain damage and limited speech capacity are often derogatorily referred to as “vegetables.”) In describing the ways in which hybrid figures can expose the discursive construction of the organic, Donna Haraway writes:

Science fiction is generally concerned with the interpenetration of boundaries between problematic selves and unexpected others with the exploration of possible worlds in a context structured by transnational techno-science the emerging social subjects called “inappropriate/d others” inhabit such worlds SF – science fiction, speculative futures, science fantasy, speculative fiction – is an especially apt sign under which to conduct an inquiry into the artifactual as a reproductive technology that might issue in something other than the sacred image of the same, something inappropriate, unfitting, and so, maybe, inappropriate.

Within the belly of the monster, even inappropriate/d seem to be interpolated – called through interruption – into a particular location that I have learned to call a cyborg subject position. (“The Promises of Monsters” 70)

If the disabled body, because of its frequent merger with the technological, the scientific, and the inorganic, stands as the “inappropriate/d other,” then it also evokes associations of a futurity that exposes and undoes the natural. By this I do not mean to reinforce a kind of perspective that reinforces the idea that disability is unnatural, but rather that disability, because of the variance and idiosyncrasy *in nature* that it exposes, challenges the idea of the natural as entirely whole and complete. The reliance of the disabled body upon the inanimate and other bodies exposes the partiality of the body and of the subject. The inorganic quality of the disabled body points to the flimsy construction of our conception of the human subject as autonomous and clearly bounded from other organisms and the unnatural world.

In “A Manifesto for Cyborgs,” Haraway emphasizes that cyborg imagery “means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, spaces, stories” (39). In the essay, Haraway seeks to examine what she identifies as the social relations of science and technology. This means arguing for a reconstituting of boundaries in relation to the animal and human, organism and machine and the physical and non-physical. In reconstituting these boundaries Haraway, of course, wants to

emphasize how they are blurry and uncertain, and the ability for things on either side to merge and defy categorization. Haraway is looking at the ways in which cyborgs both enable and disable “machines, identities, categories, relationships, spaces, stories.”

Haraway’s ideas have been used heavily within disability studies, and critics tend to either focus on the way in which these ideas create, in a positive sense, a metaphorical mechanism for discussing disability, or critique cyborg imagery precisely because of its function as a metafiction and removal from the experience of lived disabled bodies. For instance, Carrie Sandahl suggests that Haraway, in fact, extends her concept to include people with disabilities and that “disability artists and activists might consider how the ontological status [of cyborg] itself might be a new template for reimagining and reinterpreting bodies with disabilities” (59). In her essay “Against Normalization” Ingunn Moser turns to cyborgs at the end of her essay because “the cyborg is appropriated, twisted, turned and refigured to help us articulate new figures of subjectivity as well as our community” (236). Rosemarie Garland Thomson also finds the cyborg concept useful. “Donna Haraway’s popular notion of the cyborg might serve as a theoretical prototype for constructing a self that can negotiate between ‘disabled’ as a physical fact and social identity and person as a member of the human community” (114).

However, in her later essay “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory” she critiques Haraway along with other postmodern feminist theoretical work claiming that “this metaphorical invocation seldom acknowledges that these figures often refer to the actual bodies of people with disabilities. Erasing real disabled bodies from the history of these terms compromises the very critique they intend to lodge and misses an opportunity to use disability as a feminist critical category” (9). A similar critique is made by David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder in the introduction of their 1997 anthology *The Body and Physical Difference*, where they use Haraway as an example of how disability “shows up in numerous postmodern catalogs without comment on the conflicted relationship of disabled body people to the equipment that theoretically affords them access to able bodied populations, architectural structures and cultural commodities” (8). Susan Wendell complains that, when discussing the metaphors of immune system discourse, Haraway does not take into account the impact of this discourse on people with immune system disorders (44). She gives this as an example of theoretical approaches to the body which “seem to confuse the lived reality of bodies with cultural discourse about and representations of bodies or that deny or ignore bodily experience in favor of fascinations with bodily representation” (44).⁴⁶ Tobin Siebers interprets the cyborg as “always more than human – and never risks to be seen as subhuman” (63). His reading of the cyborg claims that “prostheses always increase the cyborg’s abilities; they are a source only of new powers, never problems” (63). And he sums up his critique by saying “to put it simply, the cyborg is not disabled” (63). In this observation, I find Siebers to be completely correct or rather, since we can utilize the cyborg outside of Haraway’s manifesto and other theoretical work, let us rephrase his objection and say Haraway’s work is not a disability studies text. It is not concerned with representing some aspect of the disability experience. Although as he, Sandahl, Mitchell, Thomson, and many other critics have pointed out, Haraway does invoke disability as an example of cyborgian identity.

I want to separate the figure of the cyborg from Haraway's writing on the cyborg precisely because I do find the cyborg a particularly useful figure to reconsider issues of boundaries, identity and ability. I find Haraway's cyborg figure useful for disability studies and also feel it is important not to conflate Haraway's lack of interest in disability with the utility of the cyborg figure for disability studies. It is equally important to separate utilizations of Haraway's cyborg from the initial concept. The cyborgian figure is not meant to represent or re-present disabled subjectivity as much as it is meant as a theoretical tool with which to reconceptualize some of the major boundary formulations that Haraway critiques. One could argue that the cyborgian figure also helps to destabilize boundaries of ability and disability and offers a breaking down of boundaries between subjects in either category. After all, dissolving boundaries between man and machine has obvious implications for the disabled body which many critics have already observed.⁴⁷ However, there is a difference between recognizing the utility of Haraway's project for disability studies and taking issue with the fact that theorizing ability and disability is not at the center of Haraway's project.

As for claims that Haraway's cyborgian figure is too positivist, and that it erases the difficulties of relying upon technology and is never seen as subhuman, such a claim seems to miss much of the critique that Haraway is trying to make. It is precisely that the cyborgian figure blurs the boundaries between human and animal, and machine and organism, that Haraway seeks to emphasize repeatedly throughout her essay. Haraway constructs a cyborg in place of a goddess because she wants to privilege these leaky boundaries and an inorganic partial figure that does not rely on myths of the whole and the natural. However, I fail to see how this construction implies that cyborgs and monsters are somehow outside of stigma, difficulty, pain and distress.⁴⁸ The cyborg, for Haraway, is not meant to be some futuristic superhuman without problems, but rather a way of thinking about the role of science, technology, and culture in a postmodern age. "The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are illegitimate offsprings of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism" ("A Cyborg Manifesto" 10). I want to emphasize the term illegitimate, the way in which cyborgian figures exist as accidental byproducts of patriarchal and militaristic constructions. They are not made with the purposeful intent of carrying on a particular legacy or fitting into the pre-existing structures of power and privilege. Haraway's mention of state socialism is particularly salient in relation to disabled populations which often rely upon state funded programs for income, attendant services and transportation.

Disabled bodies are threatening because they display the body's finitude and unpredictability, as Longmore's observation makes clear. They are also threatening because they point to a kind of speculative future. This future not only contains the ominous threat of possible disability but points to cyborgian identity as a realizable fiction, and instead exposes the fictionality of inorganic, independent and contained body. Disability not only merges with categories of technology, science and the artificial but challenges our conceptions of those categories as well as the boundaries between the natural and the unnatural, the normal and the abnormal, the object and the subject. As we saw in the chapter on Joyce, to consider disability in a more complex relationship to sexuality and desire requires a more fluid and nuanced understanding of subject and object relationships.

Likewise, disability demonstrates how objects can become incorporated into daily modes of functioning and blurs the boundary between object and subject. In his book *Design Meets Disability*, Graham Pullin describes the variety of ways in which assistive technology can be better designed in order to meet not only the functional but aesthetic criteria of its users. In fact, he points out the false dichotomy between aesthetics and utility. Using eyeglasses and hearing aids as an example, Pullin argues that the *wear* perspective is currently missing from disability design.

You *wear* glasses rather than just carry or *use* them. Somehow the term user becomes inappropriate, wearer sets up a different relationship between the designer and the person being designed for.... [with this perspective] comes the risk of a design not suiting a particular individual, or the individual not liking the design, and so the need for variety and choice. (19, italics Pullin)

A less commonplace example that applies the same principle is Amy Mullin's use of her prosthetic legs. Amy Mullin is an athlete, model and actress who owns several prosthetic legs.

Her wardrobe is made up not only of different clothes that can make her feel a different way but also different legs; there are her carbon fiber running legs, various silicone cosmetic prostheses, and a pair of intricately hand carved wooden legs. ... her legs too can make her feel amazing in different ways: a pair of silicone legs that are several inches longer than her own legs would be, make her (even) taller and more elegant on the catwalk, while her eerie glass legs have an element of magical realism. This very choice becomes part of her individual identity and also a collective experience ... (33)

Mullin's relationship to her prostheses is one that involves redesigning both her body and her body image. These objects become a part of her body itself but also change the parameters of what bodies can do, given that they can change her height, shape, size and flexibility. Pullin also makes this point when he points out that "some amputees have spoken of not liking the feel of their hand. They, like anyone, unconsciously cradle one hand in the other yet the materials chosen for their visual resemblance to skin are rubbery and clammy to the touch, and can feel dirty somehow. Some amputees even complain that their prosthesis *smells* unpleasant" (35, italics Pullin). His point is simply that prostheses that were designed solely for their visual reference in order to look like arms and hide disability often neglect other aspects that are important to the user like feel and smell. In critiquing hook prostheses, Pullin points out that "these may work well as tools, but any hand is more than a tool – it becomes part of the wearer's body image, a visual as well as functional termination of the arm" (35). The oversight that Pullin points out throughout his book in relation to other assistive technology like wheelchairs, hearing devices, Braille and time devices for the blind is that assistive technology is more than a functional object meant to alleviate practical problems or normalize disability.

Because such technology is integrated into the user's body or daily life, its designers need to pay attention to the variety of functional and aesthetic needs that its users have. Disabled people's perception of assistive technology and the stigma it carries also plays a role in their ability to accept it. Charmaz quotes Stewart as saying "that wheelchairs could be thought of as conveniences rather than as portable prisons, or worse

badges of moral capitulation was a life transforming concept that simply did not occur to me” (151). Clare Hocking discusses the impact on identity as a key reason for patients abandoning their assistive devices. People’s attitudes towards assistive technology are largely impacted by their attitude towards disability and technology generally. Hocking also questions whether there is a gendered component to the utilization of assistive technology. “For example, do expectations of male mastery of electrical and electronic devices lead to under utilization of high tech equipment with female clients?” (8). In addition, therapists may often transfer their own personal value system onto the client, worrying that the client might become lazy and dependent if they increase their options for mobility by utilizing mobility aids. Clearly, cyborg status is not always celebratory, equally distributed or uncomplicated. But regardless of its drawbacks, cyborg status avoids the constraints of needing to live on and maintain an identity on one side of the binary of healthy and sick.

As Woolf initially told us, health constructs an army of the upright replete with all of the strictly managed images of time that come with military associations. Contemporary queer theorizations of time open up the very space of alternative time that Woolf alludes to in her meditations on illness, but rather than deploy Tiny Tim as a way to express the hyper-frailty of the future, Woolf looks at an “ill” subjectivity as central to understanding alternative temporal modes.

Whether we are talking about how language and time are altered by illness, how the disability temporal frame mimics and veers from the queer temporal frame, how disability becomes associated with children and an always deferred future or how disability heralds the arrival of the futuristic cyborg, disability looms large in our (post)modern attempts at understanding and reconfiguring notions of time.

Chapter Three: Playing with Difference: Disability in Toni Morrison's Novels

In the previous chapters, we saw how through the crippled erotic and use of the senses, Joyce's *Ulysses* created a textual sense of sexuality that allowed for a multitude of bodies and was not contingent upon a singular, hegemonic understanding of ability. We saw the subversive and expansive potential for Woolf's understandings of gender and time in relation to disability. Now we will move to Toni Morrison's novels and her use of ability as a point of contrast and a way to examine these issues more sustainedly through a series of utilizations of disability by the same author. While the previous two chapters have looked at instances of disability representation and moved out to broader theoretical interventions and conceptions of ability, this chapter focuses instead on examining how disability aligns with Morrison's own theoretical interventions in representation and literary criticism.

What happens when an identity becomes a tool in the literary imagination rather than a place to imagine from? This is a question that Toni Morrison takes up in her now classic *Playing in the Dark* when she argues that an Africanist presence structures and haunts canonical American literature. *Playing in the Dark* critiques the deployment of images relating to blackness and Africanism and shows how reliant white canonical American authors are on racial anxieties and themes. In the first portion of this chapter, I will discuss how Morrison's claims about literary representation in regard to race can also be applied to disability. Morrison's novels invoke ableized values in a variety of ways. First, I will examine the way that disability and blindness become deployed in Morrison's non-fiction, and then I will use *Playing in the Dark* to describe Morrison's deployment of disability in her novels *Tar Baby*, *Sula*, and *Beloved*. I will then use *The Bluest Eye* as a counter-example to show how Morrison's distancing of the character from disability in fact allows a fuller character to develop. In the course of this analysis, I will critique the few previous writers who have dealt with Morrison's use of disability, Rosemarie Garland Thomson, Sherri Hoem and Ato Quayson. My reading differs dramatically from their primarily celebratory reading of Morrison's disabled characters. I hope to do for disability what Morrison successfully does with race in her nonfiction: to demonstrate its varied and extensive appropriation and also how its consideration in a more conscious manner can expand the purview of literary projects and their social and political dimensions.

Playing With Disability

What happens when we consider dynamics of disability alongside dynamics of race in literary analysis of representations of and by African-Americans? What happens when we insert a conception of disability as a social and political identity, alongside a black identity in literary analysis? In the case of Toni Morrison, one finds that disability is written as fixed rather than fluid and conceptualized as metaphor rather than identity. In her own writings as a literary critic, Morrison points to the seething but nonetheless unacknowledged presence of blackness.

I can't help thinking that the question never should have been 'Why am I, as an Afro-American, absent from it [literature] ... The spectacularly interesting question is "What intellectual feats had to be performed by the

author or his critic to erase me from a society seething with my presence and what effect had that performance upon the work? (*Unspeakable* 34)

I think one can ask the same question regarding the exclusion of disability. In what ways did (and does) literature function to erase the presence of disability, while at the same time being saturated by it? How has the “unspeakability” of disability shaped “the structure, meaning and choices of American literature” (*Unspeakable* 34)? How does disability function as “the ghost in the machine, an active but un-summoned presence that can distort the workings of a machine and can also *make* it work” (*Unspeakable* 35)?

In a certain way, this query in regard to Morrison’s own work may seem out of place. She frequently has disabled characters in her novels that are more developed than many prior literary depictions of disability. Yet within her writing, disability functions as metaphor and sometimes mythology, but nonetheless as a “choked, never fully developed presence,” analogous to her claim for an Africanist presence within American literature (*Playing* 17). In a sense, her use of disability is understandably stifled. Disability, like race (but not in the exact same way as race), can be a site for pity, chaos, and loss of control and autonomy (Longmore 155). The depictions of disability in texts by able-bodied authors more often than not reflect able-bodied fantasies, fears and ambivalence more than anything else. As Morrison puts it:

I came to realize the obvious: the subject of the dream is always the dreamer. The fabrication of an Africanist persona is reflexive; an extraordinary meditation on the self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in writerly consciousness. It is an astonishing revelation of longing, of terror, of perplexity, of shame, of magnanimity. It requires hard work *not* to see this. (*Playing* 17)

We live in an ableized society, just as we live in a racialized one. I wonder what it means that a distinction between terms like racial and racist does not exist for disability. Would it be beneficial to use the term “ableized” instead of “ableist” in order to defuse responses to this critique that mistake its goal for political correctness? Can we thereby avoid the appearance of a preoccupation with the language used to describe disability that misses how disability reveals the interworkings of both the text and of ability itself? We all internalize “ableized” values as normal, just as we can’t help but internalize white racialized values. But we are much less conscious of what ableized values are and how to recognize and subvert them. Unlike the black community, which has had a subversive, resistant subculture for hundreds of years, disability subculture has been much slower to form and much less prominent in American culture in part because of race and class dynamics which attempt to divide disabled people from each other.

While both race and disability involve complicated histories of identifying or not identifying as raced and/or disabled, these histories are unique, specific, complex and distinct, despite overlapping and intersecting. Douglas Baynton’s work demonstrates how disability has been used as a stigma in three great citizenship debates: women’s suffrage, African-American freedom and civil rights, and the restriction of immigration. He traces the way disability was deployed as a justification for inequality in all three debates in order to demonstrate that disability has a complex history in these groups. His analysis also helps to explain what he refers to as “a common strategy for obtaining equal rights” in which groups seek to distance themselves from disability and implicitly accept that disability is a legitimate reason for discrimination and inequality.⁴⁹

Morrison often captures an ambivalence, hatred and longing for acceptance by the dominant white culture within the able-bodied black community. However, when it comes to disability, the outright refusal to conform to dominant ableized standards within Morrison's novels is lacking and the ambivalence and longing for acceptance don't come through as a character's struggle with identity, but as an ambivalence and acceptance, in some ways, of dominant ableized standards and attitudes within Morrison's work. (But no disabled characters in Morrison's work refuse outright to conform to dominant ableized standards. The ambivalence registers, not as a dynamic struggle within Morrison's characters, but as an unresolved ambivalence on the part of the writer.

Of Morrison's own social positioning in *Playing in the Dark* she writes:

I am a black writer struggling with and through a language that can powerfully evoke and enforce hidden signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony, and dismissive "othering" of people and language which are by no means marginal or already and completely known and knowable in my work. My vulnerability would lie in romanticizing blackness rather than demonizing it; vilifying whiteness rather than reifying it. The kind of work I have always wanted to do requires me to learn how to maneuver ways to free up the language from its sometimes sinister, frequently lazy, almost always predictable employment of racially informed and determined chains. (x-xi)

What would it mean to undo the sinister, frequently lazy and almost always predictable employment of images and invocations of disability that occur both in Morrison's own work and the culture at large? What does it mean to read from a place which does not assume the marginality of disability and disabled characters within the text and presumes their multidimensionality as well as their inability to be completely known and knowable? I'm not looking to make a simplistic argument which merely chastises Morrison for her use of disability and disabled characters. I am less interested in the ways that ableist assumptions and language are routinely deployed by Morrison and within the culture at large (although I do think that those instances are worth noting) than I am in the ways in which assumptions about ability and superiority, or perhaps more accurately non disability and superiority, impact how the narrative is constructed, and what possibilities these create and foreclose in Morrison's literary representation. Through looking at the recurring nature of the disabled body in Morrison's text, we come to see that disability is one of the central ways in which Morrison's work engages with racial difference and anxieties about the materiality of bodies and survival. While disability may at first seem to be at the periphery of Morrison's work, since her disabled characters frequently are peripheral or at least secondary to the novel's major protagonists, mythologies and anxieties about disability are part of the way the novels are able to rework issues of race, class and gender.

For reasons that should not need explanation here, until very recently, and regardless of the race of the author, the readers of virtually all of American fiction have been positioned as white. I am interested to know what that assumption has meant to the literary imagination. When does racial "unconsciousness" or awareness of race enrich interpretive language, and when does it impoverish it? What does positing one's writerly self, in the wholly racialized society that is the United States, as unraced and all

others as raced entail? What happens to the writerly imagination of a black author who is at some level *always* conscious of representing one's own race to, or in spite of, a race of readers that understands itself to be "universal" or race-free? In other words, how is "literary whiteness" and "literary blackness" made, and what is the consequence of that construction? How do embedded assumptions of racial (not racist) language work in the literary enterprise that hopes and sometimes claims to be "humanistic"? When, in a race-conscious culture, is that lofty goal actually approximated? When not and why? Living in a nation of people who *decided* that their world view would combine agendas for individual freedom *and* mechanisms for devastating racial oppression presents a singular landscape for a writer. (xii-xiii)

Much as Morrison asks what are the benefits and costs of racial unconsciousness, I ask how these questions apply to ability unconsciousness. In asking these questions I am not seeking to enforce some kind of literary hierarchy in which texts are evaluated based on their positivist rhetoric around disability or their relationship to ideas such as ableism. Instead, I want to highlight the ways in which disability can constrain the textual representation in Morrison's work. It does not seem self-evident that, like literary blackness and whiteness, disability is constructed and that construction has literary and textual consequences that correspond to social and political realities. How is humanism equally and differently potent in relation to disability? How do disabled bodies and a disability experience stand in for a kind of universalism about race, limitation, freedom, confinement and struggle? How do these metaphorical universalizing gestures interact with mechanisms for ableist oppression and what is the consequence of failing to acknowledge and adjust their specificity? Morrison is very careful to frame her project of literary criticism as coming from a place of faith and hope in language and literature and the skills of the American authors engaging in it. Writers, she argues, are conscious of their subtext and its transformative potential.

My project arises from delight, not disappointment. It rises from what I know about the ways writers transform aspects of their social grounding into aspects of language, and the ways they tell other stories, fight secret wars, limn out all sorts of debates blanketed in their text. And it rises from my certainty that writers always know, at some level, that they do this. (4)

I want to ground my critique in the same hopefulness about the writer's enterprise. I too, share the same hopefulness about the power of language to transform social and cultural landscapes through imagination. When I gave a version of this chapter in its early stages at a conference, an audience member commented that Morrison's books reflected real life and that unfortunately black disabled women were at the bottom of the social order – someone had to be so ... the commentator's voice trailed off. "No" I responded, "literature is a place where anything is possible and there is no reason why ability hierarchies, much as racialized ones often are in her texts, can't be challenged and explored in the ways in which other identities such as gender and race are."

I am not arguing here that any use of metaphor or mythology is problematic nor that Morrison's work should have the style of a realistic twentieth-century novel. What I am saying is that an interest in myth-making, metaphor, or aspects of magical realism

does not preclude her from exploring disability from a perspective that expands representation and understanding rather than occluding them. Morrison's work seems to be the perfect site for such an undertaking, precisely because she is concerned not only with the writer's ability to depict what is there, but also *what is possible*.

It is tempting to take at face value her assertion that all writers know about their subtext: the secret wars other stories and debates that arise within their text. But I do not think that this is always the case. Based on her fiction and nonfiction, it does not seem that Morrison has any sustained interest in depicting the complexities of disability as a social or political identity or even a lived experience in the way that she does with blackness. She is not alone in her invocation of disability without these considerations, although the pervasiveness of disability imagery in her work is definitely worth noting. And perhaps the point of this analysis is precisely in examining that lack of interest and its impact on her work. By this I do not mean I am interested in whatever autobiographical reason may exist for Morrison's lack of interest in disability culture, disability studies, or disability rights. I am not interested in Morrison's personal attitudes towards disabled people. I am interested in the ways in which the invocations of disability in her texts reveal anxieties and fantasies about disability and the nature of ability itself. What are the implications of these for the literary representation of her characters? What opportunities are missed or taken through her use of disability in this way? How would a more complex writing of disability expand the project of imagining and reimagining social grounding that Morrison undertakes? What is the function of disability's constant presence and simultaneous relegation to mostly peripheral characters? How and why does disability function as a backdrop against which the nondisabled protagonists can emerge? But before we examine Morrison's novels I want to look first at her use of disability in her non-fiction and the parallels that can be drawn to her fictional disabled characters.

Blind Spots in Morrison's Non-Fiction

Disability becomes deployed in strikingly traditional ways throughout Morrison's non-fictional work that critiques the use of race in American literature. The two main metaphors I have found in her non-fiction are blindness and amputation, although she also uses the idea of "crippling." These metaphors in her non-fiction correspond to the types of impairments her disabled characters have. Eva, in *Sula*, is an amputee, as is Nan, a minor character in *Tar Baby*. Marie Therese, a character from the same novel, is blind, and both Pauline in *the Bluest Eye* and Baby Suggs in *Beloved*, limp. Blindness, in particular, is a common, recurring metaphor for a willful or unwillful failure to acknowledge or understand. In *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison uses blindness as a metaphor several times. "I have made much here of a kind of willful critical blindness – a blindness that, if it had not existed, could have made these insightful parts of our routine literary heritage" (18).

Morrison is right to say that she has made much of this critical blindness; in fact, she uses this metaphor at least four times throughout the text. In the above passage, it refers to a refusal of white Americans to acknowledge the ways in which Americans choose to talk about themselves "through and within a sometimes allegorical, sometimes metaphorical, but always choked representation of an Africanist presence" (17). But the

choice of blindness as a metaphor for willful ignorance of racialization should be challenged just as much as the ignorance of an Africanist presence and racialization of whiteness and blackness within American literature. It is obvious but nonetheless necessary to mention that intellectual or personal understanding so often discussed as “seeing” is not literal seeing. The problem with equating the two and concretizing the process of understanding in this way is that it ignores the position of the blind subject and blindness as disability identity.

Morrison’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech also uses the metaphor of blindness, only this time the blind subject is reified as mythically wise. “‘Once upon a time there was an old woman. Blind but wise.’ Or was it an old man. ‘Once upon a time there was an old woman. Blind. Wise’” (Nobel Lecture). According to Morrison, through this mystic wisdom the blind woman becomes both the law and its transgression. It is this dual role coupled with the metaphor of isolation that creates such a problematic character. The woman lives alone and in Morrison’s initial presentation of the myth, the character’s gender remains ambiguous. It is this coupling of ambiguous gendering and isolation that allows the blind woman to echo a Tiresian figure and function more as myth than character. While using the blind woman character allows Morrison to meditate on language in interesting ways through the rest of her speech, it does so at the expense of considering the reality of blind subjectivity. The story is meant to demonstrate the obvious pitfalls of oppressive language as well as the ways in which multiplicity and signification can and must expand the possibilities of language. Here, blindness exists as a site that allows language to function “without pictures” (Nobel Lecture). What Morrison presumes to be the lack of visual referents for the blind woman extends to the lack of concrete signification that language accomplishes. In other words, the blind woman stands in as a metaphor for the deliberate and necessary blindness of language.

In her analysis of *Beloved*, C. Namwali Serpell focuses on literary analysis as a process of multiplicity. Because of the ways in which novelistic multiplicity allows for multiple meanings and perspectives to comprise of the novel itself, multiplicity becomes not only a function of language but also of narrative structure. Serpell uses the metaphor of the palimpsest to discuss multiplicity. She rightly points out that the palimpsest suggests both transparency and concealment and also a multiplicity with regard to temporality in that the past and the present exist simultaneously (9-11). But what does it mean when blindness as a characteristic or an identity is meant to signify such multiplicity, which is not, we must remember, a multiplicity inherent to blindness but rather the multiplicity of language itself? The speech and the novels Morrison has written all demonstrate that this conflation leads not to a more complex narrative but merely to a contradictory one, in which surface claims of blindness as wisdom or vision ultimately get undermined and, to use the metaphor of the palimpsest, overwritten by an emphasis on the limited perceptions of blind people and on how blindness constrains and shapes experience.

Both the speech and *Playing in the Dark* mobilize the metaphor of blindness for cross purposes, without any consideration of the lived reality and complexity of blindness itself. Morrison’s uses of amputation, lobotomy and hypochondria also deserve a second look. In *Playing in the Dark* she writes:

Excising the political from the life of the mind is a sacrifice that has proven costly. I think of this erasure as a kind of trembling hypochondria

always curing itself with unnecessary surgery. A criticism that needs to insist that literature is not only “universal” but also “race-free” risks lobotomizing that literature, and diminishes both the art and the artist. (12)

These same ideas appear in an earlier version in her essay “Unspeakable Things Unspoken” where she also includes the metaphor of amputation.

I am made melancholy when I consider the act of defending the Eurocentric Western posture in literature as not only “universal” but also “race-free” may have resulted in lobotomizing that literature, and in diminishing both the art and the artist. Like the surgical removal of legs so that the body can remain enthroned, immobile, static – under house arrest, so to speak. (36)

Her description of the body without legs as immobile, static, and under house arrest, is compared to a lobotomized Eurocentric literature that is diminished. One cannot help but see the association between this diminishment and the disabled body. Morrison’s choice of the surgical removal of legs as a metaphor also gives us insight into her view of Eva as a character in *Sula*, since Eva had a leg removed and was under house arrest, so to speak, because Morrison placed her on the top floor. We can see here that the disabled body is being equated with limitation. As a result of the clear parallels to Eva’s body and living situation within *Sula*, we can’t help but associate the immobile static disabled body with the disabled character who has this body. The use of the verb “lobotomizing” is also a troubling way of making a point about literature, especially considering the historical use of black subjects for medical experimentation.⁵⁰ The reference to a lobotomy may be the most severe invocation of mental illness as metaphor but it is certainly not the only one present in Morrison’s writing about the Africanist presence within literature.

In fact, Morrison opens *Playing in the Dark* with disability when she talks about Marie Cardinal’s memoir *The Words to Say It*. Morrison opens her book by discussing the racialized aspects of Cardinal’s first anxiety attack, occurring at a Louis Armstrong jazz concert. She takes the language that Cardinal used to describe the jazz “one precise, *unique* note, tracing a sound whose path is almost *painful*, so absolutely necessary had its *equilibrium* and *duration* become; *it tore at the nerves* of those who followed it” (Cardinal qtd. in Morrison viii). Morrison emphasizes the unbearability of the equilibrium and duration and the nerve-racking nature of the balance and permanence. She writes “These are wonderful tropes for the illness that was breaking up Cardinal’s life” (viii). She further explains that what interested her in Cardinal’s experience of jazz was whether its cultural associations led to her experience of anxiety or as Morrison describes it “madness.” I am interested in the ways that Morrison is reading the racialized element of Cardinal’s experience of illness as in some ways being the source of that illness. She follows up her example by stating “I was interested, as I had been for a long time, in the way black people ignite critical moments of discovery or change or emphasis in literature not written by them” (viii). This is certainly a critical and understudied topic and such an analysis can be used for disability studies as well. But so is the presumption that the onset of this illness was brought on by jazz and the cultural associations that surround it. In framing the book, Morrison tells us that Cardinal’s experiences with psychiatric disability are what led her to write the book. “Cardinal’s project was not fictional, however; it was to document her madness, her therapy, and the complicated process of healing and language as exact and evocative as possible in order

to make both her experience and her understanding of it accessible to a stranger” (v). It seems that Cardinal’s illness becomes, for Morrison, both an example of white anxiety projected onto figures of blackness or figures associated with blackness and a metaphorical way to discuss how this anxiety functions as a sickness or at least a catalyst for one. It is this collapse of racial anxiety with an experience of anxiety disorder that mirrors her collapse of stereotypical negative associations of disability that continue throughout the text: blindness, a lobotomized brain, and an earlier version also uses the image of an amputated limb.

Stepping onto Morrison’s Playground: Using Morrison to Understand Disability in Her Work

Now I would like to turn to Morrison’s use of these disabilities in her fiction; in order to ground this section of my analysis I will begin with quotes from Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark* that describe various ways race is deployed by white canonical authors. Morrison proposes several utilizations of blackness that require further investigation. The first is the Africanist character as surrogate and enabler. Disability functions much in the same way, so that disabled characters stand in for other identities and ideas about black identity that Morrison wants to critique or privilege.⁵¹ “In what way does the imaginative encounter with Africanism enable white writers to think about themselves? What are the dynamics of Africanism’s self-reflexive properties?” (51). In what ways is this use of disability contrived and self-referential? We will look in more detail about how disabled characters enable the plot and serve to highlight nondisabled protagonists when looking at *Sula* and *Tar Baby* later on. One can see this in other characters as well by looking at the freedom of nondisabled characters versus disabled ones, their sexuality, desirability, and ability to make choices.

Morrison uses the Africanist figure to signal difference. Disabled characters, in Morrison’s text, often signal a different generation, fewer options and the mythological.

A second topic in need of critical attention is the way an Africanist idiom is used to establish difference or, in a later period, to signal modernity. We need to explicate the ways in which specific themes, fears, forms of consciousness, and class relationships are embedded in the use of Africanist idiom: how the dialogue of black characters is construed as an alien, estranging dialect made deliberately unintelligible by spellings contrived to disfavor it; how Africanist language practices are employed to evoke the tension between speech and speechlessness; how it is used to establish a cognitive world split between speech and text, to reinforce class distinctions and otherness as well as a marker and vehicle for illegal sexuality, fear of madness, expulsion, self-loathing. (52)

I can think of several depictions of madness within Morrison’s novels that fit these criteria as well as stereotypes that cast disabled characters as unintelligent and peripheral. But more on this later when we explore Morrison’s more detailed articulation of stereotype in American literature and apply it to disability within her own texts.

Third, we need studies of the technical ways in which an Africanist character is used to limn out and enforce the invention and implications of whiteness. We need studies that analyze the strategic use of black

characters to define the goals and enhance the qualities of white characters. Such studies will reveal the process of establishing others in order to know them, to display knowledge of the other so as to ease and to order external and internal chaos. Such studies will reveal the process by which it is made possible to explore and penetrate one's own body in the guise of the sexuality, vulnerability, and anarchy of the other—and to control projections of anarchy with the disciplinary apparatus of punishment and largess. (52-53)

Of all the ways in which Morrison's schema for the use of blackness by white writers is relevant, this is perhaps the most useful. In virtually all of Morrison's novels, disabled characters are used to give the nondisabled characters something to define themselves against and move away from. Rather than be tied to a life of survival and obligation, nondisabled characters want to create a fuller subjectivity that involves choice and sexual agency. Unlike the older disabled characters, they are complex rather than contradictory and they seek to make themselves rather than other people the center of their lives.

Fourth, we need to analyze the manipulation of the Africanist narrative (that is, the story of a black person, the experience of being bound and/or rejected) as a means of meditation—both safe and risky—on one's own humanity. Such analyses will reveal how the representation and appropriation of that narrative provides opportunities to contemplate limitation, suffering, rebellion, and to speculate on fate and destiny. They will analyze how that narrative is used for discourse on ethics, social and universal codes of behavior, and assertions about and definitions of civilization and reason. Criticism of this type will show how that narrative is used in the construction of a history and a context for whites by positing history-lessness and context-lessness for blacks. (52-53)

In Morrison's novels the mythological aspect of a disabled character allows for a rising above of material and physical circumstances that simultaneously fails to take these circumstances into account. The goal here may be to demonstrate some sort of everpresent ability to rise above the body and circumvent limited physicality or ability. These characters always exist as inspirational in a way that is completely untethered to any kind of actual ability to inspire, insofar as inspiration is defined as beyond functioning or merely existing. The disabled characters are used to highlight the nondisabled characters, their freedoms and possibilities. They are used as opportunities for meditations on adulthood and freedom but their subjectivity is never fully explored in a manner that acknowledges either their freedom or their adulthood.

As the book progresses, Morrison offers a more detailed and specific outline of the various ways that race is used. I am interested in looking at first at how Morrison's disabled female characters function as surrogates and enablers for their nondisabled counterparts, although I will also discuss the way in which stereotype functions in more predictable ways in other novels as well. The next few sections respond directly to Morrison's list of metaphorical uses of blackness in *Playing in the Dark*.

(E) Racing Blindness in *Tar Baby*

In *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison is explicit about the different ways that African-American characters can function to enable whiteness within the text. One of these ways is a kind of flattening of specific historical differences. “Metaphysical condensation. This allows the writer to transform social and historical differences into universal differences. Collapsing persons into animals prevents human contact and exchange; equating speech with grunts or other animal sounds closes off the possibility of communication” (68). While this is meant to describe the canonical works of white authors, it also describes Morrison’s own writing in relation to disability. In order to explain this concept further in relation to Morrison, I will now turn to an examination of *Tar Baby* and Marie Therese. In the novel, difference is used to serve the greater narrative rather than contemplate what kind of difference blindness is. In *Tar Baby*, on the one hand, blindness becomes uncomplicatedly equated with ancestral understanding, a monolithic equation that Morrison would never employ in a representation of blackness. The central blind character Marie Therese is depicted as unintelligent and undesirable, one of the blind race who sees with the “eye of the mind” (152) -- ironic, considering Morrison has cast her as naïve and stupid. In *Tar Baby*, blindness is reified as a sign of connection to blackness and ancestral heritage.

Somewhere in the back of Son’s mind, one hundred black men on one hundred unshod horses rode blind and naked through the hills and had done so for hundreds of years. They knew the rainforest when it was a rainforest, they knew where the river began, where the roots twisted above the ground; they knew all there was to know about the island and had not even seen it. They had floated in strange waters blind, but they were still racing each other for sport in the hills behind this white man’s house.
(206)

Blindness here is identified with nakedness, innocence, and a more primitive, more intuitive way of knowing. The blind race is symbolic of the ancestry of the African American community. While blindness may be appealing as a metaphor – blindness for example to the dominant culture, to its ignorance of nature and community and its perverse value system – this use of blindness is dangerous. It does to the blind what Morrison has successfully avoided doing in her writing with regard to blackness – erasing the divisions within the black community and romanticizing it. Blind people, like any other group, are not monolithic, and blindness is not more of a symbol of intuitive connectedness to ancestry than any other characteristic of the body. This symbolic ancestral connection is reinforced again in the novel’s ending, when Therese guides a boat to the island where the ancestors are waiting. She then gives Son an ultimatum, which Angelita Reyes claims is the central theme of the book (19). Therese says,

‘Don’t go to L’Arbe de la Croix.’ Her voice was a calamitous whisper coming out of the darkness towards him like jaws. ‘Forget her. There is nothing in her parts for you. She has forgotten her ancient properties.’(305)

The “she” in the above quotation refers to Jadine, a black bourgeois supermodel who has gone to Paris. Son is in love with her and intends to follow. Marie Therese informs him of the futility of this path, as Jadine has forgotten her “ancient properties,” her historical

and cultural connection to black culture. Marie Therese is the only character who is a member of the blind race, and, predictably enough, she is the one who informs him that Jadine has nothing for him. In giving Son this warning, Marie-Therese solidifies her tie to her own ancient properties and the tie of the blind race to this cultural, natural, and ancestral awareness that Morrison seeks to privilege.

The notion of a blind race is problematic because it denies the fluidity of disability as an identity and imposes a fixity to one's ability status, which is never really there. The notion of race as fixed is solidified in the novel through an emphasis on the separate worlds which whites and blacks inhabit even while living within the same house. After a huge fight between the white family that inhabits and dominates the island where *Tar Baby* takes place and their black servants, Jadine and Son have the following conversation:

‘What does it mean?’ She closed her eyes.

‘It means,’ he said talking into her hair, ‘that white folk and black folk should not sit down and eat together.’

‘O, Son.’ Jadine looked at him and smiled a tiny smile.

‘It’s true’, he said. ‘They should work together sometimes, but they should not eat together or live together or sleep together. Do any of those personal things in life.’ (210)

The separatist sentiment expressed in this passage foregrounds the importance and irreducibility of racial difference. The sentiment that “races don’t mix” is challenged only when black people abandon their race.

Fat or skinny, head rag or wig, cook or model, you take care of white folks babies – that’s what you do, and when you don’t have any white man’s baby to take care of, you make one – out of the babies black man gave you. You turn little black babies into white ones... (270)

Here the racial fluidity that is alluded to only works one way: the ability of blacks to metaphorically become white, not in the sense that they automatically gain white racial privilege but in the sense that they live by and hold themselves to the standards of white culture. Of course, this ability to transition -- for blacks to become white -- is never fully successful. Thus, at the end of *Tar Baby*, Jadine is left unfulfilled. As Andrea O’Reilly puts it, “*Tar Baby* tells the story of Jadine’s quest for wholeness and its ultimate failure” (92). Despite the fact that the meaning of people’s skin color and physiological attributes often varies based on context, era and culture, people’s skin color and other racialized attributes most often do not change over the course of a lifetime, although, as the above passage points out, movements between black and white culture and between racialized economic classes often do take place. Alternatively, few people remain disabled or nondisabled throughout the course of an entire lifespan. Therefore, the evocation of disability *as* a race is a contradiction that cannot hold.

Just Surviving: Eva and Sexuality in *Sula*

If disability as a race seems like an unsustainable contradiction, an application of Morrison’s use of fetishization may seem even more problematic. After all, the disabled are more often seen as lacking sexual desirability than transformed into objects of sexual desire. Morrison describes fetishization as not only revolving around erotic desire, but

also the creation of difference where difference isn't there. "Fetishization. This is especially useful in evoking erotic fears or desires and establishing fixed and major difference where difference does not exist or is minimal" (68). The way that this concept functions in Morrison's writing in *Sula* is a kind of fetishization of Eva's disability and asexuality. Fetishization is most closely associated with sexuality and Morrison evokes erotic fears through describing disabled asexuality in her character Eva. (Although this trope of asexuality and characters whose choices were dictated by survival extends to many of her other disabled characters as well.) Rosemarie Garland Thomson points to Eva as Morrison's most developed of her disabled characters. In "Speaking About the Unspeakable: the Representation of Disability of Stigma in Toni Morrison's Novels," she writes,

Eva is represented as a goddess/queen/creatrix figure even though she is by dominant standards an old, black, one-legged woman who runs a boarding house. Figured simultaneously as realistic and mythical, she is a re-visioned and re-written black Eve and a female version of the Afro-American trickster whose asymmetrical legs suggest his presence in both the material and supernatural worlds. (241)

The supernatural quality allows Morrison to mythologize her. While this may seem like a positive move on Morrison's part, mythologization allows for the dehumanization of Eva. Her mythic nature allows the reader to drop his/her expectation for realism. One example of an implausible occurrence that we are asked to ignore would be Eva's ordering stairs built in her own house, despite the fact that she uses a wheelchair to get around. Not only does she order more stairs built in the house as well as doors and stoops (other things that make wheelchair accessibility difficult), she also lives on the top floor.

In addition, her disability is mythologized because its true cause is speculative.

Fewer than 9 people in the town remembered when Eva had two legs, ... unless Eva herself introduced the subject, nobody ever spoke of her disability; they pretended to ignore it, unless, in some mood of fancy, she began some fearful story about it – generally to entertain children. How the leg got up by itself one day and walked on off. How she hobbled after it, but it ran too fast. Or how she had a corn on her toe and it just grew and grew and grew until her whole foot was a corn and then it traveled up her leg and it wouldn't stop growing until she put a red rag at the top but by that time it was already at her knee. Somebody said Eva stuck it under a train and made them pay off. Another said she sold it to a hospital for ten thousand dollars... (30-31)

Both serious explanations given for Eva's disability suggest that disability is a source of wealth. This is in great contradiction to the economic experiences of people with disabilities. Disability, in fact, is more often than not a source of additional economic expense rather than a way to find subsistence.⁵² Critic Patricia McKee claims that Eva's representation of her body "sets limits to her bodily and historical inconsistencies" (11). I understand this to mean that Eva controls the meaning given to her body and her history through controlling their representation. Children's stories told about the leg further allow disability to become mythic and give Eva a supernatural air. This does not allow us to think through the unrealistic treatment of Eva's disability. The sentence, "They

pretended to ignore it” referring to Eva’s disability is particularly telling. It is a kind of pretend at which Morrison fails miserably, because she focuses so much on Eva’s missing leg and her disability. In fact, we learn of Eva as “a one legged grandmother named Eva” before we are introduced to her in person. Eva’s missing leg is mentioned when her husband comes to visit (36). Virtually every scene in which Eva appears makes some mention of her missing leg. Seeing Eva as myth allows us to dehumanize her, in the sense that we do not have the same expectations for her as we do for able-bodied characters. Unlike Quayson, I do not see this mythologization as something which allows a productive joining of the imaginary / mythical and the real but rather a problematic conflation of the two which constrains the full realization of Eva’s character (Quayson 104). We do not doubt her ability to survive or rule the household, but we do not look to her as the center of the novel, or as a character who makes choices.⁵³

Also, I take issue with Thomson’s decision to read both disabled and nondisabled characters as similar examples of stigma. Stigma functions very differently in relation to these two groups. Thomson does not contend that the nondisabled characters she includes (Pilate, Sethe and Sula) are disabled in any way. And she is correct. There is nothing in the book to support that their markers of physical “stigma” are limiting or perceived as limiting by themselves or others in any way. In fact, a comparison of these able-bodied characters with their disabled counterparts shows how differently they are cast. I am not denying that all of Morrison’s characters have specific historic and socio-economic backgrounds that shape and to some extent limit their agency. Nor am I denying that disability creates additional challenges that are both structural and attitudinal. However, these challenges are not explored or confronted within the narrative itself.

Continuing with Eva as an example, we can first look at the area of female sexuality, a topic with a prominent place in the novel.-It would be useful to compare Morrison’s treatment of Eva with her treatment of able-bodied black women living in the same house, namely her daughter, Hannah and granddaughter, Sula. We are told that

Eva, old as she was, and with one leg, had a regular flock of gentleman callers, although she did not participate in the act of love, there was a good deal of teasing and pecking and laughter. The men wanted to see her lovely calf, that neat shoe...” (41)

What I find interesting is that Eva having a regular flock of gentleman callers must be prefaced with “old as she was” and “with one leg,” as though these two things are somehow antithetical to the presence of gentleman callers. I am also very intrigued that there is no further explanation for why Eva does not participate in the “act of love,” because this act has such a prominent place within the novel. Two pages are devoted to describing Hannah’s sex life: the ways in which it exasperates other women in the town, Hannah’s preferences for relationships, etc. Sex occurs so frequently in the Peace household that it leaves her daughter, Sula with the impression that “sex was pleasant and frequent, but otherwise unremarkable” (44). When Sula comes of age, love making is a big part of her life as well. It is an activity that gives her “[a] feeling [of] her own abiding strength and limitless power.” We are not told of Eva’s sexual feelings let alone her potential sexual exploits. So why is this activity given such little narrative attention within Eva’s life? One can only guess that it is because of her age and disability.

It is not only in terms of a sexual life that Eva Peace's character is lacking. As Thomson says,

Eva's is an alternative mythic narrative of the maternal which is grounded in the necessities of the flesh – of eating, defecating, dying, and the material, realistic demands of earthly survival. (“Unspeakable” 241)

I read this groundedness in survival as a limitation rather than a strength of Eva's. Her life lacks the free choice found in those of her daughter and most particularly her granddaughter, the novel's protagonist. This is made clear both in conversations she has with her daughter and granddaughter. When Hannah, Eva's eldest daughter asks her if she played with them when they were little, Eva eventually replies,

No time period, they wasn't no time. Not none. Soon as I got one day done, here come a night. With you all coughin'. And me watchin' so TB wouldn't take you off and if you was sleeping quiet, I thought, O Lord, they dead, and put my hand over your mouth to see if they breath was comin'. What you talkin' bout did I love you girl, I stayed alive for you, can't you get that through your thick head, or what is that between your thick ears, heifer? (69)

Obviously, Eva's emphasis on survival was a necessity of her economic situation during the Great Depression. Most of Morrison's disabled characters are oriented purely around survival. I question why disability is so often aligned with survival as a sole emphasis. Eva's lack of choice in comparison to Sula makes the limited nature of Eva's character clear.⁵⁴

Sula lived out her days exploring her own thoughts and emotions, giving them full reign, feeling no obligation to please anyone, unless their pleasure pleased her. (118)

We can see that Sula's life is the exact opposite of Eva's. It is not only not dictated by obligation but is seen solely as a vehicle to bring her pleasure. Living her life in this way is condemned by her grandmother.

'When are you going to get married? You need to have some babies. It'll settle you.'

'I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself.'

'Selfish. Ain't no woman got no business floatin' around without no man.'

'You did.'

'Not by choice.'

'Momma did.'

'Not by choice, I said. It ain't right for you to want to stay off by yourself.

You need...I'm 'a tell you what you need.'(92)

Here Eva condemns the choice of living alone, not marrying, not having children, etc. While this is a result of her age, at least as much as the other characteristics she has, it serves to further distance her from the main character, and the book's primary focus on female centered relationships and feminism within the lives of black women. Eva is aligned with more traditional gender roles when we hear that she chastises new brides, for not getting their man's supper ready on time; about how to launder shirts, press them, etc (42). When her granddaughter Sula arrives, coming back to the Bottom after a long

absence, she is dressed as a movie star. Upon seeing her, Eva criticizes her, saying the foxtails on her hat do her no more good than they did the fox (91). I can't help but wonder about the association between disability and traditional conceptions of femininity. Do Eva's limited views about the role of women, fashion etc. align in some way with her bodily difference as a perceived kind of limitation, rather than purely with generational differences? In Morrison's analysis of *To Have and Have Not* by Ernest Hemingway she asks:

What would have been the cost, I wonder, of humanizing, genderizing, this character at the opening of the novel? For one thing, Harry would be positioned—set off, defined—very differently. He would have to be compared to a helpless alcoholic, a contemptible customer, and an individualized crew member with, at least by implication, an independent life.. Harry would lack the juxtaposition and association with a vague presence suggesting sexual excitement, a possible threat to his virility and competence, violence under wraps. He would, finally, lack the complementarity of a figure who can be assumed to be in some way bound, fixed, unfree, and serviceable. (73).

Similarly, what would have been the cost of humanizing Eva? How would the narrative shift and expand to accommodate an exploration of her own sexual life? She too would lack an association with a vague presence of mythology and power associated with her phantom limb. One would have to consider how she maneuvered down the stairs of her house, managed to use her kitchen, how she navigated her inaccessible environment and people's stereotypes of her alongside her positive sense of self and desire and need to run a household and get things done. How would these considerations recast the idea of limitation? At what cost are these dimensions excluded from her character to the rest of the narrative? Like Harry Morgan in Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not*, Eva could no longer be "bound, fixed, unfree, and serviceable" or to use another, more metaphorical, comparison she could no longer be a stump and defined either by its outrageous denial or metaphorical collapse.

When Sula tells Eva she "sold her life" not her leg, Eva does not correct her, leaving the interchangeability of her leg and her life alone. Thus choosing disability is the equivalent to losing one's life, whether it is sold, willingly or unwillingly given. Becoming disabled in this equivalence is tantamount to death. While this kind of equating may seem severe and totalizing it is also quite common.⁵⁵

But perhaps the difference between Eva and Sula is best summed up in the metaphor of the stump. Before she dies while talking to her best friend Nel, Sula explains the difference between her and every other colored woman in the country. She says,

The difference is they dyin' like a stump. Me, I'm going down like one of those redwoods. I sure did live in this world. (143)

Sula's grandmother is particularly included because in addition to being a colored woman in this country, married and having family obligations, she also has a stump. Not only does Eva die like a stump because she is aligned with these other women, but because she has the literal marker used as the metaphor. Eva is the stump, and has been for a long time. The use of this metaphor not only limits Eva as a character but says something

about disability and amputation in particular as an inherent limitation and an ignoble “way of dying,” meaning never having really lived.

This is further amplified by Eva’s unhappiness and desire not to live. Although Eva’s ability to survive is made clear throughout the text, her desire to do so is sometimes undermined.

From then on, Willy boasted that he had saved Eva’s life – an indisputable fact which she herself admitted and for which she cursed him every day for 37 years thereafter and would have cursed him for the rest of their life, except by then she was already ninety years old and forgot things. (77)

Eva’s role as a powerful matriarch is also dubious as the novel progresses. Despite the power within the household that Thompson credits Eva with (“Unspeakable” 240), Sula ultimately wins power over Eva. She sends Eva away to an old folks home and Eva “didn’t even have time to comb her hair before they strapped her to a piece of canvas” (*Sula* 94). In addition, Sula has the power to send away the help that her grandmother had in order to be able to maintain the household. The only reason Sula gives is that “she [the help] just didn’t belong in that house” (100). Unlike Eva, Sula shows no markers of physical vulnerability.

She was nearly 30, and, unlike them, had lost no teeth, suffered no bruises, developed no ring of fat at the waist or pocket at the back of her neck. It was rumored that she had no childhood diseases, was never known to have chickenpox, croup, or even a runny nose. She played rough as a child – where were the scars? Except for a funny shaped finger and that evil birthmark, she was free of any normal signs of vulnerability. (115)

The positioning of Sula’s birthmark and misshaped finger after “except for” shows that she was not stigmatized or defined by her analogous markings in the same way that Eva seems to be tied to her disability within the text. In my reading, I cannot help but align Sula’s lack of physical vulnerability with her ultimate triumph over Eva locking her away in an old folks home.

Despite the fact that Eva ultimately gets locked up, the text stops short of demonstrating the complexity of disability as an identity and instead oscillates between two equally problematic stereotypes, the disabled woman as mythical and the disabled woman as villain. While one may be able to claim these categories could fit other characters as well, the disabled women in Morrison’s work are more greatly constrained by these categories than their nondisabled counterparts. This reading differs greatly from other interpretations of Eva. Despite the prevalence of disability in Morrison’s work it has only begun to receive critical attention recently. Rosemarie Garland Thomson’s critique of Morrison is really more of a celebration of her use of disability than a criticism of how disability functions within the novels. Quayson’s reading is certainly more nuanced, but ultimately he also hails Morrison for creating texts that are “multivocal ... in terms of the many positions that are adopted regarding disability” (114). Sheri Hoem’s analysis challenges the idea that the novel privileges disability over ability in that it “provides slim evidence of a postmodern hybrid sensibility relative to a dis/abling difference” (198). While her reading challenges Thomson’s entirely celebratory interpretation, Hoem’s reading fails to see the ways in which this failure ultimately limits textual complexity, and sees this as a way that disability conforms to rather than eludes a similar construction of other identities within the text such as race, gender and class.

Ability Hierarchies: Not All Disabilities Are Allowed

While hierarchies of race and gender are challenged in Morrison's work, an ability hierarchy is simply reproduced, especially in *Sula*. Nowhere in the text is this more clear than in Eva's murder of her only son Plum. When Plum returns from the war, it is implied that he becomes addicted to heroin.⁵⁶ Here, as elsewhere, the text privileges those who can be entirely independent with self-care. In addition to reading Plum's murder in *Sula* as a point in the novel where women "internalize the decapitating philosophy of patriarchal hegemony" (C. Thompson 147) or "black militarized manhood" (Jackson 384), or a point at which anxieties and ambivalence about one's adequacy as a disabled mother are expressed (Quayson 100), I read it as a point at which abled ideologies of "independence" are also internalized. We may say that, ironically, despite her own disability Eva internalizes the same pressure as nondisabled parents to raise an independent child. I want to point out that in the description of Plum, he is often described as having similar characteristics to many disabled people.⁵⁷

Finally, some two or three days after Christmas, he [Plum] arrived with just the shadow with his old dip-down walk. His hair had been neither cut nor combed in months, his clothes were pointless and he had no socks... (45)

His difficulty walking and difficulty with self-care are both characteristics often exhibited by people with disabilities. Eva murders him by lighting him on fire for his dependency. She explains:

...He wanted to crawl back into my womb and well...I ain't got the room for no more even if he could do it. There wasn't space for him in my womb. And he was crawling back. Being helpless and thinking baby thoughts and dreaming baby dreams and messing up his pants again and smiling all the time. I had enough room in my heart but not in my womb, not no more. I birthed him once. I couldn't do it again. He was growned, a big old thing... I don't everything I could to make him leave me and go on and live like a man, but he wouldn't, and I had to keep him out so I thought of a way he could die like a man not all scrunched up in my womb, but like a man. (71-2)

Here we can clearly see that adulthood and masculinity are being defined importantly, by Eva, as physical self-sufficiency. There is no more space in Eva's womb for Plum because he is not acting the way an adult should act meaning that is, he is not being independent in matters of self-care. My reading does not refute other interpretations which focus on the racialized and gendered aspects of this scene but rather wants to highlight the ability component of black masculinity.

One may counter that it is his addiction and not his physical dependencies to which Eva responds negatively. However, in our description of Plum, his walk, and his appearance are cited as evidence that something is wrong. Also, what Eva responds to negatively is his physical helplessness and not necessarily his addiction. Tar Baby, a boarder in the house, is a known alcoholic. In fact he is

...intent solely on drinking himself to death. At first he worked in a poultry market, and after wringing the necks of chickens all day, he came home and drank until he slept. Later, he began to miss days at work and frequently did not have his rent money. When he lost his job altogether... (40)

Despite his inability to hold down a job and his serious addiction, Tar Baby is allowed to live and left alone in the narrative because he “was no bother, ate little, required nothing, and...no one found him a nuisance” (40). In fact, Morrison points out that Tar Baby has a beautiful voice and is an enjoyable addition to the community, although certainly no one would deem him a productive member of society by dominant cultural standards. It is his ability to require nothing and remain self sufficient in a physical sense, despite being unemployed and addicted to alcohol that allows him to live within the novel and not be murdered as was Plum. Of course this comparison also shows the greater stigmatization of those addicted to drugs than those addicted to alcohol, within the community.

Another less dramatic instance occurs again in *Sula* when Nel chastises Sula for placing Eva in a nursing home.

‘You mean that home the white church run? Sula! That ain’t no place for Eva. All them women is dirt poor with no people at all. Mrs. Wilkins and them. They got dropsy and can’t hold their water – crazy as loons. Eva’s odd, but she got sense...’ (100)

Nel’s explanation of who does belong in the home - those who get “dropsy” and can’t hold their water - reveals a different hierarchy of disability within Morrison’s text, one that does cast certain disabilities and dependency in a negative light.

In contrast, looking at Shadrack as an example of psychological disability one can see a picture of community integration rather than segregation. He institutes a holiday to help the community deal with the unpredictability of death. For many years Shadrack was the only celebrant ... “easily, quietly, suicide day became a part of the fabric of life up in the bottom of Medallion, Ohio” (16). Despite the fact that people were initially frightened of Shadrack, they still recognize his agency within the community: “they knew Shadrack was crazy but that did not mean that he did not have any sense, or even more important that he had no power” (14-15). In fact, the narrative goes on to claim that much like National Suicide Day, Shadrack is integrated into the community. “Once people understood the boundaries and nature of his madness, they could fit him, so to speak, into the scheme of things” (15). One gets the impression that, like National Suicide Day, Shadrack is no longer remarked upon because he has been absorbed “into their thoughts, into their language, into their lives” (15). The narrative highlights that Shadrack “never touched anybody, never fought, never caressed” (15). While this in some ways aligns him with the muted sexuality of Eva, I believe this is pointed out to highlight the ways in which Shadrack is neither violent, confrontational or predatory. While this statement, of course, speaks directly to these common stereotypes and anxieties regarding the mentally ill, it also stops short of narrating the subject position of Shadrack and his reasons for not touching, caressing, or fighting. Unlike the story of Eva’s impairment, which suggests disability as a source of wealth and mythologizes its origins, we can see very clearly how Shadrack was traumatized by the war and we are told that he was released from the hospital because of his earlier violence and a demand

for space. “The priority or the violence earned Shadrack his release 217 in cash, a full suit of clothes and a copy of very official looking papers” (10). Unlike Eva, we are given the impression that the money, the clothes, and the papers are not going to be substantial enough to mitigate the difficulty of negotiating the world with no other support in relation to his disability. In this case, rather than portraying disability-based assistance as a source of wealth, it is seen as an inadequate compensation for life altering impairment.

Comparing Eva and Shadrack we can see that psychological disability is framed in a way that is much more based around community support and critical of the lack of social and economic structures in place to help deal with disability. This is much more in line with Morrison’s focus on interdependence in her novels than the strong emphasis on self-care at all costs. Interdependence is often emphasized within the African community that Morrison depicts. One prime example would be the communities rallying around Denver, a character in Morrison’s *Beloved*. Denver is unable to find work and her mother and sister have gone crazy. Despite her refusal of charity, the community provides food for her and her family by leaving it her doorstep and subsequently keeps them alive (248). Morrison herself has said that being connected to and dependent upon one’s community is important. In a conversation with Elsie B. Washington, she commented:

[grandparents and ancestors] were responsible for us and we have to be responsible for them... You cant just take. And if you ignore that, you put yourself in the spiritually dangerous position of being self sufficient, having no group that you’re depending on. (Taylor-Guthrie 234-38)

We can see Morrison’s emphasis on dependence on ancestry, culture, and kinship directly in the above quote, so it is curious that this value placed upon dependency or interdependence would not extend to those within the community who are physically dependent upon others. In this way Morrison internalizes dominant cultural values regarding independence and able-bodiedness rather than challenging them in the alternative community she creates. Valuing inter- rather than independence would not prevent Morrison from highlighting the damaging effects of dominant white cultural standards nor the black community’s ability to question and resist, and sometimes even become constrained by those standards. Instead, such a subversion would only expand Morrison’s project and its liberatory potential.

Beyond Eva: Other Characters Who Are Just Surviving

Part of the way Morrison achieves these goals of validation and liberation in her novels are her rich, fully-developed characters. Yet, many of the disabled figures in her texts, like Eva, don’t show the same depth. In order to understand how these characteristics are deployed, we can look at Morrison’s definition of metonymic displacement. “Metonymic displacement. This promises much but delivers little and counts on the reader’s complicity in the dismissal. Color coding and other physical traits become metonyms that displace rather than signify the Africanist character” (68).

One could definitely apply this idea to minor characters with disabilities like Nan and Baby Suggs. We can see asexualization and an emphasis on survival and constraint

in *Beloved*'s Baby Suggs as well. At no point is this more apparent than after Baby Suggs is bought free by her son.

Sadness was at her center, the desolated center where the self that was no self made its home. Sad as it was that she did not know where her children were buried or what they looked like if alive, the fact was she knew more about them than she knew about herself, having never had the map to discover what she was like. Could she sing? (Was it nice to hear when she did?) Was she pretty? Was she a good friend? Could she have been a loving mother? A faithful wife? Have I got a sister and does she favor me? If my mother knew me would she like me? (140)

Because she has been a slave, Baby Suggs has no map to discover "what she was like." She knows more about her children than her own self – there cannot be a better example of a life with no self-exploration. The fact that her character is both a former slave and disabled is not coincidental, and Morrison directly links her lack of freedom to her disability in the following passage.

What does a sixty-odd year old slavewoman who walks like a 3 legged dog need freedom for? And when she stepped foot on free ground, she could not believe that Halle (her son) knew what she didn't; that Halle, who had never drawn one free breath, knew there was nothing like it in this world. (141)

Even to accept the gift of freedom is not a choice that Baby Suggs makes for herself; she makes it for her son, and the question, "What does a sixty-odd..." shows us the internalization of the slave economy which places the elderly and the disabled as lesser compared to their younger and able bodied counterparts. When Baby Suggs hurt her hip, she was a real bargain on the slave market (139).

As one would expect, the issue of freedom is central to the novel, set as it is both during and after slavery. Freedom is [being able to] "eat, walk, and sleep anywhere was life as good as it got" (270). Although Baby Suggs doesn't have the freedom to walk anywhere she likes because of her disabled hip, she also does not have the freedom of self-ownership and choice in the same way that Sethe does. Sethe learned how to decide what to do with the day.

That's how she got through waiting for Halle. Bit by bit, at 124 and in the Clearing, along with others, she had claimed herself. Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another. (95)

Baby Suggs also makes decisions that shape her freed life. For example, she decides "she had nothing left to make a living with but her heart – which she put to work at once" (87). Baby Suggs uses her heart in order to become an un-churched preacher who gives sermons in the Clearing, and she is revered for her status as holy within the community. Her sermons emphasized loving the body and the flesh. Also, she dances on her twisted hip (88).

However, her body is not seen as beautiful in the same sexualized sense as Sethe's body is. The scar on Sethe's back, although it comes from a horrific beating during slavery, is described as truly beautiful.

When the top of her dress was around her hips, and he saw the sculpture her back had become, like the decorative work of an iron smith, too passionate for display, he could think but not say, 'Aw, Lord, girl.' And

he would tolerate no peace until he touched every ridge and leaf of it with his mouth... (17-8)

Although Baby Suggs preaches love of the body and has had eight children, there is no similar scene in which her disabled body is the object of sexual desire in the same way. Also, Sethe manages to hold on to at least one of her children, despite murdering one and attempting to murder two others who eventually run away, whereas Baby Suggs loses all her children. Once again, I realize that this is as a result of slavery and the generational gap between the two women, but yet again the disabled character is the one with a much less prominent sexuality, one in the past, and with a greater inability to hold on to her children.

A look at Nan, a minor disabled character in *Beloved*, may at first seem to contradict this trend. After all, Nan enters the narrative briefly as the one who nursed babies and cooked when Sethe was young. Nan has one good arm and half of another. But when her character is revisited later in the book, it is implied that her mothering is somehow insufficient, and this is linked to her missing arm.

Would she (Sethe's mother), now? Leave her in the yard with a one armed woman? Even if she hadn't been able to suckle the daughter for more than a week or two and had to turn her over to another woman's tit that never had enough for all. (203)

In calling Nan the one armed woman rather than by her name, Morrison shows us how she is defined within Sethe's mind and links amputation to abandonment, insufficient mothering, and nourishment that runs out.

By contrast, in *Tar Baby*, the blind character Marie Therese is known for her magic breasts that continue to give milk. Duvall claims that her breasts symbolize her nurturing and maternal role (327), but I would argue that despite her breasts it is Marie Therese's lack of someone to nurse that is significant and contradicts reading her as a purely maternal figure. Marie Therese is a marginal character. She has no children or sexual life. She tells one of the main characters, Son, that she used to be pretty and he "couldn't tell and didn't care. Pretty was inapplicable to what he liked about her" (296). One could argue that Marie Therese takes on a maternal role with Son and Jadine except that she is often depicted as stupid and naïve. Son comments that she has gone stupid as well as blind, and she appears so to the reader because she believes that American women reach into their wombs and kill their babies with their fingernails. She also thinks women take their children behind trees in parks and sell them to strangers. She believes that in America

everybody on the television set is naked and that even the priests were women. Where for a bar of gold a doctor could put you in a machine and in a manner of minutes would change you from a man to a woman or a woman to a man. Where it was not uncommon or strange to see people with both breasts and penises. (151)

While not everything that Therese claims to happen in America is completely off base or absurd, the exaggeration of things that actually happen, and their mixing with a completely absurd account makes her sound naïve and unreliable.

Thomson claims that Therese is powerless, inconsequential, and even invisible within the dominant social and economic sphere. She is poor, old, uneducated, haughty, given to superstition, speaks English badly, and refuses to be grateful to her employers

("Unspeakable" 243). What Thomson argues is true, but not only within the dominant and social economic sphere. The insult "stupid" and the perception of her as unattractive does not come from the dominant sphere but from the black community, specifically from her brother Gideon and Son, a character that Marie Therese likes a great deal. Yet, even he throws away a present from her because "it looked like Ganja and he didn't want to draw any attention to himself at customs" (218). Thus rather than being a Tiresian source of illumination, Marie Therese reads as unintelligent (100).

Disability at the Periphery: Character at the Center

There is, however, one of Morrison's novels that suggests the promise of a richer, deeper representation of disability. Unlike *Sula*, in *The Bluest Eye* the physically disabled character is more developed and psychiatric disability exists less as a character trait than as a moralistic ending. In this novel a disabled character is at the center and her disability, a limp, is seen as peripheral. This in turn allows Pauline to become Morrison's most fully developed disabled character. Thomson points out that she is the only character who deviates from the mythological and metaphorical patterns of Morrison's disabled women. At first such an assertion may seem surprising. Thomson describes her as completely disempowered, "never represented as a mythical goddess figure, never partakes of supernatural power, never enables other members of the community" ("Unspeakable" 244). I disagree that Pauline is completely disempowered, although she clearly has less power than any of the other disabled characters within Morrison's texts; although I must agree with Thomson that she does not enable others. But this lack of mythologization in fact paradoxically creates a character that is not constricted in the same way as Morrison's other disabled characters.

It is obvious that we are not meant to view Pauline positively. The fact that the Breedloves choose to be ugly, that they choose to look towards the dominant culture for approval and support, makes them much weaker than any families presented to us in Morrison's text otherwise. Pauline's choice to become a martyr is tied greatly to her physical deformity, which she uses to further her martyrdom, her ugliness, and inability to fit in.

The easiest thing to do would build a case out of her foot. That is what she herself did. But to find out the truth of how dreams die, one should never take the word of the dreamer. The end of her lovely beginning was probably the cavity in one of her front teeth. She preferred, however, to think always of her foot. Although she was the ninth of eleven children and lived on a ridge of Alabama clay seven miles from the nearest road, the complete indifference with which a rusty nail was met when it punched clear through her foot during her second year of life saved Pauline Williams from total anonymity. The wound left her with a crooked archless foot that flopped when she walked – not a limp that would have eventually twisted her spine, but a way of lifting the bad foot as though she were extracting it from little whirlpools that threatened to pull it under. Slight as it was, this deformity explained for her many things that would have been otherwise incomprehensible; why she alone of all the children had no nickname; why there were no funny jokes and

anecdotes about things she had done; why no one ever remarked on her food preferences...why nobody teased her; why she never felt at home anywhere, or that she belonged anyplace. Her general feeling of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot. (102)

Morrison makes several points in the above passage that are relevant to the role of Pauline's disability within the text. Pauline blames her disability for the fact that she never has anything of her own and for the anonymous life she has led, despite the fact that the accident she had when she was two distinguished her from others. Morrison's second point is that Pauline is wrong, as implied by her third sentence "But to find..." Because Pauline wrongly blames her feelings of separateness and unworthiness upon her foot, she turns it into a deformity.

The fact that Pauline is wrong in attributing this blame makes Morrison downplay the visibility and significance of Pauline's disability. In comparison to how much attention is drawn to Eva's missing leg or Marie Therese's blindness (and blindness in general) in *Tar Baby*, the attention Morrison pays to Pauline's broken foot is as slight as the deformity itself. This allows us to get a fuller picture of Pauline than we do of Eva or Marie Therese, or Baby Suggs, although it is not necessarily a positive one. We hear of her childhood, her marriage, her sex life, her experience birthing her children, her job, etc.

While in many ways Pauline's deformity may serve as a metaphor for the deformed nature of the family itself, Morrison's intention to minimize her disability gives us a fuller picture of Pauline. There are still hierarchical assertions of "ability" as superior such as Morrison's assertion that Pauline's walk becomes worse upon buying fashionable shoes. Morrison cast this as negative ending the passage with

The sad thing was that Pauline did not really care for clothes and makeup. She merely wanted other women to cast favorable glances her way. (110)

Aligning of an exaggerated limp with conforming to dominant cultural norms and to sadness reinforces the notion that there is one correct way to walk, and Pauline's obsession with white mainstream beauty standards is in part evidenced by the exaggeration of the limp. In essence, the desire to conform becomes deformity itself. Is the desire to reduce the limp not another manifestation of the "fear of funkiness" in another form? When Morrison discusses it in *Bluest Eye*, she says it is a fear of "the dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions" (75). Is a desire to control the limp not another way of controlling the funkiness of the body, of one's walk and movement? If it can be characterized by a fear of gestures that are too generous (75) and body parts sticking out too far, then why can this fear not also be expanded to fear of movement which deviates not just from a racialized idea of beauty and normative movement but also an ableist one? The fact that *Bluest Eye* is a novel that in many ways is preoccupied with overturning dominant cultural beauty standards makes it particularly fitting to push Morrison on the aesthetics of ability as well as the aesthetics of race.

And Then She Got Hit By Crazy: Disability as Narrative Death

Unlike Pauline, Pecola becoming disabled is the moralistic end to the entire novel. Toward the end of the novel, the eleven year old daughter, Pecola Breedlove, is raped by

her father, Cholly. After the rape, she becomes impregnated, and although she eventually miscarries the baby, it stigmatizes her from the town and her peers. Around the same time she becomes pregnant, she goes to Soaphead Church and asks him for a pair of blue eyes. He grants her request, except that she is the only one who can see them. It is clear from this as well as other moments in the novel that Toni Morrison's project is one of liberation from racialized values and racism. Of Pecola's family she writes:

They lived there because they were poor and black, and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly. Although their poverty was traditional and stultifying, it was not unique. But their ugliness was unique. No one could have convinced them that they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly... You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. The master had said, 'You are ugly people.' They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. 'Yes,' they had said. 'You are right.' (38-9)

It is clear that Morrison wants to locate the Breedloves' self-hatred as a direct effect of their internalized racism, most especially internalized racist standards of beauty. It is clear from her statement that this hatred is mirrored back to them by the outside world by "every billboard, every movie, every glance." In fact, in the way Morrison constructs her novel, this self-hatred becomes so strong that it creates a situation where Cholly rapes his daughter and her self-hatred after the rape becomes so strong that she becomes disabled. Disability therefore becomes a tragic consequence of racist oppression, rather than another political obstacle which must be navigated.

It is this turn of events that leads to a dialogue which could be interpreted most clearly as a dialogue between her and her alter. The disassociative break that Morrison depicts here is never referred to in any direct way. It is unclear whether anyone else in the novel knows that Pecola has an alter who can also see her blue eyes. It is my contention that Pecola's "breakdown" could be read much more subversively than Morrison's treatment of it allows. Because Pecola's alter is never shown to be recognized or confronted by anyone else in the outside world, the intersubjectivity I alluded to earlier is never given consideration or a chance to develop.

Yet even within the short dialogue that we read, we are shown the alter gives Pecola the ability to rewrite her memory of her father's rape,

You did. You said he tried to do it to you when you were sleeping on the couch.

See there! You don't even know what you're talking about. It was when I was washing dishes.

Oh yes. Dishes.

By myself. In the kitchen.

Well, I'm glad you didn't let him.

Yes.

Did you?

Did I what?
Let him.
 Now who's crazy?
I am, I guess.
 You sure are. (199)

In this scene, not only does the presence of Pecola's alter allow her to rewrite the rape scene with her father as not having taken place, it also allows Pecola to articulate the absurdity of the idea that she somehow wanted or allowed the event to take place and that it was somehow her responsibility.

Her alter also alludes at one point to her own necessity:

No. Really. You are my very best friend. Why didn't I know you before?
You didn't need me before.
 Didn't need you?
I mean...you were so unhappy before. I guess you didn't notice me before.
 I guess you're right. And I was so lonely for friends. And you were right here. Right before my eyes. (196)

Here Morrison rightfully points out the necessity of Pecola's alter. The presence of Pecola's alter is a critical tool for her psychic survival after her father's rape. It gives her company and makes her feel less lonely. This point in the novel is the first time that Pecola has any kind of agency or sustained dialogue. It is the first time that she appears active and confident. Morrison alludes to this necessity and positive interpretation of Pecola's psychological disability, but it becomes subsumed within the negativity that is used to depict it in the rest of the text.

Frieda, the book's narrator, describes the predominant emotion that she and the other girls who befriended Pecola felt for her after the rape and the breakdown was pity, "we just felt sorry for her" (190). The presence of this overwhelming pity makes it clear that we are not supposed to read Pecola's new way of being as in any way emancipatory. In the rest of the passage, Frieda continues explaining the type of reaction that she expected from adults:

But we listened for the one who would say, "Poor little girl," or, "Poor baby," but there was only head-wagging where those words should have been...I thought about the baby that everybody wanted dead, and saw it very clearly...More strongly than my fondness for Pecola, I felt a need for someone to want the black baby to live. (190)

This passage is significant because it aligns the death of Pecola's baby with the metaphorical death of Pecola, which is actually the onset of Pecola's psychological disability. The slippage between "poor little girl" and "poor baby" implies that both the little girl and the little baby are subject to the same lack of enthusiasm and support, but also more importantly, to the same fate. Here, disability is subtly being equated with death. The implication behind the last sentence, "more strongly than my fondness..." is that there is more hope and more investment in an unborn, presumably nondisabled black infant than there is in an already living psychologically disabled young black woman.

In my mind, this reading is confirmed by the very ending of the novel, which describes the infertility of the soil and the way in which it will not nurture certain types of life. Pecola, we are told, has "stepped over into madness, a madness which protected her

from us simply because it bored us in the end” (205). The last passage of the novel begins:

And now when I see her [Pecola] searching the garbage—for what? The thing we assassinated? I talk about how I did *not* plant the seeds too deeply, how it was the fault of the earth, the land, of our town. I even think now that the land of the entire country was hostile to marigolds that year. This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear, and when the land kills of its own volition, we acquiesce and say the victim had no right to live. We are wrong, of course, but it doesn't matter. It's too late. At least on the edge of my town, among the garbage and the sunflowers of my town, it's much, much, much too late. (206)

The slippage between the death of the marigolds, the death of Pecola's unborn infant, and the social death of Pecola herself continues in the above passage. While it blames the environment, not Pecola or the unborn child for its fate, it is clear that she, like an unborn child or a plot of soil, is stripped of any kind of agency or ability to resist her own fate. It is striking that Morrison mentions Pecola searching through the garbage at the very end of the novel and does not use this as an instance to discuss her financial poverty or inability to find a place in society. Instead, she asks whether Pecola is looking for her unborn infant rather than the more likely possibility she is looking through the garbage for food. Because of the alignment between Pecola as dead, through her disability, with her child, dead through the inhospitability of its environment, Morrison is really asking whether Pecola is searching for her nondisabled self. The last words of the novel, “it's much, much, much too late,” leave us with no doubt as to the appropriate way to interpret Pecola's fate due to disability or the moral of the story.

Disability as a Plaything

Despite the prevalence of disabled characters within her novels, this passage from *Playing in the Dark* fails to acknowledge disability as a difference with meaning and stigma. In this passage, Morrison is making a point about the arbitrary nature of racial difference as marked. This quotation points out the erasures that occur when disability as difference is not taken up as having its own significance within the African-American community.

One supposes that if Africans all had three eyes or one ear, the significance of that difference from the smaller but conquering European invaders would also have been found to have meaning. In any case, the subjective nature of ascribing value and meaning to color cannot be questioned this late in the twentieth century. The point for this discussion is the alliance between visually rendered ideas and linguistic utterances. And this leads into the social and political nature of received knowledge as it is revealed in American literature. (49)

One wonders why, once again, a disabled or physically different body becomes the source of comparison here. The juxtaposition of three eyes to a missing ear is a curious one since one evokes science-fiction and the other a mutilated body and disability. What is the significance of aligning these two types of concepts? Once again we see the

disjuncture between considering disability as an identity or lived reality. When I claim Morrison does not consider the lived reality of disability, I am in no way arguing for a reductive realism to be enforced in the reading of her work. Morrison routinely uses magical realism and elements of mythology in her fiction. What concerns me is not her use of these literary devices but the way in which these devices are deployed without considering what these differences mean politically, socially and culturally for the people who embody and navigate them as a material circumstance of life. Morrison uses these same devices to illuminate the complexity of black experience. Her statement “if Africans all had three eyes or one ear, the significance of that difference from the smaller but conquering European invaders would also have been found to have meaning” evades the reality of mutilated African bodies, African bodies that are missing hearing and are otherwise disabled. It inadvertently assumes that despite the fact that it is not a difference experienced by all Africans, these differences already do have meaning and play out in altered social and political understandings of identity, autonomy, agency and other aspects of understanding what it means to be human.

Ability, when it is the subject of a literary fantasy -- dream or nightmare, reveals only the fears of the dreamer. Rather than imagine the expansive possibilities for the black disabled body as she does for black subjectivity more generally, Morrison uses disability as a kind of plaything, rather than a source of play. Rather than consider the complexities and joys of disability as a type of experience, as a kind of play that stresses resourcefulness, spontaneity, and creativity which would only expand on her literary constructions of blackness and the black community, Morrison instead utilizes disability much like a toy that is chiefly in service to other fantasies, desires, and purposes in the narrative.⁵⁸

Chapter Four: Written on Several Bodies: Ideologies of Gender, Sexuality and Ability in the Writing of Jeanette Winterson

Up until this point we have been looking at texts that either expand or constrain the range of representations of disability. In this chapter, I plan to complicate the binary of expansion and constraint. In examining Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* alongside an editorial she published in the *London Guardian* objecting to deaf lesbians using a deaf sperm donor, and her characterizations of art in *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*, I hope to reveal the complexity of our conceptions of ability.⁵⁹ If certain types of illness or disability represent a kind of universal loss or vulnerability, then a chosen disability represents a kind of limiting specificity. Through turning to deaf poetics, I intend to show how this sense of particularity, in fact, opens rather than forecloses possibilities for artistic expression and appreciation.⁶⁰ In a sense, I hope to argue against Winterson's seemingly common sense assertion that five senses are better than four. I make this argument in regard to Winterson not because I think this perception is particular to her, or because I think that she is at fault for not having a better understanding of disability identity or deaf culture and poetics. But the contrast between her novel and her editorial, and its subsequent link to aesthetic concerns, makes this a fruitful example of how disability reframes rather than limits artistic creation.⁶¹

In *Written on the Body*, illness is seen as universal, an inevitable part of the loss and risk that comes with living.⁶² Yet in the editorial, disability becomes a limitation, and in order to make sense of this we must examine how the universal functions within *Art Objects* in relation to those who create and those who appreciate art. Using a collective address in constructing art and the reader, the text actually presumes a specifically middle class and able-bodied reader as universal. I argue that this presumptive attitude towards the reader connects to assumptions about the necessity of able-bodiedness (or the disavowal of disability) for the appreciation and creation of art. But through a consideration and discussion of deaf poetics we can see that rather than alienate one from certain types of aesthetic production, deafness instead redefines how we conceive of art and poetics.⁶³

Before we begin a discussion of each of the texts, I want to acknowledge their obvious differences. *Written on the Body* (1992) is a novel and is less polemical than both the editorial (2002) and *Art Objects* (1995). *Written on the Body* punctuates the first phase of Winterson's career, which focused on rewriting traditional narratives of desire; it is one of her most controversial novels. It has received most of its critical attention because of its use of a genderless narrator. The novel's critique of gender and heteronormativity is heavily linked with a critique of medicine and science, yet these topics are discussed comparatively little by critics.

The editorial, printed in the *London Guardian*, voiced opposition to two deaf lesbians' decision to find a deaf sperm donor. Winterson was not alone in her criticism. Others also denounced the decision publicly, including some deaf organizations.⁶⁴ Still others understood and supported the choice.⁶⁵ Through examining the editorial I do not seek to condemn or vilify Winterson in any way; she is hardly alone or extraordinary in her views.⁶⁶ Instead, I use Winterson as an example because she demonstrates how even a reader actively critical of medicine and normative bodies can reinforce ableized values,

even while other aspects of her own work challenge these values. The significance of this example is that it shows the pervasive and contradictory nature of ableized values.

What lies behind the different perception of disability and illness in the two texts? Why is having a lover with cancer an acceptable risk for Winterson in fiction and potentially creating a deaf child an unacceptable risk to Winterson in life? Of course, there are differences between deafness and cancer and chance and choice (I will discuss these in greater detail shortly), but I will argue that one of the reasons creating deafness seems so unconscionable to Winterson is her reliance upon traditional understandings of aesthetics and art as fundamentally important to appreciating beauty and life. What is critical here is not to denounce Winterson's stance towards deafness but rather to understand the ways in which her ableized sense of aesthetics shapes her objection to the deaf lesbians, despite her overall critical stance towards ableized and normalized bodies in *Written on the Body*. In bringing these texts together, I hope to illuminate the way that aesthetics impact these complex and contradictory attitudes towards illness and disability.

One can connect these texts in any number of ways (anxiety about technology or a fear of control), but the strongest connection is the simultaneous desire to construct illness as an aesthetic and anxiety about disability as inhibiting the ability to construct or appreciate aesthetics. In *Written on the Body*, this construction of illness as an aesthetic occurs through critiques of medicine and the normative body alongside compulsory heterosexuality and gender as a particular kind of bodily ontology. In *Art Objects*, Winterson reproduces essentialist presumptions not only about her readers and what art is, but also what kind of subject positions are necessary to create and appreciate art. She argues against examining Joyce's and Woolf's work in relation to illness and disability, and, through a privileging of the senses, she implicates a kind of normative reader as one of the best to appreciate these authors, thereby suggesting an exclusivity to art. In a way, this chapter seeks to extend the work begun in *Written on the Body* and show that not only can disability/illness be a central concern within a literary aesthetic, but it can also provide a vantage point that challenges and reconceptualizes how we conceive of a literary aesthetic. Before we discuss Winterson's views on art and literature, let us first begin with a discussion of her own aesthetic in her novel, *Written on the Body*.

Rewriting Several Bodies: Gender and Ability in *Written on the Body*

Written on the Body is one of Winterson's most well known and controversial novels, a love story in which the narrator's gender remains unspecified. The narrator falls in love with a married woman who leaves her husband and then is diagnosed with leukemia. The novel can be seen as a focal point for debates about gender, Winterson, and identity generally. "Although championed by a minority, the novel was generally seen as overwritten, melodramatic and/or derivative..." (Andermahr 2). Despite the fact that many viewed it as highly flawed, the novel sparked much attention within queer and gay and lesbian studies, and a growing body of writing on the novel has emerged (Andermahr 4-5). The narrator's ambiguous gender has led many critics to feel that Winterson has abandoned a kind of feminist politics (Pierce, 1995, 1998). Other critics try to place Winterson within an explicitly feminist and lesbian reading (Stowers, 1996; Moore, 1995). Still others read her as being driven by a mainly postmodern approach to feminist issues. For example, Rachel Wingfield claims that Winterson's work in the

nineties exemplifies the depoliticization of women's writing and is instead concerned with postmodernism and individualism. Yet Laura Doan sees no tension between a postmodern project and a feminist one. "The postmodern constructions of such innovative paradigms mobilize and animate a feminist political strategy of resistance, forcing and enforcing new mappings of the social and cultural order through feminist revision and reconsideration, and reconceptualization" (154). Whether one views Winterson's approach as universalizing or postmodern, feminist or post-feminist, it becomes clear that her work contains both a relationship to some kind of gender politics and an investment in a particular kind of aestheticism that aligns her with modernist writers and a post-identity politics in which art should transcend social difference.

While the novel's use of a genderless narrator could be seen as attempting to transcend gender difference, critics often focused on how the novel inadvertently constructed gender, either through details about the narrator or the metaphors and language within the text. John Southerland, Aurelie Jane Sheehan and Andrea Stewart assume that the narrator is female. Other critics such as Walter Kendrick insist that the narrator is male. The evidence marshaled to sustain these assertions by either side is dubious. For instance, that the narrator discussing Louise's leg stubble proves a female gender or discussing the affair with Louise publicly makes the narrator male (Sheehan 209; Kendrick 131). Critic Cath Stowers insists that the novel can and should be recuperated for specifically lesbian political aims and urges further research on how bisexuality can be used for specifically lesbian aims. Still others feel that Winterson's text only recapitulates problematic metaphors that emphasize the idealization and passivity of the female body. Heather Nunn has also noted the way in which Winterson builds upon authors that are seen as canonical and patriarchal (123). Susanna Onega has argued that the narrator's literary counter-discourse is built on metaphors "as dead and patriarchal as the metaphors of science" (127).

Yet, it is precisely Winterson's critique of science that extends her critique of the patriarchy. Much as we saw in our discussion of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Winterson's critiques of ability and gender are interwoven. My reading agrees with Gregory Rubinson's general claim that Winterson challenges and wrestles with notions of science and medicine (4).⁶⁷ The novel creates an aesthetic of illness by aligning science, medicine, and technology with a kind of mass production that cannot account for the specificity and the aesthetic and visceral pleasure found in lived bodies.⁶⁸ This happens in the novel in multiple ways: through the cancer plot itself, through the meditative section about the lover's body, and also through the novel's ending and the ambiguity about whether or not Louise is still living.

While prior critics have addressed the role of illness in the novel, few do so with an implicit or explicit disability studies perspective. Despite the fact that Rubinson picks up on *Written on the Body's* blatant critique of science, he fails to see the novel's sexualization of Louise as anything but objectifying (5). Lynn Pearce claims that she is unable to read "any juxtaposition of beauty and serious illness as anything other than a glamorization of the fact" (35). Both critics fail to engage Winterson's sexualization of the diseased body as a way of countering the typical asexualization to which disabled and diseased bodies are subject by both the medical establishment and the culture at large. Jennifer Gustar suggests that "in *Written on the Body*, Louise, and the loss she represents, is the incitement for narrative, for the language predicated on the desire to replace loss"

(59). But if the loss of Louise is an incitement to narrative, so too is the desire for Louise. In fact, this desire is what dominates the first half of the novel before we even discover that Louise is ill. Rather than function as a coping mechanism for illness or loss, it seems more accurate that, in *Written on the Body*, language is a way of articulating desire *in spite of loss*. The novel grapples with what it means, not so much to desire loss as to desire in spite of potential losses; that is, to grapple with what it means to desire a body that is dying or that may die.

It is doubtful that this sexualization of the body despite illness is as an explicit response to critiques of the asexualization of illness from within disability studies. Nevertheless, Winterson's use of the body aligns nicely with Eli Clare's call for a wider variety of images that deal with disabled people as both objects and subjects of desire (118).⁶⁹ Yet, this sexualization emerges not as part of an overtly political stance, but rather as an extension of the narrative's critique of control. Winterson's use of the genderless narrator is clearly meant to destabilize narrative legibility, denying the possibility of an easily categorizable heterosexual or lesbian romance. Such ambiguity forces the reader to abdicate his or her ability to categorize and control the narrative in this way.

Whether male or female, the narrator is clearly critical of the regulation of relationships through the institution of marriage. We can observe this not merely because the narrator has dated so many married women, but by the way marriage itself is discussed and portrayed throughout the novel. "I used to think of marriage as a glass plate window just begging for brick. This self-exhibition, this self-satisfaction, smartness, tightness, tight-arsedness. The way married couples go out in fours like a pantomime horse, the man walking together at the front, the women trailing a little way behind... It doesn't have to be like that, but mostly it is..." (13). We see the fragility of marriage through the description of it as a glass plate window. The comparison of the married couples to the pantomime horse gestures both to the theatricality of marriage and the power structure inherent in the institution ("with men walking together at the front and women trailing a little way behind"). Of course, this example also emphasizes the gendered separation within marriage and women's subordinate role.

It is a very small step to align the novel's critiques of marriage with its critiques of reproduction. Much as marriage controls mating through the rights and incentives it provides to heterosexual couples, science is now encroaching upon the process of sex and procreation. This controlled reproduction is depicted as dull and miniature.

What are the characteristics of living things? At school, in biology I was told the following: excretion, growth, irritability, locomotion, nutrition, reproduction and respiration. This does not seem like a very lively list to me. If that's all there is to being a living thing I may as well be dead. What of the other characteristic prevalent in human living things, the longing to be loved? No, it does not come under the heading Reproduction. I have no desire to reproduce but I still seek out love. Reproduction... Is that what I want? The model family two plus two in an easy home assembly kit. I don't want a model. I want the full-scale original. I don't want to reproduce. I want to make something entirely new. (108)

Within this conception of marriage, what is lacking is the difficulty and satisfaction of "building a full scale original" or rather the difficulty inherent in the novel's

characterization of falling in love. I would argue that *Written on the Body* uses the narrator's relationship with Louise to show an opposition not only to marriage itself, but also to the notion of a categorizable body. Thus "unoriginality" addresses not only the idea of heterosexual reproduction but also the whole idea of standard life functions and the need to reproduce a controllable normative body. "She [Louise] opened up the dark places as well as the light. That's the risk you take" (174).

This willingness to risk is aligned with the process of loving itself. But this risk is also aligned with the risk endemic to bodies themselves because of their capacity for decay and decline, which becomes inevitable, if and when bodies age. The risk of loving and the risk of illness become aligned through the use of cancer in the text. Both processes are inadvertent, unavoidable, and central to being human. Winterson writes elsewhere in her book of essays *Art Objects* of the mistake we make in trying to tame our lives and our relationship to art.

A love parallel would be just: falling in love challenges the reality to which we lay claim, part of the pleasure of love and part of its terror is the world turned upside down we want and we don't want, the cutting edge, the upset, the new views. Mostly we work at taming our emotional environment just as we work at taming our aesthetic environment. We have already tamed our physical environment. Are we happy with all this tameness? Are you? (15)

Falling in love, like the experience of illness and disability, also has the potential to "challenge the reality to which we lay claim," and it is precisely these challenges that *Written on the Body* urges us to face and acknowledge, not tame and control. Disability studies has critiqued and tried to destabilize the notion of a controllable normative body. According to disability historian Paul Longmore, the disabled body symbolizes the Great American nightmare: loss of control, loss of autonomy, independence and subjection to fate (154). But *Written on the Body* can be read as an inversion of these values, because it critiques our desire to control in all these ways, and it goes on to show the loss of control as positive—especially because it is the necessary condition for the narrator's ability to love and be in love with Louise.

The narrator decides to leave Louise in the care of her ex-husband Elgin, a doctor and cancer specialist, against Louise's wishes. After being separated from Louise, the narrator eventually decides that this was the wrong decision. With the narrator's realization that s/he never should have left Louise with Elgin, s/he rejects the process of normalization he represents. In "A Feminist Ethic Of Love," Andrea Harris argues that it is an ethical and moral choice. In leaving Louise,

the narrator only recognizes her own sense of what is right; and by completely overlooking Louise's sense of what is right, she betrays her. After their separation, the narrator begins to think of Louise differently, and thus indicates the distance she has come in her awareness of what love can be in the fullest sense. (135)

Louise's right to decide for herself on what terms and what type of treatment she would receive for her leukemia exemplifies the major ideology of the disability rights movement, which advocates for people with disability or disease to have as much control and agency regarding the circumstances of their own lives and medical treatments as is possible. The narrator's remorse is also significant because it demonstrates the narrator's

own skepticism regarding the medical establishment and its ultimate authority in determining who is healthy or sick, and who lives or dies.

I disagree, therefore, with Rubinson's reading of the narrator's abandonment of his/her beloved to her ex-husband, the doctor, for medical treatment as an assertion that the diseased body belongs automatically to science (4).⁷⁰ Instead, I claim that, while Winterson is critical of the medical establishment and recognizes its limitations, she also recognizes, perhaps optimistically, that science can be of use to the diseased body or, more pessimistically, that it is impossible to exist entirely outside of and independent from the medical establishment. In their pervasive and totalizing nature, systems of science and medicine may be similar to systems of gender. In other words, just as despite Winterson's desire to construct a genderless narrator, she cannot write about desire without referencing some kind of gendered embodiment, which she does through the novel's object of desire, the novel also suggests that it is impossible even for a narrator who is deeply critical of medicine and science to disavow these mechanisms: they are still necessary in order to understand and articulate illness. Even while recognizing the deeply flawed economy of medicalization, the narrator feels compelled to leave so that the beloved Louise can receive the best treatment possible. While this choice goes against Louise's wishes, it points to the way in which it is impossible to understand an experience of illness outside of an experience of medicine. Winterson's use of the ungendered narrator contributes not just to a critique of gendered difference, but also to a critique of relying upon medical and biological "facts."⁷¹

While past critics have focused (and understandably so) upon gender in *Written on the Body* and its relationship to performativity, I believe the novel's emphasis on the inadequacy of medical, technical language to describe the body illustrates another kind of performativity as well—the performativity of a normative body. The section that meditates upon Louise's body and medical language not only critiques the adequacy of such language but also demonstrates the similarity between Louise and the narrator's bodies. "I thought difference was rated to be the largest part of sexual attraction but there are so many things about us that are the same. Bone of my bone. Flesh of my flesh. To remember you it's my own body I touch" (130). Here the narrator is discussing the ways in which his or her body serves as a constant reminder of Louise's body and the way their bodies fit together. The focus on similarity serves as a critique of the heteronormative cliché that opposites attract, but it also serves to destabilize the idea of difference between the healthy and sick body. "Bone of my bone" and "flesh of my flesh" cite and reconfigure religious discourse about the body of Christ but also focus on a kind of material unity between the two bodies. The alignment of the narrator and the beloved serves to critique essentialist notions of opposing genders and also ableist notions of a rigid division between the well and the ill. A similarity between the narrator and Louise is not proven on the basis of Louise's ability to get and stay well instead, the comparisons focus on the vulnerability of both bodies as they are.

The desire to dehumanize and categorize the normative body is also critiqued in the second section of the novel as the narrator meditates upon a medical textbook.

I can't enter you in clothes that won't show the stains, my hands full of tools to record and analyze. If I come to you with a torch and notebook, a medical diagram and a cloth to mop up the mess, I'll have you bagged neat and tidy. I'll store you in plastic like chicken livers. Womb, gut, brain,

neatly labeled and returned. Is that how to know another human being?
(120)

Here it is clear that the passage is questioning the adequacy of medical language and normative descriptions to understand the body. The idea that the narrator can't enter Louise's body without staining his/her clothes in a sense shows the impossibility of the "cleanliness," dispassion and objectivity science claims when trying to know a body. The narrator states more directly the disjuncture between medical terminology and what it actually represents in the following passage: "Frontal bone, Palatine bone, nasal bones, lacrimal bones, cheekbones, maxilla, vomer, inferior conchae, mandible. Those are my shields, those are my blankets, those words don't remind me of your face" (132). Medical language serves as a kind of shield that protects the narrator from the desire and fear of loss that is now associated with Louise's body. The sentence "those words don't remind me of your face" indirectly answers the question posed earlier – clearly these words are no way to know a body. In other places, the inadequacy of medical language is shown by juxtaposing it with vivid poetic descriptions of the body. "...All I want are the last wreaths of her desire that carry from the base of what doctors like to call the olfactory nerves" (136). The phrase "what doctors like to call" displays the arbitrariness of the term, and juxtaposing it with such vivid passionate language, emphasizes the term's dispassion and non-descriptive nature. Much as we saw with the narrator's decision to leave Louise, we can once again see the necessity of claiming this language through citing it and meditating upon it in this section.

Yet there are some limitations within the text and its treatment of disease that are worth noting. Leukemia, unlike other forms of cancer, has less visible markers. As Susan Sontag points out in *Illness as Metaphor*, "Leukemia (is) -- the 'white' or TB-like form of the disease, for which no mutilated surgery can be proposed -- not of the stomach or breast cancer" (18). The invisibility of leukemia allows the narrator to continue his/her idealization of the beloved without having to reconcile this idealization with visible markers of cancer. Also, Louise is not present in the novel for most of the time she has cancer; this allows the narrator to avoid the physical realities of the illness and the treatments it entails. Thus the novel can be criticized with regard to disability and sexuality in that it does not grapple explicitly with the altered embodiments that cancer—and illness and disability more generally—produce. In his book of essays, *Exile and Pride*, Clare discusses photographs of Ellen Stohl, a disabled model, who posed for *Playboy* "She appeared nondisabled in the most sexualized portion of the spread..." and all markers of her disability were made non-visible (105). One could make a similar assessment of *Written on the Body* for failing to grapple with cancer's visible markers and effects, but such analysis should be contextualized within the novel's investment not only in questioning the medical establishment, but also in illuminating the precarious nature of health and life. Unlike the Stohl photographs, the novel engages with disability and illness as a central concern rather than as something which must be concealed or mitigated in order to produce desire.

Desire is produced repeatedly in the novel as the narrator discusses his/her past romantic exploits as well as discussing Louise. However, it is the unpredictability of this desire and its outcome which opens the novel. "Why is the measure of love loss? ... [Love] will not stay still, stay silent, be good, be modest, be seen and not heard, no" (9). Later on, when describing a comfortable relationship in which the narrator is not in love,

s/he says “I had learned lately that another way of writing FALL IN LOVE is WALK THE PLANK. I was tired of balancing blindfolded on a slender beam, one slip and into the unplumbed sea” (26). At the novel’s closing, the narrator finally completely acknowledges and accepts the unpredictability of what happens next, both in terms of romantic love and in terms of Louise’s health. Throughout the novel, the unpredictability of disease is emphasized, much like the unpredictability of desire. When the novel ends, the narrator finally finds Louise after their long separation. The reader is then told: “hurry now, it’s getting late. I don’t know if this is a happy ending but here we are let loose in open fields” (190). The uncertainty about the happy ending here is what is most critical. The narrator brings up the idea of happy endings early on in the novel as well.

I am desperately looking the other way so that love won’t see me. I want the diluted version, the sloppy language, the insignificant gestures. The saggy armchair of clichés. It’s all right, millions of bottoms have sat here before me. The springs are well worn, the fabric smelly and familiar. I don’t have to be frightened, look, my grandma and granddad did it, he in a stiff collar and club tie, she in white muslin straining a little at the life beneath. They did it, my parents did it, now I will do it too won’t I, arms outstretched, not to hold you, just to keep my balance, sleepwalking to that armchair. How happy we will be. How happy everyone will be. And they all lived happily ever after. (10)

Here the notion of a happy ending becomes redefined by describing the traditional happy ending, which we are meant to understand as marriage, or, at the very least a life long commitment, as sleepwalking, dull, and a decision made out of fear and survival, not passion and romance. The hesitation to label the novel’s ending as a happy one comes from the narrator’s inability to foresee what will happen to him/her and Louise. They may wind up bored and fall out of love, or they may not.

But I think more attention should be paid to the notion of *living* happily ever after, given Louise’s illness. The narrator, like the reader, does not know whether Louise will survive her cancer or die as a result of it. But really the narrator’s meditation upon illness and the constant identification of the narrator with Louise in terms of the body raise questions about more than just the length of Louise’s life. The novel’s last line “I don’t know if this is a happy ending ...” raises the question of both their mortalities. We are made acutely aware of the impossibility of living happily ever after, because the inability to live forever and the experience of pain, both emotional and physical, are foregrounded in the book, as much as passion and pleasure. This is not because the two are somehow equated with one another, but because they are inextricable from one another.⁷² Their inextricability underscores not only the impossibility of avoiding negative experiences and dying, but also shows that a true “happy ending” encompasses those experiences as well. Much as Winterson has throughout the novel, she foregrounds illness and the possibility of death as a central part of the text and its aesthetic.

“Five Senses are Better than Four”: Reproducing Disability as Limitation

Given the myriad of ways that *Written on the Body* is critical of normalized and medicalized accounts of the body in relation to both ability and gender, I was extremely surprised when I came across Jeanette Winterson’s public objection to a deaf lesbian

couple having a deaf child. This is not to say that Winterson is alone or should be chastised for her objection. But it is striking that rather than challenge traditional hierarchies of heteronormativity and ability, her critique reinforces them both. This reinforcement of heteronormative and ability binaries seems to also reinforce heteronormative understandings of reproduction and undo the point that Winterson is making about risk and control, such that control of ability is now placed at a greater value than risk. Winterson begins her editorial in *The London Guardian* by asking incredulously “In the long argument over designer babies, did anyone imagine that parents would prefer a designer disability?”

It becomes evident from this opening question that Winterson makes her argument about not only disability but also the utilization of reproductive technologies.⁷³ The long argument to which she refers is one that has been taking place for quite some time within feminist writings on the subject. The way *Written on the Body* and the editorial characterize technology, and reproductive technology specifically, can be seen as aligning with what Charis Thompson terms the first wave of feminist critiques of reproductive technology. Phase one was characterized by a feminist critique of the “excessive medicalization of reproduction in the West. Pregnancy and childbirth had become medicalized and pathologized by a patriarchal and increasingly interventionist medical establishment” (57). By the time Winterson wrote *Written on the Body*, feminist writings were moving to phase two, which showed more ambivalence toward these technologies than “just say no.” A few years before *Written on the Body* was published, several popular books and journal articles were written to address ethical concerns about how these technologies might be used (Edwards 89). The issue of choice versus control is another way to frame the debate on reproductive technologies and also a reoccurring theme in the editorial, as well as *Written on the Body* and *Art Objects*.

Feminist critiques of reproductive technology were driven by an anxiety that reproductive technologies would further control women’s bodies. As time passed, these critiques moved towards a greater acknowledgment of reproductive technologies’ ability to provide women with a choice rather than an obligation to reproduce. In the editorial, control becomes aligned with wanting to have a disabled child and risk becomes having a child through standard heterosexual reproduction. (Ironically, in *Written on the Body* heterosexual reproduction is cast as predictable, unoriginal and safe.) While Winterson frames these values as privileging risk over control, it becomes clear when one examines the logic of the editorial that her main objection to the decision is because of the lesbians’ view of deafness as a cultural identity rather than a limiting bodily condition.⁷⁴

It sounds like the start of a bad joke, except that they have now managed it twice. They claim that they are especially well equipped to look after a deaf child, which I am sure is true, and had they adopted⁷⁵ one such child, or twenty, we would all be praising their goodness. The difference, of course, is that no child should be forced inside its parents’ psychosis – whether they be Seventh Day Adventists or Deaf lesbians. The truth is that all of us have to contend with our parents, for good or ill, but at least we can’t be committed to spending the rest of our lives as circus performers or bank clerks, or missionaries. We have free will, and the great thing about growing up is personal choice.

One of the most striking things is the editorial's use of disability as an insult to the deaf lesbians when she claims that no child should be forced into their parents' psychosis. Along the same lines, I am tempted to read into her use of the word "commitment." Rhetorically it seems as though deafness functions as some kind of unjust sentence. Then her use of examples of what people spend the rest of their lives doing resonates both with her own history, as in the example of missionaries,⁷⁶ and also jobs she imagines people with disabilities are forced into doing due to lack of other economic opportunities.⁷⁷ As her initial question suggests, the focal point of Winterson's objection seems to be the irrefutability of deafness as limitation and disadvantage. In other words, her objection seems to center around the fact that these women are increasing the chances of having a deaf child rather than the fact that they are lesbians or using a sperm donor or even, as she suggests in the excerpted passage, willing to care for a deaf child.

Winterson's objections seem to align solely with the issue of bringing a deaf child into the world through some kind of choice. This is especially ironic given that she highlights the importance of giving our children free will and personal choice. Yet this freedom apparently does not extend to disabled adults trying to create a family that includes disabled children. Later on in the article, she seems to state the exact opposite when she claims "I am always on the side of risk, always suspicious of control. The more controls we have, the less free we become. Parents usually try to control their children, and later their children hate them for it..." So therefore, by the editorial's logic, by increasing their chances of having a deaf child, the couple is somehow eliminating choices from the child they are planning, even though this same issue would exist if a heterosexual deaf couple decided to reproduce. Yet, Winterson aligns herself as on the side of risk.

Why does risk becomes acceptable when it increases the chances of having a hearing child rather than a deaf one? Her argument seems as though it would lend itself to a more queer and disability friendly reading given that queer redefinitions of family often emphasize the lack of reproducibility and control that she does. "[F]luid boundaries and varied membership meant no neatly replicable units, no defined cycles of expansion and contraction..." (Weston 109). But Winterson misses the opportunity to see their choice as a kind of reconstruction of the "reproduction" that she critiques in *Written on the Body*, and instead asserts that this kind of risk can only be taken unknowingly by heterosexual couples.

There are several other things I object to with regard to the critique of the deaf lesbians. It is factually inaccurate. It presupposes that these women were effectively condemning their child to deafness when in fact no child was yet in existence and there was no guarantee that even with a deaf sperm donor that they would have a deaf child. Winterson argues that it would be acceptable for either of the deaf lesbians to choose to have a baby with a man regardless of whether he was deaf or hearing, because it would not guarantee that the baby would be deaf. The next sentence, "You take a chance with love; you take a chance with nature," implies that it is okay to take this risk if one is having a child through traditional heterosexual means. Yet she critiques a hypothetical couple for screening out the possibility of gayness in their child "just to make sure they had a good life." Here she seems to be objecting to equating heterosexuality with good although she herself seems to be allowing heterosexuals more freedom to have a deaf child and "let nature take its course."⁷⁸

Yet despite this claim, an alternative understanding of disability is acknowledged but ultimately undermined within the editorial. “Even if we transform the language of disability into a dialectic of alternative functioning, should the medical system support parents who want their child to suffer a serious handicap?” Winterson acknowledges the possibility of disability as an alternative schema of understanding the world. Then she quickly abandons the premise. With a tentativeness suggested by its “even if” construction to ask how the medical system could possibly offer approval to these women by supporting them, she reverts back to the medicalized language of serious handicap and the moralistic language of suffering. In another example, Winterson writes: “I believe that hearing, like sight, is a blessing, and if we are prepared to use technology to breed children we have deliberately disabled, it is not only the language of disability that will have to be radically re-worked, but our entire moral perspective.”

The passage refers to radically reworking the language of disability as something that will be subsumed by an imperative to rework our entire sense of morality if we allow or approve of deaf parents choosing or desiring to have deaf children and also refers to ability as a divine gift. While this is a commonly espoused idea that ability is a kind of blessing, I can’t help but wonder what its implications are for those who are not blessed. It seems to revert back to moralistic understandings of disability as divine favor or disfavor. This language of moral crisis suggests that this case demonstrates a way in which both disability pride and technology have gotten out of control.

Although cancer is a kind of illness that is about the body’s reproduction of cells going out of control, when one compares this example of disability with the use of cancer in *Written on the Body*, this juxtaposition suggests that embracing cancer seems fundamentally different than embracing deafness.⁷⁹ In one sense, this can be explained by the ways in which the two instances of disability are radically different. Perhaps Winterson views cancer as more universal than hereditary deafness, which she seems to identify with an obvious lack. Winterson writes: “We can make our world as friendly as possible for people with different physical capacities, but we cannot change the simple fact that it is better to have five senses than four.” Such a statement lays bare the perceived superiority of five senses to four and the very limited role that the environment plays in mitigating this inherent and apparent hierarchy. This is not to say that in some ways it is not better to have five senses rather than four. It is certainly true that people who have five traditional senses are the subjects for whom much of our social world is designed and who therefore have advantages because of this. But this statement completely fails to consider deafness as another sense of knowing the world. I find it critical to acknowledge the particularity and specificity of the deaf experience as a particular way of knowing that is not encompassed by the hearing world. Her emphasis on the importance of sight and hearing in the editorial (“How would any of us feel if the two women had a blind baby and claimed the right to a blind baby?”)⁸⁰ occurs because, in her own writing about the modernist tradition in *Art Objects*, she emphasizes the role of the visual arts and the sound elements of language.⁸¹

Ability for Art’s Sake: The Universal in *Art Objects* and *Written on the Body*

If one were to identify the key terms in *Art Objects* they would certainly be art and language. Winterson’s text is almost a kind of manifesto that takes for granted an

authentic conception of art and of language's primacy in that conception. Brian Finney points out that in *Written on the Body* "Winterson not only describes humans as textual artifacts but also thinks of works of literature as if they were living beings" (27). It is as if, while bodies are given the specificity of language, language in turn is given the vitality and visceral qualities of the body. In fact, in *Art Objects*, Winterson uses the same language to refer to a book at the end of an essay as she does to Louise's body at the end of *Written on the Body*. "Art is indifferent to time, and if you want proof, you have it. Pick up the book. It is still warm" (132). I will discuss Winterson's universalizing of art later on in the chapter, but what I want to focus on here is the way in which the warmth to which she refers endows the book with a kind of lasting immortality. Similarly, in *Written on the Body*, upon seeing or having a vision of Louise—the novel is unclear deliberately as to which—the narrator asks "Am I stark mad? She is warm" (190). The parallel here not only further demonstrates Finney's point about a degree of interchangeability between body and text in *Written on the Body*, but the ways in which these connections span texts as well.

Written on the Body also points to a tension between the particular and the universal or the political and the human that we see in *Art Objects*. The novel seeks to construct a kind of love story which exceeds the bounds of gender, but at the same time places its focus precisely on what is missing through the way the narrator disavows gendered rhetoric and the rhetoric becomes placed onto his/her object of desire. The narrator must, in some way, tap into a rhetoric of desire that is recognizable, if not cliché. In fact, *Written on the Body* struggles with how to discuss love without clichés while at the same time criticizing them. "Why is the most unoriginal thing we can say to each other the thing we long to hear?" (9). The novel is not just meditating upon cliché, but trying to demonstrate both that cliché is a kind of unifier of human experience and also, at the same time, a problematic issue in relation to both language and experience. By this I mean that cliché, in a sense, gets at a kind of universalism that Winterson wants to suggest about desire and longing.⁸² The text is concerned with how clichés inform both art and experiences of romantic love. Cliché allows Winterson to deconstruct categories and emphasize the universality of romantic desires rather than emphasizing the specifics of a particular identity. At the same time, it creates the perception that the text itself is cliché. For instance, the narrative must desire a specific kind of body and—since the reader cannot connect to the body of the "I"—the specificity becomes transferred to Louise's embodiment of femininity. This can be read as a reenactment of standard patriarchal modes and articulations of desire. If the narrator's body becomes invisible and unobjectifiable, then the beloved's body, in a sense, must absorb that objectification.

Like Louise's body, art must be objectified. In order for art to emerge as a unified coherent subject matter, art must be made into an object in Winterson's aptly titled *Art Objects*. While Winterson never explicitly defines art, the text makes it clear that art is measured objectively, with clearly defined parameters of what it is and is not. For instance, Realism and Modernism are juxtaposed. Realism becomes explicitly categorized as anti-art. "Realism is not a Movement or a Revolution, in its original incarnation it was a response to a movement and as a response it was essentially anti-art" (30-31). What also appears to be anti-art is the autobiographical impulse. "The doctrine of Realism saves us from a bad attack of Otherness and it is a doctrine that has been bolstered by the late-twentieth-century vogue for literary biography; tying in the writer's

life with the writer's work so that the work becomes a diary; small, private, explainable and explained away" (27). The role of art in her manifesto is to "enlarge you and me," and emphasizing the smallness of the writer's life and aligning that with a private autobiographical impulse shows it as working against the text's conception of art. *Art Objects* makes these arguments about Virginia Woolf:

Woolf in her lifetime, suffered from an invalidish image, a spinster type of delicacy which is supposed to make her work, delicate, fragile, beautiful maybe, but out of touch and not robust. Woolf, as a woman, was no more invalidish or fussy than James Joyce as a man, with his chronic eye trouble and ferocious migraines. I see no reason to read into Woolf's work the physical difficulties of her life...a writer's work is not a chart of their sex, sexuality, sanity and physical health. We are not looking to enlist them in the navy we are simply trying to get on with the words [sic]... (97)

There is much embedded in this quotation which reinforces and responds to the political forces that the text claims should have no bearing when it comes to art. It is clear from the quotation that to be perceived as ill or, to use Winterson's phrasing, "invalidish" should be disavowed, and that it carries the same stigma as, if not more than, being a spinster. The passage accurately identifies some of the stereotypes that get applied to women and the disabled. Winterson claims that people's perception of Woolf as disabled makes them look at her work, and also at her, as beautiful possibly, but also as frail, isolated and removed. That would not be the case if she were not female and seen as mentally unstable. This combination is particularly significant because of how women have often been pathologized as mentally ill or hysterical.⁸³ However, Winterson does not seem to be challenging these stereotypes as much as she seeks to distance Woolf from them. She holds steadily to the idea that to read Woolf's work as a product of the specificity of her experience of illness, femaleness, and queer sexuality hinders the ability to see Woolf as a writer as great as James Joyce and her modernist contemporaries. *Art Objects* fails to be critical of the way in which illness is used to discredit Woolf's artistic status. This failure may shed light on *Written on the Body*'s willingness to embrace radical critiques of the medical establishment and reproductive technology, despite the editorial's harsh criticism towards those that embrace disability or deafness as a chosen and welcome identity. It is particularly ironic that *Art Objects* focuses on Woolf and Joyce given the way that disability is utilized in their work. In fact, I find that both authors use disability as part of an aesthetic construction and cultural critique. Of all the modernist writers that Winterson could have chosen, Woolf and Joyce, both writers who could be understood as disabled and who invoke disability as a subject matter rather than merely a trope, seem to be a particularly problematic choice.⁸⁴

Yet, I think one of the reasons that *Art Objects* focuses so heavily on the inappropriateness of reading Woolf's biography into her text is Winterson's own frustration with being read as a lesbian writer and having this be the focus of a lot of the critical attention she receives. "No-one asks Iris Murdoch about her sex life. Every interviewer I meet asks me about mine and what they do not ask they invent. I am a writer who happens to love women. I am not a lesbian who happens to write" (104).

While her frustration is understandable, it demonstrates the way in which art and politics cannot be easily extricated from one another. This is not to say that work exists merely as an example or checklist of various identities but rather that art is created

and received within specific historical moments and made by artists with specific and varied experiences of embodiment and desire. While Winterson repeatedly rails against the ghettoization of gay and lesbian writers in *Art Objects*, the text fails to mention how further recognition of gay and lesbian writers helped to create a space for her own work and its acclaimed status. Certainly her entrance into university settings and syllabi has happened primarily through courses in Women's Studies and gay and lesbian literature. The media's ghettoization of Winterson occurs both because of the way in which her work is often concerned with challenging stereotypes and narratives relating to gender and sexuality and also because her first novel, *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*, although fictitious to some degree, is based on her own coming out story. Both the subject of her work and her willingness to be "out" or open about her sexuality demonstrate the ways in which sexuality both externally and internally influences the perception of one's work.

In this universalist paradigm, where the only thing that does and should matter is a kind of removed reading from the work which takes no account of identity, Winterson is surprisingly willing to make rather specific assumptions about her reader. In her opening chapter, she encourages people to buy their own art pieces, claiming that the time, like the money, can be found, and she assumes that all her readers are purchasing "the latest satellite equipment and the new PC." Later on in the book, she chastises people who have only seen a postcard reproduction of a Picasso rather than the real thing (8, 66). Rather than being universal Winterson's presumption of whom her readers are and of the resources they have available is not only specific, but rather elitist.

Although *Art Objects* acknowledges gay and straight as well as male and female readers, one does get the sense that the proper way to appreciate aesthetics requires a certain kind of mind and body, most especially one that can hear and see. She begins her own book on the power and importance of art with looking at a painting, and she emphasizes rhythm repeatedly with regard to Woolf and Joyce. "Like Woolf, Joyce had a fine ear and he is entranced by the rhythm of words; the shuffle of words, the march of words, the words that dance, the words that can be choreographed into battle" (82). Of Woolf, she writes, "Rhythm subjects her thought to a discipline more than intellectual" (76). In fact, not only is the aesthetic greatness that exceeds the purely intellectual thought of as rhythm, but rhythm becomes central to defining art itself (90). While rhythm is often a central aspect of poetic prose and artistic production, it is also something that Winterson (like most people who are unfamiliar with deaf poetics) probably views as inaccessible to the deaf. About the opening pages of Woolf's *The Waves* Winterson writes "It can help to read them out loud. Much of the delight everyone gets from radio adaptations of classics is a straightforward delight in pace. The actors read much more slowly than the eye passes, especially the eye habituated to scanning the daily papers and skipping through magazines... Over and above all the individual rhythms of music, pictures and words, is the rhythm of art itself" (89-90). Much of how rhythm is understood in the text happens through the auditory as a way of pacing. There is no reason why the visual cannot create the same degree of slowing down but it is the automatic association of rhythm with the auditory that perhaps informs Winterson's strong objection to reproducing deafness. Elsewhere she writes of Woolf "The poet has an ear that runs in harness with her mind. When Woolf writes she is listening as well as thinking. Rhythm underpins her thought. Winterson makes a similar point about Joyce "Joyce had a fine ear, and he is entranced by the rhythm of words; the shuffle of words,

the march of words, the words that dance, the words that can be choreographed into battle” (82). While Winterson emphasizes Joyce’s ear as the source of his love of words, she uses visual metaphors to illustrate how the words are manipulated. Nevertheless, her persistent emphasis on the auditory raises questions for me about Winterson’s understanding of the role of deaf subjectivity as the source of both artistic creation and appreciation. If one’s body must function in a particular kind of way in order to appreciate art, what are the implications for those bodies that do not? Furthermore, if there is an unavoidable interaction with illness that is universal and thus grounds for art, as is Louise’s cancer in *Written on the Body*, what distinguishes it from other types of bodily deviation or disability that produce a kind of identity. In other words, why is it acceptable to critique medicine through cancer, but not to critique our understandings of art through deafness?

Finding a New Rhythm: Deaf Poetics and Culture

By turning to deaf poetics we shall see the ways in which deafness expands rather than constrains aesthetic choices. We have seen how for Winterson disability functions as an acceptable positionality so long as it is seen to be accidental, as the subject of art rather than a modality through which art is both created and critiqued and also most importantly as long as it is not claimed as an identity or, to use a phrase repeated in *Art Objects*, “special interest group.” The desire to acknowledge illness and specific impairments without acknowledging or considering the foundational challenges that disability poses to our understandings of sex and gender (see my discussion of the crippled erotic in chapter one and my discussion of *Mrs. Dalloway* in chapter two for further examples) is certainly not limited to these works by Winterson.

From a theoretical perspective, deafness and femaleness can be seen as a kind of dually subversive identity. In her introduction to *Women and Deafness* Brenda Brueggemann acknowledges this resistance when she juxtaposes the terms women and deafness alongside one another. “We must adopt them even as we want to resist or remove them” (xii). Brueggemann draws on the work of Donna Haraway, whom she credits with the most non-derivative, original definition of women. For Haraway, “woman” becomes a destabilizing category in relation to “Western evolutionary, technological, and biological narratives” (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women 2*). *** Brueggemann argues that the category of deafness further destabilizes the category of woman. “Deafness – as a term and bodily condition – also has occupied a demonstrative, monstrous, and boundary-like space... typically recorded in our medical, scientific, and philosophic history as an aberration of linguistic normalcy, deafness marks a mutilation...” (xii-xiii). Deafness becomes aligned with perceptions of difference, deviance, and loss that position it alongside femininity.

Through examining deaf beauty pageants and their debates about the use of music and language in the talent portion, we can see how central language is to understandings of deafness from both within and outside of deaf culture. One example would be Alexandra Herman, who won Miss Deaf California in 1991 by playing the piano and was later criticized and told she could not use the talent for the national competition. Heather Whitestone, who eventually became Miss America, was heavily criticized for signing exact English and her choice to voice as well as sign using SinCom. Examining deaf

beauty pageants shows us that a restrictive set of norms exists in relation to upholding deafness as a linguistic identity rather than pathology. At the same time, these pageants maintain traditional mainstream values such as beauty, patriotism, moral values and civic responsibility (Burch 253).⁸⁵ How does this emphasis impact and complicate not only popular cultural sites where ideologies of ability and gender intersect but also Winterson's specific concerns about "high culture" and the aesthetic?

Turning to discussions of deaf poetry in relation to the construction of art in *Art Objects* is useful because it highlights several of the properties that Winterson emphasizes in Modernist writers like Woolf and Joyce. Poetry is a genre which traditionally accentuates the oral properties of language that are among those *Art Objects* seeks to stress. Deaf poetics fundamentally transforms and redefines how we understand the genre of poetry as well as the role of the senses in literacy more generally. Like Winterson's project, the project of deaf studies scholars extends beyond adding another identity category and instead moves to defining what constitutes art itself. Heidi Rose observes that "sign language literally provides a new space for literature to exist... The body and space are not problematized in sign language literature; the body and space make up the text itself" (131, 134). H. Dirksen and L. Bauman argue that "sign poetry is not a newcomer to the field of literature but rather a primordial means of enacting the body's existential relation to language and space" (171).⁸³ How do deaf poetics come into conversation with Winterson's textual anxieties about art and hearing, hearing and understanding the world? Deaf poetry allows for possibilities that spoken language does not have. Oliver Sacks discusses the way in which sign language poetry allows for the simultaneity of things that would otherwise occur "linearly, sequentially and temporally in spoken language" (87). Breuggemann extends his point by arguing that "the pressure sign language poetry exerts on our conceptual limits for poetic utterance, the way it furthers the range of expression for both hearing and deaf cultures and the way it allows us to listen to and thus ride with outlaw deafness" are at the center of deaf poetics (208). Her work discusses the ways in which deaf poetry combines poetics with visual embodiment and movement in a way that hearing poetry cannot. "In all sign poetry or performances, presence and impermanence stand side by side as embodied language presents itself even as it is 'erased' in its oral-like, nonprinted tracings. What distinguishes one sign from another in sign language is the place where it is made (location), the distinct configuration of the hands in making the same (handshape), and the action of the hands, face and body (movement, direction and expression)" (213). Rose elaborates on Breuggemann's point: "as a performer analyzes the language, style, and tone of an ASL poem or narrative, that analysis must involve, for example, the author's specific facial expressions – including every nuance of movement of the mouth, eyes, eyebrows – and tilts of the head, tension in shoulders, and so on" (136). So the visual is given added weight in the absence of the oral.

Rhyme and repetition must be conveyed visually as well by hand shapes that are similar. Breuggemann offers the example of Clayton Valli's "Deaf World," in which the rhyme and refrain come in a raised arm sequence, and each image rises higher as the boy grows up and is uplifted by visual images (216). Breuggemann also offers another example in which members of the Flying Words Project Kenny Lerner and Peter Cook demonstrate rhythm through using two parallel sets of arms which come in the refrain of the poem "Hands." The focus is entirely on Lerner and Cook's forearms and hands

which revolve in parallel circles and relate and punctuate through gesture and movement (216). Furthermore, the same five hand shapes are used through a number of images which ultimately extends throughout the body (Dirksen- Bauman 171).

The medium of deaf poetry offers more than just an expansion of traditional literary understanding of rhyme and repetition. As Breuggemann has articulated, deaf poetics alters what poetry is, what language is and understandings of what deafness is (227). Poetry becomes an embodied practice which simultaneously illustrates the limits of language as a spoken medium. Sign language poetry alters both dominant cultural notions of deafness, language, poetry and persuasion as well as understandings of these concepts amongst deaf people themselves. The possibilities that deaf poetics opens up for deaf culture and dominant understandings of poetics both challenge specific ideas of embodiment and expand the kind of universalist rhetoric that Winterson advocates in conceptualizing art. Davidson further argues that deaf poetics reframe the ocularcentrism within modernist literature. “Translated into our terms with ASL poetry, we might say what belongs to the language game called poetry at least within hearing society, is a set of self-evident values concerning poetry’s association with voice and sound. But an equally potent principle of poetry is its ability to challenge linguistic norms” (187).

Breuggemann closes her chapter on poetry with an ideology of transcendence but not through suggesting a unification of language and culture. Instead she suggests a sort of unity through pluralism which expands how we perceive language to begin with. In describing the deaf artist she writes:

in her acts and the acts of approaching both intellect and imagination, of instructing even as she pleases, of studying the appearances of things, of discovering all the available means, of attending to the art of careful listening as to that a careful speaking even as she turns away from them both, of communicating across cultures, of using language and persuasion beyond speech and beyond writing, too, she might show those truthsayers, the critics and the philosophers, a thing or two. She might show them how to lend (and bend) an ear, how to wield words another way. (232)

Like Winterson, Breuggemann is giving her artist a female subjectivity and imploring her to make use of all available means of creating art. But unlike Winterson, Breuggemann is addressing the paradox of using hearing and listening as metaphors for understanding and attention to the art practice itself with her phrase “even as she turns away from them both.” Breuggemann acknowledges the multi-cultural work that is done through this practice by bridging both deaf and hearing cultures, rather than ridiculing the ways in which traditional modes of writing and speaking have been exclusive. Breuggemann positions the deaf artist as one who can transcend rather than further fix these boundaries and expand not just how we understand the recipient or even the maker of art, but the art object itself.

From the position of the deaf artist we can see how deafness becomes an epistemological challenge to our perceptions of poetics and art rather than an a priori constraint on artistic expression. This challenges both the way that deafness is perceived by Winterson in the editorial as well as the presumptions in *Art Objects* about the creators and audience for art. Deaf poetics demonstrates that it is not simply a question of five senses being better than four but that deafness creates an alternative artistic and poetic sensibility. This does not so much contradict Winterson’s general points about art in *Art*

Objects, but rather expands their focus to include various kinds of bodily rhythms that extend beyond the auditory, and also demonstrates the importance of an artist's sense of embodiment to his or her work and aesthetic – this comes across with Joyce's Gerty or his use of the senses and Woolf's understanding of temporality and her depiction of Septimus Smith. Like *Written on the Body* and its engagement with medicine, illness, and loss as universal, *Art Objects* constructs a narrative that is universal about bodies, beauty, and art. However, unlike *Written on the Body*, *Art Objects* inadvertently excludes certain subjects from its audience through its implicit understanding of art and poetics. Through juxtaposing this universality with the specificity of both a concrete choice that stems from understanding disability as an identity as well as the specificity of disabled embodiment as artistic embodiment - as a potential embodiment of both the artist and the audience - I hope to push on the limits of a presumed universal ability in relation to potential futures for art in its subject matter and in the subjects who matter for art and how we conceive of it. I want the kind of universal understanding of illness as expressed in *Written on the Body*. I also want an understanding of illness as something from which both subject positions and an aesthetic can emerge that extends to how we understand the variation of health and ability amongst *all* bodies. In order for this to emerge, it is first necessary to understand the source and complexity of contradictory attitudes about ability, control, and art. In this chapter, I've explored those connections in order to understand them and find ways to expand them, so that universality need not forsake the specificity of identity and experience and so that the specificity of that experience need not be excluded from our universal understandings of art and what it represents.

What art is and what it means to understand and appreciate it extends far beyond Winterson's work and highlights the way that ableization functions in a multitude of ways. As in the rest of the project, through looking at these texts together, I hope to highlight how ability underlines basic notions of embodiment and how those ideas connect not only to illness and ability, but also to other concepts such as gender and art. This combination of texts demonstrates how even a writer like Winterson who makes a critique of medicine and normativity central to her aesthetic concerns can be complicit with them in other ways, pointing to the complexity of ideas and attitudes about ability and embodiment. Through bringing to light these contradictions, I seek to extend not just the way we think of ability (by emphasizing a distinction between ableized and ableist) but to extend our understandings of what it means to be a creator and appreciator of art, and also what it means to be embodied.

What it means to be embodied in terms of sexuality, adulthood, temporality, representation and aesthetics are all linked by ideas about what it means to be able and how the body should function. This underlies how we understand what it means to embody gender, be desired, to work, to reproduce, to have what our culture recognizes and defines as family and stability. I would argue that the literary is not peripheral to these understandings and these creations, nor is it the only place where these ideologies are at play. It is, however, one of the places in which language and imagination is privileged, where what we imagine can be brought into existence, examined and reexamined, and then reconfigured. I have called here not simply for a greater number of disabled images, a greater interest in disability, or more thoughtful considerations of disabled subjectivity (although I would object to none of these things). What I have sought to formulate here is an understanding of ability as a foundational concept over

which we lay a variety of ideas about what it means to be a subject. In order to better get at the complexity of these ideologies, we need to engage with concepts of ability as a central axis in our understanding of all of these different categories in the human experience. It is not merely enough for disability to be added on and used to extend current theoretical models that did not consider ability in a foundational way at their inception. This is not to say that such models cannot be useful for disability studies, only that the theorization that emerges within disability studies needs to more critically examine how ability is constructed and how considerations of ability cannot merely expand, but shape future theoretical interventions about the human body and human experience. I hope that this dissertation has helped begin such work by unearthing some of the complexity and contradictory nature of “ability.”

Endnotes

¹ See Tobin Siebers' *Disability Theory* 35, Robert McRuer's *Crip Theory* 211, Mary Johnson's *Make Them Go Away* 133.

² For further discussions of the hypersexuality of queerness, see Kammeyer, Quinn & Meiner, Cavanaugh, etc. Hypersexuality has also been written about extensively in relation to race. See Shimizu, Fisk, Alland, etc.

³ I am not saying here that one cannot understand things without sight, nor am I saying that this common use of language is inherently bigoted or prejudicial. What I am saying is that it is an example of a common and frequent way that ability gets synthesized with understanding both as an assumption "we can see" but also as a precondition of how we understand.

⁴ See Chapter Two 90-91.

⁵ The pervasiveness of disability in literature has been pointed out by Mitchell and Snyder, Garland Thompson, Lennard Davis, Poore, Longmore, and others.

⁶ I made a similar point in my essay "Passing Last Summer," where I argue against the ocularcentricism of understanding in relation to disability and that visibility of my disability in no way alleviates me from having to explain the specifics of my bodily function and accessibility needs.

⁷ The prevalence of non-visible disabilities has been often noted by a variety of sources. See United Kingdom National Health Service, National Service Inclusion Project, Michigan Community Service Commission, Heaphy, Waschler, Bowman, Villalon.

⁸ After this chapter was already completed and submitted for publication, I learned of Nemecek's recently published essay "Reading the Disabled Woman: Gerty MacDowell and the Stigmaphilic Space of 'Nausicaa.'"

⁹ For examples see Asch and Fine's *Women with Disabilities, Gendering Disability*, Guter and Killacky, Tremain's *Pushing the Limits: Disabled Dykes Produce Culture*, Brownsworth and Raffo, Clare, Hockenberry, Carol Thomas, and Shakespeare. Virtually every book that engages with issues of disability and sexuality from any perspective engages with confirming the existence of and refuting this stereotype in some way.

¹⁰ Norris sees these three figures as ciphers for the chapter's three female characters: the alabaster and virginal Gerty is like a "nun" (especially because of her resemblance to the Blessed Virgin); Cissy Caffrey ("the dark one with the mop head and the nigger mouth") is like a negress; and Edy Boardman wears glasses (Norris 176 as cited by Bishop 311 footnote 17).

¹¹ Although there is a negative cultural association between women who wear glasses and sexual desirability as in the old adage "men don't make passes at girls who wear glasses," the comparison still minimizes the stigma associated with Gerty's limp.

¹² Ellman, Bishop and Norris comment on the ways in which Gerty can be read as a double for Stephen Daedalus, especially in relation to Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*. Her heightened romanticization of sexuality and men in general can be seen as another way of demonstrating and perhaps mocking a false sense of exceptionality that is often associated with youth.

¹³ Bloom's objectification of Gerty has been commented on by most critics who have written about the chapter. See Henke, Bishop and Sicker for examples.

¹⁴ John Bishop makes a similar point in his essay.

¹⁵ Here I am referring to the "mirror stage" in Lacanian psychoanalysis and the mirror's central role in the formation of subjectivity and the ego.

¹⁶ In her article "The Romance Heroine Exposed: 'Nausicaa' and *The Lamplighter*," Devlin argues that the watcher/watched binary not only conflates here, but collapses.

¹⁷ Discussions of how disability emerges as a way of critiquing and complicating traditional feminist arguments about objectification emerge elsewhere within disability studies. For example, in writing about Ellen Stohl, a disabled model who posed for Playboy, Clare writes: "When nondisabled feminists started criticizing Ellen and the disability activists who supported her, I wanted to rant... [Their] analysis has led to much powerful feminist activism in the past 25 years against rape and child abuse, against pornography and other media portrayals of women. But when taken to its extreme – sometimes in the form of legislation – it has also led to pro-censorship stands, bizarre agreements with the right wing, and narrow, dogmatic views about sex and sexual imagery. It succeeded in bringing to the foreground what is degrading, humiliating, and dangerous about sexual objectification but failed to understand the complicated relationship between the self as subject and the self as object. It spoke eloquently about the damage that

can be caused by pornographic sexual representation but failed to embrace the need for pleasure. It named certain sexual behaviors as oppressive but failed to take into account the multi-layered reality of erotic power” (114-115).

¹⁸ This is not to say that practices of gendering do not have the impact of strengthening patriarchal norms, only that I do not want to read them as the primary way in which Gerty’s femininity functions, reduces, and dismisses a greater, more complex critique of the way in which gender works.

¹⁹ Butler’s work on the performativity of gender and materiality as a citational practice has been used within disability studies by Shelly Tremain to argue that ability, like gender, is performative. See “On the Subject of Impairment” in *Disability/Postmodernity: Embodying Disability Theory*.

²⁰ This is also true for other groups such as people of color, fat people and a general population as it ages. It is also conversely true that all of these populations including people with disabilities have been fetishized and eroticized within specific subcultures, but, as I discussed earlier in the chapter, the general perception of asexuality amongst people with disabilities is still the primary cultural narrative through which disability and sexuality are thought of in relation to each other.

²¹ That gender is a citational practice means that it will always function with this kind of contradiction, both exposing and partially attaining the norms it reproduces. Because of the way disability alters and interferes with these norms, it further exposes the weakness of their construction and the reliance of gendered norms upon ableized ones.

²² On these issues, see Richards’ outstanding chapter on “Nausicaa.” Richards points out that magazines like *Cosmopolitan* begin with the photo of a fabulous model on the cover, but that as you move through the magazine into its back pages, you find increasing ads for wart- and cellulite-removal, weight loss, breast enlargement—the kinds of products readers would think they might need in order to come to resemble the photo on the first pages.

²³ Even though Gerty’s friends are unmarried, it is the insertion into the maternal role and Gerty’s freedom from that that is relevant here.

²⁴ For further discussion of disability and capitalism, see Russell, Oliver, Barnes, Goodley, Lennard Davis’ *Enforcing Normalcy* and *Disability Studies Reader* (all editions) and Tremain’s anthology *Foucault and the Government of Disability*.

²⁵ I do not mean to suggest that the chapter doesn’t employ the gaze or visibility, only that visual markers that signify the erotic are often either euphemized or implied rather than explicitly stated.

²⁶ While the gaze is referred to in this passage, both what is seen and how it differs from previous glances is left for the reader to infer.

²⁷ Krafft-Ebing also cites several other cases in conjunction: a man who was also partial to cross-eyed women and the case of a man attracted only to amputees as well as sado-masochist impulses prompted by white skin. However, what is notable about his interpretations of these fetishes, however problematic their alliances might be, is his belief that one must work within them to obtain sexual and romantic happiness rather than overcome them.

²⁸ Both Kleege and Chinn attest to the unreliability of vision as a way of gathering information; Kleege argues that sighted people often give eye contact much more weight than it deserves as a form of communication and Chinn makes the claim that “the sense on which most people primarily rely for information about the world around them –vision- is virtually useless when it comes to figuring out and describing the experience of sexual pleasure” (182).

²⁹ Bishop also comments on the importance of the olfactory in relation to vision (198-201).

³⁰ This relates back to Freud’s idea of the polymorphously perverse. See *The Collected Works of Sigmund Freud* 67-68.

³¹ This is not to suggest that ideology is identical to feeling, but nevertheless feelings are often influenced by ideologies, though as I argue in this chapter, not necessarily entirely determine by them.

³² Also missing is the distinction between Thompson and Kowalski’s subject positions. While McRuer quotes Thompson as saying, “Sharon and I would always be a package deal,” Sharon’s voice and any variation in her experience of disability is conspicuously missing (Schneider 13, as cited by McRuer).

³³ By focusing on McRuer and Longmore, I do not mean to obscure or ignore the substantial work of disabled feminists such as Garland Thomson, Carol Thomas, Wendell and many others. Their work has in many ways paved the way for much of the new scholarship occurring in gender and sexuality studies on disability. While their work has illuminated the ways in which gender and disability are related, the importance of disabled women’s experience, theories of interdependence for feminism, and alternate

understandings of embodiment etc. it does not address in a theoretical way the specifics of how disability and gender intersect with regard to desire and relationships.

³⁴ In a more recent article, “Disability Nationalism in Crip Times,” McRuer uses Halberstam’s *In a Queer Time and Place* to discuss heteronormativity in relation to the movement within queer transnational texts to recognize both “the emergence of heterosexuality/homosexuality and the co-existence and ongoing development of nonidentical queer modes of being” (McRuer 168), rather than theorize what I call “crip time.”

³⁵ For the purposes of this dissertation, I view illness as a type of disability experience although recognize that not all illnesses cause disability and not all disabilities are related to illness. Much like disability encompasses a wide range of experiences and embodiments, so does illness. In wanting to emphasize ability and alternative embodiments it does not make sense to maintain a rigid distinction between illness and disability.

³⁶ See Prudente, Rosenbaum and Hellerstein for examples.

³⁷ For Woolf, illness heightens the creative faculties, although we shall see in a later chapter that Winterson’s interpretations of its effect on her work require the severing of the two in order to preserve the universality and timelessness of Woolf’s art.

³⁸ See Llewellyn, Agu and Mercer, Bonnie, and Clements and Read.

³⁹ Of course, this refers to attendant programs that are funded publicly. Since attendant care is generally not funded through insurance, (unless one needs nursing care) the vast majority of in home attendant services are paid for through such programs.

⁴⁰ This piece later extends its reach by closing with the line “No, I don’t fit in your world,” alluding to the way in which these concerns surrounding access extend far beyond the home of the particular friend to a world generally inaccessible for people with their various impairments. This piece was obtained from the archive at the LGBT Historical Society for Diane Hugs, a member of Wry Crips.

⁴¹ Specifically she references *Godspeed* by Lynn BreeLove and *Chelsea Girls* by Eileen Myles.

⁴² This quickened temporality would also apply to people with bipolar disorder, which Woolf has often been read as having. For extended conversations about Woolf’s sanity or insanity, see Bell, Trombly, Love, Poole, Rose, and Gordon.

⁴³ See Bell, DeSalvo, Trombly, Rose, Poole, Love, Gordon, Lee, Briggs.

⁴⁴ For an extended discussion of Virginia Woolf’s relationship with her doctors including their use of rest cures, see Trombly, especially chapters 3,4,5,6 and 7.

⁴⁵ I think it is important to make a distinction between the heightened ability to understand language and produce art that is facilitated by illness and an alternative relationship to temporality and the misconception that disabled people, particularly people who have lost a sense, automatically have stronger gifts or abilities in one area e.g. that the blind can hear exceptionally well. There is a distinction between an automatic kind of exceptionality being a result of disability and a different kind of relationship to time and productivity and the alternative values and skills that this time may foster.

⁴⁶ I will get into the role of cultural and discursive construction and bodily representation in relation to the lived and material experience of disability later on in the chapter when I discuss Wendell’s work in relation to pain and transcendence, but for now I wish to note the ways in which cyborg theory has been seen as inherently useful for disability studies as well as having been repeatedly critiqued for being too removed from the lives of people with disabilities and their experiences.

⁴⁷ Although certainly this is not to suggest that all people with disabilities utilize machines or challenge these boundaries to a greater extent than the general population although overall the reliance of people with disabilities upon technology, machines and other people expands and reconsiders these boundaries to a greater degree than for the nondisabled.

⁴⁸ It is true that Haraway is not particularly interested in how partiality and its stakes vary among cyborgs.

⁴⁹ For a more extended analysis that traces disability as a concept in several fights for equality around categories of race, gender, and citizenship please see Baynton. It seems only logical to note, although it would be beyond the scope of this chapter to explore, that a history of being discriminated against with a rhetoric of disability would make such groups more reticent to embrace the politicization and reclamation of disability as an identity rather than an insult.

⁵⁰ Spillers notes in her famous essay “Momma’s Baby, Poppa’s Maybe” that William Goodell’s work has demonstrated how “diseased, damaged and disabled Negroes” were often “deemed incurable and otherwise worthless” and thus were bought by medical institutions for experimentation and “education” (Goodell

qtd. in Spillers 62).

⁵¹ This point has been made by other critics in disability studies. Most notably by Mitchell and Snyder's *Narrative Prosthesis* and McRuer's *Crip Theory*, especially his discussion on *As Good As It Gets* 19-31.

⁵² In her book *Shifting the Blame*, Goodman describes the proliferation of railroad accidents that came irrespective of mechanized improvements in safety. While her work speaks to the transformation of railroad accidents from mechanical to human drama, it does not address or suggest that anyone engaged in deliberate accidents in order to collect disability. It would seem more plausible to attempt to fake one's impairment, given the permanent difficulty inherent in disability with regard to finding housing and employment.

⁵³ This is not to say that Eva does not take action in the narrative, but her actions are driven by an impulse to survive and emphasize her lack of choices. For example, deciding to lose a leg is motivated by her extreme poverty and lack of employment options. Eva feels she needs to burn Plum, her son, because he can no longer physically care for himself, which will be discussed further later on in the chapter.

⁵⁴ It is true that other factors impact their freedom and mobility, like coming of age in different historical periods, but my point is that most depictions and certainly all major depictions of disability in these novels become aligned with limitation and curtailed freedom.

⁵⁵ In a recent national survey commissioned by Disaboom, an online community for people dealing with disability, 52 percent of the respondents reported that they would rather die than live with a permanent disability ("Disaboom Survey Reveals").

⁵⁶ I do not wish to enter into a discussion regarding the consideration of drug addiction as a disability. But I am interested in the way drug addiction creates dependence with self care and how this is treated in the text.

⁵⁷ In making this claim, I do not wish to suggest that self-care is a problematic issue for all people with disabilities. I also do not mean to suggest that Plum's murder is a demonstration of ableist ideology rather than patriarchal or black military ideologies. Instead I seek to suggest their fusion and to highlight the unacknowledged role of ableism in this enforcement of racialized and gendered norms around black masculinity.

⁵⁸ African Americans have the highest rate of severe disability of any group. Over fifty percent of working African Americans are unskilled laborers, and thus more susceptible to injury, poor quality of life, lack of access to health care, and unhealthy eating habits, smoking and substance abuse (Bryan 139-40).

⁵⁹ Throughout the course of writing this dissertation, I have gone back and forth in my uses of deaf and Deaf as well as D/deaf. I have decided to use the word deaf uniformly not because I do not understand or appreciate the distinction but because it is such a complex and slippery distinction that it seems inappropriate one for me to enforce in an either/or manner within the chapter itself. In her latest book *Deaf Subjects: Between Identities and Places*, Breuggeman cites several responses to "how useful is Deaf?" in which she herself compares it to the usefulness of the term gay (163 notes). She also cites Lennard Davis, who quoted from an earlier post by Dirksen Bauman stating, "what we are talking about here is a multifaceted construction of fluid possibilities, hitting up against some embodied borders from time to time" (Davis as cited by Breuggeman, 164 notes). My rejection of this binary is not from a place that disputes its importance but rather its clear-cut enforcement.

⁶⁰ In this chapter I often discuss deafness and disability as though they were interchangeable. This is not because I view deafness as an inherently bodily or medical condition as opposed to a linguistic identity or because I am unaware of deaf culture as a linguistic minority. I do this because I want to assert that disability is also a cultural and social identity rather than a material or bodily limitation.

⁶¹ This is not to say that disability is not experienced as limitation or that people with disabilities do not feel limited in certain environments or situations; rather I am interested in how disability functions epistemologically in relation to art and literature.

⁶² In this chapter, as elsewhere in the dissertation, illness and disability are used interchangeably. While illness is not necessarily disabling and disabled people are not necessarily ill, they both are experiences and conditions against which the notion of ability is defined.

⁶³ Following Winterson's lead in *Art Objects*, I use the term "art" broadly, although because of my focus on deafness in this chapter, I focus primarily on the ways in which Winterson discusses art in relation to the auditory.

⁶⁴ The couple was criticized by the Family Research Council. President Ken Connor called the decision "incredibly selfish." The National Association of the Deaf also denounced the decision. (Pyeatt, Spriggs)

⁶⁵ For instance, news coverage also quotes the president of the Deafness Forum of Australia and other deaf parents who understand and defend the choice. (Barry)

⁶⁶ Much writing on disability in relation to reproductive technologies has focused on the anxiety and opposition to giving birth to disabled infants. In *Beyond Conception*, Patricia Spallone argues that reproductive technologies follow in eugenic footsteps and in present day are used to uphold paradigms of white male supremacy (154). Barbara Katz Rothman examines the impact of prenatal diagnosis, arguing that because of society's unwillingness to accommodate the disabled generally, "even if the woman were willing to sacrifice herself entirely to meet the needs of the child, it may still not be enough" (242). Dorothy Wertz echoes these concerns when she says "disability rights activists argue that disability is a social construct and that most disability can be overcome through social change ... on the other hand it is the parents, not society, who raise the children. Parents should not be expected to bear the burden while waiting for social changes that may never come. And for some disabilities, no amount of social change will be sufficient" (184). Conversely, disability rights activist Anne Finger argues "no woman should be forced to bear a child, abled or disabled, and no progressive social movement should exploit an oppressed group to further its ends... women considering whether or not to give birth to a disabled child have few if any positive role models" and are often advised by doctors who feel that disability is a fate worse than death (287-288). Diana Axelsen agrees, "as a society we must abandon the attitude that the birth of a 'less than perfect' is an event for which we cannot prepare and which we must therefore contemplate with fear ... we need not and should not allow medical and economic criteria to settle issues concerning the treatments of newborns" (144).

⁶⁷ Rubinson's critique has also been cited in Onega's book *Jeanette Winterson*, in which she agrees with his critique while noting that the aversion Rubinson claims occurs when Winterson uses political metaphors to describe Louise's diseased body is in fact no less unique than the model it supposedly inverts of using disease to talk about politics and history (127).

⁶⁸ These seem especially focused on the interference of science with dating and reproduction. "Why leave yourself to chance when you could leave yourself to science? Shortly the pseudo-lab coat approach of dating by details will make way for a genuine experiment whose results, however unusual, will remain controllable. Or so they say. (See splitting the atom, gene therapy, in vitro fertilization, cross hormone cultures, even the humble cathode ray for similar statements.) Nevermind. Virtual Reality is on its way... For myself, unreconstructed as I am, I'd rather hold you in my arms and walk through the damp of a real English meadow in real English rain" (*Written on the Body* 96-7).

⁶⁹ The absence of Louise as subject is worth noting and will be discussed later on in the chapter.

⁷⁰ Science emerges in the novel primarily (though not exclusively) through Winterson's use of biology and medicine. An entire section is devoted to poetic meditations on medical textbooks describing the body. Notably, science is also responsible for efforts to control the human experience. In my reading I am following the alignment of medicine, science and technology that Winterson creates in the text, although obviously neither medicine nor technology encompasses the totality of science; nor is either category solely influenced by science.

⁷¹ Although Winterson relies on scientific metaphors to legitimize the work of the artist in *Art Objects* for example, she talks about the artist using words as atoms and gases and also books working intravenously while we try to immunize ourselves against them (44, 27). Rubinson makes similar points in his essay as well when he claims that the majority of the book's reviewers failed to recognize Winterson's critique of biological essentialism (2). He claims that Winterson challenges oppression by mixing the genre of medical language with poetic language. But for Rubinson, Winterson's critique of science exists only to further her critique of gender rather than as a critique of another type of oppression.

⁷² Onega also argues that the possibility of a happy ending is undermined through what she describes as "an ironic counter-illusion" to Elliot's refrain in *The Waste Land*, in "A Game of Chess" ("hurry up please, it's time") which further highlights the possibility for boredom that threatens all long-term relationships.

⁷³ When *Written on the Body* was published, the transition to a more ambivalent response to these technologies was happening within feminist criticism. Writings began to valorize a kind of maternal instinct and regardless of its origins galvanize around women's desire to have children. Writings began to complicate understandings of birth that operated within simple binaries; for instance Daniels demonstrates in her book how the body breaks down masculinist understandings of identity such as citizen and worker (139). Alice Adams further argues that "abstract economies between mother and fetus, individual and community are continually reproduced at multiple sites of cultural construction including not only

feminism but the theory and practice of medicine, law and psychology” (249).

⁷⁴ The way in which Winterson aligns reproductive freedom with heterosexuality in relation to deafness is particularly interesting given that work within queer studies has heavily focused on the ways in which choice becomes a contentious term. In *Families We Choose*, Kath Weston discusses how queers often form alternative kinship circles and the ways in which reproductive technologies such as artificial insemination reinstate ideas that, not only the technologies, but gays and lesbians are somehow unnatural (171). She also points out that lesbian and mother are identities that can function to obscure one another. Winterson’s objection seems to be both strengthening these heteronormative logics as well as calling into question a third category of the responsible disabled parent. Winterson seems to be rhetorically reworking an old argument made against gay and lesbian parents that they are saddling their child with stigma and disadvantage and “invoking cultural notions of childhood innocence” (Weston 195).

⁷⁵ Schneider points out that “adoption is only understandable as a way of creating the social fiction that an actual link of kinship exists. Without biological kinship as a model, adoption would be meaningless” (55).

⁷⁶ Winterson’s own parents were Seventh Day Adventists and she left home early on to escape her religious upbringing and pursue a career in writing. She writes about this at length in her first book *Oranges are not the Only Fruit*, an autobiographical novel.

⁷⁷ It is also worth noting that bank clerk is a type of vocation that lacks creativity and is an almost stereotypical example of safe and predictable employment.

⁷⁸ While one could argue that there is a difference between screening for and screening against, screening for deafness does not equate with screening against hearing in the sense that the deaf lesbians are not seeking to abort any child who is hearing anymore than two parents trying to genetically increase their chances of any other attribute are screening against its absence.

⁷⁹ The field of deaf studies is vast and extends beyond disability studies into its own interdisciplinary focus. For some discussions of deafness as a cultural identity, see work by Mairian Corker, Brenda Brueggemann, Carol Padden, Harlan Lane, David Wright, Katherine Jankowski, and *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability Deafness and the Body* by Lennard Davis.

⁸⁰ The deaf lesbian couple admitted in an interview with the Washington Post that they too saw blindness as different from deafness “and if they themselves – valuing sight – were to have a blind child, well then, Candy acknowledges, they would probably try to have it fixed, if they could, like hearing parents who attempt to restore their child’s hearing with cochlear implants” (Mundy 4). This further demonstrates the point I am making in which sense of disability as a site for subversion in one instance does not necessarily translate to an across the board understanding of disability as such.

⁸¹ This is not to say that this is only true of modernist writing or that print culture during modernism did not utilize sound elements visually. But rather to examine the ways in which an emphasis on hearing and sight as both indispensable to understanding modernist aesthetics shapes Winterson’s response to both deafness and blindness within the editorial.

⁸² Armitt suggests that Winterson structures her narratives around longing precisely because the construction of the “P” suitor allows her to unify the narrative while dismantling a unified relationship between the teller and the tales (21).

⁸³ See Showalter and Chesler.

⁸⁴ Refer to chapters one and two for a detailed account of how disability is utilized in “Nausicaa” in Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*.

⁸⁵ While Burch’s article focuses on the way in which pageants are still highly normative in regard to gender roles, I am interested in the ways that these debates demonstrate the imperative of deafness as a linguistic identity and how this contrasts with a mainstream cultural imperative to see deafness as limitation.

⁸⁶ It is interesting to consider that deaf theater, like deaf poetics of today, was once only signed and then voiced and now sign language is re-emerging as a primary mode of deaf performance (Padden 101).

Works Cited

-
- Adams, Alice. *Reproducing the Womb: Images of Childbirth in Science, Feminist Theory, and Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994.
- Alland, Alexander, Jr. *Race in Mind: Race, IQ, and Other Racisms*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002.
- Andermahr, Sonya. "Introduction: Winterson and her Critics" *Jeanette Winterson*. Ed. Sonya Andermahr. London: Continuum Press, 2007.
- Armitt, Lucie. "Storytelling and Feminism" *Jeanette Winterson: A Contemporary Critical Guide*. New York: Continuum Press, 2007.
- Asch, Adrienne and Fine, Michelle. "Nurturance, Sexuality and Woman With Disabilities." *The Disability Studies Reader*. Ed. Lennard J. Davis. New York: Routledge, 1997. 241-259.
- . *Women With Disabilities*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1988.
- Australia. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). *Life Expectancy and Disability in Australia 1988 to 2003*. 1 Sep. 2006. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=6442455830>>.
- Axelsen, Diana E. "Decisions About Handicapped Newborns: Values and Procedures" *The Custom-Made Child?: Women-Centered Perspectives*. Eds. Holmes, Helen B. Betty B. Hoskins and Michael Gross. Clifton: Humana Press, 1981.
- Barnes, Colin and Geof Mercer, eds. *Exploring Disability*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010.
- Barnes, Colin, Mike Oliver, and Len Barton, eds. *Disability Studies Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002.
- Barry, E. "Family United in Deafness Pride." *The Herald Sun* [Durham, NC]. 10 Apr. 2002. news sec.: 3.
- Baynton, Douglas C. "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History." *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*. Ed. Paul K Longmore and Lauri Umansky. New York: New York UP, 2001. 33-57.
- Bell, Quentin. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*. 2 vols. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972.
- Berman, Douglas A. "An Understandable (but debatable?) Child Porn Declination Decision by Federal Prosecutors." *Sentencing Law and Policy*. 1 Dec. 2008. 20 Sept. 2010 <http://sentencing.typepad.com/sentencing_law_and_policy/2008/12/an-understandable-but-debatable-child-porn-declination-decision-by-federal-prosecutors.html>.
- Bishop, John. "Metaphysics of Coitus in 'Nausicaa'." *Ulysses En-gendered Perspectives*. Ed. Kimberly J. Devlin and Marilyn Reizbaum. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1999.
- Bonnie, Selina. "Diabled People, Disability, and Sexuality." *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments*. Eds. John Swain, Sally French, Colin Barnes, Carol Thomas. London: Sage Publications, Ltd. 2004. 125-132.
- Bowman, Marjorie A., Erica Frank, and Deborah I. Allen. *Women in Medicine: Career and Life Management*. New York: Springer-Verlag, 2002. 79.
- Bradbury, Malcolm and James McFarlane, eds. *Modernism: 1890-1930*. Harmondsworth: New York: Penguin, 1976.
- Breedlove, Lynn. *Godspeed*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002.

-
- Briggs, Julia. *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2005.
- Brown, Richard. *Joyce and Sexuality*. London: Cambridge UP, 1985.
- Brownworth, Victoria A. and Susan Raffo. *Restricted Access*. Seattle: Seal Press, 1999.
- Brueggemann, Brenda Jo. Introduction. *Women and Deafness: Double Visions*. Ed. Brenda Jo Brueggemann and Susan Burch. Washington D.C.: Gallaudet UP, 2006.
- Brueggemann, Brenda Jo. *Deaf Subjects: Between Identities and Places*. New York: New York UP, 2009.
- . *Lend Me Your Ear: Rhetorical Constructions of Deafness*. Washington D.C.: Gallaudet UP, 1999.
- Bryan, Willie V. *Multicultural Aspects Of Disabilities*. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1999.
- Burch, Susan. "Beautiful, Though Deaf: The Deaf American Beauty Pageant" *Women and Deafness: Double Visions*. Ed. Brenda Jo Brueggemann and Susan Burch. Washington D.C.: Gallaudet UP, 2006.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge, 1993.
- . *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Campbell, Fiona Kumari. *Contours of Ableism: The Production of Disability and Abledness*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Cavanagh, Sheila L. *Sexing the Teacher: School Sex Scandals and Queer Pedagogies*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.
- Center for an Accessible Society. *Employment Gap Between Working-Age People With and Without Disabilities Continues*. 2007. 4 Sept. 2008
<<http://www.accessiblesociety.org/topics/economics/employment/empgap1107.html>>.
- Charmaz, K., *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time*, Piscataway: Rutgers UP, 1991.
- Chesler, Phyllis. *Women and Madness*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1972.
- Chinn, Sarah E. "Feeling Her Way: Audre Lorde and the Power of Touch" *GLQ*. 9:1-2. (2003):181-204.
- Clare, Eli. *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*. Cambridge: Southend Press, 1999.
- Clements, Luke and Janet Read, eds. *Disabled People and European Human Rights*. Bristol: The Policy Press, 2003.
- Cohen, Cathy J. *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Coles, John. "I Want Tank One!" *The Sun* 15 Jan. 2011. 11 Mar. 2011.
<<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/3352895/Jim-Starrs-wheelchair-needs-a-military-licence.html>>.
- Corker, Mairian. *Deaf and Disabled, or Deafness Disabled?: Towards a Human Rights Perspective*. Buckingham: Philadelphia: Open UP, 1998.
- . *Deaf Transition: Families Communities Identities* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1996.

-
- . *Counseling--The Deaf Challenge*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1994.
- Cunningham, Michael. *The Hours*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1998.
- Daniels, Cynthia R. *At Women's Expense: State Power and the Politics of Fetal Rights*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993.
- Davidson, Michael. "Tree Tangled in Tree: Re-sitting Poetry through ASL." *Signs & Voices: Deaf Culture, Identity, Language, and Arts*. Ed. Kristin A. Lindgren, Doreen DeLuca and Donna Jo Napoli. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet UP, 2008.
- Davis, Hugh, "'How Do You Sniff?': Havelock Ellis and Olfactory Representation in 'Nausicaa,'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 41.3 (2004): 421-440.
- Davis, Lennard J., ed. *The Disability Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- . ed. *The Disability Studies Reader*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- . ed. *The Disability Studies Reader*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- . *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body*. London: Verso, 1995.
- DeMeester, Karen. "Trauma and Recovery in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*." *Modern Fiction Studies*, 44.3. Fall (1998) 649.
- DeSalvo, Louise. *Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.
- Devlin, Kimberly. "The Romance Heroine Exposed: 'Nausicaa' and *The Lamplighter*." *James Joyce Quarterly* 22 (Summer 1985): 383-96.
- . *Wandering and Return in Finnegans Wake*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991.
- Dhont, K.R., Beatty, P. W., & Neri, M. T. *Access to Health Care Services Among People with Disabilities in Managed Care and Traditional Fee-For-Service Health Plans*. Abstracts of the Academy of Health Services Research and Health Policy Meeting 2000, 17. 7 Nov. 2008 <<http://gateway.nlm.nih.gov/MeetingAbstracts/ma?f=102272510.html>>.
- Dirksen, H-Bauman, L. "Body/Text: Sign Language Poetics and Spatial Form in Literature." *Signs & Voices: Deaf Culture, Identity, Language, and Arts*. Ed. Kristin A. Lindgren, Doreen DeLuca and Donna Jo Napoli. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet UP, 2008.
- "Disaboom Survey Reveals 52 Percent of Americans Would Rather Be Dead Than Disabled." 2008. 4 Sept 2008 <<http://www.prweb.com/prweb.php?prid=1082094>>.
- Doan, Laura. "Jeanette Winterson's Sexing the Postmodern" *The Lesbian Postmodern*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Doty, Mark. *Heaven's Coast: A Memoir*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996.
- Duvall, John N. "Descent in the 'House of Chloe': Race, Rape, and Identity in Toni Morrison's 'Tar Baby.'" *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer 1997): 325-349.
- Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke UP, 2004.
- Edwards, Robert *Life Before Birth: Reflections on the Embryo Debate*. London: Hutchinson, 1989.
- Egelko, Bob. "Rapist, Now Quadriplegic, a Threat, Court Rules" *SFGate.com* 7 Apr. 2010. 20 Sept. 2010 <<http://articles.sfgate.com/2010-04-07/bay-area/>>

-
- 20838117_1_inmate-s-release-state-prison-director-prison-in-imperial-county>.
- Ellman, Richard. *Ulysses on the Liffey*. New York: Oxford UP, 1972.
- Finger, Anne "Claiming All of Our Bodies: Reproductive Rights and Disabilities" *Test-Tube Women: What Future for Motherhood?* Ed. Rita Arditti, Renate Duelli Klein, and Shelley Minden. London: Pandora Press, 1989.
- Finney, Brian. "Bonded by Language: Jeanette Winterson's Recovery of the Postmodern World" *Contemporary Literature*. 37:2, 1996. 23-31.
- Fiske, John. *Media Matters: Race and Gender in U.S. Politics*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Forbes, Shannon. "Equating Performance with Identity: The Failure of Clarissa Dalloway's Victorian 'Self' in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway." *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 38.1 (Spring 2005): 38-50.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline & Punish and The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage-Random, 1977.
- French, Marilyn. *The Book as World: James Joyce's Ulysses*. Boston: Harvard UP, 1976.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Collected Works of Sigmund Freud*. Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2008.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979.
- Goodley, Dan. *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. London: Sage Publications, 2011.
- Goodman, Nan. *Shifting the Blame: Literature, Law, and the Theory of Accidents in Nineteenth-Century America*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998.
- Gordon, Lyndall. *Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.
- Gustar, Jennifer. "Language and the Limits of Desire" *Jeanette Winterson*. Ed. Sonya Andermahr. London: Continuum, 2007.
- Guter, Bob and Killacky, John R. *Queer Crips: Disabled Gay Men and Their Stories*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2004.
- Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time & Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York UP, 2005.
- Hall, Matthew. "Disabled Man Banned from Driving Wheelchair Tank." *AOLNews*. 26 Jan. 2011. 11 Mar. 2011 <<http://www.aolnews.com/2011/01/26/disabled-man-jim-starr-banned-for-wheelchair-tank/>>.
- Halperin, David M. *How To Do the History of Homosexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- . *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: and Other Essays on Greek Love*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- . *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Haraway, Donna. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s." *The Haraway Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004. 7-46.
- . "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others." *The Haraway Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004. 63-124.
- . *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

- Harris, Andrea L. *Other Sexes: Rewriting Difference From Wolf to Winterson*. Albany: State University of New York UP, 2000.
- Hawthorne, Evelyn. "On Gaining the Double-Vision: Tar Baby as Diasporean Novel." *Black American Literature Forum*, Vol. 22, No. 1. (Spring, 1998): 97-107.
- Heaphy, Dennis G. "Section 504 the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act in Public Health Education." *Public Health Perspectives on Disability: Epidemiology to Ethics and Beyond*. Eds. Donald J. Lollar and Elena M. Andresen. New York: Springer, 2011. 246.
- Hellerstein, Marjorie H. *Virginia Woolf's Experiments with Consciousness, Time, and Social Values*. Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2001.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *To Have and Have Not*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1937.
- Henke, Suzette S. "Gerty MacDowell: Joyce's Sentimental Heroine" *Women in Joyce*. Ed. Henke, Suzette & Unkeless, Elaine. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982.
- . "Joyce's Naughty Nausicaa: Gerty MacDowell Refashioned." *Papers On Joyce*. 10-11 (2004-2005): 85-104.
- Herbeck, Dan. "Quadriplegic Spared Prison in Porn Case." *Buffalo News* 1 Dec. 2008. 20 Sept. 2010 <<http://www.allbusiness.com/crime-law/criminal-offenses-cybercrime/12001321-1.html>>
- Hockenberry, John. *Moving Violations: War Zones, Wheelchairs, and Declarations of Independence*. New York: Hyperion, 1996.
- Hocking, Clare. "Function or Feelings: Factors in Abandonment of Assistive Devices." *Technology and Disability* (11) 1999 3-11.
- Hoem, Sheri I. "Disabling Postmodernism: Wideman, Morrison and Prosthetic Critique." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 35 (2002): 193.
- Hours, The*. Dir. Stephen Taldry. Perf. Nicole Kidman, Julianne Moore, Meryl Streep, Stephen Dillane. Paramount Pictures, 2002.
- Hussey, Mark. *The Singing of the Real World: The Philosophy of Virginia Woolf's Fiction*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1987.
- Hutchison, Beth and Smith, Bonnie G. Eds. *Gendering Disability*. Piscataway: Rutgers UP, 2004.
- Jackson, Chuck. "A 'Headless Display': Sula, Soldiers and Lynching." *Modern Fiction Studies* 52.2 (Summer 2006): 374-392.
- Jankowski, Katherine. *Deaf Empowerment: Emergence, Struggle, and Rhetoric*. Washington D.C.: Gallaudet UP, 1997.
- Johnson, Mary. *Make Them Go Away: Clint Eastwood, Christopher Reeve, and The Case Against Disability Rights*. Louisville: Avocado Press, 2003.
- Joyce, James. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. Ed. Richard Ellman. New York: The Viking Press, 1975.
- . *Ulysses*. New York: Random House, 1990.
- Kammeyer, Kenneth C. W. *A Hypersexual Society: Sexual Discourse, Erotica, and Pornography in America Today*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008.
- Kendrick, Walter "Fiction in Review" *Yale Review* 81 (1993) 131-33.
- Kleege, Georgina. *Sight Unseen*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1999.
- Kodmur, Danny. "Testing My Faith in Romance." *Bent Voices*. Mar. 2002. 10 Sept. 2010

-
- <http://www.bentvoices.org/bentvoices/kodmur_testing.htm>.
- Krafft-Ebing, Richard Von. *Psychopathia Sexualis*. New York: Stein and Day, 1965.
- Lane, Harlan. *A Journey into the Deaf-World*. San Diego: Dawnsign Press, 1996.
- . "Is There A Psychology of the Deaf" *Constructing Deafness*: Eds. Susan Gregory and Gillian Hartley. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1991.
- . *Mask of Benevolence: Disabling the Deaf Community*. San Diego: Dawnsign Press, 2000.
- . *When the Mind Hears: A History*. New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 1986.
- Laurence, Patricia Ondek. *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991.
- Law, Jules David. "'Pity They Can't See Themselves': Assessing the 'Subject' of Pornography in 'Nausicaa.'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 27 (1990): 219-239.
- Leckie, Barbara. "Reading Bodies, Reading Nerves: 'Nausicaa' and the Discourse of Censorship." *James Joyce Quarterly* 34.1-2 (1996-1997): 65-85.
- Lee, Hermione. *Virginia Woolf*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1996.
- Leonard, Garry M. *Advertising and Commodity Culture in Joyce*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1998.
- Lishner, D., M. Richardson, P. Levine, and D. Patrick. "Access to Primary Health Care Among Persons with Disabilities in rural areas: A summary of the literature." *The Journal of Rural Health* 12:1 (2008) 45-53.
- Llewellyn, Anne, Lorraine Agu, and David Mercer. *Sociology for Social Workers*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008. 173.
- Longmore, Paul K. "Conspicuous Contribution and American Cultural Dilemmas: Telethon Rituals of Cleansing and Renewal" *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* Ed. D. Mitchell & S. Snyder. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997. 134-160.
- . *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2003.
- Love, Jean O. *Virginia Woolf: Sources of Madness and Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- McGee, Patrick. "Joyce's Nausea: Style and Representation in 'Nausicaa.'" *James Joyce Quarterly*, 24.3 (1987) 305-318.
- McKee, Patricia. "Spacing and Placing: Experience in Toni Morrison's *Sula*." *Modern Fiction Studies*. 42 (1996): 1-30.
- McRuer, Robert. *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. New York: New York UP, 2006.
- . "Disability Nationalism in Crip Times." *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*. 4.2 (2010) 163-178.
- Michigan Community Service Commission. "Echolalia – Muscular Distrophy." [michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,1607,7-137-8074_22503_23185-61857--,00.html). 16 Mar. 2011 <http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,1607,7-137-8074_22503_23185-61857--,00.html>.
- Mitchel, David T. and Sharon Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 2000.
- . *The Body and Physical Difference*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Moore, Lisa "Teledildonics: Virtual Lesbians in the Fiction of Jeanette Winterson" *Sexy*

-
- Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*. London: New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Morrison, Toni. Afterword. *The Bluest Eye* New York: Knopf, 1970. 209-216.
- . *Beloved*. New York: Plume, 1988.
- . *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Knopf, 1970.
- . "Nobel Lecture." Nobelprize.org. 17 Oct. 2008 <http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1993/morrison-lecture.html>.
- . *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992.
- . *Sula*. New York: Knopf, 1973.
- . *Tar Baby*. New York: Plume, 1982.
- . "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro American Presence in American Literature." *The Black Feminist Reader* Ed. Joy James & T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. 24-56.
- Moser, Ingunn. "Against Normalisation: Subverting Norms of Ability and Disability," *Science as Culture* 9 (2000) 201-240.
- Mullin, Katherine. *James Joyce, Sexuality and Social Purity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.
- Mundy, Liza. "A World of Their Own: In the Eyes of His Parents, If Gauvin Hughes McCullough Turns Out to be Deaf, That Will Be Just Perfect" *Washington Post*. 31 Mar. 2002. 23 Dec. 2008 <http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:AWNB:WPIW&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F29BD0986EF59BD&svc_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req_dat=0D0CB57AB53DF815>.
- Myers, Linda. "Gap Widens Between Working-Age People With and Without Disabilities in the Workforce, Reports Shows." *Chronicle Online*. 5 Oct 2005. 8 Oct. 2009 <<http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/oct05/disab.work.rpt.html>>.
- My Left Foot*. Dir. Jim Sheridan. Screenplay by Shane Connaughton and Jim Sheridan. Ferndale Films, 1989.
- Myles, Eileen. *Chelsea Girls*. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1994.
- National Service Inclusion Project. "Glossary of Disability and National Service Related Terms." *serviceandinclusion.org*. Mar. 16 2011 <<http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php?page=glossary>>.
- Nemecek, Angela Lea. "Reading the Disabled Woman: Gerty McDowell and the Stigmaphilic Space of 'Nausicaa.'" *Joyce Studies Annual* (2010) 173-202.
- Neri, Melinda T. and Thilo Kroll. "Understanding the Consequences of Access Barriers to Health Care: Experiences of Adults with Disabilities." *Disability and Rehabilitation* 25:2 (2003) 85-96.
- Norris, Margot. *Joyce's Web: The Unraveling of Modernism*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992.
- Nunn, Heather. "Written on the Body: An Anatomy of Horror, Melancholy and Love." *Women: A Cultural Review* 7.1 (1996): 16-27.
- Onega, Susana. *Jeanette Winterson*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006.
- Oliver, Michael. *The Politics of Disablement: A Sociological Approach*. New York: St.

-
- Martin's Press. 1990.
- O'Reilly, Andrea. "Maternal Conceptions in Toni Morrison's *Bluest Eye* and *Tar Baby*: 'A Woman Has to be a Daughter Before She Can Be Any Kind of Woman.'" *This Giving Birth: Pregnancy and Childbirth in American Women's Writing*. Ed. Julie Tharp and Susan Macallum-Whitcomb. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press. 83-102.
- Owo, Yvette. "African-Americans Still Face Discrimination in Schools." *The Daily Texan* [Austin, TX]. 30 April 2004. 5 July 2007 <<http://www.dailytexanonline.com>>.
- Padden, Carol and Tom Humphries. *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard Fellows, 1988.
- . *Inside Deaf Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005.
- Pearce, Lynne. "The Emotional Politics of Reading Winterson." *I'm Telling You Stories': Jeanette Winterson and the Politics of Reading*. Ed. Helena Grice and Tim Woods. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998. 29-40.
- Poole, Roger. *The Unknown Virginia Woolf*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978.
- Poore, Carol. *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.
- Prudente, Teresa. *A Specially Tender Piece of Eternity: Virginia Woolf and the Experience of Time*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009.
- Public Health and Welfare Act. (2006). 42 U.S.C. §1382c (f)(1).
- Pullin, Graham. *Design Meets Disability*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.
- Pyeatt, Matt. "Deaf Lesbians Criticized for Efforts to Create Deaf Child." *CNSNews.com*. 7 July 2008. 16 Mar. 2011 <<http://www.cnsnews.com/node/4977>>.
- Quayson, Ato. "Toni Morrison: Disability, Ambiguity, and Perspectival Modulations." *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation*. New York: Columbia UP, 2007.
- Quinn, Therese and Erica R. Meiners. *Flaunt It!: Queers Organizing for Public Education and Justice*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009.
- Reyes, Angelita. "Ancient Properties in the New World: The Paradox of the 'Other' in Toni Morrison's *Toni Morrison*." *Black Scholar* 17 (1986): 19-25.
- Richards, Thomas Karr. "Those Lovely Seaside Girls." *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.
- Rose, Heidi. "The Poet in the Poem in the Performance: The Relation of Body, Self, and Text in ASL Literature." *Signing the Body Poetic: Essays on American Sign Language Literature*. Ed. H-Dirksen L. Bauman, Jennifer L. Nelson and Heidi M. Rose. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006.
- Rose, Phyllis. *Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf*. New York: Oxford UP, 1978.
- Rosenbaum, S.P., ed. *The Platform of Time: Memoirs of Family and Friends*. London: Hesperus Press, 2007.
- Rothman, Barbara Katz. *The Tentative Pregnancy: Prenatal Diagnosis and the Future of Motherhood*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1986.
- Rubinson, Gregory J. "Body Languages: Scientific and Aesthetic Discourses in Jeanette

-
- Winterson's *Written on the Body*." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*. 42:2 (2001) 218-32. 10 December 08 <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?Ver=1&Exp=12-11-2013&FMT=7&DID=68133733&RQT=309&cfc=1>>.
- Ruotolo, Lucio P. *The Interrupted Moment: A View of Virginia Woolf's Novels*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1986.
- Russell, Bertrand. "Mysticism and Logic." *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1921.
- Russell, Marta. *Beyond Ramps: Disability at the End of the Social Contract*. Monroe: Common Courage Press. 1998.
- Sacks, Oliver. *Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1989.
- Samuels, Ellen. "Fingerprinting the Nation: Identifying Race and Disability in America." Diss. U of California, Berkeley, 2006.
- Sandahl, Carrie. "Performing Metaphors: AIDS, Disability, and Technology" *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 11:3, 49-60.
- Schneider, David M. *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*. Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1984.
- Senn, Fritz. "Nausicaa in James Joyce's Ulysses." *Critical Essays*. Ed. Clive Hart and David Hayman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.
- Serpell, Carla Namwali. "The Ethics of Uncertainty: Reading Twentieth-Century American Literature." Diss. Harvard University. 2008.
- Shakespeare, Tom. *The Sexual Politics of Disability: Untold Desires*. New York: Cassell, 1996.
- Shapiro, Joseph. *No Pity*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1993.
- Sheehan, Aurelie Jane. Rev. of WB by JW. *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 13 (Fall 1993) 208-9.
- Shelton, Jen. "Bad Girl: Gerty, Cissy and the Erotics of Unruly Speech" *James Joyce Quarterly*. 35:1 (1997): 87-102.
- Sherry, Vincent B. *The Great War and the Language of Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.
- Shimizu, Celine Parreñas. *The Hypersexuality of Race: Performing Asian/American Women on Screen and Scene*. Durham: Duke UP, 2007.
- Showater, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.
- Sicker, Philip. "Unveiling Desire: Pleasure, Power and Masquerade in Joyce's 'Nausicaa' Episode." *Joyce Studies Annual*, 14 (2003): 92-131.
- Siebers, Tobin. *Disability Aesthetics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.
- . *Disability Theory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- . "Tender Organs, Narcissism, and Identity Politics." *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*. Eds. Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann and Rosemarie Garland Thomson. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2002.
- Snyder, Sharon L. and David T. Mitchell. Eds. *Cultural Locations of Disability*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

-
- Social Justice Group at the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, University of Minnesota, Ed. *Is Academic Feminism Dead?: Theory and Practice*. New York: New York UP, 2000.
- Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor*. New York: Farrar, Strous and Giroux, 1978.
- Southerland, John. "On the Salieri Express." Rev. of *Written on the Body*, by Jeanette Winterson. *London Review of Books* 24 Sept 1992: 18-20.
- Spalone, Patricia. *Beyond Conception: The New Politics of Reproduction*. Granby: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, 1989.
- Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *The Black Feminist Reader* Ed. Joy James & T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. 57-87.
- Spriggs, M. "Lesbian Couple Create a Child Who is Deaf Like Them" *Journal of Medical Ethics*. 28:283 2002.
- Stapleton, David C. and Burkhauser, Richard V. *The Decline in Employment of People with Disabilities: A Policy Puzzle*. Kalamazoo: W.E. Upjohn Institute, 2003.
- Stowers, Cath. "The Erupting Lesbian Body: Reading *Written on the Body* as a Lesbian Text." *I'm Telling You Stories': Jeanette Winterson and the Politics of Reading*. Ed. Helena Grice and Tim Woods. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998. 29-39.
- Stuart, Andrea. "Terms of Endearment." Rev. of WB. *New Statesman and Society* 18 Sept. 1992: 37-8.
- Taylor – Guthrie, Danielle. *Conversations with Toni Morrison*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1994.
- Thomas, Carol. *Female Forms: Experiencing and Understanding Disability*. Philadelphia: Open UP, 1999.
- Thomas, Sue. "Virginia Woolf's Septimus Smith and the Contemporary Perceptions of Shell Shock." *English Language Notes* 25 (1987): 49-57.
- Thompson, Carlyle V. "'Circles of Sorrow': Decapitation in Toni Morrison's *Sula*." *CLA Journal*. 47:2 (2003): 137-74.
- Thompson, Charis. *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005.
- Thompson, Karen & Andrzejewski, Julie. *Why Can't Sharon Kowalski Come Home?* San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Book Company. 1988.
- Thomson, Rosemarie Garland. *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1997.
- . "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *NWSA Journal* 14.3 (2002) 1-32.
- . "Speaking About the Unspeakable: the Representation of Disability as Stigma in Toni Morrison's Novels." *Courage and Tools: The Florence Howe Award for Feminist Scholarship*. Ed. Joanne Glasgow & Angela Ingram. New York: The Modern Language Association of America. 1990. 238-252.
- . *Staring: How We Look*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.
- Tremain, Shelley, ed.. *Foucault and the Government of Disability*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- . "On the Subject of Impairment." *Disability/Postmodernity: Embodying Disability Theory*. Eds. Marianne Corker and Tom Shakespeare. New York: Continuum, 2002.

-
- . Ed. *Pushing the Limits: Disabled Dykes Produce Culture*. Ontario: Women's Press, 1996.
- Trent, James W. Jr. *Inventing the Feeble Mind: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Trombly, Stephen. *All That Summer She Was Mad: Virginia Woolf, Female Victim of Male Medicine*. New York: Continuum, 1982.
- United Kingdom. National Health Service. *Recognising Disability – A Guide for Managers and Colleagues*. 11 Mar. 2011 <<http://www.lcrchs.nhs.uk/Library/RecognisingDisability.doc>>.
- Villalon, Susan. "Ten Biggest Myths about Social Security Disability." *avvo.com*. 16 Mar. 2011 <<http://www.avvo.com/legal-guides/ugc/ten-biggest-myths-about-social-security-disability>>.
- Vincent, Norah. "Enabling Disabled Scholarship." *Salon.com* 18 Aug. 1999. 20 Sept. 2010 <<http://www.salon.com/books/it/1999/08/18/disability>>.
- Wachsler, Susan. "A Decade Later – Still Femme?" *Visible: A Femmethology*. Ed. Jennifer Clarke Burke. Vol. 1. Ypsilanti: Homofactus Press, 2009. 2 Vols. 49.
- Wendell, Susan. *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Wertz, Dorothy C. "How Parents of Affected Children View Selective Abortion" *Issues in Reproductive Technology: An Anthology*. Ed. Helen Bequaert Holmes. New York: London: Garland Publishing, 1992.
- Weston, Kath. *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991.
- Wingfield, Rachel. "Lesbian Writers in the Mainstream: Sara Maitland, Jeanette Winterson and Emma Donoghue" *Beyond Sex and Romance: The Politics of Contemporary Lesbian Fiction*. Ed. Elaine Hutton. London: Women's Press, 1998.
- Winterson, Jeanette. *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*. New York: Vintage International, 1995.
- . Editorial. *The London Guardian* 9 Apr. 2002. 16 Apr. 2007 <<http://www.jeanettewinterson.com/pages/content/index.asp?PageID=134>>.
- . *Written on the Body*. New York: Vintage International, 1992.
- Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. Vol. 3. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1980.
- . *Mrs. Dalloway*. Orlando: Harcourt, 1925.
- . *On Being Ill*. London: Hogarth Press, 1930.
- . *A Writer's Diary: Being Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Leonard Woolf. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003.
- Wright, David. *Deafness*. New York: Faber and Faber, 1991.
- Wry Crips. *You Shut Me Out*. LGBT Historical Society (archive for Diane Hugs), San Francisco.