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Hideous Progeny, Dreaming Robots, and the Limits of the Human

A Thesis Presented By

SCOTT ELLIOTT

May 2022

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Hideous Progeny, Dreaming Robots, and the Limits of the Human

A Thesis Presented By

SCOTT ELLIOTT

May 2022

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies

Bridgewater State University

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In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

This project is an in-depth exploration and synthesis of three different works: novels *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick, and the movie *Bladerunner* by Ridley Scott. I will be approaching each story as a separate entity unto themselves yet tie them together through the common lens of a need to explore what it means to be human, the treatment of those that fall outside of the norm, and how that leads to villainous representation. While the negative portrayal of disabled bodies has positively progressed since *Frankenstein*, this problem continues to endure within both art and society. Art is merely one facet of a larger problem but by close reading novels and film I hope to gain a better understanding at the the ways in which the disabled body is vilified as well as what it will take to move beyond and into a place of acceptance. By applying theoretical perspectives from aesthetic theory, posthumanism, and disability studies, I argue how evolving perceptions of the body impact our definitions of the villainous.

DEDICATION

To my children who I hope never stop adventuring,
and to my wife, Renata, whose support and home-cooked meals have always kept me
going.

I love you all.

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I would first like to thank Dr. Adams for the constant support throughout the entire thesis process. Your insight during my writing was crucial as was your patience and thoughtfulness. Without your help I do not think I would have been able to finish in such a short amount of time, so thank you very much.

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Finally, I would like to thank my mom for her continual support through everything, and to my dad for introducing me to *Blade Runner* and the genius of Ridley Scott.

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Introduction

The story of the hero achieving justice for those that have been persecuted, righting the wrongs, and conquering the villain is one that has been told throughout generations. The archetype has been used so often that there have been books and college courses devoted to that specific story; however there is a trend among these stories that has been and continues to be troubling. One of the more recent examples is the James Bond movie and book franchise. Forty years ago in this famous franchise the main villain had a facial disfigurement, and the most recent film in the franchise, *James Bond: No Time to Die*, had three villains who each had facial disfigurements. This franchise is not alone as popular television shows and movies throughout the years have cast physically and mentally disabled characters as the villains such as Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*, Darth Vader from *Star Wars*, or Barty Crouch or Voldemort from *Harry Potter*, the first having a tongue twitch and the latter lacking a normal physical appearance.

Not every villain that is written for a story is labeled as disabled, however it happens so frequently that just typing the words “disabled villains in movies” into Google Search will yield more than twenty pages of articles about this very topic ranging from *The New York Times* to press companies in the United Kingdom to private blogs. It is great that the conversation about the disabled body being repeatedly cast as a sinister presence is a growing topic, but judging by one of the most popular film franchises of all time deciding to triple the amount of disabled villains in a movie since the inception of the leading character, there is still much work to be done.

The previous examples are just the latest in demonizing the disabled body as this is an issue that has persisted across time. In fact, Greek mythology continually

demonized Hephaestus, a god. This is significant when considering that these tales were originally kept alive primarily through oral tradition, and therefore the motif of the vilified disabled body is one that never wavered. Greek mythology is not the singular cause of this problem, but merely one example of how this troubling tradition has persisted. A common thread throughout these stories is the way in which the disabled body seems to be something that is uncontrollable. It is this aspect, the unpredictability of “not normal” body that links disability to villainy. In order to better understand this link, I examine depictions of bodies, out of control bodies, that can be read as metaphors for disability and disabled bodies.

The term disabled can also be referred to as non-normate, a term popularized by Rosemarie Thomson. She uses this term to refer to a body that deviates from the societal expected norm, a body that is not broken or inferior but instead embodies a different image than what the observer has come to believe is normal. It is this deviation from normality that is villainized, and the non-normate body is not allowed to exist and be accepted among normate bodies. In discussing disability, then, we cannot limit our investigation to visible disabilities. Instead, this project examines non-normate bodies that stand in for the disabled body. The overlap between these two concepts—disabled and non-normate—allows us to consider the ways in which difference gets portrayed as deviance. The continual portrayal of the disabled or non-normate body as a villain begs the question: what is it about the disabled body that links it to villainy? One of the more simple explanations for the recent stereotypical casting is that it has just become the norm for directors and writers. The original *Peter Pan* film by Disney was released in 1953 and partly centered on the evil Captain Hook brandishing a shiny hook as a prosthetic hand,

whereas one of the newest and live action adaptations was released in 2003 with Captain Hook still being the villain and still having a hook for a prosthetic hand. While someone might argue that there was no change in the villain because he resembled the original, this is exactly the problem. Arguing for or being complacent with the continuation of a certain theme or trope just because it is conventional is stubborn and without compassion for those that these stylistic choices potentially impact. Sure, there is tradition, but there is a more persuasive way of reading the problem.

Another explanation for why this trend has persisted is upon viewing a disabled body, there is a subconscious realization that the body is fragile and not without flaws, one could even say not whole. As Lennard Davis has argued, this subconscious awareness causes negative reactions because that conception of the self has been violated and shattered. By casting the disabled body as a villain, storytellers have given the audience the ability to have their negative emotions validated. If the disabled body is sinister and villainous then it discredits the disabled body's ability to fracture the idea of a complete and whole self. The problem with this notion is that the concept of the whole self is a facade. Every single person has a physical or mental difference that could be considered a deficiency when compared to another person, and our physical and mental abilities will also radically change as we age which therefore does not allow for an established set of standards by which to measure oneself. Without the set of standards, the idea of the body and mind being flawless and whole must be a facade because there is no true sense of perfection.

The exclusion, mistreatment, and vilifying of disabled and non-normate bodies is not confined to literature and film, but pervades reality as well. While steps have been

made in the right direction in terms of inclusion and acceptance, there is work to be done. Literature and film may be perpetuating various stereotypes, but art is not the singular barrier and is instead part of a much larger societal problem. I am not making an argument for just art to change but instead for a societal change. I do not presume to offer a solution, but by critiquing texts and films that are creating space for the disabled body and analyzing how it is being done as well as the success of that labor, I hope to strengthen the argument against vilifying the disabled body. Because this problem persists and these explanations still subconsciously exist as permission among writers, I have devoted myself to analyzing the past, present, and future of this issue. In this project I look into how this trope was developed, stigmatized, and is attempting to be overturned by evolving what it means to be human.

Science fiction (sci-fi) offers the reader a world that many other types of genres cannot, a world that breaks rules and barriers that the reader's present society has not been able to. Sci-fi is about creating a vision that shows the reader what we could potentially be as a society and even individuals through a story that contains elements completely foreign and imaginary. In these various stories, authors confront the task of creating a world that engrosses the reader because of this possibility, and the higher the potential for accepting these rules and norms as plausible then the higher the potential for the reader to be moved by the theme or message. Science fiction is also obsessed with grappling with the concept of what is or what is not human. Whether it is an alien, cyborg, or a different body introduced as a character, there are constantly new bodies that play pivotal roles in a story and are often the focal point of oppression.

One of the most oppressed communities within science fiction is the disabled body, or those that would be a stand in for the disabled body. The idea of disability is constructed, an idea that is constantly in flux and defined by varying bodies. The human body will go through numerous changes just from aging, and abilities that one has at a certain point in life could potentially lessen or be negated altogether. This makes defining a normal human an impossible task because every trait that could be a qualifier is one that is subject to change because of time. The inability to define the normal human makes defining what is disabled a near impossible task as well. In order to put pressure on the constructed nature of normalcy, I focus on works that center on constructed bodies. These constructed bodies should be as close to perfect as the ideal of the “non-disabled” body could be. Yet, in works centering on constructed bodies, the bodies’ flaws become more pronounced and these bodies can be read as metaphors for the disabled body. I have chosen to examine the novels *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (1818), *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick (1968), and a film adaptation of Dick’s novel titled *Blade Runner* directed by Ridley Scott (1982). In *Frankenstein*, for instance, the Creature is created in a laboratory from disassembled body parts, and in Dick’s novel and Scott’s adaptation the androids and replicants are constructed in facilities. Because they are considered to be inferior to humans based on some aspect of their physical bodies, the Creature, androids, and replicants can be read as metaphorical disabled bodies. In each instance, the constructed body is marked—in legible and non-legible ways—as incomplete. This lack of a certain something—desirability, empathy, memory—marks these figures as inherently fractured, incomplete, and unable to pass as human. They are not disabled in the traditional sense but they are met with horror,

rejection, and hostility because of their deviance from the norm and therefore not accepted by the normate bodies.

I begin with *Frankenstein* and the birth of both the genre of science fiction and the constructed body at a time when questions about identity and humanity were deeply inflected by the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Next I see the fruits of those concerns in a mid-twentieth century text, *Androids*, that deals with anxieties about individualism, progress, and human connection post-World War II. Finally, I close with a somewhat optimistic response to the concerns that industrialism and world-wide war have wrought. Though set in the twenty-first century, *Bladerunner's* interest in the constructed body's potential for evolution offers a riposte to the greed, commercialization, and political conservatism of Reagan Era America. In many ways, the story of the constructed/disabled body follows the progression of modernity and the anxieties it wrought. This redemption arc also suggests the possibility for resisting the forces which produce anti-disability ideology.

The topic of the disabled body being immorally neglected or vilified is not a new conversation, nor is the topic of what it means to be human. There has been extensive deliberation and criticism within disability studies and posthumanism, but what scholarship leaves out is the true merging of these theories. When scholars such as Jared Richman or Amber Knight utilize disability theory they are yet to include any critique of the social and future ramifications of the dissolving of the normate and non-normate binary. Not only that, but they have not yet touched on any kind of support for that binary as well. I think it is truly useful to argue how a character or text could be read with a disability lens, but I want to continue that argument into “what’s next?” or “where do we

go from here?” Even other theorists like Elizabeth Bohl who are reading the Creature as “other” such as through a critical race lens do not continue that conversation into possibilities of the future. I am focusing on how the constructed body can be read as disabled. What this means, then, is that the disabled body reveals our own disability, a point that other scholars do not raise in their analyses of these texts.

In order to put pressure on the ways in which the constructed/disabled body gets pulled into conversations about what is human, I turn to the work of disability theorists such as Donna Haraway. In doing so, I identify and use the obvious connections between the posthuman and disabilities studies. By including disability studies, posthumanism can create an even stronger foundation for its assertions that what is human is not limited by a quantified number of qualifiers. I take up Haraway’s call for affinity groups, arguing that if we are challenging the nature of the human, we should consider the disabled body as a fruitful site for retheorizing humanity. Posthumanism is concerned with the evolution of the idea of humanness which has led to the contemplation of how mechanical and artificial constructs and intelligences can be included as qualifiers for humanness, but what if society is vilifying those with mechanical and artificial prostheses? Posthumanism must include disability studies because if the idea of the human is to evolve, then the perception of the disabled body must evolve as well and the concept of the villain must be radicalized.

My thesis is broken into three main parts with the first chapter focusing on Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and establishing the history of vilifying the disabled body. I start by citing Rosemarie Thomson to help establish what non-normate means as well as outlining how the disabled body is attempted to be kept separate from the normate. I

point out that Thomson has failed to take her argument a step further and to say that the disabled body has been vilified. I move on by close reading and arguing how the creature can be read as a disabled body and identifying the markers that make him perceived as non-normate. I make sure to concentrate on Victor Frankenstein's response to the creature in any situation, especially after the creature is bestowed with life. Paul Marchbanks' comments help in establishing that Victor's hatred is paramount because it is originally caused by nothing more than the physical appearance of the creature, and this response becomes one that is repeated throughout the rest of the novel. Perhaps the most climactic point in the chapter is when the creature attempts to integrate and engage the sympathy of a normate body by making contact with the oldest member of a family he has been watching for over a year. Jared Richman and Amber Knight each offer insight into how the creature thought his eloquent speech would be the perfect tool in this endeavor, and I expand on their ideas as to why this failed. I would be remiss to not include Edmund Burke's theory regarding sympathy as this aids in the adjoining section about why and how the creature is vilified by other normate bodies that he encounters. I conclude with a close reading of the first time the creature kills someone. This is a drastic turning point in the novel as up until this point the creature had been a benevolent being who sought to join and contribute to society. However, because of the constant subjection to being vilified and the incessant labeling as such from his creator, the creature succumbs to the only thing the disabled body is meant to be within the novel: a villain.

The second chapter is a close reading of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick. This novel is not nearly as one-sided as *Frankenstein* as the androids, who are stand-ins for the disabled body, do cause the reader to pause and reflect on

exactly who the villain is in the novel and why. The chapter begins by establishing what empathy is and its importance to the novel and again I cite Burke and his critique of empathy and sympathy. In this beginning part I describe how the Voigt-Kampff test measures empathic response and decides if the subject is an android or a human and how this links the qualifier for humanness to the body. This part is essential for the subsequent chapter as well. I then emphasize that Deckard originally did not deliberate on whether or not to kill androids, however his emotions and connections to androids begins to blur with this newest task. I include John Sullins' scholarship to describe how Rachael and Phil Resch are responsible for this character development and posthuman evolution. One of the other central characters, John Isadore, is the focus of my attention for another portion towards the beginning. By including Lennard Davis' scholarship in disability studies as well as Clay Morton's connections to Autism Spectrum Disorder, I make the link between disabled bodies within reality and the novel as well as why various disabled bodies are accepted and others are not. Davis is also instrumental in establishing why the disabled body is vilified or ostracized to begin with. However, for all the posthumanist progression that Deckard makes as well as the androids being successful in activating sympathy and empathy within the normate body, that progress is undone towards the end of the novel. I close read various sections where Rachael and the androids are thrust back into a villainous and manipulative role and the disabled body is once again vilified. I conclude the chapter by analyzing how the logic against the disabled body in the novel breaks down and falls apart when truly examined. I look closely and recall various parts in this chapter and the novel that should not allow the normate body to be accepted as well, such as Iran's dependence on the mood organ. I incorporate Gilbert McInnis and his

posthumanist scholarship that analyzes Iran's behavior and how her dependence on machines can be read as a type of prosthesis.

My final chapter attempts to end on a more positive note by analyzing the film *Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott. I begin by addressing how Jordana Greenblatt, John Sullins, and Clay Morton have critiqued and analyzed *Blade Runner* through either a disability or posthumanist lens, but how they fell short of connecting these two theories and how each analysis does consider the importance of the body. Once into my own analysis, I establish how the film connects empathy, the body, and humanness. I emphasize the importance of the Voigt-Kampff test in establishing these connections as it literally shows the body being measured for humanness using empathy as a scale. The chapter consists of a combination of close reading of the cinematography as well as the relationships and dialogues between the characters. Davis is again incorporated when I examine Rachael and her role as an android within the film. Rachael plays a different role in the film than in Dick's novel as in the film she is originally unaware of being an android. I then focus on Rachael and Deckard's relationship because from the very beginning she was a catalyst for the posthuman evolution of Deckard's ideology. Towards the middle of the chapter I heavily integrate Donna Haraway's scholarship to argue how the androids could be read specifically as cyborgs, a combination of human and machine. This is monumental because it emphasizes that the cyborg is not the science fiction robot from movies that we are accustomed to seeing, but the reliance on machines in our everyday lives and machine prostheses are to be included in that definition. This is where I make the connection between posthumanism and disability studies as the concept and reading of the cyborg is what will liberate the disabled body from villainy. I finish

the chapter by again revisiting the relationship between Deckard and Rachael but how it has evolved into a posthumanist connection and broken down the barrier between normate and non-normate. It is Deckard who gives up his position of unquestionable power and ultimately Rachael who is finally able to achieve agency for herself and the disabled body.

Vilifying the Disabled Body

I had hardly placed my foot within the door, before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile weapons, I escaped to the open country, and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel, quite bare, and making a wretched appearance after the palaces I had beheld in the village. This hovel, however, joined a cottage of a neat and pleasant appearance; but, after my late dearly-bought experience, I dared not enter it. (Shelley 96)

Without any further context, the reader would assume that the people with frightened and hostile responses were confronted with a villain responsible for the most inexplicable deeds, recognized on sight for infamous cruel acts of every nature. However, not much earlier in the narrative, that same character who caused such alarming reactions said, “I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but, feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept” (94). How could this being from the second quote cause such reactions when clearly he is of such little threat? He can’t see, is in such pain that he can’t move or do anything to escape it, and weeps just from existing. Even further, in the following line he remarks at the beauty of a sunrise and the joy it causes him to see such beauty in nature. The missing link, the real reason that the villagers from the first quote fled or attacked on the side, is only because of his appearance and his body not being what they are used to describing as normal. A being of incredibly large stature with discolored skin and eyes, he is an object of terror for the citizens, but so much so that they think he is evil and must mean harm strictly because of

his countenance. Had those people given him a chance to act or attempt communication, they would have found a benevolent and incredibly helpful being, however they deny him this chance at belonging or any kind of acceptance within their society. By attacking the Creature because of wrongful judgment of his body, they are not only attacking the individual but symbolically attacking all non-normate and disabled bodies.

One of the earlier novels to vilify the disabled body was Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, published in 1818. Despite Paul Marchbanks describing the Creature as an "articulate intellectual and agile athlete," and the creature displaying benevolence and exquisite articulation, he is constantly met with horror and disgust before even uttering a sound or performing any kind of act or deed. Shelley paints the Creature as a being incapable of escaping his destiny as a villain, just as he is incapable of escaping his body that is the cause of his abuse. Read through a progressive lens, the reader could be led to believe that Victor Frankenstein is actually the villain because of his abandonment of the Creature and attempts to kill him just because of his unnatural appearance. However, mainstream media and film have continued the trend of portraying the Creature as an object of terror and evil. Before discussing the literature and film that is opening doors and conversations for the disabled body to be accepted and no longer vilified, we must first analyze the root of many of these issues. In this chapter, I examine the ways in which *Frankenstein* displays the disabled and non-normate body as villainous. The Creature's constructed body reveals the constructed nature of normality and therefore can be read as a metaphor for disability. I carefully close read the descriptions of the Creature as well as the reactions to his presence that prove he is perceived as non-normate, and furthermore I argue that he is vilified because of his disabled and non-normate body. I

draw distinctions between other parts of his persona and his physical presence to ensure there is no doubt that the Creature is the novel's villain primarily because of his corporeal form. More specifically, it is the constructed nature of that form that it makes him inferior to the human, a body to be vilified, and a metaphor for disability.

For the purpose of this argument, I will often refer to the disabled body as non-normate and the non-disabled body as normate. These terms were popularized in disability studies in part because of *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* by Rosemarie Garland Thomson. When first introducing the term she argues “The term *normate* usefully designates the social figure through which people can represent themselves as definitive human beings.” Thus the opposite, non-normate, is those who are not represented as definitive human beings because of cultural norms and societal expectations. The problem then hinges on the intangible or abstract notions of what the cultural norms and societal expectations are at any given time in history as they are malleable and constantly in flux. The disabled figure has long been the “paradigm of what culture calls deviant” (6), and that perception has unjustifiably not positively progressed as society has changed. Thomson uses “deviant” where I use non-normate, but regardless she points out a ridiculous dichotomy. If one were to compile all of the traits that would make someone “definitely human” then there would be close to nobody on that list, or at least an extraordinary minority. However, those who do fall into the normate category wield the power of disciplining the body, of choosing what is acceptable as normate or not. As the reader sees in *Frankenstein*, every normate body denies the creature any possibility at heroism, integration, or happiness. The disabled body is kept at a distance from society except when occupying the role of

the villain, therefore it is an extraordinary task to be seen as anything other than the monster.

Building on Thomson's arguments about the marginalization of the non-normate body, I argue that the disabled body represented by the Creature becomes vilified over the course of the novel. Corporeal divergence has long brought with it the feeling of needing to prove humanness on the part of the disabled body because "corporeal departures from dominant expectations never go uninterrupted or unpunished" (7), thus disability is less a distinct trait than a labeling and a category for disciplining. What occurs because of this is the exclusion from belonging, refusal of acceptance or even villainization. The disabled body is judged and either becomes a spectacle to gaze at or a "monstrosity" that arouses anxiety in the non-disabled body. Therefore in literature and in film when the disabled body is vanquished by the non-disabled hero, a cathartic feeling is felt by the reader or viewer, justice has been done and a balanced world has been created. The non-normate body is kept separate from acceptance and shackled to the labeling of disability because much of society refuses to accept the notion that everyone is either different in some way or will eventually become disabled by some means (aging has a way of negating attributes that at a certain point in life are criteria for being distinctively human). I contend that Thomson makes a valid point when she writes "If we accept the convention that fiction has some mimetic relation to life, we grant it power to further shape our perceptions of the world, especially regarding situations about which we have little direct knowledge" (10), however that shaping is not just negative, it is damaging.

Often the disabled body painted unfairly is not given a proper voice so as to create disillusion and a lack of agency. Thomson argues “From folktales and classic myths to modern and postmodern ‘grotesques,’ the disabled body is almost always presented by the mediating voice” (10). This is especially true in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The Creature’s tale and even his own words are retold through Victor Frankenstein’s point of view and again through Walton’s. Though there are very brief moments of empathy for the Creature on the behalf of Frankenstein, his narrow view of the human body remains rigid and stubborn as “Even the Creature’s designer, who temporarily bows to his creation’s compelling logic and allows himself to empathize with the Creature’s situation, ultimately fails to see beyond his strange appearance” (Marchbanks 25). By “strange appearance,” Marchbanks is referring to the Creature’s disabled body, and the failing “to see beyond” the successful attempt is denying the possibility of agency to the Creature. It is this visual reminder of inhumanity that links the Creature with Thomson’s arguments about the disabled body. The Creature’s appearance signals his inferior position vis-a-vis humans, thus aligning him with popular conceptions of the non-normate body.

Frankenstein always emphasizes the physical appearance of the body and this becomes the basis for vilifying the Creature. Before the Creature is ever described and perceived as non-normate, Frankenstein, the creator, makes sure to say, “His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful” (Shelley 45). Frankenstein established that he is the primary judge on beauty and worth for his creation, and because thought was put towards the beauty of the Creature, deviance from this plan would be met with shock, which is exactly what happened. Despite Frankenstein’s best-laid plans, his constructed body reveals the fractures in thinking of the body as whole and complete.

Frankenstein's tone dramatically changes as the Creature wakes up, and he takes time to voraciously describe every detail about the Creature's true image, "His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuries only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same color as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion, and straight black lips" (45). Various scholars have scrutinized the section and novel as a whole for how Shelley uses the Creature to draw attention to otherness. Allan Lloyd Smith argues that "Shelley's literary culture... signal(s) the need for a closer attention to the thematics of race and slavery in the text in order to consider how Frankenstein can be related to contemporary discourses on race, slavery and antislavery" (209). In addition, Elizabeth Bohl calls attention to how "very little attention has been paid to Shelley's manifest concern with the political, psychological, moral, and, in particular, aesthetic problems occasioned by the fact of empire" (Bohl 23). Though they have read this "otherness," they are not focusing on the non-normate or disabled body. What Frankenstein is describing is a body that terrifies him because of it existing outside of the normate framework that his mind is used to operating in. What "beautiful" features the Creature does have, his teeth and hair, are immediately contrasted with his traits that would be considered non-normate, his skin, eyes, and complexion.

The Creature's body is clearly not what Frankenstein anticipated or envisioned and therefore the Creature does not live up to Frankenstein's idea of beauty and normality. At the same time, the Creature is a body created by Frankenstein; the irony of the creator's distaste is that it reveals a very human antipathy towards the non-normate

body. The reader does not need to look further than the diction that Frankenstein uses when describing the Creature, such as “horrid,” and “shriveled.” Both are significant word choices, as “horrid” has a sense of inherent horror and “shriveled” suggests that, even though the Creature is larger than a man, there is something “less than” about his very appearance. In addition, this tale is being told to essentially a stranger as Walton is aboard a ship who randomly came across Frankenstein and saved his life. Frankenstein does not hide his harsh judging of another’s body and thus he deems it acceptable to do so. He supports this himself when shortly after the Creature’s description he says, “The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature” (Shelley 45). Frankenstein truly thought he would see his work as beautiful. He toiled endlessly at this project and the only reason those feelings of joyful anticipation have dissipated are because the corporeal form of those dreams does not fit his normate-centric views, that the Creature does not resemble a “normal” human. And, in truth, he never would, not just because he is constructed, but because all ideas of normalcy are constructions.

Frankenstein’s hatred for the Creature endures beyond this point, and remains a focal point even when Frankenstein thinks he, himself, is responsible for his younger brother’s death. When they come face to face years after Victor has abandoned the Creature, but not too long after the Creature has murdered William, Frankenstein remarks, “He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes” (89). The point that Frankenstein ends on is not the supposed murderer of a family member, but the physical representation of the Creature. Perhaps one of the most glaring points to be made about Frankenstein’s fixation on the Creature’s non-normate body is

that there is no proof that he killed William, the younger brother, yet, and that point is strengthened in this scene. The focal point of Frankenstein's detestation is the Creature's body, and now the central reason he is vilifying the Creature and labeling him a murderer and "monster" or "wretch" is because of the Creature's body. Even though Frankenstein is retelling these moments years later to Walton, he still chooses to focus on the physical appearance of the Creature rather than the acts of the Creature, thus pointing to what Frankenstein thinks is the source of evil: physical deformation. He is not so remiss as not to notice the Creature's pain at all, but he is now both subconsciously and consciously choosing to vilify the Creature rather than sympathize. Even Walton is recounting these moments from memory and also choosing to focus on the abnormal physical characteristics of the Creature. By intentionally bringing the focus to the physically disabled body, they are establishing an ideology that is masquerading as natural logic. They are aligning the non-normate with evil so when the Creature kills William, it is because of this ideological point. Furthermore, Barbara Freeman argues in the novel there is a clear line between what is "moral and good" and what is "illegal, marginal," and references Kant's ideas of beauty and the sublime when deciding that beauty plays a crucial factor: "the beautiful, it too may remain a symbol of 'the morally good'" (22). By deciding to pivot attention to his hatred for the Creature because of his looks rather than the criminal acts that the Creature has committed at this point, Frankenstein is deciding that beauty must equal good, and therefore without beauty, symmetry, and a normate body, one must be evil.

Frankenstein is thus responsible for establishing that there is a superior and inferior beauty, and by relation normate and non-normate bodies. After the Creature asks

for a bride and companion to share his sympathies and thoughts with, Frankenstein contemplates what the potential consequences would be. At one point he thinks to himself, “She also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man . . . and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation of being deserted by one of his own species” (Shelley 160). Frankenstein conjectures that even another non-normate body would reject and most likely vilify the Creature strictly based on his physical appearance. Frankenstein even cites that she would most likely choose the “superior beauty of man,” relegating the Creature to inferior and thus denying the disabled body any kind of humanity. When he destroys the body of the would-be companion, not only does Frankenstein view the Creature’s body as non-normate, disabled because of his inability to live in society as the normate body does, and villainous, but he also denies the Creature any possibility at becoming normate within his own group of belonging. He can’t help but think of the possibility of the non-normate body producing “a race of devils.” If the Creature is read as a stand-in for the disabled body, then Frankenstein is presenting a case of eugenics, assuming that disability can be passed down through genes and therefore attempting to deny the ability for additional disabled bodies to be reproduced. Frankenstein acts as a malicious judge of the corporeal and equally malicious executioner of the chance at acceptance for the Creature. Thomson indicates that the social relationships are just as crucial to the acceptance or rejection of the Creature as his physical appearance is. She states, “the meanings attributed to extraordinary bodies reside not in inherent physical flaws, but in social relationships in which one group is legitimated by possessing valued physical characteristics and maintains its ascendancy and its self-identity by systematically imposing the role of cultural and corporeal

inferiority on others” (7). Frankenstein has attached the ideas of monstrosity and evil to the Creature, and continues to support the idea that his body and idea of the normate body is superior to the Creature’s, so much so that there must never be another like his made. Frankenstein refuses to let the Creature’s body be legitimated in any way and in fact only ever uses terms like “wretch,” “monster,” or “devil” to describe him.

Frankenstein is most certainly not alone in vilifying the Creature. After Frankenstein, the next human that the Creature encounters is a random old man in a hut. Hours after waking for the first time, the Creature had been wandering with little control over his body and senses, every minute an attempt at training them and adjusting to the world. As innocent as a newborn, he wandered into a hut where he smelled food and felt warmth. The old man who resided there turned when he heard a noise and when he saw the Creature, “shrieked loudly, and, quitting the hut, ran across the fields with a speed of which his debilitated form hardly appeared capable” (96). The Creature’s disability is so profound that another disabled body becomes un-disabled. Even though the old man also has a “debilitated form,” he was not vilified and his disabled body was deemed permissible because the reader assumes old age is the cause. Not only that, but there seems to be a point where a disabled body is so different from the normate that other disabled bodies are deemed non-disabled. The old man literally rushes away from isolation towards society, leaving the Creature in his place, alone. The vilifying of the disabled body is so intense that disabled bodies cannot even find refuge with each other, but scorn these other non-normate bodies.

The final person to meet the Creature is Robert Walton. Walton saved Frankenstein while on a voyage in the arctic, and recounted Frankenstein's entire tale

through a series of letters to his sister. Just after Frankenstein died from his injuries and fatigue that he sustained while following the Creature into the tundra, Walton left the room. He hears a noise that sounds like a human muttering and he ventures back into the cabin to find the Creature standing over Frankenstein's body. Before Walton says anything, he notes that at first glance he could not "find words to describe" the Creature, yet he eventually settles by fixating on the Creature's physical appearance:

Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe; gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions. As he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; but one vast hand was extended, in colour and apparent texture like that of a mummy...Never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face, of such loathsome, yet appalling hideousness. (212)

Just like with Frankenstein's description, the reader is met with ghastly and grotesque diction. Even though he shuts his eyes immediately, a reaction that suggests wishing a non-normate body such as the Creature's did not exist, he cannot escape his feeling towards him. Walton's reaction further solidifies that the deviance of the physical body is what marks the Creature as non-normate or as a disabled body within this fictional world. The fact that he "hung over the coffin" paints him as the harbinger of death, almost like a grim reaper. In fact, Shelley repeats "hung" twice within those two sentences. The Creature is so grotesque that he isn't even allowed the human verb to stand; he hangs, like a leaf, a noose, or another inanimate object. If the plan is to vilify the Creature then there is no better way than to compare him to death itself, not only being capable of murder but now apparently being the gateway to the afterlife. Walton's initial inability to describe the appearance of the Creature followed by the description that was laden with

dark and grim diction can be attributed to what Lennard Davis refers to as “the gaze.” Davis argues, “disability . . . is a disruption in the visual, auditory, or perceptual field As such, the disruption, the rebellion of the visual, must be regulated, rationalized, contained” (2402). Because the appearance of the Creature is irrational to him, Walton originally cannot fathom what he is seeing. However, because of his need to rationalize the cause of his visual field being disrupted, he separates that cause into a separate category than to which he belongs. His need to rationalize and then label the Creature as non-normate are because of the “desire to split bodies into two immutable categories: whole and incomplete, abled and disabled” (2402). He very distinctly only makes that split when he sees the Creature, not when he hears him through the door, it is the visual and the gaze that is the cause of the reaction and vilification.

In addition, it is important to note that being “distorted in proportions” is part of the ghastly description. For a body to be considered normate and not a marker for evil, it must be symmetrical and unblemished, fitting into the mold that society has deemed appropriate. The immensity of the Creature is what Barbara Freeman argues is the reason from him being a monstrosity and states the “the monstrous object is defined by Kant as one that ‘by its size, destroys the purpose which constitutes the concept of it’” (22). Walton’s idea of the normate human body is shattered when looking at the Creature, and rather than reason that the Creature is a living being with emotions as well, he vilifies the disabled body and refuses to accept that body as normate within the working framework of his mind. Walton is subconsciously marking the Creature as disabled because of the stark difference in the Creature’s body than to what he is used to. It is after this indirect labeling of the Creature as disabled that Walton uses words such as “loathsome” and

“horrible” to continually vilify him. Finally, the reader is delivered the last description of the Creature. Walton describes the Creature’s hand as being like a “mummy,” but because of the texture and skin color rather than any bandages. This final description alludes to a body that is covered and sealed away from the world and paralleled to the coffin that he hangs over that carries an uncovered, normate body. For the entire novel the Creature has terrorized citizens primarily because of his appearance, and the only place he will cease to be that villain is in the isolated tundra where he will be invisible because of distance, where his tomb will be the ice and snow rather than in the desert like the mummy. Mummies of course were revered in their time and a valuable marker of the past in the early nineteenth century. The Creature is neither—he is an abomination that horrifies all viewers: the coolness of the mummy is stripped away in the Creature and all this is left is the horror of the transfigured body

After Walton subconsciously labels the Creature as disabled, he continues on the same trajectory as every other normate body in the book and vilifies him. In just the next paragraph he states, “I approached this tremendous being; I dared not again raise my looks upon his face, there was something so scaring and unearthly in his ugliness” (Shelley 212) and immediately after refers to the Creature as “the monster.” Walton is well aware of all of the Creature’s crimes and murders but not once do these memories or thoughts pervade his own mind and he does not reference them or call the Creature a criminal. Instead, Walton chooses the same word that Frankenstein used before the Creature had actually committed any crimes. The word choice is significant because Walton is subconsciously choosing to vilify the Creature not based on any actual evil deeds committed, but because of his non-normate body. In fact, the Creature points out

this injustice, “I desired love and fellowship, and I was still spurned. Was there no injustice in this? Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all human kind sinned against me? Why do you not hate Felix, who drove his friend from his door with contumely? Why do you not execrate the rustic who sought to destroy the saviour of his child?” (214). The Creature is not blind to the reasons he is shunned from society and “sees matters quite clearly when he asserts that there can be no communion between himself and an aesthetically prejudiced majority unwilling to look beyond his abnormal appearance” (Marchbanks 25). Throughout both Frankenstein’s and the Creature’s stories, there were those who acted with ill intent against others, created injustices, and were malicious, but it is the Creature who garners everyone’s hate. The only difference, emphasized thoroughly throughout the text, is the non-normate body of the Creature. The reader must remember the plethora of kind deeds that the Creature performed for Felix and his family, yet that kindness was not rewarded with acceptance. It is not the actions of an individual that make a villain, but rather the corporeal form of that individual. The Creature is justified in his anger at being vilified when he was terrorized for seemingly no reason other than his physical differences, but his opinions and feelings mean nothing in a world dominated by the actions of the normate body. Walton does not take the Creature’s side after this outburst because in Walton’s point of view, nobody did anything wrong against the Creature. Walton perpetuates the tolerance of malevolence towards an individual as long as the individual is a disabled body because then it is not an act of malevolence but rather maintaining the power imbalance between normate and non-normate.

While the Creature's physical appearance is perceived as abnormal, his mental acuity was sharp and poignant. The Creature is vilified because of his disabled body, but it is strictly his corporeal form that is vilified. If anything, his mental powers were a well polished tool for him to be integrated into society, however his physical abnormality was so great that no amount of articulation could make up for it. During his wandering, he happened upon a small cottage with an old man and his two adult children living there. The Creature made himself a concealed home where he could observe and listen to the family through a small opening as well as when they were outside close by. As months passed, he began to slowly learn the language through various words, "I discovered the names that were given to some of the most familiar objects of discourse: I learned and applied the words *fire, milk, bread, and wood*.. I learned also the names of the cottagers themselves" (Shelley 103). After additional time passed, he later learned how to read, "While I improved in speech, I also learned the science of letters, as it was taught to the stranger" (110). With his newfound knowledge, he eventually reads *Plutarch's Lives, Sorrows of Werter, and Paradise Lost*. All of this knowledge is self-taught. Because of his mental prowess, the reason for him being vilified is not anything to do with an unseen disability or invisible non-normate quality, and neither is it for anything criminal he has done. The Creature demonstrates an extraordinary ability for growth, and this "capacity for mental growth destabilizes common assumptions concerning the link between non-normative appearance and mental disability, and disabled the unmerited linkage between non-normative appearance and limited intelligence" (Marchbanks 26). Despite the unintentional but successful effort on behalf of the Creature to eliminate the link between

abnormal appearance and abnormal intelligence, the citizens' prejudice is not faded and instead all focus remains concentrated on the physical deviance of the Creature.

Perhaps the greatest display of the gaze disrupting the normative visual field is when the Creature interacts with the small family of De Lacey, Felix, and Agatha. Felix and Agatha are young adult brother and sister, and their much older father is feeble and blind. Besides observing the domestic routine, he observes Agatha and Felix as they perform their chores and work around the cottage. He takes note of Agatha arranging the cottage or gathering food or materials alike such as milk, and also observes Felix doing more of the manual labor such as fixing various parts of the cottage or collecting wood. The Creature notices that the family lives in poverty, "it was poverty; and they suffered that evil in a very distressing degree . . . especially the two younger cottagers; for several times they placed food before the old man, when they reserved none for themselves" (Shelley 102). This is important to note because the Creature acknowledges that he had been stealing some of the cottagers' food while they were asleep, but after learning about their poor state he realizes that he "inflicted pain on the cottagers" and instead switches to berries and nuts that he gathers for himself. Not only that, but because it is family and communal love that he is observing, the Creature feels attached to them. In an attempt to do something kind for the family, the Creature fulfills Felix's duty of collecting wood while Felix sleeps, literally and figuratively warming the cottagers. The Creature is happy when the family discovers the mysterious wood and when watching Felix resume a different task than normal, observes "with pleasure, that he did not go to the forest that day, but spent it in repairing the cottage, and cultivating the garden" (102).

Over the course of several seasons, the Creature becomes increasingly attached to the family and their kindness towards each other. After having observed them secretly for close to a year, the Creature remarks, “The more I saw of them, the greater became my desire to claim their protection and kindness; my heart yearned to be known and loved by these amiable Creatures: to see their sweet looks turned towards me with affection, was the utmost limit of my ambition” (123). If read as a stand-in for the disabled body, the Creature is not just attempting to move out of his isolated hovel and into the home of the kind family he has secretly become acquainted with. What is truly at stake is attempting to overcome the power of the gaze from the normate body and physically and ideologically move the disabled body to the sphere of acceptance within this society. Through the act of gathering wood for Felix, the Creature has learned that he is capable of performing acts of kindness and being responsible for another’s joy, though in hiding. The attempt at contact with the family will be an endeavor to overcome not only being denied acceptance, but also prevailing over the constant vilification he has been subjected to thus far. Through his learned reasoning skills, the Creature has good reason to believe that he will be successful in this pursuit because “The poor that stopped at their door were never driven away” (123).

At first, the Creature decides to restrict his exposure to De Lacey. The Creature does this because he notices that De Lacey must lean on his son whenever they are out for a walk and that he is blind, and therefore De Lacey can be read as a disabled body as well. It is important to note that the stark difference between the Creature and the old man is that the Creature’s non-normate characteristic is physical deformity whereas the old man’s non-normate characteristics are invisible to the eye. The disabled attribute of

the old man that the Creature focuses on is his blindness. The Creature knows that his chief obstacle is his appearance, and therefore if he can win over the senior in the house, then perhaps he will stand a better chance with Felix and Agatha. According to Jared Richman, “Language appears to the Creature not merely as method of communication, but also as the mechanism by which one might evoke sympathy in others” (195). At this point, the Creature has established his ability to speak well and knows that is his strength. Richman also contends that “a scientific approach to ‘mutual communication’ speaks to the use of language as the expression of human identity and the genesis of community” (195). Even though it may not be a conscious reason, it is profound that the Creature is attempting to use speech to gain admittance to the community, however, the Creature is falling victim to an ableist paradigm. He thinks speech would be enough to gain admittance to society or to be human, but what of those who are unable to speak? The Creature has decided that speech is the quintessential marker of humanness, but his logic is flawed.

Another reason the Creature wants to meet the old man alone is because of the way he is treated by his children. The Creature notices “Agatha listened with respect, her eyes sometimes filled with tears, which she endeavoured to wipe away unperceived; but I generally found that her countenance and tone were more cheerful after having listened to the exhortations of her father” (Shelley 103), and that “Nothing could exceed the love and respect which the younger cottagers exhibited towards their venerable companion. They performed towards him every little office of affection and duty with gentleness” (101). The Creature witnesses a disabled body being treated with kindness and therefore thinks it is possible that he may be able to endure the same affection. After all, it is the

old man's words that move Agatha towards happiness and profound respect and that happens to be the Creature's strength. This is exactly what the Creature will attempt, to "seek to shift the discussion of monstrosity (and disability) away from the visual to focus on the Creature's other defining feature: his eloquent speech" (Richman 189). Thomson agrees that this is essential for the disabled body gaining acceptance, "To be granted fully human status by normates, disabled people must learn to manage relationships from the beginning" (Thomson 13). The Creature embodies this idea and has been taking steps towards learning to manage relationships: bringing joy and relief by performing their chores, learning their language, and now attempting contact through friendly speech. To the Creature, there is no difference between disabled bodies, to him a non-normate characteristic means that body stands separate from the normate. The old man represents salvation, the ultimate goal for the Creature.

The Creature has initial success in his plan as De Lacey does not immediately shun the Creature like every other person has, however it is short lived and he is quickly vilified by the other cottagers. After initiating conversation and entering the cottage, the Creature describes his misfortunes and wish to meet his friends, but how he is terrified to do so. De Lacey responds with wise words, "Do not despair. To be friendless is indeed to be unfortunate; but the hearts of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity. Rely, therefore, on your hopes; and if these friends are good and amiable, do not despair" (125). The key words here are "man" and "brotherly," as each of these words refers to being human which the Creature is perceived as not belonging to that category of species, therefore this love that he is advising the Creature to trust in is in fact not meant for the Creature. It is significant that the old man is blind in

the situation because he is asking the Creature to blindly trust those who he has never actually come into contact with. The difference though is that the old man's blindness allows for the negation of the disabled attribute whereas the Creature's blind trust in Felix and Agatha is only concerned with that disabled attribute. In fact, because the old man cannot view the physical appearance of his guest, the Creature is successful in initiating emotion within him, "but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere" (126). Richman argues that "the Creature's attempts to pass, 'normal' functions primarily as 'human,'" (191) and in this moment the Creature does just that. The issue here is that this "passing" is masquerading and denying the individual aspects that make up the disabled body, and the reasons for doing so are deeply rooted in fear of rejection from society. By trying to cover up or make invisible the disabled attributes, the Creature is acknowledging that his body sets him at a disadvantage to the rest of the world. Richman goes on to say that "the novel offers options for viewing humanity as a range of variabilities rather than as an ideal set of forms and performances" (193), however I would argue that the novel does the exact opposite and points out that there are ideal forms of the corporeal body. The "human" in general may be able to have variations, but the body has limits. Throughout the novel, any person who is meant to be revered is described as beautiful. Old man De Lacey is described as "old, with silver hairs and a countenance beaming with benevolence and love," Felix as "slight and graceful in his figure, and his features were moulded with the finest symmetry" (99), Safie is "regular proportion, and her complexion wondrously fair, each cheek tinged with a lovely pink" (107). The novel emphasizes that beauty is synonymous with being morally good and thus a lack of beauty conveys evil. This logic, much like Freeman's analysis of

Victor's interest in beauty, doubles down the idea of constructed definitions of bodies and morality.

Once again, the Creature is vilified because of his physical appearance and because his body lies beyond the limits of acceptable variation of the corporeal body. The Creature discovers these limits when Felix, Agatha, and Safie return. When they walk into the cottage the Creature notes, "Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted; and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung: in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground, and struck me violently with a stick" (Shelley 126). Agatha literally cannot take the sight of the Creature and her ability to view the disabled body is negated by her passing out. Safie abandons any kind of relation and kindness to save only herself, deciding it was best to leave her new family and run. Richman sticks to his point about language being paramount and cites poet John Thelwall when he says, "Speech defines what it is to be human" (195), but apparently it is not. The Creature assumes the permeability of the normate and non-normate barrier, however his attempt to overcome his disability by acting normate and using language is quickly proven to be wrong. According to Shelley, it is the normate corporeal body that makes one human since the Creature was not given that "brotherly love" that the old man spoke of even though he had done nothing wrong. Felix is able to use "supernatural" means to separate the Creature from his father, suggesting that not only is the normate body a force for keeping the disabled body in submission but there are external factors aiding the normate agenda. While Bohls' reading of *Frankenstein* is through a critical race theory lens, her analysis of the bodies of

“otherness” is fitting here as well: “We come to realize that the comfort and attractiveness of their [normate bodies] way of life . . . is inseparable from, in fact depends on, the violence their civilization does to those whom its structure of value needs to exclude and condemn” (29). The Creature has infiltrated and disrupted their comforting routine and lives and is vilified for this intrusion. According to Bohls, the only appropriate response is violence.

The Creature attempts to activate sympathy within the cottagers through what should be a defining characteristic of humanness, however once again the emphasis is on his physical appearance and he is denied acceptance. On the topic of sympathy, eighteenth-century philosopher Edmund Burke states, “we enter into the concerns of others; that we are moved as they are moved, and never suffer to be indifferent spectators of almost anything man can do or suffer. For sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected” (41). According to Burke, Felix is the spectator and should feel sympathy for the Creature, but because the body is non-normate Felix cannot picture himself in the position of the Creature. Instead of sympathy, hatred takes its place and Felix has an extraordinary negative emotional response to the disabled body. The Creature was right to try and gain acceptance of his body into normate society, but he was wrong in thinking that his eloquent speech would make up for his “terror” inducing appearance. Because beauty has become synonymous with being morally good, those that are not beautiful must be evil and therefore objects of horror, and thus cannot be allowed sympathy. Amber Knight argues that “The Creature’s deformed physical attributes are immediately coded with value judgments that precede its use of language or behavior

towards others. In this way, the Creature is assumed to be monstrous because of the way he looks--not as a result of his actions” (10). The power of the normate over the non-normate and the disabled corporeal body is profound when considering everything the Creature had done for the cottagers and his level of speech. What this indicates is that no matter what the disabled body does to gain recognition, there is nothing that can overcome that perceived terror.

Apart from the cottagers, the Creature also attempts to evoke sympathy from within Frankenstein and later Walton. When the Creature and Frankenstein meet face to face for the first time since the night of creation, the Creature urges him to listen and tells his tale, “Let your compassion be moved, and do not disdain me. Listen to my tale: when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me. The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they may be, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned” (Shelley 91). The Creature is completely ignoring what he has learned about sympathy, or is perhaps misinterpreting sympathy. The novel highlights the visual as means for evoking sympathy, but he continues to rely on speech. Language cannot overcome the sight and therefore the Creature is damned before he even utters a sound. After the Creature finishes, Frankenstein thinks to himself, “His words had a strange effect upon me. I compassionated him, and sometimes felt a wish to console him; but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened, and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred” (138). The Creature actually succeeds to some degree at having a normate body sympathize, however it is short lived.

Sympathy is made possible because of the articulate language of the Creature, but no amount of eloquent speech can negate the violent emotions against the disabled body. For Richman, it is “Ultimately what makes the Creature most monstrous to Victor is the discordant relationship between the Creature’s verbal eloquence and his monstrous body” (206), whereas Knight puts the emphasis on the predetermined coding of the corporeal body, “Thus, the Creature’s deformed physical attributes are immediately coded with value judgments that precede its use of language or behavior towards others. In this way, the Creature is assumed to be monstrous because of the way he looks” (10). I would argue that it is a combination of these two points as Shelley disassociates the Creature’s speech with his physical body but it is also the predetermined ideology of Frankenstein that damns any attempt the Creature makes at being accepted in any way. His words did not accompany his appearance when he spoke to old man De Lacey, Walton is not terrified by the noises he hears but is horrified at the sight of him, and Victor is snapped back into a loathing state of being when he “saw” the Creature. After the Creature has scolded humans for treating him with prejudice, Walton almost echoes Frankenstein’s earlier sentiments, “I was at first touched by the expressions of his misery; yet when I called to mind what Frankenstein had said of his power of eloquence and persuasion, and when I again cast my eyes on the lifeless form of my friend, indignation was re-kindled within me” (Shelley 213). Again the Creature is successful in his pursuit to be the object of sympathy, and once again the emphasis is on viewing the physically disabled body and how it is unable to be seen as anything other than the object of horror and evil. The Creature repeatedly attempts to connect with humans through a method of communication learned specifically from other normate humans, however illogical

ideology and stubborn perspectives prevent the Creature from ever gaining acceptance or having any kind of agency within the novel. The normate perspective does not care that the Creature has made extraordinary progress in language, or that his benevolence has been met with violence. The normate community is only concerned with the preservation of that community and eliminating any threatening forces. Every moment when the Creature connects with someone else is a moment that works “to disrupt the cycle of disability stigma” (Richman 207), but Shelley ensures that there is no progress towards salvation or tolerance within this novel, and the reader is left grasping for that moment at the end.

Perhaps the most damning aspect of the Creature’s person is his villainous act against Frankenstein’s younger brother. The Creature had been wandering since being shunned by the cottagers when he happened to come across William, Victor’s younger brother. The Creature did not know the relation, but the Creature remarks the significance of this encounter for a different reason: “Suddenly, as I gazed on him, an idea seized me, that this little Creature was unprejudiced, and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity” (Shelley 134). The Creature “seized” the boy who screamed in response and then shouted, “Let me go...monster! ugly wretch! you wish to eat me, and tear me to pieces- You are an ogre.” First, not only does the Creature refer to the small boy as a “Creature” as well, but also says he is “unprejudiced.” The Creature attempts to decentralize the normate and non-normate labels, just as disability studies does by using the term “non-disabled.” The decentralizing of the labels allows for a greater acceptance among different bodies because there is no longer a binary. The Creature also assumes that because of his young age, the little boy must be able to empathize more readily and

will therefore accept him because he is blissfully unaware of the world. At his young age, the Creature is ignorant of the world; he learns through this latest attempt that he will be vilified by disabled and non-disabled bodies no matter the age.

It is at this moment that the Creature succumbs to the villainous label he has been attacked with since birth, and the tragedy of *Frankenstein* is “that the not-so-monstrous Creature cannot see himself as anything other than a monster since he is never afforded the recognition he so desperately desires” (Knight 9). It doesn't matter if the non-normate body desires acceptance and humanness, the depiction of the disabled body as villainous enables and forces that body to act evil and villainous. Once the Creature seizes the boy in his attempt to make contact, William begins lashing out, “The child still struggled and loaded me with epithets which carried despair to my heart; I grasped his throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet” (Shelley 134). In that moment the Creature’s body proves all of the normate assumptions right. There is something about the non-normate body that is almost naturally, almost mechanically evil. His body kills because it is villainous and it is villainous because it is non-normate. Look at what he says right after, too: “I gazed on my victim, and my heart swelled with exultation and hellish triumph; clapping my hands, I exclaimed, ‘I too can create desolation; my enemy is not invulnerable; this death will carry despair to him, and a thousand other miseries shall torment and destroy him’” (134). The Creature becomes proof, for the novel, that the disabled body is synonymous with villainy, and that any hope of redemption will forever remain out of reach.

The Creature is damned from birth for a multitude of reasons but mainly because empathy, as Shelley describes in her novel, is overpowered by the “gaze.” Any time he is

in a position to be the subject of this emotion, the observer either shuts down those feelings or never feels empathy at all because of the Creature's deviance from corporeal normality. The Creature is put in numerous situations where his benevolence and innocence warrants a kind response in return, however the disabled body is proven to be incapable of being the recipient of empathy. Burke suggests that empathy is more mechanic in nature than voluntary, and the Creature would actually support this. With having no true idea of the world, the reader sees the Creature empathize with the family in the cottage and their occasional sadness. This makes the omission of empathy all the more astonishing as it is not just a conscious desire to shun the Creature, but it is apparently natural. The constructed body—the disabled body—is programmed, as it were, to be the villain. Perhaps this is why empathy can never be achieved: the naturalness of evil in the disabled body undermines any attempt at organic connection. Shelley paints perhaps the most stark picture of a lack of empathy towards a disabled body whereas Philip K. Dick in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* expands the role and capability of empathy in building connections and relationships. Though the androids are still vilified in his novel, there are at least moments where the disabled body is given some kind of autonomy and agency unlike the Creature.

Attempting to Escape “Otherness”

Between the publication of *Frankenstein* and the work around which this chapter revolves, major developments occurred within the modern world. The industrial revolution inaugurated a new world, one flush with capitalistic opportunities. The body became a cog in the economic machine and then a tool in the wars spurred by greed. By the mid-twentieth century, the world had changed considerably from what Mary Shelley knew. Yet, the disabled body was still aligned with villainy, as we see in Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* While Shelley imagined a constructed body who longed for empathy but, by virtue of its kinship with disability was doomed to loneliness, Dick doubled down on the significance of empathy in his tale about androids and post-war malaise. Though the androids and therefore the disabled body stand a much greater chance at breaking down the binary, they fail just as the Creature does. Hope for acceptance remains just out of reach for the disabled body as the vilification of corporeal divergence continues.

The androids in Philip K. Dick’s novel are killed, or “retired,” by a separate task force within the dystopian society’s police department called bounty hunters, specifically one named Rick Deckard. The androids are synthetic robots that resemble the human in almost every way possible, undetectable to the untrained and naked eye, most often only caught by failing the Voight-Kampff test, a fictional test designed to test a range of human emotions incapable of being reproduced by the androids, specifically empathy, thus deeming them inhuman and therefore not fit for existence outside of their lawfully permitted space. The existence and use of this test thus renders empathy as a bodily

function rather than a mental process as it is able to be measured and quantified by have or have not, non-disabled or disabled.

Much like in Shelley's novel, empathy becomes a central piece of the equation in determining how non-normate bodies will be treated. Edmund Burke supports the claim that empathy is not limited to or contained by the cognitive abilities of a person: "I am afraid it is a practice much too common in inquiries of this nature, to attribute the cause of feelings which merely arise from the mechanical structure of our bodies, or from the natural frame and constitution of our minds, to certain conclusion of the reasoning faculty on the objects presented to us" (41). According to Burke, then, empathy is rooted in a human reaction to the emotions of another. Thought and reasoning are not part of this emotional response. Empathy, then, is not only a tool for determining who is worthy of being included in humanity (ie. the normate) but also for measuring humanness. Because of their lack of natural biological make up, every major human character most often refers to the androids as "it" when replacing the moniker with a pronoun, including the main character, Rick Deckard, until his encounter with an android masquerading as an opera singer, Luba Luft. For Deckard up until this point, the androids were merely a job, a paycheck, an item to be crossed off the check-list. However, when a fellow bounty hunter asks him, "Warn it, I should say. Do you think of them as 'it'?" Deckard responds with what would be the first of many empathic responses: "I did at one time . . . When my conscience occasionally bothered me about the work I had to do; I protected myself by thinking of them that way, but now I now longer find it necessary" (Dick 116). Unlike Shelley's novel, humans can feel empathy for the constructed disabled body in *Androids*.

However, as we shall see, the other side of this equation, the lack of empathy on the part of the androids, continues the villainization of the disabled body.

Almost halfway through the novel, Deckard has played the role of the hero and surely thought of himself as the hero. With the law behind him, he set out to kill beings that were illegally occupying space and had also just killed several humans. According to the novel, Deckard was justified in his killing of these androids and the androids were therefore not in their pursuit for freedom and survival. Especially with the lack of voice from the androids up to this point, the novel had created an extraordinarily clear divide between the hero and the villain, between good and bad. However, upon taking a closer look at the qualifications for these categories or why different characters fall into their proposed perspective roles, we see that this division is more nuanced than is simply perceived. The main androids that are hunted by Deckard are not on the wanted list only because of their killing humans, but because they are living outside of their lawful regulations and duties, which is essentially either slave labor or as a soldier and their integration into society will not be allowed because of the technological composition and lacking of the key component for being a human which according to this novel is empathy. Dick sets up the hero, Deckard, as checking off every qualifier to be normative in this society, which we know there are since he is tested every day on cognitive function and labeled with a particular title if there are irregularities. Dick then sets up the villain as the non-normative, able to check off many of the same qualifiers as Deckard does but unable to meet the qualification that the masses in this society have deemed necessary: empathy.

Empathy is a dangerous force in *Androids* because it can challenge the naturalized line between normate and non-normate bodies. Deckard begins to feel empathy for the androids he is hunting, for the androids bounty hunter he is working with: “I’ve got to tell him, he said to himself. It’s unethical and cruel not to” (Dick 117), and to androids in general. In his own analysis of the role of empathy and androids in this novel, John Sullins decides that empathy is “the ability to see the world from another’s point of view and, additionally, to sympathize with that view” (199). Sullins’s definition serves perfectly for laying out how Deckard’s growing empathy towards the androids begins to obscure the reader’s ability to discern what and who is truly good or bad. If our supposed hero is able to sympathize with the view of the androids, then the leap to thinking that the androids have a right to their fight for survival then shrinks. It is not long after this point in the novel that the reader is thrust into the role of untangling these blurred lines between hero and villain not only for the novel, but on a personal level as well.

The structure of this dystopian society functions and maintains its supposed stability through clear definitions of the roles and of the normality of these people that populate it. Androids aside, the humans themselves are labeled by cognitive efficiency and even separated by a whole planet based on this normate and non-normate categorizing. For instance, Deckard is subject to routine testing to assure he is still normate: “So far, medical checkups taken monthly confirmed him to be a regular: a man who could reproduce within the tolerances set by law. Any month, however, the exam by the San Francisco Police Department doctors could reveal otherwise. Continually, new specials came into existence, created out of regulares by the omnipresent dust” (Dick 8). The need to pass a test indicates that if there is a failure, there must be a marker of that

failure, a labeling, and the labeling is therefore that departure from the societal accepted normal. Not to mention, the use of the word “law” and references to “medical checkup” lets the reader infer that is not only a subconscious or even conscious push by civilians, but that the government is involved, that this segregation of normate and non-normate is dictated by law.

The novel spends almost equal time on another character in order to demonstrate the consequences of this legal categorization of normalcy. John Isadore, classified as a “chickenhead” because of his degenerative cognitive functions, is refused allowance to emigrate from Earth to the colonies off-planet. Dick literally creates two spheres of occupancy, the off-world colonies representing the normate, and Earth representing those who exemplify non-normative traits and are therefore denied entry into the normate sphere by law. While there are those that remain on Earth who are not cognitively deficient in the eyes of this society, such as Deckard, it is primarily because of a job or sentimentality that attaches them to the planet. Those who do stay are referred to as “relatively sane” and they are all labeled as “special,” and “Once pegged as special, a citizen, even if accepting sterilization, dropped out of history,” and was labeled “biologically unacceptable” (16). Dick makes it a point to have Isadore interact with those who are higher cognitive function than he is to showcase the disparity in social acceptance between the two cognitive classes. One of Isadore’s coworkers berates him for a mistake made during a pick up of an electric animal from a customer and another chalks it up to his lack of inference and higher functioning capability. Even though one of his coworkers does stand up for him, Isadore is repeatedly referred to as “chickenhead” as placement for his name, crushing any kind of actual attempt at equality.

While Isadore's place in society is clearly reduced to being inferior to other humans, he is still allowed the title of human. The ability to identify oneself as a human is reserved for those that feel empathy, the underlying driving force in Dick's novel as it is the basis singling out the androids and eliminating them. When considering the newest generation of androids, the Nexus-6, and their extraordinary likeness to humans, Deckard wonders, "why an android bounced helplessly about when confronted by an empathy-measuring test. Empathy, evidently, existed only within the human community, whereas intelligence to some degree could be found throughout every phylum and order" (29). Even Isadore has the ability to feel empathy, thus he is still allowed a job, a home on Earth, a place within his own species. In fact, empathy is so important that civilians own empathy boxes. Isadore explains it as "the most personal possession you have! It's an extension of your body; it's the way you touch other humans, it's the way you stop being alone" (62). We hear echoes of Burke here, as well as the Creature. Empathy is the tool for connection with other humans and something that exists internal to the human body. If empathy is seen as a requirement to be human, then it can be reasonably inferred that it is an inherent function, thus the reason androids are denied the rights associated with being human.

The reader is now forced to question what it means to have empathy utilized as a tool and qualifier for humanness and why empathy boxes exist at all. The answer is to perpetuate and regulate emotions to ensure there is no lapse in any kind of feeling, and if there is no lapse in any kind of feelings and these feelings are easily modifiable then it can be reasoned that connecting and empathizing with others is also facilitated. This empathy box is necessary because of the requirement of empathy to be a human, the need

for empathy to constantly either be on display or well practiced. Because of the existence of the box, the reader can infer that this is made as a push to normalize humans according to this societal definition, lack of empathy will not be tolerated nor accepted, thus a device, a prosthesis, must be used. The irony, of course, is that the empathy box is not human, it is a machine that triggers and maintains human empathy.

Human emotions are regulated by other means, as well. The reader also encounters a different device called a mood organ within the first few pages when Deckard and his wife, Iran, are in an argument. Deckard turns to his “mood organ” as he calls it and decides “between dialing for a thalamic suppressant (which would abolish his mood of rage) or a thalamic stimulant (which would make him irked enough to win the argument)” (4). Not specifically programmed for the manipulation of empathy, this is yet another example of how emotions can be manufactured and chosen and how commonplace this practice is. This device can act as a sort of kickstart for emotions exemplified by Iran when she objectively decides on an emotion to “dial.” In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke argues that “when we have suffered from any violent emotion, the mind naturally continues in something like the same condition, after the cause which first produced it has ceased to operate” (32). Burke’s insistence on the human mind as a kind of machine helps us better understand what Dick is up to here. If our minds are easily disrupted by strong emotions, then we could seek out a machine that would reset them. In Dick’s novel, that machine, the mood organ, allows for a recalibration. Humans are metaphorically mechanical in Burke’s work and Dick’s novel. It is so important to this

world that humans have the “proper” emotions dialed in that there are several machines that exist to help regulate according to the standards set by this very society.

Machines, however, can also be used to control minds and bodies. An additional purpose of the empathy box is to enter the realm of Mercerism mentally, emotionally, and quasi-physically. Mercerism is a religion in the text and it preaches for equality and empathy. For instance, discussing the lack of animals he has compared to his neighbor, Deckard says “But . . . for you to have two horses and me one, that violates the whole basic theological and moral structure of Mercerism” (Dick 10). Despite the rigid distinctions in this society, particularly those around status symbols, the reigning theology preaches equality. We can see this later when Iran and Deckard are ecstatic after they are finally able to purchase a live goat and Iran says to her husband “I want you to transmit the mood you're in now to everyone else; you owe it to them. It would be immoral to keep it for ourselves” (159). In this moment, what Iran wants is for Rick to grasp the handles of the empathy box and instantly be emotionally connected to other humans, able to share his emotions with others and vice versa. When one grasps the handles of an empathy box, as Isadore does early in the novel, he sees a barren landscape with an elderly man on a hillside.

While Mercerism does preach equality, that equality is limited to just those who qualify a human. Because empathy is the definitive characteristic of humanity and Mercerism is accessed through the empathy box allowing those who partake to employ this emotion, the androids’ inability to feel empathy means they cannot understand or “fuse” with Mercer and on the other hand cannot enter the non-physical space created by this device thus it is therefore reserved only for humans. Read through a disability lens,

the non-disabled have created a means to connect and show off the very thing that makes them non-disabled while the disabled are excluded through negation of inherent qualities necessary. Buster Friendly, a talk show host who seems to be on all day, every day, provides what he believes to be damning evidence that Mercerism, and the guiding figure of Mercer himself, are fake. However, Pris says that “Buster is one of us,” meaning he’s an android. This creates a situation in which the subject that is accusing the structure of the space of exclusivity as fake and fraudulent belongs to the group that is excluded and thus can be read as a clamoring to demolish the system. However, Isadore remains firm in his belief that “Mercerism isn't finished” (195). It is ironic that the androids are considered disabled because they are machines without empathy while the human are non-disabled yet require machines to access empathy. It would seem that those who would qualify as normate cannot do so without a mechanical prosthesis and perhaps there is even a reliance on the the machine to attain that qualifier of humanness.

The last body in this dystopian world that has its own space subjugated to the constructed qualifications of humanness are the androids. Created by the Rosen corporation, androids are synthetic beings used for labor and military force on off-world colonies. The story focuses on five that hijacked a ship and flew it back to Earth in search of freedom and purpose. Already, the android has a unique position in society with its purpose being decided by an external force upon creation. Like the Creature, androids are created. This aligns them with the same metaphorical idea of a created body that reveals the created nature of designations. While one could say that is the plight of all machines, these machines resemble humans in almost any conceivable way. They look and speak as humans, their intelligence is comparable and sometimes even greater than the average

person, and they even bleed and have flesh, proven by the need to do a bone marrow test to confirm someone is actually an android after Deckard kills one. The deciding factor, is the lack of empathy. This is not to say the androids are void of any feeling at all. Roy Baty draws the reader's attention to his empathic capability when he "cries out in anguish" after learning that one of his fellow androids, assumed to be romantically attached to him, has been killed by Deckard. Interestingly, measuring empathy via the Voight-Kampff test relies on physical manifestations of the emotion: "measures capillary dilation in the facial area...records fluctuation of tension within the eye muscles" (44). In other words it measures involuntary bodily reactions to questions supposedly proven to produce an empathic response. Again, here we have a machine that tells us something about emotions by manipulating the body; Dick's novel is rife with these complex relationships between machine and man. This test is pass or fail, therefore setting a very distinct and clear line between what is human and what is not, what will be allowed to live freely and what will not.

While Dick seemingly establishes the presence of these various characters amid his fantasy world, each represents bodies theorized by disability studies and some are represented and accepted more than others just like their counterparts in the novel. There are several different manners in which it is done, but the dystopian society is built and reliant on the stability of their different binaries of normate and non-normate. From the test administered to the citizens still on Earth that measures their mental acuity as well as reproductive normality to the extraordinary effort to define empathy by ensuring that all citizens have access to and the ability to practice or perform empathic actions or

connections, there is no shortage of societal measuring sticks for what is normal or what is human.

Because of the existence of tests, the empathy box, mood organs, and Mercerism, these binaries are not accidental but rather a subconscious and conscious “desire to split bodies into two immutable categories: whole and incomplete, abled and disabled, normal and abnormal, functional and dysfunctional” (Davis 2402). This desire can even be thought of as “primitive.” As theorized by Lennard Davis and others, there are a number of bodies ranging in functionality and ableness, but that spectrum is precisely what is hard fought against. In fact, the deliberate push to have “normal” citizens emigrate from Earth is a direct act to separate and isolate the non-disabled from the disabled and establish what is their true normal without any kind of deviance. Davis affirms that the disabled must be “regulated, rationalized, contained” (2402), and the disabled androids and their “otherness” are therefore relegated to live off planet because of their inability to function within society. This is similar to the Creature in *Frankenstein* being shunned and attacked when attempting to integrate into normate society. While Shelley’s novel contrasted domestic dwellings of Frankenstein’s family or the De Lacey’s to the Creature’s private hovel, Dick has taken a step further and created a literal void of space between the worlds of normate and non-normate.

Within the established binary of disabled versus non-disabled, there is yet further dialectic categorization of disability within the novel: acceptable (“chickenheads”) and villainized (androids). Because of the definitions established and the wide ranging definitions in general of disability, John Isadore would be considered as “other” or disabled because of his lower cognitive function and inability to emigrate. “Chickenhead”

is a term used by many throughout the novel including those who work with Isadore and even Deckard himself. Early in the novel, Isadore realizes someone is moving in because of the sparse population and is eager to make a connection. As he is looking for food to bring over, he thinks to himself, "I have to keep calm . . . If he finds out I'm a chickenhead he won't talk to me; that's always the way it is for some reason" (25). There have been enough encounters and situations of being shunned because of his mental deficiencies and labeling that it is now a reflex to hide this part of his identity. One instance in particular is when Isadore mistakes a live cat for a fake and brings it back to the pet hospital where he works. One of the men who works there berates Isadore, calls him a chickenhead, and tries to force him to call the owner to explain what happened. Isadore tries to refuse and says, "I c-c-can't use the vidphone . . . Because I'm hairy, ugly, dirty, stooped, snaggle-toothed, and gray. And also I feel sick from the radiation" (73). To be clear, Isadore is not the only one affected by radiation or suffered side effects, the other two coworkers responding to how each other are affected by remarking "the dust has affected you; you're damn near bilind and in a couple of years you won't be able to hear," and "It's got to you, too, Borogove. Your skin is the color of dog manure" (74). If there are multiple physical side effects or aesthetic differences caused by the same radiation affecting Isadore, then the reader must begin to wonder why he is the only one singled out here. The answer must lie in his lower cognitive function. This is an interesting departure from what we saw in *Frankenstein*. In Shelley's novel, the Creature tried to use empathy to overcome his physical appearance. In Dick's novel, however, appearance is moot; empathy is the marker of non-disability. Isadore's situation is best explained by the quotation: "He had been a special now for over a year, and not merely in

regard to the distorted genes which he carried. Worse still, he had failed to pass the minimum mental faculties test, which made him in popular parlance a chickenhead. Upon him the contempt of three planets descended” (18). Reader’s cannot overlook that the damning trait is the failing of the mental faculties test, and therefore he is instantly relegated to the outskirts of societal acceptance.

The reader witnesses marginalized groups, the androids and Isadore, interacting when Isadore begins to assist the androids. At first he is only helping Pris, an android identical to the one assisting Deckard throughout the novel, because she is separated from the others. Isadore doesn’t know she is an android but when Pris’ friends show up, he begins to suspect something is different, “He sensed it without being able to finger it. As if a peculiar and malign *abstractness* pervaded their mental processes” (144). Towards the beginning of their relationship, Isadore is fond of the others and genuinely welcomes the ability to share his space with them, even going as far as to say “You’re androids...but what does it matter to me? I mean, I’m a special; they don't treat me very well either, like for instance I can't emigrate” (150). For Isadore, there is a clear empathic connection between them, they have shared hardships and are fellow outcasts.

At first glance, both Isadore and the “chickenheads” should be governed by the same rules of acceptance as the androids, they should be able to share space because of this very connection; however we see the relationship deteriorate when Isadore finds a spider and shows it to the others. Irmgard, one of the androids, suggests that the spider should be able to walk if it only had four legs and that it didn't need eight, so Pris begins to clip them off one by one. “Don’t mutilate it,” Isadore says “imploringly” (190). By expressing empathy towards the spider, Isadore begins to distance himself from the

androids. He continues his attempts at stopping Pris, unwavering in his empathy for a creature that is also picked apart by others because of its differences and out of curiosity. Isadore's connection to the androids cannot overcome his empathy for creatures and inability to rationalize that the androids cannot feel empathy, thus the conclusion to their relationship based on connection is when Isadore leaves his apartment, leaves the physical space with the androids, to release the spider. He encounters Deckard who asks Isadore to provide him the location of the androids, and Isadore responds "Well, the thing is...I'm looking after them" (201). No longer sharing space with the androids and instead assuming protection over them puts Isadore in a position of superiority to them, especially as this directly follows the deterioration of the empathic connection between the two parties. When Deckard does finally kill the last android named Roy, Deckard treats Isadore as a fellow human and attempts to prevent him from any pain or negative emotions, "Better not look" (206). At the moment of this quotation and by Dick's imaginative societal standards, there is a normal human, a "special" or chickenhead still alive and sharing space with him, and a dead android, eliminated for occupying this very space reserved for humans. Deckard is able to treat Isadore as an equal in this moment because he no longer physically or emotionally associates himself with the disabled androids.

This brings us to the villainized "other" that also falls into the category of disabled per the definitions laid out by the dystopian world, the androids. Though androids resemble humans biologically, there is a clear distinction that they are not humans or therefore not normal, and by not normal they represent the disabled body because of the inability to feel empathy. This omission of this human quality therefore

makes them inferior in society which therefore permits their elimination when needed. Essentially, then, we can see their metaphorical disability in this lack of sympathy. Their disability is invisible, but is based in lack. Davis describes the value of body parts as “The disabling of the body part or function is then part of a removal of value” (2404). In this case, it is not a physical body part that is removed but instead an emotional capacity which is as fundamental to a human, even more so, than an arm or a leg, as evidenced by the importance placed on it. The value is determined by society and in this case society is placing the utmost value on empathy. Here, it is not the additive features that make one disabled, but the negation of function or body parts that then makes the androids dysfunctional, or literally disabled. It is ironic that the androids are created and made functional by humans only to be made dysfunctional in a communitative sense by their very creators. The Rosen corporation is able to program every other type of physical, mental, and emotional capability as the androids display a wide range of emotions throughout the novel. The very fact that the androids, a stand-in for the disabled body, have creators in the first place means that the disabled body could be enslaved or disposed of at any time and it is the non-disabled humans that are therefore creating disability, or as Davis would put it, “This is more a question about the nature of the subject than about the qualities of the object, more about the observer than the observed” (2402). In addition, the androids perfectly embody the dichotomy of wholeness and incompleteness as the androids are literally indistinguishable from humans (so much so that the Voigt-Kampff test is believed to need reworking to be more accurate) except for this one trait, again this lacking marking them as incomplete.

This lack of empathy is actually similar to the definition and description of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and psychologist and autism expert Simon Baron-Cohen has identified “lack of empathy or mind-blindness as a core deficit of the disorder” (Morton 28). Not only do the androids exhibit characteristics that align with ASD, but the tests within the novel resemble tests used to diagnose ASD. The Voigt-Kampff test exemplifies methodology that is “strikingly similar to actual instruments used to measure empathy in patients thought to have ASD” (28). This lack of empathy almost embodies who the androids are and it is not an entirely foreign concept to the world of the reader. In fact, children diagnosed with ASD have often been referred to as having a “machine-like existence” (30) and one specific child being noted having “never doubted that the world was populated by human beings, though he could not reach them because they were all wearing masks that he could not remove” (30). Much like in the book, the language used is that of non-functioning in relation to the normalcy established by the able bodied human. Further, the development of the Nexus-6, the latest android model, could be seen as a symbol of the acknowledgment of Asperger's and the spectrum, behavior and emotion of those diagnosed not being as easily quantifiable and definitive. Regardless if Dick truly meant for his androids to have autism, this is an example of how easy it is to establish the correlation to “otherness” in the modern world and how the androids personify a disabled body. However it is not just the mind that is disabled, but the body as well.

Dick’s version of empathy is defined by the Voigt-Kampff test and its testing of the body. The first time the reader sees the test administered is when Deckard examines Rachael Rosen, and he describes scenarios such as “You become pregnant . . . by a man

who has promised to marry you. The man goes off with another woman, your best friend; you get an abortion and-" (Dick 47), or "On the walls someone has hung old maps Currier and Ives prints, and above the fireplace a deer's head has been mounted" (48). After the first questions, Deckard notes that there was a stimulated response and continues to ask questions that are all plausible scenarios and nothing outside the realm of reason. Yet, after being told he is wrong in his original labeling of Rachael as an android and that she is human, he asks one more question as a last ditch effort to prove that she truly is an android: "My briefcase...Babyhide...One hundred percent genuine human babyhide" (56). Deckard notices that Rachael does have a stimulated response but it is too late, she is fractions of a second too slow and he notes that "there should have been none" because of the outrageousness of the scenario. Rachael's mechanical empathic response is a result of programming and engineering to match the society that she lives in, a society that is obsessed with the classification, fabrication, and selective preservation of living beings. Every question and scenario that Deckard asks as part of the Voigt-Kampff test involves a living creature, thus by her forced reaction to these scenarios we can infer that to Dick, empathy is the feeling for another living thing. What the test also shows is that empathy, like Burke suggests and the Creature demonstrates, is linked to a bodily experience. Feelings are not merely in the mind, they are generated by biological reactions. The androids' lack of empathy, then, is also a physical disability.

It is not just the lack of empathy that makes the android a disabled body, but the fact that they are synthetic and therefore composed of prostheses. With no organic body parts there is no value to that body, and there is nothing that makes up that body that would therefore make it normal or functional by the fictional societal standards for

humanness and ableness. In our society today, if someone has a prosthetic arm, that person qualifies as disabled, the body not being functional when put up against the non-disabled body or the “normal” body. It is a ludicrous statement to say that someone with a prosthetic limb is not functional. Furthermore, it should feel ridiculous to label a being with intelligence and physical capabilities beyond those of most humans as disabled, however “the abnormal body plays a role in the defining of the normal body” (Davis 2419) and vice versa as well. It is the non-disabled community that subconsciously creates the communal lens to judge the body as normate or non-normate, non-disabled or disabled, and the androids are left out of that access to power and suffer because of it. One could argue that the androids have extraordinary prowess in other areas of their identity and because they are synthetic to begin with should not be in the conversation as disabled. However, Davis helps to answer this when he references David Hevey and his work with disability in photographs and states that “disabled people are represented but almost exclusively as symbols of ‘otherness’ placed within equations which take their non-integration as a natural by-product of their impairment” (2418). Yes, the android was not born from traditional reproductive organs normally associated with humanness, but regardless they exist in a society that has created a space for them to reason, react, and create a community of their own (without detection) and be contributing members (Luba Luft gifted audiences with music). Therefore, they should be afforded the same equality and acceptance we give to their creators from whom they are indistinguishable; it is absolutely not that far of a leap to see them as symbols for disability.

Within this structure of binaries created by this dystopia are cracks in the logic that break down the so-called rules of what governs disabled versus non-disabled, that the

idea of a “normal” body is actually an illusion. It starts with the empathy box and the mood organ. The empathy box allows one to enter a realm that is designed to perpetuate actions and feelings of empathy, as if it were created to ensure that there is a foundational normalcy among humans since that is the qualifying trait. However, because of the incessant need to use this device, Isadore calling it everyone’s most “prized possession” and Iran insinuating it would be a sin to not use it once they feel joy, it actually acts as a prosthesis. Because of its mechanical nature and the societal rules dictated by the lack of rights to androids, it cannot be seen as a natural extension to the human body. In addition, its purpose is to increase and facilitate the use of a bodily function, therefore what is the difference between the blood and bone composed android using its mechanical limbs to walk and the human using this device to explore emotions? There is none. The difference is that humans can still feel empathy, however they have now left the category of non-disabled and crossed into the labeling of disabled.

The mood organ that Iran and Deckard both use in the first chapter further pushes humans into the disabled grouping of this society. As Deckard incessantly tries to make Iran dial a setting that will improve her mood, she says “I can’t dial a setting that stimulates my cerebral cortex into wanting to dial! If I don’t want to dial, I don’t want to dial that most of all, because then I will want to dial, and wanting to dial is right now the most alien drive I can imagine” (Dick 6). There is an internal battle that Iran is facing, the want to just exist as is without the intrusion of a foreign device or electrical impulses and the spousal and societal pressure to regulate her emotions. Deckard eventually disregards Iran’s wishes and dials an emotion for her before leaving the house. Yet again we see humans relying on a tool for a bodily function. We see androids go through a range of

emotions such as anguish, joy, curiosity, but never do we see any of them use a mood organ even though the use of a mechanical device would be normal for them. The reliance on a prosthesis should not be accepted as normal for humans since the makeup of prosthetic limbs is what aids in the devaluing of androids to begin with. Not only that, but Iran's addiction to the machine can be seen when she sits idly in a room after the mood organ has shut off. Describing her emotions without it on, she says "My first reaction consisted of being grateful that we could afford a Penfield mood organ. But then I realized how unhealthy it was" (5), and Gilbert McInnis sums it perfectly by saying, "Iran's need for human contact is not only unsatisfied, she feels emptier after her convergence has happened. She feels worse because her escalating addiction to the machine dehumanizes her more as she embraces it."

John Isadore is another embodiment of the illusion of normality in the novel. As stated in the previous sections, Isadore falls into the non-normate category because of his "chickenhead" labeling, however he is not disabled in the same sense as the androids. There should not be a distinction between the acceptance of Isadore and the androids at all, and the fact that one is disabled and the other is not is void of any sound logic. The androids can be read as belonging on the autism spectrum, but Isadore can as well. He is described as not recognizing objects like other non-disabled humans can: "I don't think Isadore can tell the difference...To him they're all alive, false animals included" (Dick 73) as well as having tested for lower cognitive function in general. While he does not appear delusional to society or unable to make any human connection whatsoever, this can be attributed to "the reorganization of undamaged parts of the brain. It is not the individual function, but the integration of functional units that is critical to efficient

neuropsychological operations” (Morton 33). Because the “mind is made up of components which are innately programmed to process information,” and “ASD likely results from one of the innate components [being] faulty” (33), Isadore can be read as only mildly on the spectrum as he is not shown to have a debilitating amount of mental components that are faulty. Thus, the androids and John Isadore exhibit qualities that inevitably link them together, so much so that Isadore defends them against Deckard, a cop. The exception of acceptance made for Isadore and his qualification as normal in this society is misplaced if judging by the standards used for androids. However, the androids’ exclusion from that very category is also wrong if looking through the lens of Isadore.

The character who truly breaks down the illusion of normalcy in the novel is Rick Deckard. His position as a bounty hunter and his mission for eliminating the androids sets him up as the antithesis of his targets; however over the course of the story and his various interactions, Deckard begins to blur the line between what is normal and non-normate. One of his first androids that he sets out to eliminate is Luba Luft, who at the time of her discovery is masquerading as an opera singer. Deckard’s initial observation of Luft reveals to the reader that he does not just see her as a mechanical target, but as a being that can stir emotions “On the stage Luba Luft sang, and he found himself surprised at the quality of her voice,” but Dick is also sure to establish that Deckard has not forgotten his job “Perhaps the better she functions, the better a singer she is, the more I am needed” (92). This particular moment carries an incredible amount of importance as it is the first time he sees an android as anything other than a target thus opening the door for the evolution of his other emotions towards androids. Luft even alludes to either the

evolution of a person or replacing of personality or mentality when she tells Deckard “Maybe there was once a human who looked like you, and somewhere along the line you killed him and took his place” (94). While she is speaking hypothetically, she raises an interesting point regarding the body of Rick Deckard occupying two different mentalities and personalities. Deckard’s lack of outright denial of this statement allows the reader to entertain this notion throughout the rest of the book, mapping his empathic development to include androids. McInnis describes how the two are fundamentally different, Deckard and Luft, but that “Luba recognizes early signs that he is becoming a new sort of human, the posthuman, and she also highlights his responsibility for that change” when she posits his killing of another. A new kind of human is exactly what Deckard is becoming as there is no basis for empathy or emotion towards androids, and this first step reaches a critical juncture when he and fellow bounty hunter Phil Resch, capture Luba. Having already resigned, Luba is at their mercy but continues to point out inconsistencies with Resch’s behavior and how he might be an android. Resch snaps and attempts to kill her when Deckard stops him:

“No,” Rick said; he grabbed at Phil Resch’s hand; Resch retreated, eluding him.

“The Boneli test,” Rick said.

“It's admitted it's an android,” Phil Resch said. “We don't have to wait.”

“But to retire it,” Rick said, “because it's needling you--give me that.” He struggled to pry the laser tube away from Phil Resch. The tube remained in Phil Resch’s possession; Resch circled back within the cramped elevator, evading his attention on Luba Luft only. “Okay,” Rick said. “Retire it; kill it now. Show it that it's right.” He saw, then, that Resch meant to. “Wait--” (124)

There is a physical fight that Deckard is in as well as an internal one. Deckard is struggling with his growing empathy towards androids even though he has lived his entire life and career being told and believing that androids are nothing more than an object to be eliminated when out of place.

The fact that Deckard not only hesitates but actively tries to stop the killing of an android who poses no immediate threat solidifies the evolution of his character. While nobody was killed like Luba had hypothesized, Deckard has eliminated within himself the human that refuses to acknowledge androids as worthy of empathy. By reaching for Resch's gun, Deckard is attempting to stop any further attempt at alienating and denying androids any kind of acceptance into the sphere of normality, he is trying to provide the opportunity for Luba to occupy the space he is in as well. Deckard, aware of his current change, begins to wrestle with his new feelings: "Do you think androids have souls?" Rick interrupted" (125). The soul is a notion that is solely attached to something that is alive: "For Descartes, what separates us from machines are 1) our linguistic ability, and 2) we have a soul that enables us to act rationally" (McInnis). Deckard's postulation by questioning is acknowledgement that androids should not be denied acceptance from normative society. It also raises the concept of the constructed body: if all bodies are constructs then where do we draw metaphysical lines?

The character briefly mentioned in the previous section, Phil Resch, is another bounty hunter that Deckard meets when he is taken to a police headquarters that he is unfamiliar with because it turns out to be all androids working there. The head of the department there, Garland, also an android, remarks:

“He [Resch] doesn't know...We all came here together on the same ship from Mars. Not Resch; he stayed behind another week, receiving the synthetic memory system...All our vidphone lines here are trapped. They recirculate the call to other offices within the building. This is a homeostatic enterprise we're operating here, Deckard. We're a closed loop, cut off from the rest of San Francisco. We know about them but they don't know about us.” (Dick 113-114)

Shortly after, Resch kills Garland and Deckard stops just short of telling him the information Garland relayed and that he is an android as well. Was it out of fear that Resch would kill him or out of empathy for not truly knowing who he was and what his purpose was? Deckard's thought to himself several pages later would suggest the latter, “I've got to tell him, he said to himself. It's unethical and cruel not to” (117). Resch actually implores Deckard to give him the Voigt-Kampff test and states “Because I really want to know. *I have to know*” (129). Resch needs confirmation of his biological status because he yearns for the knowledge of knowing if he is accepted by society. Deckard, thinking that Resch is an android and is occupying space that is not allowed to by societal standards, contemplates and takes into account his feelings and emotions. If androids were truly non-human and disabled bodies not accepted in society, then Deckard should have killed him when he had the chance, but instead he works with him to later capture Luba Luft. Deckard's evolution into a new kind of human is represented by this acceptance of Resch even though he believes he is an android. This empathy humanizes Resch and devillainizes the androids by association. Deckard finally thinks to himself, “Always he had assumed that throughout his psyche he experienced the android as a clever machine- as in his conscious view. And yet, in contrast to Phil Resch, a difference

had manifested itself” (130). Deckard’s interactions with both Resch and Luba Luft have challenged not only what Deckard believes about what is human or deserves to live, but has challenged the reader to question if it is right to view androids and the disabled as villains.

Though Deckard does end up retiring all of the androids that were on his list by the end of the book, he calls himself a “crude cop with crude cop hands” (222), and after learning that a toad he discovered and thought to be real is actually artificial, he says “But it doesn’t matter. The electric things have their lives, too” (222). Deckard’s new-found empathy for androids is complete with this acceptance of the mechanical toad. This ending scene juxtaposes Deckard’s interactions and thoughts with his mechanical sheep in the first chapter: “He wished to god he had a horse, in fact any animal. Owning and maintaining a fraud had a way of gradually demoralizing one. And yet from a social standpoint it had to be done, given the absence of the real article. He had therefore no choice except to continue” (9). In this first chapter, Deckard outlines how an electric animal is a prosthesis for social acceptance, it is better to have a fake, android animal than no animal at all. By the end of the novel, Deckard accepts the idea that android animals are also desirable; this can be read as his ability to embrace the disabled body symbolized by androids.

Scholars in disability studies would argue that Deckard is being reminded of his fragmented and non-normate identity by the androids, and thus able to accept and feel empathy for them. Describing the illusion of artificial binaries, Davis says, “The divisions whole/incomplete, able/disabled neatly cover up the frightening writing on the wall that reminds the hallucinated whole being that its wholeness is in fact a

hallucination, a developmental fiction” (2403). This development begins in the infant stages when “rather than a whole, the body is an assemblage of arms, legs, surfaces” (2409), however, the infant grows and gradually creates an illusion of the self as being non-fragmented or whole, “The process that builds a self involves the enforced unifying of these fragments through the hallucination of a whole body . . . When the child points to an image in the mirror--at that stage Lacan calls ‘the mirror phase’--the child recognizes (actually misrecognizes) that unified image as his or her self” (2410). The humans in the book all rely on the empathy box, mood organ, and electric animals as means for societal acceptance or facilitating their lives and religious accessibility, and the reliance on these devices and inability to see themselves as non-normate or disabled just as the androids shows that the humans’ views of the self are in fact a hallucination. This illusion that any body is whole is what propels the villainization and exclusion from normality and acceptance for the androids. The knowledge and identification of the existence of beings created with superior intelligence and physical abilities reminds humans of their own limitations and fragmentation, or as Davis states, “The subject looks at the disabled body and has a moment of cognitive dissonance, or should we say a moment of cognitive resonance with the earlier state of fragmentation. Rather than seeing the whole body in the mirror, the subject sees the repressed fragmented body; rather than seeing the object of desire, as controlled by the Other, the subject sees the true self of the fragmented body” (2410). The hallucination of the whole is disturbed and not allowed to persevere in the subject (the human). The body then feels threatened and reminded of the natural fragmentation of the body, thus the android and its representation of the disabled is a threatening force to the illusion. Humans subconsciously and consciously villainize the

androids because of this threat and the android being a reminder of the “‘real’ body, the ‘normal body,’ the observer’s body, is in fact always already a ‘fragmented body’” (2411). The issue does not lie with the non-normate or disabled qualities of the androids, the problem is with the humans. Deckard exemplifies the progression in mentality of accepting one’s own fragmentedness and thus being able to exist with this knowledge peacefully.

The dichotomies of human and android, disabled and non-disabled are blurred because of Deckard. Though he may be keen on keeping this newfound mindset, Dick reestablishes these structures at the end of the novel. Because of Luba Luft and Phil Resch, Deckard is forced to consider an android as something other than “it,” however for the novel and the roles of the structures within this society, it is not enough as he still kills every android on his list by the end. It is as if Dick opens the door for posthuman analysis and discussion and slams it shut with Deckard's trigger finger. In addition, Rachael assists Deckard throughout various points of the novel in finding the wanted androids and therefore begins to create an alliance with Deckard and the reader. Dick also shuts down any notion of Rachael associating herself with good and the hero when towards the end she kills Deckard’s new, live goat “A small young-looking girl with dark hair and large black eyes, very thin. Wearing a long fish-scale coat. She had a mail pouch purse. And she made no effort to keep us from seeing her. As if she didn't care” (Dick 208). After this loss, Deckard refers to her and the other androids as “life thieves” and travels to a desolate wasteland where he manages to fuse with Mercer. After continuous interactions with androids ending negatively and the eventual fusion and reestablished reliance on the fabricated and empathy producing religion, Deckard has chosen to no

longer walk the lines between both worlds and stand for the demolishing of these structures, but instead to align himself with his society's established humans.

Because of Deckard's trajectory and eventual decisions, Dick establishes that in this novel the human is the normate and is good, and the android, the disabled, is non-normate and therefore villainous. If Dick let Deckard continue with his evolution that started with Luba Luft and Phil Resch and instead had Deckard choose not to kill the androids, then Dick could have allowed the reader to truly reassess the definition of human and the structures that society operates in. I have described the use of physical prosthesis by humans (empathy box and mood organ) and androids (their entire being), the electric animals as societal prosthesis for the humans, and the inconsistencies in intellectual and emotional ranges for the humans and the androids. The reader could have been given the opportunity to wrestle with how the evolution of the idea of the normal human has led to the contemplation of how mechanical/artificial constructs/intelligences can aid or make a human and then if that human would still be considered human or normal. The reader would find that a definition of what is human cannot be finitely calculated or written because what it means to be a human is constantly changing and continuously negating pre-existing societal qualifications such as no mechanical parts or specific emotional response time. If the concept of the human would have been allowed to evolve then the idea of the villain would have been allowed to change as well. This would have resulted in Deckard being coded as the villain for the elimination of the disabled because the androids did not fit the societal norm. If the structures that define humanity are being deconstructed, then so too must the traditional building blocks of the villain as disabled and non-normate be demolished as well. As we shall see in the next

chapter, there is another way. While Dick's novel ultimately turns to pessimism (an unsurprising turn in a post-war text), a later adaptation of his ideas corrects the ideological problems inherent in the novel's conclusion. The constructed body—whether it uses prosthesis or not—tests the boundaries of definitions of humanity and disability and can, ultimately, be redeemed.

Blade Runner: Centering Disabled Subjectivity

In Dick's novel, Deckard's exploration of his empathetic feelings towards the androids stops before any true inner personal change occurs. What kindness he did begin to feel or act with is negated when he eventually decides to go through with killing the rogue androids. Ridley Scott's adaptation of Dick's original story, *Blade Runner* (1982), looks at what would happen if Deckard were to relinquish the power that his normative body possesses, his growth from an empathic relationship, and the effect of not having killed every replicant by the end. Scott seizes several opportunities with characters such as Deckard, Rachael, and Roy Baty to deconstruct the definition of a human. By taking these liberties, Scott pushes past Dick and creates space for a posthuman world to develop, one where multiple bodies can coexist and relationships between different bodies can exist as well. In short: Scott takes seriously the concept of the constructed body, using it to put pressure on all constructs, including disability. What results is an ending that leaves the viewer questioning why the human and androids weren't living amongst each other in peace to begin with, and how Deckard and Rachael are a model not only for the fictional society but for reality in many ways as well.

Scott takes great liberties with the plot of Dick's novel, especially the connection between Rachael and Deckard. The story centers around a bounty hunter named Rick Deckard who is tasked with finding and eliminating four rogue replicants. Set in the dystopian future of 2019, replicants are synthetic androids that are indistinguishable from humans except for one trait: having a lack of empathy. Deckard is accompanied by Rachael, a replicant who has recently discovered that she is a replicant, as he attempts to track down the escapees. Towards the beginning, Deckard exhibits much of the same

callousness towards replicants that we see other normative figures treat non-normative bodies with in my previous chapters. As the story and his relationship with Rachael progress, so too does his attitude and empathy towards the androids. The film features a climactic battle between Deckard and Roy Baty, the lead replicant, that culminates in Baty sparing Deckard's life. This act provides the final catalyst for Deckard's posthuman evolution and he eventually relinquishes the power that comes with being a non-disabled body and shares that power with Rachael.

Several scholars have analyzed and critiqued *Blade Runner* through their respective theories and attempted to find meaning within the movie that can also critique our modern world, for better or worse. Though there are a tremendous number of topics examined-- futurism, feminism, and noir film-- identity receives perhaps the least attention. When scholars do approach the subject of identity, it is never specifically about the corporeal body but instead about various ideas that are associated with the body or identity. A survey of recent critical work on the film shows that the replicants can be read as representatives for "otherness." Jordana Greenblatt argues that the replicants in the movie can be analogous to the slave, denied personhood and humanity in a legal sense, pointing out that personhood is often thought to be on an individual basis that takes into account agency, and consciousness. Greenblatt also makes time to draw the reader's attention to the problem of masculinity and emotion and their ties to humanness. Nobody would deny that to be a man is to be a human, yet western culture and the suppression of male emotion has pervaded across centuries, and thus the movie poses a conundrum and "anxiety-inducing paradox" (Greenblatt 50). While Greenblatt focuses on Roy Batty as the epitome of this paradox and masculinity, she only addresses the issue from the

perspective of gender and a denaturalized slave narrative. Batty's fight is not only for literal freedom but also deconstruction of divisive barriers between the disabled and non-disabled bodies. Gender will not be my focus at all, but the way scholars approach the idea of the replicant versus the human as inferior versus superior and the language associated is absolutely pertinent. Ultimately, Scott blurs the prevailing narrative, casting the non-normate body as heroic and laudable.

Rather than approach *Blade Runner* as a medium that tackles the complications of gender normativity, John Sullins instead argues that the movie brings the viewer to the brink of several philosophical questions, such as if we are truly human or if we are robots, and if we would know the difference. He focuses primarily on what Dick has chosen as his marker for humanness: empathy, and by relation love and morality. He argues at the beginning of his text that replicants should be considered humans in a "moral sense (although not in a biological sense)" (Sullins 197). In addition, in his section on the difference between the *agape* as unconditional love and empathic love and how *agape* is more like a programmed love, he asserts that the replicants' emotion resembles *agape* and is therefore not as genuine as Tyrell's or Deckard's for example. He attaches his reasoning to Dick's own philosophy and finishes the section by asserting that the replicants' connections resemble *agape* rather than true empathy and that therefore if the reader cannot experience empathy then the reader is a robot. Near the end he contends that "if our motive is to build machines to replace humans, then we are denying the value of being human" (204). Like Greenblatt, he fails to emphasize or take into account the corporeal body or any connection of the human and machine that is not as grandiose as a complete replacement on all accounts.

Clay Morton does bring disability theory to the table with analysis of the movie, but its focus is on how the replicant's behavior resembles the definitions, especially the earlier ones, of autism and Asperger's. He provides specific examples of children described as having the mannerisms of a machine and even references one of the groundbreaking texts on the matter, Bruno Bettelheim's *The Empty Fortress*, and how the "highly influential book defines autism specifically as an impairment of humanness" (Morton 30). He very insightfully points out that our "sympathy for androids is a sympathy for those who are damaged in ways that do indeed disqualify them from humanity" (32). Just before this moment, he describes infantile autism and how that relates to the deliberate mere four year lifespan of the replicants. The fail safe was incorporated into the replicants to prevent them from developing deep emotions, but this has caused what Morton would argue is an ironic mechanical disconnection from the world. Morton progresses his argument to include how the movie evolves from the novel to reflect the introduction of Asperger's and the shift in the cognitive paradigm. He does not just focus on the replicant characters, but includes Deckard's behavior and tendencies and how they might be viewed through this particular lens. Not to discredit anything in Morton's argument as his focus was specifically autism and Asperger's, but he remains fixed on the cognitive aspect of the non-normate, and my focus is on the physical. It is not their cognitive faculties that exclude them from societal acceptance as the opening running of lines to the movie states how they are at least on par with human intelligence. Instead, it is their physical and biological make up, or lack thereof.

As we have seen, critics are quick to note differences in the film, but they do not consider the centrality of the body to ideas about identity. This chapter will address this

gap in the scholarship and suggest that the body, as well as the external labeling and perception of the body, factor into societal normalization. I assert that the film attempts to establish posthuman ideas and how the various characters play roles in decentralizing ideas of normate and non-normate bodies. I will incorporate Donna Haraway's transcendent cyborg to address these points and gaps in scholarship by blending these ideas of cyborg, villainy, and the body in this film. Each theorist fails to truly articulate how the corporeal body is labeled through careful language, such as retirement versus execution, to further support the binary of non-normate and normate, disabled and non-disabled. Not only that, but the disabled body, the replicants, are accompanied by the non-disabled, Deckard, on a path that can only be described as posthuman. They are blurring the lines between which body is abnormal and which is accepted by progressively enticing the audience's sympathy and eventual empathy for them. In this sense, *Blade Runner* fulfills the promise of the created body teased by *Frankenstein*. Rather than reinforcing dividing lines, the created body of *Blade Runner* reveals the artificiality of those constructions. The viewer is also forced to acknowledge the inevitable and present intertwining of human and machine, and by relation the non-normate body. We are forced to recognize that this is nothing to be shamed, negated, or vilified.

In order to better understand the link between identity and bodies—non-normate and otherwise—we must examine how the film links empathy, bodies, and humanness. Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* is an extraordinary example of how original stories and concepts can be altered either subtly or drastically to achieve the deconstruction of long-held societal standards and ideals. Though Scott adapted his film from *Do Androids*

Dream of Electric Sheep?, he chose to change the title as well as other several key components but he did keep one of the key elements: the Voigt-Kampff test. Indeed, the Voigt-Kampff test is central to the film: the administration of the test is the subject of the tense, violent, opening scene. Tyrell, the founder and overseer of the Tyrell corporation that is responsible for the creation of the replicants (in the novel they were called androids), describes the test as “Capillary dilation of the so-called blush response, plus fluctuation of the pupil, plus involuntary dilation of the iris” (Scott). It continues to measure that key piece, empathy, that separates the replicants from the humans, and importantly assumes the body is a legible and fixed text which emotions are written on.

The second time we see this test being administered is a familiar scene for those who know both stories. Deckard flies to the corporation’s headquarters to administer the test as a sort of calibration to make sure it is fit to identify and aid in the capture of rogue replicants. When Deckard first arrives, he is greeted by Rachael and an artificial owl. The camera captures just Rachael’s shoulders and head at first but quickly switches to a majority of the room with the entirety of Rachael showing as she walks towards him. A stern look on her face convincingly shows that she does not seem put off by his presence and also initiates conversation by asking Deckard if he likes the owl. During the dialogue between the two, the camera refuses to focus on anything but each of their faces in separate shots, alternating between speakers as she presses him on whether he has ever mistakenly retired a human. Tyrell seems to appear out of the walls in the back of the room, defining the characteristics of the Voigt-Kampff test as he walks in. He suggests that Deckard test Rachael first before he lets him test a replicant because at this point Deckard does not know that Rachael is in fact a replicant. As they set up for the test, a

giant shade rolls down over the window that overlooks the city. Once it begins, half of Deckard's face is hidden by a shadow and Rachael's face is also obscured by either shadows or smoke, the viewer never being able to make out her entire figure or expression. In fact, the camera is never allowed to refocus on her face after the smoke disappears until the end of the test, leaving her a mystery to the viewer.

Ultimately, we learn that Rachael fails the test and her surprise suggests the central problem with linking complete minds and bodies to humanness. The test continues to use a series of questions regarding animals and humans and as Rachael answers the needles move feverishly or not at all, and by the end Deckard says, "If she is, the machine works" and Tyrell confirms her being a replicant as a response. However, Rachael was not aware of her true body until this moment. As the directions in the script suggest, she "sits rigidly in the chair, as the ground crumbles around her...hanging by a thread" (Scott). During the test and the lead up to it, Rachael existed under the illusion that she was as everyone else, a human capable of empathy and therefore all of the rights and acceptance that go along with that. Scott ensures that the viewer only sees part of her, pieces of her body and face rather than a corporeal whole that has been ironically exposed because of this test. The fragmented filming of Rachael's body parallels the theory of the fragmented self forwarded by disability scholars. According to Lennard Davis, "The divisions whole/incomplete, able/disabled neatly cover up the frightening writing on the wall that reminds the hallucinated whole being that its wholeness is in fact a hallucination, a development fiction" (2403). Rachael was under this hallucination, unaware of her apparent incompleteness according to this fictional society's standards and Rachael and the viewer are made aware of this revelation at the same time. Scott

does an excellent job physically conveying the illusion with the shadows, dim lighting, and smoke.

Rachael's fragmented replicant body—like the other replicant bodies—reinforces the capitalist power of the Tyrell corporation even as it reinforces the hallucination of the wholeness of human bodies. Davis even goes as far as to say, “The unwhole body is the unholy body” (2406), and if Tyrell holds the power of a god in this case because of the creation of life and purpose then his casual disregard for Rachael and her feelings and mere existence are credit to this. In his eyes, now that he does not have to pretend anymore, she is nothing more than an object that deserves no more care than an everyday item. In the novel, Rachael was already aware that she was artificial, but in the movie Deckard has acted like a hammer on glass, shattering her world as she knew it. This change in the story creates a character who must now grapple with her place in the world and her progression of emotions as opposed to the Rachael in the novel who lacks such evolution of emotion and is static. Interestingly, Rachael falls into the position of the Creature in Shelley's novel: she must now navigate a world that hates her for being a constructed body.

What this allows the viewer to do is watch the evolution of this character and her attempt to carve out a space for herself in this divisive society. Because of her fragmented body or mankind deeming her unwhole, she is the non-normate body pitted against the normate, or the disabled body against the non-disabled body. According to Deckard she is missing something, missing a key piece to make her whole and worthy of acceptance. After the test, Deckard refers to Rachael as “she” but then catches himself and says “how can it not know it is?” (Scott). Jordana Greenblatt would argue that Deckard's change in

language means Rachael is outside of human affectivity, and “To be outside of human affectivity is to be inhuman and thus traumatically undesirable within the framework” (Greenblatt 50). However, he is not keen on Tyrell’s explanation of commerce being the reason for the implantation of memories and not telling her the truth. Deckard’s internal struggle is beginning; he is subconsciously deciding whether Rachael deserves his empathy or not or whether her non-normate body should be accepted. In a scene shortly after, Rachael finds herself in Deckard’s apartment. Once again the camera refuses to show her whole body or face, constantly obscured by shadows or limiting angles. She tries convincing Deckard through photographs and anecdotes that she is not a replicant, however Deckard begins to describe these memories before she can finish, proving that he knows her most secret memories. After he describes a recollection of a spider and she cuts him off to finish it herself, she finally accepts the truth. The camera lingers on her face to capture anguish and disheartenment, realizing that she is in fact fragmented and therefore outside of the spheres of normalcy.

Then Deckard shows her compassion. Kindness. The camera focuses on Rachael’s growing realization and heartbreak and then cuts to Deckard comprehending the gravity of the situation: “Ok, bad joke. I made a bad joke. You’re not a replicant, go home” (Scott). He recognizes her pain and wants it to stop, he rationalizes her emotions on a personal level to where he can’t stand it. This is of extraordinary significance because as Greenblatt would say, “Making oneself receptive to the feelings of others by feeling with and/or in response to them necessitate a kind of abdication of power that is incommensurate with subjective coherence” (Greenblatt 50). By relinquishing power in this moment, he is creating a new space to be cohabitated by both human and replicant.

He is deviating from the norm of his society and attempting to break down barriers between the two and disrupt the divide between normate and non-normate. This scene in particular is characterized by its long shots on one particular character to fully capture the emotional change caused by this realization. Rachael's face shows a continual decline in emotional and mental well-being as her entire world is shattered, and Deckard's expression and body language, shifting of his body, hands to his eyes, looking down, suggest that he feels guilty and wishes to ease her pain. By attempting to console her, he is indirectly acknowledging that there is nothing insignificant or inferior about her being, but rather she is a victim of society and of Tyrell specifically.

Deckard's actions in his apartment when Rachael finally accepted the truth would suggest he changed his tune on Rachael yet again and decided that he is to be connected to her through sympathy. Even after she leaves, the camera lingers on his face that is deep in contemplation after he poured over her pictures that she left behind that were supposed to be her memories. The viewer can't help but feel sympathy for Rachael as Scott makes sure the audience sees the torment and suffering on her face and then again an outpouring of sympathy as she denies Deckard's offer of hospitality and instead leaves hurriedly. Edmund Burke's theory of sympathy, which I have spun through this examination of the constructed body and normalcy, is illustrative here. Burke thinks of sympathy as a "sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected" (41). If Deckard and the audience are able to sympathize with Rachael, then a connection has been built, and that connection is the beginning of the path towards deconstructing the divisive barriers between disabled and non-disabled.

Unlike his novel counterpart, Deckard in the film is able to embrace this sympathetic connection and therefore it is easier for the audience to do so as well.

Even as Deckard begins to see the fragmented body as human and worthy of empathy, Tyrell—and the capitalist forces he represents—functions as the upholder of the disabled/nondisabled binary. He wants his replicants to be useful to society, however he wants Deckard to eliminate and kill the rogue replicants so he treats Rachael as an object, denying her personhood as well as humanity. She does not have an individual identity because at this point her identity is programmed for her, implanted by chosen memories from the Tyrell Corporation. Greenblatt argues that these two are intertwined:

Philosophically, personhood is associated with individual identity, resulting in some categorical blurring between personhood and subjectivity, which is associated in modernity with (self)-consciousness, agency, and possessing a discrete and continuous identity. Meanwhile, understandings of the human that seek to define it via its unique capacities have often prioritized the same capacities attributed to the modern rational subject. (46)

The societal structure validated by the non-disabled body would keep the disabled body as obscure and without agency, but Rachael will prove able to break that mold and blur the lines between normate and non-normate. In addition, Deckard acts a catalyst even though in this scene and in the beginning of the plot he exhibits the mentality that supports this divisive structure, however he begins to accompany Rachael on this reformation of ideals from this point onward.

The test that Deckard uses to differentiate human and replicant is nothing more than a machine measuring and quantifying automatic and mechanical reactions. Rather

than rely on that machine for the rest of the movie, he relies on his own emotional impulses. These impulses are involuntary and thus automatic, just like what the Voigt-Kampff measures. Burke would even go so far as to say the emotional impulses that Deckard relies on are just as machine-like as the test he uses:

I am afraid it is a practice much too common in inquiries of this nature, to attribute the cause of feelings which merely arise from the mechanical structure of our bodies, or from the natural frame and constitution of our minds, to certain conclusions of the reasoning faculty on the objects presented to us; for I should imagine, that the influence of reason in producing our passions is nothing near so extensive as it is commonly believed. (41)

Burke's theory of sympathy in *A Philosophical Enquiry* helps us parse the significance of Tyrell's language in this scene. Tyrell does refer to Rachael as "her," signifying that she does have a gender, however he never permits her to speak for herself and offers her services to Deckard as though her own input was not even a question of permittance. Tyrell's actions and Deckard's fixed language would suggest that Rachael and therefore the rest of the replicants do not have the same right to emotional discourse as humans. However, Burke would argue that Tyrell and Deckard at the beginning of the movie are suffering from a delusion. Burke states that "the cause of feelings which merely arise from the mechanical structure of our bodies" (41) is more of a chemical reaction than an enlightened rational process. Sympathy and empathy are mechanisms within the body which therefore relate more closely to the biology of the cyborg rather than Tyrell's normate body. Thus, the difference between the replicants and humans is negligible and the argument for the barrier between the two begins to dissolve. In fact, the criteria used

to separate Rachael from acceptance among humans is actually what makes her closest to humans.

Blade Runner's Rachael, and the other replicants such as Roy Batty and Pris, represent non-normate and disabled bodies, but could specifically be identified as cyborgs. Each replicant exemplifies a range of emotions that again, according to Burke is a mere mechanized process just like humans exhibit. According to Donna Haraway, a cyborg is “a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction” (Haraway 2269). If the cyborg is the joining of the machine and human, then the replicants’ ability to use and practice empathy further proves that they are closer to humans than the fictional society would like to admit and therefore wrong to be vilified. Furthermore, Burke’s ideas about bodily reactions to emotions would also posit humans as cyborgs. If we are little more than a set of mechanical reactions then the body could be read as a machine. In that sense, the lines between replicant, human, and cyborg seem to be more permeable than we saw in *Frankenstein* and *Androids*.

The term cyborg carries a science fiction connotation with it, however the premise is truer to our modern world that one might realize. The reliance on technology for the vast majority of the population may not mean that the physical body is intertwined with that very technology but it is a step away from it. However, the integration of machines with the human is not science fiction anymore as limbs are able to be replaced and used with extraordinary function. Not to mention, “modern medicine is also full of cyborgs, of couplings between organism and machine, each conceived as coded devices, in an intimacy and with a power that was not generated in the history of sexuality” (Haraway

2269). Perhaps the difference then, with Rachael and the others, is the means of reproduction. The replicants represent a shift away from traditional ideas of reproduction and instead to replication. Haraway describes this dichotomy and others in her writing such as sex/genetic engineering, mind/artificial intelligence, and labor/robotics, just to name a few. The first in each pair is natural and widely accepted as normal among both Scott's fictional society and our modern world, however there is a shift to the latter which has been previously thought as abnormal but is increasingly becoming the norm. Science and machines are replacing pure human labor, machine parts are able to communicate and even sync with the human mind, and humans are becoming either intertwined or dependent on machines if not both. This is in no way an argument that machines are taking over, but rather that what Haraway argues is true. The cyborg, the hybrid of machine and human, is progressively becoming the norm and rather than be labeled as the disabled, is dissolving that barrier altogether.

The replicants, as cyborgs, are transcending abnormality and are therefore rescuing the non-normate from villainy because the fragmented body is no longer obscure. In fact, it is the body that is still under the hallucination of wholeness that is becoming obsolete and villainous, such as Tyrell. The camera ensures we see Tyrell as a menacing figure because of the constant positioning of the viewer looking up at him, or his thick rimmed glasses concealing his eyes and not allowing the viewer to ever make a connection. Eventually Roy Batty, the leader of the rogue replicants, makes his way to Tyrell corporation to confront his maker. The room has an extraordinary amount of candles that are lit and in the beginning of their conversation, Batty refers to Tyrell as "father." It is, in many ways, reminiscent of the Creature's first confrontation of

Frankenstein. After Tyrell informs Batty that he is physically incapable of extending his life beyond what was initially programmed, Batty kills Tyrell by crushing his skull and gouging out his eyes. As gory as this is, the symbolism is not lost. Batty, the new generation, has destroyed the previous generation not only physically but also attempted to destroy it ideologically. Though it resembles the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*, our sympathies actually lie with the aggressors unlike in Shakespeare's play. If *Lear* is all about bad governance allowing increasing chaos (and those who are blind to it paying the price) then *Blade Runner* is all about how that chaos is not negative and thus renders the abusive power that created it as obsolete and abnormal. An attempt of the non-disabled body keeping power over the disabled body goes up in flames metaphorically, although the fire can be seen flickering on the faces of both characters as the tumultuous scene carries out. The script has flipped in this scene and the viewer now questions whether the replicant that has been labeled a villain and hunted for the entire movie so far is actually villainous.

Batty comes to his father and who he also refers to as a god, someone who is not only supposed to look out for him but is able to show the power to make changes where and when necessary. Tyrell does say it is impossible, but he justifies Batty's short life by saying, "The candle that burns twice as bright burns half as long" (Scott). Haraway would point out that "The relationships for forming wholes from parts including those of polarity and hierarchical domination, are at issue in the cyborg world" (2271). Tyrell has created this whole from parts but refuses to let that status of his body and the disabled body change. The issue of the cyborg and disabled body gaining acceptance and

overcoming villainous archetypes gains a victory in this scene when Batty demolishes the old ideology and creates that space for himself.

On the other hand, Deckard is transcending this divisive boundary himself as he reaches out to Rachael and accepts her fragmented, cyborg body. He is the representation of the traditional non-disabled body shedding his barriers to join Rachael on this new path of humanness. As the one whose career relies on a machine, he is the perfect candidate to take that leap. In addition, the importance of establishing that Rachael is representative of a cyborg is because whether she is labeled as cyborg or replicant or android, she embodies the characteristics of a human on almost every level except the means of her own birth or creation and presumably the ability to create life herself. According to Haraway and her push for these structures and boundaries being transcended by cyborgs, the “stakes in the border war have been the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination” (Haraway 2270). Because of the relative novelty of the cyborg, the body that is still under the hallucination of wholeness is reminded of its own fragmentation when confronted with the non-normate. This encounter makes the non-disabled revert to vilifying the other and thus perpetuates stereotypes of the non-normate bodies as villainous. It is a war of both conscious and subconscious effort on the part of the non-disabled waged against the conscious disabled body. Rachael represents the future, part human and part machine, not completely one or the other made evident by the able bodied relying on another machine to identify the otherness in her, and thus illustrative of a partial identity. Tyrell even acknowledges that Rachael has “transcended her conditioning” (Scott), but he will not acknowledge his own partial identity and remains in power over her and the other replicants.

What truly allows the development of these posthuman ideas is the relationship between Rachael and Deckard. Working alone during his quest to track down the rogue replicants, he encounters Leon first. Before he does though, Deckard is among a large crowd in a what looks like a downtown area. He looks up from the ground to spot Rachael across the street, looking at him. She turns and walks away and the camera maintains focus on Deckard with the following shot, allowing the viewer to recognize that he is longing for Rachael and her company. This is confirmed when he frantically starts to look for her with a concerned look on his face, zero trace of hostility to be found. Before he is able to find her, Leon grabs Deckard and begins to attack him. Leon is the very first replicant the viewer is introduced to. In the first scene of the movie he is taking Voigt-Kampff test and before finishing he shoots the blade runner that is administering it. Leon, like Tyrell, represents a fixed mindset and the negation of the deconstruction of labels and barriers. He literally stops the joining of the disabled body and the non-disabled body and almost puts an end to their partnership. However, it is Rachael that pulls the trigger and kills Leon, thus freeing Deckard and actively choosing Deckard's growth mindset versus Leon.

Because Leon is a replicant, he can also be classified as a cyborg. However, just because he is a cyborg does not mean that he shares the same posthuman ideals as Rachael or represents any kind of progression towards the abolishment of segregation of bodies like her. A cyborg that kills humans is not a successful melding of human and machine, and Rachael acknowledges this. She chooses the destruction of the divisive barrier and decides to work together with Deckard towards creating affinity groups or a posthuman world. Haraway argues that in a world of fraying identities there is "another

response through coalition-- affinity, not identity” (2276). Rather than continue on the path of this society and belong to a group because of literal biological make up, Rachael’s choice promotes a future that would facilitate the blending of non-normate and normate. This new identity, one that is fluid between connection by blood and connection by choice, “marks out a self-consciously constructed space that cannot affirm the capacity to act on the basis of natural identification, but only on the basis of conscious coalition of affinity” (Haraway 2276). Rachael, and now Deckard, have to protect that affinity group that they have already created from that shared space in his apartment, as well as the empathic connection that was established. In addition, because of the fluidity between affinity groups and pure identity groups, the vilifying of the disabled body becomes more difficult as well. An individual or a society is no longer able to single out one particular group as easily, and thus encourages the acceptance of all bodies.

However, this posthuman relationship is not all smooth sailing. Back in Deckard’s apartment, Rachael is visibly distraught. Deckard joins her and while sharing space, he attempts to kiss her. She backs away and then walks away from him. Deckard reaches out for her arm and when he misses, he meets her at the front door and slams it closed as she opens it to leave. He has a powerful, stern expression, contrasted by her fearful cowering. He backs her into a wall, kisses her, and when he pulls away he says, “Now you kiss me” (Scott). She complies, and following another kiss, Deckard says, “I want you.” She repeats the line, but Deckard commands, “Again” (Scott). This is a troubling scene because Deckard ignores any regard for consent on Rachael’s part and forces himself on her. He physically and verbally commands her, and thus the viewer is left stunned and uncomfortable after having spent more than an hour building an emotional connection to

her character. This is a step backwards for Deckard's posthuman development, however he does redeem himself at the very end. Following his climactic battle with Roy Batty, a battered Deckard makes his way back to his apartment where Rachael is sleeping. As he approaches her, the camera focuses only on his gun slowly lowering towards her. When he uncovers her from the blanket, the viewer loses sight of the gun as he leans down to check that she is breathing and then kisses her on the cheek. When she wakes, he asks, "Do you love me?" and "Do you trust me?" (Scott). She confirms that she does and then they make their way out together. This scene is a stark contrast to the one previously described. Deckard has completed his transformation and rather than assuming a domineering role over a perceived subject, he gives her the power of choice by relinquishing some of his own power. He allows Rachael the choice to continue in the affinity group that they have established together and as a result truly breaks down that barrier between disabled and non-disabled.

Another replicant that acts not only as a foil for Rachael but also as a force for establishing the posthuman, is Pris. The viewer first meets Pris when J.F. finds her crouched behind garbage in a dark alley. She has dingy hair and clothes, is skittish, and altogether looks either homeless or like a sex worker (the viewer has already been told that she is a "basic pleasure bot"). Upon initial contact she is scared and worried, not sure of how to react or interact with Sebastian beyond attempting to flee at first which shows her perceived helplessness. When she says she does not have a home, J.F. begins to turn away, but recognizing she is about to lose a chance at shelter and safety, she quickly stops him in his tracks by changing her attitude and joyfully remarking, "We scared each other pretty good, didn't we?" (Scott). He chuckles to himself and immediately puts down

his guard. J.F. Sebastian, a human who has suffered from toxins in the air and therefore has lower cognitive function than his fellow humans, decides to invite her back to his home to help take care of her. At this point he does not know she is a replicant or a fugitive. When they arrive, Kaiser and Bear, J.F.'s miniature robots that he has built as friends, greet them both. The mini robots walk in on their own, greet him, and walk out, though one bumps into the wall before finally making it to the opening. From this encounter, the audience immediately perceives Pris as more than just a machine because that labeling is saved for Kaiser and Bear. In fact, from this point Pris begins to take on stronger energy and emotion, eventually manifesting itself as manipulation of J.F.

It is clear to the viewer that J.F. is a social outcast because of his abandoned apartment complex that only he lives in and how he has self-made robots as friends. Pris begins to listen, confides in him, and is constantly smiling and draping herself over him. Perhaps the most important scene where this occurs is when Roy Baty arrives. J.F. learns that he and Pris are replicants and asks them to prove it. Pris responds by saying, "I think, Sebastian, therefore I am," and then hugs him from behind which causes him to smile. After establishing her power of thought, she does reach her hand into boiling water to take out an egg, an effort that cements her status as cyborg, capable of both human and machine actions. He then decides to help lead them to Tyrell after Baty asks, but the real push through his initial resistance was Pris smiling and saying, "You're our best and only friend, Sebastian."

This manipulative relationship created by Pris between her and J.F. has several implications. The first and perhaps most obvious is that it helps to establish audience acceptance for Rachael. If Rachael is the driving force for acceptance of the disabled

body and posthuman ideology and as the means to deconstruct normate and non-normate segregation, then she must be a shining hero even when she is not sharing the screen. The viewer is supposed to see Rachael and Pris as a contrast of each other, both being replicants but representing two different emotional developments, but that is the key. Regardless of her deviousness, Pris is developing emotions and an understanding of empathy. To see Pris as a force for establishing the posthuman takes a bit more empathy on the viewer's part, but nonetheless it is there. To make this leap, the viewer must connect several dots. From the moment Pris was created she was to be used physically and emotionally, constantly at the mercy of others. However, what her relationship with J.F. proves is her ability to rewrite the body through the use of her body, literally going from a sex robot to being the body in power and using that power to find freedom, autonomy, and agency. She is the opposite of J.F.'s miniature robots, she has control of her mind and body. She does lie and manipulate J.F., but her role is giving the cyborg a voice and therefore disabled bodies a voice. Lying to him is her way of creating space for herself within this oppressive society, and she creates her own narrative as part of a revolution for survival. Pris may not be the hero and the replicant that is most responsible for breaking down the divisive barriers, but she certainly plays a vital role. When the viewer is able to connect those dots, the climactic and final fight between Deckard and Baty holds more significance and gravity than at first glance, and it is because of these relationships described that Baty and Deckard's showdown is not only for personal survival, but of future survival as well.

Though it provides a lens to analyze what is human, posthumanism scholarship does not adequately address the body. This attitude of refusing to acknowledge the body

is more related to the mindset and ideology of Tyrell, and his blatant disregard for the empathy of replicants paints him as abnormal and archaic. The movie pushes against this outmoded and ignored aspect of posthumanism and rescues the body from villainy because of both Rachael and Deckard's emotional and empathetic development and their distinct choices, favorably choosing the inclusion of all bodies as the movie progresses. With the addition of Pris' arc, the viewer is pushed to sympathizing with the replicants, culminating in the death of Tyrell. Rather than see the death of a normate body at the hands of a non-normate body as a tragedy, the movie challenges the viewer to pick a side in this moment, already having provided ample evidence as to why the replicants should not be villainized and thus the death of Tyrell is just as metaphorical as it is physical. Differing from the novel, the movie ends with the joining of the two sides and therefore the destruction of that divisive barrier. If there is to be true progress, then it takes the conscious effort of both sides, like Baty choosing not to kill Deckard and Deckard choosing to give Rachael the choice in her future. Scott's movie, then, offers us the happy ending that *Frankenstein* worked so hard to avoid. The constructed body not only gains acceptance in its disabled form; it also breaks down the artificial definitions of bodies.

Conclusion

Blade Runner's climax is literally a fight between the normate and non-normate bodies, Deckard versus Roy Baty, leader of the escaped androids and last one standing. After a fight and chase where Baty held the upper hand for the vast majority of the scene, Deckard finds himself barely hanging on to a metal beam that overhangs a deathly fall while Baty looks down on him. Baty is shirtless, covered in blood, physically resembling a normate human yet existing in a world that would continually label him as inferior and inhuman. Instead of killing Deckard, Baty reaches down and brings Deckard to the surface. Baty clings to a single white pigeon the entire time as he sits across from Deckard, holding on to not only his own life but any life that is within his reach. Rather than kill Deckard, Baty describes extraordinary moments in his life that no human has ever seen and with his final words, "Time to die," he dies in front of a disbelieving Deckard. Deckard has just had his life spared but also been exposed to something much grander, the possibility that various bodies can inhabit the same space and there is not a need to eliminate one for the other to survive. Baty is the reformed disabled body, complete with agency, autonomy, and a will to live that is fierce but without giving into the villainous label he has been attached to.

Blade Runner was released in theaters thirty years ago and still there are various novels and films series such as *James Bond* that continue to employ the disabled body as the villain. Ridley Scott's adaptation does signal a continual progression towards breaking down the barrier that keeps the non-normate body from being seen as anything besides the "other." As we think about the role of the constructed body and its function as a metaphorical stand in for the disabled body, we might expect more development and

nuance in artistic depictions. Modernity's transition into postmodernity should offer opportunities for continuing to critique rigid definitions of identity and possibility, particularly in sci-fi and fantasy films. There has been other progress such as the popular children's movie, *How to Train Your Dragon*, which contains a lead character who has a prosthetic leg. Yet, the trope of the constructed body and/or disabled body as being somehow suspect still persists. As long as the disabled body is repeatedly labeled the villain then the subconscious categorizing of various bodies that Davis describes will continue. If popular art creates and normalizes the "gaze" both within the story itself as well as for the audience, then it facilitates that reaction in reality as well. Again, art is not the singular problem but only one facet in a much larger societal issue. The mental classification of bodies based on deviance from the norm occurs because of the idea that there is such a thing as a "normal human body," able to be identified by quantifiable measures or qualities, however there is no such thing. What these various stories that I have analyzed have shown is there is an evolving idea of what it means to be human and that as art continues to reflect society, it is helping to develop the posthuman as well.

Science fiction is perhaps the most adept at creating a reflection of its present society as well as creating a vision of what it could be. This project has examined how the disabled body has traditionally been vilified and even demonized within the genre because of any deviance from the established normate body but how it has recently taken on agency to create space to not only exist but to thrive. By citing numerous scholars within the disability and posthumanism fields I have established there is a clear link between how and why the disabled body is vilified as well as a glance towards what it looks like within art when that stereotyping is undone. I have hoped to provide evidence

to support reading each of these texts as a disabled text but also how they can be used within a posthumanist lens as well. After establishing who was a stand-in for a disabled body my attention was forced to the interactions and reactions of the normate characters. It is because of the fictional normate-centric societies that the creature and the androids were ostracized as they were excluded from humanness by negation of qualities pertaining to humans. However, it is also the stand-in for the normate body in *Blade Runner*, Deckard, that helps to create space where the disabled body is able to finally attain agency and acceptance.

Each of the three works I have examined centers around a disabled body attempting to find acceptance, agency, and space within a normate dominated society. While the trials that each disabled body goes through are similar, the outcomes vary vastly. The Creature is consistently met with horror in *Frankenstein* because of the deviance from the norm, and yet the replicants and androids are able to gradually carve out space not only to exist but cohabit with the normate community. A significant reason for this progression is the role of empathy. Burke pointed to empathy being much more mechanic than we realize and therefore more complex of an emotion than initially thought to be. Because of its mechanic nature, it is not as easily controlled or defined. The reader sees this when Frankenstein and Walton briefly become empathetic for the Creature. Yet what this novel reveals, is what happens when empathy is pushed aside or ignored, what is left is horror at the unknown or from something not perceived as normal. Also, the ease with which Frankenstein and Walton are able to suppress their empathetic feelings is astonishing, and something that is not as easy in Dick's novel or in *Blade Runner*. Empathy, like the mind and body, is revealed to be much more complicated than

initially thought, and this intricacy increases from each story to the next. Dick paints a picture of the fragility of empathy whereas Scott describes the strength of it. Dick and Scott link the complexity of empathy with the complexity of normality and humanness because empathy is crucial to navigating and creating a flourishing post-human world.

Though empathy is central to all three texts, there cannot be a single marker of humanness by which a person should be accepted like what the Creature attempts to utilize or like what Dick's or Scott's fictional societies impose. Instead, the exact opposite should happen. Rather than constrict the definition and structure of what is human, society should be broadening its space of inclusion. By doing this, there will not be a body that is synonymous with villainy because there will not be a body that is on the outside looking in or considered "other." It is by exclusion that society becomes unfamiliar or allowed to continue with the hallucination of the whole self, a mentality that is damaging because of the allowance of the perpetuation of stereotypes to benefit the self. *Blade Runner* has given us a glimpse at what is possible when we allow ourselves to see each other as fellow humans or normate bodies rather than categorizing based on various characteristics. Within our reach is the ability to not only exist and cohabit but to love regardless of attributes describing the body, and the possibility for an entire community to increasingly break free of villainous labels and live free of damaging stereotypes.

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