Self, Self & Other: Conjoinment and Singleton Identity in Literature and Medicine 1830-Present

Submitted by Joseph Holloway, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* in English, October 2022.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that any material that has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University has been acknowledged.

Signed ……  ……

Abstract

Conjoined twins have simultaneously been feared and vilified, whilst also idealised and fetishised by non-disabled authors and audiences. This split reaction is partially explained by the challenges that conjoinment is perceived to present to key Enlightenment concepts and resulting constructions of selfhood. This thesis collects such (mis)representations 1830-present and contextualises them amidst the social concerns of these periods. It takes a broad definition of texts, analysing fictional and historical accounts of conjoinment, promotional material, medical reports, and legal transcripts. It brings together multiple critical perspectives from intersectional disability studies to analyse these non-disabled responses to conjoinment. It understands these portrayals and real-world engagements as vehicles for projected non-disabled fantasies, twinned with a threatened sense of self and porous bodily boundaries. It interrogates the core of such depictions, showing these portrayals as nested within cumulative layers of anxieties related to the aforementioned ideas.

Chapter one explores the developing idea of a 'normal' body 1830-80, arguing that depictions of conjoinment from this period were motivated by a desire to ontologically distinguish 'normal' audiences from not-'normal' performers. It contextualises this with the rise and decline of the American freak show, and the development of evolutionary and embryological paradigms. Chapter two then examines 1860-1930 to show this imagery as informed by concerns related to 'privacy' – stimulated by the development of the camera and the close 1884 American election. These depictions shifted emphasis from demarcating between conjoined twins and non-disabled people, to managing and controlling the space *between* conjoined twins. In chapter three these concerns are related to the idea of the 'individual' within the context of 1890-1960. Here, there is a pronounced fear of the intersubjectivity of conjoinment whilst America underwent a crisis of 'wholeness' in respect to masculinity. The final chapter, then, shows how conjoined imagery 1970-present extended the normalisation strategies used to resist the feared 'porosity' of conjoinment, and instead presented conjoined twins as two demarcated 'individuals' connected only superficially. This became used to resist the advances of the social model of disability which imbued people with impairments with greater agency, and

thus eroded the psychological defences outlined so far. This imposed ontology thus became presented as self-defeating agency with each twin continuously getting in each other's way.

Overall, I argue that these intertwining concepts have consistently been seen to be incompatible with conjoinment and to also reflect back upon the observing singletons. Crucially, I show that conjoined twins are consistently presented as the ultimate expression of the inverse of these four foundational concepts, as rather than confront their own fallibilities, singletons instead project them into conjoined characters. Through a complex web of repression, exposure, and projection, I show how conjoined public figures and protagonists have been used to articulate these associated underlying social concerns. In doing so, I extend Fiona Campbell's general identification of non-disabled understandings of disability: applying the ideas of "negative ontologies" and "unthought identities" specifically to conjoinment.[1] In doing so I hope to offer a new space for conjoined identity to be reclaimed.

[1] Fiona Campbell "Legislating Disability: Negative Ontologies and the Government of Legal Identities", *Foucault and the Government of Disability, Enlarged and Revised 10th Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Shelley Tremain, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), pp. 108-30, p. 109.

Acknowledgements

Upon reflection, it seems no less than a miracle that I have been able to follow this project through to completion, given the personal challenges and the broader experience of Covid alongside which this thesis was written. Fittingly, as it explores at its heart metaphors of interpersonal reliance and interdependence, there is a long list of supportive others to whom I owe a real debt of thanks. First and foremost are my wonderful supervisors: Professors Laura Salisbury, Corinna Wagner, and Staffan Müller-Wille. The initial formulation – Laura and Staffan – made quite a gamble in accepting me, as whilst there were tangible links to their own research, my chosen materials and methodology were very different from what they were used to. When Staffan was unable to continue to supervise me due to his move to Cambridge, Corinna admirably stepped in, which was very fitting as the germ of the project initially developed from an MA module taught by her, *The Body & Identity,* back in 2018. All three of my supervisors were welcoming, approachable, and knowledgeable: suggesting what would go on to become key texts, helping me integrate into the department, and providing key guidance and support when needed. In particular, Laura gave me extended feedback on (what must have seemed) an endless torrent of drafts, reassured me when imposter syndrome kicked in, and provided the day-to-day general emotional support that I needed. Thank you all for your consistent support and encouragement.

I am sincerely grateful to my Viva panel for their knowledge and reassurance during my examination. Thank you Professors Regenia Gagnier, Jana Funke, and Doctor Harriet Cooper for transforming what could have easily been a terrifying and traumatic experience into one that was stimulating and productive. Whilst all of your questions were illuminating, I want to particularly thank Harriet for her expert insight and assistance in developing this thesis into its next form. I would also like to thank all of my academic colleagues that were not explicitly connected to this project but who nonetheless helped me navigate administrative hurdles, worked with me on unrelated projects or even just for just showing a friendly face around the department. Thank you Professor Jeanette Littlemore for introducing me to metaphor research, for all the doors you opened, and for enabling me to gain my first meaningful citation whilst still

an undergraduate. Thank you Professors Valerie Rumbold and Ian Small for cultivating in me an initial enthusiasm for Literature, and for piquing an interest in an academic career. Thank you Professor Luna Dolezal for introducing me to phenomenology. Thank you Doctor Victoria Sparey for your assistance in all things administrative. Thank you Doctor Jo Esra for showing me how to run seminars with compassion and a full heart. Thank you Doctor Felicity Henderson and Professor Elliot Kendell for your support and guidance whilst teaching at Exeter. Finally, thank you everyone in the department, but particularly Doctor Andrew Rudd and Professor John Plunkett for being friendly faces that are willing to take the time to stop and chat.

I would also like to thank my PhD colleagues for their friendship. Thank you to Iris Gioti, Cebi Subash, Journeé Cotton, Katy Humberstone, Arvian Hesketh and everyone in Queens 157 for making such a friendly office to work in. Thank you Jessie Stanier, Veronica Heney and everyone else in the Wellcome Centre for making me feel so welcomed (no pun intended) and our emergent D&D sessions. Thank you Ash Gannicott, Sophie Smith, Teresa Jane and everyone at the *Exclamat!on* journal and the *Postgraduate Journal of Medical Humanities* for your hard work and professionalism, as well as your additional emotional support in the pub. Thank you to my non-academic friends: the Birmingham lot, the Reading crew and my Sussex buddies, for never asking “when the project will be finished”, for providing genuine interest in our repeated conversations about conjoinment and for continuously encouraging me along this journey. Thank you all.

Most significantly, I would like to thank my family for their unconditional love and support throughout this entire journey. Thanks to my parents, my sister, my nan, my uncles, aunts, cousins, and the Tobenhice. Most importantly, my endless thanks to my partner Anna for everything she has done for me, not least of which is the hundreds of hours spent copy editing this thesis.

List of Contents

List of Illustrations. 7

Introduction. 8

Chapter 1 – 1830-1880: Normalcy, Continuums, & Function. 25

Chapter 2 – 1860-1930: Privacy, Cameras, & Voting Booths. 62

Chapter 3 – 1890-1960: Individuality, Parasites, & Wholeness. 104

Chapter 4 – 1970-Present: Agency, Physical Objects, & Vulnerability. 179

Conclusion. 208

Bibliography. 214

List of Illustrations

Figure 1 – ‘Types’ of Conjoinment. 13

Figure 2 – Samuel Lynch’s Thermometer of health. 29

Figure 3 – National Early Warning Score (NEWS) Chart. 30

Figure 4 – Promotional Poster of Chang and Eng Bunker Exoticised. 36

Figure 5 – Promotional Poster of Chang and Eng Bunker Aggrandised. 44

Figure 6 – Promotional Photograph of Millie-Christine McKoy. 72

Figure 7 – *Carte de Visite* of Millie-Christine McKoy. 80

Figure 8 – Cropped Medical Photograph of Millie-Christine McKoy. 84

Figure 9 – Modified Illustration of Millie-Christine McKoy. 87

Introduction

Do conjoined twins ever feel alone? Do they share one body, or have one each? What happens when one of them dies? When they have sex is it incest, group sex, adultery, or all three? These are some of the lurid questions which are not explored in this thesis, but which have nonetheless driven the creation of a disproportionate number of conjoined protagonists compared to the number of real world examples over the past 200 years. There is something about the atypical anatomy of conjoinment that stimulates speculation about the mind-body connection, the relationship between individuals and society, and normative structures within civilization. This preponderance of conjoined imagery is thus a fruitful source for critical disability studies and forms a perfect case study for both how meaning gets invested in the disabled body, as well as how these fictional depictions affect popular, medical, and even legal understandings of conjoinment.

According to Christine Quigley's encyclopaedia of conjoinment, fewer than one in 200,000 live births are conjoined,[2] yet a wide range of authors – including Alexander Pope, Mark Twain, and Irvine Welsh[3] – have all written texts that feature conjoined protagonists or that feature conjoinment as a prominent theme. Medical dramas such as *Grey's Anatomy* regularly feature conjoined twins as an opportunity to philosophise about the human condition, and farcical conjoined characters appear in such popular television shows as *The Simpsons*, *South Park*, and *Rick and Morty*, as well as in the children's film *Monsters University*, the comic *Hitman*, and many other examples.[4] Through an

[2] Christine Quigley, *Conjoined Twins: An Historical, Biological, and Ethical Issues Encyclopedia* (Jefferson: Mcfarland & Company, 2006), p. 71.

[3] Alexander Pope and others, *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus,* ed. by Charles Kirby-Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950); Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1900); Irvine Welsh, *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2014).

[4] 'Don't Stand So Close to Me', *Grey's Anatomy*, American Broadcasting Company, 30 November 2006; 'This Magic Moment', *Grey's Anatomy,* American Broadcasting Company, 12 January 2012; 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together', *Grey's Anatomy*, American Broadcasting Company, 1 May 2014.'Treehouse of Horror VII', *The Simpsons,* Fox Network, 27 October 1996; 'Conjoined Fetus Lady', *South Park,* Comedy Central, 3 June 1998; 'Interdimensional Cable 2: Tempting Fate', *Rick and Morty*, Adult Swim, 1 October 2015;

analysis of the various ableist idealisations, romanticisations, and vilifications in these kinds of depictions of conjoinment, this thesis attempts to explain this intensity of response by exploring the impact that conjoined twins have had upon four foundational Enlightenment concepts associated with selfhood: 'normalcy', 'privacy', 'individualism' and 'agency'. I show that conjoinment has frequently been understood as disrupting all of these ideas at a fundamental level, manifesting as either a sense of threat, or as fertile ground for a radical and paradigmatic shift in understanding.

I focus on the period running from the 1830s to the present day, across American and British literature, medical texts, press reports, and other forms of media. Broadly speaking, this thesis sits within literary and critical disability studies as I wish to use recent advances in these fields to inform these popular understandings of conjoinment, and vice versa. Each chapter examines the interactions between prominent conjoined twins, texts featuring conjoinment, and cultural connections between the two for a given period. This is not to imply a static or single understanding of any of the given concepts, nor that conjoinment only interacted with these concerns within the timeframe of each chapter. Instead, this thesis engages with Foucauldian "interruptions": specific sites of interest in relation to how each concept was perceived at different times and places.[5] In focusing upon these sites I explore the connections that were made to conjoined twins (fictional or real) at the time. As the chapters overlap chronologically, so too do the concepts, and it would be problematic to keep the analysis of each rigidly separate – an echo of the 'separation surgery' practice often performed on conjoined twins when not medically required – that this thesis problematises. Instead, the collective anxieties related to each concept are shown to augment and expand upon what has been examined before, mingling like the conjoined twin characters in the 1977 Brian Aldiss novel *The Brothers of the Head*: "two trees growing where only one should be, branches hopelessly intertwined, distorting each other".[6]

Monsters University, dir. By Dan Scanlon (Walt Disney Studios, 2013); Garth Ennis, *Hitman*, illustrated by John McCrea (Burbank: DC Comics, 2009).

[5] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2002), p .4.

[6] Brian Aldiss, *Brothers of the Head* (London: Pierrot Publishing Limited, 1977) p. 43.

Throughout this thesis, my overriding concern is to show how conjoined twins are presented as problematic for singletons (non-conjoined people) in relation to the four target concepts – 'normalcy', 'privacy', 'individuality', and 'agency' – and to then show the various psychological defences that are unconsciously employed against these disruptions. Consistently, conjoinment is shown to complicate surface-level understandings of who is considered 'normal' or an 'individual', and thus to also reflect back on the observing singletons. In considering how conjoined twins stress the boundaries of these concepts, singletons realise that their own lives also struggle to qualify for these understandings. Singleton reactions to conjoinment thus ironically help to further deconstruct these concepts, revealing the discrepancy between the 'normal' and the average and emphasising that no one can unproblematically be considered an 'individual' because of both our global interdependence on each other and the porous physicality of our bodies. Similar revelations for basic understandings of 'privacy' and 'agency' are also prompted by meditations on conjoinment; are the daily lives of singletons really that much more 'private' than the constant companionship of conjoined twins? Can conjoinment lead to a form of natural synergy that provides greater agency than non-disabled singletons?

Of course, many people throughout the long history of literary engagement with conjoinment have resisted the challenges to singleton thought that reflections on conjoinment have prompted. As part of the history traced here, there is also a demonstration of the various ways that conjoined twins have had their differences exaggerated: as 'freaks'; as a disempowered and demonised, conceptually leaky and infectious Other; and even as a physical threat to singletons and wider society. This practice is regularly exposed as a knee-jerk reaction from singleton authors, who are disturbed by the disruption to foundational beliefs about themselves that the phenomenon of conjoinment has provoked. In doing so, these portrayals attempt to purge the singleton author and presumed singleton reader of any such association, and to project these concerns into conjoined twins as the ultimate embodiment of such.

Within academia, conjoinment has broadly been approached via: (i) medical accounts of surgical innovations made on conjoined twins, (ii) historical analysis of specific twins, (iii) as part of a social history of the nineteenth-

century side-show, or (iv) within disability studies more broadly. Uniquely spanning these four, Christine Quigley has produced an encyclopaedia of conjoined twins, providing entries that correspond to all of these areas.[7] Many of the social questions related to conjoinment that are pursued in this thesis are outlined by Quigly, but as a result of the massive scope of her work, these explorations are necessarily short. In contextualising the various singleton responses to conjoinment through focusing on specific historical moments, this thesis usefully supplements Quigley's encyclopaedia, expanding the detail of enquiry without sacrificing her scope. Furthermore, Ellena Deeley's fascinating recent thesis on conjoinment is one other key exception to the ways that conjoined twins have been approached within academia.[8] Drawing on recent innovations within critical disability studies and postcolonial studies, this important work explores how diasporic writers have "mobilised conjoined twins as figures to explore tensions and ambivalences surrounding notions of a common identity".[9] Here, the complex and layered uses of conjoined imagery by singleton authors is explored at length, unpicking some of the interactions between medical and international development discourses.

Relatively contemporary medical texts that engage with conjoinment generally, however, focus largely on the unique biochemistry of conjoined twins, and do not directly address the more social concerns surrounding conjoinment in which they nonetheless participate. For example, some articles detail unique issues experienced when preparing conjoined twins for surgery, such as ensuring an adequate distribution of anaesthetic across both twins, or on safely using a defibrillator.[10] As these examples show, the more social concerns around individuality and bodily ownership that are the focus of this thesis are clearly evoked in these articles, but never approached directly. To make this

[7] Quigley, *Conjoined Twins.*
[8] Ellena Deeley, 'Contested Subjects: The Configuration of Conjoined Twins in Contemporary World Literature and Screen Media' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2021).
[9] Deeley 'Contested Subjects' p. 2.
[10] H. G. Lenard and F. J. Schulte, 'Polygraphic Sleep Study in Craniopagus Twins (Where is the Sleep Transmitter?)', *Journal of Neurology and Neurosurgical Psychiatry*, 35.1 (1972), 756-62; Edmund C. Bloch and Joannes H. Karris, 'Cardiopagus in Neonatal Thoracopagus Twins: Anesthetic Management', *Anesthesia and Analgesia*, 59.4 (1980), 304-7; Ruenreong Leelanukrom and others, 'Anaesthetic Experiences in Three Sets of Conjoined Twins in King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital', *Pediatric Anaesthesia*, 14.2 (2004), 176-83; Brian Cummings and others, 'Case 33-2017: 22-Month-Old Conjoined Twins', *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 377.17 (2017), 1667-77; Sandra Spijkerman, 'Defibrillation of Conjoined Twins', *Pediatric Anesthesia*, 8.4 (2013), 760-1.

point explicit: the ‘porosity’ of conjoinment is frequently used in popular narratives to evoke disgust or fear, and cited as evidence that conjoined twins cannot have any form of individuality, privacy, or bodily autonomy. It is this same enmeshing of digestive, venous, or even circulatory systems that allows for ingested or administered substances to spread from one twin to the other – as well as electrical current from a defibrillator. Thus, whilst these medical texts are reporting on innovations, or attempting to solve problems with a direct pragmatic application and which may ensure that future conjoined twins receive better healthcare, they unwittingly participate as part of the same cultural engagement with conjoinment. As a result, they often unquestioningly recirculate ableist bias and harmful narratives about conjoinment, even coded in the medical jargon that aims to provide as objective and transparent a communication as possible. This is clearly apparent in the most common focus of these medical texts: the assessment of and preparation for separation surgery. This thesis argues against separation surgery for non-emergency situations, and even when it is an emergency, not without previous full consent. Despite the considerable risk of death or impairment involved in these procedures, many medical texts unquestioningly assume that this practice is always the appropriate course of action, even when there is no physiological need.[11] Others argue positively for separation whatever the cost to the twins.[12] One such text strays beyond the composed clinical language to purely comment on the “intolerable” nature of being conjoined, showing that whilst these evaluations on whether to operate or not are grounded in medical rationale, they are nonetheless informed by social attitudes to disability generally and an inability to imagine alternate modes of embodiment as valid forms of existence.[13] As a result, whilst medical texts have provided a useful way into understanding the physiology of conjoinment – for example the established ‘fission’ theory of how conjoinment occurs and the below (fig. 1) means of depicting the distinct ‘types’ of conjoinment – medical texts nonetheless are primary sources for this thesis generally.[14]

[11] Nicole Parent-Weiss and Bruce Phillips, 'Custom Halo Superstructure Applied Preoperatively to Craniopagus Conjoined Twins: A Case Report', *Journal of Prosthetics and Orthotics*, 18.4 (2006) 120-3

[12] Spijkerman 'Defibrillation of Conjoined Twins'.

[13] Lewis Spitz, 'Conjoined Twins', *Prenatal Diagnostic*, 25.1 (2005), 814-9.

[14] Asma Mian and others, 'Conjoined Twins: From Conception to Separation, a Review', *Clinical Anatomy*, 30.3 (2017), 385-396.

Figure 1 – 'Types' of Conjoinment[15]

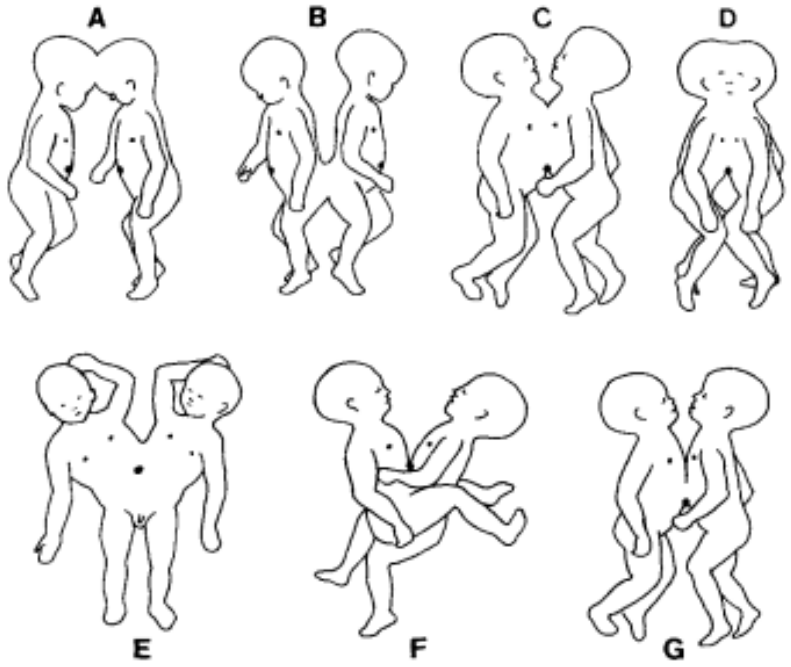


Fig. 1. **A:** Craniopagus. **B:** Pygopagus. **C:** Thoracopagus. **D:** Cephalopagus. **E:** Parapagus. **F:** Ischiopagus. **G:** Omphalopagus. (After Arey, '65.)

Historical accounts of specific conjoined twins, on the other hand, engage more carefully with some of these social issues but are usually localised, and are thus unable to draw parallels across conjoinment more broadly. Additionally, different twins have received varying levels of scholarly attention. As perhaps the most famous of conjoined twins, the Bunker twins have received half a dozen biographies, whilst others such as the Gibb twins have garnered little to no historical attention. Early examples of historiological engagement with the Bunker twins are more baldly biographical, such as Hunter's *Duet for a Lifetime* and Wallace and Wallace's *The Two.*[16] Whilst drawing from a plethora of primary sources, these biographies have a tendency to uncritically recirculate unverified myths and lore about the Bunker twins, such as when Hunter states as fact a legend about why the twins came to choose their surname.[17] Similarly, as argued by Ellen Samuels, both Martell's biography of the McKoy twins *Millie-Christine*, and Frost's biography of both the McKoy

[15] Rowena Spencer, 'Conjoined Twins: Theoretical Embryological Basis', *Teratology*, 45.6 (1992), 591-602, p. 592

[16] Kay Hunter, *Duet for a Lifetime: The Story of the Original Siamese Twins* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1964); Irving Wallace and Amy Wallace, *The Two: A Biography* (London: Cassell, 1978).

[17] For a dispelling of Hunter's legend see Joseph Orser, *The Lives of Chang and Eng: Siam's Twins in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), pp. 131-6.

twins and the Hilton twins *Conjoined Twins in Black and White*[18] "uncritically accept accounts of the twins from media and promotional documents, which casts doubt upon some of [their] conclusions".[19] These biographies both make the mistake in assuming that the texts produced in the name of the twins as part of their promotional material – such as *The History and Medical Description of the Two-Headed Girl* or the *Biographical Sketch of Millie-Christine, the Carolina Twin* – are unfiltered self-expression by the twins in question.[20] As shall be covered in more detail later on, when these texts were produced the McKoy twins were recently freed slaves touring with their former masters, and it is instead much more helpful to interpret these documents as artefacts of that dynamic, at least co-authored with their former 'owners' if not fully produced by them.

More harmfully, Wallace and Wallace stray beyond the historical record to put thoughts and feelings into the mouths of the Bunkers. For example, when writing about the historically verified visit that the twins made to a Doctor Simpson, who later was quoted in the press remarking on the impossibility of a safe surgical separation, Wallace and Wallace infer that "Chang and Eng may have reflected on Simpson's remark [...] bitterly realizing that neither the doctor nor any normal person could really imagine or understand the anguish of being bound to another for a lifetime".[21] In doing so, the authors are reading their own values towards disability into the text, using the lack of evidence to suggest pity for the twins through their seemingly authoritative (yet imagined) voice, using this to reaffirm associations betweens conjoinment and a lack of independence.

More recently produced historical accounts of the Bunker twins are a lot more rigorous, such as Orser's *The Lives of Eng and Chang*, and Huang's

---

[18] Joanne Martell, *Millie-Christine: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* (Winston-Salem, John F. Blair, 2000); Linda Frost, *Conjoined Twins in Black and White: The Lives of Millie-Christine McKoy and Daisy and Violet Hilton* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).
[19] Ellen Samuels, 'Examining Millie and Christine McKoy: Where Enslavement and Enfreakment Meet', *Signs,* 37.1 (2011), 53-81 pp. 59-60.
[20] [Anon.], *History and Medical Description of the Two-Headed Girl: Sold by Her Agents for Her Special Benefit, at 25 Cents in "Her Own Particular Way" by "One of Them".* ([N.P.] Warren, Johnson & Co, 1869) <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/vj7y5hww> [Accessed 14/9/22]; [Anon.], *Biographical Sketch of Millie Christine, the Carolina Twin. Surnamed the Two-Headed Nightingale and the Eighth Wonder of the World*, (Cincinnati: Hennegan & Co, 1892) <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/carolinatwin/carolinatwin.html> [Accessed 14/9/22].
[21] Wallace and Wallace, *The Two*, p. 268.

Inseparable. Both of these provide a detailed exploration of how these twins engaged with early American stereotypes of Asian people and complicated developing understandings of race as a black/white binary in nineteenth-century America.[22] Understandably, however, these are very specifically focused on their subject, and are not in a position to draw comparisons with how different conjoined twins were treated at different times or in different places. This thesis is able to draw such parallels, by focusing on representations of conjoinment as its broad overarching theme, and incorporating an intersectional and cultural understanding of disability. In this, it extends these insights made into the racially liminal identities of the pair towards other hybrid aspects of singleton representations of their conjoined lives.[23]

This cultural and intersectional understanding of disability owes much to the social model of disability, but is also extended to incorporate recent developments within critical disability studies. The social model was started by activists in America and the UK in the 1970s and 80s, and formalised by Oliver and other academics in the 90s.[24] The merits and disadvantages of the cultural augmentation to the social model of disability are discussed in more detail in the final chapter with respect to conjoinment, agency, and the built environment, but broadly speaking, what defines the approach of this thesis is the recognition that, in the words of Anne Waldschmidt: "disability is both socially and culturally constructed".[25] Disability is understood here to be not produced solely by a biological state (the medical model), nor merely by the ableism of the built environment (the social model). The "dualist social model" of disability is understood by Tom Shakespeare and others as "over-simplified and reductionist".[26] Instead, returning to Waldschmidt, disability is understood as "a discourse or as a process, experience, situation, or event" that may or may not

[22] Yunte Huang, *Inseparable: The Original Siamese Twins and their Rendezvous with American History* (New York, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2018).
[23] Alice Hall refers to an 'interactionist' model of disability which similarly "positions disability studies as intersecting with other theories of race, gender, class, age and sexuality", see 'Disability and the Short Story', *The Edinburgh Companion to the Short Story in English*, ed. by Paul Delaney and Adrian Hunter (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 346-62, p. 347.
[24] Mike Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement* (New York, Red Globe Press, 1990).
[25] Anne Waldschmidt, 'Disability Goes Cultural: The Cultural Model of Disability as an Analytical Tool', *Culture — Theory — Disability: Encounters Between Disability Studies and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Anne Waldschmidt, Hanjo Berressem and Moritz Ingwersen (Bielefield: Transcript Verlag, 2007), 19-28, p. 24.
[26] Tom Shakespeare and others, 'Rehabilitation as a Disability Equality Issue: A Conceptual Shift for Disability Studies?', *Social Inclusion,* 6.1 (2018), 61-72, p. 63.

occur even given both impairment and ableism.[27] The social model of disability is not sufficient by itself, as whilst it is a vast improvement upon the Foucauldian "medical gaze" it nonetheless replicates body-negative dualist structures.[28] The main success of the social model was in severing the deterministic ties both between body and culture, as well as between impairment and disability. The social model, however, ironically understands disability to be solely grounded in societal responses to impairment, and as argued by Kay Inckle, it "depoliticises the body and relegates it to a private realm untouched by critical theory".[29] Bill Hughes and Kevin Paterson agree, arguing that it "concedes the body to medicine and understands impairment in terms of medical discourse".[30] The social model approaches disability in an abstract, disembodied way, too far separated from the lived experience of disabled people. In contrast to this, this thesis helps to "recapture this lost corporeal space without returning to the reactionary view that physicality determines social status".[31] Therefore it incorporates phenomenological explorations of disability generally and conjoinment specifically such as that provided by Zaner, Toombs, Leder, Carel and many others.[32]

Whilst this thesis engages with the literature in this way to address the lacunae left between the medical model and the social model, it is also intersectional in its approach to avoid the mistakes levelled at the historiological interactions with conjoinment outlined above. Rosemary Garland-Thompson's concept of 'misfits' as well as Judith Butler's understanding of 'precarity' connect this approach to the embodied and cultural approach to disability presented previously.[33] 'Misfitting' explores how "the particularities of

[27] Waldschmidt, 'Disability Goes Cultural' p. 25.
[28] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic,* trans. by Alan Sheridan, (Abingdon-on-Thames, Routledge, 2003), p. 9.
[29] Kay Inckle 'Debilitating Times: Compulsory Ablebodiedness and White Privilege in Theory and Practice', *Feminist Review,* 111.1 (2015), 42-58, p. 46.
[30] Bill Hughes and Kevin Paterson, 'The Social Model of Disability and the Disappearing Body: Towards a Sociology of Impairment', *Disability & Society,* 12.3 (2010), 325-40, p. 326.
[31] Hughes and Paterson 'The Social Model of Disability' p. 326.
[32] Richard Zaner *The Context of Self: A Phenomenological Inquiry Using Medicine as a Clue* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1981); Drew Leder *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Kay Toombs 'The Lived Experience of Disability', *Human Studies,* 18.1 (1995) 9-23; Havi Carel *Phenomenology of Illness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[33] Rosemary Garland-Thompson 'Misfits: A Feminist Materialist Disability Concept' *Hypatia*, 26.3 (2011), 591-609, p. 591; Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York, Verso, 2006), p. 134.

embodiment interact with their environment in its broadest sense" and hence "offers a dynamic encounter between flesh and world".[34] The valuable lived experience of disabled people is thus regained to supplement the social model, alongside feminist and critical race studies, analysis of temporalities, and spatialities. This choice of approach also enables me to analyse overarching conceptual developments, such as the cultural development of the concept of the 'normal' body alongside more specific moments of interaction, such as the creation of the voting booth in chapter two. This diachronic yet localised methodology provides unique benefits and disadvantages – discussed in the conclusion to this thesis – but it is important to note that this is a deliberate choice made to try and capture as much of the intersectional experience of disability and conjoinment as possible.

In this sense, the concept of 'misfitting' is itself also an apt metaphor for the overarching methodology of this thesis. Particularly in chapter 3, I draw on overlapping critical approaches that are often presumed to be incompatible, such as phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and Foucauldian historicization. To add further complexity, all of these approaches have historically had a difficult theoretical relationship with disability. For example, despite the efforts of Deborah Marks, Brian Watermeyer, and others in using psychoanalysis to shed light onto the underlying mechanisms of ableism, many disabled people distrust psychoanalysis because of its historical connection to institutionalisation.[35] My approach, however, embraces this awkward configuration of lenses, not prioritising any approach over the others, but instead using the tensions and inconsistencies to reveal the blind-spots of each. This may not be a normative mode of reading, but it is nonetheless grounded in my understanding of disability generally, and conjoinment specifically. Disability is inherently interdisciplinary and simultaneously a relational, cultural, and physical phenomenon. My incorporation of these seemingly incompatible approaches fittingly forms a misfit, as "the problem with a misfit, then, inheres not in either of the two things but rather in their juxtaposition, the awkward attempt to fit them

[34] Garland-Thompson, 'Misfits' p. 592.
[35] Deborah Marks, *Disability: Controversial Debates and Psychosocial Perspectives* (London, Routledge, 1999); Brian Watermeyer, 'Disability and Psychoanalysis', *Disability and Social Change: A South African Agenda,* ed. by Brian Watermeyer, Leslie Swartz, Theresa Lorenzo, Marguerite Schneider and Mark Priestly (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2006) 31-44.

together".[36] This approach draws on Cooper's similar incorporation of 'misfitting' into her own methodology where she is "working at the intersections of different approaches" as "it is fitting for a book in disability studies to value mis-fitting at the level of theory as well as in interpersonal encounters".[37] It takes a methodological misfit to effectively study misfitting.

Relatedly, Butler argues that "everyone is precarious, and this follows from our social existence as bodily beings who depend upon one another for shelter and sustenance" and that "our precarity is to a large extent dependent upon the organization of economic and social relationships".[38] Disability is most strongly connected to race and gender in the increased level of precarity that it provides, and critical disability studies, gender studies, and critical race studies are most fruitful when they are considered intersectionally, as "precarity is indissociable from that dimension of politics that addresses the organization and protection of bodily needs. Precarity exposes our sociality, the fragile and necessary dimensions of our interdependency".[39] Additionally, as the controversial concept of 'Temporarily Abled Bodies' has shown, whatever our existing level of precarity, all non-disabled people are only one accident, disease, or even period of time, away from the additional precarity of disability.[40]

Stemming from this understanding of disability, a quick note on terminology is necessary. Throughout, the established term 'singleton' is used to refer to people not conjoined, in order to avoid the implication that to be a singleton is a more 'normal' or 'natural' body schema than conjoinment. For similar reasons, this thesis follows critics such as Dan Goodley and Rebecca Lawthom in using the term 'non-disabled people' instead of 'abled'.[41] I use the term 'disabled' strictly to refer to a combination of impairment, ableism (active or passive, as in the case of the built environment) and cultural modes of

[36] Garland-Thompson, 'Misfits', p. 593.
[37] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* p. 10.
[38] Judith Butler, 'Precarious Life: Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation', *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy,* 26.2 (2012), 134-51, pp. 148.
[39] Butler 'Precarious Life: Vulnerability' p. 14.8
[40] Margrit Shildrick, 'Living on, Not Getting Better', *Feminist Review,* 111.1 (2015), 10-24, p. 13.
[41] Dan Goodley, and Rebecca Lawthom, 'The Disavowal of Uncanny Disabled Children: Why Non-Disabled People are so Messed Up Around Childhood Disability', *Disabled Children's Childhood Studies: Critical Approaches in a Global Context,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 164-179, p.164.

perception and presentation. Where people have impairments but which – because of circumstance or cultural variation – they are not disabled, I refer to them as ‘people with impairments’ to avoid implying that their identity is solely made up of their impairment(s). In addition, all of the foundational concepts associated with selfhood (‘normalcy’, ‘privacy’, ‘individuality’, ‘agency’) and their derivatives are placed within inverted commas in this thesis. This is because whilst these terms are complex and dynamic, they are nonetheless often used simply and as if they are unproblematic in the primary sources analysed. The added punctuation indicates that I do not agree with the use of the term as discussed, and it should be clear from context whose perspective I am implicitly criticising. Almost always this will be that of a non-disabled singleton or associated publications.

The main historical conjoined twins explored in this thesis are as follows: Chang and Eng Bunker (1811-1874); Millie-Christine McKoy (1851-1912), Margaret and Mary Gibb (1912-1969) and Daisy and Violet Hilton (1908-1969). The personal histories of these prominent conjoined twins neatly span the timeline of the thesis between them, and other less famous conjoined twins referred to briefly are also incorporated to develop the analysis. Chang and Eng were Xiphopagus conjoined twins (two bodies fused only between navel and breastbone). They were born in China but were ‘discovered’ after their family moved to Siam (Thailand) by a British munitions merchant called Hunter; hence, ‘Siamese Twins’ quickly became interchangeable with ‘conjoined twins’. Although the Bunker twins were economically self-sufficient – using gifts bestowed upon them by the Siamese Royal Court to provide capital to build a thriving duck and egg business – Hunter perceived a financial value in the twins as curiosities, drew up a contract (in English, which the twins could not speak yet), and engaged Captain Abel Coffin to take them to America in 1829. Upon arrival in America they were exhibited widely in Boston and then New York, consistently drawing large crowds. When their contract expired, they confronted Coffin, and asserted their independence as free agents. They subsequently exhibited themselves across America, amassing a large fortune, which they used to retire, buy land, and build houses in rural North Carolina, marrying a couple of white American sisters and raising two large families. Their fortunes were decimated by the American Civil War, as both twins supported and

invested in the Confederate cause, and so at the conclusion to this conflict they returned to the stage. These shows, however, were nowhere near as popular as those of the 1830s, and the twins faced steadily dwindling audience numbers until they retired for the second time

Millie-Christine McKoy (1851-1912) were black pygopagus conjoined twins (joined back to back by the sacral region), born as slaves in the same state in which Eng and Chang resided (North Carolina). From a very young age (two), the McKoy's were exhibited by a variety of 'owners' that kidnapped and traded the twins, disputing each other's claims to their 'ownership' and suing the other 'owners' for the right to display them for profit. With the emancipation proclamation (1863) and death of their 'owner', the McKoy twins toured themselves across America and Europe with financial backing from the surviving family of their previous 'owner'. After amassing a large fortune, they had a long retirement back in the American South.

Daisy and Violet Hilton (1908-1969) were two white British pygopagus conjoined twins born within a few years of Millie-Christine's death (1912). Their mother abandoned them at birth, and their adoptive mother began exhibiting them for profit from this point onwards. They first found success in the American circus and sideshow circuit, but went on to achieve high notoriety as vaudeville, and eventually film stars, and were among the first international celebrities in a sense that we would recognise today. They played themselves in the cult horror film *Freaks*, (1932) and then later *Chained for Life* (1952) that was a fictionalised film portrayal of their lives. Later Broadway shows based on them include *Twenty Fingers, Twenty Toes* (1989) and *Side Show* (1997). Their personal lives were constantly remarked upon by the press and they had a great deal of difficulty in securing marriage licences.

Margaret and Mary Gibb (1912-1952) were white pygopagus conjoined twins born in Massachusetts, USA. They also performed across America and Europe, but never achieved the fame of the other twins examined here. Nonetheless, many press articles were written about them, especially when Margaret became engaged, and – like the Hilton twins – they faced great

resistance in finding a court that would grant them a marriage licence (they were never successful).

Abby and Brittany Hensel (1990-present) are white American dicephalic parapagus conjoined twins (two heads, one torso, two arms, two legs). The twins have received a lot of media attention in recent years, mostly in the forms of chat show appearances such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show* (1996) and in documentaries such as *Joined for Life* (2003). The twins have separate driving licences and both work as primary school teachers in America.

Whilst other fictional sources are mentioned in passing, the following recent texts featuring conjoinment are repeatedly referred to across this thesis. All are created by singleton non-disabled authors. *Attachments* by Judith Rossner (1977) is a novel narrated by a singleton protagonist (Nadine) and her life-long personal history with American conjoined twins Amos and Eddie. Suffering from undiagnosed trauma following the sudden death of her parents, she sees in the conjoined twins an embodiment of the intimacy and unity that she has lost. She stalks the twins, eventually introduces herself, marries one, and convinces her best friend to marry the other. All four raise a large family together but Nadine grows jealous of the (emotional) connection between Amos and Eddie, and pressures them into non-emergency separation surgery. This only reinforces the twins' need for each other, however, and the text ends with Nadine leaving everyone else.

Brothers of the Head (1977) is a tragic depiction of conjoinment by science-fiction author Brian Aldiss. The narrator tracks the lives of a pair of fictional British xiphopagus rock-star conjoined twins 'Tom' and 'Barry' that constantly fight, and are manipulated by their manager and record label. Late in the text, Barry slips into a comatose state as a result of heart problems. He receives a mechanical heart to help pump the blood around both twins but never regains consciousness. Tom gradually develops the ability to operate the limbs previously controlled exclusively by Barry, but his sovereignty is contested as the third head between them begins to 'wake up' and 'possesses' Barry's body. In the interval between Barry slipping into a coma and the dormant head awakening, however, Tom relates to his body similarly to a non-disabled

singleton, with undisputed motor control over it in its entirety. The book concludes with a physical fight between the part of the body controlled by the dormant head, and that controlled by Tom, ending in a pyrrhic victory as Tom gruesomely cuts out the artificial heart, killing all three.

The Girls (2005) is a sensitive novel by Lori Lansens written from the perspective of the American conjoined protagonists, Rose and Ruby. This text is a combination of both of their imagined autobiographies, structured through alternating chapters that are each written from the perspective of one twin. The twins focus on different aspects of their shared lives, start at different points in time, and write at different paces, creating an overall story that is initially fragmented but which gains clarity as the novel progresses.

One (2014) is a young adult novel by Sarah Crossan that uses verse form to explore questions of identity, elevating the voice of the teenage protagonist through the use of specific placement of individual line breaks to continuously engage with and develop the wider themes of the text. It is told from the perspective of the British teenage conjoined twin Grace as she starts school, encounters hostility, makes friends, experiences family crises, and finally undergoes separation surgery from her twin Tippi. As such, it deals with fairly mature themes, such as ableism, alcoholism, and the death of Tippi in an emotional climax.

The Secret History of Las Vegas by Chris Abani (2014) is a detective thriller featuring a pair of black American conjoined twin eco-terrorists that are the prime suspects of a murder investigation. The twins are contained in a holding cell for almost the length of the text, and the central plot revolves around whether the authorities can arrange for a modified MRI scanner to examine the relationship between the twins before they have to be released without charge. The MRI scanner eventually arrives, the use of which reveals the shocking twist that one of the twins is actually a parasitical twin, and that the other has been using them (apparently since birth) as a ventriloquist's dummy.

The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins (2016) is a thriller by Irvine Welsh where the (singleton) protagonist Lucy narrates her experiences with the

singleton Lena as the two use the (in-universe) conjoined twins Amy and Annabelle as a recurring means of expressing their growing infatuation with each other. Lucy and Lena are described as polar opposites that despise each other but are nonetheless sexually attracted to each other, and jointly engineer a chain of extraordinary events that ensure they are 'forced' to remain near to each other (including consecutive kidnappings of each other). Eventually they admit their desire, explicitly presenting their dynamic in relation to the conjoined twins.

Whilst these main texts all are written after 1976, they nonetheless represent a wide range of genres and audiences and are used to show the transformative way in which conjoinment has been presented across the period examined. These longer literary texts are, of course, augmented with many short stories, satirical accounts, and poetry featuring conjoinment from the previous two centuries, and a cultural tissue of texts engaging with conjoined imagery is analysed alongside the underlying singleton anxieties that unconsciously form such presentations. These six main texts will, however, be repeatedly referred back to in the chapters that focus on earlier periods, especially chapter three. This is because the different anxieties and concerns examined across the four chapters all inform and draw from those gone before: they are all vertically stacked upon each other like layers of paint in a watercolour. These six most contemporary examples draw on the sum of all of these concerns, helpfully articulating and illustrating anxieties that were keenly felt at the times examined in the early chapters but which were not as succinctly expressed.

Unfortunately, none of these texts are written out of lived experience of conjoinment as they are all produced by non-disabled singleton authors. This is a regrettable quality about the archive in general: as whilst much has been written about conjoined twins, there is little surviving writing by historical conjoined twins themselves. This thesis originally intended to partially address this lack, as plans were made at the start of the product to interview conjoined twins and the friends and families of conjoined twins, and to ethnographically use these voices to inform the conclusions drawn out from my literary evidence. Unfortunately, the Covid 19 global pandemic interrupted these plans and they

could not be rescheduled. Whilst this posed a significant limitation for this thesis, I resolved to instead study how singletons understand and present conjoinment. This is a different approach than originally intended but nonetheless helps address the problem of disability representation. As Harriet Cooper argues in her exploration of the relationship between depictions of disabled childhood and personal experience of the same: “before we can begin to *resist* disabling discourses, gazes and practices, we first need to understand how they have *made* us, and what they have done to our voices”.[42] The object of study is thus not the reductive ‘what is it like to be conjoined?’ but a more expansive ‘how are conjoined twins presented, interpreted, and Othered?’, as a first step towards undoing these associations. In addressing this question instead, and in studying singleton fantasies and thought experiments about conjoinment, I am also better situated to understand how this has affected the development of these foundational concepts that are related to selfhood in America and Europe.

[42] Harriet Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child: Unsettling Distinctions* (Routledge: Abingdon-on-Thames, 2020), p. 1.

Chapter 1 – 1830-1880: Normalcy, Continuums, & Function

This chapter examines the various ways that conjoined twins were found to be disruptive to the developing concept of 'normalcy' and the ableist psychological defences employed against these transgressions over the period 1830-80. It also traces the impact that this has had on our current understanding of the term. Normalcy is a governing force in our lives, yet one that is strangely resistant to analysis. In her early historicization of the concept of a 'normal child' Harriet Cooper makes this clear, stating that "the concept of normalcy is both so pervasive in Anglo-American culture and yet so difficult to characterize and yet so hegemonic in terms of its operations".[43] Precisely because of the rich and varying antonyms for 'normal' ('pathological', 'abnormal', 'extraordinarily bodied' etc), each with their own host of associations, I use the slightly awkward term not-'normal' throughout for neutrality and consistency. Through exploring the histories of the conjoined Chang and Eng Bunker (1811-1874) as well as Millie-Christine McKoy (1851-1912), I will show how the different academic lenses applied to conjoined twins – from teratology to evolutionary biology and embryology – articulate a fundamental anxiety about the relationship between people with typical and atypical anatomies. This concern was that the Othered conjoined twins are 'not abnormal enough'. The existing means of interpreting these people was found to be insufficient, as it presented them as excessive examples of 'normal' people, and thus on an ontological continuum with them. This was permissible for people whose difference was obvious, but as the conjoined twins examined here were at times able to 'pass' as non-disabled, such a means of interpreting them was seen to be inadequate. Following this, this chapter argues that the arrival of a new means of interpreting conjoined twins specifically (but also not-'normal' bodies generally) during this period was thus primarily motivated by a desire to instead create a binary ontological distinction between not-'normal' bodies and those that were staring at them. In so doing, it weaves a complex analysis incorporating the rise of evolutionary

[43] Harriet Cooper, 'The Oppressive Power of Normalcy in the Lives of Disabled Children, *Disabled Children's Childhood Studies: Critical Approaches in a Global Context*, ed. by Tille Curran and Katherine Runswick-Cole (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013), 136-51, p. 137.

thought, the taxonomical shift towards 'function' and some of the nuances between disability and performance.

As argued by Peter Cryle and Elizabeth Stevens, the term 'normal' was not used in scientific contexts until the 1820s,[44] although – as identified by Canguilhem when analysing Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (1751-1772) – there is evidence of "almost all the concepts utilised in a modern treatise on normalisation, with the exception of the term 'norm'".[45] Clearly, the concept of 'the normal' did not arise *ex nihilo,* and it is worthwhile briefly tracing some of the "pre-normal"[46] strains of thought that contributed to the development of this term as these will also be relevant as we examine conjoinment's contribution to this process later in the body of the chapter. First, I touch on Geometry – as this is the field from which the term 'normal' first appeared – before surveying some of the realms in which bodies labelled not-'normal' were most frequently encountered, such as medicine, teratology, and taxonomy.

The earliest recorded uses of 'normal' were geometrical, as Diderot and d'Alembert's Encyclopédie (1751-72) defined "a normal line in geometry is what one otherwise and more ordinarily calls perpendicular".[47] As examined by Caroline Warman, the first "figurative meaning"[48] of 'normal' relates to the 'Écoles Normales'. These were French teaching schools that had a strict moral and behavioural code, and according to Matthais Graham, the earliest dates back to 1684[49]. Whilst 'normal' was still an obscure enough term to warrant special attention in the 1866-77 edition of the *Grand Larousse du XIXe Siècle* dictionary – including in its definition that "this word is new in the language, and demands from the person who hears it for the first time a certain effort of attention"[50] – it seems clear that the conceptual parallels between perpendicular

[44] Peter Cryle and Elizabeth Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 1.
[45] Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* trans. by Carolyn Fawcett & Robert Cohen (New York: Zone Press, 1991), p. 184.
[46] Caroline Warman, 'From Pre-Normal to Abnormal: The Emergence of a Concept in Late Eighteenth-Century France', *Psychology and Sexuality,* 1.3 (2010), 200-13, p. 200.
[47] Cited in Warman. 'From Pre-Normal to Abnormal' p. 203.
[48] Warman, 'From Pre-Normal to Abnormal' p. 200.
[49] Matthias Graham, 'St. John Baptist de la Salle', *The Catholic Encyclopedia* <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08444a.htm> [Accessed 10/10/22].
[50] Warman, 'From Pre-Normal to Abnormal' p. 203.

lines and morally ‘upright’ actions provide an orientational metaphor.[51] Similarly to the dead/sleeping metaphor of an ‘upstanding citizen’, the ‘normal’ in ‘Écoles Normale’ metaphorically describes both a straight line (target domain) and morally acceptable behaviour (source domain). This case is strengthened through Warman’s exploration of the antonym ‘écart’ (to swerve), which in Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie* is described as “generally applied to physics” (i.e through the literal meaning) but that “it is transported into the figurative realm, with relation to straight or upright reason […] such as the direction which it is proper to follow in order to avoid blame”.[52] Relatedly, the Foucauldian notion of the “deviant” metaphorically understands someone outside of the “normative matrix” as an object that diverts from a set/predicted path, as someone that has additional (known or unknown) forces to the ordinary acting upon them, or as a statistical outlier.[53]

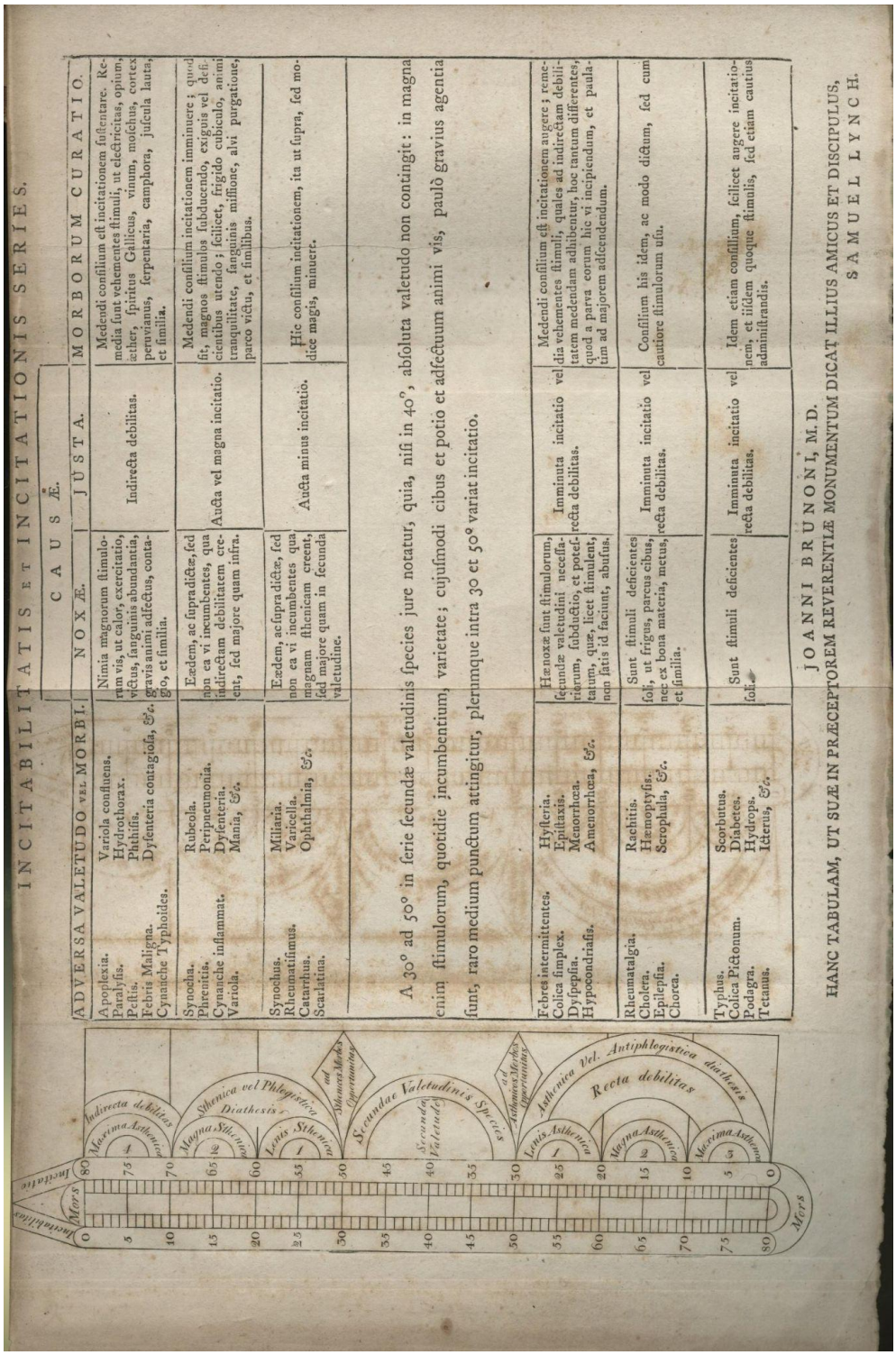
Whilst the observable outward behaviour of pupils at the Écoles Normales could be monitored and compared to a strict ‘perpendicular’ code, by contrast the crude devices that physicians used to monitor patients made it difficult to identify a ‘normal body’. Thus, even though this was one of the main disciplines through which professionals encountered not-‘normal’ bodies (the others being teratology and anatomy), medical models were relatively slow to adopt the idea of ‘medically normal’. Following Canguilhem,[54] it is clear that whilst various pathological states were identified, the antithesis to this – of perfect health – was hard to describe. Each patient had/has their own range through which it would be considered pathological or non-pathological: for example, the pulse of a sick person will probably be well outside what is ordinary for them, but another person may have a similar pulse yet may not consider themself unwell. Reflecting this quandary, many physicians of the

[51] In cognitive linguistics, orientational metaphors are deeply rooted conventional metaphors that imagine spatial/structural relations figuratively, and are used to underpin a variety of expressions, such as ‘happy=up/sad=down’ (‘feeling down’, ‘boosted my spirits’, ‘walking on air’). These are so entrenched in our language that we often don’t recognise them as metaphorical. See George Lakoff, and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
[52] Warman, ‘From Pre-Normal to Abnormal’ p. 206.
[53] Michel Foucault *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. by Alan Sheridan, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 299. The “normative matrix” is a shorthand for those that are not Othered because of their gender, race, sexuality, disability, class, if they are transgender, or personal politics. See Margaret Thornton, *Dissonance and Distrust: Women in the Legal Profession,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 25.
[54] Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* pp. 47-91.

eighteenth century presented a continuum between sickness and health, with health operating somewhere in the middle, and either extreme of the various spectrums pathologized. According to Palmira Fontes da Costa, in connection with this, eighteenth-century classifications of anomalous bodies such as Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle,* identified examples "by excess, by defect, or by transposition of parts".[55] The teratological/anomalous body was a 'normal' one that had too many or too few of something, and similarly, the pathological body was one whose 'normal' processes were operating too much or too little. For example, as argued by Sven Hansen, Scottish physician John Brown's (1780) overarching system of medicine held that all diseases were either caused by too much stimulation (named "asthenic diseases") or too little ("sthenic diseases"), with health somewhere in between these two poles.[56] Providing a visualisation of this relationship between sickness and health, in 1805 Samuel Lynch created a literal thermometer (fig 2) that tracked 'degrees' of excitability, linearly mapping these against different symptoms of various diseases. These organisational metaphors of health 'norms' are very much still with us, as National Early Warning Score (NEWS) (fig 3) charts hold a surprisingly similar layout. These are currently used in hospitals to determine the level of care/supervision that a patient needs; such as whether or not they need to be moved to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Clearly then, the "pre-normal" body in medicine was ontologically similar both to the pathological body as well as within current medical paradigms; differing only by degree and not in kind.

[55] Palmira Fontes da Costa, *The Singular and the Making of Knowledge at the Royal Society of London in the Eighteenth Century* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. 125.
[56] Sven Hansen, 'John Brown's System of Medicine and Its Introduction in Denmark Around 1800', *Dansk Medicinhistorisk Arbog,* 44.1 (2016), 31-47, p. 31.

Figure 2 – Samuel Lynch's 'Thermometer of Health'. The large central row describes general health and the rows above and below describe symptoms of diseases attributed to the corresponding increase or decrease in 'stimulation', linearly connecting the pathological body to the non-pathological body ontologically as a literal difference of degree.[57]



[57] Samuel Lynch, *The Elements of Medicine, or A Translation of the Elementa Medicinae Brunonis, with Large Notes, Illustrations, and Comments* (Philadelphia: William Spotswood, 1791), [n. page]. <https://archive.org/details/8407596.nlm.nih.gov> [Accessed 14/6/22].

Figure 3 – A National Early Warning Score (NEWS) chart. This is used to track a patient's position in relation to 7 physiological parameters and to help visualise the level of care and supervision required. As with Lynch's 'Thermometer of Health,' the 'normal' state is portrayed as a range within a spectrum, with each extreme pathologised.[58]

Physiological Parameters	3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Respiration Rate (BPM)	≤8		9-11	12-20		21-24	≥25
Oxygen Saturations (%)	≤91	92-93	94-95	≥96			
Any Supplemental Oxygen		Yes		No			
Temperature (°C)	≤35		35.1-36.0	36.1-38.0	38.1-39.0	≥39.1	
Systolic Blood Pressure (mmHg)	≤90	91-100	101-110	111-219			≥220
Heart Rate (BPM)	≤40		41-50	51-90	91-110	111-130	≥131
Level of Consciousness				A			V, P or U

[58] Image taken from Activ8rLives.com <https://www.activ8rlives.com/support/data-collected/cardiovascular-and-respiratory/national-early-warning-score-news> [Accessed 16/9/22].

Seventeenth and eighteenth century models for anatomy developed along analogous lines, as it was not possible to talk of a taxonomically 'normal body' until the innovation of species fixism in the 1750s. Thanks to this shift within anatomy as a discipline, according to Cryle and Stevens "the concept of the normal state first took shape in anatomical writing" and, crucially, "this change occurred about a decade before physiologists began to use the term".[59] This necessary development for the 'normal state' – species fixism – was a rebuttal of various folk beliefs about how animals changed across and within generations. For example, fleas were thought to spontaneously generate out of dust, and the giraffe was believed to be a hybridization of a camel and a leopard. In countering this collection of folk and pre-scientific beliefs, species fixism instead constructed 'species' as a static, stable, category and is argued by Ron Amundson to be a "progressive scientific development".[60] With this idea of a stable 'normal state' came the adaptive and evolutionary paradigms, as "without the recognition of systematic patterns among otherwise-unchanging species, evolutionism would have little to explain".[61] Species fixism imposed taxonomic order among the chaos, producing tangible groups of individuals which could then be compared and connected to each other via taxonomical, and evolutionary models. This rigid and fixed idea of species underpinned the anatomical 'normal state', which described biological components that were highly developed and specialised: defining characteristics of this stable category. Components demonstrating the 'normal state' of an individual clearly demonstrated both their function and how they connected to the body schematic of the organism they were within. In their analysis of the early history of the 'normal', Cryle and Stevens agree stating that "they were certainly not 'perpendicular' in the eighteenth-century sense of the word 'normal', but [...] these were organs that were fully in their place".[62] As an example, Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire's first use of this 'normal state' implied a structural development across the stable class of mammals. In *Philosophique Anatomique* he resisted the anthropocentric tendencies of his time to show the human as deviating from the mammalian standard, and in a footnote commenting on the

[59] Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy,* p. 27.
[60] Ron Amundson, *The Changing Role of the Embryo in Evolutionary Thought: Roots of Evo-Devo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 37.
[61] Amundson, *The Changing Role of the Embryo,* p. 39.
[62] Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy,* p. 32.

hyoid bones in humans remarked that they are “different from the normal state of mammals”.[63] Just as organs in their ‘normal state’ were ‘fully in their place’ so too the species that did not correspond to patterns observed across their genus – humans – were not (pre-)normal. Before the innovation of species fixism, possible fluctuations provided an indeterminability that left no room for taxonomic ‘normality’ to gain purchase; in the same way, pathology as a state unique to each individual experiencing it could not allow for a medically (objective) ‘normal’ body.

To take the ‘pre-normal’ taxonomic concept of species fixism up to the start of this thesis: until the 1830s anatomists generally committed to no stronger ontological beliefs about their various taxonomic models than what Amundson calls “cautious realism”.[64] That is to say that even those who believed these models were accurate (i.e that they reflected the natural world) did not, or could not, explain *why* the world was organised into these groups. This pattern was disrupted by George Cuvier’s ‘Embranchement’ theory (1817), where he committed to taxonomic realism and claimed that his embrachements (forks) accurately represented how the natural world was divided. Crucially, his theory of ‘functionalism’ also claimed to explain why the world was organised thus. As with species fixism before it, under ‘cautious realism’ there could be no taxonomically ‘normal body’. This is because without confidence that the model was an accurate schema for the natural world, anomalies were only an artefact of the gap between the model and reality. Anomalies were only temporarily anomalous, until a new model could be introduced that incorporated them. After Cuvier’s taxonomic realism, however, individuals that transgressed these boundaries or were outside the accepted model stayed beyond it, as the model produced the taxonomically ‘normal’ and not-’normal’ in all but name.

Relatedly, the use of ‘medical statistics’ was being debated in the French Academies during this ‘pre-normal’ period. ‘Anti-numerists’ argued that statistical methods had no place in medicine, as they relied upon the fallacy of an ‘average patient’ or illness, and removed the nuance from diagnosis. Undoubtedly, this suspicion was connected to the belief that health norms were

[63] Cited in Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy,* p. 31.
[64] Amundson, *The Changing Role of the Embryo,* p.33.

relative, as discussed earlier. What was the benefit of keeping treatment logs or averaging success rates if the biometrics of each patient have their own individual range through which they may be considered 'normal' or not, and if treatment may work on one patient but not another? In his 1803 *Du Degré de Certitude de la Médecine* (*The Degree of Certainty in Medicine),* for example, Pierre Cabanis argued that modern medicine had developed away from brute probabilistic methods, and that whilst a good doctor should be guided by their experience, an averaged diagnosis or treatment should not be imposed upon an individual patient.[65] Each patient's experience was unique, and to do so would be akin to taking the average shoe size for a town and only making shoes of that size. Instead, the doctor should be (in Cabanis's opinion) informed by "a kind of instinct perfected by habit".[66] Cryle and Stevens refer to this attitude as "instinctive, artistic certainty against the kind that was subject to calculation".[67] As the other strands of the 'pre-normal' came together, however, this resistance to medical statistics diminished over the first half of the nineteenth century. Coinciding with the first exhibitions of Eng and Chang Bunker in 1830, Quetelet's composite figure of *L'homme Moyenne* (average man) was published in 1835,[68] and Galton's eugenics-driven population studies were conducted in the 1870s and 1880s as the McKoy twins were at their professional peak.[69] Both of these examples will be examined later in this chapter, but they demonstrate a differing relationship between the 'normal' and the 'average'; whilst Quetelet's 'L'homme Moyenne' idealised the average as a normalising force to aim towards, Galton's population studies used the average as something that individuals could be compared against.

Altogether then, this chapter joins the development of the 'normal body' as it began to crystallise into something approaching its current meaning: 'normal' as healthy, socially conforming, and the average or most frequent. As remarked previously, the word 'normal' had not yet entered common discourse, and a combination of 'natural', 'ordinary', and 'perfect' instead plugged this

[65] Cited in Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy,* p. 74.
[66] Pierre Cabanis *Du Degré de Certitude de la Médecine* (Caille et Ravier: Paris, 1803) p. 67.
[67] Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy,* p. 75.
[68] Adolphe Quetelet, Sur l'homme et le Développement de ses Facultés ou Essai de Physique Sociale, (Paris: Bachelier, 1835).
[69] See, for example, Francis Galton, 'Regression Towards Mediocrity in Hereditary Stature', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* 15.1 (1886), 246-63.

lacuna. The ‘medically normal body’ became theoretically grounded, and people with atypical anatomy could be parsed as not-‘normal’ for the first time – concordant with the prominence of the Bunker and later McKoy twins. This was achieved through a combination of the forces surveyed previously: (i) the ‘figurative’ application of the geometric term to sociological spheres via the Écoles Normales, (ii) the taxonomical groundwork of the ‘normal state’, (iii) the acceptance of medical statistics, and (iv) the eugenic disciplines that used the average to try and produce an ‘improved norm’. As a result of all of this, the constructed identities of conjoined twins and other disabled people became closely associated with both pathology and social transgression. As shall be made clear shortly, from the 1830s to the 1880s, evolutionary and embryological discourses both drew on and informed these understandings. This analysis is in accordance with the ‘cultural turn’ of critical disability studies as presented by Walschmidt, as these paradigms “structur[ed] culture and at the same time are structured and lived through culture”; they helped produce a theoretical binary between ‘normal’ bodies and the Othered people that they viewed on stage or encountered on the street.[70]

This chapter thus provides a crucial intervention by broadly showing how the development of the ‘normal’/not-‘normal’ binary was driven by concerns that there was no fundamental nor ontological distinction between the performers and their audiences. Specifically, it focuses on the press reports of Chang and Eng before and after their period of naturalisation, showing how these reports demonstrated anxiety over the lack of an impermeable boundary between the extraordinarily bodied and those who stared at them. Finally, this chapter shows how these feared transgressions motivated academic and popular writers to map a fundamental binary between the emerging ‘normal’ and not-’normal’ bodies using the terminology of evolutionary and biological developments.

1830-50: Exotic and Ordinary, Average and Aggrandized

As part of this developing understanding of ‘normal’ and not-’normal’ people, when Eng and Chang Bunker were first brought to America (1829), they were exhibited by Captain Abel Coffin in accordance with the default ‘exotic’ mode of

[70] Anne Waldschmidt, ‘Disability Goes Cultural’, p. 20.

viewing anomalous bodies: both their costumes and performance exaggerated their cultural difference to their audience (fig 4). This mode reinforced a polemic relationship between those being presented and those watching. Besides the Bunker twins, other exhibits from this period included “Zulu warriors”, “Wild-men of Borneo”, and “Cannibal-Pygmies” that took the most dramatic exaggerations of newly encountered Othered peoples, and re-circulated existing stereotypes about their cultural difference. Therefore, when Captain Abel Coffin exhibited the Bunker twins, their differences were exaggerated beyond that of their conjoinment in both their acts and in the promotional material, depicting them in accordance with Asian stereotypes. They were shown in traditional dress including the clichéd ‘queue’ hairstyle – where the front of the scalp is shaved and the hair at the top of the head is grown long and braided – set against a backdrop with mismatched architecture and flora whose only commonality was that it was unfamiliar to an American audience (see fig 4). In their acts they performed acrobatics and feats of strength reminiscent of what John Tchen identified in his history of early Asian-Americans – the Chinese “tumblers and combatants” that had previously performed in New York.[71] Under this form of presentation, according to Robert Bogdan’s social history of the nineteenth-century American sideshow, “showmen presented the exhibit so as to appeal to people’s interest in the culturally strange, the primitive, the bestial, the exotic”.[72]

[71] John Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture 1776-1882* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 97.
[72] Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) p. 105.

Figure 4 – Promotional Poster of Eng and Chang Bunker Exoticised. Note the emphasis on culturally 'other' elements in their faces, dress and background.[73]

[73] [Anon], 'Chang and Eng the Siamese Twins, in an Oriental Setting', Lithograph (London: [n. Pub], 1830). <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/gb7v5t8h> [Accessed 19/2/19].

In contrast, when the twins exhibited themselves in later life (1849) they strongly resisted both this mode and instead conformed to what had largely replaced it: what Bogdan refers to as the 'aggrandized' mode. Under this model, "with the exception of the particular physical, mental, or behavioral condition, the freak was an upstanding, high-status person with talents of conventional and socially prestigious nature".[74] This dual engagement with both the 'exotic' and 'aggrandized' modes interacted with the developing concept of the 'normal' body in different ways. The 'exotic' mode relied upon a polemic binary between the performing bodies and those that were viewing them, as according to Rosemarie Garland-Thompson's analysis of the practice of staring at not-'normal' bodies, it "seduces with exaggeration, creating a sensationalized, embellished alien".[75] As Bodgan has shown, this mode operated even though this binary was continually undermined by the practice of 'humbug', a loaded term that refers to a performed difference as American non-disabled actors imitated disability and/or cultural differences. Chang and Eng undermined the ontological binary between 'normal' and not-'normal' from the other direction, however, providing the final stress to this already creaking construction. They assimilated into North Carolina white society (1839-49), before exhibiting themselves independently in a closer approximation of the 'aggrandised' between 1849 and 1870.

In this early promotional material overlapping strands of difference were mapped onto Chang and Eng's bodies, as their somatic difference became mixed with their racial Other-ness, reinforcing how they were doubly not-'normal'. Prior to the arrival of the Bunker twins in 1829, few Americans were familiar with Asian people, and as discussed by Yunte Huang in his history of the Bunker twins, the U.S Census Bureau did not even have a category for Chinese people until 1870.[76] The few interactions most Americans would have had with Asian people before Chang and Eng would have been exaggerated reports from missionaries, that – like the exoticized performances – habitually exaggerated cultural differences and primed Americans to Other Asian people

[74] Bogdan, *Freak Show,* p. 108.
[75] Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, 'The Politics of Staring: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography', *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities Vol I* ed. by Sharon Snyder, Brenda Brueggemann, Rosemarie Garland-Thompson (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002), 56-75, p. 66.
[76] Huang, *Inseparable*, p. 200.

as a source of entertainment, such as the 'Chinese Tumblers' referred to above.[77] As a measure of the extent that Asians were Othered in this period, Tchen points to the fact that five years after the Bunker twins first performed, Afong Moy, 'the Chinese Lady', was exhibited in 1834.[78] Unlike Chang and Eng, Moy did not have any form of bodily difference, and, according to contemporary descriptions, for her act she "talks and counts in Chinese and eats with chopsticks".[79] Simply being Asian was sufficiently interesting to draw an audience, such was the curiosity resulting from this early cultural Othering. If Moy's cultural difference alone was so entertaining to the American public, it is little wonder that the Bunkers, with their twin level of difference, achieved such notoriety.

During this period, the press continuously referred to the Bunker twins as 'ordinary'. Here, 'ordinary' did not just have today's connotations of 'unremarkable'. 'Ordinary' stems from the Latin word for 'orderly' (ōrdinārius) as does the French equivalent (ordinaire), etymologically implying that the root of what is 'ordinary' is connected to what is expected or anticipated.[80] What is 'ordinary' here is not what is most common, but is instead what conforms to what is expected to be seen. This use demonstrates some of the pre-'normal' context outlined in the opening section of this chapter, as the twins were first exhibited after the first anatomical use of 'normal state' but before the idea of a 'medically normal' body developed, and long before 'normal' became a commonly used word. The use of 'ordinary' here recognises that the spectacle of the twins is unprecedented and newsworthy, but still conforms to conventional standards in other respects. The twins were received as culturally ordinary, as their American viewers saw in Chang and Eng what they expected to see. They were received via the 'exotic' mode of exhibition and their audience was primed by previous encounters to see Asian people as a source of entertainment. Further, bodily difference was already associated at the time with being Asian, and their conjoinment only reaffirmed this for their audience. Tchen, for example, has shown that at this time that Chinese people were

[77] See Tchen *New York Before Chinatown,* p. 104.
[78] See Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown,* p. 103.
[79] George Odel, *Annals of the New York Stage – Volume V (1843-1850)* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 1931) p. 431.
[80] 'Ordinary, *adj.* and adv.' *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/132361?rskey=hSzt5o&result=2#eid> [Accessed 14/2/19].

commonly depicted as "'long-headed' and 'conic', that is, resembling the microcephalic individuals in sideshows", while in cartoons of the popular press, Chinese performers had their foreheads shaved with the angles exaggerated to give them the appearance of a sloping forehead.[81] Individuals from these other cultures were thus expected to look not-'normal', and two Siamese men with bodily differences conformed to this narrative.

What is also captured in the repeated 'ordinary' remarks in these newspaper reports, however, is a sense that whilst it would be 'normal' for these Asian performers to be not-'normal', the twins are not different *enough.* Chang and Eng's performances and costumes exaggerated their double Otherness; far from the 'monstrous' or 'anomalous' presentations we might expect, they were commonly described as 'perfect' and 'ordinary'. For example, whilst in the *Sussex Advertiser* the reporter exclaimed over the "extraordinary manner" in which they are connected, and they are also later portrayed as having "ordinary motions".[82] They were described as "much shorter than the average run of youths in this country", but this was attributed to the understanding that "the average height of their countrymen is less than that of Europeans".[83] The *Morning Post,* in turn, noted that the twins had "a gait like other people".[84] The *Leicester Journal* remarked quite matter-of-factly that "a union of the bodies of twins by various parts is not an unusual experience".[85] Similarly, the *Liverpool Post* introduced the twins as "of moderate stature" and compares them favourably to "Human monsters [that] are generally very short-lived and sickly", and instead attested to their "perfect health".[86] Interestingly, this reaction is also commonly found in today's discourses surrounding conjoined twins. Alice

[81] Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown*, p. 100. Interestingly, he argues that this stereotype had undue longevity, as "The notion of deformed heads being related in some way to Chineseness continued well into the twentieth century, with the use of the term Mongoloidism or Mongoloid idiots to describe those with Down's syndrome", and the British slang 'mong/monger' (meaning ugly) continues to refer to this.
[82] [Anon.], 'The Siamese Youths', *The Sussex Advertiser or Lewes and Brighthelmston Journal*, 30 November 1829, p .4, <https.link.gale.com/apps/doc/CL3241272299/BNCN> [Accessed 19/09/19].
[83] [Anon.], *'The Siamese Youths', The Sussex Advertiser,* p. 4.
[84] [Anon.], 'The United Siamese Twins', *The Morning Post*, 23 November 1829, p. 4, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/R3209813367/BNCN> [Accessed 19/09/19].
[85] [Anon.], 'The Siamese Youths', *Leicester Journal and Midland Counties General Advertiser*, 27 November 1829, p. 2, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CL3241148545/BNCN> [Accessed 19/09/19].
[86] [Anon.], 'The Double Siamese Youths', *Liverpool Mercury,* 13 November 1829, p. 8, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BC3203940093/BNCN> [Accessed 19/09/19].

Dreger, in examining the responses of nurses to conjoined twins, identifies the preponderance of the exact same terms, writing that they commonly "express amazement as just how *normal* and *healthy* they seem in every way but the obvious", the surprise itself an expression of how closely the opposite was expected.[87]

What was troubling for nineteenth-century audiences was clearly that the twins were too similar to those watching them, despite the efforts of the 'exotic' mode of presentation and in contrast to other anomalously bodied exhibits of the time. They possessed a "gait like other people" and, indeed, when their joint was obscured they were easily mistaken for two brothers standing close together. At the same time what had been originally thought to be disabled Other bodies were revealed to be non-disabled un-Othered performances of disability. P. T. Barnum's bestselling autobiography (1855) outlined how many of his prize not-'normal' performers were 'humbugs' (people that faked/performed impairments) and not actually impaired.[88] The 'exotic' mode flourished as it exaggerated difference and corresponded to the developing desire to see 'normal' and not-'normal' bodies as in binary opposition, but the phenomenon of humbug completely undid this effect. Similarly, Chang and Eng's somatic difference – one half of their Othering factors – was shown to neither inconvenience them, nor to be a useful means of demarcating them from their not-Othered audience, further eroding the distinction between the two camps.

This ontological mingling of the 'normal' with the not-'normal' presented a profound sense of unease. Such "psychical uncertainty" – the inability to determine from a quick glance whether a subject is similar to the viewer or not – is a signature aspect of Ernst Jensch's initial description of the uncanny.[89] In his later account, Sigmund Freud also defined the uncanny as deriving from indeterminacy, as he modified Jensch's 'uncertainty' to 'unconcealed' instead. Here, the uncanny is understood to result from an uncovering of what has been

[87] Alice Dreger, *One of Us: Conjoined Twins and the Future of Normal* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 37.
[88] Phineas Barnum, *The Life of PT Barnum, Written by Himself* (London: Sampson Low, Son, & Co, 1855).
[89] Ernst Jensch, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny', trans. by Roy Sellars, *Uncanny Modernity,* ed. by Jo. Collins and John Jervis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 219.

present all along. In experiencing the Freudian uncanny, we are reminded of our own repressed thoughts being brought to the surface. For Freud, the uncanny evokes the fear of a sudden exposure of what is hidden about ourselves, and this is experienced as threatening as we imagine being made vulnerable by the revelation of our own secrets. Crucially, this reveals anxiety towards the 'continuum' model between 'normal' and not-'normal' bodies being discussed so far. The uncertainty around the Othered status of the aggrandized Bunker twins and the 'humbug' performers of disability shows that the 'normal'/not-'normal' binary is in fact a spectrum, and thus the audience may also be (if only partially) not-'normal'. The performances of Chang and Eng, whilst successful, were tinged with this uncanniness, as there was not a clear enough distinction between what was seen to be patently not-'normal' (two Asian conjoined twins) and their white non-disabled audience. The uncanniness of the Bunker twins' 'aggrandized' performances operated as a reminder of the duality inside each individual, as a split between the not-'normal' repressed self and the 'normal' repressing self. This was intuitively visualised through their presence: two 'normal' bodies rendered not-'normal' by their intimate connection, but nonetheless perceived as 'perfect' and 'ordinary'.

In evidencing this ontological collapse of the distinction between Othered and not-Othered bodies, the press registered their surprise and did their best to maintain the distinction between these two types of people, and thus to sustain the binary. The 'perfect' health of Chang and Eng, as well as their capacity to function at a basic human level was newsworthy in its own right, so tightly woven was the association between cultural difference and pathology. Similarly, the assurance that they were "much shorter than the average run of youths in this country" is qualified with a comparison to Westerners as "the average height of their countrymen is less than that of Europeans", emphasising the twins' typicality whilst safely distancing them from the expected reader.[90] This invocation of the 'average' helps shed light upon an important aspect of the development of the 'normal' body briefly mentioned in the introduction to this chapter: the role of medical statistics. As the exhibition of Eng and Chang coincided with the rise of the anatomical/teratological 'normal state' – essentially a qualitative concept – so too the height of their fame corresponded with the

[90] [Anon.], '*The Siamese Youths', The Sussex Advertiser,* p. 4

establishment of this quantitative counterpart within medicine. The calculus of probabilities has its own long and complex history well beyond the scope of this thesis but – as alluded to in the introduction – in 1837 a key intellectual debate at the Académie de Médecine appeared around the validity of using medical statistics when diagnosing individual patients.[91] The perceived value of statistics within medicine had ebbed and flowed over the past few decades but with Quetelet's works, the composite averages of a given population became imagined as the "ideal type", as "social knowledge grounded in mathematics was asserting that the average mattered more than the exceptions".[92] According to Cryle and Stevens, Quetelet's position on the value of statistics was far from universally accepted, as "he had unwittingly conceded the general point of those who claimed in the course of the Academy debate that true clinical insight had nothing to do with number", and did not himself press for a clinical application of his ideas.[93] Nonetheless, from this point onwards, "the 'normal' now began to undergo a certain mathematization" as "thinking about the 'normal' was often marked by the theoretically unresolved cohabitation of such notions as the average and the typical".[94]

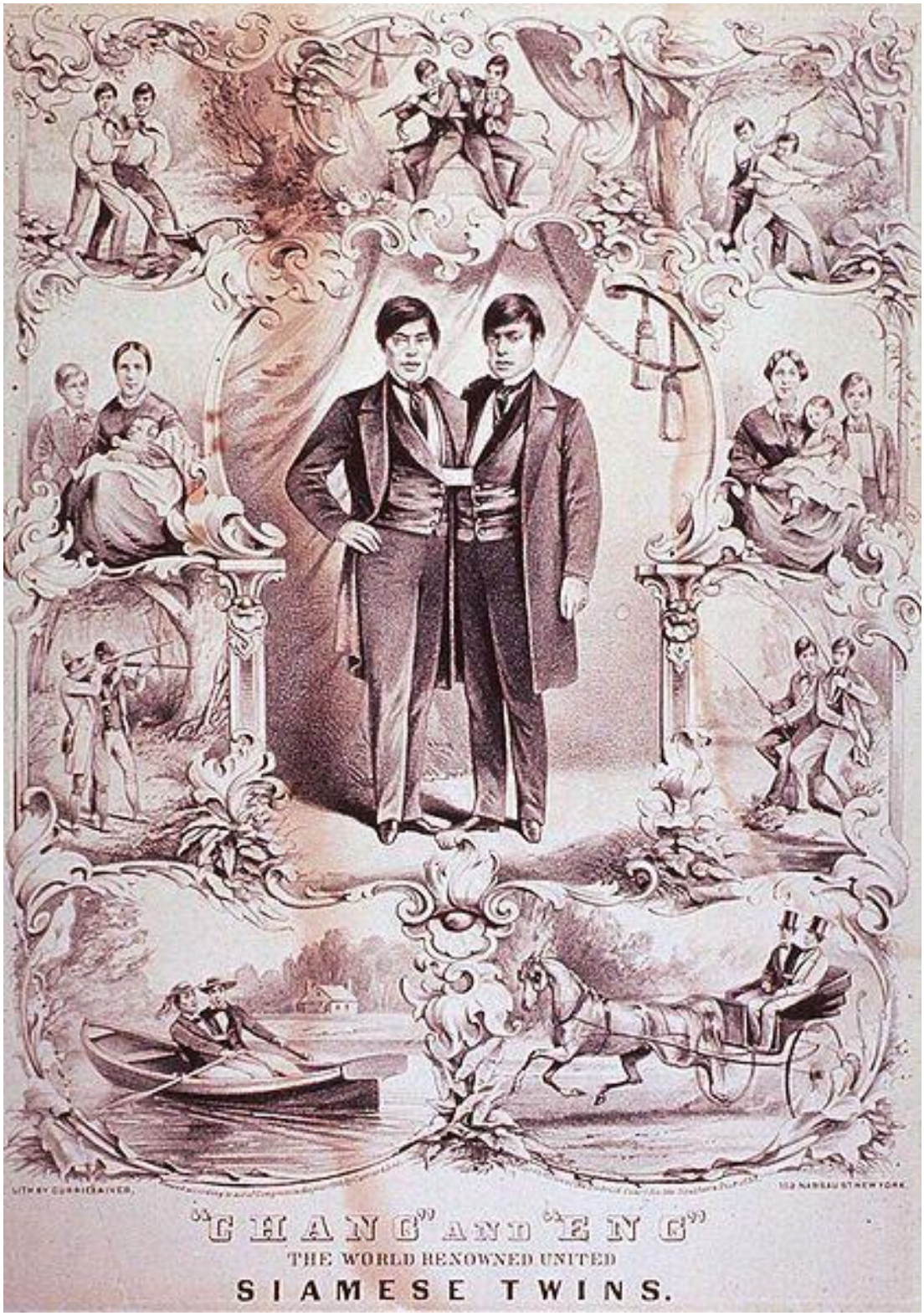
It is useful to see the reporting of Chang and Eng at this time as very much a part of this shared culture, as these reports, written a couple of years before Quetelet's *L'homme Moyenne*, suggest an uncomfortable proximity for the reporters between the twins and their readers under these models. This invoked the twins as surprisingly 'ordinary', despite their presentation within the 'exotic' mode. As audiences became accustomed to the bodily difference of the twins, so too even this cultural Otherness dissipated. During the ten years when the twins temporarily retired from the stage (1839-1849) American audiences became more familiar with Asian people and curiosity towards Chinese culture waned. Following the increased trade with China after the Anglo-Chinese treaty of Nanjing (1842) and the American-Chinese treaty of Wangxia (1844), there was a saturation of popular 'Chinese' exhibits such as John Peters Jr's 'Great

[91] For a more complete history of this debate and its significance for intellectual history see Peter Cryle and Elizabeth Stevens 'Counting in the French Medical Academies in the 1830' *Normality: A Critical Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). pp. 63-108.
[92] Adolphe Quetelet, *Sur l'homme*, p. 276. Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy* p. 80.
[93] Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy,* p. 141.
[94] Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy,* p. 141.

Chinese Museum' (1849) on Broadway and PT Barnum's 'Chinese Museum' (1850). Undoubtedly, this enhanced familiarity increased the pressure on the already creaking binary between not-'normal' Asian people and 'normal' Americans. After an influx of Chinese migrant labour in the 1850s, the stereotype of Chinese people as fascinating performers became replaced with what Tchen refers to as "pitiable beggars".[95] Concurrently, Chang and Eng's lifestyles altered dramatically. Writing near the end of their careers in 1868, the *Freeman's Journal* summarised that "having visited America, they determined to make this land their home. They bought a valuable tract of land in North Carolina, married two sisters, and settled down into the *ordinary* routine of a farmer's daily life".[96] They became a part of their community, legally naturalising as Americans when by law only white people could do so.[97] They reflected Southern U.S norms by buying a plantation and slaves, investing heavily in the Confederate currency and both volunteering sons to fight in the Civil War.[98] Their mode of exhibition also embodied this; once they returned to the stage in 1849 they no longer performed feats or appeared in 'cultural' costumes. Instead, they sat down for a formal series of questions with their audience as if entertaining guests at a dinner party.[99] Similarly, their promotional material no longer drew from the 'exotic' appeal of an Othered Siam, but instead depicted the twins as wealthy American gentlemen with a physical anomaly.[100] The illustrations on these posters show them against a Southern U.S. backdrop, engaging in activities that American gentlemen of leisure were understood to enjoy, such as hunting or rowing (fig 5).

[95] Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown,* pp. 90-95.
[96] [Anon.], 'Surgical Separation of the Siamese Twins, Chang and Eng' *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser,* 20 November 1868, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BB3204682266/BNCN> [Accessed 20/09/19]. Emphasis added.
[97] See Huang, *Inseparable,* p. 200, who cites the 1790 Naturalisation Act that was not repealed until as late as 1952.
[98] Orser *Lives of Chang and Eng* p. 152, emphasis mine.
[99] Huang, *Inseparable,* p. 297.
[100] As I show in the later sections of this chapter, the Mckoy twins also dramatically adjusted their mode of presentation when their performances were under their own management.

Figure 5 – Promotional Poster of Eng and Chang Bunker Aggrandised. Note the emphasis on 'Western' dress and occupations as well as the appearance of their 'normal' wives and family.[101]



[101] [Anon.], 'The World Renowned United Siamese Twins "Chang" and "Eng"', Lithograph, (New York City: Currier and Ives, 1860) <http://resource.nlm.nih.gov/101392965> [Accessed 10/10/22].

Both on and off stage, Chang and Eng worked to integrate into 'normal' American society, which – for this society – only enhanced their uncanny associations. This shift in representation of the twins embodied the broader shift in convention that Bogdan termed the "aggrandized mode".[102] Here, the individual was presented as a respectable bourgeois person in all areas apart from the one that made them extraordinary. This shift is often explained with reference to what Harold Perkins referred to as "the moral revolution" within the late nineteenth century America entertainment industry, as part of the means by which the new money of the emerging middle classes established a coherent identity and a series of defining behaviours and beliefs.[103] As part of a more widespread policing of stares at not-'normal' bodies – to be explored more fully in the overlapping chapter two on 'privacy' – the exotic mode of presentation became thought of as low-taste and unsuitable for most of society. Instead, to attract audiences, performers with not-'normal' anatomies were re-branded as worthy examples of middle-class culture and values. Transgressive elements were retained, exaggerated and even highlighted, but these were contextualised with the otherwise respectable behaviour, relations, and morals of the performer. This change is also helpfully understood in reference to the 'pre-normalising' forces that I have been outlining so far. Combined with an oversaturation/overexposure to the not-'normal' (the influx of Chinese labour and increased visibility of people with disabilities), the 'aggrandized' mode may well have conformed to the requirements of the 'moral revolution', but in showing their exhibits as otherwise respectable it provided the other side of the 'humbug' coin. If non-disabled, white Americans could 'humbug' impairments or pretend to be 'wild men from Borneo', so too 'aggrandized' exhibits could (shockingly) otherwise be mistaken for the middle class. What was needed was a more radical means of safely ontologically demarcating these two camps.

As the respectable and 'aggrandized' Asian conjoined twins, the Bunkers were a large target for strategies that aimed to respond to this and to reintroduce a polemic boundary between 'normal' and 'not-normal'. When the twins came out of temporary retirement – under their own management and no

[102] Bogdan, *Freak Show,* p. 97.
[103] Harold Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society* (Gillingham: Ark Paperbacks, 1985), p. 281.

longer under the ‘exotic’ mode – the press increased their efforts to racially Other them. As mentioned previously, following the influx of Chinese labour and an increased exposure to Asian cultural differences, ‘eating with chopsticks’ and ‘talking in Chinese’ were no longer novel enough to draw an audience. There was not, however, an appreciation for ethnic nuance, and the twins were largely presented and interpreted in terms of a white/black racial binary as either ‘non-white’ or ‘non-black’. Orser writes that when the twins were perceived as ‘non-black’ they benefited from this, as for example, this enabled them to gain full American citizenship when only whites were permitted to naturalise.[104] However, despite this legal status and other privileges granted to the Bunker twins resulting from their ‘non-black’ status, they were also regularly treated as holding vaguely defined ‘non-white’ identities.[105] This followed the 1854 Californian court decision of *People v Hall* where black, Irish, and Chinese identities were loosely and confusingly treated as one amorphous (and inferior) non-white identity. This case sought to rule the testimony of a Chinese man in a murder case as inadmissible, and rested on whether the existing legislation of the Act Concerning Civil Cases (1850) could be applied to Chinese people or not.[106] The key verdict in this Act was that “no black or mulatto person, or Indian shall be allowed to give evidence for or against a white person”. In *People v Hall* the judge argued that “By the use of this term [‘black’] in this connection, we understand it to mean the opposite of ‘white,’ and that it should be taken as contradistinguished from all white persons”, making it clear that race was understood to be a black/white binary, and that Chinese people were (legally) non-white (i.e black).[107] Similarly, Orser points to the fact that in the press the Bunker twins were frequently referred to by inaccurate racist slurs to indicate a non-specific racial otherness.[108] This usage can also be seen in Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s 1831 satire upon the Bunker Twins, when the butler is surprised by the twins: “He lays his finger on the trigger / And mutters out—“by Jove—*a*

[104] Orser, *Lives of Eng and Chang,* p. 81.
[105] For example, Orser argues that the violence they received from white men was that which was usually only given to other white men, and that unlike black victims of violence, Chang and Eng were permitted to fight back. See Orser, *Lives of Chang and Eng,* p. 62.
[106] ‘People v. Hall’, *Supreme Court of California,* 4.399 (1894) <https://cite.case.law/cal/4/399/> [Accessed 17/6/22].
[107] ‘People v. Hall’, s. 403.
[108] Orser, *Lives of Chang and Eng,* p. 59.

*N****r!"*[109] Similarly, an 1850 reprint of an 1848 article in the *Raleigh Register* publication was retouched to make the Bunker twins look even more culturally 'non-white'.[110] This further attests to resistance to a liminal identity that transgressed the white/not white binary of the times. In the reported speech of Chang and Eng, "the broken English of the non-native speaker was accentuated by the addition of an exaggerated black dialect – "de" for "the," "dis" for "this," "den" for "then"".[111] This was not present in the original article and was added to the reprint just two years later, purely to establish the twins as more Othered and less troublingly ambiguous. It evidences the extent to which popular ideas about 'pre-normativity' were felt to be undermined in these years by the Bunker twins coming out of retirement amidst the Chinese labour influx. As the press repeatedly attempted to relocate the twins firmly into one binary or another in this way (either 'white' or 'non-white'), the reports attempted to stabilise the identities of the Bunker twins specifically into a more comfortable form, and to better protect the binary demarcation between Othered and not-Othered people. Thus, these various interactions between conjoined twins and the press testify to the psychological need for a new means of understanding the relationship between anomalous bodies and their audiences, which was achieved in the paradigmatic shifts away from teratology and towards evolutionary and embryological thought.

1850-1880 – Anomalies, Evolution, and Embryology

The previous section showed how the representations of Chang and Eng Bunker engaged with the pre-history of the concept of the 'normal body' (1830-1850): motivating a need for a more precise means of demarcating Othered people from not-Othered people. As the doubled difference of Chang and Eng became naturalised, audiences and journalists responded to this lack of distinction between themselves and these conjoined twins. This section traces the academic ways of presenting and interpreting conjoined twins over the next few decades. Through the developing embryological and evolutionary discourses authors produced 'developmental tracks' in response to these

[109] Edward Bulwer-Lytton *The Siamese Twins: A Satirical Tale of the Times with Other Poems* (New York: Harpers, 1831), p. 128.
[110] [Anon.], 'The Siamese Twins' *Raleigh Register,* May 24 1848. Cited in Orser, *Lives of Chang and Eng,* p. 117.
[111] [Anon.], 'The Siamese Twins at Home' *Trumpet and Universalist Magazine,* 2 November 1850. Cited in Orser, *Lives of Chang and Eng,* p .117.

anxieties. As Cooper points out in her analysis of twenty-first century medical documentaries, the more contemporary term ‘milestones’ “suggests a normative route, and works to produce a notion of a ‘normal child’ who follows a particular, predetermined path through life”.[112] Embryological developmental tracks reinforce this idea of a normative route and claim to precisely chart *where* conjoined embryos stopped being ‘normal’, and thus provide a highly detailed border that firmly demarcated these liminal bodies into one side of the divide or the other.

Helping to illustrate this trajectory, Millie-Christine McKoy were first shown when Chang and Eng were in their last few years of performing (1852), and they continued to perform until the late 1880s. Because of the paradigmatic shift of evolutionary and embryological thought, however, the ways that the McKoy twins were Othered were different from those of the Bunker twins. As Deeley shows in her interrogation of a description of the McKoys in *The Daily Post*, instead of being presented as uncanny curiosities, “through the listing of her various anatomical parts, Millie Christine is reduced to a living anatomical specimen”.[113] This evidences the distance travelled towards the idea of a medically ‘normal’ body that could contain and locate the not-‘normal’. As this section demonstrates, this shift was neither limited to medical discourses, nor static. The actions of the twins and the understandings of the public and press fed back into these emerging academic ways of interacting with the not-‘normal’, providing an interlocking feedback loop as the McKoys resisted this presentation. Unlike Eng and Chang’s attempt to present as ‘normal’, however, they instead strove to be interpreted as extraordinary able-bodied performers.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century there emerged a new way of understanding the ‘normal’ body that was connected to teratology, medicine, and embryology. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, a dominant anatomical idea was that of species fixism. This was part of the academic grounding for the idea of the ‘normal state’, as it provided a stable base to which individuals could be compared; species fixism made anomalies easier to identify. Whilst the ideas of a ‘normal state’ and ‘anomalies’ persisted, however,

[112] Cooper, ‘The Oppressive Power of Normalcy’ p. 14.0
[113] Deeley, *Contested Subjects*, p. 66.

by the 1860s anatomists had oscillated back towards a more fluid idea of species.[114] It was no longer thought – as in the days before species fixism – that barnacles could turn into geese, but whilst 'species' persisted as a stable classificatory order, the establishment of the fossil record showed that species had changed over larger spans of time.

As the study of transmutation, and then later (1859) evolutionary discourse, took hold, embryos and the ways in which they changed became the primary means for studying not-'normal' bodies.[115] In his analysis of the rise of embryology, Amundson notes that similarities in embryos came to be understood as often resulting in similar adult forms, understanding "evolutionary change between species as a change in the embryological processes".[116] Ontogeny, or the study of individual organisms as they develop, thus came to be understood as reflecting phylogenesis: the evolutionary history of a group of species. As well as underpinning the differentiation of species, embryonic development was also understood to underpin understandings of how anatomical anomalies arose. In pre-industrial European society, not-'normal' births were often explained as a divine portent, or a prodigy. The first interpreted the baby as a direct divine communication created by God as a warning – or at least an indication – of some impending calamity. Indeed, etymologically, the pre-'normal' word 'monster' comes from the Latin 'monstrum' which means 'omen'. Prodigious births, however, interpreted the baby as both a direct result of – but also an indication of God's displeasure at – a carnal sin by the mother. Various impairments were seen as resembling animals, and so the child was understood as offspring between the human mother and the animal in question. Whilst the belief that disabled children were a direct communication from God fell away in the Early Modern era, under the guise of the 'maternal

[114] See Amundson *The Changing Role of the Embryo,* pp. 45-53 for a detailed history of how the grip of species fixism came to be weakened, beginning with Jeremy Bentham's *Chrestomathia: Being a Collection of Papers, Explanatory of the Design of an Institution, Proposed to be Set on Foot Under the Name of the Chrestomathia Day School For the Extension of the New System of the Instruction to the High* (1816) and ending in Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859).
[115] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859). Embryology, as a sub-discipline in its own right, is understood to be first established by Karl Ernst von Baer's *Über Entwickelungsgeschichte der Thiere. Beobachtung und Reflexion*. [On the Developmental History of the Animals. Observations and Reflections] (Königsberg: Erster Theil, 1828), <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/28306> [Accessed 21/6/22].
[116] Amundson, *The Changing Role of the Embryo,* p. 90.

imagination' theory the 'prodigious births' interpretation endured surprisingly well. The 'maternal imagination' theory understood foetuses as exceptionally 'plastic' and directly susceptible to all sorts of impressions made upon the pregnant person, not just bestiality. Writing on the maternal imagination in the eighteenth century, Rosemary Betterton provides one such account from 1733 where the author writes of "A son. But had a face like an ape. At the back of the neck an opening as big as a hand. Its genitals were also not as they should be. She had seen apes dancing".[117] Here, the mere act of the pregnant person looking at apes was seen to be sufficient for the baby to be impaired. This understanding was not simply some fringe folk belief, and this example provided crucial evidence in a British court to successfully appeal against the deportation of someone that recently gave birth to a child with impairments.[118] However, as argued by William Burns in his thesis on this topic, part of the rationale for the foundation of the Royal Society was to combat such folk interpretations as this, providing an explanatory lacuna for not-'normal' births.[119] What was posited by (among others) Etienne Serres, in his (1832) examination of the conjoined Rita-Christine and then attested to as a 'law' by his later co-author Johann Meckel (1836) was a developmental approach: that such births resulted either from overdevelopment or arrested development.[120] This clearly argues against the earlier idea of 'preformation': that embryos were a miniature version of the adult. Instead, what is implicit in this teratology are the beginnings of what became epigenesis: the idea that embryos developed through successive stages. As 'normal' developmental 'tracks' – records of gestational stages which deviating bodies could be compared back to – were identified for species, human anomalies such as conjoined twins were understood in terms of developmental milestones. Fixed and finite departure points from the 'normal' track of development still served to Other human anomalies, but in a contained and less

[117] Rosemary Betterton, 'Promising Monsters: Pregnant Bodies, Artistic Subjectivity and Maternal Imagination', *Hypatia,* 21.6 (2006), 80-100, p. 80.
[118] See Margrit Shildrick, 'Maternal Imagination: Reconceiving First Impressions' *Rethinking History*, 4.3 (2000), 243-60, pp. 243-4.
[119] William Burns, 'An Age of Wonders: Prodigies, Providence, and Politics in England 1580-1727' (doctoral thesis, University of California, 1994).
[120] Etienne Serres, *Recherches d'anatomie Transcendante et Pathologique: Théorie des Formations et des Déformations Organiques, Appliquée à l'anatomie de Ritta Christina, et de la Duplicité Monstrueuse* [Transcendent and Pathological Anatomy Research: Theory of Organic Formations and Deformations, Applied to the Anatomy of Ritta Christina, the Double Monster] (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1832) <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6358458c> [Accessed 21/6/22]. Johann Meckel, 'On Monstrosities in General', *The Medico-Chirurgical Review,* 24.47 (1836), 209-256, p. 209.

mysterious manner. This ‘developmental’ view of ‘normality’ claimed to identify the exact moment when the individual stopped being ‘normal’, ostensibly marking a clean divide between ‘normal’ and not-‘normal’ bodies. This functioned to address the uncanny continuum between these two types that was discussed earlier. Such a continuum had resulted from a combination of the earlier teratological theories, as well as the practice of the ‘aggrandized’ mode of exhibition that understood those with atypical anatomy as different only in degree, and not in kind from ‘normal’ people.

Conjoined twins like Millie-Christine were crucial factors in this reimagining of the not ‘normal’. Millie-Christine first started exhibiting themselves independently in 1866, and promotional literature associated with their performances and external material reflected this association. Dr. Bertillion, after studying Millie-Christine, proposed three reasons for their conjoinment. The third, known as fission theory and widely accepted by doctors today, holds that a single fertilised egg fails to properly divide into twins.[121] An American illustrator popularised this theory, drawing ten possible variations of conjoined twins. These illustrations were then used as the front cover image for an April 1st edition of the biggest American circus and freak show magazine *The Clipper*, to celebrate Millie-Christine’s departure for their international self-managed tour.[122] This shows the extent to which the ‘not-normal’ bodies of the twins were also culturally Othered through this ‘developmental’ lens, as paradigmatic shifts in understandings of the not-‘normal’ were literally operating on the same page as American entertainment advertisements.

Millie-Christine’s promotional material resists this means of interpretation, instead portraying them as non-disabled performers and presenting the twins as exceptional. In a supposedly autobiographical account, the narrative repeatedly refers to the twins as ‘something else’, opening with the statement that “we are, indeed, a strange people, justly regarded both by scientific and ordinary eyes as the greatest natural curiosities the world has ever sent upon its surface”.[123] The

[121] This is in opposition to the ‘fusion’ theory that holds that two fertilised eggs somehow become attached after being fertilised. See Rowena Spencer, ‘Theoretical and Analytical Embryology of Conjoined Twins: Part I: Embryogenesis’, *Clinical Anatomy,* 13.1 (2000), 36-53.
[122] Martell, *Millie-Christine,* p. 181.
[123] [Anon.], *History and Medical Description* p. 4.

account resists the new language associated with the developing embryology of 'specimen', instead reverting to the language of 'curiosity' more commonly used within the teratological discourses of the previous decades. In doing so, they evoke the 'continuum' model, as according to da Costa's analysis of the formation of the Royal Society, the teratological collections of curiosities categorised their collections "by excess, by defect, or by transposition of parts".[124] Similarly, a surviving undated pamphlet sold at these performances telling the life story of the twins has on its title page a quotation from one of the regularly performed songs; "None like me since the days of Eve / None such perhaps will ever live".[125] This difference in presentation was more than just appearing rare: this promotional material is full of superlatives. As well as the "eighth wonder of the world", Millie-Christine were also hailed as "the Puzzle of Science, the Despair of Doctors, the Dual Unity".[126] When we consider the concurrent rise of developmental and evolutionary thought, this is more than typical showman rhetoric. Rather than engaging with these disciplines, Millie-Christine were presented as too complex for the probing analysis of science. Instead of establishing this as part of a tradition of conjoined twins, or even of extraordinarily bodied people, the pamphlet seeks to establish the pair as completely unique: "There can only be one NONPARALLEL, one UNEQUALLED, and that is the subject of our brief sketch, for only one living creature is like Millie Christine, and her name is Christine Millie".[127] Despite the fact that Chang and Eng were far more famous than these twins, they are nowhere acknowledged. This is perhaps explained by the fact that, although famous, Chang and Eng lost a lot of popularity in their later life. Many newspaper reviews of Millie-Christine of this period compared them favourably to the Bunker twins, but wishing to appear as unique, and a performer in their own right, Millie-Christine did not encourage such comparisons with the Bunkers. Only one favourable comparison to other conjoined twins is given "leaving out of the question fabulous monsters. The first year of the eighteenth century witnessed the birth of a similar phenomenon in Hungary, the sisters Helen and Judith, born in the year 1701".[128] The pamphlet is quick to remind the

[124] Fontes da Costa, *The Singular and the Making of Knowledge,* p. 125.
[125] [Anon.], *Biographical Sketch,* p. 1.
[126] [Anon.], *Biographical Sketch,* p. 3.
[127] [Anon.], *Biographical Sketch,* p. 3.
[128] [Anon.], *Biographical Sketch,* p. 3.

reader that these Hungarian sisters lived "more than a century since, so that it takes Nature a hundred years at least to produce such a marvel again".[129] Millie-Christine is, however, presented as superior to even this precedent, as "Helen and Judith died at twenty-two years of age, while Millie Christine still lives, healthy and happy, at thirty-eight, and bids fair to attain a ripe old age as easily as less wonderful beings".[130]

As with Chang and Eng, however, the local press did not cooperate with this chosen manner of presentation. Whilst still giving Millie-Christine positive publicity, reports of the twins were repeatedly at odds with this strategy. Deeley argues that the "variegated ontological enactments" of Millie-Christine, were "underpinned by different ontological norms and imperatives surrounding what constituted a sexed body, woman, racialised other and human individual more generally".[131] I agree, as these singleton authors resisted the McKoy's presentations in an unconscious attempt to reinstate the cultural norm of a fixed demarcation between not-'normal' and 'normal' people. The *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial* Advertiser, for example, employs a bland, unemotive tone when describing them, flatly contradicting the claims of the promotional materials.[132] Refuting their rarity, the article states that "The Two-Headed Nightingale is not the exceptional freak which its exhibitor claims. Such a *Lapsus Natura,* but of the other sex, presented itself at the court of Charlemagne".[133] The paper invokes the academic term for freak of nature, and compares Millie-Christine with another set of conjoined twins. Interest in the twins that is not from within this intellectual perspective is ridiculed as superstitious and indicative of vulgar taste. Such 'low-brow' enthusiasm is referred to as *"Monstrous Horrendum"* and is explicitly and derogatively compared to the "sensation which a woman feels at being frightened".[134] The report does not even grant that the McKoy twins are special for conjoined twins, as "Matthew Pavis recounts a similar duality as having been seen in

[129] [Anon.], *Biographical Sketch,* p. 3.
[130] [Anon.], *Biographical Sketch,* p. 4.
[131] Deeley, *Contested Subjects,* p. 42.
[132] [Anon.], 'A Modern Marvel: The Two-Headed Nightingale' *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser,* 26 November 1872, p. 6, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3204711172/BNCN> [Accessed 21/09/19].
[133] [Anon.], 'A Modern Marvel' p. 6.
[134] [Anon.], 'A Modern Marvel' p. 6.

Pomerania" as well as "the Hungarian Sisters" and later it reinforces the connection with Millie-Christine's contemporaries which they strove to ignore: "that most pitiable of sights, the Siamese Twins".[135] It must be emphasised at this point that this report was good publicity for the McKoys; aside from the elements drawn out here, the performance is presented as an enjoyable event worth attending. Nevertheless, the report goes to great lengths to negate all attempts made by the promoters of the McKoy twins to present them as outside of the academic scope that was intrinsic to the new presentation of the relationship between 'normal' and not-'normal' bodies of this period. So, if Millie-Christine's attempt to disengage from this pervasive understanding of bodies was unsuccessful, why were they so popular?

The answer lies in the comparisons to Chang and Eng which Millie-Christine strove to evade. Chang and Eng had decreased dramatically in popularity during this period. As examined previously, their aggrandised mode of exhibition – where they uncannily presented as 'normal' – featured none of the acrobatics from their 'exotic' days. Instead, they struck a dignified pose, allowing the audience to ask them questions about their marriages and their daily lives. Unlike Millie-Christine, who sang, played instruments, and danced, the Bunker twins were not perceived to have an 'act' beyond the presentation of their bodies. In France at this time, a distinction had begun to be made between these two types of acts, separating the *phénomènes* from the *artistes.* The former relates to the English word 'phenomenon' and refers to those exhibited purely because of their physical difference. On the other hand, *artistes* often also had anomalous bodies but incorporated acrobatics, dance, music, singing, or theatrics into their stage-time.

This new classification of bodies in terms of function is also evident in the developments of comparative anatomy of the period**.** The 'embranchement' method of Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), articulated in his *The Animal Kingdom* (1834), shows how intrinsic function was for taxonomy of the period.[136] Here, all the animal kingdom was divided into four different branches: 'vertebrates', 'molluscs', 'articulated animals' (insects, spiders, crustaceans) and 'zoophytes'

[135] 'Hungarian sisters' refers to Ilona and Judit Gófitz (1701-1723).
[136] Georges Cuvier, *Le Règne Animal* (A. Belin: Paris, 1817).

(jellyfish and jellyfish-like creatures).[137] These embranchements were distinguished through the different functions of the organisms' bodies, and expanded into further degrees of classification. How animals behaved became ontologically blurred with what they *were*. With the obvious exception of insects – which were firmly demarcated into the 'articulated animals' branch – a bird was a flying animal, and so if something was observed to fly then it was, by definition, a type of bird.

For Cuvier, function was presumed to be so intrinsic that to refer to body parts in terms of structure (and so, to preclude function) was seen to be unempirical and epistemologically suspect.[138] Function was seen to be observable and provable, whereas structures were not. Wings were seen to be obviously 'for' flight. Structuralists, however, instead drew parallels between different species that did not share a common function, and this was thought to be inferential and problematic. For example, Cuvier identified the furcula (wishbone) in birds; it strengthens the thoracic skeleton as a necessary counter to the stress of flight. Cuvier's greatest rival, Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, however, correctly claimed that the same bone was also found in fish, who do not use it for flight. Despite the truth of his claims they were dismissed because they did not suit the popular drive to categorise by function: fish and birds could not have the same function, and so could not have the same bones.[139]

In validating his sub-classes of vertebrates (quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes), Cuvier demonstrates how an understanding of function informed his understanding of the whole animal, not just their parts. For example, he compares quadrupeds that are "generally formed to walk and run, both motions being characterized by precision and vigour" with reptiles that are "condemned to creep, and many of them pass a portion of their lives in torpor".[140] Quadrupeds are here argued to move the way they do *because* of their (existing) design, not, as we might now think, that quadrupeds have a specific structure that has evolved with their movement over time. Cuvier argues for the

[137] Cuvier, *Le Règne Animal,* pp. 23-5.
[138] Amundson, *The Changing Role,* p. 57.
[139] Amundson, *The Changing Role,* p. 57. We now know that this is due to common descent – both types of animal have this bone because they share a common ancestor.
[140] Cuvier, *Le Règne Animal,* p. 30.

primacy of an essential body schematic, and that this governs the functions of the body and even (as the above quote makes clear) the *character* of the individual.

Such teleological reasoning found support from many British writers: notably, the authors of the Bridgewater treatises, who were commissioned by the Earl of Bridgewater at the same time as Cuvier was writing (1834-39) to build on William Paley's watchmaker analogy.[141] As is clear from the full title *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, as Manifested in the Creation*, these were specifically written to reinforce the link between adaptation and theological design.[142] According to Amundson, like Cuvier, the authors of these tracts "considered every character of an organism to be adaptive", and took this as strong evidence of design in the natural world, and hence a designer (God).[143] These treatises show how intrinsic a part function played for academics of this period, as the distinction in taste between that of a *phénomène* and that of an *artiste* was grounded both in a theological reliance on function as evidence of the divine, and an assumption from anatomy that function revealed an essentialist identity and demarcated one's position in the Great Chain of Being. Similarly, not-'normal' bodies could have this identity confirmed through locating the exact moment that they departed from the 'normal' development track. As explained in the introduction, Cuvier was also a taxonomical realist, and believed that the organisation of his system has "not been established arbitrarily, but [is] based on the true fundamental relations".[144] That such means of categorisation were not seen to be arbitrary, but representing real, measurable distinctions, reinforced Quetelet's idea of *L'homme Moyenne*, or the idealised composite figure, made up of national averages. As the lens of function came to be the dominant way of understanding taxonomy, it also became measurable. In turn, this allowed for the calculation of an average. As Lennard Davis has shown, once an average is calculated, norms can be produced, and the individual can be compared to an

[141] William Paley, *Natural Theology: Or, Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected From the Appearances of Nature*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[142] *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, as Manifested in the Creation,* ed. by Francis Bridgewater (London: W. Pickering, 1834-9).
[143] Amundson, *The Changing Role,* p. 48.
[144] Cuvier, *Le Règne Animal,* p. 4.

externally imposed standard of function – subsequently feeding into Social Darwinism and later eugenic ideas.[145]

These academic developments, driven by the same focus on function that informed the comparative anatomy and theology of the late 1830s, were applied to non-'normal' performing bodies in post-revolutionary France. This is where the distinction between a *phénomène* and an *artiste* mentioned previously began to be codified into French law.[146] The French Ordonnance of 1828 restricted the locations of street performers of all types, and in 1831 another Ordonnance was issued that required all performers to obtain a certificate of morals and lifestyle.[147] After this, there followed a series of increasingly challenging impositions laid upon performers, building to the requirement that said individuals wear a token at all times inscribed with their permission number, subject to review every three months.[148] The distinction between *phénomènes* and *artistes* was legally established in the Ordonnance of 1863, which decreed that all public performers of any sort had to apply for special permissions before being allowed to perform, but that "Requests from the blind, the legless, the armless, cripples, and other infirm people will not be considered".[149] Despite the increasingly restrictive Ordonnances, however, performances by people with impairments still took place. The Bazar Bonne Novelle, for example, employed many people with not-'normal' bodies to perform for the French upper classes between 1846-9, and the Cafe du Geant did the same for the French working classes 1851-63.[150] Those that had not-'normal' bodies, but who also sang, or danced, or played a musical instrument were granted special permissions. French officials did not object to the physical conditions of the differently bodied and Millie-Christine completed a successful

[145] Lennard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (New York: Verso Books, 1995), pp. 23-49.
[146] I will be using *phénomènes* to refer to performers that chiefly exhibited their non 'normal' bodies and *artistes* to refer to performers that chiefly sang, danced, played instruments etc. When speaking of both *phénomènes* and *artistes* I will use 'performers'. This division is, of course, completely artificial, but used at the time.
[147] Diana Snigurwicz, 'The Phenomene's Dilemma: Teratology and the Policing of Human Anomalies in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Paris', *Foucault and the Government of Disability, Enlarged and Revised 10th Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Shelley Tremain, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 172-88, p. 178.
[148] Snigurwicz, *The Phénomènes Dilemma,* p. 179.
[149] Cited in Snigurwicz, *The Phénomènes Dilemma,* p. 179.
[150] Snigurwicz, *The Phénomènes Dilemma,* p. 179.

tour of France in 1874.[151] What was most crucial was whether the not-'normally' bodied could function, and thus be considered an *artiste* instead of a *phénomène.* What the French authorities found unacceptable was not necessarily not-'normal' bodies, but atypical bodies that could not work.

Similar concerns are evidenced in the latter case of the British conjoined twins Daisy and Violet Hilton, who were detained by immigration services when trying to enter America 1915. The border officials here cited the 1907 Immigration Act that stated that no person shall be allowed to enter that had a "mental or physical defect being of a nature which may affect the ability of such alien to earn a living".[152] Once their guardian went to the newspapers and demonstrated the ability of the twins to make a successful career through their show business, they were released.[153] The overarching emphasis for both nations was on the ability of the anomalously bodied to perform a productive function, as normalising technologies addressed non-'normal' behaviours instead of non-'normal' bodies.

This emphasis is part of the more widespread perception that disabled people are the parasitical Other to what Robert McRuer calls the "able-bodied worker".[154] In *Spaces of Hope* (2000), David Harvey showed that under capitalism, "sickness (or any kind of pathology) gets defined within this circulation process as inability to go to work".[155] To not 'work' (be unemployed) is conceptually blurred with to not 'work' (to be broken/impaired). People are 'valued' purely by the relationship that we are perceived to hold with the wider economy, and as disabled people face increased barriers to employment, they are valued less and seen as unjustly 'free-riding' on non-disabled society. As argued by Cindy LaCom in her analysis of the temporalities of physical disability in Victorian England, for nineteenth-century readers and audiences "those unable to meet industrial workplace standards because of a disability or

[151] For Chang and Eng ban see Huang, *Inseparable* p. 93. For Millie-Christine tour see Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 190.
[152] Cited in Dean Jensen, *The Lives and Loves of Daisy and Violet Hilton: A True Story of Conjoined Twins* (Berkley: Ten Speed Press, 2006), p. 58.
[153] Jensen, *Lives and Loves*, pp. 58-67.
[154] Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006) p. 161.
[155] David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2000), p. 106.

deformity were increasingly exiled from the capitalist 'norm', which demanded 'useful' bodies, able to perform predictable and repeated movements".[156] The irony of this is clear, as whilst not the case for conjoined twins, the vast majority of disabilities in this era were themselves caused by industrial accidents or the general work conditions. For example, in his overview of coal mining in the nineteenth century John Benson provides the chilling statistic that during the second half of the nineteenth century across the U.K., "a miner was killed every six hours, seriously injured every two hours, and injured badly enough to need a week off work every two or three minutes".[157] With the arrival of capitalist culture disabled people were valued by the extent that they performed a service, and in the words of David Turner and Daniel Blackie, those that were unable to conform to these ableist ideals were instead "forced into less socially desirable positions".[158]

This ableism helpfully contextualises the rise of the understanding of bodies in terms of their *function,* and we gain a clearer understanding of why Millie-Christine continued to be popular after the Bunker twins failed to draw crowds. From the 1830s onwards, the function of a body became inseparable with what it *was,* the identity of an individual becoming blurred with what they *did*. This is similar to how Foucault writes about the formation of 'deviant' sexual types, as for the nineteenth century, the homosexuality of the homosexual "was consubstantial with him, less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature".[159] This is reflected strongly in the functionalist paradigmatic shift of comparative anatomy. As was shown previously, around the same time, any instance of function was seized upon in theological circles as evidence of God's plan, making such distinctions divinely ordained. This is where conceptual slippage between the ideas of the natural and the normative is most apparent, as the observed function (the 'normal') was conceptually blended with how that individual should function (the normative). This is in direct contrast to David

[156] Cindy LaCom, ''The Time Is Sick and Out of Joint': Physical Disability in Victorian England', *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, 120.2 (2005), 547-52, p. 547.
[157] John Benson, *British Coalminers in the Nineteenth Century: A Social History* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), p. 40.
[158] David Turner and Daniel Blackie, *Disability in the Industrial Revolution: Physical Impairment in British Coalmining, 1780–1880* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018) p. 5.
[159] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol One: The Will to Knowledge,* trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1979), p. 43.

Hume's famous aphorism that you cannot get an 'ought' from an 'is'.[160] This emphasis interacted with sociological developments of 'normality' to produce prescriptive *functional* norms for both 'normal' and not 'normal' bodies, manifesting as legislation against the trope that Amit Kama identifies in their quantitative analysis of audience perceptions of disabled characters: "post-modern beggars", whilst also celebrating not-'normal' bodies which performed in the freak show or in restaurants.[161]

Both Chang and Eng and Millie-Christine had visibly non-'normal' bodies and were Othered for this, yet they differed in their attempts to exhibit their non-'normal' bodies. It is important to connect here the idea of 'passing' – to present as another part of society to avoid discrimination or to gain privileges – to Cooper's analysis of 'over-looking'. Cooper's term implies that "the object of the gaze is ignored" because of "an excess of looking".[162] Crucially, whilst "passing offers an escape *from* one aspect of the experience of 'overlooking' (being looked at too much), it is in fact an escape *into* the other side of 'overlooking' – to pass successfully means that part of oneself is overlooked".[163] As fictional conjoined twin Rose in *The Girls* puts it, the Bunkers attempted to "shelter in the essence of normal [...] hidden, but unseen";[164] they assimilated into a local community, engaging in 'normal' behaviour for 'normal' people. This allowed them to circumvent local prejudices and to lead relatively happy lives at a time of fierce prejudice against non-whites, but when they came out of temporary retirement to exhibit themselves again, this engagement with 'normal' behaviour impeded their success. Their adaptation was too successful, and their presentation as 'normal' was too much. Enhanced by the 'aggrandized' mode of presentation that sought to show not-'normal' people as respecting and emulating bourgeois ideals, this evoked an uncanny inability to cleanly distinguish between the not-'normal' performers and the 'normal' audience. Chang and Eng, with their not-'normal' bodies but their 'normal' behaviour, were

[160] "In every system of morality [...] instead of the usual copulations of propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence." David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature,* Book 3, Part 1 (London: Henry Frowde, 1739) p. 469.
[161] Amit Kama, 'Supercrips Versus the Pitiful Handicapped: Reception of Disabled Images by Disabled Audience Members', *Communications,* 29.4 (2004), 447-66, p. 461.
[162] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* p. 49
[163] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* p. 49.
[164] Lansens, *The Girls* (London: Virago Press, 2006), p. 43.

phénomènes that presented as ‘normal’, and this was felt to be threatening by their non-disabled audiences. In part responding to this, the disciplines of embryology and morphology re-presented such anomalous bodies, implicitly claiming to be able to finely distinguish between ‘normal’ and not-‘normal’ bodies. To do so, this invoked an essential understanding of ‘function’. Under their own direction after their legal emancipation of 1863, Millie-Christine resisted this new means of Othering and strove to be seen not as ‘normal’ but as something beyond ‘normal’ – as a performer – and celebrated on their promotional material that they were unique. The popular press did not agree with this presentation, as is clear from their attempts to reduce them to a medically contained specimen. Even while doing so, the media continued to support them, in recognition that they were not trying to threaten the ‘normal’/not-’normal’ binary as the Bunker twins inadvertently did.

Chapter 2 – 1860-1930: Privacy, Cameras & Voting Booths

As with the other concepts explored in this thesis, 'privacy' is complex and dynamic, meaning very different things to different people at different times. As argued by Thomas Couser in his critical disability studies analysis of 'problematic' intersubjective people such as conjoined twins: privacy is a "culturally constructed concept" and even when "'normals' live together they have to redefine the border between the public, the private and the intimate."[165] The constant proximity that is conjoinment – never being apart from your twin – has consistently been understood as incompatible with 'privacy', even as the definition of it has shifted: "conjoined twins seem to have no private space, no private time, no private lives".[166] This chapter examines the period 1860-1930, particularly focusing the period 1884-1888, as this contained both (a) the commercialisation of the camera and (b) the incredibly close 1884 American general election – two historical moments that between them ushered a reconfiguration of how 'privacy' was understood. In doing so, this chapter broadens its focus greatly in both directions and provides a crucial contribution by informing our understanding of both how conjoined twins contributed to these changes, and how, despite this, they were used (and continue to be used) as emblematic of the challenges that are presented to the 'privacy' of singletons. Whereas in the previous chapter, it was established that the different lenses used to view conjoined twins were driven by a desire to ontologically differentiate between the 'normal' audiences and the not-'normal' conjoined performers, this chapter shows how the concerns related to 'privacy' developed into a desire to control and to demarcate the space *between* conjoined twins. There will be some chronological overlap with the previous chapter, as the focus moves from the Bunker and McKoy twins to the McKoy, Gibb and Hilton twins.

The legal cases presented here are the first attempt to articulate and establish a 'right' to privacy in American history, as the commercialisation of the

[165] Thomas Couser, *Signifying Bodies: Disability in Contemporary Life Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), p. 60.
[166] Couser, *Signifying Bodies,* p. 51.

camera particularly highlighted how some people – working within advertising or as hobbyists – impacted on the desires of others to be "let alone".[167] As with all the concepts examined in this thesis, 'privacy' has a long 'pre-history', and I now quickly summarise this before the main body of the chapter which charts this formalisation of 'privacy as a concept and then a human right.

Earliest evidence of concerns related to privacy can be found in the fact that wealthy houses in the Greco-Roman period had dramatically more rooms than those of the early Iron Age and used a 'radial' design. In her analysis of how house design can inform our understanding of interpersonal relationships, Ruth Westgate defined this as "where each room or suite of rooms is accessed independently from a circulation space", indicating increased concern over social stratification and personal space.[168] However, it was not until the arrival of the modern private home in the mid eighteenth century that we commonly see separate rooms accessed by a corridor, and not immediately accessible from large communal areas. During the mediaeval and early modern periods, almost all of life across the class spectrum was visible – even hospital beds were shared, and royal courts consisted of large open spaces – and it was only when the developing middle classes of the eighteenth century wished to physically distance themselves from their servants that this type of design was felt to be necessary.[169] This is not to say that Greco-Roman, mediaeval, and early modern people did not demarcate between domestic and external environments, or feel the need to be apart from their cohabitants, but that during these periods this sense of 'privacy' did not largely make itself known through the physical demarcation of space and separate rooms or separate beds.

In the late mediaeval and early modern periods, this need was instead largely fulfilled through individual reflection and silent reading. According to Anthony Low's analysis of privacy in the middle ages, the Fourth Council of Lateran (1215) reflects the significance of this. This is because it was the first

[167] Samuel Warren & Louis Brandeis, 'The Right to Privacy', *Harvard Law Review*, 4.5 (1890), 193-220, p. 195.
[168] Ruth Westgate 'Space and Social Complexity in Greece from the Early Iron Age to the Classical Period', *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens,* 84.1 (2015), 47-95, p. 63.
[169] See Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. by R. Baldick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996) pp. 383-6.

time that the church "commanded all Christians who had reached the age of discretion to confess annually to their pastor" and thus was an attempt to govern this 'private' mental space.[170] The more widespread distribution and circulation of texts following the Gutenberg Press (1440) made possible quiet personal contemplation that was not monitored. In 1599 we see what is potentially the oldest surviving European personal diary, evidencing how in addition to reading, writing was becoming a means of achieving a sense of privacy.[171] Ironically, this was published and preserved for posterity; later this chapter will engage further with this sort of private/public blurring. With the 1710 Post Office (Revenues) Law, these written technologies also came to present a source of vulnerability for the very privacy they afforded. This act of Parliament – which was brought in to establish post offices in British colonies – took great pains to try and prevent the unauthorised reading of another's post, as section XLI specifies that: "No Person or Persons shall presume wittingly, willingly, or knowingly to open, detain or delay or cause, procure, permit or suffer to be opened any Letter or Letters Packet or Packets" and that "every Person or Persons offending in Manner aforesaid or who shall imbezil any such Letter, Letters Packet or Packets shall for every such Offence forfeit the sum of Twenty Pounds.[172] Such a weighty penalty (equivalent to the wage of 200+ days of skilled labour) attests to the perceived severity of the crime, as whilst personal correspondence provided an early sense of privacy, it similarly provided a potential vulnerability.[173]

Up until the period under discussion, then, the pre-history of 'privacy' revolved first around governmental and ecclesiastic interference into the thoughts and words of citizens, and then later the physical demarcation of space as the emerging bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century metaphorically represented the distance between themselves and the lower classes. With the

---

[170] Anthony Low, 'Privacy, Community, and Society: Confession as a Cultural Indicator in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight", *Religion and Literature,* 30.2 (1998), 1-20, p. 4.
[171] Margaret Hoby *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599–1605,* ed. by Dorothy M. Meads (London: Routledge, 1930).
[172] [Anon.], 'An Act for Establishing a General Post-Office for All Her Majesties Dominions and for Settling a Weekly Sum out of the Revenues Thereof for the Service of the War and Other Her Majesties Occasions' (London: [n. Pub], 1710) <https://www.rfrajola.com/mercury/QALaw.pdf> [Accessed 22/6/22].
[173] £20 in 1710 equated to 222 days of skilled labour <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result> [Accessed 22/6/22].

new technology of the camera, however, the question of 'privacy' was brought onto radically new ground, as the potential to record images without the subject's knowledge became far easier. As shall become clear, however, these new fears built upon the same underpinning notion of 'interference', and the resolutions provided re-applied the same metaphorical solution as the demarcation of physical space. In exploring how conjoinment engaged with this context, this chapter first explores how concerns related to the disputed control of sightlines and (un)authorised gazes upon conjoined twins anticipated the paradigmatic shift in privacy laws that followed the commercialisation of the Kodak camera in 1888. Following this, it shows how the narrow 1884 American election led to state-wide electoral reform, specifically addressing concerns relating to voter privacy, and the connection that newspapers made between election fraud and the constant proximity of conjoined bodies. Then, it explores the engagement between popular presentations of conjoined twins and related technologies that attempt to protect singleton 'privacy', such as the voting booth, the phone booth, and headphones. Throughout, this chapter shows how conjoined twins have continuously been caught up in a nexus of controlling sightlines, pilloried as 'leaky' containers of information and forced to occupy singleton phase-space in an attempt to resolve these concerns. It uses a tissue of interlocking texts, newspaper articles, medical reports, and general fiction, that together form cultural understandings of conjoinment and 'privacy' in this period.

Disputed and Distributed Sightlines

In his summary of why he awarded damages to the applicant of the pivotal case of *Roberson v Rochester Folding Box Company* (1901), Judge Rumsey illustrated a key shift in understandings of 'privacy'. He stated that ''The peculiar formation which made the Siamese twins unique was undoubtedly exceedingly valuable to them, and the courts would without question have protected them against any efforts made without their consent to photograph".[174] Here, conjoined twins are referred to alongside the appellant as among those suspected to be the most vulnerable to the infringements of the new technology

[174] 'Roberson v. Rochester Folding Box Co', *Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York,* 64.30 (1901), <https://casetext.com/case/roberson-v-rochester-folding-box-co> [Accessed 11/10/22].

of the Kodak camera. This technology catalysed understandings of ‘privacy’ as subjects rapidly lost control of gazes targeted at them and the resulting visual recording of their likenesses. This section explores why conjoined twins in particular were invoked in these discussions, and shows how conjoinment came to be so intimately connected with this new-found threat to singleton ‘privacy’. To do so, it backtracks somewhat, and explores the engagement between prominent conjoined twins Millie-Christine McKoy (1851-1912) and various medical authorities in the context of the professional use of the camera in the 1850s and 1860s, as they negotiated their own ‘privacy’ in response to illicit photography, and their prominent role as conjoined black performers in the post-emancipation American South.

The extent to which the Roberson case demonstrates a radical departure from existing interpretations of ‘privacy’ is marked by the fact that when this decision was overridden at the last possible moment in the Supreme Court of Appeals (1901) there was widespread public outcry, and the New York Privacy Laws (1903) – the first of their kind in America – were immediately rushed through state legislature in response. The applicant (Roberson) was suing the Rochester Folding Box Company for unauthorised use and distribution of her photographic portrait to advertise their flour product, and was one of a string of similar cases following the mass commercialisation of the Kodak camera in 1888, where young women had their portraits secretly taken and used for various purposes without their consent. The development of photographic technology generally is important to the historical development of the complex right to ‘privacy’, as it facilitated infractions such as this that simply were not possible previously. Likenesses of people could be captured without the subject’s knowledge, and illicit gazes could be directed in detail upon a subject at distance. With the dramatically increased affordability and portability of the Kodak camera, the number of individual amateur photographers significantly increased, and so did the number of similar trespasses upon this sense of ‘privacy’. There followed a general development in understanding the ways that this complex right could be undermined, thus redrawing the outline of what ‘privacy’ meant: from an ill-defined freedom from governmental and religious interference in social and literate affairs to the specific recognition that staring and recording the image of people without permission is harmful.

Whilst this popular understanding of 'privacy' that we would recognise today quickly developed, corresponding legal understandings lagged behind somewhat. It is no coincidence that conjoined performers – Chang and Eng Bunker – were specifically referred to by Judge Rumsey in the above quoted justification for his decision on this case. Here, he argues that for conjoined twins and other peoples whose image/likeness could be considered a financial asset – including attractive young ladies – illicit photography was injurious solely because of the economic implications. Unauthorised sightlines certainly had the potential to negatively impact upon the profits of the managing agents of conjoined twins. According to Martell's biography of the McKoy twins, one of Millie-Christine's early 'owners' (Brower) was advised by his agent that when moving to a new city he "keep her presence in the city as quiet as possible" and "smuggle his incredible toddlers into French Quarter lodgings, then wait discreetly without fanfare or fuss [...] his success depended upon mule-carriage drivers, landladies, maids, cooks, and newspaper reporters all keeping the secret".[175] The more that people saw Millie-Christine for free in the street – it was assumed – the fewer people would pay to see the performances. A secret photograph could theoretically be passed round scores of people and thus seriously damage ticket sales. Whilst awarding Roberson damages, this is the mercurial extent to which Rumsey understood or acknowledged the harms of these voyeuristic invasions of privacy. It ignores the "nervous shock" which Roberson stated drove her to seek compensation after seeing her photographic likeness everywhere suddenly.[176] Justice O'Brien extended this logic in the Supreme Court of Appeals, ignoring any non-financial aspects of the case. He claimed that since there were no existing property laws to appeal to for this, he could not, or would not, side with Roberson as "courts do not make new laws, but enforce those that exist".[177] Following widespread public outcry at this, in its very next sitting, New York State Legislature ratified what became Sections 50 and 51 of the New York Civil Rights Law (1903), which made "A person, firm or

[175] Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 12.
[176] Quoted in Jessica Lake, *The Face That Launched a Thousand Lawsuits: The American Women Who Forged a Right to Privacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 57. This text is an excellent contextualisation of these cases.
[177] Denis O'Brian, 'The Right of Privacy', *Columbia Law Review*, 2.7 (1902), 437–448, p. 444. It was very unusual for a Justice of the Supreme Court to justify their decision in print after the case, and speaks to the strength of public outcry at this overturning.

corporation that uses for advertising purposes, or for the purposes of trade, the name, portrait or picture of any living person without having first obtained the written consent of such person" a misdemeanour.[178] Whether it was awarding damages or in overturning this decision, both Rumsey and O'Brien agreed that financial implications were the only important considerations: that the popular concerns related to illicit gazes were only valid if they corresponded with economic harms.

There is no doubt, then, of the formative role that the commercialisation of the camera had in this transformation in understandings of how 'privacy' can be invaded. Prompted by these legal cases, the first attempt to produce a legal right to 'privacy' in America summarised this nebulous idea as the "right to be let alone".[179] This phrasing intriguingly drew on the 'pre-history' of privacy as protection from undue interference, as established in the chapter introduction. What was so invasive about the new camera technology was that the subject could be completely unaware that they were being abused in this way. Here, however, 'privacy' expands its remit as an individual's likeness becomes part of their affairs, and to record this is to interfere with them. Before this legal attempt, however, the earliest examples of resistance to this invasion of 'privacy' is crucially found in the conjoined McKoy twins and their relationship with various medical authorities, especially Dr. Pancoast (1866-1878). In this history, there is clear resistance from the twins to the medical control of sightlines and likenesses. Whilst the commercialisation of the Kodak camera in 1888 crystallised new thought about the right to 'privacy', according to Jessica Lake's overview of these pivotal legal cases, these concerns over "the novel harms being experienced by photographed individuals" were being discussed "from the 1860s".[180] Before the innovation of flash photography in 1889 and the resulting ability to capture a frame instantly, the daguerreotypes and calotypes of this period were almost exclusively used by specialists, and Dr. Pancoast and other medical experts used this technology to grossly invade the privacy of their patients by the later standards of the 1903 privacy law – as shall be shown shortly. These abuses are helpfully understood as a symbolic example of how,

[178] [Anon.], 'Section 50: Right of Privacy' *The Laws of New York,* 6.5 (1903) <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/CVR/50> [Accessed 11/10/22].
[179] Warren and Brandeis 'The Right to Privacy', p. 193.
[180] Lake, *The Face that Launched a Thousand Lawsuits,* pp. 43-4.

with the professionalisation of medicine, medical experts assumed control of extraordinary bodies and strove to monitor and direct gazes upon them. As this wider development coincided with the emancipation proclamation of 1863, however, Millie-Christine demonstrated remarkable resistance to these practises, and in doing so set the stage for the important shift in privacy demonstrated in *Roberson v Rochester Folding Box Company* and the important new protections afforded by the resulting 1903 Privacy Laws. This fact is unintentionally evoked by Rumsey's citing of Chang and Eng Bunker in his awarding damages to Roberson, even if he was chiefly concerned with financial injuries. This section thus provides a much-needed intervention in both the history of privacy and critical disability studies, by contextualising the McKoy's interactions with medical authorities (especially Dr. Pancoast) and analysing this early development of privacy as regaining control of the various gazes that extraordinary bodies are subjected to. It explores and analyses this personal history, focusing on interactions between the McKoys and medical authorities between 1855 and 1889.

As stated in the thesis introduction, the McKoy twins were black pygopagus conjoined twins, born as slaves in antebellum North Carolina, USA, 1851. Their early life was marked by an engagement with what David Hevey termed "enfreakment".[181] According to Ally Crockford, this process generally "relies upon the cultivation of a 'collective act of looking' on the part of the audience".[182] For the McKoy's, this enfreakment formed a strict hierarchy prescribing who could stare at them and under what circumstances. They were 'owned' by a series of men who traded the twins, kidnapped them, and took legal action against the other 'owners' for the disputed 'right' to exhibit them. One such public traumatic experience was described by the *Dundee and Perth Saturday Post* as the twins were "taken from the arms of the nurse in the most brutal manner, and the nurse herself received bruises and injuries, the children, too, suffering from the rough usage of the contending parties".[183] Their early

[181] David Hevey, 'The Enfreakment of Photography', *The Disability Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. by Lennard J. Davis (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2006), 367-378, p. 371.
[182] Ally Crockford, 'Spectacular Medical Freakery: British 'Translations' of Nineteenth-Century European Teratology' *Exploring the Cultural History of Continental European Freak Shows and "Enfreakment",* ed. by Anna Kérchy and Andrea Zittlau (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 112-128. p. 113.
[183] Cited in Martell *Fearful and Wonderfully Made* p. 43.

experiences, then, revolved around contested sightlines, as they were snatched from their various guardians in an ongoing power-struggle over the right to control who could stare at them.

As has been established by Ivan Waddington, this coincided with "the professionalisation of medicine" whereby the relatively recent class of the physician jostled for (and ultimately succeeded in taking) authority and responsibility for the study of the not-'normally' bodied people from the teratologist.[184] A significant part of this development centred around who, and under what circumstances, people could gaze upon anomalous bodies. Following both what Heather McHold termed the "moral revolution"[185] and the distinction between *phénomènes* and *artistes* discussed in the previous chapter that led to the decline and demise of the American Freak Show,[186] it was considered impolite and uncouth to stare at 'not-normal' bodies under certain conditions, whilst other circumstances permitted this staring, or even re-presented it as a positive thing to do. The control of gazes evident in the McKoy twins' early life is thus also a relationship between medical and popular discourses, as the medical 'gazes' of experts were used in various ways to expand and restrict who could stare at the twins.

First, a process of medical 'verification' was employed every time their various owners exhibited the twins in a new city, restricting the lines of sight that the twins were exposed to and also increasing demand for them. The example of Brower smuggling "his incredible toddlers into French Quarter lodgings" referred to earlier is one such restriction of sightlines.[187] This process of reducing the gazes began by first engaging local medical experts in a series of private viewings, allowing this select few unrestricted visual access in the place of the general population. In exchange, these experts then produced and signed affidavits testifying that the twins were "the genuine article".[188] As an example of

[184] Ivan Waddington, 'The Movement Towards the Professionalisation of Medicine', *British Medical Journal* 301.1 (1990), 688-90, (p. 688).
[185] Heather McHold, 'Even as You and I: Freak Shows and Lay Discourse on Spectacular Deformity', *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain,* ed. by Marlene Tromp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008), 21-36, p. 31
[186] See Bogdan, *Freak Show*, pp. 64-9.
[187] Cited in Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p.12.
[188] Cited inMartell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 12.

what Alice Dreger terms the“tacit exchange of goods and services”, this process financially benefited both the medical experts and the ‘owners’ of the twins, as the select committee had their reputations enhanced through having had the opportunity to observe a phenomenon (conjoinment) that many others had not.[189] Correspondingly, the ‘owners’ of the twins saw increased ticket sales after circulation of the signed affidavits, as the testimonies of the medical experts verified that this performance contained subjects rarely gazed upon before.

To maintain audience demand for such extraordinary bodies as exhibits, the ‘owners’ and medical experts worked together to establish a hierarchy of gazes on the twins. The ‘owners’ protected their place at the top of this chain by controlling which medical experts had access to the twins, and by screening the twins from public view when not on stage or in private viewings. The medical experts, in turn maintained their position within such a structure of stares by describing the conjoinment in rich medico-jargon. One such example of this promotional material describes the twins as:

> The sacrum of each is in like manner joined by bony union to the corresponding portion of the sacrum of the other, forming, with the muscles attached to them and the general integument, a firm band of two or three inches in diameter.[190]

It is doubtful that many of the lay audience would be able to translate this complicated terminology, but would nonetheless have their interest piqued that there is something of scientific interest in the twins. The accompanying pictures (see fig 6) showed the twins as conjoined, but crucially “we do not see the aspect of their body that most fascinated, titillated, and stymied both medical and lay audiences of their time and ours: their conjoined genitalia”.[191]

[189] Alice Dreger, *One of Us*, p. 120.
[190] Quoted in Martel, *Fearful and Wonderfully Madem* p. 20.
[191] Samuels ‘Examining Millie and Christine McKoy’, p. 66.

Figure 6 – Promotional Material used by Millie-Christine McKoy.[192]

[192] John, H. Fitzgibbon, '2 Headed Girl, MILLIE-CRISSIE', Photograph, (St Louis: Robert E Green, 1867).

Whilst at the very top of the hierarchy of gazes, the 'owners' of the twins had unrestricted access to them. The medical level of this structure distinguished itself from the lay level through the privileged visual access to the conjoined genitalia. This was, of course, hidden from sight during public exhibitions and in promotionary photographs by the twins' clothes. As with the medical jargon of the above description, this is a pretence to reveal, illuminate, and 'map' the connection between these twins. Despite this, however, such wording simultaneously served to obscure and to gatekeep such details from the public sightlines. Medical testimony, whilst validating that the twins were of scientific interest, also served as a coded barrier that limited public access. Only if one had sufficient medical knowledge to crack the code, and thus had a claim to those ranks anyway, could one gain access to this information, as medical experts preserved their privileged gazes by determining what was suitable for the public to view and what was not.

This testimony, then, was often used to ascertain more than the physicality of the twins. Much of the surviving verification of the twins, beyond affirming the fact that the twins were 'genuinely' connected, also attested that they were suitable to be viewed by the public. In Liverpool, Dr. Inman and others signed their name to the statement that the twins were "Interesting, lively, and intelligent little people and have nothing of monstrosity in their appearance".[193] "Interesting" suggests a more elevated absorption as opposed to "gripping", or "fascinating", which might equally have been used to describe a phenomena equally intriguing but of a more morbid or low-brow appeal. Both "lively" and "intelligent," on the other hand, attest to an active act, and no mere passive display of bodily difference. "Lively" evokes the commonly remarked upon fact that Chang and Eng possessed a "gait like other people," betraying surprise at impaired mobility, but this does not include the exotic markers of the early performances of the Bunker twins. Instead, this affidavit extends the 'aggrandized' mode of presentation implying that this is a genteel performance.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Millie_and_Christine_McKoy_by_Fitzgibbon,_1867.png> [Accessed 23/6/22].

[193] Quoted in Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 36.

Clearly, the verification of medical experts was more than a private viewing conducted on behalf of the general public; it also functioned as a judgement over what was suitable and unsuitable for other gazes. This medical testimony controlled other lines of sight and served to 'protect' the general public from the power of their own gaze: preventing them from seeing something deemed unsuitable. As the medical experts served as a delegation for, or synecdoche of, the public gaze, they simultaneously verified both the transgressive elements (that the twins were genuine) and the respectable elements (that they were not 'monstrous'), all within a context where the twins' own privacy wasn't a consideration.

This was, of course, not the first time that medical verification was employed by exhibitors of extraordinary bodies. However, in response to the recent (1855) publication of P.T Barnum's autobiography *The Life of P.T. Barnum, Written by Himself*, the 'owners' of the McKoy twins relied upon a far more intricate engagement with medical verification than previous exhibitors of extraordinary bodies. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Barnum's autobiography confessed to so many faked or 'humbug' exhibits, that the 'owners' of not-'normal' exhibits such as Millie-Christine had to combat a cynical press and public. Evidencing this widespread scepticism and increased reliance on verification from medical experts, one of the 'owners' of the twins – Professor W. J. L. Millar – later recounted how a riot nearly broke out whilst the twins were performing in Liverpool's Theatre Royal in August 1855. He wrote that:

> No sooner had I appeared on the stage with the children than a fellow called out from the gallery – "Humbug, look, don't you see the leather strap binding the children together? I see it; look! Look!" For an instant, the commotion was frightful. Not one word would they let me say; nothing but wild hooting and hissing could be heard.
>
> Suddenly, like an avenging angel in evening clothes, a gentleman in one of the stage-side boxes sprang to his feet. In full view of the startled crowd, he clambered over the balustrade and dropped onto the stage. It was Dr. Inman. Standing beside the flustered twins, he announced in a voice that reached the topmost gallery that he himself had examined

them and found them actually and unquestionably joined by nature.

> And as the doctor was well known in Liverpool the tables were soon turned, and many of the audience, feeling rather ashamed of themselves, cheered us to the very echo, calling us out twice.[194]

The objector's use of "humbug" here clearly connects the distrust to Barnum, and the description of Dr. Inman as "an avenging angel that was able to quickly turn the tide of public sentiment demonstrates the effectiveness of such medical testimony. Of course, Millar was writing retrospectively, and may have exaggerated the reception. Even if it didn't occur, however, it is useful to note Millar's sense of the worth of these practices, as at the least, this demonstrates his understanding of the importance of medical verification as part of this nexus of controlled sightlines. This use of medical verification thus demonstrates how Millie-Christine's early days were characterised by a complicated hierarchy of gazes, with each layer invading the privacy of the twins in different ways. In response to this, I now turn to how the twins resisted and inverted these practices to reclaim their own sightlines, and to regain control of illicit portraits of them.

As not-'normally' bodied infant/child slaves, before the American Civil War the twins had no legal rights and there was nothing that they could do to resist these detailed medicalised inspections of their genitalia. The emancipation proclamation of 1863 did not, of course, say anything about privacy or the Doctor-patient dynamic, but it nonetheless indirectly enabled Millie-Christine to resist any future such invasions. When Millie-Christine resumed touring in 1863 they were able to do so independently because the strain of the American Civil War (1861-5) on the estate of her 'owners' meant that these owners were unable or unwilling to continue to directly manage them. The Smith estate still provided some financial backing, but if this initially created obligations then these were soon dispelled, as Millie-Christine's self-exhibition was financially effective enough for them to found and fund a school for African-American children in 1880, and then to retire in 1884.[195] The twins financially

[194] Quoted in Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 39.
[195] See Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 262 & p. 239.

benefited from their performances for the first time, sending home ticket money sales to their freed parents. In the first federal census following the emancipation proclamation (1870), for example, their father was listed as "occupation: farmer, value of real estate owned: $250, value of personal estate: $150".[196] Thanks in part to the money sent back from the twins, he was able to purchase the farm he was formally a slave on and to cultivate a strong livlihood. The recent (2000) biography of the twins, Martell's *Fearful and Wonderfully Made*, presents this transition to independence as quite matter-of-fact, stating that: "Millie and Chrissie decided it was up to them to provide for both families", seemingly presenting the move from a master-slave realtionship to that of business partners as unproblematic.[197] Martells account of this relies heavily on the 1869 *History and Medical Description of the Two-Headed Girl* – which has been attributed to Millie-Christine despite the fact that "there is very little historical or textual evidence to support treating the History as a piece authored by the McKoy twins rather than by their managers and former owners", as argued by Ellen Samuels.[198] Whilst the historical record demonstrates that this arrangement remained intact until the deaths of Millie-Christine in 1912, the descriptions of this relationship – most likely written by the Smiths – should be contextualised as part of what Samuels describes as the "self-serving narrative tendencies of slave owners regarding the love and gratitude felt toward them by their bondspeople" especially with the recent (2007) emergence of a letter written in 1866 sent from the parents of the twins to the Freedman's Bureau, pleading for their assistance in recovering Millie-Christine from the ongoing control of the Smiths.[199] The image of a restrained or 'bound' body is a recurring metaphor for slavery in abolitoinist literature, and as examined by Deeley, the post-emancipation newspaper reports of the McKoys performances evoke "an image of conjoinment as a form of voluntary restraint".[200] As with the *History and Medical Description* most likely authored by the Smiths, these reports speak to a collective desire that reiterates pro-slavery rhetoric as the "image of

[196] Cited in Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 106.
[197] Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 108.
[198] Samuels, *Examining Millie and Christine McKoy,* p. 59.
[199] Samuels, *Examining Millie and Christine McKoy,* p. 63-5.
[200] Deeley, *Contested Subjects*, p. 105.

benign restraint might be understood as a covert form of social legitimation for the institution of slavery".[201]

This difference in interpretation of the authorship of the *History and Medical Description* speaks to some of the connections drawn between this and the subsequent chapter – on conjoinment and the notion of the individual – that are articulated more fully in the conclusion to this chapter. Autobiography and life writing can be (falsely) understood as an unfiltered connection between the author and the reader, as an unadulterated expression of a private individual. Personal letters and even diaries, however, can be written with – if not the expressed purpose – at least the possibility in mind that such correspondence may be accidentally 'discovered' and published in the future. Published books are rarely a straightforward one-to-one communication between author and reader, almost always involving complicating layers of editors and marketers. Whilst this was not the case for the *History and Medical Description*, it is worthwhile reflecting on the fact that a complicated interplay of different 'authors' (the various Smith's and publishing agents) was nonetheless presented as authored solely by the twins.

However the dynamic between the Smiths and post-emancipation Millie-Christine operated, what is significant for this investigation into the relationship between conjoinment and privacy laws was that with this financial independence also came the ability to control their act and the nexus of medical verification referred to previously. Millie-Christine mandated a strict barring on all unclothed inspections, reclaiming a degree of their right to be unobserved. When the twins arrived in Boston for part of their American tour in 1869, "Doctors from the Harvard Medical School faculty tried in vain to persuade the girls to undergo a full physical exam [… but] Millie refused. No matter how the physicians pleaded in the name of science, she defended her right to personal privacy".[202] Similarly, when they toured France in 1874, the head of Parisian police instructed *L'Academie de Medicine* to conduct a full examination of the twins to ensure that Parisians were not being duped into another humbug. The examination was delegated to the neurologist and anatomist Paul Broca and the

[201] Deeley, *Contested Subjects,* p. 106.
[202] Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 131.

sexologist and anatomist Auguste Tardieu, who prefaced their report back to the Academy after visiting the twins that: “I should see myself forced to warn [the academy] that our expectations will be largely deceived and that it will be impossible for me to give complete satisfaction to our curiosity”.[203] The officials were unable to satisfy this because despite the fact that “our examination had an official character and had to respond to the scruples of the authority” Millie-Christine refused to permit a nude investigation.[204] After much negotiation, the twins compromised by permitting a “German lady who serves as housekeeper and who seems to have some medical knowledge” to inspect them under the direction of the anatomists, reporting back to the medical experts what she could see.[205] Here, the very practice of medical testimony was turned against these experts, and the medical profession in general. Millie-Christine directed who gazed upon them, resisting the ‘official character’ of the investigation, blocking their previously unobstructed sightlines, and forcing the officials to take the verification of another (the German lady) in a manner to which they were not accustomed. This was a far from typical power dynamic between not-‘normally’ bodied people and medical authorities, speaking to the cultural capital that Millie-Christine had acquired through their performances so far. It is a pivotal early example of control over sightlines and resistance to invasions of ‘privacy’, anticipating first the *Roberson v. Rochester Folding Box Company* and then also Sections 50 and 51 of the 1903 New York Civil Rights Law.

More than passively restricting the (medical) gazes upon their conjoined body, Millie-Christine also actively controlled the ways they were perceived, through embracing the very technology that was to become the catalysing agent in these related later legal proceedings. In 1871, the twins commissioned their own *carte de visites* (fig 7). Teukolsky, in her analysis of the unique power dynamics bound up in this novel use of technology says that these consistently “upended traditional divides of class and gender by foregrounding powerful

[203] Ambroise Tardieu, ‘Communications; le Resultat de son Examen du Monster Connu Sous le Nom de Millie-Christine’ [Report; The result of his exam of the monster known as Millie-Christine]. *Bulletin de l’Acadmie de Medicine*, 13.1 (1874), 36–39, p. 36. My translation. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k408664f/f34> [Accessed 20/9/21].
[204] Tardieu, *Communications,* p. 36
[205] Tardieu, *Communications,* p. 37

women of dubious backgrounds".[206] As is clear in this example, both twins meet the gaze of the camera, and are equipped and positioned to portray a specific set of associations. Their outfits match each other perfectly, and the prop of a basket of flowers – held by Millie whilst Christine has a single bloom – suggests unity between the twins as well as naturally occurring phenomena. The dress is expensive, and it is interesting that two decorative bows run parallel to where the two twins meet. All of the twins' clothes had to be customised, and these bows would have run up the seam where two identical singleton outfits were combined to make one piece for the twins. These bows thus simultaneously highlight and disguise this connection, performing a role analogous to the obscure medical jargon in lay pamphlets examined earlier.

[206] Rachel Teukolsky, 'Cartomania: Sensation, Celebrity, and the Democratized Portrait' *Victorian Studies,* 57.3 (2015), 462-75, p. 462.

Figure 7 – *Carte de Visite* of Millie-Christine McKoy.[207]

[207] Louis Bertin, 'Carte-de-visite photograph of Millie-Christine with flowers' Photograph, (Brighton: [N. Pub], 1874), <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/16349914> [Accessed 28/6/22].

There is, however, one notable exception to Millie-Christine's ability to resist the medical invasions of their privacy after their independence. Also in 1871, they developed "an abscess forming near the genitals" and the local Doctor Pancoast was summoned to investigate.[208] Pancoast discovered that this abscess was the result of a fistula, and treated Millie-Christine for this over the next couple of months. Whilst the twins were physically weak and dependent on Pancoast for this ongoing treatment he would often bring other doctors and even interested lay friends and family members to gaze upon them "to establish the accuracy of my examination".[209] As a result of Millie-Christine's physical weakness and reliance on medical aid, Pancoast was provided with a privileged gaze of their conjoinment which even other medical experts had been denied. In inviting colleagues and family to stare at Millie-Christine – helpless whilst recovering from surgery – Pancoast moved from staring *on behalf* of other medical experts and the general public to actively redistributing this gaze, resituating the twins within a more conventional medical power dynamic. As shall be made clear later, non consensual medical interventions performed on conjoined twins in the name of 'privacy' often have the unconscious drive to interrupt the connection between conjoined twins and to replace it with a more typical doctor-patient relationship instead. As a key example of this, Pancoast's medical treatment of the twins was interwoven with his manipulation of the sightlines surrounding them. As he became the sole expert authorised to gaze upon them, he sought the ability to direct the gazes of others and to control the sightlines associated with them.

Over the course of his treatment of the fistula, Pancoast captured the below photograph of Millie-Christine and printed it in his 1871 *Photographic Review of Medicine and Surgery.* Following Samuels, and to avoid continuing the very practice I am criticising, I have only reproduced the upper portion of the photograph (fig. 8). The remainder – which I have cropped out – shows that Millie-Christine is nude between shoulder and knee, with their clothes draped across their fronts to conceal their breasts, whilst their conjoinment is exposed in profile. This photograph was included alongside many other not-'normal'

[208] Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p.144.
[209] William Pancoast, *Photographic Review of Medicine and Surgery: a Bi-Monthly Illustration of Interesting Cases, Accompanied by Notes* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1871) p. 49 <https://archive.org/details/photographicrevi01maur> [Accessed 20/9/21].

bodies that had come under Pancoast's care and which he had photographed. In the words of Deeley, in this publication, his report "assigns relatively little space to discussing the fistula for which Millie Christine and her guardian, Mr Smith, had sought out his assistance" instead attempting to provide "a contribution to teratological debates surrounding the classification and possible aetiology of 'duplex formations"'.[210] In doing so, he is violating the later privacy laws that made using a "portrait or picture of any living person without having first obtained the written consent of such person" a misdemeanour.[211] Whilst these laws were not enacted for some 30 years after the *Photographic Review,* it is a prime example of what Lake identifies as: "the novel harms being experienced by photographed individuals" that arose from the new technology of the camera.[212]

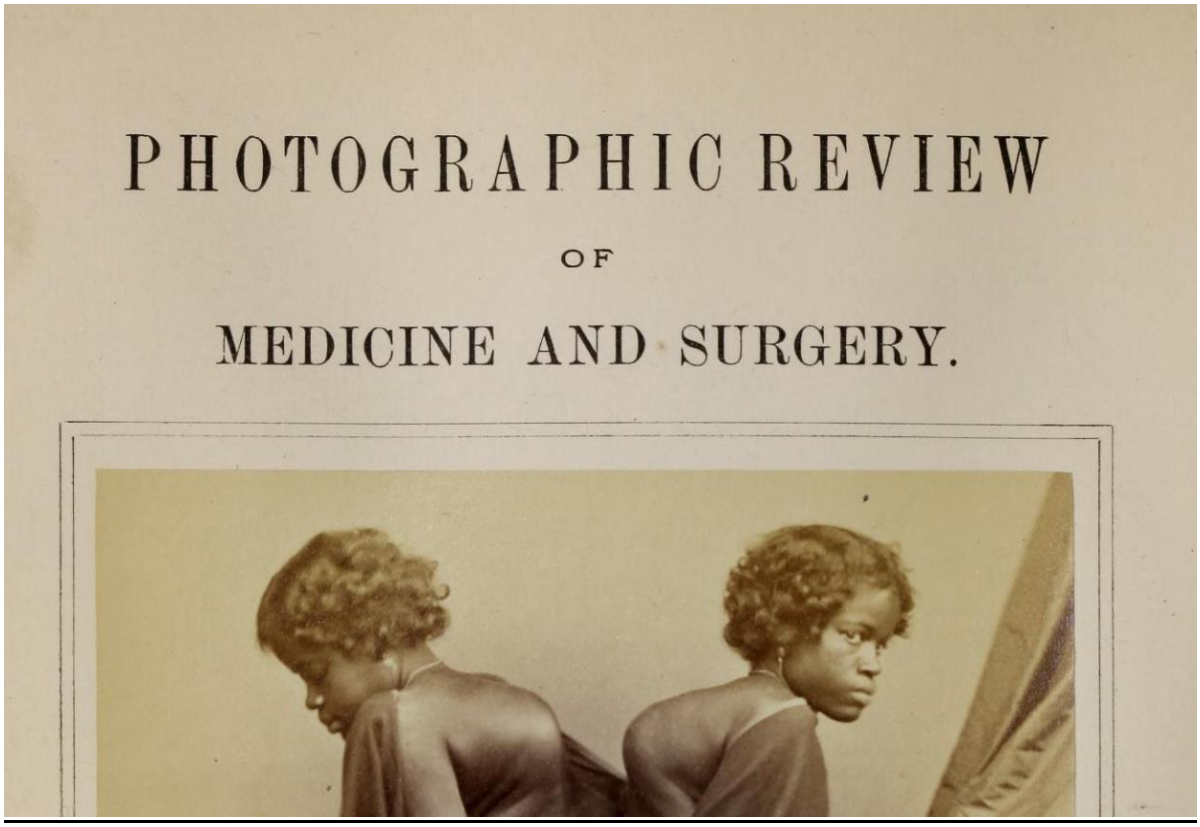
Even if these later laws were in effect by the time Pancoast published these pictures, however, no legal action would have followed against him. Medical portraiture of the type provided by Pancoast have continued with little modification to the present day, and current guidance from the Care Quality Commission still lists that (among others) images of pathology, recordings of organ functions, and x-rays consist of "special circumstances" and "recordings of which separate consent is not required".[213] Despite the fact that these pieces of personal information could be used to identify someone, these kinds of medical recordings are even today considered to not infringe on a patient's privacy. Alice Dreger cites several examples of disabled people that have been researching their own condition and been shocked to discover unauthorised photographs of themselves, whilst anaesthetized or during surgery.[214] Often, there will be a token attempt made to preserve the anonymity of the individual – a small black bar over the eyes for example – but when the explicit aim of the text and accompanying photograph is to describe a rare condition and/or anatomy this is nothing more than lip service. For example, Dreger reports that in the account in the *Journal of Paediatric Surgery* of the separation of

[210] Deeley, *Contested Subjects,* pp. 79-80.
[211] *The Laws of New York*.
[212] Lake, *The Face that Launched a Thousand Lawsuits,* pp. 43-4
[213] [Anon.], 'GP mythbuster 62: Photography and Making and Using Visual Recordings of Patients, *Care Quality Commission,* <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/gp-mythbuster-62-photography-making-using-visual-recordings-patients> [Accessed 11/7/22].
[214] Dreger *One of Us* p. 128.

conjoined twins Katie and Eilish, their eyes are masked and they are referred to by “Twin 1” and “Twin 2” respectively. However, their unique configuration completely undermines this as “anyone who knows anything about conjoined twins knows that the report is about Katie and Eilish; they had been shown with their real names in news reports all over the world”.[215] The interventions supposedly made in the name of privacy instead further objectify the people involved, as they turn “the focus away from the individual to the condition itself, supplanting the life and person with the ‘deformity’”.[216] This is in itself, part of the Foucauldian practice by which individuals become superseded by the deviant “type” that they are grouped within, and the subject of the illustration in a medical textbook becomes nothing but their condition just as “the nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood”.[217] The educational and scientific value of these texts and images is felt to be of more importance than the privacy of the patients involved, which in itself is a rehashing of the nineteenth century presumption that for the ‘greater good’ people with not-‘normal’ bodies were duty-bound to be experimented on and to receive public autopsies.

[215] Dreger, *One of Us,* p. 128.
[216] Dreger, *One of Us,* p. 127.
[217] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* p. 43.

Figure 8 – Cropped Medical Photograph of Millie-Christine McKoy. Taken by Pancoast over the course of his treatment for their fistula and later published in his *Photographic Review of Medicine and Surgery*.[218]



Whilst Pancoast was operating within a long history of teratology that used drawings and then photographs to document the extraordinary bodies being examined and classified, what is different about the invasions of Millie-Christine's privacy is their marked resistance to it, visually disputing this assumption of lines of sight. In the words of Samuels, whilst Christine (on the left as we look at it) gazes at the floor, Millie "is positively glaring at the camera—at us. Her head is twisted around to face us, her eyes narrowed in contempt, her jaw set in stubbornness and what I would go so far as to call rage".[219] All the other subjects in this issue either face away from the camera, or are looking to the side: Millie is the only one to return the gaze and to stare back at us. Pancoast acknowledges the unique levels of resistance to his gaze, stating in the accompanying notes that "they clung to their raiment closely" and that "it was only by earnest entreaty that they were willing to compromise by

[218] Pancoast, *Photographic Review,* p. 42.
[219] Samuels, *Examining Millie and Christine McKoy,* p. 71.

retaining the drapery as photographed".[220] Indeed he acknowledges that "the expression of their countenances shows their displeasure, as their features ordinarily express great amiability of character".[221] Despite his recognition of the twins resistance to his photograph, Pancoast also includes two woodcut engravings (not reproduced here) minutely representing what Tardieu and Broca were unable to access: the shared genitalia of Millie-Christine "drawn by the artist Mr. Faber, from my description", presumably whilst the twins were unconscious.[222] As argued by Deeley these actions by Pancoast are examples of where "the medical gaze intersects with a sexual policing or surveillance of Millie Christine's anomalous corporeality".[223] Pancoast provides an intricate description of the McKoy's vagina and anus, narrating his invasive exploration of it, including a description of the various smells he detected, and that he "readily passed my index finger up its whole length".[224]

Intriguingly, the woodcut engravings did not have a distinct legal status to the photographs; whilst we might expect that the former is more of a 'likeness' and less 'objective' than the latter – at least in the courts – the two medias were considered somewhat equivalent. In *Burrow-Giles Lithographic Co. v. Sarony* (1884) the court recognised the subjective and creative work involved in portraiture photography. In this case, the court supported photographer Napoleon Sarony's claims of copyright infringement in the unauthorised lithographs of his photograph of Oscar Wilde. Through the arrangement of "the costume, draperies, and other various accessories in said photograph, arranging the subject so as to present graceful outlines, arranging and disposing the light and shade, suggesting and evoking the desired expression, and from such disposition, arrangement, or representation" the court recognized that the photograph was indeed "an original work of art" and as such could be afforded copyright protection.[225] Clearly then, whilst the commercialisation of the camera was feared to infringe upon the nascent right to privacy because of its supposed objectivity – especially following the innovation that same year of

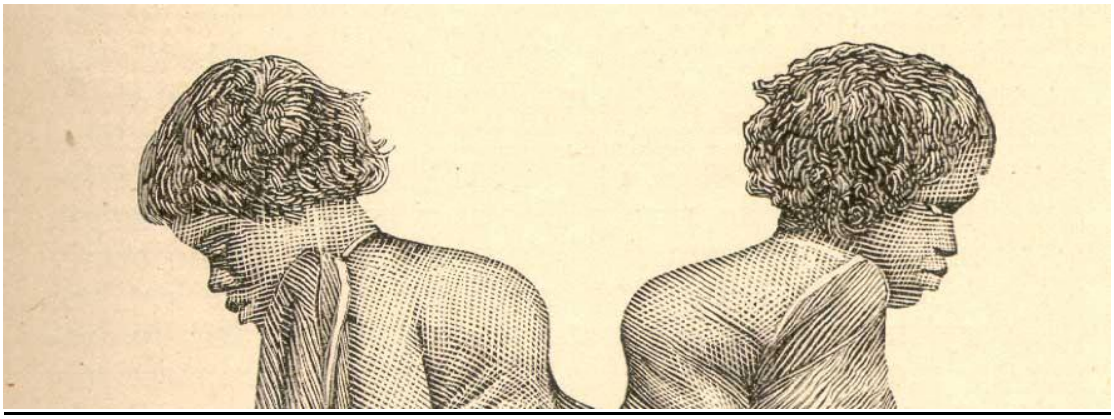
[220] Pancoast, *Photographic Review,* p. 44.
[221] Pancoast, *Photographic Review,* p. 44.
[222] Pancoast, *Photographic Review,* pp. 47-8
[223] Deeley, *Contested Subjects,* p. 77.
[224] Pancoast, *Photographic Review,* p. 48.
[225] 'Burrow-Giles Lithographic Company v. Sarony', *U.S Supreme Court*, 111.53 (1884) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/111/53/> [Accessed 12/7/22] p. 55.

the ‘flash’ capture method that made exposure times practically instantaneous – there was from the start an awareness of the way this ‘objective’ gaze could be manipulated as any other media.

Millie’s “gazing back as a form of assertive resistance to visual objectification” is thus crucial context for both their personal history of negotiated control of sightlines and for the wider development of privacy laws, as well as singleton understandings of ‘privacy’.[226] Importantly, in George Fisher’s entry for ‘Teratology’ in his 1889 *Reference Handbook of the Medical Sciences*, he cites Pancoast’s *Photographic Review* and includes an engraved reproduction of the photograph of Millie-Christine that has been discussed so far, but with a crucial difference. As you can see below in fig. 9 (again cropped by me, following Samuels) Millie is no longer staring down the lens of the camera, no longer staring back at the photographer and those vicariously invading her privacy. The engraving is otherwise faithful to the original, and that this is the only alteration made by Fisher’s engraver is a testament to the agency of Millie’s return stare, and Fisher’s desire to remove it. This detail importantly sheds light on the current-day limited attempts to preserve the ‘privacy’ of the subjects of illustrations in medical textbooks, as Fishers’ modification is similar to what the disability rights activist Cheryl Chase identifies as “the black rectangle over the eyes [that] accomplishes only one thing: it saves the viewer from having to endure the gaze of the subject”.[227]

[226] Samuels, *Examining Millie and Christine McKoy,* p. 73.
[227] Cheryl Chase, cited in Sharon E. Preves, *Intersex and Identity: The Contested Self* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), p. 69.

Figure 9 – Modified Illustration of Millie-Christine McKoy. By "Schnitzer," cropped, from the entry on "Teratology" in the Reference Handbook of the Medical Sciences. The illustration is engraved from the above (fig 8) photograph in Pancoast's *Photographic Review*.[228]



Unfortunately, the prioritisation of the viewer's comfort over rights to privacy of these women has continued to the present day. As Samuels discovered, in 2006 the National Library of Medicine website hosted a digital exhibit (still available as of writing) that featured this altered image of Millie-Christine, and not the original one expressing Millie's discomfort and her agency in returning the stare.[229] In addition, the engraving minutely detailing their shared genitalia not shown here is also hosted on this page. This active current practice removes the twins agency, and the associated discomfort, and according to Samuels "certainly speaks to a contemporary reluctance to acknowledge the exploitation and resistance involved in the medical display of extraordinary bodies, particularly those marked as racial others".[230] As this quotation makes clear, this current practice is an extension of the racial double standard applied to women with not-'normal' anatomies during the nineteenth century. For example, Dr. Marion Sims performed experimental gynaecological surgery on black women in his backyard hospital to small audiences, even purchasing slaves expressively for the purpose of such experimentation but

[228] Cited in Samuels, *Examining Millie and Christine McKoy,* p. 75.
[229] 'From "Monsters" to Medical Miracles: Selected Moments in the History of Conjoined Twins from Medieval to Modern Times' *National Library of Medicine* <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/conjoined/marvels.html> [accessed 21/9/21].
[230] Samuels, *Examining Millie and Christine McKoy,* p. 75.

ensured that white women undergoing the same treatment were at least covered with sheets.[231]

On the one hand then, there is the power of the *carte de visite* to radically upend "traditional divides of class and gender by foregrounding powerful women of dubious backgrounds".[232] On the other hand, however, the medical portrait of these same subjects circumvents this gained agency and is/was seen as a valid exception to issues related to privacy. Just as the nineteenth-century practice of medical testimony – in response to the 'moral revolution' – re-validated staring at these people as educational and genteel entertainment, so too the medical portrait inverts the power dynamics of the *cartes de visite* and as Garland-Thompson puts it: "Photography authorizes staring".[233]

The power of the returned gaze for not-'normally' bodied people is also alluded to in recent fictional depictions of conjoined twins. An important example in *The Girls* is their use of mirrors. The twins are craniopagus conjoined twins, joined at the head, and unable to see each other's faces, or to both look at the same thing simultaneously. To accommodate for this, they have adorned their flat with mirrors and shiny surfaces, and this enables them to look at each other from any direction, and also to catch the illicit stares of bystanders. In her essay 'Ways of Staring', Rosemarie Garland-Thompson argues that staring creates a relationship between two people "that is at once alienating and intimate" and thus "breaches the conventionalized anonymity governing visual relations among strangers in modernity".[234] Such stares typically transgress behaviour codes, and to catch someone in the act of illicitly staring can "endow the staree with the ability to seize the attention and to hold in thrall the starer" as "the face to be saved in staring encounters is not the face of the staree, but the face of the starer".[235] This is, of course not the only power dynamic bound up in staring

[231] See Terry Kapsalis 'Mastering the Female Pelvis: Race and the Tools of Reproduction', *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture,* ed. by Kimberly Wallace-Sanders (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 263-300, pp. 267-9.
[232] Teukolsky, 'Cartomania', p. 462.
[233] Garland-Thompson, 'The Politics of Staring', p. 58.
[234] Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, 'Ways of Staring', *Journal of Visual Culture,* 5.2 (2006) 173-92, p. 175.
[235] Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, 'Ways of Staring' p. 175, p. 179.

and disability; as the previous discussions about Millie-Christine's early life, Hevey's concept of "enfreakment" and Cooper's personal analysis of the "mechanics of the disabling gaze" make clear.[236] Millie, however embraces the potential agency of the staree in Pancoast's photograph, as do the conjoined characters in *The Girls,* as when visiting family in Slovakia they identify with the "devilish hoofed" fairies of local folklore.[237] These are believed by the Slovakian characters to "bring you luck if you catch one of *their* eyes before they catch one of yours".[238] The unspoken opposite of this belief is apparent, as when they catch a Slovakian staring at them he is "horrified to have been caught".[239] Otherwise, however, these beliefs are shown negatively, as the twins describe Slovakia as disconcertingly devoid of mirrors. In describing the first house they arrive in, Rose's primary recollection is that "it struck me right away that there were no mirrors in the old women's home, which made me feel cut off from my sister".[240] Their ability to manage the gazes of others and thus to control both how they see and how they are seen is severely hampered, and they mistakenly report that there was "*no staring.* No craning. No peering. Nothing" – an experience they describe as not "odd or weird, it was frightening", as they are cut off from their adapted way of seeing each other and from controlling their environment.[241]

The use of mirrors here, then, is more than just a means of extending their cones of vision. Evoking the nexus of contested sightlines which Millie-Christine was born into and struggled against, this use of mirrors by fictional twins attests that 'privacy' is not just a thing to be taken for granted or to be held passively, but a means by which their integrity is constantly assaulted by casual onlookers. As they increase their cones of vision and manage the disempowering gazes of others, or as Millie-Christine negotiated sightlines surrounding them, conjoined twins can control the ways that they are perceived and regain a degree of privacy. Whilst Roberson's case (1901) and the resulting public uproar were pivotal moments in the development of the 'right to be let

[236] Hevey, "The Enfreakment of Photography" p. 371; Cooper *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child*, p. 40.
[237] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 241.
[238] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 241.
[239] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 253.
[240] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 265.
[241] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 249, emphasis original

alone', Millie-Christine's much earlier (1863) atypical power dynamic with various medical authorities anticipated a key shift in understandings of privacy. As demonstrated by Millie's defiant staring back in Pancoast's photograph (1871), to stare at someone with a not-'normal' body was shown to be a just as encroaching invasion of privacy as government 'interference'. As the power of the returned stare was felt more keenly in the following decades, however, the physical demarcation of space *between* conjoined twins was increasingly argued for, supposedly to provide them with greater privacy from each other. In reality, however, this was a continued effort to control sightlines and to protect singletons from having their own privacy compromised by the spectre of conjoinment.

Voting Booths, Phone Booths, Headphones

Following on from the commercialisation of the Kodak camera and technological advances that dramatically improved our ability to record visual forms of information, from 1880-1914 'privacy' came to be understood as vulnerable to new forms of assault, and thus the understanding of what 'privacy' constituted also developed. The particularly close 1884 American Presidential election also lent an increased focus to these concerns, as voter privacy became necessary to avoid the threats of voter intimidation, vote buying, and a potentially undemocratic election. The bodies of prominent conjoined twins were invoked by this discourse, as the constant proximity of conjoinment and a seeming lack of solitude and personal space led conjoined twins to be lampooned as the ultimate expression of impinged privacy in media responding to the voting reform laws of the early twentieth century. Concerns related to privacy after the McKoy twins thus moved from the control of sightlines and unauthorised visual recordings to a control of physical space and a policing of 'streams of heard information' – my own term for an audio equivalent of 'lines of sight'. In the interactions between conjoinment and 'privacy' during this period, then, there is a focus on technology that facilitates these forms of regulation: voting booths, telephone booths, and headphones.

The 1884 American presidential election was won by an incredibly narrow margin, and a single majority of just 1047 votes decided the final electoral vote (New York) which provided Grover Cleveland's victory. Such a

narrow decision raised awareness of the potential impact that the practises of vote-buying, voter fraud, and voter intimidation could have on a Presidential election – practices that were relatively common under the current voting systems because according to Donald Debats analysis of early voting systems, these "were designed *NOT* to be private, but unapologetically to reveal, especially to party operatives, each voter's political choices".[242] Through 1884-1891, all American states underwent a process of electoral reform away from these open (and in many states oral) forms of voting to a secret ballot. As part of these state election reform laws, the new technology of voting booths was installed across the U.S between 1884 and 1950, with the bulk occurring at the start of the century. These were remarkably specific, as the New York electoral reform law of 1894 stipulated that:

> A guard rail shall be so constructed and placed at each polling place that only such persons as are inside such rail can approach within six feet of the ballot-boxes, and of the booths. The arrangement of the polling place shall be such that the booths can only be reached by passing within the guard rail, and that the booths, ballot-boxes, election officers, and every part of the polling places, except the inside of the booths, shall be in plain view of the election officers and of persons just outside the guard rail.[243]

This law minutely describes the dimensions, the position, and even demarcates the negative space around and between the booths in an attempt to (a) ensure that no one can observe someone inside, and (b) that the outside of the booth is fully observable. Whilst America was far from universal suffrage at this point – as in Europe – a series of voter reforms had expanded the vote to the male, white, wealthy, non-disabled middle class (what Margaret Thornton refers to as "the normative citizen"), and this level of specificity functioned as a means of ensuring that the democratic process remained under the control of these kinds of people.[244] It was not until the 1965 Voting Rights Act that disabled people

---

[242] Donald A Debats, 'Secrecy in Voting in American History: No Secrets There', *Sociallogic,* (2016) pp. 5-6. <http://sociallogic.iath.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/f%20Public%20Voting%2C%20secrecy%20historic%20%234.pdf> [Accessed 21/10/21].

[243] [Anon.], *Journal of the Assembly of the State of New York at their One Hundred and Seventeenth Session. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Albany, on the Second Day of January 1804,* Vol 1 (Albany: James B. Lyon, 1894), p. 1607.

[244] Thornton, *Dissonance and Distrust,* p. 25.

gained the right to assistance and accessible polling stations in America, and even then, this was rarely enforced until the 1984 Voting Accessibility for Elderly and the Handicapped Act. Developing the understanding of 'privacy' 1850-1890 that was outlined in the previous section, in the first few decades of the new century, privacy in America was understood as requiring that singletons be completely closed off from all other humans, to interrupt existent lines of dependence and communication and to reimagine the voter as entirely independent and in a literally separate space – a veritable room of one's own. Conjoinment – as constant proximity to another – inherently contradicts this fragile construction of privacy, which explains why it was so often understood as incompatible or even in opposition to privacy.

In the popular press there is clear evidence of conjoinment being seen as compromising singleton privacy. In a 1933 article by the American Newspaper *The Daily Boston Globe*, the article title succinctly expresses the issue at stake, 'VOTING PROBLEM IS CREATED BY HOLYOKE SIAMESE TWINS: How to Ensure Individual Privacy for Sisters In Casting Ballot'.[245] The 'problem' referred to is "just how the twins can vote individually without one seeing how the other casts her ballot".[246] Whilst the tone of the article is light and whimsical, it nevertheless concludes that special/spatial measures will have to be undertaken to prevent the conjoined Gibb twins from committing an election offence. Due to their configuration, the journalist provocatively asks "whether, on election day, Dec 5, a special booth will have to be built for their balloting".[247]

The intention of the twins is not considered, as the article does not question whether the twins are likely to commit an election offence or not. Instead, the reporter presents the Gibb twins as an automatic threat to the management of 'privacy', circumventing recent singleton technology designed to protect this (the voting booth). Here, this threatening presentation of the twins is connected to their public status, as immediately after outlining such concerns, the article describes "their occupation, show business", connecting the private

[245] [Anon.], 'Voting Problem is Created by Holyoke Siamese Twins: How to Insure Individual Privacy for Sisters in Casting Ballot, Puzzles Board', *Daily Boston Globe,* 15 November 1933, p. 1 <https://www.proquest.com/docview/758220013> [Accessed 11/10/22].
[246] [Anon.], 'Voting Problem', p. 1.
[247] [Anon.], 'Voting Problem', p. 1.

and public aspects of the twins by informing the reader that "they just returned from a tour on the road and headed right in the midst of a municipal election".[248] Whilst it is likely that this inclusion was at least requested by their agent – eager to increase ticket sales from this free publicity – it is interesting that the article segues so neatly from the threat that conjoined twins pose to privacy, to how they voluntarily reduce their privacy for profit. In his outlining of the process he terms 'celebrification', Oliver Driessens explains that this development "entails commodification [...] manufactured by the celebrity industry [to] produce and help to sell other commodities".[249] Just as modern celebrities are often presented as waiving their rights to privacy by making some parts of their lives public, so too the conjoined twins here are presented as having forfeited these rights by exhibiting themselves. It suggests that their occupation as performers and their day-to-day lack of singleton 'privacy' is connected to the ways that they will automatically violate the electoral code. Similarly to how medical verification re-presented the act of staring as an educational and suitable act, so too the guise of 'celebrity' is taken as a valid circumvention of everyday entitlements to 'privacy'. In all cases the act of staring at not-'normal' anatomy becomes reinvented as something permissible by bourgeois society. This newspaper article plays on this ambiguity and activates concerns related to the recent close election, presenting conjoined twins – and by extension people with disabilities more generally – as threatening. The constant proximity that is their conjoinment is simultaneously justification for blocking their vote, whilst also an excuse to stare at them. As the twins are constantly in each other's presence, and thus constantly transgressing the singleton norms of 'privacy', singletons are justified in staring at them, as they do not have the same level of 'privacy' to protect.

A few months before this article on the Gibb twins, in late 1932, it was widely reported that as part of her courtship of her fiancé Jack Lewis the conjoined Daisy Hilton "had a phone booth moved into their Central Park apartment".[250] She then had this modified in a way that enabled her to enter the cubicle with her twin Violet on the other side of a partition, enabling her to have

[248] [Anon.], 'Voting Problem', p. 1.
[249] Olivier Driessens, 'The Celebritization of Society and Culture: Understanding the Structural Dynamics of Celebrity Culture', *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 16.6 (641-57), p. 643.
[250] Jenson, *Lives and Loves,* p. 217.

telephone conversations with Jack without Violet overhearing them. Such a personal telephone booth physically resembles the ‘special booth’ that the author of the article on the Gibb sisters recommended to prevent them from committing election fraud, and was designed to prevent Violet from overseeing and overhearing these intimate conversations.

In these technological ‘solutions’ to the ‘problems’ of conjoinment, there is a core assumption that their constant proximity can lead to compromised ‘privacy’. Always having your twin present is understood to mean that private information (personal vote, telephone conversations, etc.) can be easily overheard and/or overseen and thus requires technological interventions (the phone or voting booth) to ‘plug’ this potential ‘leak’ and to preserve the singleton construction of ‘privacy’. As shown by the voting booth, this intervention is understood to be not just/primarily for the benefit of the twins – the 50 year gap between the Gibb article and the Voting Accessibility Act shows that such outrage was not driven by concerns that disabled people did not have the same voting rights as other citizens. Instead the intervention is felt to be needed as it neutralised the threat that conjoinment posed to the ‘privacy’ of wider society. This attempt to negate the problematic properties of unruly conjoined bodies are artificial divisions of space, aiming to prevent communication between the twins. This soothed singleton anxieties, as it forced conjoined bodies into singleton phase-space, extrapolating from this an understanding of conjoined bodies as only enmeshed at the surface. If their limbs and heads can be kept apart, then the two individuals can be kept distinct, and so there is no visceral communication (of any form) to be concerned about. As the two are complete and separate individuals, they can have complete and separate lives, and thus can be seen to have a singleton understanding of ‘privacy’.

With the important technological development of headphones in the inter-war years, the management of singleton privacy was no longer dependent on physical space.[251] Headphones produce a private acoustic space, albeit what Charles Stankievech describes in his phenomenological account an “impossible

[251] See Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 173.

space" as it does not "inhabit the mass of the body".[252] Headphones function as a portable phone booth as – paralleling the shift away from oral voting practices – the auditory information "intimately reverberated within the private acoustic space of the listener's head rather than his or her external environment", according to Angela Frattarola's exploration of auditory symbolism in literature from this time.[253] Headphones allowed conjoined twins to be demarcated into separate information streams, interrupting their 'leaky' dynamic and allowing for more traditional interpersonal relationships to be imposed upon them instead. Indeed, in Sarah Crossan's (2015) more recent depiction of conjoinment *One*, when the conjoined Grace is in therapy, her twin Tippi voluntarily dons a pair of noise-cancelling headphones so that Grace can "spew all my suppressed feelings into / Dr Murphy's notebook / without hurting any of Tippi's".[254] Here we see, similarly to both the adaptive voting booths and the Hilton's phone booth that – thanks to this new technology – personal space and a degree of privacy can be created without having to demarcate the mingled twins into separate physical space.

The need for this, however, is questioned by Grace, as she tells us that: "I used to rant a lot / when I was seven or eight / and Tippi had stolen my doll / or pulled my hair / or eaten my half of a cookie. / But now there's not much to say / Tippi doesn't already know".[255] For Grace the need to have this sort of privacy, where she can voice thoughts without her twin being part of, is unnecessary and childish, perhaps important for when they were growing up, but not anymore. Intriguingly, Crossan has Grace flatly deny the ability of this 'privacy' preserving technology, or any such device (e.g. phone or voting booths) to fulfil this task. She reinforces conjoinment as inherently and unavoidably 'leaky', as "there's not much to say / Tippi doesn't already know", and that "even with my headphones / on / I know that Tippi hears the tinny hissing / of my music / in her own ears".[256]

---

[252] Charles Stankievech, 'From Stethoscopes to Headphones: An Acoustic Spatialization of Subjectivity', *Leonardo Music Journal,* 17.1 (2007), 55-59, p. 56.
[253] Angela Frattarola, *Modernists Soundscapes: Auditory Technology and the Novel* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018) p. 96.
[254] Sarah Crossan, *One* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 43.
[255] Sarah Crossan, *One,* p. 43.
[256] Sarah Crossan, *One,* p. 152.

Grace connects this singleton imposition of ‘privacy’ upon them both to the psychological pathologization of their condition. She reports that even though she does not see herself as needing therapy, for the past sixteen and a half years “the doctors insist we come for regular therapy / to support our mental health / as though that’s the bit of us that’s broken”.[257] At the surface, their medical practitioners understand the twins' non-normative body type and resulting lack of what a singleton understands ‘individuality’ or ‘privacy’ to be inherently harmful to the twins’ mental health. These concerns are important to analyse further, however, because they manifest as the medical staff temporarily interrupting the communication and connection between the twins, and replacing it with one of doctor-patient. Dr. Murphy does not insist that Grace gets some ‘privacy’ from Tippi by reading, or forming a close personal relationship outside of her conjoinment (both of which Grace does and remarks on the value of later in the text), but instead mandates that Grace cut herself off from Tippi so that she (Dr. Murphy) can temporarily replace her. Similarly to Pancoast’s re-establishing of a conventional doctor-patient power dynamic when Millie-Christine needed treatment for her fistula, the headphones are a means by which Dr. Murphy blocks the twins from each other, allowing her to re-establish an audio version of the medical gaze.

The irony of this imposition is alluded to by Crossan. On the one hand, Dr. Murphy is acting in this text in a way that aims to improve the wellbeing of the twins, however, this forms part of what Eli Clare refers to as the “ideology of cure” and is a problematic attempt to ‘fix’ their non-normative configuration.[258] This practice implicitly assumes that conjoined twins necessarily have a lack of singleton ‘privacy’ and that this requires a ‘resolution’. However, in addressing this perceived lack, Dr. Murphy herself tries to observe the secret thoughts and feelings of Grace. Grace’s response to these unasked for invasions is to clam up, to: “sit in silence / for ten whole minutes / worrying at a button in the brown leather sofa”.[259] This is shown to be a typical interaction between the two, as it is introduced as what “so often happens”, establishing Grace’s resistance to this interrogation in the name of privacy. This episode is linked to a similar

[257] Sarah Crossan, *One,* p. 42.
[258] Eli Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling With Cure* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2017), p. xvi.
[259] Sarah Crossan, *One,* p.44.

interaction in gym class later in the text, as after Grace has sat in silence with Dr. Murphy for a while she confesses that “I’m afraid the other students will pity me”.[260] Dr. Murphy does not respond to this admission beyond looking at the clock and stating that “I’ll be really interested / to hear how that goes […] See you next time!”[261] The expressed concern by Grace about pity serves as a bridge to connect to the later depiction of gym class, where their (singleton) classmate expresses how sorry they feel for the twins “because I need my privacy. / I’d hate to be so trapped all the time”.[262] As with the medical experts’ insistence that Grace and Tippi need therapy to copy with their non-singleton configuration, this classmate provides a well-intentioned expression of ableism. It assumes that conjoined twins do not have any singleton form of ‘privacy’, and therefore that they do not have *any* form of ‘privacy’.

It is significant, of course, that sounds and not vision are under discussion here, as there are significant differences between the politics of listening and seeing. Unless something arresting has caused us to stare, it is more intuitive to direct and control what one is looking at rather than what one listens to. Sauron’s all-knowing disembodied body part that kept a constant and vigilant ‘look-out’ for the hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was his ‘eye’ and not his ear, and there is no English equivalent for an audio ‘stare’ or ‘gaze’. Additionally, whilst we can voluntarily close our eyes it is much harder to create a perfect seal for our ears – as those who rely on ear plugs to sleep at night will know – and our ears are ‘always on’ by comparison. Perhaps connected to this, our language more frequently associates vision with our primary means of capturing information, whilst data gathered through listening can be illegitimate or underhand. Spies ‘overhear’ or ‘listen at keyholes’, whilst instructors and examiners ‘observe’ (from the Latin ‘observare’ ‘to watch’) and if someone needs to verify that they are being told the truth they may demand that the speaker augment the listener’s ears and ‘look me in the eye’ whilst they speak. Although you can stare from a greater distance than you can eavesdrop, if we are non-disabled and near the target then it is easier to disguise the fact that we are listening without someone’s knowledge than it is to furtively stare at them.

[260] Sarah Crossan, *One,* p. 44.
[261] Sarah Crossan, *One,* p. 45.
[262] Sarah Crossan, *One,* pp. 206-7.

As part of this sensory bias which Martin Jay terms 'ocularcentrism', then, audio information sources are clearly understood as less manageable, more 'noisy' (in terms of signal-to-noise ratio) and have less integrity than visual streams.[263] Importantly, as discussed previously, conjoinment is understood to be inherently 'leaky', and the technological developments aimed at protecting singleton privacy implicitly focused on this leakiness by managing sightlines through the control of physical space. It is clear that this seemingly additional porosity of audio information provides additional motivation for singleton interventions through booths and headphones.

As the example shown here demonstrates, however, headphones are at best a partial solution to this singleton concern. Even though the headphones occlude the actual words that Grace is speaking, the imperfect and porous seal around Tippi's ears still allows for information about the information – or meta-data – to be communicated and 'overheard'. Grace states that "Even with my headphones / on / I know that Tippi hears the tiny hissing / of my music in her own ears".[264] The additional line break emphasises "on" and the unnecessary reaffirmation included in the "her own ears" makes it clear that this is not being absorbed via a form of telepathy – the 'overhearing' is not done internally – but instead externally through Tippi's ears.

This is not to say, however, that telepathy was not also a concern for singletons when they started thinking about conjoined twins and privacy. Returning to the period specifically under discussion in this chapter, a 1943 article in the *Good Morning* newspaper published a related interview between "a Biologist, a Doctor, a Psychologist and Mr. Everyman" to "tackle the question scientifically [...] on the strange sympathy existing between twins".[265] Whilst the article discusses singleton twins as well as conjoined twins, in reference to conjoined twins specifically the unnamed psychologist confidently states that: "There is no doubt that such phenomena as telepathy—or thought-reading—are more common among twins than among other people, and this is no doubt

[263] Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).
[264] Sarah Crossan, *One,* p. 142.
[265] [Anon.], 'Today's Brains Trust' *Good Morning,* [April-December] 1943, p. 2, <https://www.servicenewspapers.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Images/LBY_E_J_005199_1_180/1> [accessed 15/11/21].

partly due to the fact that they are constitutionally 'tuned in' to each other".[266] That this debated ability to dissociate was so hotly contested and discussed is of note, as it highlights what is felt to be threatening about the singleton concerns being discussed so far. The Hilton twins (1908-1969), for example, repeatedly reported that they had an ability – taught to them by their friend and co-performer Harry Houdini – to mentally disengage from their surroundings. When using this ability each twin would reportedly neither see nor hear what happened in their presence until they voluntarily brought themselves back. This ability functioned similarly to their custom phone booth and "would often prove useful to them, especially in the years ahead when each was regularly involved in romantic relationships".[267] Similarly Lori and George Schappel are contemporary twins that have often talked about a similar ability. Lori is a country and Western performer, and in interviews George has talked about how he would either view himself as an audience member, or would mentally dissociate from the performance, ensuring both his and his twin's privacy.[268]

In *The Girls,* this ability is simultaneously naturalised and shown to be useful for the twins beyond their conjoinment. When Rose describes being trapped in an awkward situation, she reproduces her ability to mentally absent herself:

> I started to hum, and Aunt Lovey knew that I was gone, not physically of course, but that I had walked through a door and closed it behind me and could not be reached for comment. (Ruby has the same capacity to make a swift mental exit, and I've read about the phenomenon in other conjoined twins.) Some people call it "wandering". It's a state of consciousness that is not quite here and not quite there, deeper than a daydream, not awake but not asleep. It is a technique Ruby and I discovered rather than learned, and I wonder if all people don't possess it in some measure. I've observed husbands wander from their wives while

[266][Anon.], 'Today's Brains Trust' *Good Morning,* [April-December] 1943 <https://www.servicenewspapers.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Images/LBY_E_J_005199_1_180/1> [accessed 15/11/21].
[267] Jenson, *Lives and Loves,* p. 117.
[268] See interviews in the documentary *Face to Face: The Schappel Twins* (Dir Ellen Weissbrod) Cited in Garland-Thompson 'Ways of Staring' p. 184.

> sitting thigh to thigh on the crowded Leaford bus. I saw a little boy wander while clutching his mother's hand.[269]

These abilities are a fitting contrast to the 'headphones' imposition by Dr. Murphy in Crossan's *One* discussed previously. Both models involve preventing information from being transmitted between the twins – minimising their 'leakiness' – and, as with the 'headphones' mode, Rose's 'mental liberty' model does not require spatially distancing the twins, as singletons have been observed doing just this 'while sitting thigh to thigh' or as singletons attempt to do through voting booths. Crucially, however, the 'mental liberty' mode empowers the twins, leaving the degree of singleton 'privacy' that they experience up to Rose and Ruby. Rose actively closed the mental door between herself and the other participants in the conversation, and it is up to her if and when she returns as she 'could not be reached for comment'. Whilst naturalised through the reference to singletons, however, the singleton 'wandering' is presented as accidental and passive, rather than 'a technique' which the twins use actively and deliberately, as Rose does in this example. When Rose hums, the twins' ability to control how present they are is presented as a beneficial superhuman ability. Whilst Rose emphatically tells the reader at the start that "our thoughts are our own" throughout her tale there are a series of circumstances that seem to suggest that the twins are, to a certain degree, telepathic.[270] When the girls are both explicitly asked by their cousin Jerzy if "You think what she thinks?" in their haste to deny this they unintentionally provide evidence that they may be, because "'No,' Ruby and I said at once, then, to each other, like a freak show, we added in unison, 'He was asking *me*'".[271] Similarly, Rose recalls that one time:

> We were in bed and I'd closed my eyes and was nearly asleep when Ruby said, "Ernie Harwell" [...] The thing that is strange about Ruby saying the name Ernie Harwell is that I had been trying to remember his name the whole night [...] Ruby heard the question in my mind, and either pried Ernie Harwell's name from some department in my brain that

[269] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 155.
[270] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 5.
[271] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 268.

was not available to me or remembered it on her own, which is even more remarkable.[272]

These suggestions that the twins may be able to communicate telepathically with each other perhaps gains extra valance in this text because the twins are craniopagus – or joined at the head – and thus "our cerebral tissue is fully enmeshed, our vascular systems snarled like briar bushes".[273] Importantly this tendency is only triggered passively – when the two are stressed or close to unconsciousness – unlike the active technique of the twins 'wandering'. This somewhat resists the resulting empowerment of conjoined twins, as whilst here they can consciously absent themselves, they also cannot prevent the occasional slip where their thoughts are unintentionally transmitted to each other. Even though the twins can actively 'turn off' the mental tap that feeds the leaky pipe between them, when it is 'turned on' their privacy is necessarily compromised by their conjoinment. Of course, these are fictional representations and not coming from lived conjoined experience, and thus tell us more about singleton understandings than the reality of conjoinment. Importantly, then, whilst they seem to have more agency here than under the 'headphones' model, this is dependent upon their active engagement. In these depictions, whilst conjoined twins are granted the ability to protect their privacy from each other, the default or passive mode of operation is ordinarily represented as involving a 'leaky' transmission from one to the other.

In these more recent portraits of conjoinment, we thus see an intensification of similar singleton concerns related to privacy as those from the start of the previous century. Whilst Millie-Christine was an early pioneer for a re-development of the 'right to privacy' in response to the invasions made possible by the new technology of the camera, conjoinment has continued to be presented to be necessarily lacking singleton 'privacy', as a result of the constant proximity arising from their very biology. Following these underlying, unconscious understandings of conjoinment and privacy after 1884, new technology was employed to physically demarcate the space between conjoined twins in an attempt to prevent the flow of information from one twin to

[272] Lansens, *The Girls,* pp. 301-2.
[273] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 5

the other. As part of the presumed inherent and automatic lack of privacy from each other, conjoined twins were understood as fundamentally ‘leaky’ containers of information. Headphones, voting booths, and phone booths have since been imagined or actually employed around conjoined bodies in an attempt to use technology to ‘plug’ these information leaks, as an ultimate test of the ability to prevent violations of privacy on singletons. If even these unruly bodies can be kept separate, then singleton ‘privacy’ could be guaranteed. The next chapter analyses these concerns about porosity in greater detail, as the conceptually ‘leaky’ understanding of conjoinment is connected to their shared subjectivity and understood in relation to the singleton understanding of both the ‘individual’ and ‘wholeness’. In part, the underlying anxieties connected to the compromised ‘privacy’ of conjoinment can be re-expressed through this lens: another way of articulating the same concern is that there is no fixed partition between the two twins, and that information freely flows from one to the other.

With the important development of headphones in the inter-war years, the creation and control of interpersonal space no longer required physical space. As concerns related to conjoinment and normalcy were motivated by a desire to ontologically distinguish not-‘normal’ bodies from ‘normal’ bodies, anxieties related to conjoinment and privacy continue to be driven by a related singleton need to control the physical space between these two types of peoples, as well as between individual conjoined twins. Headphones allowed for conjoined twins to be put, and to put themselves, into separate information streams and for more traditional interpersonal relationships to be formed and imposed upon them, functioning similarly to portable phone booths. In this way, these technologies are a conceptual form of separation surgery, demarcating the shared space between conjoined twins, and functioning as a (flawed) means of keeping information streams between the twins distinct. As problematised by the fictional examples in this chapter, however, this is never entirely effective, and these efforts are especially undermined by representations of both mental liberty and telepathy. The next chapter develops this further to examine more physical responses to this disruption, and surgical attempts to physically separate conjoined twins in response to anxieties related to the concept of the ‘individual.’

In resisting this forced relocation into singleton phase-space, however, claims of mental liberty can empower conjoined twins, as they control the amount of information that is shared with each other. This imbuing with agency tends to be watered down, however, through the idea of accidental telepathy. As will be demonstrated in the final chapter on 'personal agency', this depiction is consistent with many other forms of empowerment attributed to fictional conjoined twins, as it contains its own in-built, self-correcting system, preventing the involved twins from becoming too powerful. Whilst the superpower that is 'mental liberty' may be able to actively prevent such leaks, the depiction of conjoined twins as unable to prevent the unintentional transmission of data when their guard is down reinforces the idea of conjoined twins as necessarily 'porous' containers of information, and thus is used to justify non-emergency separation surgery.

As concerns related to privacy thus shifted between 1860 and 1940 – from the control of gazes and unauthorised recording of likenesses, to the control of physical space and to the spectre of telepathy – the conjoined body thus continued to be upheld as an embodiment of the threat to privacy that singletons experienced.

Chapter 3 – 1890-1960: Individuality, Parasites, & Wholeness

In *Attachments* (1970), one of the key novels for this project, Nadine pressures her conjoined husband to get non-emergency separation surgery. As part of this, she lists the following 'benefits' that Amos would enjoy through 'becoming' an individual:

> 'You don't know what it's like to wake up in the morning and just think about what *you* want to do. Or even just wake up and get out of bed without having to worry about whether someone you're attached to wants to do the same thing […] of bending over to pick a flower when you felt like it… of walking the streets of a new city when nobody knew you were there… of hiding in the bathroom for an hour at a time with a book and maybe something to eat because you had a delicious desire to be absolutely alone with your digestive system.' I thought I was being at once sane and eloquent, humorous and comfortably bizarre.
> 'Why don't you shut the fuck up?' Amos suggested.[274]

In Nadine's "catalog of the joys of being a single person", we see the assumption that only singletons can be 'an individual'.[275] This casual assumption is, to an extent, present in all texts explored in this thesis. This inherent incompatibility is grounded in a recognition of the fact that conjoined twins are primarily intersubjective. As argued by Deeley, "such twins are not temporally distinct entities at any stage of development".[276] Assuming that the accepted 'fission' model of conjoinment referred to previously is correct, to separate them is to make an ontological intervention, not a 'solution' to a 'problem'. Conjoinment thus is "a form of bodily difference which disrupts taken-for-granted notions of "biological" individuality" and "troubles normative discourses of corporeality, individuality, selfhood, and the human".[277]

[274] Judith Rossner, *Attachments* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), pp. 195-6.
[275] Rossner, *Attachments* p. 196.
[276] Deeley, *Contested Subjects,* p. 7.
[277] Deeley, *Contested Subjects,* p. 7.

The singleton concept of 'Individuality' that conjoinment disrupts is related to Scott Selisker's idea of the "diamond mind".[278] Selisker produced this term to help articulate cultural investment into 'brainwashing' tropes and it is a useful historical lens for this thesis as it highlights underpinning singleton anxieties related to 'individuality'. The pervasive myth of the mind as a 'diamond' presents it as invulnerable to external attempts to penetrate and manipulate, and is implicitly evoked by its conceptual opposite – the brain-washed and mindless zombie. Thus the working definition which an 'individual' will be short-hand for in this chapter is a false belief that the subject is separate from the world, self-directed, and the origin of their own desires. Selisker traces the development of these ideas precisely to the period under discussion in this chapter, seeing the zombie and thus the 'diamond mind' counterpart as arising out of World War Two and the Korean War. In his analysis of the origin and development of the 'brainwashed' trope, Selisker sees the roots of this imagery in nineteenth-century suspicion of automated manufacturing. He explains that these figures achieved cultural prominence in the twentieth century, however, because they were "convenient model[s] of discourse for explaining away veteran dissent when returning to America".[279] As America moved between the World Wars and the Korean War, its political adversary (communism) was no longer geographically-based, but ideologically based. Thus, the exaggerated sense of American 'freedom' – and hence the 'diamond mind' construction – was created in contrast to the popular depiction of the victim of communist brainwashing, such as in *The Manchurian Candidate.*

In extending Selisker's analysis, it is clear that these ideological fears are underpinned by the singleton concerns analysed in the previous chapter in connection to 'privacy' and particularly the notion of 'interference' and the "right to be let alone".[280] The construction of the 'diamond mind' individual is one that successfully resists external hostile attempts to take it over, and speaks to a desire to see ourselves as uncompromised, independent, and sovereign. In his summary of how historians have approached the 'individual', Henry Kaman grounds this connection in singleton constructions of 'privacy'. In this, he argues

[278] Scott Selisker, *Human Programming: Brainwashing, Automatons, and American Unfreedom* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016, p. 51
[279] Selisker, *Human Programming,* p. 47.
[280] Warren and Brandeis 'The Right to Privacy', p. 193.

that for historians, ‘individuality’ either “seems to mean a freedom to make personal and economic decisions” or is used “in terms of an emerging distinction between what might be ‘public’ concerns and what might be more specifically ‘private’”.[281] From Kaman’s perspective, historians’ understanding of the term ‘individuality’ appears to be either synonymous with ‘privacy’ or at the very least to rely on this ‘right to be let alone’. Here, to be able to make these kinds of decisions without government interference appears to be a defining feature of both ‘privacy’ and ‘individuality’.

Although Anglo-American discourses glorifying the singleton ‘diamond mind’ were at their zenith in the 1950s, this close association between ‘sovereignty’ and ‘individuality’ can be historicised by analysing the progression of recognised personal rights. In an analysis of the ‘individual’ across classical and Greco-Roman society, Augusto Forti claims that there were a “few [who] had all the rights and many had none at all”.[282] For the overwhelming majority, there was nothing special about being ‘an individual’. It was not until the 1200s that we see the beginning of the emergence of what we would now recognise as ‘an individual’ in law, beginning with the Habeas Corpus article in the Magna Carta (1215), stating that no one could be imprisoned unlawfully. Over the next two centuries or so there came to be a recognition of ‘individuals’ beyond this that valued individual minds as much as bodies. The governing powers of mediaeval society were forced to afford greater respect to ‘individual’ labour roles following the specialisation of labour within communes and guilds in the 11th and 12th century, and the labour shortages that followed the Black Death in the 14th century enhanced this. Specialised labour roles ensured that the governed classes were understood to be not just a collection of identical parts, and contributed to a developing awareness that each worker had a specific place in the economy machine and couldn’t be easily replaced by an anonymous other.

The spread of humanism went hand in hand with this growing respect for individual labour, to help drive a complementary, bottom-up, societal

[281] Henry Kaman, ‘Modernity and the Individual’, *Early Modern European Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021) 277-315, pp. 277-8.
[282] Augusto Forti, ‘History of the Concept of Individual and Individuality in Western Society’, *International Conference on Humanities and the Contemporary World,* 1.1 (2012) 1-6, p. 2.

understanding of the idealised individual as a sovereign, independent, discrete subject free from external interference. According to Geoff Baldwin's exploration of the 'individual' in late Renaissance society, by the end of the sixteenth century in Britain and France, "to discuss the functioning of politics was to engage with the legacy of humanism, as it provided the guide to appropriate behaviour for those who held public office".[283] Valued tracts such as Cicero's *De officiis* were "ethical arguments about the duties of those who held public office".[284] Humanism thus helped to shape lay engagement with official positions, and as the working individual gained more societal power, so too the increasingly democratic structures of the renaissance dramatically politicised 'the individual'. For many social historians "the emergence of an individualist society was [...] the process by which the modern, as opposed to the medieval, came into being".[285] During the industrial revolutions and the rise of the middle classes across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this entwining of 'the individual' with both politics and the economy created exponential sociological growth, where through democracy and capitalism the idealised 'individual' has taken a dominant conceptual role.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, there surfaced a new way of understanding the relationship between society and individuals. Modernisation, globalisation, and contagion paradigms made visible some of the underlying connections between people and peoples across the globe. Countries and classes were no longer causally isolated from each other. Epidemiological and economic disasters were no longer related to as either unmotivated or divinely ordained events; instead they were connected to the actions of individuals sometimes far removed from the consequences. Society was understood as increasingly fragile and could not so easily be taken for granted, and it was seen to be dependent upon the individuals of which it consisted. Hence we see increasing concern with the perceived 'health' of society, and a variety of academic disciplines and government programmes sought to improve society by changing the behaviours of specific kinds of individuals. David Cohen points to one such manifestation of this as the

[283] Geoff Baldwin, 'Individual and Self in the Late Renaissance', *The Historical Journal*, 44.2 (2001) 341-64, 346.
[284] Baldwin, 'Individual and Self in the Late Renaissance', 346.
[285] Baldwin, 'Individual and Self in the Late Renaissance', p. 341.

eighteenth century understanding of childhood as a potentially corruptible period of innocence to be protected.[286] Just as with wider society, it could no longer be simply assumed that a child would develop into a healthy adult. Instead, a variety of interventions were required to prevent harmful social interactions, such as education, and protection from work. The child became a synecdoche for wider society: an individual formed or harmed by its interactions with other people, requiring protection and cultivation. These concerns coalesced across the fascination with embryological development as examined in chapter one. Through the nineteenth and twentieth century, the Global North investiture into child development continued to be a cipher for the management of society through the governing of individuals, as Cooper puts it, "to protect the 'human capital' of the future".[287] David Armstrong agrees in his analysis of the origins of "surveillance medicine", stating that the 'growth' of a child – and also with wider society – was understood as "inherently problematic, precariously normal".[288] The growth and development of individuals became understood to indicate the "health" of society, and careful biopolitical monitoring and frequent interventions became necessary to avoid slipping away from the desired norm.[289] The hygiene movement of the nineteenth century speaks to a similar desire to cultivate a specific society but this time through the controlling of the connections between individuals. The fear of contagion is a fear of corruption stemming from individuals, and the hygiene movement was a response to a threat to society manifesting through individuals. Further, the 'moral revolution' of the late nineteenth century examined in chapter one was a more metaphorical means of 'cleaning up' society, and an attempt to improve it by restricting the damaging behaviours of individuals. Of course, these overarching and enduring concerns about the relationship between individuals and society found their ultimate expression in the anxiety about societal 'degeneration' in the fin de siècle period, and the social Darwinist and eugenics movements that were examined in the previous chapter.

---

[286] David Cohen, *The Development of Play,* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2017).
[287] Cooper *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child*, p. 61.
[288] David Armstrong, 'The Rise of Surveillance Medicine', *Sociology of Health and Illness,* 17.3 (1995), 393-404, p. 396.
[289] See Marina, Levnina, 'Regulation and Discipline in the Genomic Age: A Consideration of Differences between Genetics and Eugenics,' *A Foucault for the 21st Century: Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millennium*, ed. by Sam Binkley and Jorge Capetillo (Cambridge:Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 308-319, p. 312.

These interventions testify to the power (and great responsibility) that the idealised 'individual' was believed to have. Conjoinment, however, in its challenge to the entrenched "one body, one person" norm that Couser identifies, problematically presenting not two bodies attached to each other, but one body that incorporates two people.[290] Conjoinment is thus a challenge to Cartesian mind/body dualism as well as what Hughes and Paterson state underpins the social model of disability: "the cartesianized subject that [...] sits very uneasily in the contemporary world of identity politics".[291] This disrupts the singleton model of 'individuality' and challenges the heteronormativity of formalised singleton relationships such as heterosexual monogamous marriage. If society is formed and controlled by its constituent 'individuals' and the ways that they interact with each other, then this feared disruption to how 'individuals' are understood at a physical level is crucial. There is also no simplistic way of 'disentangling' conjoined twins into two individuals: conjoined twins commonly share limbs and organs, as well as enmeshed nervous and digestive systems, and this configuration will be unique to each set of conjoined twins. This is further complicated through additional differences of sensation and control as one may 'feel' or control a limb which might not be thought to ordinarily 'belong' to them because of its position on their body/ies. Further, there may be body parts which have dual sensation and control, or one may have sensation without control. Additionally, the degree to which each twin is connected to the limbs may be entirely different to the degree they are connected to the visceral organs, and there are thus multiple ways to dispute the claim that one twin may or may not have ownership of the conjoined body.

In the wake of this long history of the rising self-importance of the individual sketched briefly above, it is perhaps unsurprising that conjoined twins became understood purely in reference to the disruption they were seen to present to 'individuality'. In particular, at the end of the nineteenth century, they were used to represent and vilify the emerging sociological construct of the 'New Woman'. In the words of Regenia Gagnier, this term is generally "applied

[290] Couser, *Signifying Bodies*, p. 51.
[291] Hughes and Paterson 'The Social Model of Disability and the Disappearing Body', p. 326.

to self-consciously modern women at the fin de siècle".[292] Although this group is "largely a media construction" that has been "always contested, not least by the women themselves", the figure of the New Woman became associated with "material well-being and economic independence, scientific knowledge, and political emancipation".[293] As shall be explored later, these associations were seen within the context of the developing "individualist ideology" and the constant proximity of conjoinment was invoked by critics as a means of discrediting these sociological shifts.[294]

Additional important historical context is found in the overwhelming number of disabled soldiers returning from the World Wars, as the resulting advances in medical techniques meant that separation surgery was more routinely used as a 'resolution' for conjoinment. This was in tension, however, with cultural concerns related to 'wholeness' and the initially miraculous separation surgery became a problematised resolution. A process I call 'mapping' developed as a partial replacement for this surgery. With the advancement of medical imaging techniques and technologies, the boundary between conjoined twins could be traced and reimagined as firm and impermeable, re-presenting conjoined twins as two separate individuals attached (only) at the surface.

This chapter thus explores this relationship between conjoinment and individuality, drawing on a range of sources and focusing particularly on the period between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1970s. As highlighted in the thesis introduction, this chapter is the clearest example of my 'misfitting' methodology, as I fruitfully combine psychoanalysis, Foucauldian historicization, and phenomenology, all in the name of critical disability studies. Broadly speaking, psychoanalysis and phenomenology both start with the individual and extrapolate outwards to form universal claims, whilst strictly Foucauldian methodologies instead begin with this much broader perspective. In this sense, the combination of these approaches articulate what I referred to as my

[292] Regenia Gagnier, "New Women, Female Aesthetes, and Socialist Individualists: the Literature of Separateness and Solubility", *Individualism, Decadence and Globalization On the Relationship of Part to Whole, 1859–1920* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 61-86, p. 61.
[293] Gagnier, "New Women" p. 62.
[294] Gagnier, "New Women" p. 62.

‘diachronic yet localised’ attitude. Through this, I use these contrasting approaches to generate insights about both specific sites of interaction between conjoinment and the ‘individual’, as well as more widespread developments over the period studied. Alternating between these approaches forms a ‘misfit’ and is a deliberate choice taken to remind us that no academic approach is or could ever be truly ‘objective’. Moving between these lenses is akin to using multiple security cameras, as whilst it generates additional labour to stitch the different images into a consistent whole, it also helps fill in some of the blindspots for each ‘camera’.

It is important to note that this chapter uses primary depictions of conjoinment that are – strictly speaking – outside of the timeframe examined (up until 1970). As detailed in the thesis introduction, this is due to the overlapping nature of these concepts and societal responses. In a sense, this muddling of periods resembles the very challenge that conjoinment is seen to present to ‘individuality’ as analysed in this chapter. Additionally, beyond what is captured here, compared to the other periods there is a distinct lack of surviving primary material featuring conjoinment. There were fewer culturally prominent conjoined twins to attach these to and to stimulate such discourse, compared to the Bunker or McKoy twins of previous periods. Anxieties connected to conjoinment continued to circulate, however, and in their slightly later imagining of conjoinment, these texts draw on and combine the concerns of the period under discussion, and illuminate what was felt but was not so frequently articulated.

Furthermore, this chapter is by far the longest in this thesis and the argument is the most complex, so it is worthwhile briefly signposting what follows. First, I establish how conjoinment has been seen to disrupt heteronormative relationship models through its presumed challenge to individuality, as the contemporary parallels between the New Women and conjoinment are analysed in further detail alongside more recent representations of conjoinment as a form of queer attraction or pregnancy. In the next section I then dig deeper into the singleton underlying mechanisms for these forms of representation, exposing the driving forces of projection and abjection. These are shown to stem from archetypal food memories which,

when un-repressed, reveal (to the horror of the presumed singleton reader) that we are all intercorporeal, that strictly speaking none of us are 'individual', that we all have experienced intersubjectivity (whilst in the womb), and that we all continue to absorb particles that have previously been part of an Other (through eating and breathing). Building on this, the next section explores some of the 'resolutions' applied to this social challenge to singleton 'individuality'. First I look at the problematic practice of separation surgery, paying particular attention to the controversial Attard case and later dramatisations of it to show how the common means of justifying such procedures relies on a cultural over-application of 'parasite' terminology, itself an extension of more widespread social associations between disabled people as 'beggerly'. I then show how following the World Wars, separation surgery came to be problematised due to a cultural prioritisation of 'wholeness'. Separation surgery provided a 'resolution' to the challenge to individuality that conjoinment was seen to evoke, but the resulting lack of 'wholeness' was seen to be worse. I examine such representations through the lens of Lacan's 'mirror stage' before moving into the contemporarily more accepted resolution to the 'problem' of conjoined 'individuality'. In this section, I outline a process I call 'mapping the boundary', invoking examples from across the timeline of the project, where this is presented as a precursor to – or even a substitution for – separation surgery that does not threaten the 'wholeness' of the conjoined twins. Overall, I argue that concerns in this period related to conjoinment and 'individuality' draw on the presumed 'leakiness' of conjoinment presented in the previous chapter and show that these different 'resolutions' are an evolution of the same techniques used to manage the concerns related to privacy.

Challenging Monogamy & Pregnancy

As made clear in the introduction to this chapter, the disruption that conjoinment presents to 'individuality' at a physical level was routinely presented as a challenge to singleton relationships, and hence wider society as a whole. In this way, conjoinment was believed to be incompatible with the hallowed Victorian institution of marriage and the family, as the repeated failed attempts of the Hilton and Gibb twins to gain marriage licences because of 'moral' objections attests to.[295] Nonetheless in texts from this period as well as more recently,

[295] See Jenson, *Lives and Loves,* p. 248.

singleton authors use conjoined imagery to disrupt ideas of heteronormative monogamous marriage, by presenting conjoinment as an homosocial alternative. Dreger draws out explicit parallels between the relationship of conjoined twins and that of besotted lovers stating:

> When you immerse yourself in the thought of conjoinment for a long time, you begin to hear every crazy-in-love song as a song about conjoinment… Songs about never being alone, songs about feeling the constant touch of another, songs about someone who knows you as well as you know yourself—all of them sound like celebrations of conjoinment. A singleton is apt to find this discovery very disconcerting. No matter how much they resonate, these age-old effusions about attachment are intended to be just metaphorical.[296]

Fittingly, recent fictional depictions of conjoinment draw on this 'disconcerting' parallel between conjoined twins and singleton lovers. This is part of a long history of scholarship and popular discourses that is fascinated by non-'normal' bodies because of the potential for these bodily differences to be mapped onto social limits.[297] Whilst 'fat' and 'thin' bodies have been shown by Corinna Wagner to have became politicised as vehicles to discuss geosocial expansion, the perceived lack of 'privacy' and 'individuality' of conjoinment became a means of expressing singleton fantasies about transgressive sexual acts.[298] This bears no relationship to the lived experience of conjoinment, but instead articulates some of the singleton response to it, and the attempts of individual authors to either constrain or cultivate alternatives to monogamous heterosexual relationships and/or the nuclear family.

An early example that draws on the parallels that Dreger identifies can be found in the Hannah Gould poem dedicated to her contemporaries: the conjoined twins Eng and Chang Bunker. Here, the two twins are described as

---

[296] Dreger, *One of Us,* p. 50.

[297] See, for example, Elisabeth Grosz, 'Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at the Limit' in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body,* ed. Rosemary Garland Thompson (London: New York University Press, 1996), 55-66.

[298] See for example Corinna Wagner 'Gout vs. *Goût:* Taste, Community, and the Monarchy', *Pathological Bodies: Medicine and Political Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013) 167-98, See also Amy Farrell, *Fat Shame: Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

being a “Visible image of faithful love / Firm union of heart and heart”, and the (physical) connection between them is phrased as “the union of souls”.[299] The language deliberately evokes matrimonial bonds, referencing a monogamous and “faithful love”, and presents the twins as platonically married to each other. The “union of heart and heart” both continues this metaphor and references the biblical scripture that describes the archetypal Judeo-Christian marital relationship between Adam and Eve – “bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh”.[300] This presentation of conjoined twins as a married couple is part of the ‘aggrandized’ form of the exhibition of anomalous bodies discussed in the first chapter. Whilst Gould did not work for the Bunker twins or their promoters, in this depiction she is nonetheless part of the web of cultural artefacts that argued that, according to Heather McHold’s account of the decline of sideshow, that despite bodily difference, “these exhibition stars were exemplary participants in bourgeois culture.”[301] Accordingly, there is no hint that this ‘marriage’ is any way sexual. Despite a plethora of bawdy descriptions of conjoined twins from before and during this period that focused on their sexual interactions, these less genteel concerns simply do not appear here. Instead, the shared body/ies of the Bunker twins is here evoked as an unproblematic form of male-male marriage. In reiterating that the twins are the image of ‘faithful love’ Gould instead reassures her readers that these twins will not form relationships with singletons and sexually transgress by incorporating a third party. Whilst seeming celebrative, praising the twins in this way de-sexualises them, and flies in the face of the evidence six years later when the twins married a pair of American sisters and raised two large families. This early use of the “disconcerting” parallel between conjoined twins and singleton lovers identified by Dreger, is thus “intended to be just metaphorical”. Whilst it stems from an acknowledgement that conjoinment complicates singleton relationships such as monogamous marriage, it does not tease out any of the more problematic implications as later texts do, such as incest or adultery.[302]

[299] Hannah Gould, ‘To the Siamese Twins’, *Poems by Miss H. F. Gould* (Boston: Hillard, Grey & co., 1839), 54-5, p. 54 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007659325> [accessed 26/4/19].
[300] The Bible. New International Version (Genesis 2:23).
[301] McHold, ‘Even as You and I’, p. 31
[302] Dreger, *One of Us.* p. 50.

Later depictions of female conjoined twins, however, were instead very concerned with the potential gendered social ramifications of relationships with singletons stemming from their disruption to singleton understandings of 'individuality'. According to Ann Ardis's analysis of the New Women: "Socialists in England in the 1880s and 1890s approached the 'Woman Question' [...] as one aspect of a more general problem of social organization".[303] The New Woman meant many (often contrasting) things to different people, in the words of Maura Dunst she was "not one figure, or one set of ideals, but like a Rorschach test, she manifested differently for each individual viewer".[304] Nonetheless in this figure there was seen to be a core challenge to the existing relationship between the individual and society. It is this renouncing of "traditional sex, gender, and class distinctions" that distinguishes "'Independent Women' from New Women'".[305] Whilst according to Angelique Richardson, the author Sarah Grand "stressed that marriage was not to serve the individual but the race",[306] Ann Ardis argues that in the works of Mona Caird, New Women are presented "as society's scapegoats, the citizens whose individual needs are sacrificed for the good of both society and their families".[307] Whether it was through eugenics, the radical formation of a 'marriage of equals' or of independence from men entirely, "the critics who were most threatened by the prospect of radical social change associated New Women with socialism".[308] Whilst both New Women and socialists alike argued for their distinctiveness, their critics "collapsed these two categories, which represented quite different, though equally radical threats to the bourgeois status quo" in terms of the relationship between society and individuals.[309]

As examined in Alison Pingree's analysis of the performances and promotional material of Violet and Daisy Hilton, these twins were invoked by the press as a monstrous embodiment of this 'New Woman'. In response, their

---

[303] Ann Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 17.
[304] Maura Dunst, 'Music and Trauma in New Women Short Stories', *British Women Short Story Writers: The New Women to Now,* ed. by Emma Young and James Bailey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 15-31, p. 17.
[305] Ann Ardis, *New Women*, p. 16.
[306] Angelique Richardson, 'The Eugenization of Love: Sarah Grand and the Morality of Genealogy', *Victorian Studies,* 42.2 (2000), 227-55, p. 241.
[307] Ardis, *New Women, New Novels*, p. 18.
[308] Ardis, *New Women, New Novels,* p. 19.
[309] Ardis, *New Women, New Novels,* p. 19.

controlling managing agent attempted to re-present the twins as “the exception that proved the rule”.[310] What they meant to demonstrate through this was that their conjoinment was a testament to the importance of existing gender roles, and thus signalled the twins’ agreement with them. Despite these efforts, however, as part of the means by which conjoined twins became feared by singletons for their complication of ‘individuality’, the ‘New Woman’ came to be presented as a ‘monstrous’ form of conjoinment: two women ‘attached’ to each other in a radically different way to anything else. In this metaphor is the implicit hope that the feared new agency of these New Women would be directed at each other, in an early form of the ‘self-defeating’ agency to be discussed in the final chapter.

As an example of this, Pingree points to an essay written at the height of Daisy and Violet Hilton’s fame (1928) in *Harper’s* that attacked the figure of the New Woman as a ‘Two-Headed monster’ and explicitly understood a “marriage of equals as a freakish, conjoined set of bodies”.[311] The idea of a ‘marriage of equals’ was radical in itself during this period, but beyond this it is interesting that the author of the piece understands this in terms of conjoinment specifically. Pingree correctly reads this as Carey’s layering of “issues regarding women’s power, voice, earning capabilities”[312] onto the twins' physical attachment to each other, understanding their inability to be ‘on their own’ as a challenge to conventional Edwardian understandings of gender and marriage. In response to the article in *Harper’s,* the managing agent of the Hilton twins adjusted their act and produced promotional material that instead “transmut[ed] Daisy and Violet into representatives of more traditionalist norms”.[313] In 1926, for example, the twins sang a song entitled ‘Me Too’ as part of their act. This song uncritically celebrates conservative gender roles and is a “model for a companionate marriage: man and woman enjoy the same things and go places together; satisfied as a consumer of sex and material goods, the woman plays

[310] Alison Pingree, ‘‘The Exceptions That Prove the Rule’: Daisy and Violet Hilton, the “New Woman,” and the Bonds of Marriage’, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. by Rosmarie Garland Thomson (London: New York University Press, 1996), 173-184, p. 173.
[311] Henry Carey, ‘This Two-Headed Monster – The Family’ *Harper’s Monthly Magazine*, 156.1 (1928), 162-71.
[312] “The Exceptions that Prove the Rule” p. 177.
[313] Pingree, ‘The Exceptions that Prove the Rule’ p. 179.

her proper role as the wife".[314] By paralleling "their relationship with that of a heterosexual couple" it "normalizes their potential danger".[315]

Similarly, in a pamphlet their agent produced that same year, the narrative claims to be the twins "speaking for themselves" arguing that "we believe that the career of every woman is marriage, or should be".[316] Here, the twins' personas recycle the conventional gender norms in an attempt to limit the extent that they are seen to challenge these norms, presenting themselves as "the exceptions that prove the rule".[317] In this presentation, Daisy and Violet are used as a negative example for all New Women, implicitly repeating the association between bodily difference and social transgression, as it is suggested that if young women do not respect gender norms then they may be as socially outcast as a "two-headed monster". This sentiment unfortunately rang true for the twins: once free of their 'owners' that put these words in their mouths, Daisy and Violet's careers flourished but they were repeatedly refused a marriage licence because according to Jenson's biography: "officials could not be sure whether, under the law, the bride would be considered one person or two".[318] This is despite the example of the double Bunker marriages some 75 years earlier (1843). As we can see, whilst conjoinment consistently challenged monogamous marriage through its challenge to individuality, dominant gender roles meant that there was a clear difference in the way that male conjoined twins and female conjoined twins were found to affect it. For Carey, the twins' "two-headed" existence is a fitting vehicle for the societal challenge of the New Woman, articulating fundamental concerns about the nature of the gendered individual and dependence. Whilst male conjoined twins were only shown to threaten the 'individual' when they marry, female conjoined twins – like the New Woman – were understood to be problematic because they cannot marry.

More recent texts also reflect this association between marriage and conjoinment, as in *The Girls*, when the conjoined Rose initially supposes that "Some people think that Ruby and I are cursed to live conjoined", but instead

[314] Pingree, 'The Exceptions that Prove the Rule' p. 178.
[315] Pingree, 'The Exceptions that Prove the Rule' p. 178.
[316] Cited in Pingree, 'The Exceptions that Prove the Rule' p. 180.
[317] Cited in Pingree, 'The Exceptions that Prove the Rule' p. 180.
[318] See Jenson, *The Lives and Loves of Daisy and Violet Hilton,* p. 250.

presents her conjoinment as an enhanced version of marriage.[319] In doing so, she immediately argues against the supposed 'curse' of their existence saying: "Imagine if a husband knew the instant his wife stopped loving him and could bring the marriage back to life before it was too late".[320] This is presented in direct contrast to the 'wandering' examined in the previous chapter in relation to telepathy and 'mental liberty' where Rose describes how "I've observed husbands wander from their wives while sitting thigh to thigh on the crowded Leaford bus".[321] Unlike such a husband and wife, however, Rose's explicit comparison to herself and Ruby implies a superior personal and emotional connectedness, as – resulting from their conjoinment – they can sense and soothe potential conflicts more effectively.

This image of the twins as a married couple is later reinforced through the quilt that their adoptive aunt gives them. This heirloom is only ever gifted to newlyweds – according to family tradition – yet their Aunt Lovey realises it has "never been meant for her and Stash but for [Rose] and Ruby".[322] The quilt features conjoined imagery, with entwined hearts "representing [Aunt Lovey] and Uncle Stash, joining forever as one".[323] Gifting the quilt in this way to the girls normalises the challenge that conjoinment may seem to present to singleton relationships as represented by the entwined hearts. This returns us to Dreger's observation that the imagery of conjoined twins overlaps significantly with singleton lovers. Correspondingly and more problematically, however, the married singleton characters (Uncle Stash and Aunt Lovey), are described as metaphorically conjoined. When Aunt Lovey breaks her neck in a fatal car crash, the grieving Uncle Stash tries "several times to put her floppy head right, and, when finally he did, pressed his cheek to hers. There was no space, no hint of light, between Aunt Lovey's skull and Uncle Stash's".[324] The narratorial focus upon the lack of space between the two heads is a clear allusion to Rose and Ruby's craniopagus configuration. Rose later explicitly ponders Uncle Stash and Aunt Lovey's 'conjoinment', remarking that:

[319] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 52.
[320] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 52.
[321] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 155.
[322] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 49.
[323] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 49.
[324] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 315.

> In the days that followed, I found myself wishing that Mr. Merkel hadn't pulled Uncle Stash from the wreckage of the car. In spite of their imperfect union, their different interests and language and culture, Uncle Stash and Aunt Lovey shared an essential vein and should have never been separated.[325]

The 'separation' of Uncle Stash from Aunt Lovey's body evokes emergency separation surgery between conjoined twins and the phrase 'share an essential vein' is frequently repeated in this novel in relation to the craniopagus conjoinment of the twins. In the photograph of them in the local museum the legend holds this text instead of their names, speaking to the way that they are perceived in their town, as their impairment nominally supersedes their individual identity. The (singleton) author does indicate that this practice is problematic generally later, as the twins indignantly react to medical students failing to see the person behind the condition:

> We've got a senior biology class from Leaford Collegiate coming in. They're learning about cell division, and we're the next case study. The teacher told me on the phone that the students had really enjoyed meeting a thalidomide man the week before. A *thalidomide man.* I bet he just loved being called that.[326]

However, despite the outrage that Ruby articulates through the italicised 'A *thalidomide man',* the individual erasure that the twins face is often left undisputed, and the above example of Uncle Stash and Aunt Lovey 'sharing an essential vein' is inconsistent with Ruby's response. These reductions of characters down to just their medical condition(s) engages with Cooper's term alluded to briefly at the conclusion to chapter one, that of "being over-looked".[327] Here the hyper-visibility of the individual renders them invisible, as the starers fixate upon the "visibly disabled" aspects which is "matched by a lack of attention to other aspects of the [individual's] body and personality".[328] Through

[325] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 315.
[326] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 119.
[327] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* pp. 44-5.
[328] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* p. 45.

this process, the impaired subject loses both their individuality and their bodily ownership, as Crossan makes clear when her conjoined protagonists agree to the separation surgery. Grace writes that:

> Without asking our permission, he
> presses his hands against
> the incisions
> —our bellies, backs, and sides—
> and it is plain to me
> that we no longer
> own our bodies:
> we have entrusted them to these men and
> women
> who will inflate us and
> shape us and
> slice us apart
> and never stop to ask,
> *Are you sure?*[329]

Grace understands this process of being over-looked as "no longer own[ing] our own bodies." Through being over-looked, the visible site of disability has come to replace the person underneath it, and as the over-lookers take control of this, they are portrayed as taking control of the entire subject. In this over-looking, the twins are presented as "entirely *lost to the gaze"*, as the twins begin the process of separation surgery, by which they are literally de-coupled from both their defining impairment and each other.[330] Correspondingly, the twins as we know them cannot survive this process, as Tippi dies on the operating table, leaving Grace "alone / in a land of / so much / space"[331]

Whilst it is perhaps intuitive that a conjoined character would more naturally reach to conjoinment as a means of interpreting the world, it is important to remember that these are all works of singleton authors. Hence,

[329] Crossan, *One,* pp. 325-6.
[330] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child*, p. 48, emphasis original.
[331] Crossan, *One,* p. 362.

even though the description of singletons as metaphorically conjoined reciprocates the normalisation of conjoinment, it also risks trivialising their impairment, and further entrenches the medical/collector gaze criticised by Ruby in the first place. Extending this use of conjoined imagery, the author of the recent thriller *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins* (2014) creates singleton characters that through their dialogue repeatedly and explicitly compare their own same-sex desire to the relationships of in-universe conjoined twins, Annabel and Amy. Similarly to *The Girls,* the narrative alternates between the respective first person perspectives of the singleton female protagonists, Lucy and Lena. For these two, conjoinment and the challenges that it presents to a singleton understanding of 'individuality' are used as both a signifier of, and a means of disguising, their relationship with each other. Conjoinment is thus romanticised here as a form of queer attraction, but one that is problematically non-consensual, as the eventual relationship between these two singletons is grounded in mutual kidnap, restraint, and torture. It is compared to conjoinment throughout; when Lena annoys Lucy, for example, Lucy thinks to herself "I'm even delighted to meet *Mom* for lunch. *Anything*, if it means escaping my own personal Siamese twin. Annabel, I know your pain".[332] Lucy is brazen and often foul-mouthed, and so the reader is presumably not meant to feel that this is an acceptable comparison to make. The difficulties that the fictional twins that Lucy is referring to here are severe disagreement on whether one of them can have sex and get married to her boyfriend. The difficulties facing conjoined twins – which in this text are extended to also involve litigation between the two – are trivial compared to Lucy's concern (at this point, before the kidnapping) about merely bumping into Lena.

Problematically, the metaphor of conjoinment continues to be used when their professional relationship develops into a dubiously-consensual sexual relationship. During these events, their discussions of the in-universe conjoined twins becomes "The only time we talk about anything that isn't to do with my weight".[333] Once the darker events alluded to begin, Lena undergoes an advanced form of Stockholm Syndrome, but this is presented as Lena learning to accept her metaphorical 'conjoinment' with Lucy. When Lena finally escapes

[332] Welsh, *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins,* p. 100.
[333] Welsh, *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins,* p. 294.

her bonds, she in turn restrains Lucy and puts her through a corresponding form of the same torture, before the conclusion where both singletons 'admit' their (allegedly) repressed sexual desires for each other. The queer attraction presented here is thus not worthy of celebration as it rooted in non-consensual practice, and it is unfortunate that the imagery of conjoinment is consistently used to describe the feelings of both sexual attraction and helplessness. Lena repeatedly desperately pleads to be set free and it is only after both kidnappings have concluded (across several concurrent months) that the two begin to refer to each other with anything approaching informed consent. The 'love' that the author springs upon the reader in the conclusion is thus undeserved. Far from a tale of how Lena – initially presented as heterosexual – learns to un-repress her homosexual desires through the example of female conjoined twins, instead we have a story of the openly bisexual Lucy kidnapping and forcing herself upon Lena. Whilst the trope under discussion of 'lovers as conjoined twins' operates on top of all this then, this text also reiterates ableist concerns by implicitly connecting these power dynamics to conjoinment. This presents conjoinment as a challenge to monogamous heterosexual marriage, but also as an erasure of individuality, as Lena has to be brainwashed, removing her individuality, before she describes herself as 'conjoined' and the 'romantic' conclusion. It is only when Lucy starts to accept her own kidnapping and torture by the escaped Lena, that she refers to herself as a reluctant conjoined twin. The two are together watching a television interview with the conjoined twins after they finally decide not to be surgically separated. We hear from the television that "It has to be about the two of us, Annabel says, a serene glow in her eyes. – I need her and she needs me" before Lucy narrates that "I look back at Lena. I really do need to stay here a while, don't I? I ask her. Yes, I think you do, she says".[334]

As with *The Girls* it is important to recognise that this is all a construction of a singleton author, and hence articulates far more about singleton fantasies and reactions to conjoinment than it ever could about the lived experience of conjoinment. As the title – *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins* – makes clear, this text is primarily interested in exploring sexual fantasies. The title is a transparent reference to an article of almost the same name written by Dreger

[334] Welsh, *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins,* p. 439.

two years previously: ‘The Sex Lives of Conjoined Twins’. This article quickly overviews some of the singleton attitudes to conjoined twins and sex explored in this chapter before concluding with the stimulating observation that: “when a conjoined twin has sex with a third person, is the sex—by virtue of the conjoinment—incestuous? Homosexual? Group sex? Well, it definitely is sex. You can tell because everyone wants to talk about it”.[335] Conjoinment and sex is argued to have been consistantly understood as inherently transgressive because of the disruption to individuality. As it is unclear whether having sex with conjoined twins is sex with one or two people then it could be any one or more of the risqué categories mentioned in the quote.

As a creator of shocking and controversial characters that often contravene sexual norms, Welsh through his *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins* embraces this understanding. Our first impressions of Lucy are reading her first person accounts of picking up women for anonymous BDSM encounters with dubious levels of consent. She uses the equipment from these encounters in order to kidnap and restrain Lena, and throughout both Lena and Lucy – as well as “all America” – obsesses with whether these twins count as two individuals or not, whether this means that having sex with one ‘counts’ as sex with the other, and what rights one has to refuse or give consent for the other.[336] During Lena’s imprisonment the two watch a documentary on the twins, provoking this altercation:

> Amy and Annabel Wilks are the third most common type of conjoined twins, omphalopagus twins, comprising around 15 percent of cases. Their two bodies are fused at the lower chest. The hearts are separate but they partially share a liver, digestive system, and some other organs.
> Sharing a pussy? Sack that fucking shit!
> Those poor girls, Lena moans. - I doubt they’ll be sharing a vagina, but they will share certain nerve endings. So to all intents and purposes that

[335] Alice Dreger ‘The Sex Lives of Conjoined Twins: Why Does the Topic ‘Defy Imagination?’ *The Atlantic,* 25 October 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/10/the-sex-lives-of-conjoined-twins/264095> [Accessed 05/10/22]
[336] Welsh, *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins,* p. 26. It is a stylistic choice by the author to not include quotation marks, making it harder to tell exactly where one character ends speaking and another begins, as a cipher for the porous boundary between conjoined twins.

means if this Stephen character is having sex with one of them, then he's technically having sex with both. It's sick. It's Rape!
What?
It's against her consent.
Fuck that noise! You gotta be kidding!
Well, it is!
I see it differently. So you're saying it's okay that poor Annabel can't get fucked, by the boy she loves, 'cause her frigid bitch of a sister, Amy, that fucking *attachment,* won't take one for the team?
That's disgusting, Lucy. What kind of a feminist are you?
One that gets laid occasionally.[337]

These dramatic and contrasting responses from the protagonists indicate the degree to which marriage *with* conjoined twins is understood as a disruption. Both singleton characters here understand the conjoined twins as two separate, but connected, individuals, but whilst Lena understands both twins' right of consent to prevent either twin from having sex with anyone if her twin does not consent, Lucy understands both twins' right to sex as coming first. Conjoined twins are presented as incompatible with heterosexual mongamous relationships by unavoidably introducing a third party. This is even the case if – as examined in the previous chapter – the twins claim that they can 'mentally withdraw' to the point at which they are no longer participating, as they are still at least physically present.

The 1977 novel by Judith Rossner about conjoinment, *Attachments,* extends this understanding of marriage as incompatible with conjoinment through the singleton Nadine's unhappy marriage with the conjoined Amos. In a joint ceremony in this text, Nadine marries Amos and her friend Dianne marries Amos's twin Eddie. However, their marriages formalise and solidify the previously flexible relationships between the four into an inherently adulterous configuration. When Nadine takes the twins upstairs to consummate their marriage (without Dianne), she narrates the ensuing crisis she experiences when she realises how marriage has changed them:

[337] Welsh, *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins,* p. 202.

> I was just beginning to forget Dianne and enjoy myself when I realized that she'd come upstairs after all and was standing there watching us. Watching me with both of them. Holding her husband's penis! *Dianne, I didn't know what I was doing! I didn't mean to*—Maybe she could tell just by looking at me that it was Eddie I'd really liked from the beginning! In a spasm of guilt and confusion I squirmed out from between them just as Amos was coming, the result being that my new husband shot his first married load directly into his brother's belly button.
>
> Oh, Jesus I'd really done it! Blown the whole marriage. Gotten it off on the wrong… whatever.
>
> God only knows how often they'd done it to each other before. It wasn't something they were ever willing to talk about. I think a lot of craziness about child sex had gone down in the state home, although I'm not sure where in the hierarchy of sin as it has been revealed to state home matrons jerking off your Siamese twin fits in.[338]

Even though the four have all regularly enjoyed sex together previously, the sudden presence of Dianne makes Nadine realise that she is technically committing an act of adultery, as by having sex with her conjoined husband she will also be having sex with his twin. As a singleton, her marriage is challenged (and eventually destroyed) by the porous boundary between the two twins, and when she has sex with them, her own individuality is destabilised. What is thus most disturbing for these singleton characters is the extent that it transforms singleton roles and relationships. Despite the initial relationship and marriage being entirely driven by her desire for the twins, she struggles to adapt to having two husbands, instead of one. For these characters, the act of marriage solidifies the previously fluid relationship roles and, in doing so, makes visible the previously hidden yet problematic aspects of their intersubjectivity, manifesting as the threat of adultery.

In this example it is interesting to see in Nadine's reaction – beyond the 'spasm of guilt and confusion' – as she unconsciously deflects blame and attention by speculating about possible incestuous and homosexual activities of the twins whilst they were growing up. Within two lines she smoothly shifts from

[338] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 124

blaming herself to speculation about the “lot of craziness about child sex” that she assumes happened in their orphanage. Nadine here identifies that she is engaging with a problematic form of intersubjectivity that also challenges the idea of the ‘individual’. In having sex with conjoined twins, she is experiencing first-hand the porous boundary between conjoined individuals, as it is impossible to partition the sexual feelings between the twins, or to separate her experience with one from her experience with the other. The challenge to the ‘individual’ thus flows both ways, as through intercourse she melds and joins with the twins, becoming a “mass of lovely spare parts”.[339] Before this dynamic and fluid relationship was formalised through the joint marriage this was not problematic. Once the conceptual borders over who ‘belongs’ to whom are formalised – essentially a border that goes between the conjoined twins – it makes visible the transgressions that are occurring underneath. Thus, marriage reveals the inherent challenge to the ‘individual’ that the twins present. As soon as she becomes aware of this, she instead deflects focus by considering how else the twins embody such troublesome aspects to minimalise and repress her own participation in this process, purging her own intersubjective adultery by speculating about the twins as queer and incestuous. Thus, we see in this example a fictionalised articulation of the process of ‘splitting’ that singletons go through to rid their own ego of such transgressions and to project them onto conjoined bodies.

Throughout these texts, conjoinment is consistently presented in contrast to heterosexual monogamous relationships due to the complications that it presents to a singleton understanding of the ‘individual’. Whilst all these texts engage in the ‘conjoinment as singleton spouses’ trope, they do so in markedly different ways, and this attests to the evolution of the importance of the ‘individual’ as a singleton concept. In the bawdy depictions examined briefly outside the confines of this chapter, the ‘individual’ was less fragile. As a result the threat that conjoinment was seen to present to singleton relationships could be more freely explored satirically without risking a destabilising of the keystone concept of the ‘individual’. With Gould’s poem and the difficulties that the Hilton and Gibb twins faced, however, there is a clearly increased concern for the potential gendered social ramifications of conjoinment upon singleton

[339] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 123

relationships. As the figure of the ‘New Woman’ challenged existing gender relations and advocated for independence within marriage, so too conjoined twins became feared by singletons because of the complications they presented to the ‘individual’. These texts then responded by ‘aggrandizing’ the twins involved, de-sexing them and presenting them instead as “the exception that proved the rule”.[340] The more recent novels analysed may seem to demonstrate greater security in the singleton concept of ‘the individual’, but they continue to approach this trope whilst containing the disruptive potential that conjoined twins hold for monogamous heterosexual relationships and singleton ‘individuality’. The author of *The Girls* experimented with conjoined protagonists to present conjoinment as a metaphorical singleton marriage, and singleton love as metaphorical conjoinment. Whilst this naturalised conjoinment, it also romanticised and trivialised it, reducing the twins back down to their condition. In this way, it still contains the damage that conjoinment could present to the ‘individual’, as it reduces the individuality of the conjoined twins by synecdochally replacing them with their impairment. This is, ironically, a practice that the twins themselves problematise, and this tension makes visible some of the more problematic aspects of writing about minority identities without that lived experience. Irvine Welsh, through *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins,* extended these aspects and used conjoinment as a means of exploring singleton sexual fantasies related to same sex desire and power play. Here, the challenges that conjoinment presents to the ‘individual’ are re-presented as an inability to escape – and thus an excuse for risque sexual encounters – whilst the actual conjoined twins reject sexuality in favour of their platonic relationship. Lastly, *Attachments* reveals these underlying understandings of conjoinment as inherently adulterous and incestuous through depicting the singleton protagonist’s own burgeoning awareness of how her marriage is affected by conjoinment. In doing so, the author depicts the challenge that conjoinment poses to ‘individuality’ and marriage as corrupting singleton relationships, and – by extension – their ‘individuality’.

The second relationship archetype that conjoinment is presented as problematising in these texts is that of mothers and foetuses. The potential for this disruption signifies deeper challenges to the ‘individual’ than those

[340] Pingree, ‘The Exceptions that Prove the Rule’ p. 173.

examined so far, as when the foetus gestates within the pregnant conjoined twin we find a combined figure that moves from bi-subjectivity to tri-subjectivity. As three people become physically enmeshed and mingled, this tri-subjectivity evokes a similar period of intersubjectivity: when the conjoined twins' mother was pregnant with them. Thus a hierarchy of dependence between all three agents is raised in imitation of when the twins were inside the womb. The foetus of the conjoined twins demonstrates a dependent intersubjectivity and physical reliance on the conjoined mother(s), reflecting the pre-existing dynamic between the twins, and queering – or providing an alternative to – the typical filial relationship.

Barring gender transition, when a conjoined twin becomes a parent, the child will have (at least) two parents of the same sex. In *Attachments,* the children of Nadine and Eddie refer to the conjoined Eddie and Amos as "the daddies".[341] This demonstrates that the disruptive potential for conjoined pregnancy – as with marriage – lies in its ability to transform conservative family relations. In these texts however, this potential is resisted by the singleton characters. Nadine intercepts her children's references to 'the daddies' and rewrites this depiction of their family. When she plans the separation surgery of the twins she remarks to herself that "we would have to find new ways to refer to them [Eddie and Amos]".[342] Her normalisation project of pressuring Eddie and Amos into non-emergency separation surgery can thus be read as an act of suppression. Conjoinment disrupts heteronormative family spaces and relations, and for Nadine, becomes associated with homosexual love and adultery, whilst the singleton body becomes associated with heterosexual Christian marriage and the nuclear family. Whilst it is potentially useful to have these underlying singleton constructions of conjoinment articulated, it is still problematic for a singleton author to use the imagery of minorities in this way, and runs the risk of reinforcing or even forging these understandings in the first place.

Similarly, in *The Girls,* whilst conjoinment is used to intriguingly challenge traditional narratives around pregnancy, the conjoined Rose is forced to give

[341] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 242.
[342] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 257.

her baby up for adoption immediately after birth. In an act of self-censorship, it is her twin Ruby who prevents the twins from having a queer platonic co-parented family. Ruby overrules Rose's maternal instincts, as Rose records that "my sister made it real, that I would not, and could not, keep my baby".[343] The twins here embody Carey's portrait of the New Woman as a "double-headed monster", and his fears that this is causing the "modern American family […] frequently to split down the middle".[344] Carey fears that new gender roles and a marriage of equals will demarcate the family unit into separate pieces. Intriguingly, as Carey argues that "the heads are at war with each other. The house divided against itself does not, we observe, stand", so, too, the maternal disagreement between Rose and Ruby prevents one disruption to the heteronormative family unit by choosing another.[345] As they feel they have to choose between a family, or their conjoinment, they choose the latter.

This notwithstanding, in the sections of *The Girls* that detail Rose's pregnancy, the connection between the twins is presented as being threateningly porous. This alternative to singleton relationships is connected to the intercorporeal challenge of conjoinment to the singleton 'individual'. Both the physiological and psychological effects of pregnancy are described as being shared by the twins, as Rose describes the lived experience of both as:

> I shared the pregnancy with Ruby in surprising ways. She was affected by my hormones, of course, weepy and exhausted. She craved ketchup-flavoured potato chips and black liquorice whilst I had no cravings at all. As my blood volume increased, so did hers, making her nose gush every time she sneezed, swelling her lips and other erogenous zones.[346]

This experience is not within the conservative norms of the heterosexual family unit, as the foetus is gestated by two mothers that both experience the pregnancy. Whilst not explicitly pathologising this, the shared experience of pregnancy is depicted clinically by the author. The shared vascular system results in Ruby being 'affected by [Ruby's] hormones,' and her physical

[343] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 150.
[344] Quoted in Pingree, *The Exception that Proved the Rule,* p. 177.
[345] Quoted in Pingree, *The Exception that Proved the Rule,* p. 177.
[346] Lansens, *The Girls,* pp. 157-8.

changes are explained by the increased blood volume. The physicality of conjoined pregnancy allows for blood and hormones to be shared across three people, causing psychological and physical changes in all three. Despite these shared experiences, though, Rose believes that the twins experience the pregnancy differently, and even the labour pain to different degrees. However, the author does not provide Ruby's thoughts on this. Rose writes that Ruby "couldn't feel it directly. She was confused. And helpless".[347] This exploration of what it may be like to be conjoined and pregnant is intriguing, and perhaps accurate for some cases, but is not grounded in lived experience. Lansens is only presenting one set of conjoined characters, and as the physiology of each pair of conjoined twins is unique then this is feasible. However, as with all these singleton imagninings, it must be remembered that this projected experience is being used for a narrative function. Here the supposed inability of one twin to 'feel' the labour pains is a parallel to their different emotional reactions to the baby – itself a form of the 'mapping' outlined later in this chapter.

In their difference, the author portrays Ruby's feelings about the baby as grounded in fears that she will be replaced and that this will disrupt the established dynamics between her and Rose. As we shall see shortly, the dynamics between the twins in this text is portrayed as parallel to that of mother-and-child. When Ruby discovers the pregnancy for the first time via the reflection of a mirror she remarks that "we found the other's reflection broken by the foggy mirror. Where once we were two. Now three".[348] In the section about the importance of controlling sightlines via physical objects in chapter two, the importance of mirrors for these twins in gaining access to otherwise hidden knowledge and controlling the gazes of others was established. The 'foggy mirror' shows that the combined self-image of the two has been disrupted, as Ruby anticipates having to renegotiate her identity to incorporate a third person attached to their conjoined body. In the tension that this results in, the expected relationship between mother and baby is challenged by conjoinment. The special bond that pregnant people are expected to establish with their children is presented as diluted by this additional connection, and as Rose is portrayed as already holding this with Ruby; for her to bond with the baby would mean

[347] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 164.
[348] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 150.

losing her link with Ruby. It is as if the emotional investment that a mother can invest in her unborn child is finite and discrete.

Pregnancy is truly disrupted in these texts, however, by the ways that both twins interchangeably take on the roles of a 'parent twin' and 'child twin'. Early on, Rose presents herself as the 'parent twin' because:

> I have carried my sister like an infant since I was a baby myself, Ruby's tiny thighs astride my hip, my arm supporting her posterior, her arm forever around my neck. Ruby is my sister. And strangely, undeniably, my child.[349]

Beyond merely being arranged in a way that suggests a mother/child relationship, however, Rose is presented as also fulfilling a maternal role towards Ruby. The relationship between female conjoined twins is thus naturalised, but at the same time this risks infantilizing Ruby. Prompted by the visual confirmation of the death of their biological mother (this is the first time they have come across any trace of her since she abandoned them at the hospital), in the eyes of Rose, Ruby acts excessively emotionally at their mother's grave. This draws unwelcome attention towards the pair and Rose instinctively takes on the role of their mother as she, "gather[ered] my sister in my right arm, feeling Ruby shake with shock and protest and marched us back to the family car".[350]

Similarly, Ruby shows us that Rose has played the motherly role of soothing her to sleep since they were both children:

> When I was little, the only way I could fall asleep was if my sister touched my earlobe. I used to cry for her to do it. I called it Lolo for some reason So I used to cry Do Lolo, Rose, until Rose would rub my earlobe […] and Rose would do Lolo and I would fall asleep.[351]

[349] Lansens, *The Girls*, p. 4.
[350] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 29.
[351] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 76.

Importantly, however, this mother/daughter aspect of their relationship is not unilateral, as the girls rapidly chop and change who is the 'mother' and who is the 'child'. Recalling her labour pains, Rose writes that "'It hurts,' I cried. Ruby stoked the lobe of my ear and chanted shh shh over and over, like I was a toddler who needed a nap".[352] Ruby thus instinctively perceives the need in Rose and automatically switches their dynamic to fulfil it. Although Rose is the one carrying the baby, Ruby perceives that Rose needs comforting like "a toddler who needed a nap" and fluidly reverses their dynamic. In this description, Rose is presented as helpless and childlike, but this is not an appropriate portrayal of an adult with disabilities, nor should these associations be made.

Abjection, Splitting & Shared Digestive Systems

Throughout the historical periods examined in this thesis, singleton reactions to conjoinment have demonstrated what Julia Kristeva associates with abjection more broadly: a "compound of abomination and fascination".[353] The shared bodily processes within conjoinment seem to contradict the cherished concept of the 'individual' whilst also evoke and remind singletons of when they were conjoined to another – their mother, whilst they were in the womb. Similarly, the shared subjectivity of conjoinment reminds singletons of the intercorporeal and intersubjective reality of everyday existence, as we constantly ingest tiny particles of matter that have previously been inside or a part of someone else, and breathe air that has been exhaled thousands of times before. It is thus intuitive to understand these depictions of conjoined twins as informed by an unconscious practice of abjection and splitting.

In these texts, the shared subjectivity of conjoinment is presented as a blurring of the fundamental division between "I and Other".[354] This division is formative to typical psycho-development, and so to witness such a transgression is to question foundational beliefs about the self. This causes a psychical disruption known as 'abjection' first articulated in Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Abjection manifests as disgust and

[352] Lansens, *The Girls*, p. 164.
[353] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 167.
[354] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* p. 7.

nausea, as the (presumed singleton) reader attempts to reinforce their own somatic boundaries. In doing this they attempt to expel contamination and to reiterate a self-image as impermeable and uncompromised. This, however, reveals the reader to be the one that is already contaminated. All digestion (and thus all regurgitation) involves a re-negotiation of the boundary between 'inner/self' and 'outer/other'. Carolyn Daniels agrees, as in her exploration of representations of eating within children's literature she argues that when we eat we incorporate external matter into our core. Here, "the processes of ingestion, digestion, and excretion force us to acknowledge that our bodies are not finite cohesive structures but permeable corporeal organisms constantly in flux with the outside".[355] In experiencing disgust, according to Kristeva, in this way "I expel myself, I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish myself [...] It is no longer I who expel, "I" is expelled", as the instinctive urge to vomit is in itself another transgression of the fundamental boundary between 'inner' and 'outer' space, triggering a feedback loop of nausea that threatens to overwhelm.[356] In this way, disgust reveals how intercorporeal singletons are, as for Daniels "body fluids [...] graphically confirm that the body is permeable, and, therefore, that it is vulnerable to infiltration and pollution".[357] What Mary Douglas calls our "pollution behaviour" is an instinctive reaction to "a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order".[358] Disgust and related emotions are for Appelbaum "boundary markers, where societies protect themselves from the danger of perceived pollution and hence from threats of social dissolution from within".[359] The singleton body is assumed to be always intact and whole, and evidence to the contrary, such as conjoinment, thus can provoke this reaction instinctively.

When conjoinment is presented as intolerable for singletons, then, what is really being reacted to is a return of repressed knowledge about how we all continuously ingest (bits of) others. This is, in itself, a form of Kleinian projective

---

[355] Carolyn Daniels, *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children's Literature*, (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2006), p. 6
[356] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* p. 3.
[357] Carolyn Daniels, *Voracious Children,* p. 99
[358] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge,1966), pp. 35-6
[359] Robert Appelbaum, 'Existential Disgust and the Food of the Philosopher', *Food and Literature,* ed. by Gitanjali G. Shahani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 130-44, p. 137.

identification underpinning object relations theory. In this psychoanalytical understanding, humans are believed to be primarily motivated by the need to form relationships. Theorists such as Cooper have thus profitably combined object relations theory with the 'relational' model of disability identified by Goodley and others "which sees people with disabilities as '*disabled through dynamic relationship of body/mind and the environment'*".[360] This critical prioritisation of personal relationships is thus very useful for my analysis of the fundamental disturbance that conjoinment is perceived to present to singleton relationships. In "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms", Melanie Klein outlined this process as a fundamental part of psychodevelopment.[361] I follow Thomas Ogden, however, in understanding the 'stages' of this process "to not emphasize its place in a developmental sequence"[362] – not to be taken as literal, linear stages – but instead, as Glen Gabbard suggests: "modes of psychological experience that persist throughout life".[363] Under this approach, for Klein "object relations are moulded by an interaction between introjection and projection, between internal and external objects".[364] Introjection is the process by which parts of another are absorbed into the ego, whilst projection is where internal feelings or understandings are instead imbued into another. Relatedly, projective identification is where unwelcome aspects of the self are projected into another, which they identify with. This has the function of keeping these 'bad' elements as separate to the ego, but at a safe distance. All of these mechanisms originate "from the deflection of the Death Instinct outwards", and facilitate the incorporation of qualities that are seen as desirable, and of expelling those that are not, helping to overcome anxiety in both cases.[365] This is what Klein refers to as "the oral element" of introjection and projection, which is particularly driven by intercorporeal concerns, and helpfully illustrate my reading of singleton responses to the perceived challenge that conjoinment poses to the concept of the 'individual'.

---

[360] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* pp. 26-27, emphasis original.
[361] Melanie Klein, 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms', *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis,* 27.1 (1946), 98-110.
[362] Thomas Ogdan, *The Primitive Edge of Experience* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 1989) p. 12.
[363] Glen Gabbard, 'Classic Article', *Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research*, 5.2 (1996) 160-163, p. 162.
[364] Klein 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms', p. 98.
[365] Klein 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms', p. 100.

The foundational example that Klein provides clearly articulates the concerns examined above in relation to Kristeva and Douglas about disgust, pollution and bodily boundaries. It is “the mother's breast which is split into a good (gratifying) and bad (frustrating) breast”.[366] The ‘good/gratifying’ breast is the one that provides sustenance to an infant, promoting desirable traits which are introjected, potentially grounding intercorporeality as desirable. The ‘bad/frustrating’ breast, however, is that which does not provide this, and thus generates undesirable feelings which need to be expelled through projection. In both cases the bodily boundaries between infant and mother are necessarily compromised in a temporary parallel to conjoinment. I argue that this fundamental psychoanalytical mechanism informs singleton responses to conjoined twins in these texts and in everyday interactions. Certainly the singleton characters, if not the singleton authors creating these characters as well, evidence a dual process of introjection and projection. The intercorporeality of conjoinment evokes that of pregnancy and breastfeeding, stimulating a complex mix of unconscious emotional responses. The responses that are found to be desirable are introjected, and this helps explain why some of the singleton authors examined here glorify or idealise conjoinment. This is the case when the author of *The Girls* uses conjoined imagery as a lens to romantically view singleton interactions through, or in the *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins* or *Attachments* where the singleton characters use conjoinment as a means of exploring sexual fantasies, or even literally fetishise conjoinment itself. The ‘bad’ transgression of physical boundaries found in the ‘frustrating’ breast, however, also becomes mapped onto conjoined twins, and the undesirable aspects of everyday singleton intercorporeal reality become split from the singleton ego and projected into conjoined twins as ultimate expressions of a self compromised by an Other. These undesirable traits are thus expelled from the singleton ego, reducing anxiety about their own shared body, safely containing the foundational memories of their own previous intercorporeality and ongoing participation in a porous world. This allows them to continue to believe that they are a robust, discrete ‘individual’, despite the example of conjoinment.

[366] Klein, ‘Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms’ p. 98.

One of the key vectors by which the authors of these texts explore the intercorporeal reality of conjoinment and these underpinning mechanisms is through the detailed description of shared consumption. In *One* (2015) these food anxieties are explicitly coded onto the conjoined bodies of the twins. As Ischiopagus Tripus twins – twins with four arms and two legs – the twins have a connected digestive system as:

> Our intestines begin
>
> apart
>
> then merge.
>
> And below that we are
>
> one.[367]

The crucial line breaks before 'apart' and 'one' and the shape of the lines here reinforce the sense that the twins are one person from below the waist, as the words on the page resemble a journey through the gut. Previously, they have listed what they have two of, progressing down throughout the body to rest at "two sets of lungs and kidneys", establishing the stomach as the point by which "we are / one".[368] Taking this further, in the 2014 thriller by Chris Abani *The Secret History of Las Vegas* we join the conjoined characters 'Fire' and 'Water' as they are being observed eating sweets by a nurse:

> Fire chewed on it for a minute, eyes closed, then spat the chewed-up red candy into his cupped hand. The nurse watched from the half-closed door, mesmerized.
>
> Fire looked up. Hello, he said to the nurse.
>
> Hi, the nurse said.
>
> Disgusting habit, I know Fire said, but I'm not good at digesting anything that isn't liquid. I get most of my nutrition from Water.
>
> Like a baby, Water said. That's why I eat for two.
>
> You eat for three, Fire said.[369]

---

[367] Crossan, *One,* pp. 32-3.
[368] Crossan, *One,* p. 32.
[369] Chris Abani *The Secret History of Las Vegas* (New York: Penguin, 2014), p. 94. As with *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins,* the lack of quotation marks is a stylistic choice by the author.

The ‘mesmerized’ nurse, half-hidden and unable to draw away, is a cipher for the curiosity of the reader. Fire confirms that his practice of regurgitating sweets is “disgusting” and the additional explanation that this is because he “gets most of [his] nutrition from water” does little to reassure us. *The Girls* (2006) similarly focuses on this aspect of conjoinment, as seen in the repeated passages where Rose comments on sharing a vascular system with someone that has motion sickness, as “when Ruby gets sick my life is severely restricted”, and when Ruby writes about sharing Rose’s morning sickness she says that: “Rose just about threw up. I could feel her swallowing and swallowing”.[370] The graphic first-person descriptions of these shared bodily processes suggests a merging of the reader with the characters, reacquainting the singleton reader with their own shared subjectivity as like Ruby we too – to an extent – experience Rose’s swallowing of her vomit. As can be seen in these examples, the disgusting elements of conjoinment are primarily connected to the porous digestive processes of the twins. As they share a digestive tract and exchange nutrients, this is symbolically represented through the vomit or the “chewed-up red candy”.[371]

In *One*, these ‘problematic’ elements are again made explicit as particular focus is drawn to the mutual vascular and digestive processes of Tippi and Grace, but even greater effort is made to reflect this back onto the reader. This reminds the singleton reader that we are all and all have been intercorporeal, evoking the abjection and projective mechanisms outlined above. The realities of shared digestion are alluded to as Grace reports that:

> I want vanilla yoghurt.
> Tippi chooses coconut cream
> with chocolate chips.
>
> Tippi and I share a lot
> —we always share dinner—[372]

[370] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 29 & p. 248.
[371] Abani, *The Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 94.
[372] Crossan, *One*, p. 128.

This form of presentation shows that the feared porosity of conjoinment is experienced by all eating subjects as the type of food that is described – soft creamy desserts with little tangible texture – importantly point towards foundational and archetypal memories of food. When explaining how "food loathing is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection" Kristeva specifically points to "that skin on the surface of milk—harmless, thin as a sheet of cigarette paper, pitiful as a nail paring".[373] Milk-based and milk-resembling foods such as the "vanilla yoghurt" and "coconut cream" are an excellent vehicle for evoking this abjection. Milk is both the first substance most babies ingest, and – because it is a product created inside another animal (often another human – their mother) – it is then expressed before being ingested by the baby. Any corruption of it – such as "the skin on the surface" but especially the suggestion of mingled digestive processes – simultaneously subverts fundamental assumptions about the purity of food whilst also evoking latent food anxieties about the transgression of corporeal boundaries between individuals that share digestion.

That the foodstuffs alluded to in these extracts evoke the primal experience of being breastfed presents conjoinment as an uncanny reflection of pregnancy. Drawing on the fact that both pregnancy and conjoinment involve shared subjectivity and intercorporeality, all of these texts focusing on conjoinment parallel pregnancy to some extent, further showing how singletons fail to live up to the cherished ideas of the 'individual' as we all began life physically enmeshed with someone else (our mother) in the womb.

In *The Girls*, the elderly carer of the twins 'Nonna' asks Rose 'How's your little girl today?', referring to the conjoined Ruby. [374] This is contextualised by Nonna's general state of confusion, as Nonna is presented as cognitively declining throughout the text, but Ruby makes her resistance to this reading explicit, saying that she finds these episodes "embarrassing" and that "I do not play along even though Rose said I should".[375] Although none of the other

[373] Kirsteva, *Powers of Horror,* p. 2.
[374] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 197.
[375] Lansens, The Girls, p. 197.

singleton characters make this mistake in this text, the parallels between the twins' conjoinment and the shared subjectivity of pregnancy are nonetheless presented as instinctive and intuitive. Nonna's 'confusion' between pregnancy and conjoinment articulates the parallels being discussed so far between conjoinment, pregnancy, and the 'individual' which the other characters may recognise, but feel is impolite to acknowledge. Pregnancy may be a more socially accepted form of intersubjectivity, but drawing parallels between the two is felt to be a faux pax, even though they are both forms of mingled bodies that exchange nutrients. Conjoinment is recognisable enough as similar to pregnancy, but with crucial uncanny inversions.

The Secret History of Las Vegas continues to explore this uncanny connection between pregnancy and conjoinment, using this to drive a theme of gothic suspense at the start of the text, before we become invested in the conjoined protagonists. One of our first sights of the twins comes from the non-disabled rookie ranger (fittingly named 'Green') who stumbles across them bathing in a lake at night that has previously been the scene of a major murder investigation:

> Green saw something attached to the man's left side, something that had previously been submerged under the water, something flailing. Green thought it looked like a baby or, at the very least, a small child
> [...]
> He advanced rather rapidly toward the ranger, he gave off an air of quiet threat. Green stepped back, realizing now that the man was in front of him, shirtless, that there had been no baby. In one glance he took in the second man, though to call him that was a stretch, hanging as he was like an appendage off the first one's side.
> Your name, sir, was the only thing he could think to say.
> Fire, the appendage said. And this is Water, the appendage added.[376]

The only way that Green can make sense of the scene initially, is to assume that Water is bathing the baby Fire in the lake. The moment of recognition, where Green realises that Fire is an adult conjoined twin and not a baby,

[376] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 13.

uncannily combines with the eerie scene-setting of a spooky murder investigation at night, as well as the "air of quiet threat" that Water is described as emitting. This sense of uncanny *not*-child is enhanced through the short physical description that Green gives of Fire on the next page:

> Fire appeared to be little more than a head with two arms projecting out of Water's chest. He had no legs or feet, but he did have one toe, and that was attached to Water's torso. He was bald, and had a large skin caul, like a turkey wattle drooped down one side of his head. His left eyelid was swollen and misshapen, almost as if he had been punched there. His nose was squished nearly flat against his face and the nostrils flared with every breath he took, although he seemed to do most of his breathing through his mouth, a rattling harsh wheeze, and with each one of his surprisingly generous lips curled back to reveal canine like teeth. Only his bright and gentle eyes gave any indication of the intelligence behind them.[377]

Fire's defining physical feature is this vestigial caul, as it is referred to repeatedly when he "crawl[s] under his caul and hide[s]" when stressed.[378] This, and the way that he is unable to eat solid food and is dependent on Water's digestive system "like a baby" is emblematic of the way that his shared subjectivity with Water resembles the relationship of that between a mother and foetus.[379] Despite these signifiers of birth, however, Fire apparently has an adult's mind and an adult's sense of humour. This adult mind suggests independence, and thus the ability to survive separately from the host/mother, unlike an undeveloped foetus. Similarly, unlike a foetus, Fire is on the outside of Water, but still derives his nutrients from Water internally. However, his sharp "canine-like" teeth re-present him as a parasitical alien draining nutrients from Water, instead of a symbiotic and shared experience.[380] In containing the same transgressive elements as pregnancy then – the shared subjectivity – but inverting the temporary, hidden, and dependent elements, these presentations of conjoinment subvert pregnancy. Fire is presented as the uncanny mirror

[377] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* pp. 13-14.
[378] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 6.
[379] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 64.
[380] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 14.

image of pregnancy: an adult foetus, with an infant's needs and connection to the 'mother' but an adult's mind and equipped with sharp teeth. Instead of conjoinment being familiarised through the more common lens of pregnancy, conjoinment is used to highlight the transgressive aspects of pregnancy, reconfiguring conjoinment as a more threatening and permanent form of singleton pregnancy.

Parasites and Separation Surgery

Presentations of conjoinment as an uncanny reflection of pregnancy commonly draw on the trope of presenting conjoined twins as engaged in a 'parasitical' relationship. As discussed, the presentation of a conjoined twin as an adult foetus 'parasitically' feeding from the mother evokes disgust. Similarly, conjoined twins are often unfairly presented as parasitically 'feeding' off each other.

Strictly speaking, the medical term 'parasitically conjoined twins' (the common name for 'heteropagus twins') is only technically accurate if used in reference to a conjoined twin that stopped developing during gestation. The 'parasitic' twin is according to the definition provided by Alexandru Anca and others: "incompletely formed, small and completely dependent on the autosite [host]".[381] In these cases, the 'parasite' twin will often be missing their head, and if not then they will not demonstrate brain activity, although in some cases their limbs can demonstrate some semblance of independent movement. The surgeon Rowena Spencer states that: "rarely, if ever, is either a functional heart or a competent brain".[382] The 'parasitic' twin 'takes' nutrients from the host twin – as all conjoined twins that share a digestive system or blood supply inevitably share material – but parasitic twins are not usually considered to be a person or to have any individual rights, instead regarded similarly to a growth. Where both twins are considered human, however, this term cannot be applied, as conjoined twins always develop from the same combination of sperm and egg – they are not two separate eggs that became attached in the womb, but one

[381] Alexandru Anca and others, 'Special Forms in Twin Pregnancy – Asymmetric Conjoined Twins', *Journal of Medicine and Life*, 8.1 (2015) 115-8, p. 117.
[382] Rowena Spencer, 'Parasitic Conjoined Twins: External, Internal (Fetuses in Fetu and Teratomas, and Detached (Acardiacs)', *Journal of Clinical Anatomy,* 14.6 (2001), 428-44, p. 428.

fertilised egg that never fully separated – and so it is impossible to say that either twin has grater entitlement to the body, or the nutrients: neither one can be considered a parasite on the other one as they are a partnership with a mutual body and shared origin.[383] Despite this, in popular and academic discourse, this medical term is widely overapplied to non-parasitic twins, reframing their mutual relationship as antagonistic, often in connection to the old harmful trope that portrays disabled people as a burden or a drain on society.

This repeated depiction of a conjoined twin as parasitical draws on the more widespread established perception that disabled people are a parasitical drain on society.[384] For example, in Mark Twain's farcical representation of the conjoined Tocci twins, *Those Extraordinary Twins* (1892), the singleton characters express envy at the twins' seeming ability to 'game' the system as they "always travel as one person, since we occupy but one seat, so we save half the fare" and "Both of us get a bath for one ticket, theatre seat for one ticket, pew-rent is on the same basis".[385] In *The Secret History of Las Vegas,* the 'parasitical' portrayal of conjoinment is more literal: and the text concludes with the medical 'resolution' of a modified MRI machine that conclusively reveals one of the twins to have been in a vegatative state since birth, and the other has operated him like a ventriloquist's dummy. As was examined in the discussion in the first chapter in relation to the 'ideology of ability' and the distinction between the *phénomène* and the performing *artiste*, in *Spaces of Hope*, David Harvey shows that disability has become synonymous under capitalism with an "inability to work".[386] People are 'valued' purely by the extent that they are perceived to contribute to the wider economy, yet employers are frequently unwilling to agree to the (often basic) adaptations or flexibility necessary to accommodate disabled employees. Even when these are not required, ableist perceptions of disability will nonetheless provide increased barriers to employment for disabled people, and the result is a feedback loop by which disabled people are forced out of employment and into what Turner and Blackie refer to as "less socially desirable positions".[387] They then are unfairly

[383] Spencer, 'Theoretical and Analytical Embryology of Conjoined Twins'.
[384] See McRuer *Crip Theory,* p. 161.
[385] Twain, *Those Extraordinary Twins* p. 139 & p. 140.
[386] Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* p. 106.
[387] David Turner and Daniel Blackie, *Disability in the Industrial Revolution* p. 5.

stigmatised for being forced into these economic situations in the first place, reinforcing their perceived 'value' to society, and the associations of 'laziness' or a 'burden' are used to justify further exclusion from the workplace.

The understanding of conjoinment as parasitic thus evokes this more widespread ableist image of disabled people as beggarly, as dependent on handouts and as creating more costs to society than non-disabled people. As the UK's National Health Service is publicly funded from tax revenue, in British books and other forms of media, disabled people have consistently been represented as a drain on resources, and hence as unproductive and less valuable citizens. As one small example of the prevalence of this belief, the hashtag #BenefitsNotBurdens was started on Twitter by Dr. Amy Kavanagh (@BlondeHistorian) as people with impairments demonstrated their positive interpersonal and societal value. That so many disabled people considered that this needed to be said, and that it received such attention, reveals the extent to which the 'beggarly' trope is ingrained into depictions of disabled people, and the formative role that this has in perceptions of disability, including internalised ableism.

Extending the implications of this label of 'burden' in *One,* the conjoined twin Grace comes to understand herself as such in respect to her twin when she discovers her cardiomyopathy (the twins have 'separate' hearts). She writes that:

> If I were a singleton
> I might have dropped dead by now.
>
> Instead
> my sister bears the burden of keeping me alive,
> of pumping most of the blood around our bodies.
>
> Instead
> I freeload.
>
> And she

doesn't complain.[388]

Crossan's character thus demonstrates how the presentations of conjoinment being inherently 'parasitical' continues the understanding of disability as 'burden', as the supposed harmful draining of vital (economic) resources from the social body is mirrored in a representation of one conjoined twin redirecting energy and resources out of the other. Grace describes herself as "freeload[ing]", metaphorically evoking perceptions of disability support. Similarly, the presentation of conjoined twins as inherently unequal, as one feeding off the other, reinforces understandings of disabled people as a threat. In this description, both twins are examples of what David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder describe in their overview of tropes associated with presentation of disabled people in British media as the "disabled avenger of horror" and "the threat toward the integrity of the able body".[389] Drawing on the anxiety related to a damaged or fractured sense of 'wholeness' – examined more fully in the subsequent section – these characters appear countless times in various media. From *Moby Dick* to Barrie's Captain Hook, from Mason Verger in *Hannibal* to Shere Khan in *The Jungle Book*, the disabled figure is frequently presented as embittered by their impairment, doggedly pursuing those they deem responsible, aiming to similarly impair them. When singletons present conjoinment as 'parasitic' – as an unequal and antagonistic relationship where one is 'feeding' off the other – conjoined twins are simultaneously understood as pursuer and pursued, each disabled by the other, neither able to escape the looming presence of their adversary.

Within Crossan's text, the depiction of 'host' and 'parasite' is challenged as Grace's cardiomyopathy requires the family to make an agonising choice. Their doctor tells the family gathered around our protagonist Grace that:

'Left as it is,
they'll both die.'

[388] Crossan, *One,* p. 334.
[389] David Mitchell, and Sharon Snyder, 'Body Genres: An Anatomy of Disability in Film', *The Problem Body: Projecting Disability on Film,* ed. by Sally Chivers and Nicole Markotić (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 179-205, p. 186.

Mum starts to cry.
Dad holds her hand.

'With a separation, they have hope,
a fighting chance,
but I can't put a number on it.
If I did, it would be low.
It would be quite low'[390]

The family – but ultimately the twins (Grace and Tippi) – have to decide whether to undergo the psychological and physical trauma of separation surgery for a 'fighting chance' of survival, or whether to accept their impending heart failure as conjoined. The twins elect to be surgically separated, as the protagonist Grace attempts to sacrifice herself so that the stronger Tippi will survive. However, against expectations Grace survives and Tippi dies, and the book ends as Grace is left struggling to contain her grief, and to adapt to her new singleton existence.

There are striking resemblances between the decision that Grace and Tippi face and an important and controversial UK court case. In this case, the parents of the conjoined Gracie and Rosie Attard (referred to in court by their respective pseudonyms of 'Jodie' and 'Marie') were told that if left conjoined, there was a high percentage that both would die within six months, whereas if they underwent separation surgery one twin would certainly die, whilst the other would have a much higher likelihood of survival. Differing to the fictional Grace and Tippi of *One,* however, the Attard parents decided to not try to separate Gracie and Rosie, but the attending medical team sued them for the right to operate anyway in an attempt to save Gracie. Controversially, the Court of Appeals granted the medical team permission to perform the operation, and, as predicted, Gracie survived it whilst Rosie died.

The most striking resemblances between the two cases is in the role that the presentation of the twins as host/parasite played. This is deliberate by Crossan – the 'Author's Note' makes it clear that the parallels are not

[390] Crossan, *One,* p. 261.

coincidental – as she disrupts this widespread form of representation of conjoinment as inherently parasitical. The similarity in names between 'Gracie and Rosie' and 'Grace and Tippi' highlights this. In the transcript of the court proceedings, the term 'parasite' was used several times to describe Gracie, despite the fact that Lord Justice Walker conceded that "Jodie and Mary [Gracie and Rosie] must be regarded as two separate persons" because "they have two brains and two nearly complete bodies".[391] The hearing included the expert testimony of Mr Adrian Whitefield QC that "it has not been and could not be suggested that this case comes anywhere near that category [of parasitic conjoinment]."[392] Despite this, however, the judges portrayed Jodie as a parasitic growth, summarising their judgement as:

> Mary may have a right to life, but she has little right to be alive. She is alive because and only because, to put it bluntly, but nonetheless accurately, she sucks the lifeblood of Jodie and she sucks the lifeblood out of Jodie. She will survive only so long as Jodie survives. Jodie will not survive long because constitutionally she will not be able to cope. Mary's parasitic living will be the cause of Jodie's ceasing to live. If Jodie could speak, she would surely protest, "Stop it, Mary, you're killing me". Mary would have no answer to that. Into my scales of fairness and justice between the children goes the fact that nobody but the doctors can help Jodie. Mary is beyond help.[393]

The insistence that Rosie is parasitic is thus used to justify her separation from Gracie. The same economic 'burden' of disability is evoked, as when Grace described her 'burden' on Tippi, as Gracie is here shown to be feeding off Rosie, "suck[ing] the lifeblood out of Jodie". Severing their common aorta was presented as a passive act, as a withdrawal of food supply, and not an active form of euthanasia. This mirrors Twain's satirical conclusion to *Those Extraordinary Twins* whereby after they incite a riot, a mob seizes the conjoined twins Angelo and Luigi, and debate what to do with them. Some object that they cannot punish the (guilty) Luigi without harming the (innocent) Angelo:

---

[391] 'Re A (Conjoined Twins)', *England and Wales Court of Appeal,* Civ 254 (2001) <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2000/254.html> [accessed 18/08/21].
[392] 'Re A (Conjoined Twins)'.
[393] 'Re A (Conjoined Twins)'.

> "No- Count Angelo is innocent; we mustn't hang him."
> "Who said anything about hanging him? We are only going to hang the other one."
> "Then that is all right – there is no objection to that."
> So they hanged Luigi. And so ends the history of "Those Extraordinary Twins".[394]

Barring immediate emergency separation surgery, Couser tells us that for conjoined twins "the death of one entails the death of the other".[395] The butt of Twain's macabre joke may well be the members of the mob that are too stupid to realise this, but Twain's characters nonetheless utilise the same logic as in the Attard court case, as they remove Luigi's air supply by hanging Angelo. More than a century after Twain's farce, in the Attard case, the separation surgery was explicitly compared to "switching off a ventilator" by the judges, as this "is also regarded as a withdrawal of treatment (that is, as an omission rather than a positive act) even though it results (and is expected to result) in immediate death".[396] As noted in Alice Dreger's review of this case, the use of "parasite" in this case conceptually transforms the active and personable Gracie into a harmful growth that needs to be cut away for Jodie's health. Separation surgery becomes sacrifice surgery, as "a mentally functioning person [is used] as a vital-organ donor".[397] Conjoinment is reimagined as fundamentally unequal. It ignores the fact that Gracie had been 'using' these organs just as long as Jodie, had just as intimate a visceral connection to them, and had just as much entitlement to them as Jodie did, or indeed as any singleton does to their own. As there was little legal precedent available for the three judges to draw on, they relied instead on "an intuitive judgement that the state of being a conjoined twin is a disease and that separation is the indicated treatment".[398] The judges approached the case with the ableist "singleton assumption – that a life conjoined is an unjust, unworthy life", understanding conjoinment as an

[394] Twain, *Those Extraordinary Twins*, p. 184.
[395] Couser, *Signifying Bodies*, p. 51.
[396] 'Re A (Conjoined Twins)'.
[397] Dreger, *One of Us,* p. 95.
[398] Dreger, *One of Us,* p. 104.

inherently parasitical and unequal relationship.[399] This enabled them to ignore the medical testimony that contradicted this, and to authorise the separation surgery against the wishes of the parents.

Hence, understandings of conjoinment as inherently unequal and in opposition automatically build towards a medical 'resolution' of surgery. In contrast to the 'social model' of disability – where disability is understood as resulting from a combination of impairment and social barriers/prejudice, the 'medical model' frames disability solely as, in the words of Clare, "a medical problem lodged in individual body-minds, which need to be treated or cured".[400] The 'medical model' thus takes non-normative bodies and surgically ensures that they are "transformed, and improved" into typical Focuauldian "docile bodies".[401] This presentation of a conjoined twin as a harmful, parasitic growth upon the other – used to justify separation surgery – is a clear example of the ways that medical and non-medical discourse can harmfully reinforce each other. Representations of conjoinment and other disabilities, according to Waldschmidt "are structuring culture(s) and at the same time are structured and lived through culture", and here we see both mutually inform each other in a closed loop.[402] The cultural over-application of the medical term 'parasitic' in relation to non-parasitic conjoined twins is reabsorbed by the medical sphere, as the additional assumptions surrounding disability as 'parasite' are unfairly invoked as justification for separation surgery.

Crossan's exploration of the loaded term 'parasite' shows awareness of the sensitive Attard case, and the nuances around representations of disabled people particularly, and conjoined twins especially. In the 'Author's Note' she says that her text was "based on amalgamated stories of real-life conjoined twins, both living and dead", particularly citing Alice Dreger's analysis of this case referenced previously as having "profoundly informed my views on separation surgery".[403] After the twins are told about Gracie's cardiomyopathy,

[399] Dreger, *One of Us,* p. 104.
[400] Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection* p. 8.
[401] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* p. 136.
[402] Waldschmidt, 'Disability Goes Cultural', p. 24.
[403] Crossan, *One*, p. 460.

the next chapter is even titled “Parasite” and we see the effect that this term has on the twins:

> ‘You think we’re partners, but really
> I’m a parasite,’ I whisper.
> ‘I don’t want to suck
> Your life from you.’
> ‘Oh come on, Grace’ she says,
> ‘all this *you* and *me* is a lie.
> There has only ever been *us*.
> So
> I won’t do it.
> You can’t *make* me have an operation.’
> ‘But I’m a parasite,’ I repeat,
> and in my head say it
> over and over.
> Parasite. Parasite. Parasite.
> All I want now is to save Tippi.
>
> If I can.[404]

Grace is depicted here as having clearly internalised this understanding of herself as a ‘parasite’. Their shared venous system, has been re-presented as Grace ‘feeding’ off Tippi with monstrous vampiric undertones, as the phrase “suck the life from you” makes clear, deliberately echoing the phrasing by the judges in the Attard case. In response, Tippi cuts to the core of the issue when she explains that “all this *you* and *me* is a lie / There has only ever been *us*.”

This evidences Clare’s point that “the ideology of cure” is “a kind of restoration”.[405] This is because the practice of medical cures implicitly believes “that what existed before is superior to what exists currently” and “seek to return what is damaged to that former state of being”.[406] As with Grace and Tippi,

[404] Crossan, *One,* pp. 335-6.
[405] Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection,* p. 14.
[406] Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection,* p. 14.

however, for Clare this "return" is impossible because it "doesn't originate from my visceral history. Rather it arises from an imagination of what I should be like, from some definition of normal and natural".[407] Whether we view Grace as a 'parasite' or not is related to our understanding of their bodily ownership: if the twin's body is inherently shared then both are experiencing the cardiomyopathy, both are equally at risk of it, and Grace cannot be a parasite. This is how Tippi understands their relationship. If, however, the twins understand themselves – or if singletons understand them – as two fundamentally separate yet linked bodies then only Grace experiences the cardiomyopathy, and could (insensitively) be considered a parasite.

Reflecting this 'separation bias' in modern medicine – where surgeons risk a high chance of death of conjoined twins for non-emergency causes – the fictional surgeon in *Attachments* advises the singleton Nadine to convince her conjoined husband to opt for the dangerous non-emergency separation surgery, and when pressed for a reason he simply states that "the condition is enough reason to attempt the cure".[408] As with inter-sex surgical 'corrections', these operations are non-essential and done because the medical teams, parents, and wider society cannot imagine a happy or worthwhile existence with atypical anatomy, despite the numerous examples of intersex and conjoined people who have chosen to not undergo such normalisation surgery. In her encyclopedia of conjoined twins, Quigley agrees, stating that:

> From an early age, many state, most of them emphatically – that they would not want to be separated. Their condition of being joined to a twin is normal for them and we should expand our definition of what a normal body is, rather than make them conform to ours.[409]

Even with today's medical imaging, Arvind Sinha and others (misleadingly) claim that "the overall success rate of separation surgery is around 65%".[410] This quoted statistic uses a skewed definition of 'success',

[407] Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection,* p. 14.
[408] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 186.
[409] Quigley *Conjoined Twins,* p. 4.
[410] Arvind Sinha and others, 'Conjoined Thoracopagus Twins – Our Experience of Successful Separation', *Journal of Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons,* 26.5 (2021) 354-7, p. 357.

however, as in many reports of separation surgery the operation is hailed as such even when one (or both!) twins did not survive the process. For example, Sinha later clarifies this figure, stating that "The overall survival rate of emergency separation for all varieties of conjoined twins is around 30%".[411] In the overview of 17 separation surgeries across 16 years cited by Sinha and others as evidence, only "four of fourteen survived" (29%).[412] This is made explicit in *One* when the twins are debating whether to undertake the emergency separation recommended to them or not:

> When conjoined twins are separated,
> it's deemed a success so
> long as one of them lives.
>
> For a while.
>
> And that,
> to me,
> is the saddest thing
> I know about how
> people see us.[413]

Even where both twins survive the procedure, however, separation surgery is not an unproblematic 'resolution' to the 'problem' of impairment. As described in the introduction to this chapter, it is only at the surface that the conjoined body can be demarcated into two individuals; viscerally speaking, it is a lot more complex. A powerful example of this is the dicephalic parapagus conjoined twins Abby and Brittany Hensel, who control almost exactly one bilateral half of their body/ies each.[414] Whilst it might seem easy to 'allocate' one arm and leg each to the twins, it is impossible to do the same for their shared heart or digestive system. Other sets of twins, such as the craniopagus conjoined twins Lori and George Schappel, have a much more unequal distribution of body

[411] Arvind Sinha and others, 'Conjoined Thoracopagus Twins – Our Experience of Successful Separation' p. 357.
[412] L. Spitz, and E. M. Kiely, 'Experience in the Management of Conjoined Twins', *British Journal of Surgery,* 89.9 (2002), 1188-92, (p. 1188).
[413] Crossan, *One,* p. 329.
[414] Two heads, one torso, with high bilateral symmetry below the neck.

parts.[415] Because of the unique challenges around individuality and bodily ownership outlined previously: it is only at the surface that the conjoined body can be demarcated into two individuals and below it is impossible to be completely sure what 'belongs' to which twin. Grace introduces this to us as she questions:

> *how* can they reconstruct our lower halves
> so that we end up with two whole bodies?
> We share most of our
> intestines
> but Dr Derrick says this is not a problem.
> We share our privates
> but Dr Derrick says he'll give those pieces
> to Tippi and
> fix me up
> so I'll be like any other girl when he's finished.
>
> But this is a lie.
>
> In any case I don't question him
> and I never
> ask why he's decided to give the originals to Tippi.[416]

As Grace makes clear, separation surgery is ultimately a process of unfair division of unequal parts. Whilst stable conjoined twins have sufficient internal organs for continued existence, they rarely have enough organ redundancy for both to exist as independent singletons. If they are joined at the chest, for example, rather than both 'having' a functioning heart that can be allocated to each after separation, what is more common is that the twins will share a larger, or three chambered heart, which can adequately pump blood around their whole body/ies, but cannot simply be cut in half for each separately. Even in rare instances – where conjoined twins have enough internal organs to allocate

[415] Joined at the forehead, left eye area to left eye area so both are facing over the other's left shoulder.
[416] Crossan, *One,* p. 302.

to each twin – one twin will often have a more intimate nervous connection to a majority of the organs, making it impossible to make a fair division. Even where there are, for example, four kidneys, one twin may be more intricately connected to them all, making them impossible to share, and so separation surgery often also requires additional transplantation, complications, and follow-up procedures simply not necessary if they were to remain conjoined.

As an historical example of this, Dreger cites an interview with intensive care nurses that assisted in the separation of the Htut twins in 1984. Here, although presented as a complete success, the non-emergency separation surgery provided more disabling impairments than their original conjoinment, as the impairments resulting from the surgery heavily restricted their mobility. The nurse interviewed says that initially "we were struck by their normalcy" and that before the separation surgery "as nurses we were not sure what to do with [these] 'healthy' children". By contrast, afterwards they said that: "The healthy 'whole' children whom we had adopted as our own were now, seventeen hours later, separate but badly deformed. *Now* they seemed handicapped".[417] Their use of the word 'whole', meaning stable, intact, sufficient etc. is important, as the next section argues that conjoined twins adjust to their self-image as any singleton child does, and as such they understand themselves whilst conjoined to be whole. Separation surgery – whether emergency or non-emergency – destabilises this, leading to a fragmented self-image akin to a secondary mirror stage.

Wholeness & Secondary Mirror Stages

The 'separation bias' that has been discussed so far was only possible following the surgical advances that arose out of the World Wars, as the millions of soldiers and civilians were impaired by the conflict. Separation surgery, however, is an inherently problematic response to stable conjoined twins – as the high mortality rate alone attests. Furthermore, wider contemporary cultural concerns relating to 'wholeness' were in tension with this 'resolution' to the challenge to 'individuality' that conjoinment presented. This section briefly charts this rise of 'wholeness' and shows how it further problematised

[417] T. Sweeting and P. Patterson, 'Lin and Win Htut: The Conjoined Twins from Burma', *Canadian Nurse,* 80.11 (1984) 18-20, p. 18.

conjoinment. Throughout it engages with Lacanian understandings of the formation of the self, as in some of the more contemporary portrayals of conjoinment separation surgery (whether done in an emergency or not) is presented as a secondary and traumatic mirror stage.

In response to the millions of amputees and otherwise newly impaired people following the global armed conflicts, vast industries arose to supplement these fragmented bodies. Plastic surgery, prosthetics and rehabilitative services developed to conceal any challenge to the cultural norm of 'wholeness', and various scholars have documented how related anxieties surrounding masculinity and disability frequently appear together.[418] Similarly, Kinsey's dispelling of a cohesive social norm articulated (and in some cases induced) concerns relating to societal fragmentation and disenfranchisement. Through these surveys and other sociological work of the 1950s Kinsey established how common the sexual 'not-norm' was.[419] This only increased in pace with cultural movements of the Beat Generation and the 60s, as texts from this period attest to.

Accordingly, the American novel *Attachments*, set in the late 60s, shows how the dubious benefits of 'individuality' do not balance against the diminished 'wholeness' created through the separation surgery of conjoined twins Amos and Eddie. Due to ongoing pressure from the non-disabled singleton protagonist Nadine, their Doctor, and in consideration of the financial gain they stand to make from having the procedure filmed, Amos and Eddie eventually agree to non-emergency separation. Both, however, are changed by the surgery in ways that strongly imply a secondary mirror stage. The mirror stage is an important phase of typical psychodevelopment identified by Lacan. This stage is ordinarily indicative of when an infant is able to recognise their own reflection in a mirror – "up to the age of eighteen months" – and evidences at least a partial understanding of the connection between itself and this mirror image.[420] This is the first indication of a self which Lacan labels the "ideal-I",

[418] See for example, Ryan Sweet, *Prosthetic Body Parts in Nineteenth Century Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).
[419] See Cryle and Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy,* p. 343.
[420] Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: The first Complete Edition in English*, trans. by Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002) p. 76.

externally manifested and complete in its outline.[421] Such an image of ourselves is, however, an unachievable aspiration that we continuously attempt to emulate in vain. It fixates the self into "a fictional direction that will forever remain irreducible".[422] Despite our efforts, we experience ourselves as "this fragmented body", with our parts in (at least temporary) opposition, as evidenced by projection, abjection and interruptions to the mind-body connection discussed previously.[423] The intact self offered in the mirror reflection hangs over us our entire lives as an unattainable goal, as we continue to experience ourselves in pieces. As singletons are haunted by this unachievable goal of a holistic self; so too we might think of the post-surgical experience for recently separated conjoined twins.

Following the separation surgery, Amos physically recovers slowly as a result of the trauma. Because of his healthily functioning body, the medical team do not understand this, showing surprise that despite his vigour, he is still unable to walk "for a week after the surgery" and even then "he only got as far as standing at the side of the bed, then was overwhelmed by dizziness".[424] He "refuses to watch" his twin Eddie learn to walk the next day: "in the same awkward deliberate way they'd moved when he was attached, his left leg halting as his hip bumped around another hip that was no longer there".[425] As this secondary mirror stage thrusts the twins into re-evaluating their self-image(s), so too they have to re-learn fundamental motor controls. To do this only reminds Amos of his previous state of completeness, traumatically reflecting against his new fragmented, singleton existence. Whilst he does regain motor function later, he is never depicted as being able to move beyond this psychologically, and to relate to himself as a whole and complete subject from Eddie. His new-found 'individuality' is shown to have come at a cost to his wholeness. Later on we witness the twins unconsciously trying to repair their separation. Their mechanical workshop betrays this process as it is portrayed as the site through which they explore their new identities:

[421] Lacan, *Ecrits,* p. 76.
[422] Lacan, *Ecrits,* p. 76.
[423] Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 78.
[424] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 253
[425] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 253

> They seemed to be rearranging the tools to reflect their separated condition. Except they couldn't decide precisely what that reflection should be. They moved the tools and mounts so the sets were about a foot from each other, stepped back to survey the results, took everything down and rearranged the sets to be at opposite ends of the wall, decided this was too far and settled on a position somewhere between but much closer to the first. They went through similar procedures with the soldering gun and other equipment of which there was only one set, placing them first on Eddie's side, or Amos's, then eventually in between.[426]

The workshop filled with "equipment of which there was only one set" resounds with the unfair division of unequal parts that characterises separation surgery. Whilst working as one (whole yet mingled) they had sufficient tools/organs to meet their needs, as between them they would only be working one car at a time. Following separation surgery – as they cannot simply cut these tools in half – this arrangement is no longer optimal. The fact that they "couldn't decide precisely what that reflection should be" shows the difficulty they experience in adapting to their new singleton 'individuality' and resembles the difficulties that surgical teams operating on conjoined twins face in trying to craft two incomplete 'individuals' from one whole body. As they explore their new singleton identities and the spatial relationship that this has with the external world, this "land of so much space", and as they move their separate equipment closer together, then further apart, and then in-between, they are playing with the boundaries of this fundamentally demarcated yet also shared workshop.[427] As such, this is a microcosm of their existence as singletons, and a shift of emphasis from their previous experience where space was fundamentally shared, yet distinct. As the phone booth and the headphones forced conjoined twins into singleton phase-space to better control and limit their natural synergy and limit their conceptual 'leakiness', we see the after effects of separation surgery continue to complicate their spatial existence.

---

[426] Rossner, *Attachments,* pp. 295-6.

[427] This is the evocative way that Grace describes her new-found singleton experience immediately after waking up from her separation surgery in *One,* p. 455.

Long after the surgery is complete, and they have recovered from the physical trauma, Amos experiences additional psychological trauma relating to his new-found lack of 'wholeness' in the form of imagined physical vulnerability. Amos's children are desperate to cuddle him, but he is frightened that they will hurt him. When his son Phillip rushes forward for a hug, Nadine narrates that: "he reacted as though it were a fully trained Green Beret trying to castrate him instead of a very anxious seven-year-old boy".[428] The imagery here is important, as it makes clear the connection between war-trauma, 'wholeness' and separation surgery. This text is set in the late 60s, when America was immersed in the Vietnam War, and Rossner has Amos use the metaphor of a military threat to articulate his concerns of being ruptured once more. It is significant that it is a Green Beret that is imagined here, a U.S special forces unit created in 1952 which were the first forces sent by President Kennedy to South Vietnam in the early 60s. It might seem strange that Amos, an American character, associates thus, until we remember that, as argued in Marita Sturken's analysis of cultural representations of the Vietnam War, that it was largely received as "a war that 'emasculated' the United States".[429] Here the societal anxieties stemming from recent international conflict manifest as a perceived assault on American 'wholeness', as Keith Beattie in his research understands the conflict as a societal "wound".[430] Rossner extends these cultural associations, using Amos's recent separation surgery and his reference to the Vietnam War to imply a secondary mirror stage and diminished 'wholeness' as resulting from this.

Although the words are Nadine's and not Amos's, the use of "castrate" is important. When Nadine talks to Amos about this overreaction he justifies it, saying "if he loves me let him stop trying to punch holes in me".[431] This shows that his response was not (just) instinctive, but that even with hindsight he fears that his son has the power to rupture this closed wound, revealing the extent of

[428] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 275.
[429] Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997), p. 53. See also Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).
[430] Keith Beattie, 'The Healed Wound', *The Scar that Binds: American Culture and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1998) 11-57.
[431] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 275.

his anxiety over his bodily boundaries and his compromised integrity. It also parallels how his sexual desire has been entirely supressed by the separation surgery, dependant upon his whole self-image. Ahead of the surgery, Nadine dreams rich imagery that evokes both abortion and castration, showing how even for the singleton wife pushing for separation surgery, at some unconscious level she too equates the conjoinment of the men with wholeness. She describes how in her dream she yanked at their connective ligament "furiously and it came off at both ends and I stood there holding this warm bloody thing which began screaming at me. (The men were in the background bleeding to death but that didn't seem very important)".[432] In this dream, the connection between the two twins is both phallic, and personified as a 'screaming' new-born. Their separation surgery is abstractly connected by Nadine to their ability to have sex. Following this, Amos resists Nadine's sexual advances until she confronts him, and he confesses that "it makes me nervous" because "I feel as if something's gonna bust open".[433] The physical act of penetrative sex is a fundamental disturbance of both the boundaries between 'inner' and 'outer' as well as between 'self' and 'Other' akin to eating. For Amos, sex is a traumatic exposure of these newly formed boundaries following his separation surgery, and whilst it could be parsed as a new temporary 'conjoinment' it would inherently involve another 'separation' at its conclusion, and thus risks undoing the psychological healing that he has achieved so far. We see Amos's anxieties over his ability to police his own bodily surface, as he struggles to adapt from his habitual intersubjective state to one as an 'individual'. The frailty and vulnerability that he feels following separation surgery parallels the splintered sense of relating to singleton bodies in light of the mirror stage. This manifests as withdrawing from the emotional attachments of his wife and children – as evident from his fear that Philip will 'punch holes' in him – and an inability to engage in sexual activity. His self-image has become too fragile and fragmented to open up to others, and he instead builds a figurative wall around himself. His desexualisation is thus directly tied to his separation surgery, as his splintered sense of self pales in comparison to the memory of his mirror image, complete in his conjoinment.

[432] Rossner, *Attachments*, pp. 181-2.
[433] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 280.

It is significant that in his description of the mirror stage, Lacan describes the formative role that a corresponding Other ordinarily has on fulfilling the subject's sense of self. In drawing parallels with the development of animals he showed that the effect of this is to enable the process of sexual maturation. Lacan observed that:

> It is a necessary condition for the maturation of the female pigeon's gonad that the pigeon see another member of its species, regardless of its sex; this condition is so utterly sufficient that the same effect may be obtained by merely placing a mirror's reflective field near the individual.[434]

Through traumatically taking away the twins' mirror reflection in separation surgery, their self-image is disrupted and they are unable to adapt and to develop a new self-image, with effects paralleling the female pigeon here.

Rather than freeing them from their emotional attachment to each other, as Nadine had initially hoped, and to make them more emotionally dependent on her, the separation surgery instead intensifies the connection between Eddie and Amos. Early in the text, Nadine's almost first response to conjoinment was that:

> I had experienced my life until then as the opposite of their condition. There I was with an empty space beside me. How could I consider the freedom that empty space gave me when I was perpetually frightened that no one was there to keep me from falling.[435]

She was attracted to them because of their conoinment, and fetishises it, hyperfixating on their 'joint' during sex and keeping her personal file on the twins "in a lingerie box".[436] In her explanation, she makes it clear that she became obsessed about conjoinment because she associated their personal proximity with intimate emotional connection. Whilst this is not to say that

[434] Lacan, *Ecrits,* p. 77.
[435] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 83.
[436] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 98 & 19.

conjoined twins do not experience this form of relationship, Nadine's representation of her lack of close friends and family as "the opposite of their condition" romanticises conjoinment in a deeply problematic and ableist way. Through the separation surgery, Nadine at some level hopes to replace Eddie in Amos's eyes and to establish the same bond that her husband had with his twin. This does not succeed however, as the twins are, if anything, more invested in each other by the separation surgery. The jealous Nadine writes that following the surgery, when they finished being interviewed for the documentary that paid for the surgery they would:

> Come home and talk to each other, look at each other, fuck each other with their eyes. That was what they were doing, as a matter of fact. If I ever saw two people fucking each other with their eyes it was Amos and Eddie.[437]

As the twins respond to the trauma of the separation surgery and resulting secondary mirror stage they attempt to bridge their separation, re-imagine their conjoinment, and re-establish their joint, complete, and conjoined self-image.

Whilst Eddie initially adapted to his new singleton identity more naturally than Amos, he also faces sexual problems following the separation surgery. Nadine confesses their sexual issues to Dianne who in turn says that '"He barely touches me and he doesn't want to be touched" she said. "They're downstairs talking. Then he comes to bed and he gets an erection and he...uses me for a while...then he comes. Aside from that he doesn't touch me or kiss me"'.[438] Whilst Eddie still has sex with his wife Dianne, it is clear that she does not find it satisfactory, and that his sexual desire is only triggered by when he is 'downstairs talking' to Amos. Both twins therefore attach deep sexual significance to their being together, as this helps them forget their separate individual identities, and to remember their conjoined and complete identity, temporarily healing the psychological trauma of the separation surgery and the secondary mirror stage.

[437] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 288.
[438] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 283.

Such psychological healing is short-lived, however, and Amos's fierce reaction to Nadine's proposed solution to their sexual problems is important. In an attempt to coax Amos back into bed, Nadine suggests that they "get into bed with Dianne and Eddie. Like in the old days...to have sex, all of us together".[439] Amos explodes at this suggestion as:

> In one motion he'd pushed me away, turned on his side and sat up in bed.
> "You crazy?" He was furious, the first time he'd been even a little angry with me in all the months since the surgery.[440]

Despite the impact that separation surgery has on each singleton twin's ability to have sex, Amos is unable to accept this reconciliatory suggestion. Even though his separation from Eddie has meant that his self-image has become too fragmented to enjoy sex with his wife, and even though Eddie is also unable to get an erection unless he has been talking with Amos immediately prior, Amos is unable to consider this a solution. His secondary mirror stage is shown to leave him eternally fragmented, and through her suggestion that they all "get into bed together", even Nadine recognises that the surgery was a mistake, and everything was better when the twins were 'whole.'

As was previously argued for pregnancy in *The Girls,* or for marriage in this text (see above for both), separation surgery is presented as the ultimate means of resolving the problematic challenges that conjoinment presents to both singleton 'privacy' and 'individuality'. The need for such a 'solution' is criticised within critical disability studies, however, and the high death toll and disabling nature of such an intervention argues against such a practice. Nonetheless, the example of the Attard twins explored previously, and the high rate of stable conjoined twins that refuse to be surgically separated to the present day for social/cosmetic reasons, show that these concerns continue to have lasting power. It is only by the threat to 'wholeness' that such practice was reduced, as conjoinment was shown to place concerns related to the 'individual' in opposition to that of 'wholeness', and separation surgery addressed only the

[439] Rossner, *Attachments* p. 290.
[440] Rossner, *Attachments* p. 290.

former of these. To resolve this separation surgery needed to be either replaced or augmented in such a way as to conceptually demarcate and formalise the inter-mingled subjectivity of conjoinment; to metaphorically draw a distinction between the two connected persons and transform a pair of conjoined twins into two (superficially) connected individuals. I term this practice 'mapping', and it is the subject of the final subsection of this chapter.

Mapping the Boundary

This fourth and final section interrogates this practice of charting (physically or abstractly) the connection between conjoined twins, redrawing their outlines, reimagining them as connected only at the surface with distinct viscera and re-repressing the problematic engagement with singleton understandings of 'individuality'. This praxis attempts to conceptually separate conjoined twins and disentangle the two mingled selves, as an example of what Arthur Frank calls a "restitution narrative".[441] This form of presentation reimagines the boundary between conjoined twins as fixed and impenetrable, as opposed to the dynamic and permeable reality, and offers a conceptual and cartographic version of the same 'resolution' offered by separation surgery but without impacting on the 'wholeness' of those involved. It is an attempt to 'unpick' the Gordian knot of conjoinment, rather than to surgically separate it.

The term 'map' is deliberately chosen and relates to the complexity connecting one twin to another. Additionally, Deeley points to the "longstanding relationship between monstrous bodies and geographical boundaries in the Western imaginary", citing Wright's summary of the mediaeval European practice of using 'monstrous' figures such as conjoined twins to signify "'unknown' regions of the world" and "spaces of otherness".[442] In the 1977 novel *The Brothers of The Head*, the titular pun is explained in reference to both the geographical 'Head' – where the conjoined twins are from – and their 'dormant' third head. In describing this aptly named piece of Norfolk coast the narrator tells us that:

[441] Arthur Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 75.
[442] Deeley, *Contested Subjects*, p. 233.

> The bleakest point along this stretch of coast is arguably L'Estrange Head, a natural feature lying between the summer resorts of Hunstanton and Sheringham. It is neither a true headland nor a true island. To determine its geographical status under law, one would have to decide whether its baffling system of marshes, creeks, and rivulets link it with or divide it from the mainland.[443]

Here the "baffling system of marshes, creeks, and rivulets" that "link[s] it with or divide[s] it from the mainland" is a fitting metaphor for the connection between the two twins, as the complex series of interconnected and mingled physical systems are simultaneously sites of connection and division.

Similarly, in *The Girls* when Rose describes the road beside the river she explicitly connects this to her conjoinment, saying that "We drove the road along the river, the one that curves and loops and seems to flow back into itself, the way I do my sister, and life does death".[444] Building on the watery imagery of *Brothers of the Head*, the author Lansens uses the riverbank to evoke an understanding of the physical connection between twins as both complex and dynamic, as where the river meets the land is simultaneously both land and water. All 'mapping' – geographical or medical – is a compromise, as it is a simplistic representation of a much more complex (maybe even infinitely fractal) reality. Just as the coast line gets longer with the greater accuracy of the tools used to measure it, so do the contours between conjoined humans. After all, any map that was entirely accurate (again, geographical or medical) – that is, drawn with a scale of 1:1 – would be absolutely pointless: it would be just as inscrutable, complex and unwieldy as its subject. Alida Metcalf agrees, stating that "Maps structure as they document; they shape as they present", and thus whilst a map with a 1:1 scale may show things that otherwise were not visible, any attempt to neutrally map and to draw an artificial partition between conjoined twins is thus doomed to failure as a compromise between accuracy and usefulness.[445] It is attempted in these texts nonetheless, as a means of negating the troubling aspects of conjoined 'individuality'.

---

[443] Aldiss, *Brothers of the Head* p. 15.
[444] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 250.
[445] Alida Metcalf, *Mapping an Atlantic World Circa 1500* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020), p. 2.

A common means by which conjoined twins are conceptually demarcated (or 'mapped') is illuminated through Leslie Fiedler's observation in his investigation into the protomythic functions of anomalous bodies in literature, *Freaks: Myths and Legends of the Secret Self*; conjoined twins are often portrayed as in competition with each other as sworn enemies. This is particularly apparent in *Brothers of The Head*, where the twins are constantly physically fighting each other (to the eventual death), or the constantly warring conjoined twins in Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1893) whose "natures differ a good deal from each other and our tastes also".[446] It is also found in all the other texts examined in the previous section, such as when Rose and Ruby in *The Girls* compete with each other over a potential boyfriend, or in *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins* where the (singleton) protagonists that are obsessed with conjoined twins are described as polar opposites that abduct each other (on separate occasions). Fiedler connects this common form of representation of conjoinment to the way it "challenge[s] our individuality, along with the distinction between self and other upon which that individuality depends".[447] I build on this insight by Fiedler to argue that the challenge that conjoinment is seen to present is evaded through this presentation of conjoined twins as contrasting, warring entities, and that this is a form of 'mapping' the connection between them. Presenting twins in opposition facilitates the ability of the reader to mentally partition them, to metaphorically separate them, to imagine them as separate and un-mingled selves, and to partially resolve anxieties relating to 'the individual' evoked through imagining them as melded individuals.

Similarly, conjoined twins are often shown as holding radically different – if mutually supportive – personality traits. This difference facilitates our demarcation of them as readers into separate 'individuals', superimposing a singleton ontology on top of their conjoined bodies as a means of minimising the disruption they are seen to present to the concept of the 'individual'. In *The Secret History of Las Vegas*, for example, the twins are described as polar opposites, with full and contrasting personalities, and each bringing

[446] Twain *Those Extraordinary Twins*, p. 137.
[447] Leslie Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1981), p. 203.

complimentary attributes to their partnership. 'Fire' is repeatedly and explicitly referred to as a mere "appendage" of 'Water'.[448] He is uncoordinated in his actions and unable to even digest food himself. Water, in contrast, is described as "six feet" with a "muscular, lean body and a face so perfectly proportioned that he seemed like a cruel joke at Fire's expense".[449] The twins are thus presented as mutually supportive, with their radical differences functioning as a means of keeping the mingled selves separate.

'Mapping' plays a far more prominent role in *The Secret History of Las Vegas*, however, as the overarching plot literally revolves around plotting the physical outlines of the conjoined twins through medical imaging technology. For almost the entire length of the text the (innocent) conjoined twins are held in custody without representation following the scene at the lake with Ranger Green that was presented at the start of this chapter. The authorities suspect early into this text that the twins are more mingled than other conjoined twins, observing that "Some experts say twins can swap consciousness" (this is, of course, untrue).[450] The twins, however, are too big to fit into a regular MRI scanner to investigate this and to concretely 'map' their physiological connection, and the main source of dramatic tension is whether the authorities will have to release them without charge before they can get a larger model from the zoo delivered to the facility that the twins are being held at. This is managed just in time, where the MRI reveals that "on the little one there was no brain activity showing up. He appeared brain dead".[451] Whilst this does not reflect conjoined biology, this narratorial structure reveals the extent to which the medical imaging technology is used to resolve the twins' challenge related to the 'individual' by 'mapping' the conjoined connections (or lack thereof). This medicalised 'mapping' is an extension of what Corinna Wagner sees as underpinning much of post-Enlightenment science: that which "seeks to increase human well-being and to secure the social order by rendering the body a more transparent entity".[452] Uniting post-enlightenment science, from physiognomy to contemporary neuroscience, there is a common striving for

[448] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 13.
[449] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 13.
[450] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 114.
[451] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 200.
[452] Corinna Wagner, 'The Dream of a Transparent Body: Identity, Science and the Gothic Novel', *Gothic Studies,* 14.1 (2012), 74-92, p. 75.

what Richard Grey labels a “penetrating interior vision that would infallibly reveal the psychological constitution of any human being”.[453] Whether it is in reference to their physiological health or moral character, the human frame is believed to be an inherent signifer of the individual being examined. Here, the medical gaze draws on the ability of the MRI to render transparent the connections (or lack of) between body parts, and to collapse the challenges that Fire and Water presented to the ‘individual’ without having to resort to separation surgery. The seemingly disruptive mingled individuals are medically ‘mapped’ and revealed to be one discrete individual all along, merely pretending to be problematic.

As the invoking of physiognomy makes clear, however, the practice of ‘mapping’ existed long before MRI or X-ray machines – or even VR technology – could claim to offer an ‘objective’ map of the connection between conjoined twins.[454] Before this, they were subjected to a wide variety of physiological experiments that similarly aimed to resolve these challenges to the ‘individual’ by ‘mapping’ the physical connection between them. For example, as recorded by various biographers, the Bunker twins participated in a wide variety of tests designed to establish the limits of their shared visceral processes, sensation and control. These experiments ‘mapped’ which were experienced by only one, and which by both. Sometimes these experiments were conducted as part of their routine health checks, without the twins being informed beforehand. When in Britain, for example, Doctor Bolton recorded the following experiment he conducted upon them:

> It having occurred to me that the odour given by asparagus to the urine would be a test of the extent of the circulation of the blood through both the twins, on the 22nd of March I gave that vegetable to Chang with his dinner, not allowing any to be given to his brother. On examining their urine four hours after this meal, that of Chang had distinctly the peculiar asparagus smell, but the urine of his brother was not influenced by it. The next day this experiment was reversed, and therefore with reversed

[453] Richard Gray, *About Face: German Physiognomical Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz*, (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2004), p. xvii.
[454] Shiona McCallum, ‘Conjoined Twins Separated with the Help of Virtual Reality’, *BBC News,* 1 August 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-62378452> [Accessed 13/8/22].

> results. These trials sufficiently prove a fact which was otherwise apparent – that the sanguineous communication between the united twins is very limited.[455]

Mapping the same connection but from the other end of the twins, Wallace and Wallace also record an experiment by Dr. Roget. Drawing on the knowledge that a combination of both silver and zinc will taste sour:

> An aide placed a silver teaspoon on Eng's tongue and a disc of zinc on Chang's tongue to learn their reactions. When the metals were brought into contact, both brothers cried out, "Sour, sour!" Nevertheless, Dr. Roget urged that the experiment be continued, reversing the metals, this time placing the zinc on Eng's tongue and the teaspoon on Chang's tongue. Again both twins protested the sour taste.[456]

This desire to map the hidden connection between the twins was not limited to Doctors, however. Biographers of the Bunker twins have drawn on archived letters published in British and American newspapers evidencing a similar fascination from the general public. One such point of contention focused on the Bunker twins' singular navel. A letter printed in *The Times* is representative of this public engagement:

> Much stress has been laid on their having but one navel. Now this fact alone, in my opinion, decides what might or might not be done, and proves or disproves everything that is interesting on this subject. There is but little doubt (if there are two navels) that there was a double placenta, with one cord and two sets of vessels – one set emerging to one child, and one to the other. Should this have been the fact, it proves them to be two distinct individuals, in no way differing from twins without a union. Should there have been but one placenta and one set of vessels entering the umbilicus, it then proves, on the contrary, that they are inseparable.[457]

---

[455] Quoted in Wallace and Wallace, *The Two,* p. 86.
[456] Quoted in Wallace and Wallace, *The Two,* p. 87.
[457] Quoted in Wallace and Wallace, *The Two,* p. 83.

This interest in 'mapping' the connection between the twins across medical and more accessible discourse attests to the general importance of resolving the concerns relating to the 'individual' that have been discussed so far. The twins could not be safely surgically separated – as many doctors reluctantly concluded – because it was unknown what the connecting tissue between them contained. Whilst it was possible that the fleshy band at their chest was only skin and ligament, it was (correctly) feared that it contained much more crucial viscera, and to cut into this band would harmfully expose the body cavity/ies and risk the death of both. Separation surgery would have resolved all concerns relating to the 'individual', revealing conclusively whether or not the twins shared physiological processes and irreversibly removing this state. Ultimately, however, these experiments prevented and replaced separation surgery, as they suggested conditions that made separation surgery a non-viable option. These experiments are all attempts to 'map' the connection between the twins, and to reveal the contours and the substance of the connection between them. That this was the root desire of these experiments is best demonstrated through the work of Dr. Simpson, who in a personal letter to his colleague wrote:

> You are well aware that various attempts have been made of late years, by electric and other strong lights, to make portions of the body more or less translucent. By placing a powerful light behind the connecting band in Eng and Chang, I tried to make its thinner portions transparent, with a view of possibly tracing its contents better than by touch; but I failed entirely in getting any advantage from this mode of examination.[458]

As the challenges that the twins presented could not be resolved through surgical separation, this experimental 'mapping' provided a substitute 'resolution' that became extremely popular. 'Mapping' the limits between the processes of one twin and another provided a vague outline of where one twin began and the other ended, and the tantalising semblance of a fixed border between them, rather than the threatening mingled self. This kind of

[458] Quoted in Wallace and Wallace, *The Two,* p. 267.

engagement then, acted as a metaphorical separation surgery, and allowed the public and doctors alike to conceptually tease the twins apart to some extent.

Such experimentation became extremely popular. It became routinely incorporated into the acts of conjoined twins exhibited in the nineteenth century, often involving audience participation. Millie-Christine McKoy established on the bill advertising their grand opening after the Emancipation Proclamation freed them from slavery that there would be "experimenting with the twins by a committee selected from the audience".[459] Professor Lee was part of one such committee, and described in a personal letter "how he had demonstrated that the girls shared sensation below the union" and how one of them "could tell, for example, how many times I pinched her sister".[460]

This public fascination with the connection between conjoined twins and desire to 'map' it is not something that disappeared with the nineteenth-century Freak Show. In a 2012 interview, as part of their 8 episode reality TV show *Abi & Britney*, for example, the titular conjoined twins provide an interesting example of this. When the interviewer asks "What happens when you get cold?" and "what about if one you feels unwell?" the twins describe a line of sensation running down them internally:

> **[Interviewer]** What happens when you get cold?
> **[Abi]** We're always different and like, even on our stomach, if, like, we're in a swimsuit or whatever, we can, like, if you touch my stomach and I can be a totally different temperature to what Britney would be, it's so weird. And our hands
> **[Britney]** Sometimes
> **[Abi]** Not right now, but a lot of times our hands are different temperatures, so I get super hot way faster, and there's a distinct red line all the way down and I'm like legitimately like my legs are sweating, like everything, like it's awful, and she's fine.
> **[Britney]** Is that weird?

[459] Quoted in Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made*, p. 112.
[460] Quoted in Martell, *Fearful and Wonderfully Made,* p. 112.

> **[Interviewer]** What about if one of you feels unwell?
> **[Abi]** If my stomach hurts it hurts right here **[indicating Britney's side of their stomach]**, and I can't feel this, like, I can't feel anything, but my stomach hurts right there and Britney's stomach hurts right here **[indicating Abi's side of their stomach]** and she can't feel that, because I can only feel my right side
> **[Britney]** and I can only feel my left side
> **[Abi]** but when we have stomach aches, it hurts on the opposite side
> **[both]** isn't that weird?[461]

This 'distinct red line' re-presents the twins as two connected, but nonetheless discrete 'individuals,' clearly demarcating the physiological processes between them, and separating out their mingled selves. *Brothers Of The Head* narrates this process dynamically, as through Tom's dreams when the 'dormant' third head begins to 'wake up' and slowly take over the motor controls of Barry's 'part' of the conjoined body.[462] Whilst this is a phenomenon that has never been documented historically, these passages nevertheless present the changing contours of bodily ownership as (literally) nightmarish changes, reiterating the safety and importance of well-defined and stably 'mapped' physiology. The conclusion of this text involves the conjoined Tom learning to operate the limbs previously exclusively controlled by his twin Barry, who is in a permanent coma. Tom gradually loses his sense of self during the invasion of the third head, and the text ends when Tom and the third head (using 'Barry's' limbs) fight to the death. This process of awakening and 'possession' happens gradually, and as the head becomes more responsive, Tom is harder to awaken and reports disturbing dreams.[463] These dreams evoke a deep sense of horror at the fluctuating sense of self and bodily control as the 'mapped' connections between the twins spreads and changes rapidly. This depiction by a singleton author of an impossible situation nonetheless presents conjoinment (albeit a fantastical conjoinment) as a form of body-horror. In so doing, it reinforces singleton readers' inability to think outside their own subjectivity, and to

[461] 'Abby and Brittany Hensel: Conjoined Twins - Quick Q&A', *Naked Stories* <https://youtu.be/1RiFbEA3aOw> [accessed 16/4/21].
[462] Aldiss, *Brothers of the Head,* p. 51.
[463] Aldiss, *Brothers of the Head,* p. 109.

understand anything beyond this framework (such as conjoinment) as both fearsome, and as necessarily vulnerable to a loss of individuality.

In his description of the mirror stage, Lacan writes that it is "regularly manifested in dreams" when there has been a voiced or unvoiced "disintegration of the individual", and Tom's dreams as he becomes gradually absorbed by the emerging 'third head' all correspond to this.[464] Aldiss presents these dreams episodically via Tom's singleton sister, who discusses his dreams with him every morning and notes his accompanying physical deterioration. The author thus illustrates this psychological physiological process in a manner that evokes psychoanalytical therapy sessions. When Tom describes his last dream, for example, he says that he is one of a group of "robots, things of metal, without consciousness" and the night before, he dreams that the whole world becomes made out of sand and that "my limbs, my body, were composed of sand too. They began to crack and break […] I scarcely dared wake up in case the dream proved to be real".[465] In the first dream, he tells his sister that "I was not myself but a horse, or some other four-footed animal. I'm not sure what".[466] All of these dreams are examples of Lacan's understanding of how the mirror stage appears in dreams, manifesting as "disconnected limbs or of organs exoscopically represented".[467] The transformations, which Tom is only able to outline and not specify, speaks to the ambiguity arising from the changing contours that were previously 'mapped' between him and Barry, but which are now being invaded by the third head. At times he explains he was "trying to get away from someone I hated" but that person "rode upon my back in a great raised saddle, draped with rugs and strings of jewels. With a black whip, he lashed me on" connecting back to his earlier dream of himself as a "conjoined, four-footed animal".[468] Similarly, when he dreamt he was a robot, he explains that terrifyingly, he and all the other robots were "governed by a great distant machine" and with "no control over myself. I was forced to march into that destructive cloak of night".[469] As a result of being attached to the dormant head

[464] Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 78.
[465] Aldiss, *Brothers of the Head,* pp. 100-2.
[466] Aldiss, *Brothers of the Head,* p. 92.
[467] Lacan, *Ecrits,* p. 78.
[468] Aldiss, *Brothers of the Head,* p. 92.
[469] Aldiss, *Brothers of the Head,* p. 102.

which is slowly taking control over him, Tom's dreams clearly articulate the singleton fears surrounding the 'individual' explored so far, manifesting as the vulnerability of having your entire self subject to the malign influence of another.

Whilst in *Attachments* and *The Girls* there were evocative descriptions of the trauma of separation surgery, Tom's dreams are instead best understood as representing preparation for the procedure. In separation surgery, it is routine to use skin expanders ahead of the practice. In *One,* the twins describe skin expanders as "small balloons filled with saline – under our skin to stretch it out so we will have enough to cover the wounds of separation when the time comes".[470] These saline balloons take the existing skin boundary between twins and gradually expand it, thickening it and providing a neutral and uncontested site to penetrate. Following on from the metaphor of separation surgery as artificially 'mapping' a geographical boundary with a ruler across an atlas, this preparation creates a demilitarised no-man's-land between the twins, a neutral border-zone belonging to neither twin. However, this involves the creation of an unknown third territory between the twins. As a gap is stretched between the twins, and as a space is created inside and between both of them, they both lose control and sensation from it. The introduction of saline balloons can be felt but not experienced, affecting both bodies as the development of the foetus affected both Rose and Ruby in *The Girls* when only Rose was pregnant. Tom's dreaming experience, of a third unknown presence expanding within him and taking control of his body, results in his final self-evisceration and improvised separation surgery that kills all three. As such it is a final, if deeply disturbing, 'resolution' to the challenges that conjoinment presents to 'individuality'.

The death of Tom as a consequence of this keenly illustrates anxieties that are bound up in the shared subjectivity of conjoinment in these texts. As stated previously, Couser makes it clear that unless the twins become separated within hours, the death of one twin is "a death sentence" for the other, even when there are no shared essential organs.[471] This is used as (an extreme) example as to the importance of clearly 'mapping' the connection between conjoined twins, as a lack of a hard and impermeable boundary is

[470] Crossan, *One,* p. 407.
[471] Couser, *Signifying Bodies,* p. 56.

what facilitates the spread of mortality from one twin to the other. If the twins share a vascular system, then the blood that one twin pumps into the other is no longer returned to the remaining twin.[472] Worse, the blood is obstructed by the solidifying residue trapped within the veins of the dead twin, and with each heartbeat the remaining twin slowly bleeds to death. Even if there is no shared vascular system, twins will have to be separated within hours of one passing to avoid severe infection spreading across their joint. When the dead twin starts to decompose, the lack of a hard physical boundary means that this spreads unchecked to the remaining twin. The remaining twin starts to rot from the inside out, by the same forces that are putrefying the corpse of their dead counterpart.

This terrifying prospect has been richly imagined by poetry focusing on conjoinment, evoking anxieties about the conjoined challenge to 'individuality'. Lee-Hamilton, in his (1894) short poem about Chang and Eng Bunker, refers to the terrifying moment where Chang woke to find the corpse of Eng beside him as: "ten times woe to the surviving Mind" in recognition of how much worse it must be for the twin that temporarily survives.[473] In this moment, Lee-Hamilton changes how the connection between the twins, and the site of their intersubjectivity is presented, from that of a friend with whom Chang is tethered "with Fate's strong thread"[474], to a "corpse" that he was "bound to".[475] 'Tethered' suggests safety and security, as you would tether a ship to a wharf, whilst 'bound' instead implies a lack of consent and a frantic desire to escape. The invocation of fate in the former description suggests an acceptance of the situation, and an appreciation that the twins are accustomed to their situation. In the latter description, however, there is none of this composure and rationalism, just a desperate sense of urgency. The singleton author, in their imagining of this moment, cannot see beyond their own perspective and approaches conjoinment through a lens of body horror. The shared subjectivity of conjoinment is presented as an additionally fallible body which both twins are dependent on and inextricably connected to. If something goes wrong with the

[472] For clarity in this brief discussion I distinguish between the 'remaining' twin, or the one that is alive but attached to the corpse of their twin and the 'dead' twin'.
[473] Eugene Lee-Hamilton, 'Siamese Twins', *A Body of Work: An Anthology of Poetry and Medicine,* ed. by Corinna Wagner and Andy Brown (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 403.
[474] Lee-Hamilton, 'Siamese Twins', p. 403.
[475] Lee-Hamilton, 'Siamese Twins', p. 403.

body of either twin, then the other will suffer the same fate. In this sense, the singleton understanding of conjoinment is informed by Drew Leder's concept of the "dys-appearing body".[476] Here, the healthy body is distinguished from one that is in sickness or in pain by its conspicuous absence: the body only makes itself known when there is something wrong with it/you. On the other hand, a healthy person may go quite some time without being aware of the body that they are part of. Under this singleton imagining of conjoinment then, conjoined twins engage with each other as an additional sick body: one that is constantly thematised.

Not only is the connection between conjoined twins thus understood as an extra source of fallibility, but even when healthy and stable it is shown as harmful. A porous physical connection between twins is an embodiment of the conceptually 'leaky' singleton fears of conjoinment discussed in the chapter on privacy. Whilst the singleton characters/authors 'map' out the connection between conjoined ones, disruptions to the reading of conjoinment as a purely superficial connection are presented in terms of sites of pollution, or weaknesses in their defences. This is most apparent when the twins discuss ingesting substances that have a physical effect on each other, such as coffee and cigarettes. In *One* Grace relates that whilst:

> I am a peppermint tea sort of person.
> Tippi drinks coffee the colour of coal.
> She guzzles down around five mugs a day
> —not that I get a say—
> as the caffeine careens around her body
> and has her buzzing like a blender
> —and me, too
> these days.[477]

Here the somatic response that the twins experience from drinking coffee moves from one to the other. It is thus simultaneously used as an authorial means of 'mapping' the connection between the twins – functioning similarly to

[476] Leder, *The Absent Body,* pp. 66-99.
[477] Crossan, *One,* p. 96.

the asparagus, or zinc and silver experiments, like tracing intersecting drains through the use of coloured dye – whilst also highlighting the negative effect that this has on Grace. In this way, it proves and highlights the physical porosity of the conjoined twins, and hence makes visible the challenge that they provide to singleton 'individuality' whilst also serving to salve these concerns by 'mapping' these leaks.

These depictions of the shared consumptive processes of conjoinment are often explicitly coded as inherently harmful for the conjoined twins, reinforcing these negative associations as a form of what Mitchell and Synder refer to as "narrative prosthesis".[478] Whilst the fictional twins in Twain's *Those Extraordinary Twins* are praised for their enmeshed digestive system, as the one becomes: "A well brother to take the medicine for his poor sick brother",[479] Rose in *The Girls* confirms that "I've had some terrible side effects from Ruby's medication".[480] These passive acts are enhanced through descriptions of one twin deliberately and actively polluting the other through their own consumption. In Barbara Gowdy's short story involving conjoined protagonists, "The Two-Headed Man", one of the fictional conjoined twins (Simon) reports that "Everything I eat or drink, [his twin 'Samuel'] siphons off. I used to have the old lady spike my coffee. It was hilarious. I'm guzzling gin and coffee, feeling nothing except maybe a nice sweet shimmer, and Samuel's sliding off a chair".[481] The shared consumption here is not a contamination arising from negligence, but instead is a deliberate act of drugging, as we can see from the use of the word 'spike'. The drugged twin Samuel later lists "Drinking in excess, damaging my liver" as a leading grievance against his twin, showing that he is fully aware of these actions, but unable to resist them.[482] This contrasts with the self-serving 'guzzling' of the gin, as Simon wilfully ignores the health implications on his twin, and dismisses the gravity of the situation as 'hilarious'. Samuel asserts his claim to the organ ('my liver') whilst at the same time admitting to a lack of agency over his bodily affairs, evoking vulnerability.

---

[478] David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).
[479] Twain, *Those Extraordinary Twins,* p. 140.
[480] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 102.
[481] Barbara Gowdy, 'The Two-Headed Man', *We Seldom Look on Love* (London: Flamingo, 1992) 101-15, p. 103.
[482] Gowdy, 'The Two-Headed Man', p. 105

Similar vulnerability is at the root of the humour in Mark Twain's repeated New Year's Eve performances.[483] He reportedly dressed up with a friend as a pair of conjoined twins, and at midnight gave a speech celebrating the temperance of the company, whilst his 'twin' pretended to discreetly drink heavily, and Twain pretended to demonstrate the effects, slurring his words and collapsing at the conclusion.

Connecting back to the earlier interrogation of the 'parasite' trope, this means of exploring and representing the points by which the twins mingle associates the shared subjectivity of conjoinment with unwelcome dependence. As their porous connection allows for harmful substances to be shared from one twin to the other, in *One* the twins show how their individual decisions directly affect the health of each other. When Tippi decides to smoke, for example, Grace relates that:

> Yasmeen blows a mouthful of smoke into the sky
> then passes me her cigarette.
>
> I shake my head but before I can object,
> Tippi has the smouldering cancer-stick
> between two fingers and is
> inhaling great gulps of tobacco and tar.
>
> She stops
> and coughs
> so hard I think she might throw up.
>
> Yasmeen laughs.
> Jon scratches his head.
> And I gently pat my sister
> on the back
> when what I really want to do is

[483] One such party is documented in J David Smith, *Psychological Profiles of Conjoined Twins: Heredity, Environment, and Identity* (Praeger: New York, 1988) pp. 89-90.

let her choke.[484]

Tippi here ignores Grace's indication that she doesn't want to ingest the cigarette smoke and consents for them both. Grace is clearly concerned by the health implications of smoking, and this is conceptually layered onto their conjoined body. In the recognition that "what I really want to do is / let her choke" Grace acknowledges that she would like to let Tippi make her own decisions, but cannot, as they are directly connected to her own physical health.

Beyond pregnancy, few readers will have been in such a position literally – where their own consumption directly affects the health of another – but many of us will nonetheless be able to understand this indirectly through the example of passive smoking, or as the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to adapt our social behaviour to avoid negatively impacting on the health of others. In this text, however, this reflection continues to develop associations between the intersubjectivity of conjoinment and morbidity, as it is the shared vascular system which is shown to be the threat to Grace. It is the facilitation of the spread of carcinogens that is focused upon instead of the carcinogens themselves. Later, the twins argue about Tippi's smoking as Grace narrates that:

'I think we should have discussed it,' I say,
not needing to remind her
that
        this shoddy body
        never split like it should
        and that if she dies,
        so do I.

'Sorry,' she says.
        'So can I smoke?'

I turn my head,
        curl away from her

[484] Crossan, *One,* pp. 95-6.

as best I can.

It isn't really a question.[485]

The line breaks and additional indentation makes clear that "this shoddy body" section is the implied and unvoiced subtext. Tippi is upset because, for her, conjoinment is a limit to her immediate personal agency: she is being made to feel guilty because – due to their physical connection – her actions directly affect another. On the other hand, Grace is upset with Tippi because, for her, conjoinment is a source of vulnerability. She curls away from Tippi "as best I can", trying to put as much distance between them both as possible, implicitly reiterating the impossibility of escaping each other, or their conjoinment, as whilst the inhaled smoke 'curls' through them both, so does their physical connection. Grace reiterates what she does not need to remind Tippi, that "if she dies / so do I" emphasising their mutual dependence and fragility.

In this portrayal of 'mapping' the connection between the twins, then, Crossan activates the concerns that may justify such a process, explicitly showing how conjoinment facilitates the transmission of carcinogens between them. This is simultaneously used to emphasise the connection between the twins, and the impossibility of installing a neat, conceptual boundary 'between' them.

The myth of the "individual", then, is a formative concept for singletons that is intimately bound up in the previously examined concerns related to 'normalcy' and 'privacy'. The perceived challenges that conjoinment presents to this prompts abjection and projection. Through conjoinment, the singleton is forced into confronting the repressed knowledge of their own lack of 'individuality': either through the time spent in the womb, or in ongoing existence in a material and intercorporeal world. Thus, attempts to constrain and to limit the disruption that conjoinment causes to the singleton understanding of 'individuality' is really an automatic response to a perceived lack of 'individuality' on a personal level, and the feared loss of agency that this entails, as will be discussed more fully in the subsequent chapter.

[485] Crossan, *One,* p. 108.

As shown earlier, the instinctive singleton response to the challenges that conjoinment provided to ‘privacy’ was to force the twins into singleton phase-space and to demarcate the space between them. So too, the instinctive defence to these challenges to singleton ‘individuality’ is to attempt to surgically separate the twins involved, ‘creating’ two individuals out of one conjoined body. This ‘separation bias’ was criticised at both a theoretical and a pragmatic level, but the most successful obstacle to non-emergency separation surgery has been found to come during the period 1930-70, when cultural anxieties related to ‘wholeness’ eclipsed that of ‘individuality’. As separation surgery is an inherently unfair division of insufficient parts, it always disrupts ‘wholeness’ and thus an alternative defence to the challenge to ‘individuality’ was required. This was shown to be the process I term ‘mapping.’ In this the porous and dynamic physical boundary between conjoined twins is traced and reimagined as fixed and impermeable through physical experiments, the use of medical imaging, and an understanding of the involved twins as in competition with each other.

Overall, presenting conjoined twins as only superficially connected functions to minimise any disruption to singleton ‘individuality’. Any remaining instances of permeability are then re-presented as a source of pollution and weakness for the twins specifically, though still generally threatening for singleton observers.

Chapter 4 – 1970-Present: Agency, Physical Objects, & Vulnerability

Drawing on these problematic 'resolutions' to the disruptions that singletons see conjoined twins as posing, this chapter investigates the presentations of conjoined twins through the lens of personal agency from 1970 up to the present day. This time was crucial for the development of the disability rights movement in the UK and the US, as the new social model of disability arose. Importantly, this presented people with impairments as holding dramatically different levels of personal agency compared to the previously dominant medical model. This new understanding was – to an extent – culturally absorbed, and people with impairments took a new prominence in various ways in different media.

By 'personal agency' I refer to the control someone has over their body: the ability to do what they want, when they want. This is limited by factors both internal and external to ourselves; for example, whether I become imprisoned by forces external to myself or hospitalised due to circumstances within my body, I will experience a decrease in personal agency. Impairment is thus widely assumed to automatically result in a lesser form of personal agency, much to the consternation of people with impairments. Associations between impairment and reduced agency achieved prominence with the Victorian capitalist ableism discussed in the previous chapter, where the ability 'to work' (earn a living) was largely dependent on and conceptually blended with a 'working' body (i.e one that was able to perform strictly regulated specific repetitive movements). Conjoinment extends this even further, as in an extension of the 'mapping' discussion of the previous chapter this impairment is parsed as two competing wills that are attached to each other. In the words of Twain's fictional conjoined twin Angelo in *Those Extraordinary Twins*: "I would start one way, Luigi would start another, at the same moment – the result would be a standstill".[486] Conjoinment is thus represented as mutual disempowerment. As seen previously, just as the constant proximity of conjoinment is assumed to be incompatible with a singleton's understanding of 'privacy', the resistance to the feared 'porosity' of conjoinment is presented as two demarcated 'individuals'

[486] Twain, *Those Extraordinary Twins,* p. 147.

only connected at the surface. This imposed ontology is then imagined as a continuous experience of getting in each other's way and an undermining of each other's personal agency.

Until relatively recently, associations between impairment and disempowerment largely went unchallenged; disabled people were understood to be dependent on others to survive in society. Following the return of vast numbers of disabled veterans following the two World Wars, however, attitudes began to shift, and the resulting technological advancements and government support programs facilitated a greater sense of self-sufficiency for disabled people. In 1976 the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) published the cornerstone pamphlet *Fundamental Principles of Disability,* out of which developed the social model of disability: a radically new understanding of disability and its relationship with both impairment and society. This dramatically changed the amount, and the type, of personal agency that disabled people were understood to have.[487]

As outlined in the thesis introduction, this new social model of disability fundamentally understood disability to be socially constructed, and not as a 'problem' to be 'resolved' through surgery. 'Disability' thus became contrasted with 'impairment'. Waldschmidt's cultural modification to the social model crucially states that the two terms "need to be distinguished and do not have a causal relation" as the latter refers to bodily and mental states whilst the former refers to an individual's ability to function in society.[488] In this sense, impairment is not understood to cause disability, and instead it is recognised that disability is created by a combination of both the systematic ableist oppression of the built environment and impairment. A person with visual impairments may be considered disabled under the medical model, whilst the social model resists this reading, instead pointing towards the disabling structure of society and the inadequate provision of (for example) tactile or audible pedestrian crossings. The social model understands the lack of facilities to be the primary obstacle to that individual's engagement with society, and thus it is this that has disabled

[487] See Tom Shakespeare, and Nicholas Watson, 'The Social Model of Disability: An Outdated Ideology?', *Research in Social Science and Disability,* Vol. 2 (2002) 9-28.
[488] Waldschmidt, 'Disability Goes Cultural', p. 20.

them.[489] Furthermore, in the words of Waldschmidt, as it is society that disables people: "it is a society's responsibility to remove the obstacles that persons with disabilities are facing".[490] The burden of adaptation is on society so that people with impairments can integrate into it, and not on that individual to be medically 'fixed' so that they can navigate a non-disabled landscape. In sum, whilst the medical model understands disability as an organic/biological 'fact' that is causally connected to impairment, the social model instead understands disability as emergent from the way that people with impairments are treated in society.

Clearly the history of 'personal agency' is thus closely connected to that of 'the individual' explored previously. This intersection is most explicit in the connected notion of 'dependence'. Critical disability studies theorists such as Inga Bostad and Halvor Hanicsh have demonstrated that whilst the lives of people with impairments are often "characterized by continuous dependence on others", this continuous dependence, however, also characterises non-disabled existence. For both non-disabled and impaired people: "freedom in society is constituted by both independence and interdependence".[491] Everyone is enmeshed in the processes of globalisation, and we are all interdependent on and connected to each other. Despite this, or perhaps even as a result of this, Clare argues that "white Western culture goes to extraordinary lengths to deny [...] the utter reliance of human upon human".[492] The agency that is associated with being an 'individual' is sharply contrasted with the idea of disability as "an overwhelming dependency, a terrifying loss of privacy and dignity" even though if any of us (dis/abled) were truly an independent 'individual' operating on their own, they would not last long.[493] Through the challenges that conjoinment raises in relation to the 'individuality' of the singleton, then, non-disabled people

[489] Interestingly, Bogdan argues that the liminal category of "Freakishness" that was embraced by people with and without impairment in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century dime museums and circuses was also socially constructed. He states that "Many freaks who were brought from abroad had nothing "wrong" with them physically [...] What made them "freaks" was the racist presentations of them and their culture by promoters." Robert Bogdan 'The Social Construction of Freaks, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. by Rosemary Garland Thompson (New York: New York University Press, 1996) 23-37 p. 29.
[490] Waldschmidt, 'Disability Goes Cultural', p. 21.
[491] Inga Bostad and Halvor Hanisch, 'Freedom and Disability Rights: Dependence, Independence, and Interdependence', *Metaphilosophy*, 47.3 (2016), 371-84, pp. 372-3.
[492] Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*, p. 136.
[493] Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*, p. 136.

are reminded of the limits to their own personal agency, although the reality of this disempowerment is of course dramatically different to that experienced by disabled people. Simultaneously, in the opposite direction, the social model empowered people with disability, and the ontological demarcation that non-disabled singletons make between themselves and disabled people is seen to be eroded from both directions.

This model of agency thus connects to the controversial resistance to the dis/ability binary in recent critical disability studies. Related to Butler's use of the "precarity"[494] concept, bodies are universally understood within a graduated framework of Jasbir Puar's understanding of "debility".[495] Those that consider themselves non-disabled are nonetheless what Shildrick defines as 'Temporarily Abled Bodies' (TABs), as "not only are we all at risk of unexpected accident and disease that might precipitate disability" but that "as we age our bodies inevitably begin to fall away from a normative standard of mental and physical capacity".[496] The degree to which one's body corresponds to this understanding of debility is one of many vectors by which precarity can be considered, as Shildrick quotes that "precarity is indissociable from that dimension of politics that addresses the organization and protection of bodily needs. Precarity exposes our sociality, the fragile and necessary dimensions of our interdependency".[497] This is not to conflate nor trivialise the experiences and challenges of different forms of precarity, but to highlight that the stigmatisation of 'dependence' as a negative marker of impairment is grounded in a fundamentally flawed representation of the complicated structure of society.

The underpinning argument of this chapter is thus as follows. It is assumed, to begin with, that non-disabled concerns about death are ordinarily repressed to avoid constant existential dread. As part of the maintenance of this repression, non-disabled people can undergo a dual process of splitting and projecting these concerns into and onto the impaired people that they encounter. Underpinning a host of popular depictions of impairments is hence a

[494] Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence.*
[495] Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).
[496] Shildrick, 'Living on, Not Getting Better', p. 13.
[497] Shildrick, 'Living on, Not Getting Better', p. 15.

response to the disempowerment that non-disabled authors recognise within themself, but which is expelled and projected into impaired characters instead. This practice harmfully reinforces associations between people with impairments and passivity, disempowerment and vulnerability, as this ableist imagery is used as a salve for non-disabled readers. As the social model of disability grew in prominence during the 70s, however, people with impairments were both more visible and presented as holding a similar level of personal agency to non-disabled people which undermined this splitting and projection. Because of the perceived transgressions discussed so far around the 'individual' and 'privacy', conjoined twins have been seen by non-disabled singleton authors to particularly evoke these concerns, and so conjoined narratives have become sites where these anxieties are explored. In the narratives featuring conjoined protagonists analysed below, then, there is a re-negotiation of the non-disabled body's awareness of its own fallibility, corruptibility, and mortality, manifesting as concerns relating to the personal agency of people with impairments. As part of this, these portrayals of conjoined twins are simultaneously shown to be disabled by the built environment, but also vulnerable to each other in a variety of additional self-defeating ways. This added vulnerability functions as a self-correcting limit to any empowerment that the twins may receive through the social model of disability, ensuring that they do not gain too much agency for their non-disabled singleton readers to deal with. After analysing this process of projection, this chapter will conclude with some (unfortunately, surprisingly rare) counternarratives that disrupt this tendency, presenting conjoinment as a form of lateral agency, or as imbuing natural synergy.

Physical Items and the Built Environment

As outlined in the introduction, the fundamental difference between the social model and the medical model of disability is that the social model roots disability in society. *The Girls* is an important case study here, as in its description of the limitations that impaired bodies face we see non-disabled resistance to this new understanding of the relationship between disability and society, and the resulting impact on non-disabled concerns over their own personal agency. Here, the conjoined Rose describes how the twins fly with their foster parents to Slovakia to meet their extended family. She narrates that "the flight promised a

few horrors, as we would be badly cramped and, more disturbingly, catheterized for the longest leg of the journey because our particular anatomy does not configure with the teeny airplane bathrooms".[498] The situation gets even worse on the next leg of the journey, however, as Rose tells us that "we were amused to find that, according to our tickets, Ruby and I had seats at opposite ends of the plane. The astonishingly lovely flight attendant shrugged when we explained our situation. "Ask someone to move," she growled".[499]

It is surprising to read this engagement between physical objects and people with impairments in a 2006 text. The novel is set in Ontario 1974-2004, with the section just discussed occurring in 1994. Canadian legislation preventing discrimination due to disability had long been established by this point, both at a federal and a legal level. The 1962 *Ontario Human Rights Code* protected Canadians with impairments from discrimination within the protected social area of "goods, services, and facilities".[500] This was reinforced with the federal 1977 *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*[501] That scenes such as described above are noteworthy in a novel written some 30-40 years after the social model was first articulated, and some 10-20 years after critical disability studies started to move beyond the social model and into intersectional and cultural models, is evidence that there was (and still is) a significant disjunct between the progression of critical disability studies and non-disabled perceptions of disability. This lag is evidence that the new social model was somewhat resisted by the non-disabled population. Despite the widescale visibility of the disability rights movement protests, and the legal victories such as the Americans with Disability Act (1990) and the UK Disability Discrimination Act (1995), people nonetheless retained their previous disempowering attitudes towards people with impairments.

In this example, an airline company and its employee disables and inconveniences the impaired twins through the use of physical space and

---

[498] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 213.
[499] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 223.
[500] *Ontario Human Rights Code,* (1962) <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code> [Accessed 12/10/22].
[501] *Canadian Human Rights Act,* (1977) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/*Canadian*> [Accessed 12/10/22]; *Charter of Rights and Freedoms,* (1982) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-12.html#h-40> [Accessed 12/10/22].

objects, applying the desire to 'map' and demarcate the conjoined characters into singleton phase-space as outlined in the previous chapters. It is only due to the perseverance of the twins and the medical modification of their bodies – fitting a catheter – that they are able to travel at all. Mike Oliver shows that, from a Marxist perspective, commercial barriers such as those posed by this fictional airline are partially produced by the economic structure of society.[502] For a market to recognise an individual's physical needs and to cater to these is to grant these individuals a crucial form of personal agency. Conversely, to not do this is to discriminate economically. Whilst under the medical model it may be argued that the need for this modification arises from the twin's biology and the act of catheterisation is not specifically required by the airline, the social model instead recognises that impaired people have an equal right to be a consumer and that the burden of adaptation is on society to accommodate and not disable. This tension between undergoing invasive procedures to adapt to ableist society on the one hand, and the potential increased agency of such procedures on the other, speaks to the broader difference of response to rehabilitation within critical disability studies and disability activism. As Tom Shakespeare and others' analysis of how rehabilitation is received in the disabled community states, physiotherapy may be alternatively received as "oppressive, because they see it as emphasising 'normalisation'" or "empowering, enabling [the individual] to regain functioning and thus maximise [their] social participation".[503] Fittingly, in this fictional example from *The Girls*, in order to engage in this service and to assume a level of personal agency similar to non-disabled characters, the twins must first sacrifice their bodily autonomy and secede control of their bodily functions, providing a 'net loss' of agency. It is important to note that the required action (the fitting of a catheter) is itself a transgression of the fundamental boundary between 'inner' and 'outer', making the insides of the twins 'visible' in a (medically) controlled, exaggerated representation of the feared porosity and shared subjectivity that the twins pose. Thus, whilst through the airline company's services the twins are theoretically granted greater holistic personal agency, they must first cede control over parts of their bodies and their broader bodily boundaries. The flight enables the twins

[502] Mike Oliver, 'A Sociology of Disability or a Disablist Sociology?', *Disability & Society: Emerging Issues and Insights,* ed. by Len Barton (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 1996), 18-42.
[503] Tom Shakespeare and others, 'Rehabilitation as a Disability Equality Issue', p. 62.

to move their whole bodies across spaces, but it is only permitted by the non-disabled singleton authorities if they can manage the disruptions and related anxieties that this provokes.

Whilst Rose and Ruby obviously cannot sit at opposite ends of the plane, the response of the employee clearly assumes that the burden of adaptation lies with the twins. The employee recognises the impossibility of the twins complying with the tickets issued by her company, yet still insists that they remedy the situation themselves. This action parallels the twins' need to be catheterised, albeit in a less invasive and yet more visible fashion. Here, employees that direct and manage consumers' use of their partitioned spaces are shown to be just as inflexible as the constructed objects. Both the air host and the aeroplane designer(s) are unwilling to (literally) accommodate the differently bodied or people with impairments. Thus, this shows how the built environment is not just a passive cause of oppression for people with impairments, but can also be actively used as a tool for such discrimination.

The value of adaptive technology is also questioned in this text through the wheelchair that the twins acquire when Rose develops an aneurysm and they experience repeated fits of dizziness. Both twins react differently to this chair, complicating any understanding of this mobility aid as an unproblematic means of 'resolving' their disability and implicitly criticising the demands of the medical model that the burden of adaptation is on the impaired. Momentarily embodying the medical model, Ruby feels empowered by the wheelchair; because of her atypical development she does not ordinarily reach the floor when Rose is standing. Whilst previously she influenced and negotiated with Rose how and when they moved, the chair is presented as granting her direct control of her movement for the first time. She describes her initial attempt as: "I felt like I had legs. Not like I was borrowing my sister's, but like I had my own. The vibration of the wheels on the floor shot up the steel legs of the stool and right into my spine".[504] Ruby incorporates the chair into her own body image, sensing and controlling the chair as if she were a post-human cyborg and it

[504] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 233.

were an extension of her body.[505] This empowerment is, however, in opposition to Rose's experience. Instead, Rose criticises the implications of such assistive technology: that impaired people hold the burden of adaptation and instead should be the ones to accommodate for non-disabled society. Used to physically mobilising both bodies in joint negotiation with Ruby's wishes, the chair is a poor substitute and a simple, constant, reminder that "she's not as strong as she used to be".[506] The chair becomes ominous and foreboding for Rose, who describes it as the "behemoth", imbuing it with agency as it is "staring us in the face".[507] In her resistance to the chair she endows it with its own agency, which reduces her own.

Here we see common concerns raised by people adapting to a prosthetic device, particularly what Ryan Sweet, in his interrogations of nineteenth-century representations of assisted technology, describes as the "perceived autonomy of the mechanical prosthetic body part".[508] Engaging with Bill Brown's "thing theory"[509] – a phenomenological approach that analyses the physicality of objects and the ways which humans imbue them with meaning – this depiction is part of a long history of fictional "self-acting prostheses".[510] In these depictions, the assistive technology holds a magical and independent agency that exercises their users to death such as Parker's "The Flying Burgermaster' (1832).[511] In this ghost story, and many other examples, the prosthetic device articulates underlying suspicion of adaptive technology and is presented as an ominous and threatening object. In these portrayals, whilst they initially grant their users increased agency, the prosthetic becomes their downfall. Sometimes the device is used passively as the murder weapon of the user, or, as in this

---

[505] See Donna Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late 20th Century, *Socialist Review,* 80.1 (1985), 65-108.
[506] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 233.
[507] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 228.
[508] Sweet, *Prosthetic Body Parts*, p. 75.
[509] Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry,* 28.1 (2001), 1-22, p. 5.
[510] Sweet. *Prosthetic Body Parts,* p. 75.
[511] Frances Parker *The Flying Burgermaster* (London, [N. pub.], 1832), <https://archive.org/details/flyingburgermast00morl> [accessed 21/01/22]. See also the anonymous 'Cork Leg' song (date unknown); *All the Year Round*'s 'Bolderoe's Widow' (1876); Allsopp *Æsop's* 'The Wooden Leg and the Ungrateful Pensioner' (1878); *Every Week's* 'A Wooden Leg That Knows a Thing or Two' (1895); Frank Crane's 'Willie Westinghouse Edison Smith'; two anonymous cartoons 'Willie Westinghouse Invents an Automatic Arm' (1904) and 'Willie's 'Handshaker' Gets Papa into Trouble' (1907); as well as J. Stuart Blackton's *The Thieving Hand* (1908).

spectral example, he is actively "dragged by his fatal leg away".[512] All of these examples testify to a distrust of prosthetic devices by both users and non-disabled audiences. Rose's imbuing her wheelchair with such a looming and threatening agency can helpfully be seen within this tradition. Whilst the nineteenth-century examples are likely responding to the different cultural concerns related to prosthetics listed by Sweet such as "vitalism and the possibility of perpetual motion; the growth of the artificial limbs trade; the rise of industrial manufacture; and the development of automated machines, such as Babbage's 'Difference Engine'", the example from *The Girls* highlights an important point about conjoinment and personal agency.[513] In the examples from the nineteenth century, the prosthetic device is used to express underlying fears that the device grants too much personal agency to the user. These same concerns are articulated in *The Girls* through this chair "behemoth". Each conjoined character is given an increased degree of personal agency, but this is accompanied by a corresponding decrease for the other, effectively neutralising it. This has the effect of reducing the damage done to the deflected non-disabled concerns relating to their own agency via the social model of disability – as conjoined characters are not only shown to be more active but simultaneously more vulnerable.

Vulnerability as Self-Limiting Agency

Clearly, the praxis that shows conjoined twins as especially vulnerable because of their conjoinment articulates some of the underlying non-disabled concerns over people with impairments and personal agency that were enhanced by the development of the social model of disability. In her analysis of disability and the horror genre, for example, Ria Chenye writes that portraits of people with impairments "resonate with and reinforce conceptualisations of disabled people as helpless or vulnerable, already victims of circumstance or chance".[514] Describing conjoined characters as disempowered by each other, however, goes above and beyond this. More than being presented as passive and helpless victims, this trope presents conjoined twins as actively working against each other. This facilitates the imbuing of these characters with greater

[512] Parker, *The Flying Burgermaster,* p. 3.
[513] Sweet, *Prosthetic Body Parts,* p. 100.
[514] Ria Cheyne, *Disability, Literature, Genre: Representation and Affect in Contemporary Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), p. 31.

personal agency than earlier portrayals of people with impairments, whilst also containing the resulting threat to non-disabled psychological defences against anxieties relating to their own personal agency and death. Presenting conjoined twins as mutually vulnerable to each other harmfully means that any increase in personal agency is self-defeating; as one increases in agency the other decreases correspondingly, functioning as a self-correcting system and limiting the autonomy that the twins can demonstrate as a combined entity whilst allowing the relative power dynamic between them to continually shift. This presentation of conjoinment allows for a less static character dynamic, and one that is seemingly in accordance with the developing social model of disability but unfortunately also bolsters the non-disabled status quo. Singleton authors, in their use of this device, thus exploit conjoined imagery for non-disabled psychological benefits.

Another way in which conjoined characters are represented as vulnerable to each other is through their emotional and physiological connection to, and corresponding influence on each other. One of the most commonly remarked-upon aspects of conjoinment surrounds the potential to share feelings and sensation. In these narratives this is presented as implying that neither twin has full control over their emotions, as a projection of non-disabled concerns around their own emotional vulnerability, the fallibility of the singleton mind-body connection, and hence their own personal agency. In more recent texts these concerns are clothed in anxieties related to sexual abuse.

Although far outside the period focused on in this chapter, the previously examined Hannah Gould's 'To the Siamese Twins' (1832), dedicated to her contemporaries Eng and Chang Bunker, is a perfect example of this. In the previous chapter, this poem was analysed as an example of how conjoinment was presented as disrupting heterosexual monogamous marriage. In other lines, the speaker contemplates the potential emotional synergy that may arise from such a shared biochemistry of the conjoined Eng and Chang, introducing their shared vascular system as: "The stream that empurples the veins of each / Through the breast of his brother flows!"[515] Shared blood between the twins here implies shared emotions and feelings, as "One grief must be felt by this

[515] Gould, 'To the Siamese Twins' p. 54.

two-fold dart"[516] and "joy lit up by a single spark / Is sunshine in either heart".[517] This speculative exploration of shared feelings (both physical and emotional) is extended, however, to evoke a sense of vulnerability. How strange it must be, Gould encourages us to wonder, to have your pulse suddenly quicken, to feel an embodied emotional response stirring within you even when you are unaware of the stimuli for these changes. The emotions of either twin are imagined to automatically evoke similar feelings in the other, presenting the hormonal boundary between the twins as porous and thus a challenge to their personal agency. If emotions can be induced directly from an 'external' source, (the shared body 'belonging to' their twin), then neither twin is ever in full control of their own feelings. Whilst, of course, the faculty of empathy means that non-disabled people will also frequently have their emotions externally induced, as part of the maintenance of the myth of an individual, uncompromised "diamond mind" referred to in the chapter introduction, singletons nonetheless like to understand themselves as holding an uncompromised self that is impervious to this form of influence.[518] The presentation of conjoined twins as emotionally influencing each other is thus a manifestation of the everyday effect that we all have on each other, but here it is stigmatised as especially vulnerable. The 'undesirable' trait recognised by the singleton speaker (being emotionally affected by others, and thus having less of a 'diamond mind') is hence purged and projected into the imagery of conjoined twins.

As Drew Leder makes clear in his phenomenological account *The Absent Body:* "one's own body is rarely the thematic object of experience" and, without pain or decreased function to draw attention the default mode of operation, the able-bodied is on 'autopilot', without conscious intervention or even awareness of most of the bodily functions.[519] Perhaps relatedly, under Cartesian dualism, the body is often relegated to an inferior ontological plane in comparison to the elevated and spiritual 'mind'. In contrast, the 'mind' or 'soul' is cherished as the ultimate expression of the self and the individual, associated with logic and rationality. Emotions and feelings, however, complicate this binary thinking, requiring both mind and body, and are simultaneously both

[516] Gould, 'To the Siamese Twins' p. 54.
[517] Gould, 'To the Siamese Twins' p. 54.
[518] Selisker, *Human Programming*, p. 51.
[519] Leder, *The Absent Body,* p. 1.

unconscious and directed. To be emotionally vulnerable is to allow the fallibility of the 'body' to corrupt the impenetrable 'mind', hinting at the embodied nature of being, and tying the mind of the individual to the ultimate mortality of the body. To read conjoinment as emotional vulnerability is to unconsciously purge such repressed knowledge from the non-disabled self, and project it outwards, onto a body which has already been societally primed to be understood as vulnerable in other ways. These depictions of conjoinment by singleton authors for singleton readers thus function as a means of re-repressing these concerns about the mind-body connection and death.

Recent depictions of conjoinment adapt this trope of emotional vulnerability to relate to concerns surrounding sexual abuse. In a short poem by Joan Lifshin from 1970, for example, there is a use of conjoined imagery to highlight the importance of sexual consent, as the speaker presents their relationship with a pair of conjoined twins as a happy marriage. There is, however, also thinly veiled imagery of sexual assault in this poem. The potential for sexual personal agency from the conjoined twin married to the speaker is undermined by portraying them as at least complicit in the sexual assault of the other. Despite the title, the twins are separately referred to by the speaker as "my wife" and "her sister".[520] The speaker does not understand the conjoined twins as either being two different wives or as one wife with two bodies. Instead he presents the pair as two different people, (only) one of whom he is married to. This allows for the seemingly harmless joke that "Her sister threatens to run off and I kiss her soundly".[521] When combined with the fact that this sister is forced to "shut us out when I get to rutting loud in her", however, the joke is far from harmless as this implies that the sister is trapped in this relationship against her will.[522] Despite the speaker's insistence that the three are united "like a three petaled flower", and that "we're happy, the three of us" it is clear that the sister has no choice in the matter.[523] Like a flower, as well as the reader, she is rooted to the spot, unable to escape the sexual advances of her brother-in-law; again, as one twin gains personal agency and sexual liberation it

[520] Joan Lifshin, 'The Man Who is Married to Siamese Twins Joined at the Skull', *A Body of Work: An Anthology of Poetry and Medicine,* ed. by Corinna Wagner and Andy Brown (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 189.
[521] Lifshin, 'The Man Who is Married to Siamese Twins', p. 189.
[522] Lifshin, 'The Man Who is Married to Siamese Twins', p. 189.
[523] Lifshin, 'The Man Who is Married to Siamese Twins', p. 189.

is undercut by the sexual vulnerability of the other. In choosing to tell this story through this imagery, the author reinforces the image of conjoined twins as especially sexually vulnerable, and with a self-defeating form of sexual agency.

A similar episode is related in *The Girls* where one twin seduces the boy (Frankie) that they both have a crush on. The normally quieter twin (Ruby) takes the lead as Rose remarks that "I had never met the bold sister, this brave Ruby, this sister who desired a kiss so badly she risked the cruelest of rejections".[524] Whilst Rose initially describes the scenario positively, saying that: "I wanted Frankie Foyle to kiss me too and didn't want to miss my turn", as the kissing with Ruby gets more intense she displays strong reservations.[525] She describes Frankie's "spiderlike" hand that "crept [...] onto my shoulder and dropped down inside my blouse".[526] Rose and Frankie have penetrative sex, but Rose still remarks that "Frankie didn't kiss me. My turn never came" indicating that all she wanted to experience here was the kissing, and that the penetrative sex was non-consensual.[527] The kissing that she does experience – of Frankie kissing Ruby – is described as if she were an interloper, not a consenting partner as: "I could hear from within the sound of Ruby swallowing. I thought I could feel Frankie's tongue".[528] Rose's conjoinment, and the resulting sensations that she shares with her twin, leads her to feel violated, as she concludes: "After. Shivering. Ashamed. I asked Frankie for a tissue. "Use the bedspread," he said".[529] In this episode Ruby takes on a far more active role in the sexual abuse of her twin than in Lifshin's poem. She initiated the encounter without discussing this with Rose, and at no point did either she or Frankie check that Rose was happy to proceed. Frankie seems briefly concerned about whether Rose "will tell" as he "gestured my way without actually looking at me", but Ruby answers for both responding "she *won't"*, the emphasis making it clear that she is ordering Rose to comply.[530] Although it is in relation to intellectual disability, Michael Gill's argument that the "circular logic between the meaning and the management of the impairment continues to enforce vulnerability" also applies

[524] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 115.
[525] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 116.
[526] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 116.
[527] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 116.
[528] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 116.
[529] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 117.
[530] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 116.

here to conjoinment.[531] Here, he argues that people with impairments are understood as intrinsically vulnerable by able-bodied people, and this becomes self-fulfilling as it leads people to take advantage of them. This is sadly true for the conjoined twins in these texts. As with Frankie and Ruby, a conjoined twin having consentual sex with someone else can in of itself an act of sexual abuse of the other conjoined twin. The very state of conjoinment then is presented as an enhanced potential for sexual abuse, and this increased vulnerability is not only self-fulfillng, but in these narratives acts as a counter-weight to any increase in sexual agency that the other twin may enjoy. This limits the damage done to non-disabled psychological defences by the increased agency of the social model of disability.

As well as emotionally and sexually, conjoined twins are also importantly shown in texts from this period to be physically vulnerable to each other. This is consistently done in these texts through the metaphor of alcohol and the lack of personal agency that results from intoxication. Several of these invoke the Bunker twins, perhaps because they are the most well-known conjoined twins, but also because they are known to have shared a liver and because one of the twins was historically known to be a far heavier drinker than the other. In addition to the Mark Twain performances referred to previously, where at New Year's Eve parties he would routinely perform an act as a teetotaler becoming unsuspectedly drunk because of the covert drinking of his 'twin', Cathy Hong examines this potential imbalance and the impact on personal agency in her poem, 'The Ontology of Eng and Chang'.[532] Here she presents physical violence between the Bunker twins, writing that: "Chang became drunk, [and] knocked Eng out with a whiskey bottle", referring to Chang's actions in terms of both passive abuse (through their shared circulatory system) and active abuse (physical assault).[533] Eugene Lee-Hamilton also focused on this dynamic between the historically conjoined twins in his dedicatory poem 'The Siamese Twins'.[534] He describes Eng and Chang as friends that would "share at last one

[531] Michael Gill, *Already Doing It: Intellectual Disability and Sexual Agency* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), p. 40.
[532] Cathy Hong, 'Ontology of Chang and Eng, the Original Siamese Twins' *Translating Mo'um* (New York: Hanging Loose Press, 2002), 15-20, p. 15.
[533] Hong, 'Ontology of Chang and Eng', p. 15.
[534] Lee-Hamilton, 'Siamese Twins', p. 403.

bier".[535] The wordplay with 'share', again referring to the fact that alcohol consumed by one twin would pass into the bloodstream of the other, initially seems more genial than Hong's allusion. The reference to 'bier', however, as both funerary equipment and homophone for the alcoholic drink, when combined with the unsettling "at last" is a clear reminder of the physical threat that the habits of one conjoined twin present to the other. Robert Graves makes a similar point in his short poem 'Twins', and is more direct in his memento mori, stating that Chang "Resolved at length to misbehave / And drink them both into the grave".[536] In these poetic presentations of conjoinment, then, the same associations that we have been discussing so far are conveyed in a more condensed fashion, as there is greater freedom for the ideas and images to be interchanged rapidly. As Susannah Mintz argued in her interrogation of poetry and disability, the former can be a powerful means of representing the latter, as "in a poem - where form, sound, line breaks, and the heightened surprise of juxtaposition are fundamental to meaning - bodies can emerge in unfamiliar and revolutionary form".[537] Throughout these examples though, there is a parallel consistently drawn between the way that alcohol affects the body and the relationship between these twins; pairing the social aspects of intoxication with the physically harmful affect on the body. Through the passive absorption of alcohol, conjoined twins are shown to be physically vulnerable to each other, undermining bodily integrity and reinforcing non-disabled unconscious defences surrounding personal agency and impairment.

Similar imagery is used in relation to fictional conjoined twins. Returning to *The Girls,* the consumption of alcohol by one twin is also shown to have a direct negative impact on other health conditions for both twins. After one is diagnosed with an aneurysm, the other fears for her own safety when the pair drink champagne. Ruby states that "The glass of champagne Rose drank had us stuck in the bathroom for half an hour trying to get rid of her hiccups! The whole time I'm thinking that each hiccup is going to rupture the aneurysm".[538] For the texts referring to Eng and Chang above, the liver is the physical

[535] Lee-Hamilton, 'Siamese Twins', p. 403.
[536] Robert Graves, 'Twins', *A Body of Work: An Anthology of Poetry and Medicine* ed. by Corinna Wagner and Andy Brown (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), p. 406.
[537] Susannah Mintz, 'Lyric Bodies: Poets on Disability & Masculinity, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 127.2 (2012), 248-63, p. 249.
[538] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 168.

connection between the two twins, and it is also where the damage done by the poison in question (alcohol) is felt by both. The function of the liver, to *clean* the body of poisons, is subverted through conjoinment. Similarly, the twins in *The Girls* are connected at the heads, which is also the site of the dangerous aneurysm. These representations show the connection between the conjoined twins as both corrupting and deadly, depicting both sets of twins as twice as vulnerable to each other because of their conjoinment, as their behaviour is depicted as holding potential negative implications from both the outside and from the inside.

As examined in the previous chapter, Barbara Gowdy's short story involving conjoined protagonists, 'The Two-Headed Man', portrays one twin drugging the other and articulating concerns related to the complexities of bodily ownership in respect to the 'mapping' of conjoined individuals. Connected to the tendency – as identified by Susan Sontag – for people to blame people with illnesses for those same illnesses, here again it is the twins' conjoinment which is presented as the cause of their vulnerability.[539] There is also an additional disempowering function, as because the twins are so violently opposed any increase in personal agency associated with them is shown to be self-defeating, as it becomes directed against each other. Rather than an ill body that is 'uncooperative', the conjoined body is here envisioned as literally acting against its best interests. This is also presented by Gowdy as another means of understanding conjoined twins as vulnerable to each other through the portrayal of an interrupted or blocked mind-body connection.[540] Not only does the twin Simon act and manipulate his twin's (Samuel's) viscera with his actions, but as Simon is paralysed, he is unable to interact with 'his' body. Being attached to, yet trapped within, an unresponsive body is articulated through Simon's dream of "growing limbs that turn out to be tree limbs, useless", presenting his experience as disempowered and with complete dependence on his twin.[541] He complains that, "My brain messages aren't getting through. My brain works like anybody else's, it sends out messages to the body. But in my case the

[539] Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, (New York: Farrar, 1978).
[540] By an 'additional interfering connection' I mean that conjoined twins are represented as vulnerable to each other as they also receive emotional and intoxicating inputs directly from another body as in the texts above.
[541] Gowdy, 'The Two-Headed Man', p. 101.

messages hit a roadblock at Samuel's collarbone".[542] The 'roadblock' metaphor evokes a deliberate barrier policed and guarded by Samuel. This representation of the connection is a neat contrast to the permeable networks that allow the twins to share nutrients and intoxicants. Gowdy is thus providing an additional association of vulnerability to conjoinment compared to the previously examined poems. The connection between the conjoined twins, then, is simultaneously presented as both *too* porous, and not porous *enough.* Both sets of imagery are used by the singleton author to understand the conjoined body as exhibiting a fundamental vulnerability, specifically caused by their impairment. Samuel is presented to the reader sympathetically, as a character beset by a conjoined 'burden' (Simon) that does everything he can to antagonise Samuel. In her analysis of disability and the short story format, Alice Hall argues that "short stories are particularly suited to the various experiments with form which recur in cultural representations of disability" such as "the rendering of multisensory forms of perception in literary writing" and "the resistance to normative endings".[543] This is certainly present here, as Gowdy's exploration of the porous yet impermeable boundary between her two conjoined characters allows her to repeatedly focus on conjoined tactile sensations which would be novel to the singleton reader. Indeed, the rapid characterisation of both twins is itself an artefact of the short story format, as there is less space to establish a grounded depiction of conjoinment. Instead we see a stereotype of conjoinment, as the harmful ableist attitudes towards conjoined twins is condensed into an inherent, self-defeating form of vulnerability.

Conjoined Spatialities: Alternate Mastery, Lateral Agency & Synergy

Through these Anglo-American examples it is clear how conjoined narratives from this era have consistently recognised the social model of disability, whilst also portraying any resulting increase in personal agency as cancelled out by a corresponding increase in vulnerability. A particularly North American idea of agency is invoked, as in shifting yet fundamental ways the twins are shown to be in competition with each other. This section now turns to some much more optimistic portrayals (although not entirely unproblematic) that stand in the face

[542] Gowdy, 'The Two-Headed Man', p. 101.
[543] Hall, 'Disability and the Short Story' p. 347.

of singleton concerns raised previously, as conjoined twins are shown as instead holding net-positive levels of personal agency.

One important means by which conjoinment is shown to motivate a non-traditional understanding of personal agency is the way in which this is described as a joint or negotiated affair. In Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson or Those Extraordinary Twins*, his fictional conjoined protagonists explain to their hosts the means by which two independent, yet physically connected people make day-to-day decisions:

> "But, you see, there's one prime essential — an essential of the very first importance — which isn't my own."
> "What is that?"
> "My body."
> The old ladies looked puzzled, and Aunt Betsy Hale said – "Why, bless your heart, how is that?"
> "It's my brother's."
> "Your brother's! I don't quite understand. I supposed it belonged to both of you!"
> "So it does. But not to both at the same time."
> "That is mighty curious; I don't see how it can be. I shouldn't think it could be managed that way."
> "Oh, it's a good enough arrangement, and goes very well – in fact it wouldn't do to have it otherwise. I find that the Teetotalers and the Anti-Teetotalers, hire the use of the same hall for their meetings. Both parties don't use it at the same time, do they?"[544]

Whilst Twain's inspiration for his characters – the historical omphalo-Ischiopagus conjoined twins (two legs, fused abdomen, four arms) Giacomo and Giovanni Tocci (1875-1940) – were unable to coordinate their movements so that they could walk, his description instead evokes the form of agency that the Bunker twins were famous for in their local community. In their biography of Chang and Eng Bunker, Irving and Amy Wallace recount an anecdote told to them by one of the Bunker descendants that makes this clear. After the

[544] Twain, *Those Extraordinary Twins,* p. 146.

American Civil War, Chang and Eng were summoned to meet President Lincoln who "told them the story about the Illinois farmer who owned a yoke of oxen that found it hard to work in tandem".[545] Both the families of Chang and Eng staunchly supported the confederates during the war, and Lincoln summoned them and told them this story as an implicit political message to the South. Chang and Eng were well-known celebrities, and are here used as symbolic representations of the Southern states. Lincoln's metaphor clearly iterates the importance of the Confederacy working together with the Union for the benefit of all, but in doing so suggests an equivocation of the twins with the draught animals. In follow-up interviews, Wallace and Wallace have shown that the Bunker descendants also understand this comment to imply "that the twins' physical predicament probably made it difficult for them to pull together" – it is assumed that the twins, like the Southern states, ordinarily inclined to pull in opposite directions.[546] In fact, the twins demarcated their two families into two separate households and, in the words of historian Huang, they established a "strategy of 'alternate mastery'" where each took it in turns "to completely yield to the will of the other".[547]

As a variation on this depiction of negotiated agency, in *The Girls* Rose describes the unspoken arrangement between the two twins as a negotiation which subtly changes throughout the day:

> There are days when, like a normal person, we're clumsy and coordinated. We have less natural symbiosis when one of us (usually Ruby) is sick, but mostly our dance is a smooth one. We hate doing things in unison, such as answering yes or no at the same time. We never finish each other's sentences. We can't shake our heads at once or nod (and wouldn't if we could - see above). We have an unspoken, even unconscious, system of checks and balances to determine who'll lead the way at any given movement. There is conflict. There is compromise.[548]

[545] Wallace and Wallace, *The Two,* p. 249.
[546] Wallace and Wallace, *The Two,* p. 249.
[547] Huang, *Inseparable*, p. 233.
[548] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 7.

Instead of a strict schedule of 'alternate mastery', this "unspoken, even unconscious system of checks and balances" is far more democratic a negotiation of agency. It is, however, an invention of the singleton author. Whilst it manages to avoid implying the falsehood that conjoined twins are one person somehow split across two bodies, it does succeed in normalising their arrangement through more familiar imagery (a dance) and through adding detail as to how it fluctuates and varies. It is important to recognise that the type of agency presented here is not unique to conjoined twins, however, nor simply to people with impairments, but is relevant to all humans to a greater or lesser degree. People are deeply social, and the agency of any of us is part of a constant negotiation with a myriad of known and unknown others. It may be argued that singleton non-disabled agency does not require a negotiation with anyone for basic physical movement, but this is to ignore the modifications that we make to our behaviour to avoid incarceration and obtain employment. Similarly, the non-disabled singleton construction of an aloof and unaffected 'diamond mind' referred to previously falsely ignores the accepted power of advertising, for example, to instil and to trigger behaviour patterns. This is one clear example of the fact that we are never wholly in control of our thoughts and desires, and non-disabled agency is also helpfully understood as a 'dance' with multiple partners. This is not to trivialise the physical difficulties of living with any form of impairment, but merely to point out that a vision of singleton agency where that individual enjoys full autonomy over their will and full control over their body – to which these portrayals of conjoinment have been set up in opposition to – is an idealised fiction, covering over non-disabled singleton anxieties relating to control of their bodies, bodily and cognitive vulnerability, and the inevitability of death.

A second, more optimistic, model of conjoined agency more widely applicable to people with impairments generally is a form of lateral agency. The agency argued for here incorporates two important and complementary aspects. The first is that the act of conjoinment is a form of what Judith Halberstam referred to as a crip "failure"[549] that resists Lauren Berlant's concept

[549] Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 87.

of “slow death”[550] and creates space between what Anna Hickey-Moody refers to as the all-consuming “progression of the unfolding of a neo-liberal future”[551] (I will unpack these concepts more fully shortly). The second aspect is grounded in the recognition that all agency is interdependent on that of others and involves negotiation. Recognition of this ‘negotiated agency’, is intimately connected to the non-disabled resistance to the empowerment of people with impairments, as such a visible reminder of mutual dependence is perceived as threatening to the fabricated non-disabled self that is wholly intact, in control, and independent.

Berlant’s crucial exploration of the concept of ‘slow death’ recognises that the vast majority of neoliberal societies are caught in the relentless “physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of people in that population that is very nearly a defining condition of their experience and historical existence”.[552] This does not play out evenly, however, and escaping from this mode of existence requires great resources, and for this reason it is practically unachievable for many people with impairments. This notwithstanding, the commodification of the disabled body and the rehabilitation market have resulted in societal expectations that reinforce normalising strategies that encourage and expect people with impairments to nevertheless continue to pursue this unachievable goal.[553] This is also entrenched by the neoliberal understanding of rehabilitation as a maximising of the capacity for productive work.[554] This is not to negate or belittle the desire for people to ‘get better’ or to become symptom and pathologen free, but to draw attention to how this desire is endlessly preyed upon by marketers as, according to Margrit Shildrick “a phantasm, just out of reach”.[555] This produces and commercialises what Berlant refers to as a “cruel optimism”[556] as people with impairments can

[550] Lauren Berlant, ‘Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)’ *Critical Inquiry,* 33.4 (2007), 754-80, p. 754.
[551] Anna Hickey-Moody, ‘Slow Life and Ecologies of Sensation’, *Feminist Review,* 111.1 (2015), 140-8, p. 142.
[552] Berlant, ‘Slow Death’, p. 754
[553] See Shildrick, ‘Living on, Not Getting Better’, p. 16.
[554] See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the ‘Spirit’ of Capitalism and Other Writings*, trans. by Peter Baehr, ed. by Gordon Wells (New York: Penguin, 2002).
[555] Shildrick, ‘Living on, Not Getting Better’, p. 15.
[556] Lauren Berlant, ‘Austerity, Precarity, Awkwardness’ *Supervalentthought,* (2011), <https://supervalentthought.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/berlant-aaa-2011final.pdf> [Accessed 12/10/22] p. 1.

be caught chasing an unattainable goal, endlessly investing resources (not just financial, but also physical and emotional) that could otherwise have been life-building, accretive, efforts.[557] People with impairments are not unique to this situation, although the most affected, as under the lens of Temporarily Abled Bodies we either all are, or will become "self-centred entrepreneurs in search of the good life, consumers of all the myriad aids that putatively will enhance or recover our capaciousness".[558]

Resistance to this endless cycle, whether it is passive (unavoidable) or active (chosen) is to live within a different temporality to that presented and endorsed by neoliberal society. In her examination of the inherent profitability of debility in neoliberal society, Shildrick points out that, unsurprisingly, those that consciously or unconsciously resist this are branded as "failures, lacking in moral endeavour, bad citizens, or in the case of people who necessarily rely on welfare support, as scroungers".[559] Whilst I note Shildrick and Price's caution in light of this of "taking an overly romanticised view of disability" it is important to reclaim and to recognise that in its 'crip-failure' the disabled body necessarily produces a form of 'lateral agency'.[560] This agency is in opposition to the unobtainable sovereignty over their own body that the singleton 'individual' idealises and which is driven by the relentless advancing of neoliberal society. Instead, it is a turning away from the 'cruel optimism', and is a potential means of empowerment through the cripqueer understanding of failure as a Hablerstanian opportunity to "'imagine other goals for life".[561] When analysed temporally, this form of lateral agency becomes what Elizabeth Freeman defines as "chronocatachresis": the deliberate "stretching out of time beyond its instrumental uses".[562] This is a crucial step towards changing the very conditions that produce 'slow death', as it highlights the possibility of living what Cooper refers to as "a life-TIME of your own", rather than "living inside someone

[557] Berlant 'Slow Death' p. 757.
[558] Shildrick, 'Living on, Not Getting Better', p. 15.
[559] Shildrick, 'Living on, Not Getting Better', p. 16.
[560] Margrit Shildrick & Janet Price, 'Deleuzian Connections and Queer Corporealities: Shrinking Global Disability', *Rhizomes* 11.1 (2005) s. 21 <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue11/shildrickprice/index.html> [Accessed 12/10/22].
[561] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, p. 11.
[562] Elizabeth Freeman, *Beside You in Time: Sense Methods and Queer Sociabilities in the American Nineteenth Century* (Durham DC: Duke University Press, 2019), p. 128.

else's clock".[563] In her reflection upon growing up with an impairment and subsequent anxiety that partially manifest for Cooper as repetitive "checking behaviours", this chronoctachresis is presented as "an alternative use of time, an alternative chronotope that is designed to resist the strait-jacket of developmental time".[564] That which may "seem only to waste time [...] might actually be understood as seeking to find a 'time of the self' – a time that is not governed by a developmentalist logic" and which instead "'replays' time at my pace, rather than at the pace of the Other."[565]

Lateral agency is ascribed to conjoined twins clearly in *The Girls* as the text is bookended by Rose's reflections on her capabilities as someone with an impairment. In the opening page, before reference is made to her conjoinment, she tells us that:

> I have never looked into my sister's eyes. I have never bathed alone. I have never stood in the grass at night and raised my arms to a beguiling moon. I've never used an airplane bathroom. Or worn a hat. Or been kissed like that. I've never driven a car. Or slept through the night. Never a private talk. Or solo walk. I've never climbed a tree or faded into a crowd.[566]

The unfolding narrative documents Rose's attempts to achieve these moderate ambitions, with mixed success, and by the end of the tale the singleton author has Rose self-consciously revisit this list:

> I returned to the first chapter of this book, which I haven't read since my last crisis of confidence. I might alter it now to read: I have never looked into my sister's eyes, but I've seen inside her soul. I have never worn a hat, but I *have* been kissed like *that.* I have never raised both arms at once, but the moon beguiled me still. Sleep is for suckers. I like the bus

[563] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* p. 83.
[564] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* p. 83.
[565] Cooper, *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child,* p. 83.
[566] Lansens, *The Girls*, p. 3.

just fine. And though I've never climbed a tree, I've scaled a mountain, and that's a hell of a thing.[567]

Rose is here aware of her crip failure, as the additional physical limitations she experiences as a result of her impairment have enabled, encouraged, and forced her to re-evaluate her priorities, her capabilities and the expectations that are made of her as a citizen in contemporary neoliberal society. Mundane, everyday indicators of non-disabled 'normality' such as "wearing a hat" or "raising both arms at once" are recognised to be unnecessary, highlighting what has come to be known as "the ideology of ability".[568] Rose's flat admission that she has "never worn a hat" because of her craniopagus configuration is a passive act of resistance to the non-disabled ideology, that implicitly equates personhood and value with the ability to perform such mundane actions. Rose is proud of her inability to wear a hat, implicitly criticising the value placed upon such a signifier of 'normality'. Similarly, whilst the configuration of her craniopagus conjoinment has meant that she has been physically unable to look directly into her sister's eyes, this is presented as to some degree mitigated by the constant close proximity and shared vascular system with Ruby. This has enabled an enriched form of non-verbal communication between the twins, and hence she has "seen inside her soul". Importantly, awareness of her crip failure, and the impossibility of living a non-disabled life has also enabled a more active form of resistance and lateral agency. Rose has realised which of her ambitions are important and worth focusing on, as shown by the italicised emphasis on her success that she has "been kissed like that", as well as her confident scaling of a mountain, as "a hell of a thing".

Lateral agency of this form is particularly relevant for conjoined twins because of the 'chronic' nature of their impairment. Freeman helpfully defines 'chronic' as neutrally as possible: as "timeish" or as a condition that persists across time. Living with a chronic condition is not necessarily 'a death sentence', but neither is it a state which one can expect to 'recover' from.[569]

---

[567] Lansens, *The Girls*, p. 3.
[568] Meredith Minister, 'Religion and (Dis)Ability in Early Feminism', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion,* 23.2 (2013), 5-24, p. 5.
[569] Freeman, *Beside You in Time,* p. 125

What is important about chronic conditions for Berlant is that they "can never be cured, only managed", opening up a space between the binary of 'health' and 'sickness' and, thus through their 'crip failure', a new temporality arises.[570] Understood like this, the chronic temporality of conjoinment is a lateral form of resistance as it helps to avoid the 'cruel optimism' that sustains a 'slow death'. Instead of a constant, unfulfilled search for a 'cure' of an incurable condition, understanding the chronicity of a condition can encourage this energy to instead be directed in a more life-accruing direction. When the conjoined characters persist as conjoined in these texts, the texts present a resistance towards the normalisation strategies that are overwhelmingly directed at conjoined twins in an attempt to reduce the challenges they present to singleton 'normalcy', 'privacy', and 'individuality'. Some conjoined characters such as Lansens' Rose and Ruby in *The Girls* are presented as having no possibility of surgical separation. Hence, this resistance is passive and Lansens saves herself from having to make such resistance explicit. Other depictions examined here, such as Fire and Water in *The Secret History of Las Vegas,* demonstrate more active resistance to the normalisation strategy of non-emergency separation surgery, embracing their identity as 'freaks', referring to this explicitly as a "badge of honour".[571] As was made clear in the previous chapter when discussing the problematic aspects of separation surgery, the overwhelming preference of adult conjoined twins is to remain conjoined if at all possible, often preferring to remain conjoined even when emergency separation is the only prospect for keeping them alive. Whether we are impaired or not, it is intuitive for each of us to consider ourselves to be 'normal'. As Cooper suggests when critiquing the depictions of children with impairments in contemporary documentaries, "for a child born with a physical impairment, there is nothing abnormal about her body as she perceives it".[572] The long reach of ableism, however, means that "the notion that this child might wish to preserve the embodiment in which she was born, instead of choosing to become more like the imagined 'normal child' is counter-hegemonic".[573] The singleton characters in these texts are thus shown as unable to understand this resistance, as in *The Secret History of Las Vegas,* Brewster remarks that "They could very easily have been separated at birth. It's

[570] Berlant, 'Slow Death' p. 763.
[571] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 119.
[572] Cooper, *The Oppressive Power of Normalcy,* p. 140.
[573] Cooper, *The Oppressive Power of Normalcy,* p. 140.

confusing why they weren't".[574] As with conjoined adults then, the very chronicity of continued conjoined existence, whether passive or actively chosen, is a form of resistance to such normalisation strategies, and demonstrates lateral agency of the involved twins.

Twain's *Those Extraordinary Twins* also engages with these counternarratives surrounding conjoinment and personal agency by intermittently presenting conjoinment as producing a form of synergy from the twins. Whilst most of this farcical comedy derives humour from the self-destructive relationship between the twins – in accordance with the analysis above surrounding vulnerability – at times their conjoinment is portrayed as something enviable, providing agency beyond that which the twins would enjoy if they were singletons.[575] Describing the characters initially as one person the narrator states that 'he' "put out all his cordial arms at once, like one of those pocket knives with a multiplicity of blades, and shook hands with the whole family simultaneously".[576] This portrayal of the twins presents them as specially adapted and extra-functional, but – as was described in the 'parasite' section of the previous chapter – the benefits of conjoinment that they describe enjoying are chiefly economic, reiterating the 'disabled characters as burdens' trope.

Synergy is also attributed to the conjoined twins of *Attachments*, as the physical difficulties that the conjoined characters experience is shown to be purely a result of their environment. In a reference to the social model of disability, Eddie and Amos are shown to have synergy only when in a completely different environment: when in water. In an early description of the twins they are portrayed as "a two-headed fish" as the "clumsiness that characterized their movements on land disappeared in the water, where they moved swiftly and gracefully".[577] This contrast between the 'clumsy' motion of the twins on land and their ability to swim is also remarked upon by Nadine. Swimming pools are a recurring motif in this text and are imbued with emotional significance for her: her father was a pool salesperson, she met the twins

[574] Abani, *Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 200.
[575] The text continually shows the twins in opposition. One is an alcoholic and the other is a teetotaler. One smokes pipe tobacco despite the pleas of the other to stop because it makes him cough etc.
[576] Twain, *Those Extraordinary Twins,* p. 137.
[577] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 21.

through such a sale, her parents were accidentally electrocuted in a pool, and she has sex with the twins for the first time at the poolside. Later when her (surgically separated) husband is both emotionally and sexually distant to her, the twins spend their spare time building a separate pool-house and swimming alone. It is in this pool-house that she tells Amos she is leaving him at the end of the text.[578] When she first swims with the twins she thinks: "I'm just like you, air is not my natural element! The air made me crazy and ugly and then I talked all the time so no one would notice but there in the water…".[579] As she trails off, Nadine equates her social awkwardness with the physical difficulties that the twins face in the built environment. Whilst this trivialises the obstacles that they face, it at least evidences awareness that the oppression of the twins is located in the built environment. Here the twins are not shown as automatically disabled; instead it is the environment ('air') that is shown to disable them. Whilst they are able to demonstrate synergy in a more supportive environment (water), however, this is not used to overcome the oppression of the built environment – instead used as a disempowering comfort-zone to which they retreat.

Synergy and conjoinment are connected in these texts to the troubling 'supercrip' element of more widespread representations of people with impairments, as the twin's *lack* of synergy (out of the water) is contrasted with their overachieving circus friends. Pithily expressed by Scott Hamilton's now infamous "The only disability in life is a bad attitude", the 'supercrip' trope portrays individual people with impairments 'overcoming' their disability purely through a superhuman level of willpower.[580] In locating the source of oppression of people with impairments in the attitude of individuals, this trope ignores the social and psychological oppression discussed so far, and implies that those unable to surmount these difficulties simply do not have the right attitude.

---

[578] Her father was a pool salesperson, she met the twins through such a sale, her parents were accidentally electrocuted in a pool, she has sex with the twins for the first time (both with and without her friend Dianne) at the poolside. Later when her husband is both emotionally and sexually distant to her, the twins spend their spare time building a separate pool-house and swimming alone. It is in this pool-house that she tells him she is leaving him at the end of the text.

[579] Rossner, *Attachments,* p. 97.

[580] See Stella Young, 'We're Not Here for Your Inspiration' *The Drum*, 3 July 2012, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-07-03/young-inspiration-porn/4107006> [Accessed 12/10/22].

Hence, the burden of adaptability is refocused onto those with impairments, reinforcing the medical model of disability. This attitude is most strongly evident in *Attachments*, when Eddie and Amos have some of their circus friends over, and in particular they are contrasted with their 'supercrip' friend Sal 'the giant'. By virtue of his impairment, Sal is able to do tasks that (even) non-disabled people cannot manage. Whilst staying with Nadine and the twins he constantly does chores, taking particular delight "when it was a job only he, by virtue of his size and strength, could do".[581] When asked to chop some logs, "after an hour and a half of his work we had enough to last beyond Spring".[582] Crucially, Nadine takes care to remind us that "Chopping wood wasn't one of the things the twins could do", actively contrasting the twins ability with that of supercrip Sal's, and evoking the major criticism of supercrip narratives: that such individual performances further stigmatise those with impairments which, through no fault of their own, are unable to function in such a way.[583]

The most productive example of synergy demonstrated in these conjoined narratives, however, is in *The Girls.* Here, conjoinment is shown to provide additional survival advantages for the twins as each benefits from the 'fight or flight' hormonal system of the other. When the twins get surprised by another child, Rose reports that "My sister saw him first. Adrenaline coursed through my body as Ruby's flight instinct sparked. My sister shifted swiftly so I could turn and I saw him too".[584] Here is a modernised version of the emotional vulnerability that I presented in Gould's poem analysed earlier, but given a more productive function with increased agency. Rather than being limited by the other's emotional response, the shared emotional sensation in this example allows for increased reaction time from the twins. If one sees something threatening then they don't have to verbally tell the other, they can feel and react, instantly.

Such an understanding of agency disassembles Selisker's "diamond mind" which many singletons believe they have: an isolated and separated psyche, divorced from society and other external influences and the sole

[581] Rossner, *Attachments* p. 133.
[582] Rossner, *Attachments* p. 133.
[583] Rossner, *Attachments* p. 133.
[584] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 57.

originator of their thoughts and actions.[585] It instead proposes that subjects are more helpfully understood as a jumble of interconnected nodes, dependent on each other, and complexly bound together through the processes of globalisation. As conjoined twins interact with and through each other's agency, so too do singletons engage with each other, just from more of a physical distance. Singleton phase-space – as referred to in the privacy chapter – is a myth, and these texts complicate traditional understandings of personal agency and dependence in relation to impairments and present a more productive form of conjoined spatialities. This holds the potential for a form of synergy, responding to the more frequent depictions of mutual vulnerability and self-defeating agency as analysed previously. This re-presentation interacts with both widespread cultural anxieties related to the political empowerment arising with the disability rights movement, as we have seen, and the relationship of the previously examined 'individual' to wider society.

[585] Selisker, *Human Programming,* p. 51.

Conclusion

This thesis has traced the means of interpreting conjoined twins in relation to four foundational concepts as these developed over nearly 200 years, as recent fictional texts have felt drawn to examine and re-examine these associations. The progress of this argument has not always been strictly chronological, and the various concepts have flowed, as Rose from *The Girls* describes her conjoinment itself: “the road along the river, the one that curves and loops and seems to flow back into itself, the way I do my sister, and life does death”.[586] This apt conceptual mingling has at times made it hard to ‘map’ the contours of the different sections, and at times there has been a risk of practising the very normalisation strategies that I criticise – drawing seemingly arbitrary divisions between them. Nevertheless, whilst this methodology provided some practical difficulties, the interlocking components give greater strength and cohesion to the project as a whole.

My primary investigative focus was to explore how and why recurring threads of meaning get invested into the conjoined body. Building on this, my secondary aim was to analyse and highlight the corresponding effect that these portrayals have on non-disabled singleton perceptions of real-world conjoined twins. One of the most important successes of this approach is that it enabled me to bring together a wide range of disparate popular sources and academic writings that have very little in common besides their treatment of those with not-‘normal’ bodies. I adopted a methodology that was simultaneously diachronic yet localised. This enabled me to examine specific sites of focused interactions between singletons and conjoined twins, whilst also maintaining an engagement with broad conceptual shifts across time. When specific conjoined twins became particularly prominent, for example, or when an external crisis in connection to one of my four foundational ideas became mapped onto conjoined characters, I was able to explore this in detail and yet maintain a connection to more widespread conceptual shifts. In so doing, I have constructed a web of textual and historical interactions that engage with a specific form of impairment, and have consistently drawn on conjoined imagery as variations on recurring ableist themes. As is clear from the preceding four

[586] Lansens, *The Girls,* p. 250.

chapters, conjoinment has constantly been understood and presented by these authors in respect of singleton identity and underlying concerns and anxieties. In challenging these portrayals, I hope to have opened up a space by which conjoined authors can construct their own representation, not just as the uncanny inverse of singleton fears.

This, however, brings me to the main shortcoming of this thesis: the voices of conjoined authors are badly needed to supplement the arguments I have made. As I have made clear, lots of singleton authors have imagined conjoined perspectives and characters, with varying biological realism. For example, see where Abani's singleton characters matter-of-factly assert that conjoined "twins can swap consciousness", in comparison to Crossan's *The Girls,* and the complex depiction of Grace and Tippi as they attempt to navigate everyday ableism.[587] Despite these differing degrees of sensitivity, however, all of the authors examined are singletons. Conjoinment has attracted a considerable amount of media interest, yet none of it represents in an unmediated fashion the lived experience of conjoinment. I have not been able to find any surviving writing from any of the twins examined in this thesis, and documentaries focusing on conjoinment – such as the 1992 documentary *Katie and Eilish: Siamese Twins*, the 1995 *Siamese Twins* or the 2019 *The Conjoined Twins: An Impossible Decision* – largely uncritically recirculate the 'medical gaze' and rarely offer the twins any airtime to provide their thoughts. When initially planning this investigation, I approached as many charities and organisations as I could to try and arrange potential interviews with conjoined twins and families, to ensure that my insights about conjoinment were grounded in lived experience. These did not manifest, however, and so I have had to limit my investigation to singleton portrayals, and how this articulates underlying singleton anxieties.

It was only when this thesis was in its very final stages that I became aware of youtube channels created and maintained by conjoined and separated twins, such as Lupita and Carmen (https://www.youtube.com/c/CarmenandLupita) or Kendra and Maliyah Herrin (https://www.youtube.com/c/HerrinTwins). If I could extend this thesis, my first

[587] Abani, *The Secret History of Las Vegas,* p. 114.

priority would be to incorporate insights from the videos and interviews on these channels, to challenge or support my overarching arguments about how singletons perceive conjoined twins. In addition, there is room to augment my analysis through investigating representations of conjoinment from genres not engaged with here. As mentioned in the introduction, conjoined characters are one of the staple 'monsters' in horror based video games and films, as well as in 'edgy' cartoons such as *South Park.* It is important to resist the lazy ableism bound up in these portrayals, and to interrupt the automatic associations with conjoinment presented in these depictions. Similarly, there is more to the Enlightenment understanding of 'selfhood' than the four cornerstone concepts examined here: 'normalcy', 'privacy', 'individualism', and 'agency'. This thesis leaves fertile ground for an exploration of conjoinment and the idea of 'authenticity', for example. Furthermore, an extension of the analysis back to pre-Enlightenment engagement between conjoinment and understandings of the self would be a fruitful addition to the literatures on conjoinment engaged with here.

Whilst my 'diachronic yet localised' methodology referred to above has provided substantial analytical opportunities, it has also provided methodological risk. I have tried to avoid implying anything like a singular and uniform understanding of either conjoinment or of any of these foundational concepts. What 'privacy' was seen to consist of, for example, has varied intensely between classes, and whilst there are common tendencies across these depictions it is unfair to speak simply of what it is 'like' to be either conjoined or a singleton. In the presentation of non-disabled singletons there was a particular risk of a reductionist perspective, as not all encounters between singletons and representations of conjoined twins are underpinned by the psychological processes that I analyse. At the same time, this approach has meant that when wading into the small details of particular texts and interactions, there was always a potential that my fine-grained analysis would either be overtly driven by the overarching argument or deviate from it significantly. I am satisfied that I have managed to avoid these twin pitfalls, but just as my simultaneously 'broad' yet 'narrow' exploration has provided unique advantages, it has provided unique disadvantages which a more traditional approach may have avoided.

It is important to make it clear at this point that many, if not all of the problematic ways of representing conjoined twins, even the ones presented at the very start of the timeline for this project, still persist in current discourse around conjoinment. The loosely chronological structure was not intended to imply that – for example – after the 1884 election people stopped being concerned about the relationship between conjoinment and 'normalcy', instead purely focusing on the challenges that conjoinment presented to 'privacy.' The four concepts examined over the course of this project were deliberately chosen because of their overlaps. For example, it is the presumed not-'normal' lack of 'individuality' that is understood to undermine conjoined claims to singleton 'privacy', and this culmination is presented as a source of vulnerability, and thus disempowerment. Looking more microscopically at, for example, the 'exotic' method of presenting and understanding not-'normal' bodies in the early nineteenth century, it is clear that it has never really left us. After the "moral revolution" identified by McHold, whereby it became established that this was not an acceptable means of engaging with such people, the 'medical verification' of conjoined twins by Doctors provided justification for the continuation of this, signalling a shift from what could be represented as uncouth gawking to genteel and educational observation.[588] The objections to the 'unsightly' means of staring were not grounded in concern for the subject of the stare. This is demonstrated by the continued justification of the act of staring at not-'normal' bodies as different lenses were, and continue to be offered through, which audiences could continue to stare at these people. The process of 'celebrification', understood as "the process by which ordinary people or public figures are transformed into celebrities" functioned similarly.[589] Through this process, not-'normal' bodies were commercialised and presented through film and later television as suitable to be stared at – in contrast to the unsophisticated circus and side-show acts. This turn to 'celebrification' was, and still is, an intensification of an audience's belief in its entitlement to lines of sight around certain people, and contributed to the concerns related to 'privacy' that I discussed earlier. Celebrification became incompatible with any ordinary

[588] McHold, 'Even as You and I, p. 31.
[589] Olivier Driessens, 'The Celebritization of Society and Culture: Understanding the Structural Dynamics of Celebrity Culture', *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 16.6 (2013), 641-57, p. 643.

singleton understanding of 'privacy' as the vague "right to be let alone",[590] as audiences developed interest in the lives of these people off-stage, and many performers turned typically 'private' events into public performances. For example, the 'owner' of Daisy and Violet Hilton invited the press along to their baptism, and when independent, the twins were convinced by their manager to perform a sham 'marriage' as a publicity stunt[591]. This 'celebrification' is simply a new justification for the same relationship between not-'normal' bodies and an audience that considers itself 'normal'. The same connection that underscored the freak show, the medical demonstration, and the performance of the artiste now guides the medical documentary which has been described in Jose van Dijck's analysis as "the televised freak show",[592] even whilst the directors of these take great efforts to, according to Deeley, "obscure [their] own status as media spectacle".[593]

Whilst the 'justification' that people with 'normal' bodies have invoked for their staring at not-'normal' people has remained relatively consistent across this period, so too has the underlying cause for Othering these people and thus the motivation for these stares. Speaking specifically about race, Gail Weiss comments that individuals with hybrid identities – those that transgress binaries like this – are often associated with the "group that is most oppressed".[594] Speaking intersectionality, this is absolutely true for the case studies presented here. Where Chang and Eng were perceived as both 'non-white' and 'non-black' in a time and place that understood race in terms of these binaries, for example, this did not mean that they were universally treated as 'white'. Instead they were given shifting, hybrid identities that were simultaneously resisted and reinforced by the press, as they tried to resolve this uncertainty and collapse their identities into one side of this binary or the other. This uncertainty around binaries and conjoined resistance (active or passive) to such structures can be felt throughout all of the concepts examined in this project. Through their perceived

[590] Warren and Brandeis 'The Right to Privacy', p. 195.
[591] See Jenson, *The Lives and Loves,* p. 18 & p. 278.
[592] Jose van Dijck, 'Medical Documentary: Conjoined Twins as a Mediated Spectacle', *Media, Culture & Society,* 24.4 (2002), 537-556, p. 553.
[593] Deeley, *Contested Subjects*, p. 162.
[594] Gail Weiss, 'Sharing Time Across Unshared Horizons', *Time in Feminist Phenomenolgy,* ed. by C. Schües, D. Olkowski, & H. Fielding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 171-188, p. 174.

‘leakiness’ and concerns related to telepathy, for example, conjoined twins were problematically ‘not private enough’, yet at the same time the feared ability for conjoined twins to actively control how much information they absorbed through ‘mental liberty’ showed that they were also at the same time ‘too private’ for singleton comfort. Similarly, as we saw, conjoined twins are often presented as the ultimate embodiment of transgressed ‘individuality’ (through their shared subjectivity) but in the process of being confronted with this abject challenge to this foundational concept, singletons are also reminded of the extent that they transgress such an ideal in our globalised and intercorporeal society. Throughout, then, conjoinment is consistently understood as a disrupter of boundaries, threatening to overflow into singleton phase-space and to disrupt singleton concepts, and singleton identities in relation to this. As it stands, this negative portrayal – the disavowed Other of singleton identity – is the sum total of singleton depictions of conjoinment, and in desperate need of conjoined reclamation.

This depiction of conjoinment as nothing more than a destruction of borders is helpfully contextualised with the final example of the penultimate chapter: independence, dependence and interdependence. As critical disability studies theorists such as Shildrick and Price have explored, the interdependence of both Temporarily Able Bodies and people with impairments is more helpfully understood as a jumble of interconnected nodes, dependent on each other, and complexly bound together through the processes of globalisation[595]. To embrace the conceptual challenges that conjoinment has provided, this thesis hopes to have resisted the various normalisation strategies of ‘mapping’ and separation surgery. Without wishing to also use conjoined twins as a metaphor for singleton concerns, it is clear that reflections on conjoinment should encourage us to consider how we might best reassess our approaches to personhood and to recognise our interdependence, especially in facing global concerns that the climate emergency and the Covid-19 pandemic have illustrated. Otherwise, as Twain’s fictional conjoined twins put it: “if our legs tried to obey two wills, how could we ever get anywhere? I [Angelo] would

[595] Shildrick and Price, ‘Deleuzian Connections and Queer Corporealities’.

start one way, Luigi would start another, at the same moment – the result would be a standstill, wouldn't it?"[596]

[596] Twain, *Those Extraordinary Twins,* p. 147.

Bibliography

‘A Modern Marvel: The Two-Headed Nightingale’ *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser,* 26 November 1872, p. 6, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3204711172/BNCN> [Accessed 21/09/19]

Abani, Chris, *The Secret History of Las Vegas* (New York: Penguin, 2014)

‘Abby and Brittany Hensel: Conjoined Twins - Quick Q&A’, *Naked Stories* <https://youtu.be/1RiFbEA3aOw> [accessed 16/4/21]

Aldiss, Brian, *Brothers of the Head* (London: Pierrot Publishing Limited, 1977)

Amundson, Ron, *The Changing Role of the Embryo in Evolutionary Thought: Roots of Evo-Devo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

‘An Act for Establishing a General Post-Office for All Her Majesties Dominions and for Settling a Weekly Sum out of the Revenues Thereof for the Service of the War and Other Her Majesties Occasions’ (London: [n. Pub], 1710), <https://www.rfrajola.com/mercury/QALaw.pdf> [Accessed 22/6/22

Anca, Alexandru and others, ‘Special Forms in Twin Pregnancy – Asymmetric Conjoined Twins’, *Journal of Medicine and Life*, 8.1 (2015) 115-8

Appelbaum, Robert, ‘Existential Disgust and the Food of the Philosopher’, *Food and Literature,* ed. by Gitanjali G. Shahani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 130-44

Ardis, Ann, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990)

Ariès, Philippe, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. by R. Baldick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996)

Armstrong, David, 'The Rise of Surveillance Medicine', *Sociology of Health and Illness,* 17.3 (1995), 393-404

Baer, Karl Ernst von, *Über Entwickelungsgeschichte der Thiere. Beobachtung und Reflexion* (Königsberg: Erster Theil, 1828). <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/28306> [Accessed 21/6/22]

Baldwin, Geoff, 'Individual and Self in the Late Renaissance', *The Historical Journal*, 44.2 (2001) 341-6

Baril, Alexandre, 'Transness as Debility: Rethinking Intersections Between Trans and Disabled Embodiments', *Feminist Review,* 111.1 (2015), 59-74

Barnum, Phineas, *The Life of PT Barnum, Written by Himself* (London: Sampson Low, Son, & Co, 1855)

Beattie, Keith, *The Scar that Binds: American Culture and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1998)

Benson, John, *British Coalminers in the Nineteenth Century: A Social History* (New York: Macmillan, 1980)

Berlant, Lauren, 'Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)' *Critical Inquiry,* 33.4 (2007), 754-80

— — Austerity, Precarity, Awkwardness' *Supervalentthought,* (2011), <https://supervalentthought.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/berlant-aaa-2011final.pdf> [Accessed 12/10/22]

Bertin, Louis, 'Carte-de-visite photograph of Millie-Christine with flowers' Photograph, (Brighton: [N. Pub], 1874), <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/16349914> [Accessed 28/6/22]

Betterton, Rosemary, 'Promising Monsters: Pregnant Bodies, Artistic Subjectivity and Maternal Imagination', *Hypatia,* 21.6 (2006), 80-100

Biographical Sketch of Millie Christine, the Carolina Twin. Surnamed the Two-Headed Nightingale and the Eighth Wonder of the World, (Cincinnati: Hennegan & Co, 1892) <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/carolinatwin/carolinatwin.html> [Accessed 14/9/22]

Bloch, Edmund, C., and Joannes H. Karris, 'Cardiopagus in Neonatal Thoracopagus Twins: Anesthetic Management', *Anesthesia and Analgesia*, 59.4 (1980), 304-7

Bogdan, Robert, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)

— — 'The Social Construction of Freaks, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. by Rosemary Garland Thompson (New York: New York University Press, 1996) 23-37

Bostad, Inga, and Halvor Hanisch, 'Freedom and Disability Rights: Dependence, Independence, and Interdependence', *Metaphilosophy*, 47.3 (2016), 371-84

Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry,* 28.1 (2001), 1-22

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, *The Siamese Twins: A Satirical Tale of the Times with Other Poems* (New York: Harpers, 1831)

Burns, William, 'An Age of Wonders: Prodigies, Providence, and Politics in England 1580-1727' (doctoral thesis, University of California, 1994)

'Burrow-Giles Lithographic Company v. Sarony', *U.S Supreme Court*, 111.53 (1884) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/111/53/> [Accessed 12/7/22]

Butler, Judith, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York, Verso, 2006)

— — ‘Precarious Life: Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation’, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy,* 26.2 (2012), 134-51

Cabanis, Pierre, *Du Degré de Certitude de la Médecine* (Caille et Ravier: Paris, 1803)

Campbell, Fiona, “Legislating Disability: Negative Ontologies and the Government of Legal Identities”, *Foucault and the Government of Disability, Enlarged and Revised 10th Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Shelley Tremain, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), pp. 108-30

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, (1982) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-12.html#h-40> [Accessed 12/10/22

Canadian Human Rights Act, (1977) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/*Canadian*> [Accessed 12/10/22]

Canguilhem, Georges, *The Normal and the Pathological,* trans. by Carolyn Fawcett & Robert Cohen (New York: Zone Press, 1991)

Carel, Havi, *Phenomenology of Illness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Carey, Henry, ‘This Two-Headed Monster – The Family’ *Harper’s Monthly Magazine*, 156.1 (1928), 162-71

‘Chang and Eng the Siamese Twins, in an Oriental Setting’, Lithograph, (London: [n. Pub], 1830). <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/gb7v5t8h> [Accessed 19/2/19]

Cheyne, Ria, *Disability, Literature, Genre: Representation and Affect in Contemporary Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019)

Clare, Eli, *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling With Cure* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2017)

Cohen, David, *The Development of Play,* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2017)

Couser, Thomas, *Signifying Bodies: Disability in Contemporary Life Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009)

'Conjoined Fetus Lady', *South Park,* Comedy Central, 3 June 1998

Cooper, Harriet, 'The Oppressive Power of Normalcy in the Lives of Disabled Children, *Disabled Children's Childhood Studies: Critical Approaches in a Global Context*, ed. by Tille Curran and Katherine Runswick-Cole (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013), 136-51

—— *Critical Disability Studies and the Disabled Child: Unsettling Distinctions* (Routledge: Abingdon-on-Thames, 2020)

Crockford, Ally, 'Spectacular Medical Freakery: British 'Translations' of Nineteenth-Century European Teratology' *Exploring the Cultural History of Continental European Freak Shows and "Enfreakment",* ed. by Anna Kérchy and Andrea Zittlau (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 112-128

Crossan, Sarah, *One* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)

Cryle, Peter, and Elizabeth Stevens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017)

Cummings, Brian, and others, 'Case 33-2017: 22-Month-Old Conjoined Twins', *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 377.17 (2017), 1667-77

Cuvier, Georges, *Le Règne Animal* (A. Belin: Paris, 1817)

Daniels, Carolyn, *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children's Literature*, (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2006)

Darwin, Charles, *On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859)

Davis, Lennard, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (New York: Verso Books, 1995)

Debats, Donald, A., 'Secrecy in Voting in American History: No Secrets There', *Sociallogic* (2016) <http://sociallogic.iath.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/f%20Public%20Voting%2C%20secrecy%20historic%20%234.pdf> [Accessed 21/10/21

Deeley, Ellena, 'Contested Subjects: The Configuration of Conjoined Twins in Contemporary World Literature and Screen Media' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2021)

Dijck, Jose van, 'Medical Documentary: Conjoined Twins as a Mediated Spectacle', *Media, Culture & Society,* 24.4 (2002), 537-556
'Don't Stand So Close to Me' *Grey's Anatomy* American Broadcasting Company, 30 November 2006

Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge,1966)

Dreger, Alice, *One of Us: Conjoined Twins and the Future of Normal* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004)

Driessens, Olivier, 'The Celebritization of Society and Culture: Understanding the Structural Dynamics of Celebrity Culture', *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 16.6 (2013), 641-57

Dunst, Maura, 'Music and Trauma in New Women Short Stories', *British Women Short Story Writers: The New Women to Now,* ed. by Emma Young and James Bailey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 15-31

Ennis, Garth, *Hitman*, illustrated by John McCrea (Burbank: DC Comics, 2009)

Farrell, Amy. *Fat Shame: Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2011)

Fiedler, Leslie, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1981)

Fitzgibbon, John '2 Headed Girl, MILLIE-CRISSIE', Photograph, (St Louis: Robert E Green, 1867), <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Millie_and_Christine_McKoy_by_Fitzgibbon,_1867.png> [Accessed 23/6/22]

Fontes da Costa, Palmira, *The Singular and the Making of Knowledge at the Royal Society of London in the Eighteenth Century* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009)

Forti, Augusto, 'History of the Concept of Individual and Individuality in Western Society', *International Conference on Humanities and the Contemporary World* 1.1 (2012) 1-6

Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality Vol One: The Will to Knowledge,* trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1979)

— — *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. by Alan Sheridan, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995)

— — *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2002)

— — *The Birth of the Clinic,* trans. by Alan Sheridan, (Abingdon-on-Thames, Routledge, 2003)

Frank, Arthur, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Frattarola, Angela, *Modernists Soundscapes: Auditory Technology and the Novel* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018)

Freeman, Elizabeth, *Beside You in Time: Sense Methods and Queer Sociabilities in the American Nineteenth Century* (Durham DC: Duke University Press, 2019)

Frost, Linda, *Conjoined Twins in Black and White: The Lives of Millie-Christine McKoy and Daisy and Violet Hilton* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2009)

Gabbard, Glen, 'Classic Article', *Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research*, 5.2 (1996) 160-163

Gagnier, Regenia, "New Women, Female Aesthetes, and Socialist Individualists: the Literature of Separateness and Solubility", *Individualism, Decadence and Globalization On the Relationship of Part to Whole, 1859–1920* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 61-86, pp. 61-2

Galton, Francis. 'Regression Towards Mediocrity in Hereditary Stature', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* 15.1 (1886), 246-63

Garland-Thompson, Rosemary, 'The Politics of Staring: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography', *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities Vol I* ed. by Sharon Snyder, Brenda Brueggemann, Rosemarie Garland-Thompson (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002), 56-75

— — 'Ways of Staring', *Journal of Visual Culture,* 5.2 (2006), 173-9

— — 'Misfits: A Feminist Materialist Disability Concept', *Hypatia*, 26.3 (2011), 591-609

Gill, Michael, *Already Doing It: Intellectual Disability and Sexual Agency* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015)

Goodley, Dan, and Rebecca Lawthom, 'The Disavowal of Uncanny Disabled Children: Why Non-Disabled People are so Messed Up Around Childhood Disability', *Disabled Children's Childhood Studies: Critical Approaches in a Global Context,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) 164-179

Gould, Hannah 'To the Siamese Twins', *Poems by Miss H. F. Gould* (Boston: Hillard, Grey & co., 1839), 54-5, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007659325> [accessed 26/4/19]

Gowdy, Barbara 'The Two-Headed Man', *We Seldom Look on Love* (London: Flamingo, 1992) 101-15

'GP mythbuster 62: Photography and Making and Using Visual Recordings of Patients, *Care Quality Commission,* <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/gp-mythbuster-62-photography-making-using-visual-recordings-patients> [Accessed 11/7/22]

Graham, Matthias, 'St. John Baptist de la Salle', *The Catholic Encyclopedia* <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08444a.htm> [Accessed 10/10/22]

Graves, Robert, 'Twins', *A Body of Work: An Anthology of Poetry and Medicine* ed. by Corinna Wagner and Andy Brown (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), 406

Gray, Richard, *About Face: German Physiognomical Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz*, (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2004)

Grosz, Elizabeth, 'Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at the Limit', *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body,* ed. Rosemary Garland Thompson (London: New York University Press, 1996), 55-66

Halberstam, Judith, *The Queer Art of Failure*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011)

Hall, Alice, ‘Disability and the Short Story’, *The Edinburgh Companion to the Short Story in English*, ed. by Paul Delaney and Adrian Hunter (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 346-62

Hansen, Sven, ‘John Brown's System of Medicine and Its Introduction in Denmark Around 1800’, *Dansk Medicinhistorisk Arbog,* 44.1 (2016), 31-47

Haraway, Donna, ‘A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late 20th Century, *Socialist Review,* 80.1 (1985), 65-108

Harvey, David, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2000)

Hevey, David ‘The Enfreakment of Photography’, *The Disability Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. by Lennard J. Davis (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2006), 367-378

Hickey-Moody, Anna, ‘Slow Life and Ecologies of Sensation’, *Feminist Review,* 111.1 (2015), 140-8

History and Medical Description of the Two-Headed Girl: Sold by Her Agents for Her Special Benefit, at 25 Cents in "Her Own Particular Way" by "One of Them". ([N.P.] Warren, Johnson & Co, 1869) <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/vj7y5hww> [Accessed 14/9/22]

Hoby, Margaret, *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599–1605,* ed. by Dorothy M. Meads (London: Routledge, 1930)

Hong, Cathy, ‘Ontology of Chang and Eng, the Original Siamese Twins’, *Translating Mo’um* (New York: Hanging Loose Press, 2002), 15-20

Huang, Yunte, *Inseparable: The Original Siamese Twins and their Rendezvous with American History* (New York, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2018)

Hughes, Bill, and Kevin Paterson, 'The Social Model of Disability and the Disappearing Body: Towards a Sociology of Impairment', *Disability & Society,* 12.3 (2010), 325-40

Hume, David, *Treatise of Human Nature,* Book 3, Part 1 (London: Henry Frowde, 1739)

Hunter, Kay, *Duet for a Lifetime: The Story of the Original Siamese Twins* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1964)

Inckle, Kay, 'Debilitating Times: Compulsory Ablebodiedness and White Privilege in Theory and Practice', *Feminist Review,* 111.1 (2015), 42-58

'Interdimensional Cable 2: Tempting Fate', *Rick and Morty*, Adult Swim, 1 October 2015

Jay, Martin, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1993)

Jeffords, Susan, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989)

Jensch, Ernst, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny', trans. by Roy Sellars, *Uncanny Modernity,* ed. by Jo. Collins and John Jervis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

Jensen, Dean, *The Lives and Loves of Daisy and Violet Hilton: A True Story of Conjoined Twins* (Berkley: Ten Speed Press, 2006)

Journal of the Assembly of the State of New York at their One Hundred and Seventeenth Session. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Albany, on the Second Day of January 1804, Vol 1 (Albany: James B. Lyon, 1894)

Kama, Amit, 'Supercrips Versus the Pitiful Handicapped: Reception of Disabled Images by Disabled Audience Members', *Communications,* 29.4 (2004), 447-66

Kaman, Henry, ‘Modernity and the Individual’, *Early Modern European Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021) 277-315

Kapsalis, Terry, ‘Mastering the Female Pelvis: Race and the Tools of Reproduction’, *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture,* ed. by Kimberly Wallace-Sanders (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 263-300

Klein, Melanie, ‘Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms’, *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis,* 27.1 (1946), 98-110

Kristeva, Julia, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)

Lacan, Jacques, *Ecrits: The first Complete Edition in English*, trans. by Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002)

LaCom, Cindy, ‘‘The Time Is Sick and Out of Joint’: Physical Disability in Victorian England’, *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, 120.2 (2005), 547-52

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980)

Lake, Jessica, *The Face That Launched a Thousand Lawsuits: The American Women Who Forged a Right to Privacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

Lansens, Lori, *The Girls* (London: Virago Press, 2006)

Leder, Drew, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)

Leelanukrom, Ruenreong and others, 'Anaesthetic Experiences in Three Sets of Conjoined Twins in King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital', *Pediatric Anaesthesia*, 14.2 (2004), 176-83

Lee-Hamilton, Eugene, 'Siamese Twins', *A Body of Work: An Anthology of Poetry and Medicine,* ed. by Corinna Wagner and Andy Brown (London: Bloomsbury, 2016)

Lenard, H. G., and F. J. Schulte, 'Polygraphic Sleep Study in Craniopagus Twins (Where is the Sleep Transmitter?)', *Journal of Neurology and Neurosurgical Psychiatry*, 35.1 (1972), 756-62

Levnina, Marina, 'Regulation and Discipline in the Genomic Age: A Consideration of Differences between Genetics and Eugenics,' *A Foucault for the 21st Century: Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millennium*, ed. by Sam Binkley and Jorge Capetillo (Cambridge:Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 308-319

Lifshin, Joan, 'The Man Who is Married to Siamese Twins Joined at the Skull', *A Body of Work: An Anthology of Poetry and Medicine,* ed. by Corinna Wagner and Andy Brown (London: Bloomsbury, 2016)

Lorde, Audre, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House', *Sister Outsider* (New York: Penguin, 2019), 103-10

Low, Anthony, 'Privacy, Community, and Society: Confession as a Cultural Indicator in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight", *Religion and Literature,* 30.2 (1998), 1-20

Lynch, Samuel, *The Elements of Medicine, or A Translation of the Elementa Medicinae Brunonis, with Large Notes, Illustrations, and Comments* (Philadelphia: William Spotswood, 1791),. <https://archive.org/details/8407596.nlm.nih.gov> [Accessed 14/6/22]

M. Mian, and others, 'Conjoined Twins: From Conception to Separation, a Review', *Clinical Anatomy*, 30.3 (2017), 385-396

Marks, Deborah, *Disability: Controversial Debates and Psychosocial Perspectives* (London, Routledge, 1999)

Martell, Joanne, *Millie-Christine: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* (Winston-Salem, John F. Blair, 2000)

McCallum, Shiona, 'Conjoined Twins Separated with the Help of Virtual Reality', *BBC News,* 1 August 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-62378452> [Accessed 13/8/22]

McHold, Heather, 'Even as You and I: Freak Shows and Lay Discourse on Spectacular Deformity', *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain,* ed. by Marlene Tromp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008), 21-36

McRuer, Robert, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006)

Meckel, Jhann 'On Monstrosities in General', *The Medico-Chirurgical Review,* 24.47 (1836), 209-256

Metcalf, Alida, *Mapping an Atlantic World Circa 1500* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020)

Minister, Meredith, 'Religion and (Dis)Ability in Early Feminism', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion,* 23.2 (2013), 5-24

Mitchell, David, and Sharon Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000)

— — ‘Body Genres: An Anatomy of Disability in Film’, *The Problem Body: Projecting Disability on Film,* ed. by Sally Chivers and Nicole Markotić (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 179-205

Mintz, Susannah, ‘Lyric Bodies: Poets on Disability & Masculinity, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 127.2 (2012), 248-63

Monsters University, dir. By Dan Scanlon (Walt Disney Studios, 2013)

‘National Early Warning Score’, *Activ8rLives.com,* <https://www.activ8rlives.com/support/data-collected/cardiovascular-and-respiratory/national-early-warning-score-news> [Accessed 16/9/22]

N. Parent-Weiss, and Phillips, B. (2006) 'Custom Halo Superstructure Applied Preoperatively to Craniopagus Conjoined Twins: A Case Report', *Journal of Prosthetics and Orthotics*, 18.4, 120-123

O’Brian, Denis, ‘The Right of Privacy’, *Columbia Law Review*, 2.7 (1902), 437–448

Odel, George, *Annals of the New York Stage – Volume V (1843-1850)* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 1931)

Ogdan, Thomas, *The Primitive Edge of Experience* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 1989)

Oliver, Mike, *The Politics of Disablement* (New York, Red Globe Press, 1990)

— — ‘A Sociology of Disability or a Disablist Sociology?’, *Disability & Society: Emerging Issues and Insights,* ed. by Len Barton (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 1996), 18-42

Ontario Human Rights Code, (1962) <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code> [Accessed 12/10/22]

‘Ordinary, *adj.* and adv.’ *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/132361?rskey=hSzt5o&result=2#eid> [Accessed 14/2/19]

Orser, Joseph, *The Lives of Chang and Eng: Siam’s Twins in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014)

Paley, William, *Natural Theology: Or, Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected From the Appearances of Nature*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Pancoast, William, *Photographic Review of Medicine and Surgery: a Bi-Monthly Illustration of Interesting Cases, Accompanied by Notes* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1871), <https://archive.org/details/photographicrevi01maur> [Accessed 20/9/21]

Parker, Frances, *The Flying Burgermaster* (London, [N. pub.], 1832), <https://archive.org/details/flyingburgermast00morl> [accessed 21/01/22]

‘People v. Hall’, *Supreme Court of California,* 4.399 (1894) <https://cite.case.law/cal/4/399/> [Accessed 17/6/22]

Perkin, Harold, *Origins of Modern English Society* (Gillingham: Ark Paperbacks, 1985)

Pingree, Alison, ‘‘The Exceptions That Prove the Rule’: Daisy and Violet Hilton, the “New Woman,” and the Bonds of Marriage’, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. by Rosmarie Garland Thomson (London: New York University Press, 1996), 173-184

Pope, Alexander and others, *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus,* ed. by Charles Kirby-Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950)

Preves, Sharon, E., *Intersex and Identity: The Contested Self* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003),

Puar, Jasbir, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017)

Quetelet, Adolphe, Sur l'homme et le Développement de ses Facultés ou Essai de Physique Sociale, (Paris: Bachelier, 1835)

Quigley, Christine, *Conjoined Twins: An Historical, Biological, and Ethical Issues Encyclopedia* (Jefferson: Mcfarland & Company, 2006)

'Re A (Conjoined Twins)', *England and Wales Court of Appeal,* Civ 254 (2001) <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2000/254.html> [accessed 18/08/21]

Richardson, Angelique, 'The Eugenization of Love: Sarah Grand and the Morality of Genealogy', *Victorian Studies,* 42.2 (2000), 227-5

'Roberson v. Rochester Folding Box Co', *Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York,* 64.30 (1901), <https://casetext.com/case/roberson-v-rochester-folding-box-co> [Accessed 11/10/22]

Rossner, Judith, *Attachments* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977)

Samuels, Ellen, 'Examining Millie and Christine McKoy: Where Enslavement and Enfreakment Meet', *Signs,* 37.1 (2011), 53-81

'Section 50: Right of Privacy' *The Laws of New York,* 6.5 (1903) <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/CVR/50> [Accessed 11/10/22]

Selisker, Scott, *Human Programming: Brainwashing, Automatons, and American Unfreedom* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016)

Serres, Etienne, *Recherches d'anatomie Transcendante et Pathologique: Théorie des Formations et des Déformations Organiques, Appliquée à l'anatomie de Ritta Christina, et de la Duplicité Monstrueuse* (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1832) <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6358458c> [Accessed 21/6/22]

Shakespeare, Tom, and Nicholas Watson, 'The Social Model of Disability: An Outdated Ideology?', *Research in Social Science and Disability,* Vol. 2 (2002) 9-28

Shakespeare, Tom, and others, 'Rehabilitation as a Disability Equality Issue: A Conceptual Shift for Disability Studies?', *Social Inclusion,* 6.1 (2018), 61-72

Shildrick, Margit, 'Maternal Imagination: Reconceiving First Impressions' *Rethinking History*, 4.3 (2000), 243-60

— — 'Living on, Not Getting Better', *Feminist Review,* 111.1 (2015), 10-24

Shildrick, Margrit & Janet Price, 'Deleuzian Connections and Queer Corporealities: Shrinking Global Disability', *Rhizomes,* 11.1 (2005), <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue11/shildrickprice/index.html> [Accessed 12/10/22]

Sinha, Arvind and others, 'Conjoined Thoracopagus Twins – Our Experience of Successful Separation', *Journal of Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons,* 26.5 (2021), 354-7

Smith, J. David, *Psychological Profiles of Conjoined Twins: Heredity, Environment, and Identity,* (Praeger: New York, 1988)

Snigurwicz, Dianna 'The Phenomene's Dilemma: Teratology and the Policing of Human Anomalies in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Paris' *Foucault and the Government of Disability, Enlarged and Revised 10th Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Shelley Tremain, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 172-88

Sontag, Susan, *Illness as Metaphor*, (New York: Farrar, 1978)

Spencer, Rowena, 'Conjoined Twins: Theoretical Embryological Basis', *Teratology*, 45.6 (1992), 591-602

— — 'Theoretical and Analytical Embryology of Conjoined Twins: Part I: Embryogenesis', *Clinical Anatomy,* 13.1 (2000), 36-53

— — 'Parasitic Conjoined Twins: External, Internal (Fetuses in Fetu and Teratomas, and Detached (Acardiacs)', *Journal of Clinical Anatomy,* 14.6 (2001), 428-44

Spijkerman, Sandra, 'Defibrillation of Conjoined Twins', *Pediatric Anesthesia*, 8.4 (2013), 760-1

Spitz, L., 'Conjoined Twins', *Prenatal Diagnostic*, 25.1 (2005), 814-9

Spitz, L. and E. M. Kiely, 'Experience in the Management of Conjoined Twins', *British Journal of Surgery,* 89.9 (2002), 1188-92

Stankievech, Charles, 'From Stethoscopes to Headphones: An Acoustic Spatialization of Subjectivity', *Leonardo Music Journal,* 17.1 (2007), 55-59

Sterne, Jonathan, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2003)

Sturken, Marita, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997)

Sweet, Ryan, *Prosthetic Body Parts in Nineteenth Century Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022)

Sweeting, T., and P. Patterson, ‘Lin and Win Htut: The Conjoined Twins from Burma’, *Canadian Nurse,* 80.11 (1984) 18-20

Surgical Separation of the Siamese Twins, Chang and Eng’ *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser,* 20 November 1868, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BB3204682266/BNCN> [Accessed 20/09/19]

Tardieu, ‘Communications; le Resultat de son Examen du Monster Connu Sous le Nom de Millie-Christine’ *Bulletin de l’Acadmie de Medicine*, 13.1 (1874), 36–39, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k408664f/f34> [Accessed 20/9/21]

Tchen, John, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture 1776-1882* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999)

Teukolsky, Rachel, ‘Cartomania: Sensation, Celebrity, and the Democratized Portrait’ *Victorian Studies,* 57.3 (2015), 462-75

The Bible. New International Version (Genesis 2:23)

The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, as Manifested in the Creation, ed. by Francis Bridgewater (London: W. Pickering, 1834-9)

‘The Double Siamese Youths’, *Liverpool Mercury,* 13 November 1829, 8, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BC3203940093/BNCN> [Accessed 19/09/19]

‘The Siamese Youths’, *Leicester Journal and Midland Counties General Advertiser*, 27 November 1829, 2, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CL3241148545/BNCN> [Accessed 19/09/19]

‘The Siamese Youths’, *The Sussex Advertiser or Lewes and Brighthelmston Journal*, 30 November 1829, 4, <https.link.gale.com/apps/doc/CL3241272299/BNCN> [Accessed 19/09/19]

‘The United Siamese Twins’, *The Morning Post*, 23 November 1829, 4, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/R3209813367/BNCN> [Accessed 19/09/19]

‘The World Renowned United Siamese Twins “Chang” and “Eng”’, Lithograph, (New York City: Currier and Ives, 1860) <http://resource.nlm.nih.gov/101392965> [Accessed 10/10/22]

‘This Magic Moment’, *Grey’s Anatomy,* American Broadcasting Company, 12 January 2012

Thornton, Margaret, *Dissonance and Distrust: Women in the Legal Profession,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

‘Today’s Brains Trust’ *Good Morning,* [April-December] 1943, 2 <https://www.servicenewspapers.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Images/LBY_E_J_005199_1_180/1> [accessed 15/11/21]

Toombs, Kay, ‘The Lived Experience of Disability’, *Human Studies,* 18.1 (1995) 9-23

‘Treehouse of Horror VII’, *The Simpsons,* Fox Network, 27 October 1996

Turner, David, and Daniel Blackie, *Disability in the Industrial Revolution: Physical Impairment in British Coalmining, 1780–1880* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018)

Twain, Mark, *Pudd’nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1900)

‘Voting Problem is Created by Holyoke Siamese Twins: How to Insure Individual Privacy for Sisters in Casting Ballot, Puzzles Board’, *Daily Boston Globe,* 15 November 1933, 1, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/758220013> [Accessed 11/10/22]

Waddington, Ivan, ‘The Movement Towards the Professionalisation of Medicine’ *British Medical Journal,* 301.1 (1990), 688-90

Wagner, Corinna, ‘The Dream of a Transparent Body: Identity, Science and the Gothic Novel’, *Gothic Studies,* 14.1 (2012), 74-9

— — ‘Gout vs. *Goût:* Taste, Community, and the Monarchy’, *Pathological Bodies: Medicine and Political Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013) 167-98

Waldschmidt, Anne, ‘Disability Goes Cultural: The Cultural Model of Disability as an Analytical Tool’, *Culture — Theory — Disability: Encounters Between Disability Studies and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Anne Waldschmidt, Hanjo Berressem and Moritz Ingwersen (Bielefield: Transcript Verlag, 2007), 19-28

Wallace, Irving, and Amy Wallace, *The Two: A Biography* (London: Cassell, 1978)

Warman, Caroline, ‘From Pre-Normal to Abnormal: The Emergence of a Concept in Late Eighteenth-Century France’, *Psychology and Sexuality,* 1.3 (2010), 200-13

Warren, Samuel, & Louis Brandeis, ‘The Right to Privacy’, *Harvard Law Review*, 4.5 (1890), 193-220

Watermeyer, Brian, ‘Disability and Psychoanalysis’, *Disability and Social Change: A South African Agenda,* ed. by Brian Watermeyer, Leslie Swartz, Theresa Lorenzo, Marguerite Schneider and Mark Priestly (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2006) 31-44

‘We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together’, *Grey’s Anatomy*, American Broadcasting Company, 1 May 2014

Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism and Other Writings*, trans. by Peter Baehr, ed. by Gordon Wells (New York: Penguin, 2002)

Weiss, Gail, 'Sharing Time Across Unshared Horizons', *Time in Feminist Phenomenolgy,* ed. by C. Schües, D. Olkowski, & H. Fielding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 171-188

Welsh, Irvine, *The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2014)

Westgate, Ruth, 'Space and Social Complexity in Greece from the Early Iron Age to the Classical Period', *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens,* 84.1 (2015), 47-95

Young, Stella, 'We're Not Here for Your Inspiration', *The Drum*, 3 July 2012, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-07-03/young-inspiration-porn/4107006> [Accessed 12/10/22]

Zaner, Richard, *The Context of Self: A Phenomenological Inquiry Using Medicine as a Clue* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1981)