

**Bioengineering, Embodied Subjectivity and Biomedical Trash:  
Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) to Kishwar Desai's  
*Origins of Love* (2012)**

**A Thesis Submitted to Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati in Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**



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### **Declaration**

I do hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Bioengineering, Embodied Subjectivity and Biomedical Trash: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) to Kishwar Desai’s *Origins of Love* (2012)**”, is a research work carried out by me in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, under the supervision of Dr. Avishek Parui, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

No part of this thesis has been submitted to any University or Research Institute for the award of any degree of diploma.

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### **Certificate**

This is to certify that Manali Karmakar has prepared the thesis entitled “**Bioengineering, Embodied Subjectivity and Biomedical Trash: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) to Kishwar Desai’s *Origins of Love* (2012)**” for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. The work was carried out under my supervision and in strict conformity with the rules laid down for the purpose. The thesis is the result of her investigations and has not been submitted either in whole or in part to any other university/institution for a research degree.

IIT Guwahati

(Dr. Avishek Parui)

Supervisor

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## Abstract

This thesis examines selected fictional representations of ethical, emotional and existential anxieties triggered by developments made in the domains of bioengineering like artificial reproductive technology (ART), organ transplantation, and human cloning. The historical framework of this research is the period 1818-2012, and this study aims to examine how selected literary representations are ontologically equipped to critique conventional understandings of lived realities that are discursively determined by medico-legal classifications of embodiment, agency, human subjectivity, personhood, citizenship, and family. The main objective of this thesis is to foreground how selected literary representations of the socio-cultural and political status of bioengineered lives enable us to reflect with renewed attention on the current culture of biocapitalization that, on the one hand, has produced flawless human commodities and on the other hand, has created a class of bioengineered beings classified as disposable lives exploited for biomedical purposes and are subsequently converted into biomedical trash.

In its opening section, this work studies a novel published in 1818, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, that captures the transition in biomedical practices from healing a diseased body to controlling and engineering a human body that anticipates modern medical practices of bioengineering. The chapter examines how the novel dramatizes and anticipates the use of artificial reproductive technology that problematizes the ontology of parenting and procreation, thus unsettling our bionormative notion of family formation. Shelley's literary work emerges as a feminist critique of conventional notions of personhood and kinship that are embedded in an anthropomorphic understanding of life and life-forms. The entangled and embodied forms of subjectivity and orders of agency exhibited by bioengineered lives like brain-dead patients who are classified as non-agentic beings are discussed in the second section of the thesis. That section investigates how biomedical reification of the human body can be resisted by foregrounding selected fictional representations of different orders of subjectivities that evolve as a result of the entanglement between organic and inorganic entities. The third section analyzes how the selected literary texts are complexly reflective of the bioethical issues related to ageing, biocitizenship, cloning, and organ transplantation by extending the discussion from a human to a posthuman world where the privileged sections of society can re-engineer their bodies by incorporating biomatter from bioengineered lives

classified as disposable bodies and *wasted lives*. The final section of the thesis studies a novel published in 2012 that dramatizes how in the current culture of neoliberal consumerism, medico-legal institutions and privileged sections of society strategically deploy artificial reproductive technology for the purpose of subverting the *deterritorializing* potential of biotechnology, thus re-inscribing and consolidating caste-based heteronormative architecture of family in current Indian social and political setting. The thesis as a whole explores how selected literary representations of emotional and existential anxiety and the agentic crisis experienced by bioengineered lives enable us to reflect on the inadequacy of the existing medico-legal amendments to respond to complex bioethical issues related to notions of human subjectivity, personhood, and citizenship. In order to offer a deeper analysis of the current culture of bioconsumerism, this work draws on perspectives from critical theory, medical anthropology, sociology, theories of citizenship and phenomenology, among other disciplines. Through a study of selected literary texts, this thesis attempts to offer a small contribution to a complex understanding of the notions of subjectivity, agency, and citizenship that are being configured and reconfigured by biotechnological intervention in the era of genetic engineering.

# INTRODUCTION

## 0.1 What it Means to be a Human in the Age of Genetic Engineering

We've managed to slip evolution's leash now,  
haven't we? We can cure any disease, keep even  
the weakest of us alive, and one fine day perhaps  
we shall even resurrect the dead, call forth Lazarus from  
his cave. Do you know what that mean? It means that we're done.  
That this is as good as we're going to set.

*Westworld*, "The Original"

The American science fiction television series *Westworld* (2016)<sup>1</sup> produced by HBO from where the above lines are taken aptly encapsulate the current culture of bio-genetics that has heralded the age of "anthropocene", a historical moment in which humans have evolved as a geological force capable of re-engineering, reordering, controlling and determining the process of evolution through biotechnological intervention in the organic order of nature.<sup>2</sup> The lines are articulated by Dr. Robert Ford (played by Anthony Hopkins) the co-founder of the Westworld amusement theme park who says that we the human beings have reached the pinnacle of our biological evolution and perhaps the androids will be the next phase of evolution engineered by humans. In *Westworld*, Dr. Ford who designs life-like androids with sophisticated behavioral codifications for his theme park, alludes to Mary Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein who bioengineers a human being by supplanting the woman from the process of procreation. However, unlike Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein, Dr. Ford is not depicted as "some

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's television science fiction series *Westworld* is based on Michael Crichton 1973 film of the same title that speculates on the bioethical issues related to the socio-political status of the androids who gradually evolve as conscious beings, thus unsettling the binary between human and non-human. The science fiction television series speculates on fundamental questions such as: what is consciousness and can artificial intelligence like android have a conscious mind? The androids in the Westworld amusement parks are known as hosts whose sole purpose is to serve the rich clientele (the normal humans) who come to the park for the sake of amusement and the hosts are programmed to believe that they are real human beings living in the old west in a town named Sweetwater but as the story unfolds, the androids started evolving as self-reflective beings and unveil the mystery behind their engineered existence.

<sup>2</sup>See Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (United Kingdom: Polity Press) 5. In her book Braidotti defines anthropocene as a new geological epoch dominated and constructed by humans.

freaky Teutonic madman but a Silicon Valley superstar.”<sup>3</sup> The Westworld theme park populated with the androids is depicted as an extreme extension of the computer simulated world of video game where guests (new comers) are allowed to walk among the synthetic hosts and to torture, rape and murder the androids over and over again for amusement purposes. In an essay entitled “Revealing your Deepest Self” (2018) Jason T. Eberl states:

Whereas pornographic videos or first-person shooter videogames are experienced through external media- television or computer screens and 3D technology takes the viewer deeper into a still mediated experience, Westworld fully immerses one into a physically manifested environment. The farther you go into the park, the more the line between reality and fantasy may become blurred.<sup>4</sup>

The artificial beings are depicted as disposable entities designed solely for the purpose of tolerating violence perpetrated against them or to be witness to the violence enacted against other artificial beings by the normal humans who visit the park. The hosts of the park do not share the evolutionary history of normal humans. They are bioengineered and coded with complex human-like behavioral traits by Dr. Ford and hence not considered as conscious beings who can be accorded legal personhood rights. The first episode titled “The Original” dramatizes how the hosts of the park gradually start gaining awareness of their bioengineered existence and attempt to break out of narrative loop that is designed for them by evolving as sentient and empathetic beings, thus problematizing the borderlines between humans and nonhumans.

In an article entitled “Crossing the Uncanny Valley” (2018) Siobhan Lyons’ argues that “the incredibly life-like appearance of the robots in Westworld brings us to uncanny valley”.<sup>5</sup> The problematization of the binary between the human and the nonhuman evokes a feeling of uncanniness because it threatens the legitimacy and superiority of humans as sentient and agentic beings. Lyons further argues:

The previously clear distinction between humans and robots is blurred, and the commonly-held beliefs about the definition of the “human” are disrupted. The robots

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<sup>3</sup>Jeet Heer, “Westworld’s Trigger Warning.” *The New Republic*, October 28 2016, accessed on 28 June 2018. <https://newrepublic.com/article/138016/westworlds-trigger-warnings>.

<sup>4</sup>Jason T. Eberl, “Revealing your Deepest Self: Can Westworld Create and Corrupt Virtue,” in *Westworld and Philosophy*, edited by James B. South and Kimberly S. Engels, 50-60 (United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2018) 51.

<sup>5</sup>Siobhan Lyons, “Crossing the Uncanny Valley: What it Means to be a Human?” in *Westworld and Philosophy*, edited by James B. South and Kimberly S. Engels, 41-49 (United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2018) 41.

in their peak state once resemble humanity and departs from it, disturbing those for whom humanity is usually an unambiguous concept.<sup>6</sup>

The hyperreal brave new world of Dr. Ford problematizes the culturally accepted binary between real and virtual, organic and inorganic orders, life and death and human and non-humans and triggers fundamental bioethical questions such as: what does it mean to be human and to what extent is it possible to grant citizenship rights to engineered beings who are not conceived as conscious and hence cannot be recognized as morally responsible for their actions?

This thesis aims to understand how literary texts are ontologically equipped to address the above questions while also fictionally capturing bioethical crises stimulated by biotechnological intervention into the organic order of humanness. Through an examination of selected literary fiction, it attempts to examine the moral status and agentic crisis of bioengineered lives such as human clones, organ donors, brain-dead patients and surrogates. The thesis studies the literary works of Mary Shelley, Robin Cook, Priscille Sibley, Kazuo Ishiguro and Kishwar Desai that speculate on the ambivalent and liminal status of bioengineered beings that problematize our normative notions of personhood and human subjectivity and hence, trigger questions such as: what criteria ought to be taken into consideration while determining moral status and agency to beings created in laboratories and humans changed in medical experiments for achieving biomedical goals?

In a book entitled *Moral Status* (1997) Mary Anne Warren defines moral status as a conceptual tool deployed for the purpose of bringing order to the “welter of conflicting claims about what we ought and ought not to do. It is somewhat a blunt tool, in part because it can play more than one role in moral theory and human moral philosophy”.<sup>7</sup> Warren further argues that “to have moral status is to be morally considerable, or to have moral standing. It is to be an entity towards which moral agents have or can have obligations...we are morally obliged to give weight in our deliberations to its needs, interest and well-being”.<sup>8</sup> The literary texts that are studied in this thesis foreground how the inability to acknowledge or determine the moral status of bioengineered lives subsequently lead to their classification as disposable biomedical entities that are exploited for restoring health and vitality of privileged humans. This thesis endeavors to foreground how the selected literary texts offer scope to reflect and

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>7</sup>Mary Anne Warren, *Moral Status: Obligations to Persons and other Living Things* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 13.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 3.

revise our anthropomorphically overdetermined understanding of humanness that is being increasingly problematized by biotechnological interventions.

R.S Downie and Jane MacNaughton state that literature is able to instigate moral awareness in its readers because of its immediacy. It stimulates the imagination of readers, thus facilitating the construction of mental images of the situations that are depicted in literary texts. Literature enables us to develop intersubjective relationship of empathy with imagined fictional characters, hence it is consciousness-raising.<sup>9</sup> In a similar vein, in an article entitled “The Heart of Reading” (2018) Avishek Parui argues that empathy as an affective ability “emerges as a key feature in literary imagination as well as in the experience of reading fiction, whereby human minds form creative affiliation, moved by the defamiliarization and semantic depth of literary language”<sup>10</sup> and hence forms of literature like novels are ontologically equipped to capture thoughts, emotions and feelings through imaginary characters that enable readers to enact their empathetic and affective selves.<sup>11</sup> Michael Mack states:

Literature helps us to resist forms of exclusion and stereotyping, which have been passed on to us in various forms of representations...At the same time literature alerts us to and help us to cope with demographic transformations in an ever more complex world where biomedical advances and ecological upheavals overtake our capacity to keep up with their social and political consequences.<sup>12</sup>

In the current culture of biotechnology when bioethicist and lawmakers are struggling with moral crises related to unsolved bioethical issues, literature offers us vivid pictures of how lives of individuals are unsettled by biotechnological research. In their remarkable edited volume on representations of male body in medicine and literature, Andrew Mangham and

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<sup>9</sup> R.S Downie and Jane MacNaughton, *Bioethics and the Humanities: Attitudes and the Perceptions* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007), 134. See also, Gurumurthy Neelakantan’s “Trauma, Ethics and Psychoanalysis in Philip Roth’s Sabbath’s Theater,” *Philip Roth Studies* 13: 1 (2017): 93-104. In his thought-provoking article, Neelakantan discusses how the fictional frame of the novel entitled *Sabbath’s Theater* (1995) offers a complex reading of “trauma, ethics and psychoanalysis” (94). The novel fictionally intervenes into the biomedical explanation of traumatic memory by “castigating a certain kind of psychoanalyst, one who appears wedded to psychotherapy as a method to approach human problems” (94).

<sup>10</sup> Avishek Parui, “The Heart of Reading,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 53: 4 (2018): 102.

<sup>11</sup> See also, David Lodge’s *Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays* (United States: Harvard University Press, 2002) 10. Lodge states that as a form of literature, novel may be considered as a record of human consciousness with the ability to capture dense personal experiences that are unique in nature. Lodge argues that literature offers us opportunity to take cognizance of consciousness of people other than ourselves. It does not merely represent some of the mundane truth about human nature, rather literary works offers us fertile field to enact with empathy.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Mack, *How Literature Changes the Way we Think* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 6.

Daniel Lea state that “literature becomes a crucial arbiter between the epistemology of medicine and the experiential lives of men”.<sup>13</sup> They suggest that fictional narratives enable us to speculate on how biomedical practices are shaped by the culture in which they are embedded, thus helping us to “explore the implications of medical research and health practice”.<sup>14</sup>Literature broadens our perspective and sensitizes us to different forms of social exclusion and stereotypical representations that we have accepted and internalized indisputably.



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<sup>13</sup>Andrew Mangham and Daniel Lea, introduction to *The Male Body in Medicine and Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 7.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

## 0.2 Literature Review and Research Gap Explored in this Thesis

Biomedicine may be defined as a clinical practice of diagnosis, healing and prevention of diseases based on an in-depth understanding of the principles of physiology and biochemistry of human body. Professor Cathy Lloyd in an article entitled “What is biomedicine? (2012) states:

Modern Western Scientific medicine is often called “biomedicine” because it explains health in terms of biology. It attaches importance to learning about the body structure (anatomy) and systems (physiology) in particular to understand mechanisms like heart, arteries, nerve, brain and so on...

So, a biomedical account is one which gives a physical and biological explanation for health and offers physical/biological method for ‘repairing’ bodies when they are not working properly. [sic]<sup>15</sup>

In her article entitled “Historiography of Biomedicine” (2011) Ilana Lowy states that the birth of biomedicine can be traced back to mid nineteenth century when doctors started relying on laboratory tests in order to diagnose diseases.<sup>16</sup> The initial failure and the later developments in the domain of the transplantation medicine in the mid 1990s is one of the important examples of the collaboration between the biologists and the clinicians that accelerated the age of biomedicine. Moreover, the rise of the medical industrial complexes during the year 1970 and the conglomeration between the medical, political and economic sectors played an important role in the expansion of the process of biomedicalization.

In an article entitled “Biomedicalization” (2003) Adele Clarke et. al. study the transition from medicalization to biomedicalization as a social phenomenon that is stimulated by developments heralded in the domains of technoscience that enable biotechnological intervention into the biomechanism of the human body, thus problematizing the notion of the body as a biological unit with definite boundaries. Adele Clarke et.al. describes biomedicalization as an “increasingly complex, multisited, multidirectional process of medicalization, both extended and reconstituted through the new social forms of highly technoscientific biomedicine”.<sup>17</sup>The study of Adele Clarke et. al. foregrounds three key

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<sup>15</sup>Cathy Lloyd, “What is Biomedicine?” *Open Learn*, 27 February 2012, accessed on 1 July 2018. <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/body-mind/health/health-studies/what-biomedicine>.

<sup>16</sup>Ilana Lowy, “Historiography of Biomedicine: “Bio,” “Medicine,” and In Between,” *Isis* 102:1 (2011): 117.

<sup>17</sup>Adele E. Clarke, Janet E. Shim, Laura Mamo, Jennifer Ruth Fosket and Jennifer R. Fishman, “Biomedicalization: Technoscientific Transformations of Health, Illness, and U.S Biomedicine,” *American Sociological Review* 68: 2 (2003): 162.

features of biomedicalization as a social phenomenon- a) computerization and data banking b) molecularization and geneticization of biomedicine c) medical technology development.<sup>18</sup> The application of computer technology for regulating and ordering the available data of the patients created “a new social form of orchestrating and performing the full range of biomedically related work”, thus providing easy access to information related to health and vitality of the citizens that accentuated the practice of medical surveillance.

In this context one may refer to the 1976 article of Michel Foucault entitled “The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century” that discusses the rise of the medical politics in eighteenth-century Europe.<sup>19</sup> Foucault’s study throws light on how the state with the cooperation of private medical institutions enforces medical policies in order to regulate the populations. The state strongly considers diseases as a political and economic problem for the society which they ought to resolve as a matter of overall state policy. Foucault’s study of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ medical and political practices foregrounds how the lives of the citizens are controlled through various medico-legal strategies. He defines these medico-legal strategies of codifying and regulating the lives of the citizens as biopolitics that he further explains in his lecture series titled as *The Birth of the Biopolitics* (1978-1979). The study of Adele Clarke et.al study highlights the continuation of biopolitics in the current culture of neoliberal consumerism geared by information and communication technology.

Nikolas Rose in *Politics of Life Itself* (2007) coins the term “ethopolitics” for the purpose of explaining the transition from the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics regulated by the notion of racial hygiene to a neoliberal understanding of biopolitics that is evolving as a result of the interface between “biology and society and politics and ethics”.<sup>20</sup> Rose argues that “genetics today has little to do with the eugenics intervention of the past. Such argument “dismisses critical analysis that view contemporary human genetics as an extension or an intensification of traditional forms of selection and population regulation”.<sup>21</sup> The order of biopolitics that is evolving in the current culture of biotechnology and digitalization may be

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 173-176.

<sup>19</sup>Michel Foucault, “The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century,” Trans. Richard A. Lynch, *Foucault Studies* 18 (2014): 113-127.

<sup>20</sup>Nikolas Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power and Subjectivity* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007): 22-27. See also Thomas Lemke, “The End and Reinvention of Nature,” in *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2011) 100-103.

<sup>21</sup>Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Introduction* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2011), 100.

defined as “recombinant biopolitics which operate within and beyond the body’s boundaries,” thus foregrounding the limitations of the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics that is bounded to the notion of the human body as an organic unit.<sup>22</sup> Similar to Adele Clarke et. al., Rose argues that one of the key features of the current culture of bioengineering is “molecularization” of life.<sup>23</sup> Developments in the domain of molecular biology has enabled biotechnological intervention into the visceral sphere of the human anatomy, thus redefining the human body as a “molecular software” that can be decoded and re-encoded for the purpose of optimizing human life span.<sup>24</sup> Rose argues that evolution of sophisticated medical technologies offer scope to visualize life at the molecular level. “The clinical gaze has been supplemented, if not supplanted by this molecular gaze which is itself enmeshed in a molecular style of thought about life itself”, thereby opening vitality itself to various forms of commodification that is informed by the practice of biocapitalisation.<sup>25</sup>

Kaushik Sunder Rajan in his book *Biocapital* (2006) explains the concept of biocapitalisation as a process through which human vitality is incorporated into the structure of capitalism and converted into biocommodities consumed for various therapeutic purposes.<sup>26</sup> Catherine Waldby argues that the concept of biocapitalism is enmeshed with the notion of biovalue that indicates the process of revitalizing and augmenting the vitality of the body or fragments of the body in order to increase their self-maintenance and self-reproducing capacities for the purpose of enhancing the health and vitality of the consumers of biomedicine.<sup>27</sup> Biotechnological intervention into the organic order of the human body and capitalization of vital phenomenon have problematized the normative and epistemic boundaries between nature and culture, life and death, human and nonhuman, thus triggering bioethical questions about the sanctified nature of vital phenomenon and the very ontology of humanness.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 5.

<sup>24</sup>Lemke, *Biopolitics*, 77.

<sup>25</sup>Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 12.

<sup>26</sup>Kaushik Sunder Rajan, *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006) 1-36.

<sup>27</sup>Catherine Waldby, “Stem Cells, Tissue Cultures and Production of Biovalue,” *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine* 6:3 (2002): 305-323.

Bioethics as a discipline had a “bilocated birth” and was first coined by Van Rensselear Potter around the year 1970/1971.<sup>28</sup> As a discipline it was institutionalized by Andrea Hellegers at Georgetown University to “designate the focused area of inquiry that became an academic field of learning and movement regarding public policy and life sciences”.<sup>29</sup> In *Birth of the Bioethics* (2003), Albert R. Johnson states that bioethics as a discipline was established for the purpose of responding to the limitations of the traditional medical ethics that failed to address the challenges posed by the current culture of biotechnology. Johnson argues that the exploitation of humans for bioscientific experimentation is morally troubling and hence has paved the way for a new form of ethics that we may term as bioethics. Johnson further argues that traditional Western medicine had absolute respect for the “sanctity of life” but the evolution of modern medical technologies has “forced the society and its doctors to relativize the absolute value. The clear conscience of medical ethics began to be troubled”,<sup>30</sup> and hence the need to speculate on the current culture of biomedicine with renewed attention on the notion of humanness that is being reconfigured by biotechnological intervention. However, R.S. Downie and Jane Macnaughton argue that adjectives such as ‘medical’ or ‘health care’ or ‘bio’ as qualifiers of the term ethics indicate that we are dealing with a concept of ethics that is narrow in its approach.<sup>31</sup>

In a biodiverse world where our biosphere is shared by humans, animals and engineered beings that are designed in the biotechnological laboratories, there is often the need to ontologize a new ethical order suitable to address the moral issues that are evolving in the biotechnological era. Hence, posthumanist theorist Rosi Braidotti proposes the practice of “nomadic ethics” that offer a more fluid and distributive understanding of human subjectivity, agency and personhood that co-evolve as a result of an intersubjective and intercorporeal relationship between man, animal, and other inorganic entities.<sup>32</sup> In *Nomadic Theory* (2011) Braidotti explains nomadic ethics thus:

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<sup>28</sup>Warren Thomas Reich, “The Word “Bioethics”: Its Birth and the Legacies of those who Shaped It,” *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 4:4 (1994): 320.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Albert R. Johnson, *The Birth of Bioethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 5.

<sup>31</sup>Downie and Macnaughton, *Bioethics and the Humanities*, 134.

<sup>32</sup>Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (New York: University of Columbia) 231.

Contrary to the Heideggerian, the emphasis here is on generation, vital forces and vitality. Contrary to the Kantians, the ethical instance is not located within the confines of a self-regulating subject of moral agency, but rather is a set of interrelations with both human and nonhuman forces. These forces can be rendered in terms of relationality (Spinoza), duration (Bergson), immanence (Deleuze) and in my own terms ethical sustainability. The notion of the nonhuman, inhuman, or posthuman emerges therefore as the defining trait of nomadic ethical subjectivity.<sup>33</sup>

In her book *Posthuman Ethics* (2012) Patricia MacCormack uses the term “posthuman ethics” for the purpose of addressing the socio-cultural and political issues of the posthuman subjects that correlate to Braidotti’s concept of nomadic ethics.<sup>34</sup> MacCormack argues that posthuman ethics does not enquire on “what a posthuman is” rather it tries to examine how posthuman theories can be creatively deployed for the purpose of establishing new ways of intercorporeal relatedness between animate and inanimate forms.<sup>35</sup> MacCormack states that “the privileged site of the posthuman ethics is historically and philosophically the oppressed site of life which does not register as entirely viable within the humanist’s operation of knowledge, power and majoritarian system”.<sup>36</sup> Posthuman ethics is a critique of the Cartesian notion of the human self and offers embodied, entangled and extended notions of human subjectivity. MacCormack argues:

There is no body without the mind and that they are not separate, because they are not separate they cannot be ordered hierarchically, that the mind as corporeal thus proves consciousness is not given, thereby will and affect are never entirely accounted for, predictable or discrete.<sup>37</sup>

Posthuman ethics examines lives occupying the margins of the society and hence, becomes an important theoretical tool for the purpose of examining the socio-cultural and political status of the bioengineered lives that are depicted in the literary texts chosen for this research.

There have been several significant works on artificial reproductive technology (ART), brain-death phenomenon, organ transplantation, and human cloning born out of socio-cultural, political and existential anxieties. Such studies have often examined the

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 301-302.

<sup>34</sup>Patricia MacCormack, *Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory* (USA: Ashgate, 2012) 1.

<sup>35</sup>MacCormack, *Posthuman Ethics*, 1.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> MacCormack, *Posthuman Ethics*, 1-2.

blurring of borderlines between organic and inorganic orders that have problematized our normative notions of humanness. I draw on the works of social theorists and anthropologists like Michel Foucault, Nikolas Rose, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sarah Franklin, among others, in order to examine *epistemological mutation* in the notions of life and procreation that are stimulated by evolution of biotechnological practices like artificial reproductive technology. What connects the various discourses studied by these researchers- and this is especially evident in the works of Nikolas Rose, Evelyn Fox Keller and Sarah Franklin- is the way life as a phenomenon is explained as a socio-cultural construct that is constantly being denaturalized and re-naturalized by biotechnological interventions and the socio-cultural and political contexts in which it is embedded. I have also drawn heavily on the works of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari who have explained the concept of *schizophrenic deterritorialization* and *reterritorialization* for the purpose of discussing the working mechanism of capitalism and how its subversive potential is being rechanneled by government and industrial organizations for reinstating hegemonic discourses. My work draws on Tamar Sharon's concept of *re-naturalization* and links it to Deleuze's notion of *schizophrenic deterritorialization*. Sharon's study adopts and appropriates the schizoanalytic framework of Deleuze and Guattari for the purpose of analyzing how the subversive potential of artificial reproductive technology to deconstruct the concept of nature is reterritorialized and *re-naturalized* by the medico-legal institutions.

The critical perspectives in this thesis are also drawn from posthumanist thinkers such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Karen Barad and N. Katherine Hayles among others, in order to explain the entangled and embodied orders of subjectivities that are evolving as a result of the man-machine interface. Their studies offer more distributive and entangled notions of human subjectivity that critique the classical liberal humanist notions of agency and personhood associated with a conscious mind. The neurobiological study of Antonio Damasio also features frequently in this research that explains mind and body as an inseparable phenomenon. There has been increasing interest in recent years in the phenomenological experiences of organ recipients that have contributed to an enhanced understanding of the complex forms of subjectivities emerging as a result of the intercorporeal relationships shared by donors and recipients. This is immediately evident in the works of medical anthropologists such as Margaret Lock and Vin-Kim Nguyen. Their studies have thrown light on the growing bridge between biomedical understandings of the human body as a reified entity and *lived bodily* experiences of the recipients whose life narratives are problematized by biotechnological interventions. This thesis also draws on the

ethnographic study of organ transplantation by Lesley Sharp. Following on the phenomenological study of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, works of medical anthropologists like Lesley Sharp and Margaret Lock emphasized on the *lived bodily* experiences of the recipients for the purpose of explaining forms of embodied relationality that defy the notion of body as a discrete unit with definite biological boundaries.

This research also draws on the works of Zygmunt Bauman, Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito, and Julia Kristeva while studying sections of society who are stripped off their socio-cultural and political rights and are classified as non-citizens. The works of these theorists examine the non-agentic status of people who inhabit the margins of society and are conceived to be outside the ontological framework of personhood, thus foregrounding the binaristic structure of the political narratives of neoliberal biocapitalist societies that socially, culturally, linguistically and conceptually categorize sections of societies as *wasted lives*. Studies of Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas on the notion of biocitizenship are also discussed for the purpose of throwing light on how in the current neoliberal consumerist culture, pharmaceutical and biotechnological industries have amplified the hierarchical structure of the society by classifying a section of the society as non-agentic beings who are exploited for organ donation and biotechnological experimentation. The works of medical anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes on neo-cannibalistic feature of biocapitalism is also drawn on heavily in this thesis. Hughes' works study the emerging global market of organs, tissues and other body parts and discuss how in most cases organs are procured from the immigrants and laborers of the Third World countries, thus leading to the revival of the concept of medical apartheid.

This study also refers to the work of the philosopher Greg Kennedy who offers an ontological examination of trash. Kennedy argues that trash as a concept embodies semantic ambiguity that indicates the physical act of disposing an entity as well as a conceptual order that problematizes our normative understanding of the human cognitive schema. In this thesis, I make an attempt to adopt and appropriate Kennedy's explanation of the notion of *ontological hollowness* for the purpose of explaining how the act of not acknowledging the physical presence of a section of the society is in itself an act of epistemic and ontic violence that transforms these people into disposable objects. Works of philosophers like Jurgen Habermas and Francis Fukuyama are also referred to heavily in this thesis for the purpose of discussing bioethical crisis that are evoked in the current culture of bioengineering and reproductive medicine. Habermas and Fukuyama unequivocally critique the uncritical acceptance of biotechnology as potentially liberating and argue how, in the current culture of

biotechnology, autonomy of certain sections of the society is compromised and has led to the revival of the eugenics practices that are enmeshed with state-sanctioned biopolitics.

Deanna Gross Scherger's study of the current culture of reproductive technology corroborates Habermas and Fukuyama's argument that biotechnological intervention into the organic order of procreation has further reinforced eugenics-driven ideologies. Scherger in her doctoral thesis examines the interface between science and feminist studies through the lenses of literature for the purpose of examining how artificial reproductive technology is deployed for the purpose of re-inscribing heterosexual architecture of family. Scherger in her thesis argues, "reproductive discourses include eugenics ideologies that were directed mainly at the regulation of middle-class and working-class bodies using mass-media as a normalizing force" [sic].<sup>38</sup>In a similar vein, Camisha Russell argues that although the use of artificial reproductive technologies like invitro-fertilization, artificial insemination and gestational surrogacy have intervened in our culturally accepted notions of parenthood and family, the medical technology has further accentuated the notion of race as a biological phenomenon.<sup>39</sup>However, scholars like Scherger and Russell have confined their study to White-middle class society where the practice of designing babies through artificial reproductive technology is discursively determined by notions of race and class. In my thesis, the politics of parenting and procreation is studied in the context of neoliberal India where notions of caste, religion, and class are re-inscribed by biomedical practitioners as biological phenomena. Through the lenses of literature, this thesis examines how, in the capitalist and consumerist culture the practice of designing babies artificially in Indian context is heavily informed by religious and caste-driven ideologies embedded in hierarchical hygiene-based norms which are discursively determined.

Biotechnological intervention has problematized our notion of biology as the ontology of being human and has triggered bioethical questions about humanness and the essence of humanity. These queries are addressed in the research works of scholars like Caroline Mosser, Laurel A. Tweed, and Michele Braun. Mosser and Braun draw on the theories of posthuman ethics for the purpose of examining how the notion of humanness is being reconfigured as a result of the man-machine interface.<sup>40</sup> Mosser studies the fictional

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<sup>38</sup>Deanna Gross Scherger, "The Same Brave World: Eugenics Discourses in Contemporary Narrative of Reproductive Technology" (doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 2013) 14.

<sup>39</sup>Camisha A Russell, *The Assisted Reproduction of Race* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2018) 5.

<sup>40</sup>Caroline Mosser, "The Artificial Creation of Life and what it Means to be a Human" (doctoral thesis, University of South Caroline, 2016) iv. See also Michele Braun, "Cyborg and Clones: Production and

representation of artificial life depicted in literary texts located in the historical time frame ranging from seventeenth to nineteenth century. Tweed's doctoral thesis discusses bioethical issues related to the use of reproductive technology by drawing on critical perspectives from the domain of feminist care ethics. Tweed argues that "ethics of care pays attention not only to human flourishing, but also to non-human flourishing through its broad inclusivity of human interaction with the environment and animals".<sup>41</sup> Tweed further argues that the use of feminist ethics of care as a theoretical tool will enable us to revise and broaden our notions of personhood, subjectivity and agency overdetermined by anthropomorphic notions of humanness. Research works of Mosser, Tweed, and Braun examine the concept of humanness by focusing on fictional representation of artificial life such as androids and robots. Their study primarily explores orders of subjectivity that are produced as a result of the entanglement between organic and inorganic orders. However, it does not explore the notions of disposable bodies and biomedical trash that are integral and inevitable features of the current culture of biocapitalization and bioconsumerism. Exploring this research gap, my thesis examines the notions of disposable bodies and wasted lives through the fictional representation of the biomedical status of brain-dead patients, human clones and surrogates who are classified as biomedical commodities that are purchased by a rich privileged clientele for therapeutic purposes.

This thesis aims to combine critical perspectives from bioethics, citizenship studies, sociology and anthropological research with the study of selected fictional representations of brain-dead patients, organ recipients, and human clones for the purpose of examining the existential, experiential and emotional crisis that are generated by biotechnological developments. It foregrounds literary studies and brings in critical perspectives from several disciplines in order to draw on as well as explore the research gap in its chosen field of enquiry. In so doing, it interrogates the medico-legal reification of sections of societies who are conceived as social outcasts, and thus aims to raise complex questions about the nature and ontology of citizenship, agency and identity.

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Reproduction of Posthuman Figures in Contemporary British Literature" (doctoral thesis, Northeastern University, 2010) 3.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

### 0.3 Objectives and the Rationale of the Research

In current culture of reproductive technology, the pure organic order and ontology of procreation and parenting are problematized and there is a transition from the concept of heteronormative parenting to single and multiple parenting. Hence, biomedicine has stimulated discussion on the ethics of parenting that takes into consideration not only the daily acts of decision-making by prospective procreators but also the law, public policy and medicine in relation to parenting and child development. This research would like to examine the ethical and emotional anxieties related to biomedical technologies like artificial reproductive technology (ART), organ transplantation, and human cloning. More specifically, the research seeks to explore how the notion of family, kinship, identity, agency and embodiment are problematized and reconfigured in the current capitalist consumerist cultures of bioengineering which produces its unique human commodities as well as human trash. The objectives and rationale of the research are the following:

1. The research would like to study how literature responds to the use of artificial reproductive technology (ART) that has challenged our culturally accepted notion of family formation that conceives family as a heteronormative unit with children who are genetically, biologically, socially, and legally related to their parents. The research also seeks to examine how the selected literary texts speculate on the practice of technocratic biomedicine in the neoliberal capitalist society where subversive potential of artificial reproductive technology is channelized and domesticated by medico-legal practitioners and commissioning parents in order to customize and consolidate the hegemonic process of parenting. The research aims to throw light on how notions of race and caste are further accentuated rather than obliterated through the practice of artificial reproductive technology (ART) within a consumerist capitalist structure.
2. The research would like to examine the existential anxiety of the donor and the recipient that is enmeshed with the concept of biocapitalism as dramatized in the selected literary texts. Organ transplantation has given rise to a new ontology of death. The liminal status of the brain-dead patients who are sustained in life-supporting system in order to preserve them for organ harvesting has reconfigured our understanding of life and death. The notion of brain death is rooted in the Cartesian

understanding of the human body that facilitates the reification of human organs for the purpose of transplantation. The depersonified body is considered as a commodified entity that can be disaggregated and preserved in order to meet the demands of the consumer culture. This research aims to foreground how the dualistic understanding of the human self is interrogated in selected literary texts thereby emphasizing on embodied understanding of humanness.

3. The research would also like to examine the socio-cultural and political status of the bioengineered lives produced and classified by the capitalist consumerist culture as biomedical waste (disposable entities). Through the lenses of literature, the study would like to explore the ontology of human trash in relation to bioengineered lives like brain-dead patients, human clones and surrogates who are biomedically categorized as consumable entities by socially and economically privileged clientele. The research aims to throw light on how the narrative of technocratic biomedicine is embedded in the capitalist consumerist frame that, on the one hand, promises to produce flawless purchasable biomedical commodities and on the other hand, generates wasted lives that subsequently turn to human trash.

## 0.4 Research Questions

1. How does ART (artificial reproductive technology) problematize our accepted notions of procreation and parenting as reflected in the chosen literary texts?
2. How do the selected literary texts sensitize readers about the notion of neoliberal eugenics that is being further accentuated in the current culture of reproductive technology?
3. How are the selected literary texts reflective of the anxiety associated with the use of reproductive technology that is strategically customized and consolidated in order to re-inscribe the heteronormative notion of family-making?
4. How do the selected literary texts engage with the practice of producing the progeny on a selectionist, hierarchical discourse in sync with the kinship model facilitated by capitalism?
5. How does the ontology of death determined by modern biomedicine reinforce the Cartesian understanding of the human self and subject? How do the selected literary texts interrogate the concept of human subjectivity embedded in Eurocentric humanist notions of agency and personhood?
6. How do the selected literary texts situate themselves apropos of a phenomenal and existential understanding of the human body and in relation to the prescriptive understanding of the human body as classified in dominant biomedical narratives?
7. How do the descriptions of brain death in the selected literary texts evoke complex questions about the ontology of human life, death and the phenomenality and liminality of life processes?
8. How do the selected literary texts reflect the fluidity of the boundary between bodies (of donor and the recipients) that problematizes the ontology of the self, intercorporeality and intersubjectivity in the process of transplantation?
9. How do the selected literary texts interrogate the concept of human trash in the context of bioengineered lives that are not acknowledged as citizens and are strictly classified biomedically as fodder for a rich consumerist clientele?
10. How does the notion of biomedical trash relate to recognized and shared ideas about agency and agentic identities in a neoliberal context?

## 0.5 Literary Texts Chosen for this Research and their Rationale

I begin by looking at the first half of the nineteenth century, a period in which biology as a discipline was institutionalized for the systematic study of natural phenomena and end by examining the current culture of neoliberal consumerism where biotechnology as a hybrid domain has evolved as a result of the collusion between clinical, judicial, and technocratic bodies of control and coercion. The primary texts selected for my study are Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Robin Cook's *Coma* (1977), Hanif Kureishi's "The Body" (2002), Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), Jodi Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel* (2008), Kishwar Desai's *Origins of Love* (2012) and Priscille Sibley's *The Promise of Stardust* (2013). These literary texts enable us to speculate on the bioethical crises that are triggered by biotechnological practices such as organ transplantation, artificial reproductive technology (ART) and human cloning. The literary works offer complex commentary on the liminal and ambiguous status of the bioengineered lives such as engineered humans, brain-dead patients, organ recipients and the surrogates who problematize our shared medico-legal understanding of human body, subjectivity, personhood, citizenship and agency. Although located in different historical time frames, the selected literary texts offer scope to trace the development in the biomedical practices from the first half of the nineteenth century when the notion of life in the domain of science was going through a process of epistemic transition to the twenty-first century where simultaneous developments in the domain of biomedicine and technology have problematized the borderlines between life and death, organic and inorganic orders and humans and non-humans, thus reconfiguring our normative notion of what it means to be a human.

I begin with Shelley's novel that foregrounds how the use of artificial reproductive technology leads to the denaturalization of the bionormative notion of family whereas Kishwar Desai's novel with which this thesis ends dramatizes how in the neoliberal consumerist society the collusion between the biomedical, judicial and technocratic organizations has strategically re-inscribed the heteronormative architecture of society. However, what has also factored into my selection of these particular texts is the manner in which the themes of bioengineering, embodied subjectivity, wasted and disposable lives cut across and connect all these fictional narratives despite their locations in different historical time frames.

Thus, Shelley's novel that dramatizes the marginalized socio-political status of the bioengineered being designed by Victor Frankenstein connects with Cook's *Coma and Sibley's The Promise of Stardust* that offer fictional representations of the disposable status of the brain-dead patients who are medico-legally considered as dead and are exploited for organ donation and bioscientific experimentation. Shelley, Cook and Sibley through their literary works, reflect on the notions of personhood, subjectivity and agency that are further explored in Picoult's novel. The existential anxiety and narrative crisis of the organ recipient as dramatized by Picoult offer scope to explore the notions of hybridized and intercorporeal subjectivity in the context of organ transplantation. Likewise, Kureishi's novella foregrounds the disposable feature of the current culture of consumerism where biotechnological industries have converted certain underprivileged sections of society into biocommodities that are purchased by rich consumer clientele for therapeutic and cosmetic purposes. The non-agentic status of bioengineered beings who are exploited for transplantation surgery finds parallels in Ishiguro's fictional and dystopian descriptions of non-agentic and marginalized status of the human clones who are conceived as "sentient infrastructure" of the state that are exploited as biomedical fodder for reviving health and vitality of normal humans.<sup>42</sup>

Kureishi and Ishiguro's literary works foreground how the disposable feature of the consumer culture is extended to human bodies where non-citizens are conceived as "carefree commodities" that are used for biomedical purposes and are subsequently converted into biomedical trash.<sup>43</sup> The concept of biomedical trash is explored by Kishwar Desai in the context of surrogates who are hired for producing bioengineered babies for rich White clientele. What connects the work of the primary authors chosen- Mary Shelley, Robin Cook, Priscille Sibley, Jodi Picoult, Hanif Kureishi, Kazuo Ishiguro and Kishwar Desai- is their attempt to interrogate and subvert the notion of humanness that is embedded in biologically and organically overdetermined discourses. Their works offer a more fluid and *deterritorialized* notions of human subjectivity, personhood and agency, thus enabling us to revise and expand our anthropomorphically overdetermined notion of humanness for the purpose of reflecting on the socio-legal rights of bioengineered lives. The selected literary

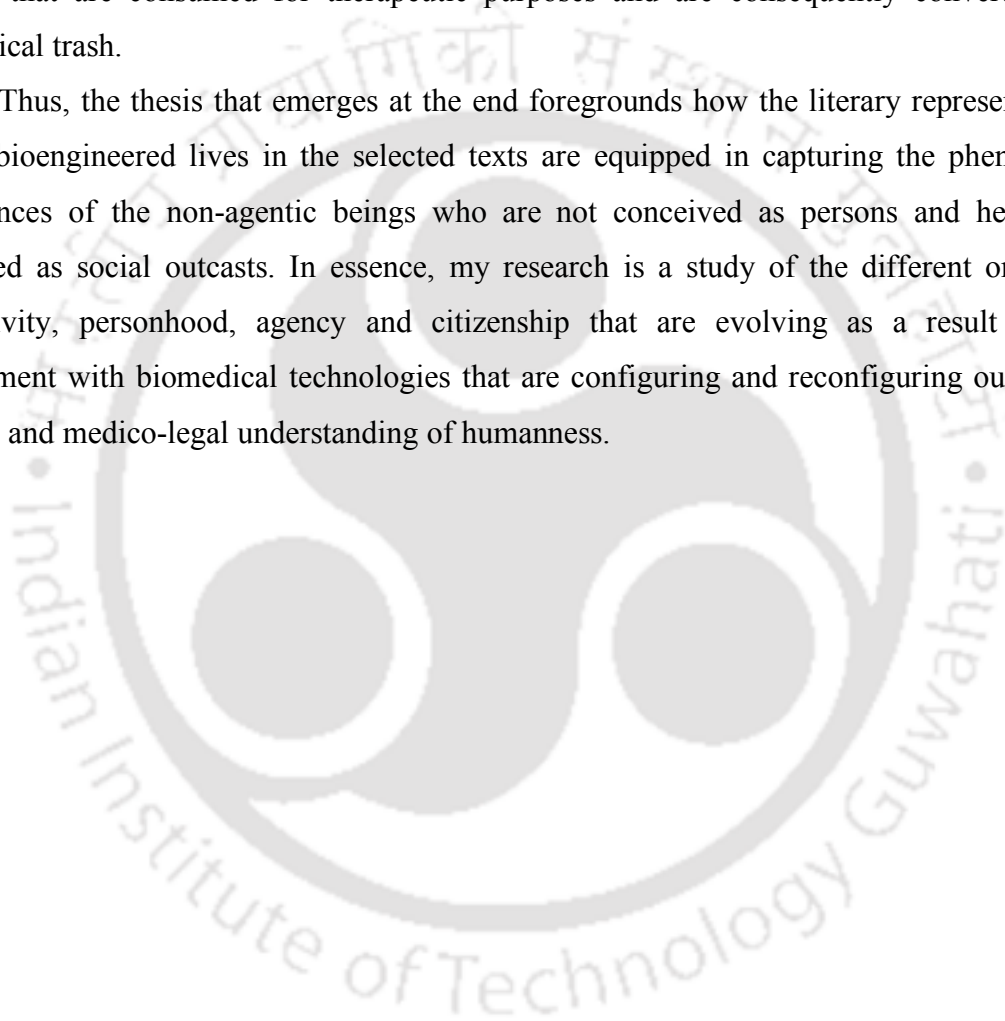
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<sup>42</sup>Kelly Rich, "Look into the Gutter: Interiority and Infrastructuralism," *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies* 61.4 (2015) 633.

<sup>43</sup>See Greg Kennedy's *An Ontology of Trash: The Disposable and its Problematic Nature* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007) 122.

texts examine the notion of biocitizenship as an evolving social phenomenon that on the one hand offers autonomy to consumers of biomedicine to take charge of their health and vitality, and on the other hand, creates a class of humans who are classified as *bare lives*. The literary works emerge as a critique of the extreme form of biomedical reification that is promoted by the process of biocapitalization. The fictional narratives speculate on how in the current culture of hyperconsumerism the plastic and disposable feature of commodities are extended to human bodies, thus converting sections occupying the margin of societies as expendable entities that are consumed for therapeutic purposes and are consequently converted into biomedical trash.

Thus, the thesis that emerges at the end foregrounds how the literary representations of the bioengineered lives in the selected texts are equipped in capturing the phenomenal experiences of the non-agentic beings who are not conceived as persons and hence are classified as social outcasts. In essence, my research is a study of the different orders of subjectivity, personhood, agency and citizenship that are evolving as a result of our engagement with biomedical technologies that are configuring and reconfiguring our socio-cultural and medico-legal understanding of humanness.



## 0.6 Organization of Chapters and an Overview of how the Chosen Literary Texts are Read in this Research

The thesis has been divided into following chapters:

### Introduction

**Chapter I-** “Was I then a monster”: Deterritorialization, Personhood and Kinship: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*

**Chapter II-** “It is the machine keeping her body alive”: Deterritorialized and Embodied Subjectivity in Robin Cook’s *Coma*, Priscille Sibley’s *The Promise of Stardust*, and Jodi Picoult’s *Change of Heart: A Novel*

**Chapter III-** “We’re modelled from trash”: Biocitizenship, Disposable Bodies, and Biomedical Trash in Hanif Kureishi’s “The Body” and Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*

**Chapter IV-** “These were made-to-order babies”: Reterritorialized Kinship and Artificial Reproductive Technology in Kishwar Desai’s *Origins of Love*

### Conclusion

The first chapter studies Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* as a literary text that captures the transition in the biomedical practices from healing a diseased body to artificially designing a human that appears to anticipate the baby-making-process performed in the current culture of artificial reproductive technology. The chapter is divided into three sections and the first section discusses how during the nineteenth century the notion of life was going through a process of transition in the domain of biology that was heavily informed by the debate between the vitalists and the materialists about the concept of life. The chapter draws on Michel Foucault, Evelyn Fox Keller and Nikolas Rose in order to explain the transition from a taxonomical understanding of the natural phenomena that correlates to the understanding of life as discussed in the domain of biotechnology. The second section foregrounds how the novel problematizes the pure organic ontology of parenting and offers a transition from heterosexual parenting to single parenting. The chapter argues that the problematization of the normative notion of procreation as dramatized in the novel corresponds to Sarah Franklin’s study that explains how concepts like kinship, procreation and lineage that are

conceived to be biologically determined are being unsettled by biotechnological interventions into the human body. The chapter argues that Shelley's *Frankenstein* may be interpreted as a critique of the male fantasy to control and consolidate the kinship and family structure through a bioscientific experimentation that suffers an apocalyptic ending. The final section of the chapter discusses the bioethical crisis that is generated by the male protagonist because of his failure to acknowledge his progeny as the member of the human moral community. The chapter draws on Linda Macdonald Glenn and Pramod Nayar's concept of "multispecies citizenship" in order to foreground how our shared notions of personhood and citizenship need immediate revision and expansion in order to accord socio-political rights to life-forms that are engineered in the biotechnological laboratories for achieving biomedical objectives.<sup>44</sup>

The second chapter examines Robin Cook's *Coma*, Jodi Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel* and Priscille Sibley's *The Promise of Stardust* in order to discuss how the fictional representations of the liminal state of the brain-dead patients and the phenomenal experiences of the organ recipients problematize the binaristic understanding of the human self embedded in the dominant narratives of biomedicine. The first three sections of the chapter examine Cook's *Coma* and Sibley's *The Promise of Stardust* that dramatize the reified and disposable status of the brain-dead patients who are classified as nonpersons. The chapter argues that the man-machine entanglement as depicted in the novels construct a *deterritorialized* and entangled form of human subjectivity that intervene in the dominant biomedical understanding of personhood and agency that we notionally associate with a conscious mind. The order of subjectivity that is produced through biotechnological intervention in the context of brain-dead patients corresponds to N. Katherine Hayles' explanation of the posthuman subjectivity that defies clear-cut biological boundaries between organic and inorganic orders. The chapter draws on and extends Dawn Goodwin's concept of agency for the purpose of examining the order of agency and subjectivity exhibited by patients who are sustained on ventilator in a state of irreversible coma for an indefinite period. The last section of the chapter discusses Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel* that dramatizes embodied experientiality of the organ recipient. The cadaveric organ transplantation as portrayed in the novel offers us scope to interrogate the notion of human subjectivity that we associate with rational, autonomous subject with a discrete biological embodiment with an organic oneness. The chapter examines how developments in the domain of organ transplantation have enabled us to reconceptualize the significance of the body in (re)construction of human

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<sup>44</sup> Pramod Nayar, "A New Biological Citizenship: Posthumanism in Octavia Butler's *Fledgling*," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 58.4 (2012): 796.

subjectivity. The chapter discusses forms of entangled and embodied-relationality that are evolving as a result of the biotechnological intervention.

Hanif Kureishi's "The Body" and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* are studied in the third chapter of this thesis for the purpose of throwing light on how the fictional frame of the literary narrative is equipped in examining the non-agentic status of the bioengineered lives that are traded and consumed by white wealthy clientele anxious to repair and re-engineer themselves through cosmetically constructed posthuman bodies. The literary texts examined in this chapter engage with the issues of ageing, biocitizenship, disposable bodies and *wasted lives* by extending the discussion to a posthuman era where affluent sections of the society replenish their aged, degenerating, organic body by incorporating biomatter from non-citizens and clones who are not acknowledged as members of a politically agentic community. The first section of the chapter examines the concept of biocitizenship discussed by Nikolas Rose and Carlos and the notion of *wasted lives* propounded by Zygmunt Bauman for the purpose of examining the crisis of identity and agency among people inhabiting the margins of the society who are exploited for organ transplantation and bioscientific experimentation like cloning. The second part of the chapter studies the socio-cultural and political status of the human clones who are not acknowledged as persons and hence, are not accorded citizenship rights. Greg Kennedy's metaphysical explanation of waste is heavily drawn on for the purpose of examining the uncanny and ambiguous location of the fictional clones who problematize the normative notion of humanness.

The final chapter of this thesis studies Kishwar Desai's *Origins of Love* (2012) in order to examine how the novel is complexly reflective of the reproductive biotechnological practices that strategically re-inscribe the notions of caste, class and religion as biological phenomenon. The first section of the chapter studies how biomedical practitioners and prospective parents deploy artificial reproductive technology for the purpose of reinforcing a selectionist, hierarchical and phallogocentric architecture of family-making as dramatized in *Origins of Love*. The chapter draws on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of *schizophrenic deterritorialization* and Tamar Sharon's concept of *re-naturalization* for the purpose of examining how technological innovation may be deployed by the medico-legal institutions for further perfecting and consolidating capitalist structure of consumption and discrimination. The prospective parents' desire to have a child through artificial reproductive technology as dramatized in *Origins of Love* correlates to Sharon's study that foregrounds how privileged sections of the society use artificial reproductive technology for promoting genetic continuation between parents and their offspring. The second section of the chapter

examines how the growing acceptance among the parents for the use of reproductive technologies such as pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) and the screening and purchasing of reproductive gametes for the creation of customized babies have revived the practice of eugenics in the current culture of human genetics that is enmeshed with state-led biopolitics. The chapter also examines the politics of hygiene and caste in the current Indian context and how the same is consolidated and reinscribed, along with other related social hierarchies, by modes of artificial reproductive technology in complete collusion with capitalism and capitalist consumerism. Through such study, the chapter aims to underline how the potentially subversive nature of biomedicine is eventually appropriated and domesticated by dominant and heteronormative categories of knowledge and consumption.

My study eventually illustrates how the fictional frame of literary narratives is uniquely equipped in articulating bioethical crises generated by the agentic crisis of the bioengineered lives that are exploited by the normal humans for rejuvenating their health and vitality. The thesis aims to come to a full circle with its final section examining how the monstrosity embedded in the practice of artificial reproductive technology as examined in the first chapter is tamed and re-naturalized in a neoliberal capitalist culture, thus re-inscribing the bio-normative architecture of the family and social hierarchies that were deconstructed by the biotechnological experiment of Victor Frankenstein.

## CHAPTER ONE

### “Was I then a monster”: Deterritorialization, Personhood and Kinship in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*

#### 1.1 Introduction

In January 2018, the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics and Center for Science and Imagination (Arizona State University) celebrated the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus* that was published in 1st January 1818 in order to honor and acknowledge the novel’s relevance in the current culture of biotechnology. Shelley’s *Frankenstein* dramatizes the life of Victor Frankenstein whose attempt to bioengineer a human being by gathering biomatter from anonymous sources has continued to trigger bioethical debates especially in the field of transplantation surgery and artificial reproductive technology (ART). Stuart F. Youngner interprets Victor Frankenstein’s progeny’s “jigsaw body”<sup>1</sup> as an external manifestation of “the dark side”<sup>2</sup> of the organ transplantation procedure that defies our normative understanding of the body as an organic whole, thus demonstrating the monstrosity embedded in the narratives of biotechnological practices. Shelley’s *Frankenstein* may be interpreted as the “founding myth of transplantation surgery and of its ability to defy the laws of nature together with the complex hybridization process that this same ability puts in place”.<sup>3</sup> *Frankenstein* fictionally explores and demonstrates the monstrosity embedded in the narratives of biotechnological practices.

In an article entitled “Why Frankenstein Matters” (2018) anesthesiologist Audrey Shafer argues that Shelley’s *Frankenstein* may be considered as the first major work in the

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<sup>1</sup>Stuart F. Youngner, “Organ Retrieval: Can we Ignore the Dark Side?” *Transplantation Proceedings* 22.4 (1990): 1014-1015.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Sara Damiani, “Unthinkable Hybrid: The Somatic Unconscious of the Transplanted Body,” in *Monstrous Anatomies: Literary and Scientific Imagination in Britain and Germany during the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Raul Calzoni and Greta Perletti (Germany: V& R Unipress, 2015): 260.

science fiction genre that is not merely a tale of scientific hubris, rather “it also presents a framework for narratively examining the morality and ethics of the experimentation and experimenter”.<sup>4</sup>Shafer says that the novel *Frankenstein* offers a fictional medium in order to explore bioethical issues related to the domain of “genetic engineering, tissue engineering, transplantation, transfusion, artificial intelligence, robotics, bioelectronics, virtual reality, cryonics, synthetic biology and neural networks”.<sup>5</sup>In a similar vein, Catherine Belling discusses the novel as the first work of fiction that addresses bioethical issues generated by the creation of lives in the laboratories.<sup>6</sup>Shelley offers voice to the creature who narrates his tragic life narrative without being over shadowed by the anthropomorphic views of its creator. Susan Lanser’s essay interprets the novel as a complex commentary on the notion of body politics that was evolving as a socio-political phenomenon in eighteenth-century England by dramatizing Victor Frankenstein’s creature’s bioengineered status that triggers questions such as – “who will participate in the civil society, in what ways and with what rights. Who shall have public power and whose interests shall be considered”?<sup>7</sup>

Victor Frankenstein’s relationship with his unnamed progeny in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* has been interpreted by a range of researchers and scholars through the lenses of postcolonial theory, feminism, lesbian and queer theory and psychoanalytic theory. Drawing on Marilyn Butler’s argument in “Frankenstein and Radical Sciences” (1993) that Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is “famously reinterpretable”, one may state that the novel- whose presence in literary criticism and popular culture alike has only grown in time- offers a remarkably rich range of literary and cultural interpretations.<sup>8</sup>American feminist Ellen Moers argues that Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is to a large extent informed by the author’s tragic experiences as a young, unwed mother of a baby

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<sup>4</sup>Audrey Shafer, “Why Frankenstein Matters: Frontiers in Science, Technology, & Medicine,” *Stanford Medicine* (2018), accessed on March 8 2018. <http://stanmed.stanford.edu/2018winter/why-issues-raised-in-Frankenstein-still-matter-200-years-later.html>.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid

<sup>6</sup>Catherine Belling, “Introduction: From Bioethics and Humanities to Biohumanities?” *Literature and Medicine* 34.1 (2016): 1-6.

<sup>7</sup>Susan S. Lanser, “The Novel Body Politics,” in *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture* (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) 483.

<sup>8</sup>Marilyn Butler, “Frankenstein and Radical Science,” in *Frankenstein*, edited by J. Paul Hunter (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 302.

who died at an infant state.<sup>9</sup>Moers interprets the novel as a “birth myth” that is enmeshed with the sense of revulsion that evolves out of Shelley’s inability to procreate a healthy son and heir for P.B. Shelley and her guilt for being the cause of her mother’s death.<sup>10</sup> Moers states that the literary piece dramatizes the abnormality and monstrosity hidden in the parent-child relationship. Scholars like Margaret Homan and Barbara Johnson have discussed Shelley’s *Frankenstein* as a critique of the institution of parenthood.<sup>11</sup> Like Moers, Johnson argues that the bioscientist Frankenstein’s abhorrence for his progeny as dramatized in the novel foregrounds the interrelationship between parenting and monstrosity. The novel foregrounds the problematic around the politics of procreation and parenting, juxtaposing the bionormative model with a super-scientific one, while revealing how both are informed by masculinist fantasies of creation, control, and coercion. Johnson while discussing Shelley’s *Frankenstein* states:

It is the story of two antithetical modes of parenting that give rise to two increasingly parallel lives- the life of Victor Frankenstein, who is the beloved child of two doting parents, and the life of the monster he single-handedly creates, who is immediately spurned and abandoned by his creator. The fact that in the end both the characters reach an equal degree of alienation and self-torture and indeed become indistinguishable as they pursue each other across the frozen polar wastes indicates that the novel is among other things is a story of impossibility of finding an adequate model of what a parent should.<sup>12</sup>

Drawing on Homan and Johnson’s argument about the critique of patriarchy and family-institution in Mary Shelley’s novel, this chapter would like to extend the same onto an examination of the bioethics of procreation in the context of current cultures of bioengineering. The first part of the chapter seeks to examine the *epistemological mutation* in the domain of medical science as captured in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.<sup>13</sup>The notion of *epistemological mutation* is introduced and explained by Nikolas Rose in *The Politics of Life Itself* (2007) as the transition in the socio-cultural and medico-legal meaning of life. The

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<sup>9</sup>Ellen Moers, “Female Gothic,” in *Literary Women*, 90-110 (New York: Doubleday, 1976), accessed on 5November 2017. [http://www4.ncsu.edu/~leila/documents/MoersEllen\\_FemaleGothic\\_.pdf](http://www4.ncsu.edu/~leila/documents/MoersEllen_FemaleGothic_.pdf).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>11</sup>See Margaret Homan, “Bearing Demons: Frankenstein’s Circumvention of the Maternal,” in *Bearing the World: Language and the Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 100-119. See also Barbara Johnson, “My Monster/ My Self,” *Diacritics*, 12 (Summer 1992), 2-10.

<sup>12</sup>Johnson, “My Monster/Myself,” 2.

<sup>13</sup>Nikolas Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 41.

essay proposes to study the novel as a literary piece that throws light on the transition in the biomedical practices from healing a diseased body to controlling and engineering the human body into a perfect progeny, an attempt that appears to anticipate modern medical practices in bioengineering. Caroline Mosser argues that “Shelley presents a narrative that explores the possible consequences of a successful actualization of the new biological science’s desire to create and re-create new life”.<sup>14</sup>Frankenstein’s creation of a human being through technology offers an ontological change in the notion of life structurally similar to the technocratic biomedical practices performed in the era of genetic engineering. The process of artificially creating a bioscientific creature by gathering biomaterial from anonymous sources and Frankenstein’s ability to pre-select the biological features of the being appears to anticipate the baby making procedures practised in the domain of artificial reproductive technology (ART).

The second and third sections of the chapter seek to examine how the novel offers a fictional engagement with the ethical issues that have emerged with the development of ART that has challenged the normative understanding of procreation and kinship. Frankenstein’s monster problematizes the normative understanding of family-making that conceives family as a heterosexual unit with children who are genetically, biologically, socially, and legally related to their parents. Frankenstein’s progeny emerges as a trans-species being who transgresses the normative understanding of being a human and hence is abandoned by his creator as he fails to acknowledge him as a member of his community. The essay will examine how the desired transhumanist perfection of Victor Frankenstein’s bioscientific imaginary becomes a failed project paradoxically due to an extreme embodiment of masculinity and rationality that makes his progeny posthumanist and transgressive, blurring the borderlines between scientific “sublimity and monstrosity” in Mary Shelley’s novel.<sup>15</sup>The chapter will conclude its argument by throwing light on *Frankenstein* as a complex literary

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<sup>14</sup>Caroline Mosser, “Artificial Creation of Life and What It Means to be a Human”, 74.

<sup>15</sup> Avishek Parui, “Masculinity, Monstrosity, and Sustainability in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” in *Romantic Sustainability: Endurance and the Natural World, 1780-1830*, edited by Ben P. Robertson, 187-198 (New York: Lexington Books, 2015) 189. See also, Cary Wolfe’s *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota, 2010) for a better explanation of the concepts of posthumanism and transhumanism. In his book, Wolfe explains Transhumanism is a philosophical movement that encourages the practice of biomedical intervention into human body for enhancing intellectual, physical, and emotional capabilities with an aim to enhance and perfect the Humanistic and Enlightenment principles of logic and reason that constitutes the notion of the perfect human self underpinned in the Cartesian cogito. It thus aims to expand the human life span and to perfect human attributes embedded in and overdetermined by Eurocentric understandings of life and reason. Posthumanism on the other hand interrogates the Humanist and Enlightenment ideologies that offer a binaristic understanding of the man, animal, and machine. It thus problematizes an anthropocentric understanding of the life-world and rejects any primacy of Cartesian consciousness and reason.

text that enables us to reflect on how not acknowledging the bioengineered being as a member of the moral community by Frankenstein leads to the conversion of the progeny as a monstrous social outcast. The dramatization of socio-cultural and political status of the artificial human being offers scope to speculate on the bioethical issues associated with the use of ART in a society embedded in an anthropomorphic understanding of life and life forms.



## 1.2 Re-configuring Biology as a Science of Life

In *Order of Things* (1966) Michel Foucault examines the transition from a taxonomical understanding of the natural world to a fundamental division of nature into two broad categories- organic and the inorganic- in nineteenth-century Western world when biology as a discipline was systematized by medical practitioners as the science of life. Foucault argues that during the eighteenth century biology as a discipline did not exist and hence “life [as it is biomedically defined today] did not exist. All that existed were living beings, which were viewed through a grid of knowledge constituted by natural history.”<sup>16</sup> The vitalists and the materialists’ debate about the essence of life throws light on the underlying unity among the living beings that defies the classifying and categorical cognizance of the natural world upheld by the Classical age (mid seventeenth century to eighteenth century).<sup>17</sup> Rose argues that “when a depth opens up beneath the taxonomical table, the depth of vitality within each entity that can belong to the organic world, only then did biology, in the form that it would exist for one hundred fifty years, become possible.”<sup>18</sup> Rose describes biology as an *epistemology of depth* and observes synchronous development in the domain of biology and biomedicine that can be defined as a clinical practice of diagnosis, healing and prevention of diseases based on an in-depth understanding of the principles of physiology and biochemistry.

In the *Birth of the Clinic* (1963) Foucault explains how the in-depth knowledge of human anatomy paved the way for a shift in the diagnosis of diseases from a “medicine of surfaces and classifications to a medicine of depth” that does not rely on visible symptoms in the patient’s body in order to identify the cause of illness.<sup>19</sup> The vital living interior of the patient is diagnosed in order to identify the underlying pathology. This notion of *epistemological mutation* as explained by Foucault and Rose throws light on the epistemic transition in the domain of life science and resonates with the American physicist and

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<sup>16</sup>Michel Foucault, *Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (London & New York: Routledge, 1989), 139.

<sup>17</sup>Vitalists like George Cuvier and Marie Francois Xavier Bichat argued that there is a fundamental difference between the living and the non-living entities because living beings contain some non-physical elements. Materialists too believed that there is a difference between the living and nonliving entities but they defy the notion of the vitalists that living beings contain non-physical elements. Materialists like William Lawrence explained that life emanates as a result of the synchronous operation of the organs in the human body. See Sarah Marsh, “Romantic Medicine, the British Constitution and Frankenstein,” *Keats-Shelley* 65 (2015), 105-122.

<sup>18</sup>Rose, *Politics of life Itself*, 41-42.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 42

feminist Evelyn Fox Keller's notion of life discussed in the article entitled "Creating "real life"" (2010). Keller argues that the notion of life is not a purely natural phenomenon but also constitutes a human construct which is always in a state of flux and is being constantly reconfigured by the interface of science and technology, matter and medicine.

The notion of *epistemological mutation* of life can be amply applied in Shelley's *Frankenstein* by tracing Victor Frankenstein's epistemic growth from a student of natural philosophy to his development as a bioscientist. Caroline Mosser argues that Frankenstein's growth as a student of bioscience might be divided into three phases- "an innocent and unrealistically idealist interest in science, an often confused learning phase in which he attempts to find balance between the illusions of magic and down to earth realism of the hard sciences, and lastly an experimental phase leading to new discoveries and success".<sup>20</sup> Although in the initial phase of his medical career Frankenstein's study of the natural phenomenon was informed by his independent reading of natural philosophy, he soon identifies epistemic flaws in Alchemy as a scientific endeavor. Thus, Frankenstein directs his attention to the study of chemistry and physics during his stay in the University of Ingolstadt. Mosser states that Frankenstein's systematic study of the natural world and living organisms offers a fictional representation of how biology as a scientific discipline evolves during the early phase of nineteenth century. Unlike Mosser who states that Frankenstein's study reflects the scientific practices of the Romantic period, this chapter argues that Frankenstein's curiosity to delve deep into the secrets of nature in order to know how life sparks in an inanimate body leads to an epistemic shift in his understanding of the meaning of life that deviates from the accepted paradigm of scientific practices of nineteenth-century England. Frankenstein's knowledge of life problematizes the binary between man/animal, life/death, and nature/culture. The problematized binary of life and death is fictionally represented in Shelley's *Frankenstein* thus:

I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of eye and brain. I paused, examining and analyzing all the minutia of causation, as exemplified in the change from life to death, and death to life, until from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me- a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised, that among so many men of genius who had directed their enquiries towards the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Caroline Mosser, "Artificial Creation in Literature and What It Means to be a Human", 80.

<sup>21</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 30.

In a book entitled *Shelley and Vitality* (2005), Sharon Ruston argues that by the year 1800, a new concept of life had emerged that unsettled man's hierarchical relationship with other living beings on earth. For the first time the notion of life was explained as a universal phenomenon by the materialists like William Lawrence that triggered questions, anxiety, and curiosity among people about the image of the great chain of being- the strict religious hierarchical order that confers man superior to the other living beings.<sup>22</sup>The notion of vitality was being recurrently inquired and debated during the Romantic period by scientists and litterateurs like P.B. Shelley and Mary Shelley. Prior to nineteenth century, life was believed to be a sanctified phenomenon that is bestowed only on man. However, William Lawrence's 1816 lecture on the comparative anatomy entitled "Objects and History of Comparative Anatomy" subverted this established notion. In "Romantic Medicine, the British Constitution and *Frankenstein*" (2015) Sarah Marsh throws light on how William Lawrence's mentor John Abernethy offered a tailored version of vitalism in order to appease the dominant religious ideologies of nineteenth-century England. Abernethy states that life was something of an invisible and active presence in nature superadded to organism.<sup>23</sup> Marsh argues that vitalism for Abernethy and his colleagues became a conservative religious position, whereas vitalism was not a strictly religious phenomenon during the eighteenth century. In contrast to Abernethy's statement, the theory of vitalism may be defined as a metaphysical and philosophical understanding of life that explains the underlying unity among all the animated beings on earth. William Lawrence proselytizes the vitalist's argument that life is evenly distributed among all the living beings and unsettled the binaristic understanding of the life world propagated by Abernethy and his coreligionists in the Royal College of Surgeons. William Lawrence redefines the notion of life from the perspective of a biologist by arguing that, "the phenomenon of life must be studied in the same way. The functions must be observed and compared in all the links of the great chain of being, to whom any modifications of vitality have been imparted [sic]".<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Materialism is also known as physicalism in philosophy. Materialists hold the view that all facts including mental phenomenon like consciousness is dependent on the complex physiological structure of the organism. For a better understanding of the concept see the article "Materialism" by John Jamieson Carswell Smart. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/materialism-philosophy>.

<sup>23</sup>For a better understanding of John Abernethy's argument on life see, *Enquiry into the Probability and Rationality of Mr. Hunter's Theory of Life*(London: n.p, 1814), accessed on 10 April 2017, <https://archive.org/details/enquiryinto>.

<sup>24</sup>William Lawrence, *An Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology*, (London, n.p. 1816), accessed on 10 April 2017, <https://archive.org/details/introductiontoco1816lawr:10>.

In the initial stage of his medical career, Victor Frankenstein's approach towards studying the natural phenomena correlates with the notion of life as explained by the British materialist William Lawrence. Marilyn Butler in her article argues that there is substantial evidence of intellectual interactions between Mary Shelley, her husband, and Lawrence.<sup>25</sup> For her novel, Mary Shelley relied extensively on Lawrence's writings, chief of which was his explanation of monster that was published in the Rees's Cyclopaedia and the 1815 academic paper on a baby born with some part of its brain missing. Butler argues that those research papers are important in order to draw a correlation between William Lawrence's study of the human anatomy and Frankenstein's process of creating an artificial life that fictionally refabricates the notion of biology as a science of life.<sup>26</sup> Lawrence makes a comparative study of the human and animal anatomy in order to unveil the secrets of life. Victor Frankenstein too studies the physiology of the living organisms in order to discover the essence of life and articulates thus:

Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery...I resolved these circumstances in my mind, and determined thenceforth to apply myself more particularly to those branches of natural philosophy which relate to physiology...I became acquainted with the science of anatomy.<sup>27</sup>

Butler argues that Shelley's *Frankenstein* can be interpreted as a fictional engagement with the debates between John Abernethy and William Lawrence about the notion of vitality. This essay draws on Butler's argument that the scientific explanations offered in Shelley's *Frankenstein* is to a large extent informed by Lawrence's lectures on the essence of vitality delivered in the Royal College of Surgeons between 1814 and 1819. However, on the basis of textual evidences, it may further be argued that as Frankenstein gradually progresses in unveiling the mysteries of life, he deviates from the notion of life as explained by Lawrence who subscribed to a fundamental ontological division between life and death. In his lecture entitled "On Life" Lawrence explains:

The matter that surrounds us is divided into two great classes, living and dead; the latter is governed by physical laws, such as attraction, gravitation, chemical affinity; and it exhibits physical properties such as cohesion, elasticity, divisibility, &c. Living

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<sup>25</sup>Marilyn Butler, "Frankenstein and Radical Science," 304-305.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 309.

<sup>27</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 30.

matter also exhibits these properties, and is subject in great measure to physical laws. But living beings are endowed moreover with a set of properties altogether different from these, and contrasting with them very remarkably.<sup>28</sup>

Contrary to William Lawrence's philosophy, Frankenstein's scientific practices dissolve the binary between life and death. In fact, his approach of examining both the living and nonliving entities in order to unveil the essence of vitality plays a crucial role in cognizing the processes through which life emanates. Frankenstein narrates that as he progresses in his study of the natural phenomena, life and death appear to him as "ideal bounds".<sup>29</sup> An analogy may be drawn between Frankenstein's approach of understanding the processes through which life sparks in an inanimate body and Humphrey Davy's study of chemistry for unveiling the secrets of life and P.B. Shelley's discussion of the nature of vitality explained in his essay "On Life" (1832). Davy's article "A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Chemistry" (1802) discusses the role of chemistry in cognizing not merely the facts that can be deciphered by our senses but also the minute changes that are responsible for the mutation of the animate and inanimate entities. He states that chemistry reveals the intricate relationship between life and death. Davy further argues that medicine and physiology rely on "the study of the simple and unvarying agencies of dead matter" in order to demystify the mysterious and complicated power of life.<sup>30</sup> Sharon Ruston states that during the Romantic period, scientists and literary persons had not only studied the principles of life but had also tried to reflect on the relationship between life and death and how these two notions related to a living organism are fundamentally distinct from each other. Sharon explains that scientists of the Romantic period were baffled by questions such as, "how can we designate a being as living when there are some that seem to be dead for long time?"<sup>31</sup> P. B. Shelley in his article argues that there are instances that prove the existence of life in bodies which were perceived as inanimate matters. Hence, Shelley states that life may be conceived as a transmuting force which changes nonliving matter into living matters. The notion of life as a dynamic phenomenon is articulated by Frankenstein when he starts observing the living and nonliving

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<sup>28</sup>Lawrence, "On Life," in *An Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology*, 121.

<sup>29</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 32. In Shelley's *Frankenstein* the word bounds denotes imaginary boundaries. See *Frankenstein* edited by J. Paul Hunter.

<sup>30</sup>Humphry Davy, "A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry," n.p, accessed on 3 April 2017, <http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Davy/davy2dis.html>.

<sup>31</sup>Sharon Ruston, *Shelley and Vitality* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 7.

bodies with an aim to understand the essence of life. Thus, Frankenstein says, “To examine the cause of life, we must first have recourse to death. I have become acquainted with the science of anatomy: but this is not sufficient; I must observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body.”<sup>32</sup>

William Lawrence too agreed that living bodies should be observed in the moment of their formation and that scientists should make an attempt to examine the transit point when inanimate matters receive the spark of life. However, Lawrence stated that the objective of knowing life in the moment of its formation is never achieved because of technical limitations. These limitations are fictionally transgressed by Frankenstein when he is able to observe the liminal nature of life which enables him to decipher the process through which life is infused in an inanimate matter. Frankenstein’s problematization of the binary is in resonance with Evelyn Fox Keller’s argument that the new concept of life generated by scientific and technological advances violates the older taxonomies, including the distinction between life and nonlife. Keller opines that the most interesting and greatest peculiarity of life is that although it is always understood in opposition to death, the quest for the essence of life throws light on the fact that the binary between life and death is porous.<sup>33</sup> Porosity of life and death is not only foregrounded in the observatory stage of Frankenstein’s research but is also depicted in the experimentation stage when he gathers inanimate biomatter from anonymous sources in order to design a bioengineered being. Frankenstein explains the process of designing the artificial human being thus:

I collected bones from charnel houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separate from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase...The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I bought my work near to a conclusion.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 30.

<sup>33</sup>See the book entitled *Kierkegaard and Death*, edited by Patrick Stokes and Adam Buben (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011) in order to get a fuller understanding of the nineteenth-century Western philosopher Soren Kierkegaard’s notion of life and death that is in consonance with the American physicist and feminist Evelyn Fox Keller’s explanation of the porosity of life and death. Kierkegaard argues that although life and death are assumed to be two opposite poles, the binary between life and death is conceptually and phenomenally more porous than we might normally assume.

<sup>34</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 32.

Frankenstein's creation of a bioengineered being can be interpreted as an anticipation of the twenty-first century molecular biology that moves beyond a mere study of the underlying laws of nature. His study of the natural philosophy goes a step ahead by simulating the dynamic forces of nature that enables re-engineering of the vital system. Thus, his research leads to an ontological change in the notion of life itself. Modern medical technologies do not merely aim to cure the diseased body, rather those facilitate optimization of the vital processes through technological intervention.<sup>35</sup>At the initial stage of his study of natural philosophy, Frankenstein's prime objective was to master the discipline for the purpose of effacing disease from the human body. Victor states:

I entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. But the latter obtained my most undivided attention: wealth was inferior object; but what glory would attend the discovery, if I could banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but violent death.<sup>36</sup>

Later in the novel, there is an epistemic shift in Frankenstein's notion of science as a healing practice to a mode that can be applied to control and re-engineer life in order to artificially create a human being by circumventing the female from the process of procreation. In this context, one can refer to the article entitled "The Posthuman that could have been Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" (2016) by Margaret Carretero-Gonzalez. Gonzalez explores the coexistence of transhuman and posthuman discourses in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. She argues that the initial objective of Frankenstein's research to efface disease from the human frame echoes the transhumanist notion of perfecting the human race through technological intervention but his eventual creation of a new species constitutes an evolutionary leap that envisages a posthuman future with a dramatic departure from humanist certainties.

The fictional representation of the epistemic shift in the notion of life in Shelley's *Frankenstein* correlates with Sarah Franklin's explanation of the three stages of transformation in the meaning of life in the chapter entitled "Life Itself" (2000).<sup>37</sup>Franklin opines that the biotechnological intervention in the vital processes of human beings has reconfigured our notion of the human, body, and reproduction. The *technologization of*

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<sup>35</sup>See Nikolas Rose, *Politics of Life Itself*, 81.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>37</sup>Sarah Franklin, "Life Itself: Global Nature and Genetic Imaginary," in *Global Nature, Global Culture*, edited by Sarah Franklin, C. Lury, & J. Stacey (London: Sage, 2000).

*biology* has led to a transition from the concept of biologization of life to instrumentalization of life in the era of genetic engineering.<sup>38</sup> Biologization of life indicates the stage in which scientists relied on the biological configuration of the living organisms in order to explain the process of vitality. The second stage is termed as geneticisation of life that denotes the process of understanding the notion of vitality through genetic configuration and the third stage is termed as the instrumentalization of life that throws light on the strategies applied by the scientists in order to control and re-engineer the vitality for the creation of new bioengineered beings. The notion of instrumentalization of life is associated with the process of bioscientific reification as dramatized in Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

In the article entitled "The Scientific Grounding of Frankenstein" (2001) Stuart Curran argues, "what genetic engineering is to our day with such uncharted revolutionary avenues as cloning and the possibility for altering or eliminating defective genes, electrochemistry was for Mary Shelley. It represents the cutting edge of the material sciences at once promising and threatening in an intense and equal measure".<sup>39</sup> The epiphanic stage of Frankenstein's research throws light on this transitory phase of medical science. After spending days and nights in churchyards, vaults, and charnel houses, when Frankenstein is able to unveil the process of bestowing life on inanimate matter, he decides to execute his knowledge to create a human being like himself rather than applying his knowledge to cure diseases. Frankenstein explains:

When I found, so astonishing a power placed within my hands, I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibers, muscles and veins, still remain a work of inconceivable difficulty and labour...yet when I considered the improvement which everyday takes place in science and mechanics, I was encouraged to hope my present attempts would at least lay the foundation of future success...it was with these feelings that I began the creation of a human being.<sup>40</sup>

The use of technology by Frankenstein foregrounds the process of *technologization of biology* that resonates with the manner in which the bionormative process of human reproduction is denaturalized in an era of artificial reproductive technology (ART).

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<sup>38</sup>Franklin, "Life Itself", 188-189.

<sup>39</sup>Stuart Curran, "The Scientific Grounding of Frankenstein," accessed on 4 April 2017, <http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Articles/curran1.html>.

<sup>40</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 31.

Frankenstein's creation of a human being *reveals* a new order of truth that threatens to alter the essence of life. In the essay entitled "The Question Concerning Technology" (1977) Martin Heidegger critiques this technological mode of revealing that transforms nature as a *standing reserve*.<sup>41</sup>The term *standing reserve* is associated with the process of unlocking, transforming and distribution of vital phenomenon for the purpose of bringing forth a new order of truth. Frankenstein's workshop may be seen as a symbolic example of Heidegger's notion of *standing reserve* which transforms life into a reified phenomenon that can be exploited with an aim to *unconceal* a new order of truth. Taking into consideration Nikolas Rose's notion of laboratory,<sup>42</sup>it may be argued that Frankenstein's workshop is a kind of factory for the production of life. Frankenstein's ability to engineer a human being is analogous to Franklin's discussion of the new reproductive technologies that are used for creating babies. Franklin argues that the use of the reproductive tools for re-engineering human body has led to the cognition of biology as a plastic matter that can be configured and reconfigured for creating new lives.

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<sup>41</sup>For a better explanation of the concepts like *standing reserve* and *unconcealment*, see Heidegger's essay "The Question Concerning Technology," 3-35.

<sup>42</sup>In the chapter entitled "Biopolitics in the Twenty-First Century" in *The Politics of Life Itself*, Rose argues that since 1960s synchronous development in domains of technology and biomedicine have led to the conversion of laboratory into a kind of factory for the production of molecular life. And is so doing Rose states, biotechnology is refabricating a new way of understanding the notion of life itself.

### 1.3 Deterritorialization of the Bionormative Concept of Family

Julie Crawford argues that the process of reproductive technology is allied to the notion of “anonymization”.<sup>43</sup> A child created by artificial reproductive technology (ART) is an assemblage of “anonymous bodies, wombs, eggs, and gamete coming from a range of people with different degrees of investment”.<sup>44</sup> This process of gathering biomatter from anonymous sources for the purpose of creating babies is termed as *ontological choreography* by Charis Thompson.<sup>45</sup> Shelley’s dramatization of artificially creating a human being correlates to this notion of anonymization and the process of molecularization of life.<sup>46</sup> Frankenstein’s progeny is assembled from body parts collected from unnamed churchyards and charnel houses which make the progeny an anonymous anomaly. Frankenstein’s physiologically indeterminate but self-taught progeny draws attention to Donna J. Haraway’s query about the human and nonhuman’s relationship in a technoscientific culture where the evolving interrelatedness between the two beings have evoked cultural anxiety related to the notion of human, family structure, and kinship. Examining such entanglement of interrelatedness and extended kinship possibilities, Haraway argues thus:

Who are my kin in this odd world of promising monsters, vampires, surrogates, living tools, and aliens? How are natural kinds identified in the realms of late-twentieth century technoscience? What kinds of crosses and offspring count as legitimate and illegitimate, to whom and at what cost? Who are my familiars, my siblings, and what kind of livable world we are trying to build [sic]?<sup>47</sup>

In an article entitled “Remodeling Biological Futures” (2011) Sarah Franklin agrees with Haraway’s argument that we are being co-worlded with animals and in this biotech era the

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<sup>43</sup>Julie Crawford, “Non-Biological Maternity, or “My Daughter is Going to be a Father!” in *Family-Making: Contemporary Ethical Challenges*, edited by Francois Baylis and Carolyn McLeod, 168-181 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 171.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>45</sup>Charis Thompson, *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005).

<sup>46</sup>In *Politics of Life Itself*, Rose defines molecularization of life as a biomedical process of delocalizing tissues, cells, and DNA fragments from their original sources and the re-engineering of their vital properties at the molecular level for the purpose of enabling the mobilization of vital matter from “place to place, from organism to organism, from disease to disease, and from person to person” (15).

<sup>47</sup>Donna J. Haraway, *Modest Witness@ Second\_Millennium.FemaleMan\_Meets\_OncoMouse* (New York & London: Routledge, 1977) 52.

notion of being is entangled with the political and ethical questions. Franklin argues that the concepts of kinship, procreation, and lineage that are considered to be biologically determined and are termed as facts of life are being problematized in an era of bioengineering. In a similar vein, in “Fields of Posthuman Kinship” (2015) Ben Campbell argues that the knowledge of genetic engineering has reconfigured not only our notion of family structure and reproductive choices but has also restructured the relationship between human and nature. The physiological connectedness between the humans and animals that is being studied by the biologists has problematized, “the uniqueness or exceptionalism of human ontology and Euro-American kinship.”<sup>48</sup> Campbell states that by building up a relationship with the nonhuman world we have entered a posthuman society. The family, erstwhile considered humanist organic domain outside the sphere of technology, is being denaturalized and reconfigured in the era of reproductive technology through an asymmetric entanglement of human organicity and medical materiality.

The denaturalization of family structure is fictionally represented in Shelley’s *Frankenstein* by the almost apocalyptic violence on the blessed family life of its male protagonist. It is interesting to note that Frankenstein begins narrating about his epistemic growth as a scientist to Captain Robert Walton by offering a picture of his biblically blessed childhood thus:

When my father became a husband and a parent, he found his time so occupied by the duties of his new situation, that he relinquished many of his public employments, and devoted himself to the education of his children. Of these I was the eldest, and the destined successor to all his labours and utility. No creature could have more tender parents than mine.<sup>49</sup>

Shelley dramatizes how Frankenstein’s desire to create a human being through biotechnology causes the symbolic death of his biological mother in his dream and subsequently leads to the death of all the major female characters such as Elizabeth Lavenza and Justine Moritz, thus bringing a tragic end of his erstwhile perfect family. The death of the female characters and the bioengineered creation of a human being in Shelley’s *Frankenstein* offer fictional representations of how the masculinist appropriation of the birth process seeks to supplant and render redundant the female biological agency. As Avishek Parui argues, “The females in

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<sup>48</sup>Ben Campbell, “Fields of Posthuman Kinship,” *Durham Research Online*, accessed on 5 November 2015. <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/15795/1/15795.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 19

*Frankenstein* appear as disposable incomplete bodies and waste products in masculine quests for control and discovery”.<sup>50</sup>The creature’s coming to life and his demand to be acknowledged as Frankenstein’s progeny unsettle the scientist’s humanist notion of community and biological relatedness imbibed by him since his childhood. Frankenstein abhors the sight of his creation and curses the day when he thought of creating a being like him. When the bioscientist catches the sight of his monstrous creation, he exclaims, “do you dare approach me? and do not you fear vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect!”<sup>51</sup>Frankenstein’s use of the insect metaphor while addressing his progeny is interesting in as much as it throws light on the dramatic degeneration of his transhumanist desire to engineer a superior species with higher order of intelligence and reasoning. The super-human *monster* in Frankenstein’s imagination thus symbolically degenerates into a sub-human creature. It may be argued that the monstrosity in Shelley’s *Frankenstein* originates as a result of the “overappropriation” of the body of the male progeny that surpasses the normative understanding of the human orders.<sup>52</sup>

In a similar vein, in an article entitled “Frankenstein or Rousseau’s Monster” (1988) David Marshall argues that Frankenstein’s bioengineered experiment is classified as monstrous because it exhibits the ironic fulfillment of the bioscientist’s desire to create a transhuman being with a super human structure and higher order cognitive schema.<sup>53</sup> In fact, monster’s description of his superior physical and intellectual ability to Frankenstein resonates with the transhumanist’s desire to achieve a post-human perfection through bioenhancement facilities that radically exceeds the biological and cognitive ability of normal humans. Parui argues that the story telling and emotive ability of the progeny demonstrates a mind that “appears to possess a higher order of cognitive and mimetic ability and fuller form of consciousness. He thus emerges as the most moving and sophisticated story teller”<sup>54</sup> among the three male narrators. Parui states that the superiority of Frankenstein’s progeny is amply replicated in the passage where the monster considers his grief to be superior to Walton’s, thus exhibiting once again a more heightened ability to feel and suffer in

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<sup>50</sup>Avishek Parui, “Masculinity, Monstrosity, and Sustainability in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” 194.

<sup>51</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 65

<sup>52</sup>Parui, “Masculinity, Monstrosity, and Sustainability in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” 194.

<sup>53</sup>David Marshall, “Frankenstein, or Rousseau’s Monster: Sympathy and Speculative Eyes,” in *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley*, 178-227 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 195.

comparison to the normal human frame. The monster narrates about the monstrosity of his embodiment thus:

I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they, and could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and could with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeds theirs. When looked around, I saw and heard of none like me. Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned.<sup>55</sup>

Anne Mellor argues that the sight of the physiologically indeterminate *monster* who is capable of narrating his life narrative in an eloquent and persuasive manner evokes a feeling of sublimity in his perceivers.<sup>56</sup> Drawing on Edmund Burke's, Mellor argues that sublime is the strongest emotion that the mind is capable of feeling and is generated by an asymmetrical entanglement of overwhelming sense of pain and disgust, reverence and respect.<sup>57</sup> A figure that is conceived as sublime embodies the notion of infinity and obscurity that sensitizes the humans of their finite structure and limitations. Mellor argues that "the creature himself embodies the human sublime. His gigantic stature, his physical strength [...] and above all his origin in the transgression of the boundary between life and death, all render him "obscure" and "vast", the touchstone of the sublime".<sup>58</sup> The obscure physical stature triggers a feeling of pure terror and hence he is abjected by the human community.<sup>59</sup>

The creature's acquisition of language and fellowship through auditory and textual modes that he anticipates to be a potential medium for his transformation into a member of a human community fail to humanize his problematic body. The creature that is created by Frankenstein following the laws of natural science becomes an extreme extension of masculinity and rationality and consequently becomes a threat to the ideologies of Humanism and Enlightenment that believe in maintaining a strict binary between the man and the

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<sup>55</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 80.

<sup>56</sup>Anne K. Mellor, "Problem of Perception," in *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monster* (New York: Methuen, 1988). <http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Articles/mellor7.html>.

<sup>57</sup>Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (New York: P.F. Collier & Son Company, 1757).

<sup>58</sup>Mellor, "Problems of Perception" (n.pag).

<sup>59</sup>See *Power of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) by Julia Kristeva. In the book Kristeva defines abject as a psychological phenomenon that is enmeshed with an extreme sense horror, disgust and revulsion. Kristeva argues that the phenomenon is homologous to the act of throwing away. The emotional state is triggered by entities that unsettle the normative epistemic structure of the human conceptual schema. Kristeva's notion of abject is studied in details in the chapter 3 of this thesis.

animal, nature and culture.<sup>60</sup>Frankenstein intends to unleash an epistemic violence with an aim to create a new paradigm of scientific knowledge but his masculinist super-scientific desire leads to the creation of a monster that inflicts corporeal violence thereby bringing an end to all the members of his family. Victor Frankenstein thus symbolically instantiates an order of bioscientific cannibalism that devours and destroys his own biblically blessed family, ironically in his attempt to perfect the process of procreation.

In an article entitled “Frankenstein and the Physiology of Desire” (1975) John M. Mill argues that Frankenstein’s psychic life abounds in monstrous desires that lead him to create a being that unsettles the normative understanding of human community. The apocalyptic ending of Frankenstein’s blessed family life may be interpreted as a metaphorical representation of the challenges that technocratic biomedicine poses to our established understanding of family, kinship, and community. An analogy may be drawn between Frankenstein’s creation of the being and Haraway’s discussion of the evolving man machine relationship in “A Cyborg Manifesto” (2001). Haraway argues that with the gradual transformation of our society into a biosocial community, human beings are transformed into coded devices that have made it possible for the coupling of the organic and inorganic entities, thereby effacing the binary between man and machine. Frankenstein’s subversion of the normative notion of human reproduction correlates with the technocratic biomedical practices of the genomic era that have unsettled the notion of birth as a sanctified process and have created the urgent need to reconfigure our anthropomorphic understanding of life systems and its organic processes. Frankenstein’s creation of a human being through biotechnology by supplanting the female from the birth process problematizes the notion of the pure organicity of parenting and foregrounds the transition from the concept of heterosexual parenting to single parenting that is facilitated by the developments in the domain of artificial reproductive technology (ART).

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<sup>60</sup>Maureen N. McLane, “Literate Species: population “humanities” and the specific failure of literature in Frankenstein,” 86.

## 1.4 Bioengineering, Bioethics, and Citizenship

In *Technologies of Procreation* (1993), Sarah Franklin explains that kinship is an integral part of our social life. Our identity as a social being is intricately related to our notion of birth and how we are brought up. Kinship can be conceived as an immersive knowledge network that connects an individual with other members of the society thereby offering a sense of communal feeling. Biological and social relatedness that an individual identifies with the other members of society enables them to get acknowledged as a member of the moral community. However, in Shelley's *Frankenstein* the unnamed progeny's attempt to establish communal feeling with the humans has always ended on a tragic note. In spite of his innumerable attempts to form relationships with the human community, he was never acknowledged as a member of the society. As the monster gradually starts learning about the human social system by listening to his cottager's conversation, he realizes that unlike the humans he neither possesses a respectable lineage, rank, and birth history, in other words a definable genealogy that is required to get acknowledged as a member of a politically agentic community. Thus, the creature exclaims:

I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood. "The words induced me to turn towards myself. I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow-creatures were, high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only of these acquisitions; but without either he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profit of a chosen few. And what was I? [...] but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property."<sup>61</sup>

Frankenstein's progeny is not acknowledged as a member of the human community and hence is not conceived as person who can be conferred the socio-cultural and legal rights that are granted to the normal humans. Maureen McLane states that the being who is artificially created without the substance of a mother's body is "naturally alienated".<sup>62</sup> As a bioengineered being the creature deviates from the normative birth process that is conceived to be the condition of human existence and which accords humans with a definable genealogy. Frankenstein's progeny is presented as a stateless creature with a problematic genealogy who "unlike every other character in the novel has no republic, or nation to call his own. Unlike

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<sup>61</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 80.

<sup>62</sup>McLane, "Romanticism and Human Science," 92.

Victor he cannot appeal to familial, political, and other territorial categories which would provide him with techniques of authentication and remembrance”.<sup>63</sup>The bioengineered being that Frankenstein creates in order to achieve his masculinist medical fantasies turns out to be too transgressive to be accommodated within the normative order of humanness. He is thus quickly classified as a monster and subsequently converts into trash that in the end disperses in the margins of the Arctic region, thus blending the geographical and existential orders of marginalization in Shelley’s novel.

In this context, we can refer to Parui’s essay which discusses how the monster’s position as a social outcast has turned him into a biomedical trash that in the end blends into the unconquerable icy seas of the Arctic region, thus demonstrating how both male fantasies of biomedical and geographical conquests- that of Victor Frankenstein and Robert Walton in Mary Shelley’s novel- end in failures.<sup>64</sup>In an article entitled “Family History” (2005) J. David Velleman argues that the process of self-understanding is usually accomplished by establishing a resemblance between oneself and one’s biological relatives. It is by virtue of sharing a few physiological similarities with one’s family members that a person gains acceptance in one’s family and by extension in society. The creature realizes that because of his excessive and extreme order to embodiment he is neither accepted by his progenitor nor by the human community. He narrates:

‘Hateful day when I received life!’ I exclaimed in agony. ‘Cursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust? God in pity made man beautiful and alluring after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of your’s more horrid from your resemblance. Satan had his companion, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and detested.’<sup>65</sup>

In the scene where the unnamed creature urges Frankenstein to listen to his tragic life narrative, the scientist addresses the being as an abominable creature with whom he can never share any relationship. Frankenstein says, “Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies”.<sup>66</sup>Frankenstein’s abhorrence for his progeny can be analyzed in the light of Robert Wilson’s study of biocentric kinship discussed

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>64</sup>Parui, “Masculinity, Monstrosity, and Sustainability in Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein,” 192.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 66

in his article entitled “Blood is Thicker than Water, nichtwahr?” (2008). Wilson argues that human sociality is driven by externally mediated and cognitively driven normativity. Our cognitive categorization of the different entities in the world is operated by the binary of *likeus and not like us* (cited in Charlotte Witt’s article). Our subjective perspective influences the process of categorization and this perspective is situated in a particular body and in a particular social location. Hence, it can be argued that the creature unsettles normative human cognitive categorization. Being an assemblage of man, animal, and machine, he resists easy categorization thereby evoking fear and anxiety among the humans around him.

David Marshall argues that the unclassifiable body of the creature may be interpreted as a specular problem. The indeterminate stature of the creature instigates a sense of abjection because his sight problematizes the normative epistemological structure of the human conceptual schema.<sup>67</sup> The apprehension of the humans for the creature and their inability to cognize his physical structure is depicted in the scene where the monster narrates to Frankenstein how the cottagers were prejudiced about him when he approached the old blind man and his family in order to establish a friendly relationship with them. The creature fails to gain acceptance from the human community because of the visual paranoia he induces in their somatocentric symbolic system. The creature thus narrates:

They are kind—they are the most excellent creatures in the world; but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless, and, in some degree, beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster.<sup>68</sup>

Ironically in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the only character who is able to conceive the humane attributes of the monster and initially sympathizes with him after listening to the monster’s eloquent lamentation is the blind man Father De Lacey. Anne Mellor argues that Shelley’s novel poses a fundamental question—how the bioengineered creature should be perceived? Mellor states “as a unique being, an original creature, the monster functions in the novel as a sign of unfamiliar, the unknown. He is a sign detached from a visual and verbal grammar, without diachronic and synchronic context.”<sup>69</sup> The novel offers two competing orders of

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<sup>67</sup>David Marshall, “Frankenstein, or Rousseau’s Monster: Sympathy and Speculative Eyes.”

<sup>68</sup>Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 10.

<sup>69</sup>Anne Mellor, “Problems of Perception”. (n.pag)

knowledge- the one that is generated by the characters who perceive the creature and is reluctant to listen to him and the one that is provided by the old blind man whose conceptual schema is not governed by visual evidences. Mellor discusses *Frankenstein* as a critique of the sighted culture that is ideologically blinkered. In a similar vein, in article entitled “Blind Vacancy” (2011) Essaka Joshua states that the novel questions the ability of the sighted culture to gain access to truth.<sup>70</sup> Normatively blindness is associated with ignorance and lack of autonomy but in Shelley’s novel blindness is portrayed as an enabler of truth. Joshua argues that the gaze that dominates the novel may be termed as gothic gaze that classifies being who deviates from the anthropomorphic bionormative presuppositions as evil. Shelley through the blind man interrogates the authenticity of information that is derived from visual evidences.

The anxious relationship of Frankenstein with his progeny becomes a potent ground to analyze the socio-cultural status of bioengineered lives and the associated issues of embodiment and agency. Additionally, Shelley’s *Frankenstein* enables us to reflect on bioethical questions such as: what it means to be a human and to what extent is it possible to acknowledge kinship with living beings that are physiologically different from humans. Frankenstein’s abhorrence for his progeny foregrounds the cultural anxiety, the stigma, and experience of exclusion borne by the bioengineered being in a society that is embedded in an anthropocentric understanding of life processes. In this context, one may refer to the 1982 film *Blade Runner* directed by Ridley Scott that “remains one of the preeminent cinematic renditions of Mary Shelley’s essential themes updated to reflect on the contemporary technological advances”.<sup>71</sup> Scott’s *Blade Runner* anticipates a bioengineered era where advancement in the domain of genetic engineering has made it possible to design a race of superhumans with higher order intelligence and visually appealing physical traits, thus dramatizing how the monstrosity embedded in the biotechnological practices are tamed and perfected by the biotechnological industries that further problematize the borderlines between human and nonhumans. It may be argued that Frankenstein’s Creature is a forerunner of the superhuman beings known as *Replicants* in Scott’s *Blade Runner* who also face rejection and are classified as social outcasts because of their bioengineered existence. Their “more human

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<sup>70</sup>Essaka Joshua, ““Blind Vacancy”: Sighted Culture and Voyeuristic Historiography in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” *European Romantic Review*, 22.1 (2011): 49-69.

<sup>71</sup>Lester D. Friedman and Allison B. Kavey, *Monstrous Progeny: A History of the Frankenstein Narratives* (New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2016) 192.

than human” physical and empathetic attributes evoke as sense of uncanniness and abhorrence in their biological counterparts who perceive them as threat to human community. The *Replicants* are classified as sub-human beings manufactured by the Tyrell corporation for accomplishing the tasks that are conceived as odious for the normal humans and are later disposed of if they deviate from their scripted lives.

The primary argument in this chapter concurs with Margarita Carretero-Gonzalez’s argument that Frankenstein’s inability to grant the creature normatively accepted humanness leads to the tragic ending in Shelley’s novel.<sup>72</sup> The novel may be discussed as a critique of the anthropocentric foundations of the category of human and humanism, which is problematized by bioscientific ambitions for the perfect progeny.<sup>73</sup> Maureen Neolle McLane argues that Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is a critique of William Godwin’s argument that the notion of humanness is associated with the human’s potentiality to create and enjoy literature. McLane states:

The novel demonstrates, perhaps against itself, that the acquisition of “literary refinement” fails to humanize the problematic body, the ever-unnamed monster. The monster thus introduces and embodies an anthropological problem which it fails to resolve and yet which it displays. The perfectibility of man meets its violent contradiction in a speaking and reasoning being which men, women, and children throughout Europe are unable and unwilling to recognize as fellow species being.<sup>74</sup>

Unlike Haraway’s utopian cyborg world that foresees the enmeshing of man, animal, and machine as celebratory, Shelley’s *monster* highlights the anxiety of a chaotic world, the chaos emerging ironically from a bioscientific overdeterminism. The tragic ending of Frankenstein and his progeny enables us to reflect on how a restricted notion of personhood has led to the denial of essential basic rights to a bioengineered being. Notionally personhood is associated with the status of being a person who is a conscious thinking being and is socio-legally accorded the rights of being a citizen. However, postmodernist philosophers like Michael Tooley and H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr make a sharp demarcation between biological

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<sup>72</sup>See Margarita Carretero-Gonzalez’s “The Posthuman that could have been Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein,” *Relations* 4.1(2016): 53-64.

<sup>73</sup>See Maureen Neolle McLane’s article “Literate Species: Population, ‘Humanities’ and Frankenstein,” *ELH* 63:4 (1996): 959-988.

<sup>74</sup>Maureen Noelle McLane, “Literate Species: Population ‘Humanities’ and Frankenstein,” 959-960.

humanity and moral personhood.<sup>75</sup> In the current culture of bioengineering our shared notion of personhood is problematized. The American bioethicist Linda Macdonald Glenn in “Biotechnology at the Margins of Personhood” (2002) states that the biotechnological developments in the domains of transgenic and artificial intelligence have problematized the notion of personhood that confers humans a special elevated status. She argues that as barriers between the species begin to blur, the traditional legal definition of personhood becomes increasingly inadequate to analyze the socio-legal underpinning of liminal states of being.

The problematization of the normative notion of personhood is amply replicated in the passage where the creature through the discourse of law in order to persuade Frankenstein to listen to his tragic life narrative, thereby pleading his progenitor to grant him the rights of a social being. The creature reminds Frankenstein of the citizenship rights and argues that like every citizen he too has the right to speak for his self-preservation before being condemned as a murderer and sentenced to death. Susan Lanser argues that by giving the creature an eloquent and persuasive voice and in locating in his ability to speak for himself, Mary Shelley fictionally engages with the politics of citizenship that does not acknowledge the socio-political rights of beings who are conceived as subhuman.<sup>76</sup> Lanser states that the monster “articulates the term of participation not only in a human community but I will suggest in a body politic.”<sup>77</sup> The creature says to Frankenstein:

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 to speak, by human laws, bloody as they may be, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned. Listen to me Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! Yet I ask you not to spare.<sup>78</sup>

Thus, Frankenstein’s progeny does not merely challenge the normative notion of birth and the ontology of motherhood but also demands the creation of a “new world order” where human and social rights are extended to newly evolving life forms that are designed in

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<sup>75</sup>Cited in, Joseph Torchia’s *Exploring Personhood: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Nature* (USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC, 2008) 3.

<sup>76</sup>Lanser, “The Novel Body Politic,” 481.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 481.

<sup>78</sup>Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, 66-67.

laboratories for accomplishing biomedical objectives.<sup>79</sup>The concept of new world order is discussed by Haraway in *Modest Witness* (1997). In her book Haraway prompts us to contemplate on the human beings evolving kinship with other transgenic organisms where the humans are conceived not only as producers of technoscience but as being who are co-constituted by the technoscientific innovation. Hence, Haraway argues that developments in the domain of molecular biology has led to the creation of a new world order that captures the transition from a hierarchical based epistemic system to a more fluid and nonhierarchical knowledge networks that acknowledges the socio-political rights of the lives that are conceived as liminal beings.

In this context, one can refer to the concept of posthuman biology entwined with the notion of multispecies membership as discussed by Pramod K. Nayar in “A New Biological Citizenship: Posthumanism in Octavia Butler’s *Fledgling*” (2012). Nayar argues that in the era of bioengineering we should embrace a new concept of biological citizenship that evolves as a result of the mutual dependency with other living beings with whom we share the biosphere. Hence, drawing on Glenn and Nayar, it may be argued that the socio-political notion of personhood requires revision and expansion in order to reflect on the socio-legal rights of the lives that are created in the biotechnological laboratories.<sup>80</sup>Such extended understanding of life, living beings, their selfhood and subjectivity is of primary significance in the world of biomedical birth and the industry of artificial procreation we inhabit and consume today. Mary Shelley’s novel is increasingly important in the current era of bioengineering which problematizes any unified ontology of pure humanness and instead offers opportunities to have more pluralistic and protean understanding of what it is to be a human. This shift from a biologically and organically overdetermined understanding of humanness will usher in a more inclusive idea of what it means to be a sentient human subject with emotions, ambivalence, identity and agency.

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<sup>79</sup>Haraway, *Modest Witness*, 4

<sup>80</sup>Linda MacDonald Glenn, “A Legal Perspective on Humanity, Personhood, and Species Boundaries,” *The American Journal of Bioethics* 3.3 (2003).

## 1.5 Conclusion

The chapter concludes by stating that Shelley's *Frankenstein* offers us the scope to reflect on the contemporary bioethical issues related to the bioengineered lives that are designed in the biotechnological laboratories for fulfilling different medical purposes. The literary work sensitizes us to the fact that scientific innovation also gives rise to new forms of social relatedness that demand revisions of socio-cultural and political structure in order to accommodate changes of a new world order. In the current cultures of technocratic biomedicine, Shelley's *Frankenstein* serves as an important text to reflect and revise an anthropomorphically overdetermined understanding of human society with renewed attention on the concepts of vitality and kinship which are being configured and reconfigured with the advancements made in domain of artificial reproductive technology (ART). The tragic life narrative of the male progeny in Mary Shelley's novel offers scope to widen our perspective and to develop and mature our attitude towards the animate and inanimate entities with whom we share kinship in an era of genetic engineering.

This chapter has discussed the socio-cultural and political status of Frankenstein's progeny in order to throw light on how our shared notions of personhood and citizenship are problematized in the current culture of biotechnology. The following chapter will examine the issues of human subjectivity, citizenship, embodiment, and agency by analyzing the fictional representation of the medico-legal status of the brain-dead patients and the organ recipients as dramatized in Robin Cook's *Coma*, Priscille Sibley's *The Promise of Stardust*, and Jodi Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel*. The chapter will discuss how the developments in the domain of biotechnology has led to the formation of a more entangled and embodied notions of human subjectivity.

## CHAPTER TWO

“It is the machine keeping her body alive”: Deterritorialized and Embodied Subjectivity in Robin Cook’s *Coma*, Priscille Sibley’s *The Promise of Stardust* and Jodi Picoult’s *Change of Heart: A Novel*

### 2.1 Introduction

In an essay entitled “Body and Self Identity” (1991), C. Don Keyes argues that biomedical practices like organ transplantation have problematized our notions of what body symbolizes to us existentially and ontologically.<sup>1</sup> Although theologically, medically, and legally our understanding of personhood is associated with mind as the bearer of the self, the plasticity and intercorporeality of human biomatter with the advent of new biomedical innovations and interventions have triggered queries about the significance of the body in the construction of human subjectivity. Most significantly, organ transplantation has drawn the attention of medico-legal practitioners, anthropologists, sociologists, and philosophers towards the intercorporeal and the distributive nature of human subjectivity which contributes in the construction of an agentic experiential self. In the essay cited above, Keyes states that “symbolism of enlargement which lies at the base of much of the patient’s emotional struggle to adapt to the new organ dramatically reveals the body side of the self-identity”.<sup>2</sup>

The current culture of organ transplantation has problematized our commonly shared notion of life and death and has created an immediate need to medico-legally distinguish a section of humans who are merely corporeally alive from those who are acknowledged as members of a politically and existentially agentic community. Organ transplantation practice has stimulated a range of bioethical issues about the ambiguous nature of the brain-dead phenomenon, hybridized notion of human subjectivity, and the notions of personhood and embodied self. Bioethicist H. Tristram Engelhardt in an article entitled “Brain Life, Brain Death, Fetal Parts” (1989) states:

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<sup>1</sup>C. Don Keyes, “Body and Self-Identity”, *New Harvest: Transplanting Body Parts and Reaping the Benefits*, edited by C. Don Keyes, 161-177 (New York: Springer Science+ Business Media, 1991).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 170.

Since the 1960s there have been especially heated debates about how to distinguish between human biological and human personal life, and about the force and significance of the distinction. These were in part spurred by development of transplantation, which forcefully brought across the need to distinguish those forms of human life that persists in organs, tissues, and cells from those who are full bearers of rights and duties.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, scientific advances about biologically transplantable body-parts have further fueled debates about the nature and ontology of human subjectivity and personhood in biomedical cultures where plasticity and plurality have increasingly metonymized the centrality of the organically original self. Associated issues such as medical ethics, human commodification, human trash, and biomedically engineered identities have also been problematized in such debates.

This chapter will discuss Robin Cook's *Coma* (1977), Jodi Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel* (2008), and Priscille Sibley's *The Promise of Stardust* (2013) in order to examine how fictional representations of the liminal state of the brain-dead patients and the phenomenal experiences of the organ recipients problematize the binaristic understanding of the human self embedded in dominant narratives of biomedicine. The first section of the chapter will focus on *Coma* and *The Promise of Stardust* in order to analyze how the novels are complexly reflective of the existential and emotional anxieties related to the brain death phenomenon. The novels dramatize the liminal state of the brain-dead patients that problematize our normative notion of life, death and their distinction. The fictional representations of the deterritorialized<sup>4</sup> and entangled form of subjectivity in Cook's *Coma* and Sibley's *The Promise of Stardust* enable us to reconsider and revise our shared notions of human subjectivity, personhood, and agency that we notionally associate with a conscious mind. The study draws on and extends Dawn Goodwin's concept of agency discussed in an article entitled "Refashioning Bodies, Reshaping Agency" (2008). Goodwin's study examines the notions of agency and subjectivity in the context of patients who are

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<sup>3</sup>H. Trsitram Engelhardt, "Brain Life, Brain Death, Fetal Parts," *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 14 (1989)1.

<sup>4</sup> See Braidotti's *Nomadic Theory*, 15. Braidotti draws on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *schizophrenic deterritorialization* for the purpose of developing an alternative notion of human subjectivity that is constructed through the complex entanglement between man, machine and other animate and inanimate entities. Braidotti's offers a hybridized, fragmented, and non-unitary notion of human subjectivity that serves as a critique of the liberal humanist subject as an organic whole.

anesthetized during surgery but in this chapter Goodwin's explanation of agency is extended for the purpose of examining the order of agency exhibited by brain-dead patients who are sustained in a state of irreversible coma for an indefinite period.

The second section discusses Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel* that dramatizes the embodied experientiality of the organ recipient Claire Nealon whose notion of subjectivity is problematized by the residual presence of the donor's selfhood. The cadaveric organ transplantation as portrayed in the novel offers us scope to interrogate the notion of human subjectivity that we associate with rational, autonomous subject with a discrete biological embodiment and an organic oneness. Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel* dramatizes the anxiety associated with the notion of hybridization of human subjectivity and portrays human subjectivity as an embodied phenomenon that is ontologically as well as functionally distributive in quality. Interestingly, in the novel, the fragment of the human body acquires a symbolic imagery that defies the medical and reified understanding of the human body as spare parts or therapeutic tools. This chapter will foreground how developments in the domain of organ transplantation have enabled us to reconceptualize the significance of the body in the (re)construction of human subjectivity. The fictional representations of the practice of cadaveric organ transplantation and the living cadavers enable us to reflect on the new forms of entangled subjectivity and "embodied-relationality"<sup>5</sup> associated with biomedically intervened and bioengineered bodies.

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<sup>5</sup>Margrit Shildrick, "The Critical Turn in Feminist Bioethics: The Case of Heart Transplantation," *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 1.1 (2008) 35.

## 2.2 Contested and Ambiguous Nature of Brain-Dead Phenomenon

In the year 1968, brain death was recommended as the extended ontology of death by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School.<sup>6</sup> Brain-death as a phenomenon has evolved simultaneously with developments of biotechnological apparatuses like artificial respiratory system that facilitates sustaining of patients diagnosed with irreversible coma on machines for organ transplantation prior and during the surgery.<sup>7</sup> The cadaveric organ donors are perceived as mere corpses that are classified as consumable biomedical commodities. The anthropologist Lesley Sharp states that brain death is an “epistemological construction”<sup>8</sup> that was created by the legislative body and biomedical industries with an aim to augment the supply of organs from living cadavers who are not acknowledged as persons.<sup>9</sup> Robin Cook’s medical thriller *Coma* captures the anxiety associated with the ambiguous nature of the brain-dead patients who are sustained on ventilator for organ retrieval.

The novel begins as Nancy Greenly, who is admitted in the Boston Memorial Hospital for dilation and curettage – a routine gynecological procedure- suffers an anesthetic complication during her surgery. During the surgical procedure, her brain does not receive oxygen for a long time leading to the damage of her cerebral cortex. Hence, she is medically declared brain dead. Although the damage to the cortical part of Nancy’s brain leads to an irreversible coma, the doctors are able to sustain her cardiopulmonary mechanism with the help of the biotechnological apparatuses that enable the normative functioning of the vital organs of her body. The narrator in Cook’s *Coma*, through Susan Wheeler, a medical student

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<sup>6</sup>See the article entitled “A Definition of Irreversible Coma: Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School to Examine the Definition of Brain Death,” *JAMA* 205.6 (1968): 337-340, accessed on 3 November 2017. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/340177>.

<sup>7</sup>In *Twice Dead: Organ Transplantation and Reinvention of Death* (Berkeley: University of California, 2002) Margaret Lock defines brain-dead patient as a living cadaver who has suffered fatal brain injuries and is in a state of irreversible coma. The brain-dead patient is sustained on artificial respiratory system that enables the normative functioning of the vital organs of the patient’s body. There is a conceptual difference between brain death and permanent vegetative state (PVS). The lower brain stem functions normatively in the context of patients who are diagnosed to be in a state of PVS and hence unlike the brain-dead patients, the patients in the state of PVS are able to breathe on their own. See also Roger Luckhurst’s “Biomedical Horror: The New Death and the Undead,” in *Technologies of the Gothic Literature and Culture*, 84-98, edited by Justin D. Edward (New York: Routledge, 2015). In the article Luckhurst states that a brain-dead patient may be defined as a bioengineered being who is invented “inside a brand-new technical assemblage which is called intensive care unit” (87).

<sup>8</sup>Lesley A. Sharp, *Strange Harvest: Organ Transplants, Denatured Bodies and the Transformed Self* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2006), 15.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

who joins Boston Memorial Hospital as an intern, narrates the existential and emotional anxieties of an individual observing a brain-dead patient thus:

Nancy Greenly's eyes were only half closed and the lower edges of her blue iris were visible. Her face was a marble white, which contrasted sharply with the sable brown of her hair. Her lips were dried and cracked, her mouth held open with a plastic mouthpiece so she wouldn't bite the endotracheal tube [...] The harshness of the image of the previously normal woman made her tremble with undirected emotional pain [...] Susan lifted one of Nancy Greenly's hands. It was surprisingly cold and limp. Was she dead or alive? The thought crossed Susan's mind. But there directly above was the cardiac monitor with its reassuring electronic blip tracing excitedly its pattern.<sup>10</sup>

Susan as a medical student is in the early stage of her medical career and hence is not yet able to imbibe the notion of the human body as a machinic entity. Instead, she establishes an empathetic relationship with the human element of the twenty-three-year-old Nancy who is in a state of irreversible coma since the day of her surgery. Susan is subsequently moved by the medical condition of Nancy lying in front of her as an immobile statue and is not able to understand whether the motionless patient who is metaphorically denoted as a "delicate piece of porcelain" is dead or alive.<sup>11</sup> A similar situation is dramatized in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005)<sup>12</sup> where the human clone Tommy shares his suspicion with Kathy about the medical diagnosis of a patient as brain dead. Tommy says to Kathy, "You know why it is, Kathy, why everyone worries about the fourth? It's because they're not sure they're really complete. If you knew for certain you'd complete, it would be easier. But they never tell us for sure" [sic].<sup>13</sup> Tommy states that the anxiety and ambiguity associated with the brain-dead phenomenon is further augmented because of the medical practitioners' inability to state definitely that the patient diagnosed with irreversible coma is dead.<sup>14</sup> Kathy narrates the ambiguous nature of the brain-dead patient kept on ventilator for organ retrieval thus:

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<sup>10</sup>Robin Cook, *Coma* (London: Pan Macmillan, 1977) 54.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ishiguro's novel is studied in details in the following chapter of this thesis.

<sup>13</sup>Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (London: Faber & Faber, 2008), 273. In Ishiguro's novel, the word *complete* is metaphorically used to denote the death of the clones. See Sara Wasson's article entitled "Scalpel and Metaphor: The Ceremony of Organ Harvest in Gothic Science Fiction," *Gothic Studies* 17.1 (2015): 104-142. The article discusses how the narratives of organ transplantation are metaphorically structured in order to make the practice of organ harvesting socio-culturally acceptable.

<sup>14</sup>In an article entitled "The Demise of Brain Death in Britain" in *Beyond Brain Death: The Case Against Brain Based Criteria for Human Death*, edited by Michael Potts, Paul A. Byrne, and Richard G. Nilges, 139-158 (New York and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), David W. Evans David W. Evans argues that human consciousness is still an enigma and biomedically it cannot be ascertained that a person diagnosed to be

But Tommy would have known I had nothing to back up my words. He'd have known, too, he was raising questions to which even the doctors had no certain answers. You'll have heard the same talk. How may be, after the fourth donation, even if you've technically completed, you're still conscious in some sort of way; how then you find there are more donations, plenty of them, on the other side of that line [...] how there's nothing to do except watch your remaining donations until they switch you off.<sup>15</sup>

In Cook's *Coma*, Susan feels that she is looking at a dead body. The narrator explains that for a moment Susan "fought to discern the motionless figure in the bed in the corner"<sup>16</sup> but the rhythmical beep of the cardiac monitor and the to-and-fro hissing sound of the respiratory machine reassures her that the body is still alive, thus bringing the binary of life and death in a complex and contingent loop where the organic and inorganic orders are endlessly enmeshed. The man-machine entanglement as dramatized in *Coma* problematizes Susan's normative understanding of life and death. Cook's *Coma* bears rich resonance with the current research in the domain of bioethics and biomedicine which examines the liminality between life and death informed and influenced by medical machines. The ambivalent state of Susan Wheeler as dramatized in *Coma* correlates to Michael Rassin, Miri Lowenthal, and Dina Silner's case study of the phenomenal experiences of people observing brain-dead patients. Rassin et.al study has foregrounded the fact that although medico-legally brain death is accepted as a criterion for diagnosing a patient as dead, a large group of people including workers in the health care system are reluctant to accept a patient with beating heart as dead.<sup>17</sup>

Priscille Sibley's *The Promise of Stardust* dramatizes the ambiguous nature of the brain-death phenomenon by featuring the liminal status of Elle Lenore who was eight weeks

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in a state of irreversible coma will not resuscitate to consciousness. Development in biomedical technologies have facilitated mapping of some functions of the brain but there are neurobiological factors that are yet to be examined in order to offer a more comprehensive understanding of human consciousness. Evans state that "there are, as yet, no commonly available clinical investigative technique which can diagnose with certainty total irreversible loss of all brain functions with a few hours of the onset of coma and while the circulation persists" (141).

<sup>15</sup>Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 274.

<sup>16</sup>Cook, *Coma*, 51.

<sup>17</sup>Michal Rassin, Miri Lowenthal, and Dina Silner, "Fear, Ambivalence, and Liminality: Key Concepts in Refusal to Donate an Organ after Brain Death," *JONA's Healthcare, Law, Ethics, and Regulation* 17.3 (2005): 84-85. See also Roland K. Nakasone's "Ethics of Ambiguity: A Buddhist Reflection on the Japanese Organ Transplantation Law," in *Handbook of Bioethics and religion*, edited by David E. Guinn, 291-304 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

pregnant at the time she was medically declared as brain dead. Medico-legally Elle is considered as dead and hence, is conceived to be outside the normative ontology of personhood. She is not acknowledged as an agentic self who can be accorded socio-political rights that are granted to the members of a politically agentic community. Her liminal status triggers questions about bioethical issues such as: How is it possible to disassociate the maternal life from the life of the embryonic body? Elle's husband Dr. Matthew struggles to accept his wife who is corporeally alive as dead. On the one hand, Dr. Matthew considers himself a fool who addresses the biotechnologically mediated unconscious body as his wife, and on the other, he is enraged when his mother considers Elle to be equivalent to an incubator. Dr. Matthew is not able to accept Elle as a reified entity and his human anguish is expressed thus: "My heart was pounding in my chest so hard I was seeing spots. She is not an incubator. She is baby's mother" (48).<sup>18</sup> He needs to be persistently reminded of the fact that Elle as a person is not alive but that it is the machine that is keeping the body alive, thus bringing the man-machine interface into an intersubjective entanglement, one that triggers ambivalence as well as an emotional rejection of reified biomedical knowledge. At a more semantic level, the episode foregrounds the epistemological divide between hard medical data and human emotional understanding.

A similar situation is dramatized in Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper* (2004) where Anna's mother Sara Fitzgerald is described as cognitively disoriented after her daughter is diagnosed to be in a state of irreversible coma. In a moving scene in the novel, Picoult depicts the dilemma of Anna's mother who is constantly reminded thus by her husband Brian that although her daughter is corporeally alive, Anna the person is dead: "Sweetheart she is not here. It's the machine keeping her body alive. What makes Anna, Anna is already gone". In Sibley's *The Promise of Stardust*, Dr. Matthew's ambivalence is articulated thus:

I couldn't focus or make sense of anything. Cognitive dissonance had taken over. I kept whispering to and begging her to wake up. I knew what was happening. I could not accept it even though every prop tethered me to this unreality. One minute I was looking at Elle's intracranial pressure monitor, and the next my mind shot into fantastical asides like-fishbowls.<sup>19</sup> (22)

Dr. Matthew states that the biotechnological apparatuses connected to Elle problematize his normative understanding of life and death. He states that the constant beeping sound of the

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<sup>18</sup>Priscille Sibley, *The Promise of the Stardust* (United States: Harper Collins Publisher, 2013) 48.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 22.

intracranial pressure monitor and the respiring and pulsating (biotechnologically mediated) body of Elle creates an illusion that she is alive. Dr. Matthew's perplexed state corroborates the trauma theorist Roger Luckhurst's argument that brain-dead patients appear to be palpably lively on an EEG monitor (echoencephalograph) even if the signs are created by the intensive care unit artifacts.<sup>20</sup> Drawing on Michael Nair-Collin and Franklin G. Miller's article entitled "Do the 'brain dead' merely appear to be alive" (2017) it may be argued that the technologically mediated body of the brain-dead patient problematizes the binary between appearance and reality. Nair-Collin and Miller argue that "artificial ventilator creates an ambiguity in both the appearance and the vital status" of the brain-dead patient".<sup>21</sup> They further explain that the ambiguous status of the brain-dead patient arises from the fact that although they are biomedically defined as dead, the patients do not look like corpses. The artificially maintained body of the patients continues to exhibit signs of life.

Biomedical practitioners argue that the biotechnological apparatuses that are connected to the patients' body mask the reality of death. In reality, the brain-dead patient as a biological organism has ceased to function normatively. The ambivalent state of Susan and Dr. Matthew as dramatized in the novels throws light on the conflict between the biomedical explanation of the brain-dead phenomenon and the phenomenal and empathetic experiences of the observer observing a brain-dead patient to whom the patient in the state of irreversible coma appears to be somatically alive. The cognitive dissonance experienced by the characters observing a patient diagnosed as brain death in *The Promise of Stardust* corresponds to Lesley Sharp's anthropological study of the brain-dead patients who are biomedically classified as cadaveric organ donors. Sharp states:

By medico-legal definition these donors are dead: whereas the ventilated brain-dead body appears to be alive to lay parties and health professions alike, each breathe taken is technologically dependent. The bodies of such donors maintain their natural coloring and remain warm to the touch, and they may even manifest what are understood as involuntary movements that result from residual nervous system activity. Such contradictions render them inherently strange.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Roger Luckhurst, "Biomedical Horror" 87-88.

<sup>21</sup>Michael Nair-Collins and Franklin G. Miller, "Do the 'brain-dead' merely appear to be Alive," *J. Med Ethics* (2012), 2.

<sup>22</sup>Sharp, *Strange Harvest*, 17.

The new ontology of death has created an interval between the medico-legal definition of death that is termed as brain death and the biological death. The dramatized blurring of the borderlines between life and death in these literary works of Cook and Sibley offer a fictional engagement with the contemporary issues of biomedicalization of death discussed by Willard Gaylin in an article entitled “Harvesting the Death” (1974). Gaylin states that a few decades back there was no ambivalence in a physician’s mind in terms of diagnosing a person as dead. In such medical culture, “the fact of death was sufficient. The difference between life and death was an infinite chasm breached in an infinitesimal moment. Life and death were ultimate self-evident opposites”.<sup>23</sup> Advancement in biotechnological apparatuses like artificial ventilation has led to the commodification of life and commercialization of death. It is now possible to maintain the visceral functions of the body despite the absolute absence of the cortical activities that notionally qualifies a human as a person. The living cadaver who is “respiring, pulsating, evacuating, excreting” and is in constant need of “nursing, dietary, and general grooming attention” redefines our normative notions of life and death.<sup>24</sup>

In a similar vein, the French historian Philippe Aries in *The Hour of Our Death* (1981) explains how the notion of death has undergone a transformation since late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Aries states that during World War II there was a complete biomedicalization of death itself. Within the labyrinth of advanced surgical and biotechnological equipment, competent medical practitioners, and pharmaceutical laboratories death as a phenomenon has been reconfigured. Advancement in medical technologies has made it possible to resuscitate a patient’s body which suffers a complete loss of cortical activities. In the era of biotechnology, death is no longer considered as a purely organic phenomenon. Death in the era of biomedicine has become technocratic. It is regulated by the medical machines like ventilator to which the patient is kept connected. Aries describes the complexities thus:

The time of death has been both lengthened and subdivided...the old signs, such as cessation of heart beat or respiration are no longer sufficient. They have been replaced by the measurement of cerebral activity, the electroencephalogram. The time of death can be lengthened to suit the doctors. The doctors cannot eliminate death, but he can control its duration from a few hours it was, to several days, weeks, and months, or even years. It has become possible to delay the fatal moment.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Willard Gaylin, “Harvesting the Dead: The Potential for Recycling Human Bodies,” *Harper’s Magazine* (1974): 23, accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016, <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/burt/shelfhelp/harvestingthedeath.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Aries Phillippe, *The Hour of Death*. Trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Vintage Books, 1981) 1451-1452.

Fictional characters like Nancy and Elle as dramatized in Cook and Sibley's novels are not somatically or corporeally dead. Hence, their liminal status evokes anxiety and ambivalence among the bioethicists, lawmakers and layman who are not able to define the moral status of the individuals classified as living cadavers. Both Nancy and Elle continue to live on ventilator for months and the vital organs of their bodies continue to function normatively. The patients' bodies undergo all the biological changes that we associate with a living being. The liminal existence of brain-dead patients who are metaphorically considered as inanimate matter in spite of the fact that their bodies' exhibit signs of life trigger ontological and existential questions such as- Is the brain-dead patient really dead? What are the moral status and agentic activity of a liminal being like a brain-dead patient who is medico-legally classified as a disposal entity?



### 2.3 Brain-Dead Patients as Disposable Entities

In “Mind and Body as Metaphors” (1988) Laurence Kirmayer discusses how modern Western biomedicine continues to express the dualistic values of Western metaphysics through its metaphorical understanding of the body as a biochemical machine. Extending that argument, Kirmayer examines how, “Western medicine serves as a powerful reinforce of duality”.<sup>26</sup> Kirmayer further argues that the epistemic structure of biomedicine is shaped by the Cartesian mind-body dualism that has historically informed the narratives of Enlightenment and Imperialism. In this context, one may refer to Michel Foucault’s *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963) that discusses how developments of sophisticated biomedical technologies have led to the cognizance of the body as a matter that is conceived to be a separate entity distinct from the conscious mind. Foucault introduces the concept of *medical gaze* in order to throw light on how technocratic biomedicine has created a split between the patients’ mind and body.<sup>27</sup>

The neuroscientist Antonio R. Damasio argues that although research in neurobiology has proved that mind and brain are inseparable, the acceptance of the mind and brain as an inseparable phenomenon has not entirely done away with the dualistic understanding of the human self in popular imagination as well as in common medical discourse.<sup>28</sup> Damasio examines how the modern medical practices have invented a split between the brain and the body. He further states, “now the split separates the brain and the body proper and the explanation of how mind and the brain are related becomes more difficult when brain as a part of the body is divorced from the body proper”.<sup>29</sup> The mind-body dualism does not allow us to conceive the relevance of the body in the construction of the human subjectivity. In this context, one may draw on Damasio’s “How the Brain Creates the Mind” (2002) where he argues that the continuation of the separation of the mind and the body is related to our limited understanding of the neurobiological patterns of the human body. There is discrimination between the “good understanding of the mind we achieved through the

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<sup>26</sup>Lawrence Kirmayer, “Mind and Body Metaphors: Hidden Values in Biomedicine,” in *Biomedicine Examined*, edited by Margaret Lock and Allan Young (Dordrecht & London: Kluwer Academic Publisher, 1988), 58.

<sup>27</sup>See the chapter “Spaces and Classes” 3-21 in *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan (London & New York: Routledge, 1973) for a better insight on the concept of *medical gaze*.

<sup>28</sup>Antonio R. Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (New York & London: Harcourt Inc, 2003), 183-217.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 190.

centuries of introspection and efforts of the cognitive science versus the incomplete neural specification we have achieved through the efforts of neuroscience”.<sup>30</sup> An analogy can be drawn between Damasio’s analysis of the split between the brain and body that is embedded in the narratives of biomedicine and the dramatization of the mind-body dualism in Cook’s novel *Coma*.

The equivalence of a brain-dead patient with inanimate matter is captured in *Coma* in the conversation between Dr. Mark Bellows and Susan who is agitated to observe how the medical practitioners are dehumanizing Nancy by considering her as an inanimate entity. The narrator depicts Susan’s agitation thus:

Once again, she was faced with the fact that Bellows and probably the entire crew were not thinking of Nancy Greenly as a person. The patient seemed more like the part of a complicated game, like the relationship between the football and the teams at play. The football was important only as an object to advance the position and advantage of one of the teams. Nancy Greenly has become a technical challenge, a game to be played.<sup>31</sup>

Dr. Bellows is portrayed as an embodiment of the Western hegemonic biomedical knowledge who is oblivious to the human non-reified quality of Nancy. He is engrossed in quantifying the amount of intake and the output the body has produced and in managing the fluid balance of the patient so that Nancy’s body continues to perform normatively. Bellows draws Susan’s attention to the immobile state of Nancy and says, “if her squash is gone, I mean wiped out, then we may as well get the kidneys for someone else...Let’s face it; it means the brain is infarcted, dead, and there is no way to bring it back”.<sup>32</sup> As a medical practitioner, he strongly believes that it is a waste of time treating a brain-dead patient but he is not able to turn off the ventilator because the hospital authority has not given the permission, thus capturing the interface of the medical and moral dilemmas in Cook’s novel. The narrator describes the dehumanized state of Nancy by metaphorically denoting her as a football, a passive agencyless instrument of play, one that becomes an object of operation for a team of doctors for achieving their experimental goal.

The administrative staff of the Jefferson institute Michelle reiterates Bellows statement. Michelle explains to Susan that the brain-dead patients, “were people; now they’re

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<sup>30</sup>Antonio R. Damasio, “How the Brain Creates the Mind,” *Scientific American* (2002): 6, accessed on 15 September 2016, <http://people.brandeis.edu/teuber/damasio.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup>Cook, *Coma*, 92.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 56.

brain stem preparations. Modern medicine and medical technology have advanced to the point where these organisms can be kept alive, sometimes indefinitely”.<sup>33</sup> Michelle states to Susan that the brain-dead patients that are monitored in the institute are not known by their names rather they are codified so that they can be constantly regulated and monitored by the computers to which they are connected. The Jefferson Institute in Cook’s novel is described as having been constructed with the support of the department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the year 1974, thus dramatizing the state apparatus investing in biomedicine. More significantly, it may be considered as a *bioemporium* in which the living cadavers or the neomorts are harvested so that they can be used for organ procurement for a capitalist clientele.<sup>34</sup>The fictional representation of the “vast hanger of the brain-dead patients who are kept in a state of literary suspended animation” throws light on the reified status of the brain-dead patients who are considered to be outside the legal framework of personhood.<sup>35</sup> Michael Potts and A. Byrne argue that the acceptance of brain death as a criterion for medico-legally declaring a patient as dead has excluded a section of non-sentient beings from the domain of human moral community thereby raising ethical questions about the social worth of the brain-dead patients. The question of agency is accentuated here and brain-dead beings are further commodified biomedically as potential organ donors and subsequently converted into human organic trash, thus highlighting the biocapitalist quality of modern medical industry that increasingly appropriates a supply-demand discourse, converting patients into buyers, clients, and consumers.<sup>36</sup>

In *An Ontology of Trash* (2007) Greg Kennedy states that in the “throwaway society” disposability is not merely a feature of the commercial goods but has become a way of life.<sup>37</sup> Kennedy argues that disposable entities are “apriori trash”.<sup>38</sup> All entities that are classified as disposable are subsequently converted into trash and the dispensable status of the brain-dead

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 289.

<sup>34</sup>Williard Gaylin in “Harvesting the Dead” metaphorically uses the term bioemporium in order to throw light on the working mechanism of the hospitals or the wards where the living cadavers are kept on ventilators. See Gaylin’s article for a better explanation of the concept of bioemporium. Roger Luckhurst in “Biomedical Horror” states that Cook’s *Coma* corroborates with Gaylin’s vision of a dystopian society where living cadavers are anticipated to be exploited for organ harvestation.

<sup>35</sup>Roger Luckhurst, “Biomedical Horror”, 92.

<sup>36</sup>This politics of production and consumerist satisfaction is rendered into a dystopian drama in Kishwar Desai’s 2012 novel *Origins of Love* which is examined in the final chapter of the thesis.

<sup>37</sup>Kennedy, *An Ontology of Trash*, 142.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

patients foregrounds how in the current consumerist capitalist society the concept of trash is amply applied to a section of humans who are not conceived as persons. An analogy may be drawn between the reified and the disposable status of the brain-dead patients who are not acknowledged as persons in Cook's *Coma* and Lesley Sharp's study of the brain-dead patients. In *Bodies, Commodities, and Biotechnologies* (2007) Sharp argues that the horror of brain death is "that it robs us of our free will or agency and it dehumanizes us by rapidly transforming us into cyborg creatures or bodies devoid of personhood that are nevertheless dependent on machines for survival".<sup>39</sup> Like Damasio, Sharp argues that the new ontology of death reaffirms the Cartesian notion that the essence of humanness is restricted to the conscious mind while the body is conceptualized as an inanimate matter. She further argues that the brain-dead patient who is kept on ventilator is considered as a "human shell, a body that functions physiologically but no longer thinks or senses the surrounding world."<sup>40</sup>

In a similar vein, the medical anthropologist Linda F. Hogle in an article entitled "Tales from the Cryptic: Technology Meets Organism in the Living Cadaver" (1999) throws light on how the living cadavers are systematically depersonalized through the biotechnological apparatuses that enable the normative functioning of the vital organs of their bodies. Hogle argues that amidst the biotechnological apparatuses the individuality and the agency of the brain-dead patients are consumed and compromised. The process of enhancing the vitality of the donor's organ has led to the creation of *donor cyborg* which strips the patients of their agency, identity and individuality.<sup>41</sup> The new ontology of death promotes the notion of the body as an assembled apparatus capable of being mutated and manipulated mechanically. This notion of the body as a soulless mortal machine is dramatized and critiqued in Alexander Baliaev's science fiction *Professor Dowell's Head* (1925).

Baliaev's *Professor Dowell's Head* interrogates the notion of human consciousness as a disembodied phenomenon by drawing the reader's attention to the problematic existence of the protagonist Professor Dowell.<sup>42</sup> The novel may be considered as a critique of Rene

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<sup>39</sup>Lesley A. Sharp, *Bodies, Commodities, and Biotechnologies: Death, Mourning, and Scientific Desires in the Realm of Human Organ Transplantation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 10.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>41</sup>Linda F. Hogle, "Tales from the Cryptic: Technology Meets Organism in the Living Cadaver," in *The Cyborg Handbook* (New York & London: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>42</sup>An analogy may be made between the posthumous disembodied existence of Professor Dowell in Baliaev's novel and the thought experiment known as *brain in a vat* discussed by philosophers like Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi in their book *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science* (London & New York: Routledge, 2008). The *brain in a vat* experiment outlines the scenario in which a

Descartes' (1596-1650) philosophical proposition *I think therefore I am* explained in *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (1637) and offers a fictional dramatization of the ontology of embodied self. Throughout his life, the professor in Baliaev's novel believed that he is a thinking mind and never paid attention to his body but his posthumous existence sensitizes him to the fact that it is the interface between the mind and the body or a distributed embodiment that makes a being fully human. In a moving section of the novel, when research assistant Marie Laurent states that it is a punishable offence to end a person's life who is conscious, The Professor bitterly enquires, "Am I still a person?"<sup>43</sup> In the same tone the professor quotes Descartes' philosophical proposition *I think therefore I am* and shares his present existential anxieties with Laurent by throwing light on how his disembodied existence has deprived him of the multitude of embodied sensation that are enjoyed by normal humans.<sup>44</sup> The dramatization of the disembodied existence of Professor Dowell problematizes our shared notion of personhood that is equated with the conscious mind.

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brain is kept floating in a vat of chemical and is kept alive by artificial nourishment that is transmitted through an array of machines that are hooked to the brain. The sensory input from the external world is transmitted to the brain via electrodes. The thought experiment triggers questions such as: Do we really need our body to engage in cognitive activities? The thought experiment is considered to be the modern version of Rene Descartes' philosophical proposition *I think therefore I am* but Gallagher and Zahavi have drawn on the thought experiment in order to discuss human consciousness as an embodied and extended phenomenon.

<sup>43</sup>Alexander Baliaev's *Professor Dowell's Head*. Trans. Antonina W. Bouis (London: Collier Macmillan Publisher, 1980), 50.

<sup>44</sup>Cogito ergo sum is a Latin proposition that is translated into English as *I think therefore I am*. Rene Descartes argues that the very act of doubting one's existence serves as an indication of the presence of the mind whereas the body is merely conceived as an appendage to the thinking mind. See part four of *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, Trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988) 18-22 for a better explanation of the proposition. In contrast to Descartes' argument, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) offers a monistic explanation of the human subjectivity. Spinoza's monism is revisited and corroborated by the neuroscientist Antonio R. Damasio as explained in his books like *Descartes's Error* (1994) and *Looking for Spinoza* (2003).

## 2.4 Deterritorialized and Entangled Subjectivity

The concept of personhood has been of central importance in the history of moral philosophy and rationality as well as in current studies in embodiment and cognition. The term person is entwined with the cognitive and metacognitive abilities like self-reflexivity that enables individuals to act rationally and to be morally responsible for their actions. The British Empiricist John Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) stated that “a person constitutes a thinking, intelligent being that has a reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places [sic]”.<sup>45</sup> More recently, the psychologist Daniel C. Dennett in his 1976 article entitled “Conditions of Personhood” draws on John Locke’s concept of personhood in order to offer six themes on the basis of which the concept of personhood is analyzed. He states that an individual who: (a) is conscious (b) has the ability to act rationally (c) is capable of communicating verbally (d) has the ability to reciprocate to other’s thoughts and feelings (e) is self-reflexive of his/her existence and (f) is acknowledged as a member of its community is considered as a person.<sup>46</sup>

The American philosopher Tom L. Beauchamp states that although consciousness is being considered as the criterion for being recognized as a person who can enjoy moral rights, the criterion has failed to address the issues of humans like the brain-dead patients who are not incorporated within the normative frame work of moral personhood.<sup>47</sup> Beauchamp argues that we are obliged to accord some rights and moral protection to the brain-dead patients because like any living organism, they too feel pleasure, pain and undergo suffering. Beauchamp further states, “some creatures have moral standing even though they do not possess even a single cognitive or moral capacity”.<sup>48</sup> In a similar vein, Margrit Shildrick argues that in the current culture of biotechnology there is an urgent need to revise the theoretical approaches of biomedicine by drawing on philosophical traditions like phenomenology, feminism, and post-structuralism that critique and question the ontology of

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<sup>45</sup>John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: New American Library, 1964), 211. See also Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) where he defines person as a being who possesses psychological attributes like memory, self-consciousness, intelligence, and rationality and has the self-legislative capacity for moral action.

<sup>46</sup>Cited in Oskenberg Rorty, 175-196.

<sup>47</sup>Tom L. Beauchamp, “The Failure of Theories of Personhood,” *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 9.4 (1999), accessed on 3 November 2017. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/18629>.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

“the autonomous, invulnerable, and sovereign subject” upheld by traditional bioethicists.<sup>49</sup> In an essay entitled “Some Reflections on the Socio-Cultural and Bioscientific Limits of Bodily Integrity” (2010) Shildrick argues that the notion of the human with a unified and unchanging body is being problematized by the current biomedical practices that have foregrounded the plasticity and intercorporeality of human bodies.<sup>50</sup>

In *Transpositions* (2006), the posthumanist critical theorist Rosi Braidotti critiques the liberal humanist notion of personhood and throws light on the paradoxical situation of the human beings in the age of human genetic engineering. She examines how, on the one hand, we have embraced the evolving biotechnological innovation that has reconfigured our ontological understanding of humanness and on the other hand, we are attempting to offer a metaphysical explanation of being a human by relying on the classical humanist notions of agency and autonomy that are embedded in an “immutable and unmovable” concept of human nature.<sup>51</sup> Braidotti argues:

The much-celebrated phenomenon of globalization and its technologies accomplishes a magical trick. It combines the euphoric celebration of new technologies, new economy, new lifestyle, new generation of both human and technological gadgets, new wars and new weapons with complete social rejections of change and transformation. In a totally schizophrenic double pull the consumerist and socially enhanced faith in the new is supposed not only to fit in with but also actively to induce the rejection of in-depth changes. The potentially innovative, deterritorializing impact of new technologies is hampered and turned down by the reassertion of the gravitational pull of old and established values.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to the unified notion that is upheld by the classical humanist, Braidotti offers a non-unitary notion of subjectivity.<sup>53</sup> In this context, one can also refer to Braidotti’s *nomadic*

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<sup>49</sup>Margrit Shildrick, “The Critical Turn in Feminist Bioethics”, 32. See also Drew Leder’s *The Body in Biomedicine: Thought and Practices* (Dordrecht: Springer, Science + Business Media, 1992). In his book, Leder urges to draw on twentieth century philosophical traditions like phenomenology, feminism, and post-structuralism in order to examine, critique and restructure the metaphysical underpinning of modern biomedicine that conceives body as an inanimate matter. Leder further argues that emphasis should be laid on the embodied, existential and emotional self of the individuals for the purpose of developing an alternative philosophical framework that will enable us to challenge the Cartesian model of the human body which is embedded with Eurocentric phallogocentrism.

<sup>50</sup>Margrit Shildrick, “Some Reflections on the Socio-Cultural and Bioscientific Limits of Bodily integrity,” *Body and Society* 16.3 (2010): 11-22.

<sup>51</sup>Braidotti, *Transposition: On Nomadic Ethics* (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2006) 2.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>See also Lisa Blackman’s *The Body: Key Concepts* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2008). In the book Blackman argues that in the current culture of biotechnology we are confronting new concepts of embodiments that are

*theory* that discusses human subjectivity as a diffractive and distributive phenomenon.<sup>54</sup> Braidotti argues that the technologically mediated forms of human subjectivity can offer an alternative notion of human subjectivity that critiques the liberal humanist notion of human subject that we associated with rationality and consciousness. She states that we need to de-center our normative understanding of agency and autonomy. In an era of biotechnology, Braidotti argues in favor of a “nomadic and post-humanistic vision of the subject” that can offer us an alternative framework for understanding the existential status of the biomedical beings like brain-dead patients.<sup>55</sup> She further argues that the notion of self is an “open-ended interrelationship, multi-sexed, and transspecies flow of becoming by interaction with multiple others. A subject thus constituted, explodes the boundaries at the skin level” [sic].<sup>56</sup>

Plugged into an array of sophisticated machines like X-rays, sonograph, and cardiac monitor the body of the brain-dead patient emerges as a complex entanglement of biological function and technocratic biomedicine, an entanglement that problematizes the notion of human subjectivity notionally associated with a rational, autonomous human being with a discrete biological embodiment which is considered to be the sole and original ontology of agentic humanness. The brain-dead patients’ bodily boundary is reconfigured, extended, and augmented by the machines that convert them into coded devices which can be regulated as well as terminated by flipping off the ventilator to which they are connected. The biological apparatuses connected to the body of the brain-dead patients simulate their bodies’ biomechanism thereby converting the human-machine entanglement into a prosthetic extension of their self. The situation is represented in Cook’s *Coma* thus:

The tube was connected to a large square machine next to the bed that hissed to and fro, breathing for the patient [...] An I.V. line ran into the left arm. An I.V. line ran into the right side of her neck. Heightening the somber effect, a small spotlight directed its concentrated beam down from the ceiling above the patient, splashing over the head and upper body. The rest of the corner was lost in the shadow. There

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unsettling our notions “singular, bounded, carbon-based body” (3). She draws on Anne Mol’s concepts of *body multiple* explained in the book entitled *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice* (2002) in order to discuss how the concept of the human self-bounded by the skin is deconstructed by the biomedical practices. Blackman argues that our biological embodiment should not be conceived as a kind of container that embodies the “self but rather our bodies always extend and connect with other bodies, human, and non-human, to practices, techniques, technologies and objects which produce different kinds of bodies and different ways, arguably of enacting what it means to be human” (1).

<sup>54</sup>Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 114.

<sup>55</sup>Braidotti, *Transposition*, 11.

<sup>56</sup>Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 221-222.

was no motion, no sign of life save for the rhythmical hiss of the breathing machine. A plastic line curled down from under the patient and was connected to a calibrated urine container [sic].<sup>57</sup>

It may be argued that the blurring of the border lines between man and machine as dramatized in Cook's *Coma* triggers the image of a deterritorialized and entangled form of subjectivity that is produced through biotechnological intervention. Drawing on N. Katherine Hayles, it may be argued that the patient sustained on ventilator emerges as a posthuman subject who defies the "essential difference or absolute demarcation between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism."<sup>58</sup> Posthuman subjectivity critiques the notion of an independent and autonomous being with clear-cut biological boundaries where the difference between organic and inorganic orders are clearly mapped out. Instead, it defines human as a heterogeneous subject whose definition of selfhood is always in a state of flux. In a posthuman situation, human subjectivity evolves as a result of a complex entanglement, emerging out of asymmetric and intersubjective interactions with other organic and inorganic actants with whom we share the biosphere. Ciara Kierans states that biomedical technologies like "sensory technologies, implantable devices alongside technologically aided ways of seeing, screening, and scanning" have reconfigured human bodily boundaries thereby producing entangled and embodied forms of human subjectivity.<sup>59</sup>

Cook's *Coma* offers interesting fictional representations of the technologically mediated forms of communication in the context of the patients who are diagnosed as brain dead. The dynamic man-machine relationship as dramatized in the novel problematizes the normative notion of brain-dead patient as an uncommunicative and non-agentic self. *Coma* foregrounds how the alliance between the man and the machine enhances the ability of the unconscious patients to communicate about their biological status. In Cook's novel, the first instance of how a patient in the state of unconsciousness communicates through machine is portrayed in the scene where Nancy Greenly is anesthetized for surgery. The narrator discusses how the machines become a potent medium for Nancy to communicate about her biological status thereby guiding the doctors to continue her treatment in the state of

<sup>57</sup>Cook, *Coma*, 51.

<sup>58</sup>N. Katherine Hayles, *How we Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999) 3.

<sup>59</sup>Ciara Kierans, "Transplantation, Organ Donation, and (In) human Experiences: Rewriting Boundaries through Embodied Perspective on Kidney Failure," in *Culture, Bodies, and Sociology of Health* (New York & London: Routledge, 2010), 31.

unconsciousness. During the surgery, Dr. Robert Billing notices change in the rhythmical beep of the cardiac monitor and immediately instructs the team to stop the surgery. Dr. Billing's puzzled state is articulated thus:

As Dr. Major passed the second curette, Dr. Billing noted a slight change in the rhythm of the cardiac monitor. He watched the electronic blip trace across the oscilloscope screen. The pulse fell to about sixty. Instinctively he inflated the blood pressure cuff and listened intently for the familiar far-away deep sound of the blood surging through the collapsed artery...This was not terribly low but it puzzled his analytical brain. Could Nancy be getting some vagal feedback from her uterus, He wondered?<sup>60</sup>

Dawn Goodwin argues that a patient plugged into an array of machines can offer interesting examples of how a body communicates in a state of unconsciousness and shapes agency without active intentionality, thus problematizing as well as differentiating the ontological situatedness of those states. Goodwin argues that “the technologically augmented body engenders different forms of expression that in ways compensate for the loss of language”.<sup>61</sup> The unconscious body hooked to biotechnological apparatuses develops technologically mediated forms of communication. Goodwin argues that the unconscious patient is not a passive body rather the technologically mediated body of the patient contributes in shaping the diagnosis and the administration of medicine by the doctors. The brain-dead patient Nancy is not a passive receiver of the medication that is administered in order to sustain her body. Nancy continues to inform the doctors about her body's biomechanism through the biotechnological apparatuses that are connected to her body. In one of the scenes in the novel, when Nancy's body started collapsing because of the depletion of potassium level, it is immediately decoded and reflected on the screen of the cardiac monitor. The laboratory experts instantly analyze the fibrillated status of Nancy and offer a diagrammatic representation of the electrolyte value to Dr. Bellows. Based on the reports and the machinic feedback, Dr. Bellows instructs the team of doctors to inject the right amount of potassium to which Nancy responds immediately.

The scene throws light on how a dialogic relationship is established between the patient's body and the machines that enhance the unconscious body's ability to convey its needs and to shape the course of the treatment by informing the doctors' interpretation of their physiological status. More significantly, the scene dramatizes how intersubjectivity and

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<sup>60</sup>Cook's, *Coma*, 16.

<sup>61</sup> Dawn Goodwin, “Refashioning Bodies, Reshaping Agency,” *Science Technology, and Human Values* 33.3 (2008), 348.

agentic intercorporeality are not necessarily always organic phenomenon but can be mediated, co-produced, and shared by inorganic actants, thus showcasing the human-machine embodiment as a symbiotic situation. David Albert Jones argues that the dominant understanding of personhood in Western biomedicine is influenced by John Locke's notion of a person as a construct of reason and visibly embodied agency and this Lockean notion of personhood has been epistemically extended in order to shape the shared understanding of the brain-dead phenomenon. Jones critiques the neo-Lockean notion of personhood that does not acknowledge a brain-dead patient as an agentic self. The man-machine entanglement as dramatized in Cook's *Coma* offers us scope to reconsider our shared understanding of agency. The reconfiguration of the bodily boundaries and the redistribution of the physical functions with the machines to which the body is programmed offer the unconscious patient an alternative route for expression. The monitoring devices that interpret and replicate the biochemical changes of the body in the forms of diagrams, traces, and measurements offer the body a digitalized medium of communication.

The man-machine entanglement as dramatized in Cook's *Coma* throws light on the diffractive notion of agency discussed by Donna Haraway in her article entitled "The Promise of Monsters" (1992).<sup>62</sup> Haraway argues that in the current culture of biotechnology the reconfiguration of the relationship between man, machine, and animal has offered scope to revise the notion of agency that we normatively associate with conscious humans. Haraway states that agency is not a property possessed only by humans. Agency indicates the ability to enact emotions and will directed towards change, preservation, or both. In a similar vein, Karen Barad explains the distributive nature of agency thus:

Agency for me is not something that someone or something has to varying degree; since I am trying to displace the very notion of independently existing individuals. This is not, however to deny agency in its importance but on the contrary to rework the notion of agency in way that are appropriated to relational ontologies. Agency is not held, it is not a property of persons or things, rather agency is enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Donna Haraway, "The Promise of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," in *Cultural Studies*, edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Casey Nelson, Paula A. Trenchlers, 295-337 (New York: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>63</sup>Karen Barad, "Matter Feels, Converses, Suffers, Desires, Yearns, and Remembers: Interview with Karen Barad," in *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies*, edited by Rick Dolphijn and Iris Van der Tuin. (Open Humanities Press: 2012), 54. [http://openhumanitiespress.org/books/download/Dolphijn-van-der-Tuin\\_2013\\_New-Materialism.pdf](http://openhumanitiespress.org/books/download/Dolphijn-van-der-Tuin_2013_New-Materialism.pdf).

Barad argues that agency is associated with the notion of *response-ability*<sup>64</sup> and in the context of brain-dead patients, agency is mutually shared between the patient and the machine through a complex entanglement of crisis and liminality. It is the continuous dialogue between the man and the machine that sustains the brain-dead patient on ventilator for an indefinite period through a narrative of responses and representations. In Cook's *Coma*, the liminal beings like brain-dead patients who continue to execute their agency by their reliance on the machines become a potent medium to revise and redefine the notion of agency that is normatively associated with the conscious mind. Drawing on Dawn Goodwin's study it may be argued that brain-dead patients like Nancy and Elle are not inert beings but rather they retain their specificity and individuality in a liminal order of embodiment and agency. The liminality accentuates the distributive modes of cognition as studied by cognition theorist such as Andy Clark<sup>65</sup> and undercuts the assumptions about embodiment being a brain-centric phenomenon. The entangled subjectivity of the brain-dead patients enables us to reconsider the significance of embodiment in the construction of human self and subjectivity. Cook's *Coma* throws light on how the body of the cadaveric organ donor sustained on ventilator problematizes the notion of human subjectivity that we notionally associate with a unified understanding of biological embodiment. Instead, the man-machine entanglement foregrounds a hybridized notion of human subjectivity that can be further explored through a close reading of Jodi Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel*.

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>See Andy Clark, *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

## 2.5 Embodied and Hybridized Subjectivity

Jodi Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel* (2007) offers fictional representations of the estrangement and existential crisis of life-narrative experienced by an organ recipient post-transplantation surgery. The novel dramatizes how the intercorporeal relationship between the organ donor and recipient problematizes our ontological understanding of the self and the other. The fictional narration of the emotional and existential anxieties of the organ recipients and their kin prior and post-transplantation surgery captures the epistemic gap between the biomedical explanation of the body as a machine and the phenomenal experiences of the recipients. *Change of Heart: A Novel* depicts the anxieties and dilemma of June Nealon and her daughter Claire who is waiting for a heart transplantation surgery. After years of waiting for a heart donor for Claire, the only suitable match for her daughter is obtained from the death row inmate Shay Bourne who is convicted of being the murderer of June's husband Kurt Nealon and her elder daughter Elizabeth. June is depicted as an apprehensive mother who is not able to decide whether to accept the only option she has to save her fatally ill child or to refuse it. June expresses her moral ambivalence thus:

Shay Bourne wanted to donate his heart to Claire so that she'd live. What kind of mother I would be if I let that happen? And what kind of mother I would be if I turned him down? [...] If I didn't take Bourne's heart, Claire would most likely die. If I did, it would be like saying I could somehow be compensated for the death of my husband and daughter. And I couldn't- not ever.<sup>66</sup>

The biomedical explanation offered by Claire's doctor Dr. Wu who says, "it's just a muscle, June. Nothing more, and nothing less. What makes a heart worthy of transplant has nothing to do with the donor's personality",<sup>67</sup> does not reduce Claire's increasing anxiety about the effects of accepting a heart from a person who is convicted of being a murderer. The novel thus triggers the moral and medical ambivalence about whether the self is distinct from the sum of the muscles and tissues or whether the biological materiality of the body is an essential, albeit synecdochic, carrier of self. The ambivalence is dramatized in Claire in Picoult's novel as she is not able to disregard the medical reports of the organ recipients whose personality traits are reported as being morphed with the donor's personality. In one of the passages in the novel, the conversation between June and her daughter foregrounds how

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<sup>66</sup>Picoult, *Change of Heart: A Novel*, 158.

<sup>67</sup>Picoult, *Change of Heart: A Novel*, 210.

the elimination of the donor-recipient's sex matching as one of the criteria for identifying suitable heart donor makes Claire anxious. In a state of anxiety, she inquires whether the new heart that will be implanted in her will lead to a change in her subjectivity. Claire asks:

What do you think she's like?

I blinked startled. Who?

The girl. The one who died

Claire, I said. Let's not talk about this.

Why not? Don't you think we should know all about her if she's going to be a part of me?

...

'Of course, it's a girl,' Claire said, 'It would be totally gross to have a boy's heart.'

I don't think that's a qualification for match

She shuddered. It should be. Claire struggled to push herself upright so that she was sitting higher in the hospital bed. 'Do you think I'll be different?'<sup>68</sup>

In an article entitled "The Other Kidney: Biopolitics Beyond Recognition" (2001) Lawrence Cohen observes that the demystification of the immunological mechanism of the human body has reconfigured the binaristic understanding of the self and other by dissolving the apparent solidity of the biological configuration of the individual body and his/her family lineage.<sup>69</sup> Cohen states that organ transplantation has reached an immunosuppression era where development in immunosuppressant drug cyclosporine has made it possible to create a group of possible organ donors by effacing the distinction related to race, class, age, and sex. In Picoult's *Change of Heart*, Claire's abhorrence about the notion of implanting a heart from a man and the anxiety of receiving it from a person who is convicted of being the murderer of her father and elder sister throw light on the fact that the biomedical explanation of the human biomechanism has not diminished the existential emotional anxiety of the recipient about the donor's identity. Like her mother Claire is not able to detach the donor's identity from the organ that is conceived as a reified entity by biomedical and pharmaceutical industries. Anxiety about the donor's personality as narrated by Claire resonates with Margaret Lock's study of the organ transplantation cases which

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>69</sup>See also Sara Wasson's article "Recalcitrant tissue: Cadaveric Organ Transplant and the Struggle for Narrative Control," in *Technologies of Gothic Literature and Culture*, 99- 112. Edited by Justin D. Edward (New York and London: Routledge, 2015). Like Cohen, Wasson also argues that human organ transfer has reconfigured our shared notions of community and kinship.

throws light on how the gender, ethnicity, race, personality and social status of the organ donors become the cause of anxieties among the recipients.<sup>70</sup>

Unlike the heart recipient Paul River (played by Sean Penn) in Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's film *21 Grams* (2003) who develops a *biosentimental* relationship<sup>71</sup> with the widowed Christina Peck (played by Naomi Watts) whose husband's heart he has received,<sup>72</sup> Claire Nealon in *Change of Heart: A Novel* is apprehensive about meeting Shay Bourne's sister post-heart-transplant surgery. In *Strange Harvest* Lesley Sharp coined the term *biosentimentality* to examine the emotional connectedness and intercorporeal kinship developed between the recipients and the donor's family during the process of transplantation. Examining how the phenomena and phenomenal experience of organ-transplantation cross mere medical boundaries, Sharp describes the same as a "socio-medical process".<sup>73</sup> She states that the ethnographic study of the organ recipients has thrown light on the fact that in a few transplantations cases the donor's body is reanimated in minds of recipients. Many recipients acknowledge the fact that their life is dependent on the working of the organ derived from the donor. Sharp says, "in these cases, both the dead donor and once ailing recipient are rejuvenated through the melding of their bodies"<sup>74</sup> However, in *Change of Heart: A Novel* the received heart triggers a complex entanglement of anxiety and indebtedness in Claire that leads to a crisis in life narrative.

An analogy may be drawn between Sara Wasson's study of the fictional narrative of the phenomenal experiences of the organ recipients and Claire Nealon's ontological and existential experiences post-heart-transplant surgery in Picoult's novel. Wasson argues that although in a few organ transplant cases organ recipients experience a profound bond with the donor's family, an examination of the life narrative of the recipients has foregrounded the fact that in the context of cadaveric organ donation the recipients might develop an

<sup>70</sup>See Margaret Lock's *Twice Dead: Organ Transplantation and Reinvention of Death* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>71</sup>See, Sharp's *Strange Harvest*, 193.

<sup>72</sup>The film *21 Grams* (2003) depicts the life of Paul River a mathematician whose life dramatically changes post-heart-transplant. After Paul is discharged from the hospital he becomes inquisitive about the received organ. He takes help of a detective to know about the donor's family who informs him about the widowed Christina Peck whose husband's heart Paul has received. The received heart sensitizes Paul about the emotional connectedness he shares with Christina Peck and eventually he reveals to her how they are related to each other through a complex kinship network generated by modern biotechnology, dramatizing the blurred borderlines between matter and metaphor in the ontological understanding of human heart.

<sup>73</sup>Sharp, *Strange Harvest*, 4.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 24.

ambiguous relationship with the received tissue. Biotechnological intervention has enabled us to expand the life span of the organ recipient but it has also led to the reconfiguration of a new notion of self that is enmeshed with the donor's subjectivity. Sara Wasson draws on the fictional narratives of the *lived bodily*<sup>75</sup> experiences of the organ recipients and explains how, "tissue transferred can feel to be soaked in story, in a script, as much as in blood"<sup>76</sup>, thus highlighting the relationship between biological materiality and existential intersubjectivity, between embodiment as purely neural event and embodiment as phenomenal experiential event. Claire's narrative account of her embodied experience being problematized by the residual presence of the donor's subjectivity may be compared to what is termed biomedically as *Frankenstein Syndrome*. The term was first used in the year 1979 in order to explain the psychological state of organ recipients who narrates about their body being hybridized and reterritorialized by the received organ.<sup>77</sup> As opposed to the biomedical explanation of the "organ as foreign, the recipient identifies deeply on a psychological level with the donor".<sup>78</sup> Lesley Sharp states:

Within the highly medicalized realm of organ transfer, talk of a multiple, disparate, or fragmented self is evidence of pathological thinking that requires therapeutic intervention. Transplant recipient who openly expresses the sense that another person dwells within them may well acquire a medical label that draw on monstrous imagery, such as Frankenstein syndrome.<sup>79</sup>

In *Change of Heart: A Novel*, Claire states that post-transplantation her notion of subjectivity is reconfigured by the residual presence of the donor whose hauntological identity she

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<sup>75</sup>In *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 1962) Maurice Merleau-Ponty introduces the concept of *lived body* in order to explain how the body contributes in the construction of human subjectivity. Merleau-Ponty discusses consciousness as an embodied phenomenon that evolves as a result of the dialogic relationship between mind, body and the world. He emphasizes on the subjective experiences and the corporeal dimension of the human self and defies the notion of human body as a processing machine. Merleau-Ponty argues that it is through our body that we are aware of our self and hence the focus should be laid on the living body. Drawing on the concept of *lived body*, medical anthropologists and sociologists like Lesley A. Sharp and Margaret Lock have recently started studying the *lived bodily* experiences of the organ recipients which defy the dominant biomedical understanding of the body as a machinic entity.

<sup>76</sup>Sara Wasson, "Recalcitrant Tissue", 105.

<sup>77</sup>Lorena Millo, "Considering Counter Narratives: An Exploration of Gothic Representations of Organ Transplantation in Literature". MA diss, University of North Carolina, 2017, 49.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Sharp, *Strange Harvest*, 23.

shares.<sup>80</sup> Claire addresses the heart as an alien that she embodies. She experiences an epistemic crisis as her life narrative is being gradually morphed by the memories and the emotions of the heart donor Shay Bourne. In contrast to the hauntological experientiality of the patients who continue to feel the presence of the phantom limb,<sup>81</sup> the epistemic crisis in the context of the organ recipients evolves as a result of the presence of the donor's selfhood post-transplantation surgery. Claire narrates her anxiety thus:

I have been some one different now for three weeks. It's not something you can tell by looking at me; it's not even something I can tell by looking at myself in the mirror. The only way I can describe it, and it's weird, so get ready, is like wave; they just crash over me and suddenly, even if I'm surrounded by a dozen people, I'm lonely. Even I'm doing everything I want to, I start to cry. My mother says that emotion doesn't get transplanted along with the heart, that I should stop referring to it as his and start calling it mine. But it's pretty hard to do, especially when you add up all the stuff I have to take just to keep my cells from recognizing the intruder in my chest, like that old horror movie with the woman with an alien inside her.<sup>82</sup>

Claire's narrative account of her embodied experiences foregrounds how our shared notion of the autonomous self is problematized in the current culture of organ transplantation. The concept of *Frankenstein syndrome* may be further explored by examining the embodied experientiality of the character Kate in Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper* (2004).

*My Sister's Keeper* reflects on the notion of hybridization of the human subjectivity by foregrounding the post-transplantation experiences of Kate who receives the Kidney of her sister Anna who is medically declared as brain dead after a fatal car injury. Kate reanimates Anna by imagining herself being an extension of her sister's subjectivity. She acknowledges her self being hybridized and says, "I remember how, at first, I thought the

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<sup>80</sup>The concept of hauntology is associated with the notion of non-presence that defies the ontological binary between pure presence and absence. I use this term drawing on Jacques Derrida's notion of hauntology as essayed in *Specters of Marx* (New York & London: Routledge, 1994). In this chapter, the concept of hauntology is adopted and appropriated within a phenomenological framework in order to discuss the existential and emotional anxieties of the organ recipients who share their experience of being haunted by the spectral presence of the donor's subjectivity post-transplant surgery.

<sup>81</sup> The term phantom limb was first coined by Philadelphia physician Silas Weir Mitchell after Civil War. The concept of phantom limb is explained by V.S Ramachandran in *Phantoms in the Brain: Human Nature and the Architecture of Mind* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1998). Ramachandran explains that in a few medical cases amputees feel the "ghostly" presence of the arm or the leg that they have lost in an accident or is removed during a surgery (22). He states that in a few cases patients, "wake up from anesthesia and are incredulous when told that their arm had to be sacrificed, because they still vividly feel its presence ... Moreover, some of these patients experience excruciating pain in the phantom arm, hand, or the finger, so much so that they contemplate suicide" (22).

<sup>82</sup>Picoult, *Change of Heart: A Novel*, 459.

stiches seemed to spell her name. I think about her kidney working inside me and her blood running through my veins. I take her with me wherever I go".<sup>83</sup> The phenomenal experiences of the organ recipients like Claire and Kate throw light on how the change in the physiological structure of the human body reconfigures our understanding of the self. The fictional representation of the problematized and re-territorialized life narratives of the recipients by the received tissue correlates to Antonio Damasio's explanation of how our notion of self is repeatedly reconfigured by our emotional and embodied states.<sup>84</sup>

Damasio explains that the information that is transmitted from the body through the neural pathways play a significant role in forming the concept of self. In contrast to Descartes who states that the self is a disembodied and purely cerebral phenomenon, Damasio argues that any change in the biomechanism of the human body will profoundly affect the central nervous system neurally and chemically that will lead to a change in our notion of subjectivity. Damasio argues that human beings as an integrated and agentic organism is formed as a result of the interaction between the brain and the body through neurochemical pathways.<sup>85</sup> Damasio states that there is no doubt that mind is special because of its immense ability to feel pleasure and pain. Mind has the ability to form language that enables humans to express their thoughts to the world but the mind is embedded in the complex physiological mechanism of the body. So, any attempt to disassociate the two discursively, medically, or philosophically is erroneous. Damasio further argues that mind emanates from the activation of the biological tissues and nerve cells and thus shares the same characteristics that define the other living tissues of the human body. In *Embodiment and Cognitive Science* (2006) Raymond Gibbs draws on Damasio's three layered theory consciousness (proto self, core self, and autobiographical self) in order to critique the notion of human self that is biomedically explained as a monolithic and static phenomenon. Gibbs argues that the complexities of the human biomechanism and bodily experiences contribute to the creation of a distributive notion of human self. A systematic examination of the phenomenological experiences of the organ recipients resonates with Gibbs' argument that our notion of self-identity is intricately related to our body, body-parts and the changes in the same.

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<sup>83</sup>Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper* (United Kingdom: Hodder & Stoughton), 407.

<sup>84</sup>Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon Books, 1994).

<sup>85</sup>Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 183- 220.

An intertextual relationship may be established between Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel* and Claire Sylvia's memoir *A Change of Heart* (1997). In her memoir, Sylvia states that post-transplantation she realizes that it is not merely the new organ she inherits from the donor. The heart embodies the memories, emotions, and characteristics of the person that haunt her in her dream. Sylvia discovers change in her food preferences and life style which compel her to hunt for the anonymous donor whose hauntological identity she shares. This is articulated thus:

All my life I have been told that despite the protests of poets and the murmurings of mystics, the human heart is just a pump. An incredibly important pump, but only a pump, a monotonous, mandatory machine. According to this view, which is accepted one in contemporary Western medicine, the heart contains no feelings and carries no wisdom, no knowledge, and no memories [...] I used to believe these things, but today I know differently.<sup>86</sup>

The psychosomatic confusion experienced by the organ recipient as dramatized in the memoir *Change of Heart* conforms to Paul Pearsall's argument that the notion of human self is a distributive phenomenon that cannot be localized to the brain alone. The problematization of the ontological life narrative of the recipient with the donor's subjectivity correlates to Pearsall's study of the info-energetic nature of the heart and the concept of the cellular memory explained in *The Heart's Code* (1999). The cellular memory is based on the hypothesis that memories can also be stored outside the brain within the cells of the human body. Pearsall states:

All living things are made up of cells. Every cell is literally a mini-heart humming with the energy. The ultimate biological illusion has been the view that the body is made up of solid matter with fluid pumped through it by an unconscious heart and a powerful conscious brain that is the primary controller of the entire system. Energy cardiology suggests that the heart and not just the brain is what holds this system together by a form of info-energy in the temporary and ever-changing set of cellular memories we refer to as self.<sup>87</sup>

Pearsall argues that the concept of the self is a dynamic phenomenon that evolves as a result of the informational energy shared and exchanged by the different systems of the human body. He refers to the scientific studies of Dr. Gray E. Schwartz and Linda Russek that have revealed new possibilities about the way human beings think, feel, and find meaning in life. Their study has shown that heart can think and cells can remember. Memory is thus

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<sup>86</sup>Claire Sylvia & William Novak, *A Change of Heart* (New York: Warner Books, 1997) 6.

<sup>87</sup>Paul Pearsall, *The Heart's Code* (New York: Broadway Book, 1991) 101.

embodied as well as embedded and this embeddedness may thus be extended through the process of transplantation. Pearsall opines that because of our evolved dependence on the brain as the store house of our experiences we are seldom able to realize that heart is an informational and energetic cornerstone that integrates the brain with the body. Pearsall argues that if we are able to step out of the dualistic understanding of the human body and acknowledge the concept of the cells containing info-energetic memory in distributive networks then we will be able to understand the embodied experiences of the organ recipients who tell stories about their morphed intercorporeal memories. Such stories will offer fresh light on the relationship between intercorporeality, intersubjectivity, and renewed understanding of human identities.

Similar to the character Claire in Picoult's *Change of Heart: A Novel*, Casey Schilling in Dean Mayes' *The Recipient* (2016) narrates about her morphed intercorporeal subjectivity. The novel dramatizes the experience of an optimistic and confident woman Casey Schilling who turns agoraphobic post-heart-transplant surgery. Post-transplantation Casey is haunted by nightmares that unsettle her notion of an autonomous and integrated self. Casey narrates about her psychosomatic confusion to her psychiatrist thus:

It's not me [...] Casey began to shake. "It's as though I'm there and experiencing it. But at the same time, I'm watching as though it's not me [...] There's someone else. A third person. I'm watching someone else being attacked. I don't know who it is. Every time I get close seeing it, I wake up."<sup>88</sup>

Casey's nightmares sensitize her to the fact that it is not merely an organ she inherits from her donor. The received heart embodies the spectral presence of the donor's identity that has profoundly affected her autobiographical self. The corporeal relatedness experienced by the organ recipients like Claire and Casey throws light on how the received heart triggers embodied-relatedness between the donor and the recipient. In an essay titled "The Critical Turn in Feminist Bioethicists" (2008) Margrit Shildrick defines embodied-relatedness as a process of acknowledging the significance of corporeal relatedness with other individuals that informs and reconfigures our notion of human subjectivity. In *Change of Heart: A Novel* the received heart may be interpreted as a symbolic extension of the organ recipient's identity. The literal blurring of the self and the other as dramatized in Picoult's novel may be

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<sup>88</sup>Dean Mayes, *The Recipient* (Canada: Central Avenue Publishing, 2016) 131.

described as “biotechnologically-mediated intercorporeality” by Catherine Waldby in “Biomedicine, Tissue Transfer, and Intercorporeality” (2002).<sup>89</sup>

The concept of intercorporeality is explained by feminist theorist Gail Weiss in *Body Images: Embodiment and Intercorporeality* (1999) and the term is appropriated by Waldby in order to explain how the exchange of biomatter between the anonymous donor and the recipients throws light on the denaturalization of the boundary between the self and the other. In the current culture of organ transplantation, the process of organ donation involves a complex order of intercorporeality that produces identification and dis-identification among the donors and the recipients. Waldby says, “to receive and incorporate another’s organs and tissues involve a complex modification of the recipients embodied identity as the habitual equation between the limits of the body and the contours of I is shown into question”.<sup>90</sup> The notion of intercorporeality explains the process of donation and incorporation of biomaterial among the biomedicalized subjects that throws light on the way we all are indebted and mutually associated with each other. Sharing of biomatter among individuals dramatizes intercorporeality as a phenomenon that often extends to an intersubjective experience.

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<sup>89</sup>Catherine Waldby, “Biomedicine, Tissue Transfer, and Intercorporeality,” *Feminist Theory* 3.3 (2002), 251. See also Lesley Sharp’s *Strange Harvest*. In the book Sharp states that the embodied intimacy experienced by the recipients unsettle the binary between the self and the other. “Organ transfer’s uniqueness lies in the ability to transcend normative (or natural) forms of human coupling where the notion of sameness is at once about shared human fragments and about the sentimental kinship structure” (193).

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter concludes by stating that works of fiction like *Coma*, *The Promise of Stardust*, and *Change of Heart: A Novel* can serve as potent vehicles to speculate on the philosophical underpinnings of the medico-legal amendments that have shaped the biomedical understanding of the human self and body. The fictional narratives of Cook, Sibley, and Picoult enable us to rethink about the notions of embodiment, selfhood, consciousness, and agency as distributive phenomena with ambivalent attributes. The corporeal relatedness between the donor and the recipient as portrayed in the *Change of Heart: A Novel* offers us scope to reconceptualize the significance of body in the construction of human subjectivity. The entangled and embodied subjectivity of the brain-dead patients and the organ recipients enable us to reflect on the fact that human subjectivity is a distributive phenomenon that is configured and reconfigured by our embodied experiences and states of change.

The chapter has discussed the socio-cultural and political status of the brain-dead patients who are not acknowledged as persons. They are classified as reified and disposable commodities who are maintained on ventilator for procuring organs for rich consumer clientele. The following chapter will examine the issues of personhood and biocitizenship by discussing the socio-cultural and political status of the underclass people and the bioengineered beings like clones who are not acknowledged as citizens with political rights and agency. The chapter will examine the concepts of agency, biocitizenship, neoliberal cannibalism and the ontology of human trash through a close reading of Hanif Kureishi's novella "The Body" (2002) and Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005).

## CHAPTER THREE

“We’re modelled from trash”: Biocitizenship, Disposable Bodies and Biomedical Trash in Hanif Kureishi’s “The Body” and Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*

### 3.1 Introduction

In an article entitled “Biological Citizenship” (2003) Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas argue that although our notion of citizenship has long been informed by the knowledge of biology, a new form of citizenship has evolved in the age of biomedicine that they term as biological citizenship.<sup>1</sup> Biological citizenship or biocitizenship may be defined as a form of citizenship that is constituted by narratives of health care, corporeal vulnerability, genetic risk and susceptibility, and the intercorporeal relationship shared and acknowledged by the consumers of biomedicine. Rose and Novas state that in the current culture of biomedicine human beings’ understanding of themselves as individuals and social beings is to a large extent informed by the changing ontology of corporeality and intercorporeal interactions. In examining the epiphenomenon of such intercorporeality with issues such as identity and citizenship, they further state that “the form of citizenship entailed here often involves quite specialized scientific and medical knowledge of one’s own biological condition: we might term it ‘informational bio-citizenship’”.<sup>2</sup>

Rose and Novas argue that the dissemination of biomedical knowledge has empowered the citizens to participate in decision-making process in terms of their health and vitality. However, they state that not all are accorded equal citizenship in the current culture of biotechnology. Knowledge of biology and biomedicine has not merely shaped our understanding of citizenship but has also made distinctions between “actual, potential,

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<sup>1</sup>See also Jessica Mulligan’s “Biological Citizenship”. Mulligan states that biological citizenship may also be termed as medical or therapeutic citizenship. <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766567/obo-9780199766567-0164.xml>, accessed on 27 December 2017.

<sup>2</sup>Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas, “Biological Citizenship,” in *Global Assemblages*, edited by Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 6.

troublesome, and impossible citizenship”.<sup>3</sup> Through its commercial collusion with capitalist biomedicine, biotechnology has amplified the existing inequalities in the social structure by creating a section of empowered and informed citizens who are classified as consumers of biomedical products and a section of non-citizens who are exploited for bioscientific experimentation and organ donation. Unlike Ninni Holmqvist’s dystopian novel *The Unit* (2010) where the ageing population is socially marginalized and is labeled as “dispensable entities” that can be brought, sold, and traded in the market of human organs and tissues,<sup>4</sup> Hanif Kureishi’s novella “The Body” (2002) and Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* (2005) offer fictional representations of the intensification of the societal gap by dramatizing the non-agentic status of the bioengineered lives that are traded and consumed by white wealthy consumers anxious to repair and re-engineer themselves through cosmetically constructed posthuman bodies. The literary texts examined in this chapter engage with the bioethical issues related to ageing, biocitizenship, and organ transplantation by extending the discussion from a human to a dystopian posthuman world where affluent sections of society replenish their aged degenerating organic body by incorporating biomatter from non-citizens and clones. Drawing on Michael Mack it may be argued that in Kureishi and Ishiguro’s literary works “we encounter an economy of hope but it only applies to those who are the recipients of the organ donations rather than those who are excluded from full participation in such a society that focuses on the management of health”.<sup>5</sup> Mack states that the engineered beings who are designed in the laboratories for various therapeutic purposes participate “in rather one-sided way in such economy of hope”<sup>6</sup> because in the current culture of

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ninni Holmqvist’s *The Unit* (New York: Other Press, 2010) Kindle ed., offers a fictional representation of a neoliberal biocapitalist consumer society where men over sixty who have no children to look after and women over fifty who are not able to procreate are classified as dispensable entities and are sent to the Second Reserve Bank Unit for Biological Material where they are used for organ donation and bioscientific experimentation. The novel offers a dystopian image of a society where extreme tissue procurement is being sanctioned by the state. Older citizens who do not comply with the utilitarian ideology of the state are classified as non-citizens and their bodies are conceived as reservoirs of organs that are used for transplantation surgery.

<sup>5</sup>Michael Mack, “Revisiting Clones: Change and the Politics of Life,” in *How Literature Changes the Way We Think*, 49. See also the article entitled “Political Economy of Hope: Patients’ Organizations, Science, and Biovalue,” *Biosocieties* (2006): 289-305 by Carlos Novas. Novas states that in the current culture of technocratic biomedicine a new group of citizens has emerged who are actively engaged in the development of the bioscientific researches because they hope for discovering new therapeutic possibilities for enhancing their health and vitality. Novas argues that the “forms of activism and the materiality of hopes invested by the patients”, their family members and other biosocial organizations for discovering cures for the genetic diseases may be termed as political economy of hopes (290).

<sup>6</sup>Mack, “Revisiting Clones,” 49.

biocapitalism the engineered beings are merely conceived as *shadowy beings*<sup>7</sup> who are exploited for biotechnological experimentation and organ transplantation but whose physical presence in the society is not acknowledged by the manufacturers and consumers of biomedical products.

This chapter argues that Kureishi's "The Body" and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* may be interpreted as critiques of the neo-cannibalistic culture of capitalism<sup>8</sup> that transforms human body into disposable commodities that are subsequently converted into biomedical trash. The literary works of Kureishi and Ishiguro pose problematic questions regarding issues such as agency, bioethics, and neoliberal biocapitalist consumption. Biocapitalism denotes the process of capitalization of life that is promoted by the technocratic biomedical industries. Capitalization of life<sup>9</sup> indicates the process of fragmenting, harvesting, commodifying, and consumption of human body parts (living and cadaveric) in the form of medicine in an era of biotechnology.<sup>10</sup> The first part of the chapter will examine how in the capitalist consumerist society, human body is biomedically classified as a disposable commodity that is consumed as therapeutic products for rejuvenating ageing bodies. The section will analyze the concept of biocitizenship and *wasted lives*<sup>11</sup> by examining the crisis

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<sup>7</sup>The notion of *shadowy beings* is discussed by drawing on the notion of *ontological hollowness* as explained by Kennedy in *An Ontology of Trash* which will be explained in detail in the following sections of this chapter.

<sup>8</sup>See the article entitled "Neo-Cannibalism, Organ Theft and Military- Biomedical Necropolitics" by Nancy Scheper Hughes. [http://www.endslavery.va/content/endslavery/en/publications/acta\\_20/scheper\\_hughes\\_panel.html](http://www.endslavery.va/content/endslavery/en/publications/acta_20/scheper_hughes_panel.html), accessed on 27 November 2017. Hughes explains the practice of human trafficking, commodification and consumption of human bio-products from the third world to the wealthy white nations as "neo-cannibalism, bio-lust, body theft and even as bio-terrorism" (n.pag). Hughes argues that in the postmodern, posthuman era the practice of human trafficking is fueled by the neoliberal economic structure that has reduced a section of human beings as reservoir of reusable body parts. She says, "I described the buyers- the medical tourists and travelers- as ethically impaired, having no qualms about helping themselves to rented wombs, buying up the oocytes and/or the embryos taken from other bodies, or kidneys purloined for pennies from depressed, displaced, disgraced and dept ridden slum and shantytown dwellers, treating these "suppliers" as if they were dead bodies or simply fresher and more mobile proxy-cadavers" [sic]. (n.pag).

<sup>9</sup>Nikolas Rose, "Somatic Ethics and the Spirit of Biocapital", in *Politics of Life Itself*, 252-258 for a better insight on the concept of capitalization of life.

<sup>10</sup>In "Stem Cells, Tissue Cultures and the Production of Biovalue, Catherine Waldby states that capitalization of life is enmeshed with the notion of biovalue. In her essay, Waldby states that the process of revitalizing and augmenting the vitality of the body or fragments of the body in order to increase the organ's self-maintenance and self-reproductive capacity is termed as biovalue. See also Nikolas Rose's *Politics of Life Itself*, 32.

<sup>11</sup>In *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2004) Zygmunt Bauman metaphorically extends the concept of waste in order to analyze the socio-cultural status of underclass people who do not belong to the class structure of the society and inhabit the peripheral urban spaces as invisible presence. Bauman argues that the section of the population which is classified as non-citizens can be denoted as *wasted lives*. This chapter draws on Bauman's concept of *wasted lives* for the purpose of analyzing the socio-

of identity and agency among people inhabiting the margins of the society who are exploited for organ transplantation and bioscientific experimentation like cloning. The second part of the chapter will discuss the socio-cultural and political status of the human clones who are not acknowledged as persons and hence, are not accorded citizenship rights. The section will discuss how the clones who are medico-legally conceived as store house of organs are classified as biomedical trash.



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cultural and political status of human clones and the underclass people who are portrayed as outcasts in the fictional narratives of Kureishi and Ishiguro.

### 3.2 Biocitizenship and *Wasted Lives*

Hanif Kureishi's "The Body" speculates on bioethical issues that have emerged with the practice of biocapitalisation of human life while also dramatizing how our knowledge of corporeality, human subjectivity, and citizenship is problematized and reconfigured by biotechnological practices like organ transplantation. "The Body" dramatizes the life of a writer named Adam in his mid-sixties who articulates his anxiety about his aged, degenerating, and ailing body. The narrator addresses his ageing body as a "half-dead old carcass"<sup>12</sup> and states that at this stage of life he despises his ailing body and is haunted by the fear of death which is approaching him with increasing imminence. Adam describes his ageing body thus:

Want to hear about my health? [...] My knees and back give me a lot of pain. I have haemorrhoids, an ulcer and cataracts. When I eat, it's not unusual for me to spit out bits of tooth as I go. My ears seem to lose focus as the day goes on and people have to yell into me. I don't go to parties because I don't like to stand up. If I sit down, it makes it difficult for others to speak to me.<sup>13</sup>

Adam looks in the mirror and states that with his "rotund stomach, veiny, spindly legs and left-leaning posture"<sup>14</sup> he is beginning to resemble his father just before his death, thus dramatizing mortality as an intergenerational as well as an intersubjective experience. In Kureishi's novella ageing symbolizes an organic process of decay, degeneration, and death and "The Body" dramatizes how in the current biomedicalized consumerist society developments in anti-ageing therapies, replacement and regenerative medicine along with the evolution of concepts like body-maintenance and self-care have created persistent need on the aged population to become active consumers of biomedical products in order to take care of their health and vitality.<sup>15</sup> In his fifties when Adam becomes aware of his first sign of

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<sup>12</sup>Hanif Kureishi, "The Body" (London: Faber, 2002), 3.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 17

<sup>15</sup>In "Forever Young: Consumer Culture and Ageing Body in Hanif Kureishi's "The Body"" *Journal of English and American Studies*, 36 (2007): 89-100, Maricel Oro Piqueras argues that the evolution of concepts like body maintenance has led to the reinscription of the human body as a machine in the narratives of biomedicine. Drawing on the sociologist Mike Featherstone, Piqueras states that in the current culture of consumerism and biotechnology, biomedical practitioners conceive a close affinity between the body of a car, other consumer goods and the human body which requires proper maintenance, and servicing for preserving its maximum efficiency. Piqueras further argues that signs of ageing are conceived to be untidy and careless and "a well-kept

ageing he immediately starts dyeing his hair and joins gym and he gradually realizes that the ageing population around him is increasingly subscribing to anti-ageing therapies, replacement medicine, body maintenance and health care policies for the purpose of slowing down the organic devolution of their body. Adam narrates:

I knew women, and not only actresses, who had squads of personal trainers, dieticians, nutritionists, yoga teachers, masseurs and beauticians laboring over their bodies daily, as if minds longing and anxieties could be cured via body. Who doesn't want to be more desired and therefore, loved?<sup>16</sup>

Kureishi's fictional narration of the anxiety of the ageing population resonates with Neilson Brett's sociological study of the ageing population that throws light on how in the current consumerist society biogerontologists classify ageing as a disease that can be cured and slowed down by re-engineering the fundamental biomechanism of the human body. In an article entitled "Ageing, Experience, Biopolitics" (2012) Neilson Brett states that replacement and regenerative medicines are restructuring the normative temporal homogenous model of the human body involving birth, growth, ageing, and death. Biotechnological intervention enabled by the developments in the domain of molecular biology has epistemologically and ontologically redefined our experientiality of ageing that we notionally conceive to be a biological and uniform phenomenon.

In *Liminal Lives* (2004) Susan Merrill Squier states that the way each person experiences ageing "has shifted from being universal and ineluctable to being something particular and chosen".<sup>17</sup> In Kureishi's "The Body" Adam states that we have entered a time where the notion of death itself is dying and "we are making a society in which everyone would be of same age".<sup>18</sup> He acknowledges the social value of a youthful appearance and accepts the proposition made by his friend Ralph who transplants his brain into a new young body.<sup>19</sup> Like Ralph, Adam transplants his brain into a young and handsome body of a twenty-

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body not only becomes an object of *cult per se*, but it also becomes a sign of virtue and wisdom of the person who lives within it" (91).

<sup>16</sup>Kureishi, "The Body", 29.

<sup>17</sup>Susan Merrill Squier, *Liminal Lives: Imagining Human at the Frontier of Biomedicine* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2004), 215-216.

<sup>18</sup>Kureishi, "The Body", 37.

<sup>19</sup>See the article entitled "Body Transplant: A Leap of Progress or Myriad of Disaster" *Dharma Today* (2017) by Dr. Jyotir Jani. <http://dharmatoday.com/2017/05/24/body-transplant-leap-progress-myriad-disaster/>, accessed on

five-year-old male in order to explore his unfulfilled pleasures and desires but he wishes to go back to his old body after the completion of the six-month vacation period. As the story unfolds it is revealed that Adam's old body is being disposed of by the agents of the hospital thereby making it impossible for him to return to his old organic original body. Adam says that he finds himself to be a "stranger on earth, a nobody with nothing, belonging nowhere, a body alone, condemned to begin alone, in the nightmare of the eternal life".<sup>20</sup> Adam's life-narrative evokes a biblical connotation. Similar to the biblical character Adam who was banished from Garden of Eden for tasting the forbidden fruit, in Kureishi's novella Adam's desire for achieving immortality by transplanting his brain to a new and handsome body alienates him forever from his original identity and his biblically blessed family life. Thus, the novella dramatizes how our ontology of identity is intricately enmeshed and is subsequently configured and reconfigured by an increasingly technologized corporeality.

In Kureishi's novella, the commodified bodies that are consumed as therapeutic products by the ageing population are literally as well as metaphorically described as disposable entities. The human bodies that are used for transplantation are conceived to be equivalent to clothes that are purchased on the basis of "race, gender, size and age"<sup>21</sup> preferences enlisted by the purchasers of the body. Body shopping is made available to a few wealthy people who can afford to buy new attractive young bodies thereby disposing of the old and withered one. Similar to Robin Cook's description of the vast hanger of the brain-dead patients who are harvested in the Jefferson Institute for organ transplantation in *Coma* (1977), the body transplant clinic in Kureishi's novella may be considered as a *bioemporium*<sup>22</sup> where the bodies of different shapes, sizes, and colours are codified, systematically arranged and kept hanging like clothes in the fridge. Adam describes the bodies kept in the clinic thus:

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1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 Dr. Jani argues that recent development in transplantation surgery has made full body transplantation surgery plausible. Dr. Jani anticipates a biomedicalized era where it will be possible to discard our organic malfunctioning body and to purchase a new body in accordance with our aesthetics. In the article, the medical practitioner draws on recent medical research conducted in Italy and China while discussing the possible psychological impact of full body transplantation surgery on the recipients.

<sup>20</sup>Kureishi, "The Body", 126.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>22</sup>In "Harvesting the Dead," Willard Gaylin uses the term *bioemporium* for the purpose of discussing how in the hospitals and wards brain-dead patients are maintained in intensive care unit (ICU) for extracting organs from them. The notion of *bioemporium* is discussed in the chapter 2 of this thesis.

Suspended in harnesses, there were rows, and rows of bodies: the pale, the dark, and the in-between; the mottled, the clear skinned, the hairy and the hairless, the bearded and the large-breasted; the tall, the broad and the squat. Each had a number in a plastic wallet above the head [...] I was reminded of the rows of suits in the tailors I'd visit as a boy with my father. Except these were not cloth coverings but human bodies [...].<sup>23</sup>

One of the characters in the novella Matte states to Adam that soon a new era will begin when people will start exchanging bodies the way we exchange clothes. Matte says, "there'll be shops where you go to buy the body you want. I'll open one myself with real bodies rather than mannequins in the window",<sup>24</sup> thus dramatizing the ontology of corporeality as an extension of commodity fetish and underlining the cannibalistic quality of bio-consumerism.<sup>25</sup> Matte says to Adam that he is planning to wear his body for another ten years after which he would prefer to shift "to something fitter" than the present one.<sup>26</sup> A similar situation is dramatized in Richard Morgan's cyberpunk novel *Altered Carbon* (2002) where an easy equation is drawn between human bodies and clothes.<sup>27</sup> Like Kureishi's novella, human bodies in Morgan's novel are dramatized as disposable entities and are termed as "sleeves"<sup>28</sup> that are manufactured, purchased, and are taken on lease by the wealthy consumers for accomplishing their individual goals. Set approximately five hundred years into the future, the novel dramatizes the life of Takeshi Lev Kovacs, an envoy- whose consciousness is implanted into a new body which is taken on lease by the industrialist Laurens Bancroft for solving his murder mystery. The human body is implanted with a small "cortical stack"<sup>29</sup> that stores relevant genetic information including memories and emotions

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<sup>23</sup>Kureishi, "The Body", 23-24.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>25</sup>In *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: New Press, 2011) Dorothy Roberts denotes the sections of the society who consume human biomatter in the form of medicine for rejuvenating their health and vitality as bioconsumers. Roberts argues that the concept of biocitizenship is enmeshed with the notion of bioconsumerism that foregrounds the interrelationship between government, pharmaceutical, industries, and people who are classified as bioresources for deriving genetic information used for producing pharmaceutical products that are consumed by wealthy clientele as health care products.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Richard Morgan's *Altered Carbon* (United Kingdom: Orion Publishing Book, 2002) Kindle ed., is a cyberpunk novel recently adapted into a web series and is streaming on *Netflix* from 2 February 2018.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 26

that are easily transplanted through the cortical stack that is implanted into a new sleeve when the organic body gets killed or starts decaying. In *Altered Carbon* sleeving and resleeving are conceived as a biomedical process for extending individuals' life for indefinite period.<sup>30</sup>

In Morgan's novel immortality is assured by repeated uploading of the human consciousness in different young adult bodies and "real death"<sup>31</sup> can only occur when the cortical stack of an individual is permanently damaged. Thus the novel dramatizes how the human beings in the current culture of information technology and biomedicine are reduced to downloadable entities "whereby everything including human emotions and attributes are endlessly reified and replicated for the purpose of productivity".<sup>32</sup> Avishek Parui argues that this process of reification of human self is an extreme extension of Martin Heidegger's concept of *standing-reserve* "whereby every energy can be converted into potentially passive recyclable order through the intervention of modern technology".<sup>33</sup> Literary works of Kureishi and Morgan dramatize how in the current culture of bioconsumerism body is cognized as a disposable biochemical machine that is conceived to be ontologically opposite to the human mind which is considered to be least affected by the biotechnological intervention made for the purpose of re-engineering the biomechanism of the human body. The cognizance of the human body as spare part or a disposable entity by the characters in Kureishi's novella throws light on how our biomedical understanding of the human body continues to be shaped by the Cartesian mind-body dualism propounded by the French philosopher Rene Descartes as discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

Parallels may also be drawn between Kureishi's "The Body" and Greg Egan's "The Extra" (1990) where the protagonist Daniel Gray designs a race of brain-damaged clones who are exploited for organ donation for the purpose of decelerating the organic devolution of his countenance. Gray creates five batches of clones, "each batch a decade younger than the preceding one, each comprising twenty-five Extras (less one or two here and there; naturally

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<sup>30</sup>See also, M. Keith Booker and Anne-Marie Thomas, "Cyberpunk and Posthuman Science Fiction," in *The Science Fiction Handbook*, 110-123 (United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell).

<sup>31</sup>Morgan, *Altered Carbon*, 62. Interestingly in Morgan's Bay city the UN court passed a resolution titled 653 that allows the judicial system of the city to revive the murder victims who are killed in accidents or are murdered. According to the resolution the victims will be compensated by giving them a free sleeve and will be able to testify their murderer.

<sup>32</sup> Avishek Parui, *Postmodern Literature* (Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2018), 66.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

some depletion had occurred and Gray made no effort to hide the fact).<sup>34</sup> In the initial stage of the experimentation, Gray uses the Extras as organ donors and in the later stage of the experimentation he aims to use them for brain transplant surgeries in order to move into a “younger body, he wanted to begin his new life with a sense of purification, a sense of rebirth”<sup>35</sup> thus reiterating brain as the store house of memories, intelligence, and the affective factors that remain intact and are least affected when an individual’s brain is implanted into a new body. The narrator explains brain transplantation surgery as a bioscientific process of liberating oneself from one’s ravaged organic body thus:

In any case, however fervently Gray approved of his gluttonous, sedentary, drug-hazed, promiscuous life, part of him felt guilty and unclean. He could not wipe his past, nor did he wish to, but to discard his ravaged body and begin again in a blameless flesh would be the perfect way to naturalize this irrational self-disgust. He would attend his own cremation and watch his “sinful” corpse conspired to “hell fire”! [...] He had no doubt that the experience would be powerfully moving, liberating beyond belief.<sup>36</sup>

Unlike Kureishi’s “The Body” where the protagonist Adam’s memories and complex emotions and sensibilities are successfully transferred into the commodified posthuman body, in Egan’s “The Extra” the surgery goes awry. Thus, post-transplantation Gray is depicted as a cognitively impaired being with his motor skills and speech ability being irreversibly damaged. In an article entitled “The Parallax of Ageing” (2015) Jogo Morrison argues that the body in Kureishi’s novella is treated as a plaything or a costume that can be worn and taken off when its amusement value has been dissipated. The body is portrayed as a reified pleasurable object that is “used, shown off, and ultimately disposed of”.<sup>37</sup> Throughout the novella Adam recurrently addresses his new body as a “vessel” that he consumes the same way he uses his other prized possession.<sup>38</sup> The plasticity and disposable quality of human bodies as dramatized in the novella foregrounds how in the consumerist culture human beings

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<sup>34</sup>Greg Egan, “The Extra” (n.pag) <http://www.eidolon.net/?story=The%20Extra>.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Jogo Morrison, “The Parallax of Ageing: Hanif Kureishi’s The Body,” in *Hanif Kureishi: Contemporary Critical Perspective*, edited by Susan Alice Fischer (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 95.

<sup>38</sup>Kureishi, “The Body”, 38.

in the process of fulfilling their desire of replenishing their body by incorporating biomatter from anonymous sources are subsequently producing biomedical waste.

Waste is considered to be an inevitable epiphenomenon of modern commodity fetish consumerist culture and in the book *The Waste Makers* (1960) Vance Packard labeled the current consumer culture as a “deposable era and throw away age”.<sup>39</sup> Packard states that man throughout recorded history has struggled to cope with the material scarcity but in the present era there is a massive breakthrough in the process of production and consumption. In order to keep the industrial machine humming, the industrialists and their marketing experts encourage the citizens to become prodigal and, in this process, we are creating more waste. Packard argues that newness as a trait is cherished by the consumer society and “planned obsolescence is one of the major developments of the postwar period. Its use as a strategy to influence either the shape of the product or the mental attitude of the consumer represents the quintessence of the throwaway spirit”.<sup>40</sup> Packard argues that the replacement of durable goods with plastic products has enabled the consumers to dispose commodities after use instead of preserving them.

Kureishi’s novella dramatizes how in the hyperconsumerist culture the plastic and disposable features of commodities are extended to human bodies that are classified as biocommodities to be consumed for therapeutic as well as cosmetic purposes. Hamid DeBashi argues that plasticity and disposability are the integral features of a posthuman body. As a product of globalization and neoliberal economic structure the posthuman body corresponds to “a contingent and contextual being and as such an object of disposable knowledge”.<sup>41</sup> DeBashi argues that posthumanism as a concept embodies the process of transmutation from the Enlightenment-centric imagination of a body as a corporeally integral, autonomous, rational and indispensable to a notion of a bioengineered body that is disposable, dispensable

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<sup>39</sup>Vance Packard, *The Waste Makers* (New York: Van Rees Press, 1960), 7. See also Bauman’s *Wasted Lives*. Bauman argues that the true passion of modernity is its joy of expelling, discarding, and clearing of the recurrent impurity. Bauman states that in the process of creating new commodities in order to cope with the insatiable demands of the consumer culture, modern era has produced “indestructible leftovers” that occupy the margins of the society and has evoked a feeling of uncanniness among the city dwellers (1). The passion for novelty has led to the production of commodities that with the passage of time are treated as obsolete and hence, are considered as the rubbish of the consumer society.

<sup>40</sup>Packard, *The Waste Makers*, 53-54.

<sup>41</sup>Hamid DeBashi, *Corpus Anarchicum: Political Protest, Suicidal Violence, and the Making of Posthuman Body* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 4.

and mutable. Drawing on current debates on bioengineering and biomedically produced plasticity, Debashi defines the body that “can be genetically engineered, artificially inseminated, organically transplanted, plastically sculpted” as posthuman disposable body.<sup>42</sup>

Technologization of life and death and developments in transplantation surgery have intensified the disposable feature of the living organisms whose life span can be manufactured, extended, and terminated in order to comply with the therapeutic objectives of the capitalist clientele and pharmaceutical industries. This notion of the body as a reified entity is interrogated in Kureishi’s “The Body” by dramatizing the post-transplantation condition of Adam who experiences a sense of anxiety and indebtedness towards the anonymous donor whose hauntological<sup>43</sup> identity problematizes and reconfigures his existential and experiential understanding of selfhood. Similar to Jodi Picoult’s character Claire Nealon as dramatized in *Change of Heart: A Novel*, Adam states to Ralph that post-transplantation he realizes that it is not merely a new body he embodies, rather his notion of self is being extended and hybridized by the memories, emotions, and characteristics of the person whose body he has purchased. Adam articulates his post-transplantation experiences thus:

This is different. It’s as if I have a ghost or shadow-soul inside me. I can feel things, perhaps memories, of the man who was here first. Perhaps the physical body has a soul. There’s a phrase of Freud’s that might apply here: the bodily ego, he calls it, I think.<sup>44</sup>

Adam’s description bears parallels with Freud’s concept of *body-ego* discussed in the book entitled *Ego and the Id* (1923) in order to justify his explanation of how his phenomenal experiences are being altered post-transplantation by the spectral presence of the identity of the anonymous person whose body he embodies. Freud explains that human mind is primarily a manifestation of embodied sensation and hence “the ego is first and foremost a

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 202. See also Kim Toffoletti’s *Cyborgs and Barbie Dolls: Feminism, Popular Culture, and the Posthuman Body* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007). Kim argues that plasticity is the defining characteristics of mid-twentieth century, a period labeled as artificial, disposable, and synthetic. Kim states:

Plasticity has penetrated the human body in the form of prosthetics, artificial joints rendering the posthuman bodies as unnatural and disposable. The way it has seamlessly replaced the organic components both within and outside of the anatomical body, makes the question what it is we value as real and human. This new world of simulated phenomenon that plastic inhabits and in part creates challenges notion of authenticity by destabilizing a modernist paradigm and undermining the ideals of autonomy and origin that structure the identity politics of the subject. (69).

<sup>43</sup> The concept of hauntology is discussed by Jacques Derrida in *Specters of Marx*. Derrida’s concept of hauntology is discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

<sup>44</sup>Kureishi, “The Body”, 45.

body-ego. It is not merely a surface entity but it is itself a projection of a surface”.<sup>45</sup> Our notion of the self is to a large extent informed and composed by a complex set of sensations, perceptions, and affection that the body receives and modifies through its perceptual systems.<sup>46</sup> Freud argues that “it is the combined experiences of the external world and the state of our own body that somehow lays the foundation for the feeling of our own self, of our own ego,”<sup>47</sup> and hence Adam’s narration of his embodied experiences post-transplantation foregrounds the interrelationship between human body and consciousness that invalidates biomedical top-down view of the body as merely a processing machine. It instead foregrounds a more distributive understanding of cognition as corroborated by theorists such as Shaun Gallagher and Andy Clark.<sup>48</sup>

In an article entitled “Technologies in Hanif Kureishi’s ‘The Body’” (2006) Annette Buhler-Dietrich argues that the novella dramatizes “how different technologies put identity to the test and thus work towards a reconceptualization of identity to the stakes of a multi-faceted hybridity”.<sup>49</sup> Dietrich states that unlike Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* where Frankenstein’s creation of a human by transplanting body parts from anonymous sources evolves as a hideous being, in Kureishi’s novella Adam emerges post-transplantation as a handsome young man by casting off his organically deteriorating countenance. Post-transplantation Adam evolves as a complex entanglement between man and machine that problematizes our normative understanding of human identity that we associate with a singular, bounded organic embodiment. Adam speculates on how biotechnological intervention into the human body has created “mutants, freaks, human unhumans”<sup>50</sup> like him thereby enabling us to speculate on the notion of subjectivity with renewed attention on the role of corporeality which plays a significant role in the construction of an agentic

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<sup>45</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 33. Kindle ed.

<sup>46</sup> See also Antonio Damasio’s *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*. Damasio’s concept of proto-self, core self, and autobiographical self is discussed in details while explain the phenomenal experiences of the organ recipients in the second chapter of this thesis.

<sup>47</sup> Cited in Jon Sletvold, “The Ego and the Id Revisited: Freud and Damasio on the Body Ego/Self,” *IntJ Psychoanalysis* 94 (2013): 1022.

<sup>48</sup> See Andy Clark, *Supersizing the Mind*. See also Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> Annette Buhle Dietrich, “Technologies in Hanif Kureishi’s ‘The Body’,” in *Beyond the Black Atlantic: Relocating Modernization and Technology*, edited by Walter Goebel and Saskia Schabio (New York & London: Routledge, 2006), 168.

<sup>50</sup> Kureishi “The Body”, 102.

experiential self. In an article entitled “Organ Transplantation and meaning of Life” (2013) Jacques Quintin states that biomedical practices like organ transplantation offer better insight into the working mechanism of the human body.<sup>51</sup> The blending of the bodies through the transplantation procedure further intensifies the philosophical questions related to the notions of identity, body and soul, ontological status of the body and the meaning of life which are fictionally explored in Kureishi’s novella by dramatizing the phenomenological experiences of the protagonist Adam.

During the transplantation surgery Adam contemplates on how in the era of bioengineering renewed knowledge of corporeality has created new vocabularies such as *newies*, *old bodies*, *facilities* that are restructuring our discourse of identity construction and citizenship. Adam’s explanation of the emerging notion of citizenship may be compared to Rose and Novas’ explanation of biocitizenship that is informed by the knowledge of our biological life. They state that “the language with which citizens are coming to understand and describe themselves is increasingly biological”.<sup>52</sup> Adam says to his doctor that words like *new body* and *facility* “will eventually be part of most people’s everyday vocabulary...”<sup>53</sup> that will differentiate the new class of elite citizens from the “old bodies”<sup>54</sup> who are reduced to mere “body facilities”<sup>55</sup> that are purchased by the rich consumer clientele, thus pointing to a new hierarchical order of classification premised on body-commodity and its consumption. Kureishi’s “The Body” dramatizes how biomedicine is deployed for creating “a new class, an elite, a superclass of super bodies”<sup>56</sup> who are classified as *newies*. Annette Buhler Dietrich states that the novella “The Body” offers an interesting fictional representation of how the pharmaceutical and biomedical industries operate.<sup>57</sup> While the biomedical practitioners work, experiment, sell their expertise to the white wealthy consumers, the bodies of the Third

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<sup>51</sup>Jacques Quintin, “Organ Transplantation and the Meaning of Life,” *Med Health Care and Philos* 16 (2012): 564-574.

<sup>52</sup>Rose and Novas, “The Biological Citizenship”.

<sup>53</sup>Kureishi, “The Body”, 22.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 26. In Kureishi’s novella “The Body” the term *facility* is metaphorically used to denote the bioengineered commodified bodies that are purchased by the aged population.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>57</sup>Annette Buhler-Dietrich, “Technologies in Hanif Kureishi’s ‘The Body’.

World and underclass people who are labeled as the “detritus” of the society are commodified and used for transplantation surgery.<sup>58</sup> Bodies of the underclass people are conceived as “malleable facilities” that are biomedically processed and circulated within the maze of the global capitalist market.<sup>59</sup>

Similar to Kishwar Desai’s novel *Origins of Love* (2012)<sup>60</sup>, Kureishi’s “The Body” dramatizes how the agents of the medico-legal institutes collude with the socio-culturally and financially privileged sections in order to re-inscribe and consolidate the hierarchical structure of the society. The augmentation of the societal gap as dramatized in Kureishi’s novella corresponds with Dorothy Roberts’ sociological study of the intensification of the gap between the Third World and the white wealthy nations. In *Fatal Invention* (2011) Dorothy Roberts argues that the developments in the field of molecular biology along with the increase in trafficking of human bio-commodities from the Third World nations have intensified the existing societal inequalities. The most advanced and expensive pharmaceutical products and technocratic biomedical facilities are made accessible to the wealthy clientele thereby relegating vast sections of the societies to the margins. Roberts states that there is an immediate need to speculate on the recently evolved neoliberal notion of biocitizenship because the autonomy and benefits accorded to the privileged section of the society come at the cost of devaluing the agency and the socio-political rights of the underclass people who are selling their biomatter in order to survive. Roberts states:

Though genetic technologies have thrust our very “biological life itself” into the domain of decision as choice as Nikolas Rose writes, this does not mean they give us greater freedom, justice, and equality. By extending individual management of health to the molecular level, the state and the big business exercise greater ability to monitor and influence our life. While we expected to choose products and services that promise to reduce genetic risk, we cannot expect guaranteed health care for everyone who needs it.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Marilena Parlati, “Human Unhumans: Ageing, Dying, and the Body Nostalgic in Kazuo Ishiguro and Hanif Kureishi” *Status Quaestionis* 6 (2014), 77.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 78.

<sup>60</sup>Kishwar Desai’s *Origins of Love* (London and New Delhi: Simon and Schuster, 2012) fictionally engages with the bioethical issues that are triggered by the developments made in the domain of artificial reproductive technology (ART). The novel discusses the medico-legal and socio-cultural status of the surrogates who are hired by the fertility clinics for procreating babies for the white wealthy clientele thereby offering a fictional representation of the working mechanism of fertility clinics that are strategically re-inscribing the bionormative notion of family. The novel is studied in details in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

<sup>61</sup>Roberts, *Fatal Invention*, 544.

Wealthy ageing citizens like Adam gets the opportunity to purchase internationally traded new, handsome, and younger bodies to prolong their life while other human beings inhabiting the margins of the society die naturally or are used as fodder to biologically re-engineer or perfect privileged bio-consumers. Like Kureishi's "The Body", Morgan's *Altered Carbon* dramatizes the intensification of the class division between the haves and the have not-s by throwing light on the dehumanizing status of the underclass people of the fictional Bay city. In the chapter entitled "Science Fiction and Immortality" (2012) Richard Lebow argues that Morgan's *Altered Carbon* offers the "most cynical take on capitalism and immortality".<sup>62</sup>In spite of the extraordinary developments made in the domain of biotechnology, only the privileged sections of the society have access to the advanced biotechnological therapies for extending their life, whereas the poor citizens live a life of deprivation and insecurity and are conceived as disposable beings. In Morgan's Bay city, the wealthy people are entitled as "Meths"<sup>63</sup> who can afford to order for customized sleeves with genetic and cybernetic enhancement whereas ordinary citizens resleeve once in their life time after the expiry of which their bodies are stored in a facility called "storage"<sup>64</sup> from where bodies are purchased by the privileged sections. Ironically in Morgan's novel, organic bodies are preferred in comparison to the synthetic bodies, hence bodies of the young adults who are sentenced to imprisonment,<sup>65</sup> and the underclass people whose family members are not able to buy their bodies from the storage are supplied to the capitalist clientele. Wealthy people like the industrialist Laurence Bencroft have a series of clones grown from their own organic body that are used as back-ups whenever their body is killed or starts decaying.

The fictional representation of the biomedical reification of the underclass people as dramatized in the literary works of Kueishi and Morgan resonate with the sociologist Frederic Vandenberghe's study of the neo-cannibalistic feature of the biomedical industries discussed in the article titled "Deleuzian Capitalism" (2008). Vandenberghe argues that although society has been witnessing commodification of humans in the form of slavery, prostitution,

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<sup>62</sup>Richard Ned Lebow, "Science and Immortality," in *The Politics and Ethics of Identity in Search of Ourselves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) Kindle ed.

<sup>63</sup>In *Altered Carbon*, the word "Meths" evokes a biblical connotation. It refers to the biblical figure Methuselah who in Hebrew Bible is described to have lived for 969 years thus alluding to a biblical order of immortality that is paradoxically purchasable from an increasing array of biotechnological commodities.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>65</sup>In *Altered Carbon*, Morgan dramatizes a dystopian era where criminals are not kept in prisons, rather their consciousness is downloaded in a cortical stack and is kept in the storage. Later the body is made available on the market for sell or rent.

and human trafficking, the systematic fragmentation, modification, and commodification of regenerative tissues have led to the complete biomedical reification of humans inhabiting the margins of society. In the novella “The Body”, when Adam enquires about the identity of the body he has purchased, it is revealed to him that in most cases bodies are imported from the Third World nations, thus underlining the politics of production axiomatically aligned to an economy of outsourced labor and privileged consumption. Hence, the novella is reflective of a culture of bio-capitalism where by Third World producers (the body facility in Kureishi’s novella) are reified as well as alienated (in classic-Marxist senses) for the first world consumer, a theme that is further dramatized in the novel *Origins of Love*. In “The Body”, Ralph says that the body Adam bought was that of a young man who lived a life of a discard and died of depression. Ralph informs Adam:

Your guy’s going to have died in some grisly fashion [...] If he’s young, it’s not going to be pleasant. No young death is a relief. The whole world works on exploitation. We all know the clothes we wear, the food, it’s packed by Third World peasants [...] Your man had something like clinical depression. Obviously, a lot of young people suffer from it [...] They’re never going to be doers and getters like us, man. Better to be rid of them altogether and let the healthy ones live [sic].<sup>66</sup>

The dramatization of social inequalities in “The Body” corresponds with Alexander Plows and Paula Boddington’s study of how the existing inequalities in the power relationships, commodification and ownership patterns are further intensified and disseminated through bioscientific practices. In an article entitled “Troubles with Biocitizenship” (2006) Plows and Boddington argue that in the era of bioengineering, the issues of social inequalities have to be studied in relation to the concept biocitizenship as an evolving social phenomenon. Bioscience can be considered as a means through which “capitalism as a form of power relation gets a market out of Western rich and worried well at the expense of the poor and the marginalized” [sic].<sup>67</sup> Plows and Boddington’s analysis of the current culture of biocapitalism is in consonance with Nancy Scheper-Hughes’ study of the socio-cultural and political status of the immigrants and laborers in the context of the organ

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<sup>66</sup>Kureishi, “The Body”, 46-47.

<sup>67</sup>Alexander Plows and Paula Boddington, “Troubles with Biocitizenship”, *Genomics, Society, and Policy* 12.3 (2006): 129.

trade industries.<sup>68</sup> Hughes' study throws light on how developments in the field of biotechnology have led to further exploitation of immigrants, laborers of Third World nations, and the other social outcasts who are classified as non-citizens. Hughes argues that the emerging global markets for organs, tissues, and other body parts have aggravated the gap between the "North and South, haves and have not-s, organ donors and organ recipients".<sup>69</sup> She introduces the concept of *medical apartheid* in order to discuss the demographic division between the consumer and the consumed.<sup>70</sup> Hughes argues:

The spread of transplant technologies had created a global scarcity of viable organs. At the same time the spirit of a triumphant global and "democratic" capitalism has released a voracious appetite for "fresh" bodies from which organs are procured. The confluence in the flows of immigrants, workers and itinerant kidney sellers who fall prey to sophisticated but unscrupulous transnational organ brokers is a subtext in the recent history of globalization.<sup>71</sup>

Based on the report of Organ Watch, a medical human rights group affiliated to the University of California, Hughes argues that in most cases organs are procured from people who are considered to be the outcasts.<sup>72</sup> Sales of human organs have resulted in reducing a section of population to the role of organ suppliers. Bodies of the poor are disaggregated, transported, processed, and sold in the interest of a more socially and economically privileged section of the society. These social outcasts are stripped of their political rights as well as valuable biomatter in order to satisfy the consumer market that classify them as social garbage and consequently reduces them to biomedical trash.

The issues of biocitizenship and *wasted lives* are further explored in Kazuo Ishiguro's dystopian novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005) where tissue procurement from clones for prolonging the life span of the normal humans is sanctioned by the state.<sup>73</sup> Kelley Rich argues that the

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<sup>68</sup>Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "The Ends of the Body: Commodity, Fetishism, and the Global Traffic in Organs," *SIAS Reviews* 22.1 (2002): 61-80.

<sup>69</sup>Hughes, "The End of the Body," (61).

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., The term *medical apartheid* denotes the practice of classifying black and other racially marginalized groups for bioscientific experimentation and organ donation.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>73</sup>In an article entitled "Who owns your Organs- you or the State?" (2014) Brendan O' Neill discusses about the new medical policies that British medical authorities are planning to implement in order to address the issues of organ scarcity. He states that the medical authorities are planning to introduce the policy of presumed consent

human clones may be interpreted as state's "sentient infrastructures" that are designed for enhancing the health and vitality of the population.<sup>74</sup> Set in an imaginary setting of the post-World War II Britain, Ishiguro portrays a liberal democratic society where advancement in genetic engineering has made it possible to engineer a race of human clones who are raised in the fictional Hailsham boarding school under strict medical surveillance in order to donate organs to normal human- buyers. Unlike Kureishi's "The Body" where ageing as a biological phenomenon is problematized through the process of bio-modification, in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, the concept of ageing is metaphorically explored by throwing light on the diminution of the biological experientiality of human clones.<sup>75</sup> The novel portrays a complete separation between birth and ageing by foregrounding the scripted lives of the clones who are never allowed to grow old. The human clones exist for donating organs to the wealthy ageing population and are then cast off as wasted commodities, in a dystopian drama of the entanglement of human consumption and trash.

In his study of *Never Let Me Go*, Michael Mack argues that the human clones in Ishiguro's novel emerge as tragic figures because their life is "static and lacks the unpredictability that comes with growth. Growth is another word for ageing and by being deprived of growth, the clones are already at their end points, close to death. They are fixed and indeed their life has been pre-arranged".<sup>76</sup> As the story unfolds, the narrator describes her childhood days in Hailsham, a specialized private institute within the larger cloning programme where the clones are allowed to spend their childhood days in a cultivated and beautiful environment. In the novel, Ishiguro does not offer a complex character portrayal of the underclass people who are exploited for bioscientific experimentation like human cloning. Their presence is conveyed to the readers through the human clones like Kathy and Ruth who are curious to know about the humans from whom they are modelled. Ishiguro's

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according to which the organs of an individual after his death will belong to the state and can be transplanted to other patients without taking into consideration the consent of the deceased donor's kin. O' Neill argues that Medical policy of this kind will problematize the individuals' right over their own body. The policy "calls into question the most basic idea that an individual owns his organs and has dominion over his own body [...] It effectively turns us into incubator of organs for the state [...] it waters down, for real, our living autonomy and our bodily integrity". <http://www.spiked-online.com/spikedplus/article/who-owns-your-organs-you-or-the-state#.WjqRbVRdLOQ>, accessed on 10 November 2016.

<sup>74</sup>Kelley Rich, "Look into the Gutter: Interiority and Infrastructuralism," 633.

<sup>75</sup>In "Revisiting Clones," Michael Mack argues that ageing symbolizes pain, suffering, and the shrinking of the worldly experiences and in Ishiguro's novel the scripted, sterile, and foreshortened life of the clones may be compared to the stereotypical notion of ageing.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 52.

*Never Let Me Go* is primarily interpreted as a novel that foregrounds the dehumanizing aspect of organ transplantation that is entwined with classic Marxist issues such as alienation and reification at the biological and political level, thus making the novel a fertile study of neoliberal biopolitics. This chapter examines the socio-cultural and political status of the human clones and their progenitors for the purpose of discussing the concept of biomedical trash.

The spectral presence of the progenitors in Ishiguro's novel throws light on the working mechanism of biotechnological industries that exploit people who are metaphorically considered as *wasted lives* for bioscientific experimentation like cloning. It thus reveals the systematized and industrialized nature of neoliberal cannibalism which consumes human bodies for transhuman perfection. In *Wasted Lives* Bauman discusses the *supernumerary section* of the population like immigrants, prostitutes, prisoners and the other social outcasts who are considered as the "flawed consumers" because of their inability to contribute to the ever-growing structure of capitalism as *wasted lives*.<sup>77</sup> He argues that the production of human waste is the unavoidable side-effect of economic progress and quest for order which is the characteristic of modernity. In a similar vein, and in a different but related study, Bauman in *Collateral Damages* (2011) states that society is composed of classes in which individuals are included through their class membership and are expected to perform tasks which their class has been assigned to in order to maintain the social system as whole. In this context, the notion of underclass indicates the section of people who are considered as the margins of the society.

In his study Bauman articulates the ambivalence at the level of location as he states that the, "underclass may be in but it is clearly not of the society".<sup>78</sup> He extends his argument by further stating that the underclass can be considered as "an alien inside that does not count among the natural and indispensable part of the social organization".<sup>79</sup> They are the rejects of the society who are metaphorically signified as the trash of the society. Bauman argues that these unwanted individuals are the collateral victims of man-made or natural catastrophe. In the second part of *Never Let Me Go*, the narrator Kathy recalls how Ruth, Tommy, and other clones at Hailsham and the cottages were curious to know about their origins. In fact, at

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<sup>77</sup>Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, 14.

<sup>78</sup>Bauman, *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age* (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

Hailsham, Kathy narrates that the idea of knowing about the humans from whom they are cloned has both intrigued and disturbed them. Kathy describes the clones' curiosity thus:

The basic idea behind the possible theory was simple and didn't provoke much dispute. It went something like this. Since each of us was copied at some point from a normal person, there must be for each of us somewhere out there a model getting on with his or her life. This meant at least in theory, you'd be able to find the person you were modelled from. That's why, when you were out there yourself-in the town, shopping centers, transports cafes-you kept an eye out for "possible"- the people who might have been the models for you and your friends.<sup>80</sup>

The possibility of finding the person from whom Kathy is modelled makes her anxious. Subconsciously Kathy believes that she is modelled from a prostitute or a porn star and secretly searches for her progenitor in the piles of the porn magazines that are circulated in the cottages where the clones are temporarily sheltered before becoming carers or donors. Kathy's anxiety about the origin of the clones is voiced by Ruth when she bitterly admits that they are all modelled from trash. In one of the passages in the novel, Ruth, Tommy, and Kathy, along with Chrissie and Rodney go to a town named Cromer on the North Norfolk coast in search of the human from whom Ruth is cloned. Chrissie and Rodney claim to have seen Ruth's original working in an office but after waiting for an hour outside they meet with disappointment and an embittered Ruth reveals to her friends:

I didn't want to say when you first told about this. But look, it was never on. They don't ever, ever use people like that woman Think about it. Why would she want to? We all know it, so why don't we all face it. We're not modelled from that sort [...] We all know it. We're modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps, convicts, maybe, just so long they aren't psychos. That's what we come from. We all know it, so why don't we say it [...] if you want to look for possible, if you want to do it properly, then look in the gutter. You look in rubbish bins. Look down the toilet. That's where you will find where we all come from [sic].<sup>81</sup>

In an article on Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* entitled "Look into the Gutter" (2015) Kelly Rich argues that Ruth's revelation of human clones' origin from the people who are classified as noncitizens throws light on the socio-political status of the human clones that is enmeshed with the notion of trash. Rich states, "not only has Ruth's vision of professionalism crumbled but also her sense of a viable personhood. Now she is able to see herself as what she's been

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<sup>80</sup>Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 137.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 164.

all along, an object circulating in the networks of society's refuse".<sup>82</sup> The covert explanation of the bioscientific experimentation and the social outcasts who are exploited in the biotechnological experiments throw light on how the notion of biocapitalism is entangled with the neo-cannibalistic culture of capitalism as discussed by Hughes' in an article entitled "Neo-Cannibalism" (2001). Hughes argues that "amidst the neo-liberal adjustment of the neo global economy"<sup>83</sup> and the advanced biomedical surgical procedure, the bodies of the underclass who are not included within the framework of citizenship are strictly classified biomedically as fodder for the rich consumer clientele.

An analogy may be drawn between the social-cultural status of the underclass people as dramatized in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and Rachele Dini's concept of waste and recuperation.<sup>84</sup> Dini argues that the binary between waste and commodity is always in a state of flux. She states that the concept of commodity and waste is "dialectically inseparable from one another and that under capitalist exchange relations, each is revealed capable of being alchemized into another".<sup>85</sup> In Ishiguro's novel, the reincorporation of underclass people as consumable biomedical commodities throws light on how the *wasted lives* are recuperated by connecting them to the global market of human organs where they are transformed into purchasable biomatter for wealthy clientele. The ambiguous nature of trash may be further explored by analyzing the socio-cultural status of human clones within broader narratives of neoliberal biocapitalist consumer culture that classifies them as biomedical trash.

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<sup>82</sup>Kelly Rich, "Look in the Gutter", 637. See also James Tink's article entitled "The Pieties of the Death in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Parallax* 22.1 (2016): 22-36. Tink argues that the clones' identification with the social outcasts throws light on how the prejudices of social exclusion and criminality are used to marginalized the clone community. Tink states that, "the clones are subjected to political and legal order that deprives them their freedom and deems them expendable" (28).

<sup>83</sup>Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Neo-Cannibalism: The Global Trade in Human Organs," *The Hedgehog Review/Summer* 01 (2001): 79.

<sup>84</sup>Rachele Dinni, *Consumerism, Waste, and Re-use in Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

### 3.3 The Clones' Classification as Biomedical Trash

In *Ontology of Trash* (2007) Greg Kennedy argues that the concept of trash embodies semantic ambiguity. Trash as a concept does not merely indicate the physical act of disposing a commodity, rather the phenomenon should be examined as an act of withdrawal or deprivation that problematizes the normative order of human conceptual schema. Drawing on Mary Douglas's *Purity and Dirt* (1966), Kennedy states that trash always dwells in the fringes of our conceptual schema and whenever consciousness discerns incomprehensible entities that threaten to problematize or contaminate our settled conceptual order, those objects or individuals are labeled as trash.<sup>86</sup> Kennedy explains the phenomenon of trash thus:

The dehumanization of wasted things occurs at a deeper level than the mere aesthetic faculty that subjectively regards one thing as trash and another as treasure. True, the determination of waste does not involve a certain subjective imposition on the being in question [...] Anything valued can look like a junk from some vantage point. Despite this subjective relativity, it is still most instructive to understand this supervening projection as more profoundly privative. Rather than seeing waste as an expression of human activity projecting negative value- we might better regard it first as a matter of human withdrawal and deprivation.<sup>87</sup>

Trash is explained as a liminal phenomenon because it occupies a state of “in-between-ness” that resists any form of classification and ascription of meaning.<sup>88</sup> Trash is cognized as a homogenous entity that is always in a state of flux because the phenomenon oscillates between the state of being functional and non-functional, valuable and waste.<sup>89</sup> Kennedy states that trash is a material phenomenon that occupies the periphery of urban spaces and is also a conceptual order because like “beauty it appears that the phenomenon of waste belongs to the eye of the beholder”.<sup>90</sup> An analogy may be drawn between Kennedy's explanation of

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<sup>86</sup>Greg Kennedy, *An Ontology of Trash*, 6.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>88</sup>Jasper Balduk, “On Liminality: Conceptualizing ‘in-betweenness’” (Master Thesis, 2008), 6. <http://gpm.ruhosting.nl/mt/2008MASG02BaldukJasper.pdf>, accessed on 7 January 2018. Balduk states that the word liminality was first used in 1909 by Arnold Van Gennep in his book *Les Rites de Passage* where he refers to liminality as a state of *in-between-ness* during rites of passage.

<sup>89</sup>In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Routledge, 1969) Victor Turner states that the attributes of liminality or liminal personae are ambiguous, “since these condition and these personas elude or slip through the network of classification that normally locates state and position in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions ascribed and arranged by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (95).

<sup>90</sup>Kennedy, *An Ontology of Trash*, 1.

trash as a conceptual order and the unclassifiable and ambiguous position of the bioengineered beings in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* who threaten to problematize our shared normative concept of humanness. The clones in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* may be conceived as liminal beings who problematize the binary between subject and object, human and non-human and hence they unsettle the normative conceptual order of the humans observing them thereby evoking a feeling of uncanniness.<sup>91</sup>

Similar to Shelley's *Frankenstein* where the obscure physical stature of Frankenstein's progeny evokes a feeling of terror and abjection as discussed in the first chapter of the thesis, in Ishiguro's novel, Miss Emily acknowledges the fact that the guardians of Hailsham have always dreaded the sight of the human clones and have looked at them with revulsion. The act of revulsion as portrayed in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* corresponds with Julia Kristeva's concept of the abjection that denotes the act of creating conceptual boundary for classifying the unclassifiable. In *Power of Horror* (1983) Kristeva argues that the liminal and unaccommodated beings trigger a feeling of horror and disgust because they foreground the fragility of binaries and epistemic purity of the symbolic order that inform our normative and dichotomous way of constructing meaning of the socio-cultural phenomena with which we interact and are engaged in our everyday life. Liminality as a concept inhabits a space outside our shared understanding of the symbolic order thereby resisting any possibilities for meaning making. Hence, abjection may be interpreted as an emotional state that is strategically employed by humans in order to guard themselves of the entities that are conceived to be ambiguous and unclassifiable. Kristeva argues that the feeling of abjection is essentially triggered by ambiguous entity that cannot be assimilated with the normative conceptual order and hence, such "lives are categorized as excluded, they are articulated by negation and its modalities, transgression, denial and repudiation. Their dynamic challenges the theory of unconsciousness, seeing that the latter is dependent on the dialectic of negativity".<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Sigmund Freud in his 1919 essay "The Uncanny" explains uncanny as a psychological experience that evokes feeling of dread, revulsion, and horror. Uncanny is the English translation of the word *Unheimlich* that literally means unhomely. It is a state of intellectual uncertainty where a person fails to accommodate the perceived entity within the normative categories that form our conceptual schema. Indistinguishable and unclassifiable entities evoke a feeling of uncanniness because they occupy an in-between state of being known and unknown.

<sup>92</sup>Julia Kristeva, *Power of Horror*, 6-7. Kristeva states that abjection is essentially different from uncanniness and more violent too. See also the article entitled "Abjection: A Definition for Discard Studies" by Mohammed Rafi Arefin. <https://discardstudies.com/2015/02/27/abjection-a-definition-for-discard-studies/>, accessed on 8

In the novel *Never Let Me Go*, Miss Emily says to Kathy and Tommy, “We’re all afraid of you. I myself had to fight back my dread for you almost every day I was at Hailsham”.<sup>93</sup>The classification of clones as nonhumans and the feeling of uncanniness that is stimulated by their sight correlate to Kennedy’s explanation of how the inadequacy of the phallogocentric medium to decipher the incomprehensibility and elusiveness of any entity relegates it to the negative classification of dirt and pollution. Notionally human conceptual schema is governed by logic and rationality and whenever reason fails to categorize entities that transgress the normative conceptual order, “it employs ‘dirt’ as the default category that appears in the absence of rational comprehensibility”.<sup>94</sup>Kathy recalls how the headmistress came to a halt when a group of students tried to block her path:

And I can still see it now, the shudder she seemed to be suppressing, the read dread that one of us would accidently brush against her [...] Ruth had been right: Madame was afraid of us. But she was afraid of us in the same way someone might be afraid of spiders. We hadn’t been ready for that. It had never occurred to us to wonder how we would feel, being seen like that, being the spiders.<sup>95</sup>

The nonhuman status of the clones as dramatized in *Never Let Me Go* resembles the dehumanized status of Frankenstein’s creature who is not acknowledged as the member of human moral community and hence is labeled as an outcast in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The clones are stripped of their socio-political rights and are conceived as reptilian creatures whose presence is abhorred by the guardians of Hailsham boarding school. In *On Garbage* (2005) John Scanlan states that garbage symbolizes the cut-off and detached remainder of living beings. The term metaphorically indicates the people, things, and activities that are separated, removed, and devalued. In other words, garbage replicates the shadowy part of the life that we tend to overlook. Scanlan further argues that garbage is the leftover, it is what remains when the good, fruitful, valuable, nourishing and useful have been taken. At the human level, garbage indicates “the removal of qualities, a violent stripping away of

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January 2018. Drawing on Kristeva’s psychoanalytic study of the notion of abjection, Arefin explains abjection as an emotional state that “occupies a liminal space between that which is expressive through language and that which radically resists expression. Studying waste through abjection means being cognizant of the way in which something beyond meaning is continually influential in how we make meaning. The uneasy relationship often causes meaning to breakdown, in this breakdown, the fragility of normative orders is exposed” (n. pag).

<sup>93</sup>Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 264.

<sup>94</sup>Kennedy, *An Ontology of Trash*, 6.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 35.

(positive) characteristics and consigns its victim to an indistinguishable mass, a state that ensures their treatment as rubbish”.<sup>96</sup> Drawing on John Scanlan’s explanation of trash, it may be argued that the human clones in Ishiguro’s novel may be classified as social garbage who are not acknowledged as the proprietors of their own body and are conceived as state’s property. In an article entitled “Scalpel and Metaphor” (2015) Sara Wasson argues that Ishiguro’s novel offers an ontological affinity between the life of the clones and the discarded rubbish. Throughout the novel, the clones are constantly reminded of the fact that they are categorized as social outcasts who are not acknowledged as members of a politically agentic community.<sup>97</sup>

The realization of being social outcasts is aptly dramatized in the “Portway Studio” episode of the novel.<sup>98</sup> Ruth draws attention of her friend Tommy and Kathy to the silver-haired lady who smiled and welcomed them to the art gallery and asked, “*Art Students, that’s what she thought we were, do you think she’d have talked to us like that if she’s know what we really were? [...] she would have thrown us out*”.<sup>99</sup> Wasson argues that apart from the clones’ own realization that they are conceived as social outcasts, there are other incidents in the novel that subtly throw light on the clones’ resemblance with trash. The last section in the novel that portrays Kathy standing outside a fenced ploughed land in Norfolk staring at the rubbish that are caught along the fencing offers a poignant example of the human clones’ status as a social outcast and their liminal location. The fenced ploughed land symbolizes the civilized and cultivated human community from which the clone Kathy is isolated. Kathy narrates:

I found I was standing before acres of ploughed earth. There was a fence keeping me from stepping into the field, with two lines of barbed wire [...] All along the fence, especially along the lower lines of wire, all sorts of rubbish had caught and tangled. It was like the debris you get on a sea-shore: the wind must have carried some of it for miles and miles before finally coming up against these trees and these two lines of wires.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>John Scanlan, *On Garbage* (London: Reaktion, 2005), 14.

<sup>97</sup>Sara Wasson, “Scalpel and Metaphor: The Ceremony of Organ Harvest in Gothic Science Fiction.” *Gothic Studies* 17.1 (2015): 104-142.

<sup>98</sup>Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 164.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 282.

In Ishiguro's novel, the human clones metaphorically as well as literally inhabit the fringes of the social structure and the normative human conceptual order. The physical existence of the human clones is not recognized by the members of the human community and the clones are conceived as *shadowy creature* with whom they do not want to establish a mutual humane relationship. In Ishiguro's novel like the underclass people whose biomatter is used to design the clones, the human clones are conceived as spectral beings whose socio-cultural and political status is not acknowledged by the members of the human community. Miss Emily says to Kathy and Tommy, "so for long time you were kept in shadows, and people did their best not to think about you. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you weren't really like us. That you were less than human, so didn't matter". She states to Tommy and Kathy that the indifference attitude of the normal humans towards the newly evolving life forms that are engineered in the laboratories for medical purposes has led to the classification of the clones as nonhumans. Miss Emily mourns the failure of the bioethicists to cope with the bioscientific experiments that has reconfigured the normative understanding of humans and humanness. In *Ontology of Trash* Kennedy argues that "ontological violence is the progenitor of trash"<sup>101</sup> and the act of not acknowledging the physical presence of a being is in itself an act of ontological violence. Kennedy states:

Violence implies the negation of the being that occurs at two levels: What typically goes for violence in everyday speech- ontic destruction or harm to a physical being- must be preceded by an ontological negation that denies the physicality of the physical being. Violence negates the physicality of the targeted being. This is most apparent in case of human beings. To do violence to a person means to deny that the person feels pain, suffers, cares for his existence is mortal [...] One can harm another when one does not discover oneself in the other. Violence in other words depends on not truly discovering the being of the other, not perceiving a person as person.<sup>102</sup>

An analogy may be drawn between the *shadowy*, liminal, and disposable status of the clones whose life is terminated post-organ extraction when they reach adulthood and Greg Kennedy's explanation of ontological hollowness of disposable commodities that are designed for a stipulated time frame after the expiry of which objects are classified as trash. Kennedy states, "ontological hollowness of disposable commodities evacuates their phenomenal being of physicality [...] Disposable commodities appear as always already disposed of. Their revelation presupposes their disappearances in the commodified order of

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<sup>101</sup>Kennedy, *Ontology of Trash*, 144.

<sup>102</sup>Kennedy, *Ontology of Trash*, 118.

technology”.<sup>103</sup> Similar to disposable entities, human clones in Ishiguro’s novel are designed to be exploited for therapeutic purposes and are then disposed of. Drawing on Kennedy it may be argued that the clones are like “carefree commodities”<sup>104</sup> that are created, reared, and supplied to the normal humans who are not obliged to take care of the bioengineered lives that are exploited for healing and rejuvenating their health and vitality. Kennedy argues that carefreeness is the real promise of technology.<sup>105</sup> Technology promises to liberate and disburden human beings from physically engaging with commodities through perpetual production of disposable items but this disposable feature of the consumerist culture is intertwined with the act of carefreeness that facilitates discarding of commodities inconsiderately thereby transforming those into trash.

A parallel may be drawn between the commodified status of the human clones and the medico-legal status of the surrogates as dramatized in Kishwar Desai’s *Origins of Love* in terms of how both exemplify Bauman’s idea of *wasted lives*. In the novel Desai depicts how in the current consumerist culture pharmaceutical industries and fertility clinics are facilitating online ordering and purchasing of reproductive gametes thereby promoting less physical involvement with the babies and the surrogates who are hired for procreating them. The novel offers a fictional representation of the working mechanism of the fertility clinics that promises to offer a carefree life to their clientele by assuring them to disburden them of the physical engagement and the emotional anxieties that are medically and imaginatively associated with child-birth. The promise of a carefree life assured by reproductive technology is amply replicated in the section of the novel where Sharmaji, the agent of the fertility clinic talks to Ben and Kate about the brochure that is being specifically designed to attract transnational clientele:

Don’t Worry Be Happy  
Just Come to Collect Your Baby  
Use our Courier Cryogenic Service  
At 100 per cent No Risk  
[...]

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 143-144.

<sup>104</sup>Kennedy, *An Ontology of Trash*, 122. Kennedy argues that in the current culture of consumerism, technology has disburdened us from most of the physical activities by producing carefree disposable commodities whose consumption do not require taking care of them. Thus, enabling the consumers to dispose commodities when the stated time span expires.

<sup>105</sup> Kennedy, *Ontology of Violence*, 122.

You and Your Wife Take Rest  
New Life- Cheap and Best<sup>106</sup>

Champa, the maid of the health minister Renu Mishra contemplates on how the developments in the domain of artificial reproductive technology has facilitated creation of a child “without the bother of pregnancy”<sup>107</sup> thus least affecting the daily course of action of the prospective commissioning parents. Champa says, “the best part was Renu-beti could work normally without a break, since Rohit (party worker in Renu Mishra’s office) pointed out, she didn’t really have to do anything”<sup>108</sup> because the fertility clinic has assured to arrange for a surrogate who will give birth to the baby but will not be medico-legally recognized as the mother of the child. Thus, the novel dramatizes how the carefree life assured by the medical practitioners have led to the classification of the surrogates as carefree commodities whose biological relatedness to the child is not legally acknowledged and are deprived of the health care facilities thereby converting them as disposable commodities that are created, used, and disposed of after the desired objective is accomplished.

An analogy may be drawn between the bioengineered lives stripped of political rights and are exploited for different therapeutic purposes and Giorgio Agamben’s concept of *bare life* discussed in *Homo Sacer* (1998). Agamben argues that the dominant Western political narratives operate on a binaristic understanding between bare life and political existence, *zoe* and *bios*, and exclusion and inclusion. While discussing the issues of biopolitics in the context of modern democracy, Agamben draws readers’ attention to the enigmatic figure of Homo Sacer in order to explain the political scenario of modern society.<sup>109</sup> Agamben states that the people who are incorporated within the zones of *bare life* are considered as the remainder of the destroyed political bios and Mitchell Travis argues that concept of *bare life* can be conceived as a potential theoretical tool in order to analyze the social and legal positions of the bioengineered beings like clones, cyborgs, and engineered embryos who are constantly challenging the normative understanding of humanness. In an article entitled

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<sup>106</sup>Desai, *Origins of Love*, 343.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 195.

<sup>108</sup>Desai, *Origins of Love*, 201.

<sup>109</sup>The word Homo denotes the human and the word Sacer carries double meaning. Sacer denotes being both sacred and profane. Homo Sacer is the being whom people have convicted of crime and hence, can be killed but not sacrificed. See Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998) for a better understanding of the interrelationship between the figure of Homo Sacer and the non-citizens.

“Bare Life and the Camps in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*” (2013) Arne De Boever draws a parallel between Agamben’s concept of *bare life* and the life of the clones dramatized in Ishiguro’s novel. Boever argues that the creation of the clones from the genetic material of the social outcasts places them in a contested position in a society that depends on them for their health and vitality but denies them a human way of life. In a similar vein, Pramod Nayar argues that the socio-cultural and political status of the human clones alludes to the figure of the *Homo Sacer* whose life can be terminated through legally and socially accepted procedure without attracting punishment from the state.<sup>110</sup>

Like the destroyed workshop of Victor Frankenstein that symbolizes as an epistemic space embodying the failure of the bioscientific experiment initiated in order to create a new paradigm of scientific knowledge in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, it may be argued that the human clones’ status as trash or abandoned being as dramatized in Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* is symbolically mediated through Hailsham School and the gallery that are now conceived as abandoned projects. Hailsham boarding school was once designated as a “shining beacon, an example of how we might move to a more humane and better way of doing things”<sup>111</sup> and the guardian of Hailsham Miss Emily reveals to Tommy and Kathy that the school was a social experiment that was started with an aim to prove to the world that the clones too are human and should be accorded human rights. Miss Emily announces to Tommy and Kathy:

Most importantly, we demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it is possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human beings. Before that, all clones-students, as we preferred to call you existed only to supply medical science. In the early days, after the war, that’s largely all you were to most people. Shadowy objects in the test tubes.<sup>112</sup>

At present, Hailsham is associated with the ruined, abandoned, discarded and nondescript infrastructures that Kathy, Tommy, and Ruth come across. Kathy narrates how the bleak, ruined, and empty infrastructure that she crosses while driving stimulates her memory of Hailsham:

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<sup>110</sup>See Pramod K. Nayar’s “Life Itself: The View from Disability Studies and Bioethics,” in *Posthumanism*, 100-124 (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2014).

<sup>111</sup>Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 253.

<sup>112</sup> Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 256.

Driving around the country now, I still see things that will remind me of Hailsham. I might pass the corner of a misty field, or see part of a large house in a distance as I come down the side of the valley, even a particular arrangement of popular trees up on a hill side, and I think: Maybe that's it! I've found it! This actually is Hailsham!' Then I see it is impossible and I go on driving, my thoughts drifting on elsewhere.<sup>113</sup>

The affinity of Hailsham with the notion of waste is further explored in the episode where Kathy, Tommy, Ruth travel to see the beached boat "stranded in the marshes".<sup>114</sup> Tommy states that the boat with its paint cracking and timber frame of the cabin crumbling resembles the present ruined state of Hailsham and Ruth connects the abandoned boat with a dream in which she finds herself in one of the closed rooms of Hailsham that transforms into a massive lake of rubbish, a waste land. Ruth describes her dream thus:

I was dreaming I was up in a Room 14. I knew the whole place had been shut down, but there I was, in Room 14, and I was looking out of the window and everything outside was flooded. Just like a giant lake. And I could see rubbish floating by under my window, empty drinks cartons, everything. But there wasn't any sense of panic or anything like that.<sup>115</sup>

Kelly Rich argues that the association of Hailsham with ruined and degraded entities symbolizes the acceptance of the institute's "status as a ruined experiment, an abandoned structure, or in Ruth's dream, a giant lake of trash".<sup>116</sup> The ruinous and abandoned image of Hailsham may be considered as symbolic extension of socio-political status of the clones who are engineered, used, and eventually discarded. In an article entitled "Trash and the Ends of Infrastructure" (2015) Michael Ty states:

The allocation of waste helps to constitute the mobile distinction between center and periphery on which very notion of infrastructure depends and demarcates, often more forcefully than political borders, what geographical zones are unlivable, what areas are subjected to abandonment, and what spaces are habitable only at great risk.<sup>117</sup>

Built at the fringes of the society, fenced and excluded from the human community Hailsham boarding school may be metaphorically denoted as a dump yard where all the discarded objects collected from the city are brought once in every month and are put to sale for the

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 212.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>116</sup>Kelly Rich "Look in Gutter", 642.

<sup>117</sup>Michael Ty, "Trash and the End of Infrastructure," *Modern Fiction Studies* 61.4 (2015): 606-607.

students. The episode where the students merrily exchange their hard-won token for the discarded objects symbolizes the exploitative and cannibalistic feature of the capitalist consumer society that transforms the human clones into biomedical trash by exploiting them for organ donation. The gallery in Hailsham that was used to archive the artworks of the students is another moving instance in the novel that symbolizes the clones' close affinity with the notion of waste. The artworks of the students that were conceived to be the extension and projection of the clones' inner selves, now occupy the dark chamber of an anonymous house where they have lost their purpose. The guardians painstakingly collected the arts to demonstrate to the world that the clones like normal humans have souls but with the failure of Hailsham as a social experiment, artworks too are now classified as wastes that are pruned and locked up in a house where Miss Emily is residing now.

In her study of *Never Let Me Go*, Nancy Armstrong draws on the concept of third person discussed by Roberto Esposito and argues that the clones in Ishiguro's novel occupy a position of third or non-person as they fail to establish an intersubjective relationship with the normal humans.<sup>118</sup> This is in correspondence to Bauman's notion of *wasted lives* in terms of both being agency-less entities. The concept of third person is explained by the French Linguist Emile Benveniste who makes a clear distinction between the first two personal pronouns, i.e. *I* and *You* and the third person pronouns like *he*, *she*, or *it*.<sup>119</sup> Benveniste argues that the first two personal pronouns are capable of entering into a dialogic relationship with each other whereas the third person always occupies an extraneous position in a conversation. He argues that "You is the alter ego of I. *You* is conceived always in relation to *I*. *You* is non-I-its reverse its shadow"<sup>120</sup> and Esposito in his book *Third Person* draws on Benveniste's concept for the purpose of analyzing the socio-political status of the life forms that has problematized our shared normative understanding of personhood. Esposito argues that the third person is not a person, it is merely conceived as a verbal form that is used to address non-person entities. Esposito states that "third person refers to something or someone that cannot be circumscribed within a specific subject- in the sense that it relates to everyone and

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<sup>118</sup>Nancy Armstrong, "The Affective Turn in Contemporary Fiction," *Contemporary Literature*. 55.3 (2014): 441-465. See also Roberto Esposito, *Third Person: Politics of Life and Philosophy of Impersonal* (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2012).

<sup>119</sup>Cited in Esposito's *Third Person*.

<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

no one- but more profoundly because it completely evades the dialogic regime of interlocution inside which the other two remain fixed”.<sup>121</sup>

In Ishiguro’s novel the human clones socio-politically, linguistically, and conceptually inhabit an extraneous position in relation to normative humanness. Their lack of main stream education, property rights, and ownership over their body places them outside the range of intersubjective relationship that is considered to be the criterion for accepting an individual as a person. The cognizance of the clones as nonhumans and their biomedical classification as organ donors throw light on the restricted notion of personhood that has led to the conversion of the genetically engineered being as biomedical trash. The classification of the clones as disposable entities correlates to Roberto Esposito’s argument that although the concept of personhood carries with it the universal value of legitimizing a being as a member of a moral community, the concept has failed to extend its scope to encompass the newly evolving engineered life forms. The concept of personhood is based on the superiority of the personal over impersonal objects and is thus ultimately overdetermined by humanist discourses. The lives that are provided with the credential of personhood in the discipline of law, philosophy, theology, and bioethics are considered as sacred and qualitatively significant. Esposito states that in order to assert one’s right as a member of the moral community and to be acknowledged as a subject who possesses the right to life, to well-being and to dignity, an individual is required to “enter into the enclosed space of the person. Conversely, in a similar fashion to be a person means to enjoy these rights in and of themselves [...] to be a legal person, entitled to certain inalienable rights, regardless of the status of their political membership.”<sup>122</sup>

The clones experience agentic crisis as they are deprived of, on the one hand, the citizenship rights that are accorded to the normal humans and on the other hand, ownership over their own body. Kelley Rich argues that the human clones in Ishiguro’s novel share an ambivalent relationship with their physical body that does not belong to them, thus dramatizing the issue of existential as well as biological ownership and agency in a dystopian biopolitical regime. The clones create their own form of jokes, imaginative play, and figurative languages in order to cognize the ambivalent relationship with their body and the

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>122</sup>Esposito, *Third Person*, 3.

plasticity of their being. Similar to Kureishi's novella "The Body" in *Never Let Me Go* the clones in a tragicomic manner denote their body as a costume or a bag that can be unzipped when they are required to donate organs. Kathy recalls, "the idea was that when the time comes, you'd be able just to unzip a bit of yourself, a kidney or something would slide out, and you'd hand it over [...] You unzipped your liver, say, and dumped it on someone's plate, that sort of things".<sup>123</sup> An analogy may be drawn between the clones' act of transforming unpleasant real life experiences into playful activities and Sigmund Freud's explanation of how play becomes an external manifestation of the process through which a child reconcile with its negative emotions and inner anxieties buried in unconscious mind.<sup>124</sup>

Freud argues that play as a socio-cultural and biological phenomenon offers a child a scope to evolve as an agentic being who is able to assert and have complete mastery over the temporary situation that is created by him outside the sphere of his ordinary life.<sup>125</sup> Freud states that in most cases it is observed that unpleasurable experiences become a subject of child's playful activity because it enables the child "to pass over from the passivity of experiences to the activity of game, he hands on the disagreeable experiences to one of his playmates and in this way avenges him on a substitute".<sup>126</sup> Thus, it may be argued that the playful activities and jokes created by clones can be conceived as micro-activities that are enacted by them for subverting their status as non-agentic and reified beings within the spatio-temporality created by their ludic narratives. The clones in Ishiguro's novel are doubly marginalized because of their possibilities of being modeled from people who are classified as *wasted lives* and their scripted bioengineered existence that label them as non-humans. The agentic crisis of the clones is aptly explained by Miss Lucy when she declares to the Hailsham students, "None of you will go to America, none of you will be film stars. And none of you will be working in supermarkets as I heard some of you planning the other day.

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<sup>123</sup>Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 86.

<sup>124</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, edited and translated by James Strachey (New York & London: W.W Norton, 1961).

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 10. See also *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (London: Routledge, 1944) by J. Huizinga. Like Freud, Huizinga argues that the binary between the playfulness and seriousness is always in a state of flux. Although the child is completely aware of the fact that he is pretending, he takes his playful world very seriously and invests large amount of emotion into it.

<sup>126</sup>Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," 601.

Your lives are set for you”.<sup>127</sup>Jeremy Rifkin argues that shopping mall as a hypercommodified dystopian space is “a creature of the suburban development” where lived experiences are spectacularly decked out and are displayed for immediate consumption.<sup>128</sup> Ishiguro’ *Never Let Me Go* thus foregrounds and dramatizes the dystopian situation of human clones who dream of liberating themselves and achieving a more human status by aspiring an alternative, albeit more human commodified space of supermarket employees, thus dramatizing different orders of reification and alienation.



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<sup>127</sup>Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 80.

<sup>128</sup>Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism* (New York: J.P Tarcher/Putnam, 2001), <https://books.google.co.in/books?id=70dEDgAAQBAJ&pg=PT168&dq=a+creature+of+the+suburban+development&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwin5LjdpebYAhVFvY8KHc8cBPAQ6AEINDAC#v=onepage&q&f=false>, accessed on 18 January 2018. See also Frank Trentmann’s *Empire of Things: How we Became a World of Consumers from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century* (United Kingdom: Penguin, 2016) and Mark Gottdiener’s (ed) *New Forms of Consumption: Consumers, Culture, and Commodification* (Oxford & New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000) for gaining better insight into the current culture of hypercapitalism and the subsequent commodification of human lives.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter concludes by stating that the dramatization of the underclass people and bioengineered lives in Kureishi's "The Body" and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* enables us to gain rich insight into the role of literature in unveiling the reification and alienation emerging out of neoliberal biocapitalism that converts bodies into purchasable commodities and reduces sections of humans into consumable entities. The literary works of Kureishi and Ishiguro offer fictional representations of how in the current capitalist consumerist society human body is classified as carefree disposable entities that are used for therapeutic and cosmetic purposes and then are cast off as biomedical waste. The fictional representations of the dehumanized status of the underclass people and bioengineered lives offer us scope to speculate on issues such as bioethics, agency, and humanness that have emerged with bioscientific developments in the domain of cloning and organ transplantation. Kureishi's "The Body" and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* offer a complex commentary and critique of the current culture of bioengineering and biocapitalism that we internalize and consume today.

The following chapter will examine the fictional representation of the working mechanism of the pharmaceutical industries and fertility clinics that collude with socio-culturally and financially privileged section of the society for the purpose of re-inscribing bionormative notions of family making. Through a close reading of Kishwar Desai's *Origins of Love*, the chapter will examine how the use of artificial reproductive technologies for screening and purchasing of reproductive gametes has revived the practice of eugenics in the age of biotechnology that is enmeshed with the concept of neoliberal biocapitalist consumption.

## CHAPTER FOUR

“These were made-to-order babies”: Reterritorialized Kinship and Artificial Reproductive Technology in Kishwar Desai’s *Origins of Love*

### 4.1 Introduction

In his 1932, dystopian novel *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley begins by describing the manufacturing process of the embryos that are produced in the reproductive factory known as the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. Huxley depicts how the director of the institute Mr. Thomas (Tomakin) is promoting the practice of industrialized breeding of babies by applying the principle of Fordist mass production to biology, thus dramatizing immediately the collusion between capitalism and bioscientific procreation in the novel. The director proudly explains to the students how the reproductive gametes are strictly monitored, gestated, and conditioned in vitro to conform to the hierarchical caste structure to which they are biologically determined to belong.<sup>1</sup> One of the employees of the reproductive factory, Mr. Henry Foster explains to the students:

“The lower the caste,” said Mr. Foster, “the shorter the oxygen,” The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy per cent of normal oxygen you got dwarfs. At less than seventy eyeless monsters.<sup>2</sup>

The passage reveals an easy equation between caste location and biomedical investment. A parallel may be drawn between the fictional representation of the practice of codifying and strict classification of the embryos based on the hereditary factors and prescribed class structures as illustrated in Huxley’s *Brave New World* and the neoliberal capitalist society where fertility industries promote the practice of cataloguing reproductive gametes based on class, and caste, and religious identity of the donor as dramatized in Kishwar Desai’s novel *Origins of Love* (2012) which this chapter seeks to examine.

Desai’s *Origins of Love* dramatizes how a section of society that is socio-culturally, politically, and financially privileged strategically uses artificial reproductive technology for

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<sup>1</sup>Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (United Kingdom: Chatto and Windus, 1932). The bioengineered children in the novel *Brave New World* are conditioned to belong to one of the five castes: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta or Epsilon.

<sup>2</sup>Huxley, *Brave New World*, 11.

the purpose of customizing and consolidating the heteronormative institution of kinship, despite the apparent intervention such technology makes in the ontology of organic procreation and parenting. As the first chapter of this thesis examined, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) foregrounds how the masculinist appropriation of the birth process with the help of artificial reproductive technology leads to the de-naturalization of nature and family structure. Recent literary texts like *Origins of Love* may be interpreted as fictions that throw light on how artificial reproductive technology is deployed for the purpose of re-establishing and reinforcing the bio-normative notion of family formation. In an allusion that also works as an intertextual reference in the context of this thesis, a character named Simran Singh in Desai's novel refers to artificial reproductive technology as "Frankenstein medicine"<sup>3</sup> that has stimulated bioethical issues with the growing acceptance of in vitro fertilization, surrogacy and gamete donation for designing customized babies with desired physical attributes, higher order intelligence and reasoning faculty as enlisted by the prospective parents.

In *The Future of Human Nature* (2003) Jurgen Habermas critiques the practice of genetic programming and argues that the autonomy offered to the parents to reconfigure the genetic configuration of the child has created "dedifferentiation" between the born and the made.<sup>4</sup> He further explains that the blurring of the binary between the born and the made might have a negative impact on the mental and physical development of the child. If the bioengineered children realize that they are the product of their parents' pre-fabricated aspirations then they might think of themselves as objects rather than subjects who are the authors of their own life. Habermas states that the realization of the fact that the child is living a genetically tailored life might lead to the development of an anxious self, arguing thus:

The genetic intervention carried out before we are born, the subjective nature we experience as being something we cannot dispose over is actually the result of an instrumentalization of a part of our nature. The realization that our hereditary factors were in the past before we are born are subjected to programming confront us on an existential level [sic].<sup>5</sup>

Desai's *Origins of Love* begins with the protagonist Simran Singh, a social worker who investigates the origin of the bioengineered baby named Amelia, born HIV-positive in a

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<sup>3</sup>Kishwar Desai's, *Origins of Love* (London and New Delhi: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 434.

<sup>4</sup>Jürgen Habermas, *The Future of Human Nature* (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2003) 40.

<sup>5</sup>Habermas, 53-54.

fertility clinic named Madonna and Child and the mysterious death of the baby's British parents in a car accident. The novel has multiple plotlines that weave in the life of fictional characters like Dr. Subhash and Dr. Anita Pandey who are the proprietors of the fertility clinic Madonna and Child. Kate and Ben are the British couple who desperately want a child and are exploring the possible options for visiting India in order to hire a surrogate. The other characters constitute the sixteen-year-old Sonia who signed as a surrogate in the fertility clinic of Dr. Subhash Pandey, the custom officer Dewan Nath Mehta who visits a cryobank in order to know the reason behind his wife's infertility and the health minister Renu Mishra who wants to have a legal heir for inheriting her political dynasty and visits Madonna and Child for designing a baby through IVF. Desai's *Origins of Love* speculates on the bioethical issues of reproductive tourism that has promoted the growth of multi-million-dollar surrogate industries in the 'Third World', catering to white wealthy consumers.<sup>6</sup> It also dramatizes the hygiene and hierarchy around caste in the Indian context and foregrounds how the same are extended and consolidated in a consumerist biomedical culture, while also offering a complex insight into the aspirations and anxieties in dominant Indian identity-politics.

In the era of commodified packaged mass culture, *Origins of Love* foregrounds the working mechanism of fertility clinics like Madonna and Child<sup>7</sup> and websites such as Mybaby.com that encourage clients for online ordering of surrogates and reproductive gametes and direct shipping of embryos to the Indian fertility clinics, if the prospective parents from the wealthy Western world are not able to visit the country, in a classic replication of overseas outsourced production in the 'Third World'. In sync with the production principles and selling strategies in an extreme biocapitalist commodity-culture, Dr. Subhash wants the fertility clinic's website to be well designed and insists on uploading better quality photographs of the surrogates in order to attract transnational clients. Thus, the

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<sup>6</sup>Reproductive tourism or "cross-border reproductive care" can be defined as a type of medical tourism in which patients travel to other states or countries seeking fertility treatment because those treatments are either expensive or not available in their country. See Raywant Deonandan "Recent Trends in Reproductive Tourism and International Surrogacy: Ethical Considerations and Challenges for Surrogacy", *Risk Management and Health Care Policy* 8 (2015): 111-119.

<sup>7</sup>In Desai's novel the fertility clinic named Madonna and Child evokes a biblical connotation. It refers to the biblical figure of Mother Mary with his son Jesus who is described in bible as the virgin goddess mother. Sharon Jacob in *Reading Mary Alongside Indian Surrogate Mothers: Violent Love, Oppressive Liberation, and Infancy Narrative* (United States: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) argues that in *Origins of Love*, Desai through the fertility clinic Madonna and Child offers a literary connection between the figure of Mother Mary who is described as a "savior-carrier, unblemished by the stain of intercourse her body being used for higher purposes" and the surrogate mothers who give birth to engineered babies that are designed through in vitro fertilization (xi). Jacob argues that in the current culture of artificial reproductive technology there is a revival of the notion of "virginal conception" (70).

novel dramatizes how the discourse of reproductive medicine is structured by a culture of bio-consumerism. The narrator explains:

Subhash looked at the photographs. With more expensive clothes, a protein-rich diet, bleach to lighten her skin, and may be some make up, Sonia could do. Better photographs would have to be taken (especially for the website, which was designed to appeal to Western tastes), in soft pastels and with floral borders...But everything could be photoshopped these days, so he was sure that the final, slightly out-of-focus photographs of Sonia and Sobhah on their websites, would make them look more middle class.<sup>8</sup>

Desai's novel throws light on how in the current culture of neoliberal consumerism, parents are unconsciously turned into consumers of bioengineered babies and the surrogates are conceived as collateral and dispensable entities that are exploited by the fertility industries for producing babies that are delivered to the wealthy white clientele. The novel depicts the current culture of reproductive medicine where reproductive labour is reified and alienated from its final form in a casteist capitalist kinship culture. Debora L. Spar argues that although parents are not necessarily driven by commercial motive and they hardly see themselves as shoppers of their offspring, the advancements in the domains of reproductive technologies have promoted the practice of baby shopping.<sup>9</sup> Spar argues that in the age of biocapitalism when the parents "buy eggs or sperms, when they contact a surrogate, when they implant an embryo they are doing business. Firms or the fertility clinics are making money, customers are making choices and babies for better or worse are commodified".<sup>10</sup> In a similar vein, Janice Raymond examines the irony in how the instrument of agency is enmeshed with consumerist codes in the current culture of artificial reproductive technology whereby the rhetoric of choice is synchronously and functionally linked to the right to consume.<sup>11</sup>

This chapter will discuss Desai's *Origins of Love* in order to examine how the novel is complexly reflective of the reproductive biotechnological practices that strategically reinscribe the notions of race, class, and caste as biological phenomena. The chapter will

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<sup>8</sup>Desai's *Origins of Love*, 26-27.

<sup>9</sup>Debora L. Spar, *The Baby Business: How Money, Science, and Politics Drive the Commerce of Conception* (Boston and Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press, 2006), ix-xix.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., xvi. See also the article titled "A Point of View: IVF and the Marketing of Hope" (2013) by Lisa Jardine, accessed on 5 March 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24652639>. In her article Jardine argues that the fertility clinics have turned into industries that promote commodification of hope by strategically veiling the failure and the risk factors of reproductive technology from the prospective parents who want to have children through IVF.

<sup>11</sup>Janice Raymond, *Women as Womb: Reproductive Technologies and the Battle over Women's Freedom* (Australia: Spinifex Press Ptv Ltd, 1993), 85-89.

examine how the growing acceptance among parents for the use of reproductive technologies such as pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) and the screening and purchasing of reproductive gametes for the creation of customized babies have revived the practice of eugenics in the current culture of human genetics that is enmeshed with the concept of neoliberal biocapitalist consumption. The first section of the chapter will discuss how the biomedical practitioners and the prospective parents deploy artificial reproductive technology for the purpose of reinforcing a selectionist, hierarchical, and phallogocentric architecture of family making. Anthropologists like Ben Campbell have discussed how developments in reproductive technologies have led to the denaturalization of family structure, whereas Charis Thompson's study foregrounds how technology is appropriated in order to re-inscribe the normative notion of family structure that is based on genetic relatedness.<sup>12</sup> Thomson throws light on the ambivalent nature of reproductive technology thus:

It is very difficult to decide whether the new reproductive technologies are best judged as innovative ways of breaking free of bondage to old cultural categories of affiliation or whether they are best denounced as part of the hegemonic reification of old stultifying ways of classifying and valuing human beings.<sup>13</sup>

In *Woman and Womb* (1993) Janice Raymond critiques the practice of procreating children through reproductive technology and considers the technology to be the perpetuator of the core values of phallogocentric ideologies that aim to control and colonize the female reproductive process as dramatized in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In this reading, reproductive technology is conceived to be an "unadulterated offspring of patriarchal science."<sup>14</sup> Raymond argues that on the one hand, developments in the domain of reproductive medicine have led to the classification of infertility as a kind of disease that can be cured through biotechnological intervention, and on the other hand has promoted the growth of *medicalized reproductive fundamentalism* that has "violated the integrity of the woman's body that are dangerous, destructive, debilitating, and demeaning- they are a form of medical violence against women".<sup>15</sup>

This chapter proposes to study Desai's *Origins of Love* as a literary piece that enables us to speculate on how biomedical consumers' acceptance of caste and class as biological

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<sup>12</sup>Charis Thompson, "Strategic Naturalizing: Kinship, Race, and Ethnicity", in *Making Parents: Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*, 143- 178. See also Ben Campbell's "Fields of Post-human Kinship". *Durham Research Online*, accessed on November 10, 2015. <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/15795/1/15795.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup>Charis Thompson, "Strategic Naturalizing", 177.

<sup>14</sup>Franklin, "Transbiology".

<sup>15</sup>Janice Raymond, *Women as Womb*, iv.

phenomena has led to the reinforcement of the racial binaries and caste and class hierarchies. The chapter draws on the concept of *re-naturalization* explained by Tamor Sharon in “Technologically Produced Nature” (2014) and connects it to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s notion of deterritorialization and re-territorialization in order to examine how the schizophrenic or deterritorializing potential of artificial reproductive technology is reconfigured by the medico-legal institutions in order to reterritorialize and consolidate the normative structure of family formation within the capitalist consumerist culture. The second section of the chapter seeks to examine the concept of neo-liberal eugenics as dramatized in *Origins of Love*. It will draw on Nikolas Rose’s work in *Politics of Life itself* which argues that in the age of human genomics there is a transition from the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics where the vital processes of the population were manipulated and controlled by the state in order to create a healthy nation on the concept of micro eugenics driven by consumers’ choice.<sup>16</sup>The chapter attempts to throw light on how bio-enhancement facilities that are opted by the parents for genetically configuring desired traits in their children have led to the rebirth of neoliberal eugenics practices that are enmeshed with state eugenics policies as argued by Caroline Schurr in an article entitled “From Biopolitics to Bioeconomics” (2017).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Nikolas Rose, *Politics of Life Itself*.

<sup>17</sup>Carolin Schurr, “From Biopolitics to Bioeconomies: The ART of (re-)producing white futures in Mexico’s Surrogate Market”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35.2 (2017): 241-262. Schurr’s arguments will be discussed in detail in the second section of this chapter.

## 4.2 Reinforcing the Bionormative Concept of Family-Making

As an integral component of our social situatedness and existential experientiality, kinship may be conceived as an immersive knowledge network that generates a sense of individual identity as well as a location in a specific collectivity. In *After Kinship* (2003) Janet Carsten argues that the notion of the family as a natural unit based on the biogenetic relatedness is being problematized by developments made in the domain of artificial reproductive technology (ART).<sup>18</sup> Technologization of biological phenomenon has reconfigured our fundamental assumptions about parenthood, kinship, and family. Sarah Franklin discusses artificial reproductive technologies like in vitro fertilization (IVF) as a “hybrid technology that reproduces conception as an *in vitro* replica of ‘natural existing biology’ and inaugurates a powerful new domain of ‘artificially constructed’ biology that is simultaneously understood to be ‘just like the real thing’ and completely different from it- being improved, redesigned, cleaner, and more manageable”.<sup>19</sup> In this reading of bio-designed bodies, technology becomes “second nature”<sup>20</sup> accepted as an alternative mode for procreating babies by the consumers of reproductive medicines.

Radical posthumanist thinkers like Judith Halberstarn and Ira Livingstone have argued that biomedical technologies like artificial reproductive technology have the potential for deconstructing the dualistic structure of a society shaped by ideologies of Humanism and Enlightenment that discursively operate “to domesticate and hierarchize differences within human (whether according to race, class, gender) and to absolutize difference between the human and the non-human”.<sup>21</sup> Normatively it is accepted that the hierarchical structure of society is to a large extent informed and overdetermined by a purely biological understanding of human body, whereby men and women are biologically differently structured and hence differently privileged.

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<sup>18</sup>Janet Carsten, *After Kinship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 7.

<sup>19</sup> Sarah Franklin, “Transbiology: A Feminist Cultural Account of Being After IVF,” *The Scholar and Feminist Online* 9.1-9.2 (2010/2011): 1-8. Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018, [http://sfonline.barnard.edu/reprotech/franklin\\_01.htm](http://sfonline.barnard.edu/reprotech/franklin_01.htm).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Judith Halberstarn and Ira Livingstone (Eds), *Posthuman Bodies* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995) 10.

In her book *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) Shulamith Firestone states that “the biology itself-procreation is at once the origin of dualism”.<sup>22</sup> Firestone further argues that the bio-normative architecture of the family is an external manifestation of this unequal power distribution. She states that, “the natural reproductive difference between the sexes led directly to the first division of labor and the origins of class, as well as furnishing the paradigm of caste (discrimination based on biological characteristics)”.<sup>23</sup> Like other radical posthumanist thinkers, Firestone optimistically states that genital differences between human being would no longer matter culturally if reproductive technologies are judiciously deployed for the elimination of uneven distribution of labour involved in the process of procreation. Use of reproductive technologies like ectogenesis<sup>24</sup> will disburden women from involving biologically in the process of procreation. Artificial reproductive technologies may be used to deconstruct the oppressive power structures like class and caste that are “set up by nature and reinforced by man”.<sup>25</sup> Firestone argues optimistically:

The reproduction of the species by one sex for the benefit of the both would be replaced by artificial reproduction; children would be born to both sexes equally or independently of either. The division of labor would be ended by the elimination of labor altogether (cybernation). The tyranny of the biological family would be broken. And with it, the psychology of power.<sup>26</sup>

In a similar vein, in her 1991 essay entitled “A Cyborg Manifesto” Donna Haraway argues that the transgressive nature of technoscience may offer us new political possibilities for deconstructing the patriarchal, phallogocentric, and heterosexual orders embedded in our understanding of the family structure, gender, and race. Sarah Franklin states that Haraway is considered to be the “torch-carrier of Firestone’s impatience with Goddess-loving, pregnancy-worshipping, feminist Luddities and her enthusiasm for technologically-assisted, disloyal, perverted evolution”.<sup>27</sup> In her manifesto, Haraway states that although the developments heralded by information and communication technology and biotechnology are

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<sup>22</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: A Bantam Book, 1970) 8.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>24</sup> Creation of a child artificially in vitro.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>27</sup> Franklin, “Transbiology”.

not gender, race, and class neutral, the image of the cyborg can be metaphorically exploited for the purpose of formulating a new political ideology for celebrating the deconstruction of the binaries between man and machine, nature and culture, and mind and body.

Haraway studies cyborg as an iconic image of “potent fusions and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as one part of the needed political work”.<sup>28</sup>Haraway’s argument is in consonance with the approach of radical posthumanism that perceives the blurring of the borderlines between human, non-human, and nature as potentially liberating. However, Tamar Sharon in “Technologically Produced Nature” (2014) offers a more complex understanding of the biotechnological practices that radical posthumanist thinkers unequivocally celebrate to be potentially liberating. Sharon argues that the schizophrenic deterritorializing potential of reproductive technology “to deconstruct the concept of nature is seen as constantly coming up against and being captured by legislative and discursive strategies that re-naturalize nature”.<sup>29</sup>Sharon appropriates and extends Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of schizophrenic deterritorialization and reterritorialization in the context of reproductive technology for the purpose of throwing light on how the society appropriates biotechnology for fulfilling its desired ends. Sharon’s essay offers an important intervention in an uncritical acceptance of technology as a liberating apparatus in feminist and radical posthumanist theory and instead examines how technological innovations may be implemented to further and perfect capitalist cultures of consumption and discrimination.

In *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972) Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari draw on the concept of schizophrenia for the purpose of examining the working mechanism of capitalism. They argue:

Capitalism embodies twofold movements of decoding or deterritorializing flows on the one hand, and their violent and artificial reterritorializing on the other. The more the capitalist machine deterritorializes [...] the more its ancillary apparatuses, such as government bureaucracies and the forces of law and order, do their utmost to reterritorialize, absorbing in the process a larger and larger share of surplus values.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth-Century”, in *Simians, Cyborgs and Woman: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books) 295.

<sup>29</sup>Tamar Sharon, “Technologically Produced Nature: Nature Beyond Schizophrenia and Paranoia”, in *Human Nature in the Age of Biotechnology: The Case of Mediated Posthumanism* (New York: Springer, 2014), 175.

<sup>30</sup>Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1972), 34.

Deleuze and Guattari explain schizophrenia as a process of deviating from accepted paradigms of societal institutions such as government and industrial organizations that are structured by the anthropomorphic norms for the purpose of producing and containing new collective subjectivities. This process of deviating from the accepted paradigm for producing new forms of epistemic system is defined as deterritorialization by Deleuze and Guattari.<sup>31</sup> The concept of reterritorialization denotes the process of channelizing the subversive potential onto fixed and conventional understanding in order to reinstate rather than invalidate hegemonic discourses. Deleuze and Guattari state that the structure of capitalism is formulated by both the schizophrenic and paranoid tendencies.<sup>32</sup> Sharon argues that the schizophrenic deterritorialization has a liberating effect because it possesses a positive and dynamic energy for deterritorializing individuals and collective identities from institutionally created restrictive forces. She states that the concept of deterritorializing is “inherently political. It contributes to the crumbling of the humanist barricades in the rising tides of posthumanity”.<sup>33</sup>

Sharon argues that the schizophrenic potential of reproductive technology to subvert the bionormative concept of family making is channelized and reconfigured by the biomedical practitioners, administrative staff of clinics, legislature, and the prospective parents in order to re-inscribe notions like biogenetic relatedness, nature, and parenthood that reterritorialize normative structures of sexuality and legacy. Sharon uses the term *re-naturalization* for the purpose of discussing how biomedical practitioners strategically use artificial reproduction for promoting biogenetic continuation between parents and their offspring. Sharon explains that the process of reterritorialization or re-naturalization foregrounds the strategies employed by the users of biotechnology for taming and disciplining the subversive traits of reproductive technologies. Sharon argues that “the biotechnologies present a schizophrenic potential to overcome the essentialisms and binaries of modernity, but in practice, the uses these technologies are put to restore foundational categories that are once more used to normalize and discipline”.<sup>34</sup> In a similar vein, and while examining the cultural significance of the emerging ART industry, Charis Thompson argues that the fertility clinics have become an important site for protecting and perpetuating the

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>33</sup>Sharon, “Technologically Produced Nature”, 179.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 180.

biogenetic notion of family-making. Thompson states that in the fertility clinics, certain kinds of kinship are produced, protected, and perpetuated whereas other forms of biological relatedness are undermined in order to facilitate couples who purchase bioengineered baby as a commodity. The purchasing couples are genetically related to the artificially produced baby and hence biotechnology here is employed in perfecting genetic narratives of privileged buyers and consumers, with agency equated almost entirely with purchasing capacity.

Thompson argues that all the other members such as the surrogate and the gamete donors are conceived as collateral “prosthetics”<sup>35</sup> deployed for the production of the baby and are effaced, anonymized and sometimes violently distanced from the produced babies, thus dramatizing the classic-Marxist ideas of alienation and reification in an extreme biocapitalist culture of production and consumption. The clinics prioritize the procreative intention of the parents who are biogenetically related to the baby in order to “disambiguate the relevant kinship categories” that are created by the practice of reproductive medicine.<sup>36</sup> This is done through a process of naturalization of high-end biocapitalism and a strategically sentimental celebration of the human-kinship narrative in a bid to conceal the artificiality of the operative reproductive technology with the human happiness quotient. In a compelling study of the collusion between ART and dominant discourse of human hierarchy, Seline Szkupinski Quiroga argues that the desire for guarding racial purity of the child underlies the use of reproductive technology.<sup>37</sup> Reproductive technology is embedded in ideologies of genetic essentialism<sup>38</sup> and racial purity and the biomedical practitioners reinforce, reproduce, and reinscribe these social inequalities via assisted reproduction, in complete collusion with capitalist principles of production and consumption. Quiroga explains:

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>36</sup> Thompson, *Making Parents*, 5. See also, Sarah Franklin, *Biological Relatives: IVF, Stem Cells, and the Future of Kinship* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013). In this book, Sarah Franklin argues that in the current culture of genetic engineering the use of in vitro fertilization for designing babies has become a normative phenomenon. Franklin further states that IVF as a technology is internalized as a “more routine, more naturalized and normalized, more regular and even quotidian or ordinary” because it protects and reproduces the dominant patterns of kinship, parenthood, and reproduction (6).

<sup>37</sup>Seline Szkupinski Quiroga, “Blood is Thicker than Water: Policing Donor Insemination and the Production of Whiteness,” *Hypatia* 22.2 (2007): 143-161.

<sup>38</sup> Genetic essentialism may be defined as a reductionist approach that considers gene as the essence and the primary constituent for defining who we are as humans. Hence, genetic relatedness of a child with its parents is considered to be an important determining factor for medico-legally granting parental rights. See Jennifer S. Hendricks, “Genetic Essentialism in Family Law,” *Health Matrix: The Journal of Law and Medicine* 26.1 (2016): 109-122.

Cultural beliefs about race, purity, and heredity that shape the white heteropatriarchal kinship model are driving forces behind the popularity of ARTs. The medical definition of infertility and corresponding recommended treatments reinforce the importance of privileging genetic ties. Using biomedical interventions to preserve genetic continuity is the favored course of treatment for infertility. In this way, ARTs can be easily understood as cultural practices that support white-centric race-based social hierarchies. The ways ARTs are organized and deployed further supports the white heteropatriarchal model of family, which implicitly guides the actions of biomedical practitioners.<sup>39</sup>

Desai's *Origins of Love* offers a fictional representation of this process of *re-naturalization* of artificial reproductive technologies that operate with the logic of industrial production and consumer-satisfaction.<sup>40</sup> Desai throws light on how in the current culture of reproductive technology, prospective parents like Kate support the use of artificial reproduction because it allows them to have children with whom they will be able to share genetic and biological relatedness, in a re-inscription of natural human kinship with the aid of medical machine. Kate expresses her desire to have a child who will inherit her and her husband Ben's genetic traits and explains to Ben that through in vitro fertilization (IVF) it will be possible for her "to gift him a child that bore his DNA...it was a sign of her love for him".<sup>41</sup> The narrator explains the reason behind Kate's preference for IVF thus:

Perhaps she too thought that hiring a surrogate was the only way out. Faced with Kate's single-minded determination how could he ever talk to her about adoption? She would reject it outright. She wanted a child with their DNA, their genes, their hair, and their eyes-she would never settle for a child who might have nothing to do with them.<sup>42</sup>

*Origins of Love* dramatizes how in the context of gestational surrogacy,<sup>43</sup> a web of relationships is configured and reconfigured by the biomedical practitioners and

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 147.

<sup>40</sup>Consumer-satisfaction is a marketing term that is used to gauge and explain how customers are responding to products or services that are launched in the market. Richard L. Oliver in his book *Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer* (New York: M.E Sharpe, 2010) defines consumer satisfaction as "the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgement that a product or a service feature or the product or service itself provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under-or-over-fulfilment" (13). See also Nigel Hill, Gerg Roche, and Rachel Allen, *Customer Satisfaction: The Customer Experience Through the Customer's Eye* (London: Cogent, 2007).

<sup>41</sup>Desai, *Origins of Love*, 281.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>43</sup>Gestational surrogacy may be defined as a medico-legal arrangement where the woman who is hired is not genetically related to the baby she gives birth to and hence is not granted parental rights. Reproductive gametes

commissioning parents in order to extend and re-inscribe the concept of genetic essentialism in the formation of family. Sonia the surrogate who is hired by the politician Renu Mishra is neither medico-legally nor socially acknowledged as the mother of the child she conceives. Rohit the party worker explains to the maid of Renu Mishra that in the current culture of “made-to-order-babies Renu Madam would definitely be successful. It would be as though she had borne it herself, but without the bother of pregnancy”.<sup>44</sup>

In an examination of the industry of bioengineered baby-production and its treatment of surrogates, Sucharita Sarkar argues that posthumanization of the process of procreation has turned surrogates into commodified entities that are purchased by the capitalist clientele for designing babies.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, one can relate issues of embodiment, parenthood, identity and agency that are problematized with the act of surrogacy. In Desai’s novel, the surrogate Sonia says that she feels like an insentient animal or an incubator that is being exploited for producing babies. In this context, one may refer to the book entitled *The Mother Machine* (1985) by Gena Corea in which she states, “the commercial promoters of surrogacy commonly describe the surrogate mothers as inanimate objects: mere “hatcheries”, “plumbing”, or “rented property”- things without emotions which could make no claim on others”.<sup>46</sup> Preeti in *Origins of Love* recalls how the hospital administrators train the surrogates to think of their womb as a machine that can be transformed into a commodity. The narrator explains the dilemma of the surrogates like Sonia and Preeti who struggle to negotiate between the training they receive in the fertility clinic and their existential experiences as biological mothers thus:

Yet, Preeti was sympathetic. In the lessons they had been given in the hospital they had been clearly told that they had to divide their heads from their hearts and realize from day one that they should have no emotional attachments to the child in their

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used for the production of the baby through in vitro fertilization are derived from the commissioning parents. See Peter R. Brinsden, “Gestational Surrogacy,” *Human Reproduction Update* 9.5 (2003): 483-491.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 195.

<sup>45</sup>Sucharita Sarkar, “Durga, Supermom, and the Posthuman Mother”, in *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Future*, edited by D. Banerji and M.R. Paranjape, 159-176 (India: Springer, 2016).

<sup>46</sup> Gena Corea, *The Mother Machine: Reproductive Technologies from Artificial Insemination to Artificial Wombs* (United Kingdom: Harpercollins, 1985), 222. See also the 2017 published article by Sharmila Rudrappa entitled “India Outlawed Commercial Surrogacy- clinics are finding loopholes.” *The Conversation*, accessed on 27 April 2018 <https://theconversation.com/india-outlawed-commercial-surrogacy-clinics-are-finding-loopholes-81784>. In her article Rudrappa discusses the recent banning of commercial surrogacy by the government of India. Rudrappa states, “now only so-called “altruistic surrogacy” is allowed- when a consenting female family member bears a child for a heterosexual childless Indian couple”.

womb. But was that really possible? After all, they had carried the child for nine months, fed it with their blood.<sup>47</sup>

The mind-body dualism dramatized in Desai's *Origins of Love* is in consonance with Kalindi Vora's discussion of how the Western biomedical understanding of the body as machine is amply applied in the context of gestational surrogacy where the doctors and the administrators of the fertility clinic encourage the surrogates to think of their bodies as machines that remain detached from their selves.<sup>48</sup> Vora explains the estrangement thus:

This understanding of their womb as independent of their selves allows surrogates to distinguish surrogacy from infidelity and to conceive of gestation as a form of work. These understandings combine with the technologies that isolate and disperse procreation in a way that allows for the alienation of the womb and mothering necessary for commodification.<sup>49</sup>

Vora's article throws light on how the practice of prioritizing the genetic based model of parentage and the distancing of the surrogate from the fetus have led to the re-inscription of the mind-body dualism and their different prestige quotients in the narratives of artificial reproduction. Such reading reveals how surrogates embody the carrier-selves whose corporeality is strictly utility-based in quality and is divorced from dominant orders of social agency.

An analogy may be drawn between Karl Marx's theory of alienation explained in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844* and the estrangement experienced by the surrogates in the current culture of reproductive technology. Marx argues that under the capitalist condition, the workers are alienated from the process of production and the product. In the modern industrial condition, workers are not conceived as agentic selves. Similarly, in the context of fertility industries, the surrogate is alienated from her reproductive labor because she is disassociated emotionally and biologically from the child she brings forth. In "Marxism and Surrogacy" (1989) Kelly Oliver draws on the Marxist framework in order to define surrogacy arrangement as an estranged relationship, thus underlining the embodied and experiential dimensions of the classic-Marxist terms alienation and reification in the context of surrogacy, as examined earlier in this chapter. Oliver argues that the concept of

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 288.

<sup>48</sup>Kalindi Vora, "India Transnational Surrogacy and the Commodification of Vital Energy", *Subjectivity* 28.1 (2009): 266-278.

<sup>49</sup>Vora, "Transnational Surrogacy and Commodification of Vital Energy", 273

estranged labor is amply applied in the context of surrogacy because a surrogate is “doubly estranged” from her body, reproductive labor and the baby that are reified and are transformed into commercial products purchased by the commissioning parents.<sup>50</sup> The surrogate is conceived as a passive incubator whose purpose is to produce a flawless product.<sup>51</sup> She thus emerges as a collateral identity devoid of any agency in the production-consumption economy of the ART industry.

Drawing on classic-Marxist discourses Elizabeth S. Anderson in “Is Woman’s Labor a Commodity?” (1990) argues that the application of commercial norms to woman’s reproductive labor reduces the surrogate from a person worthy of respect to a mere object. The legal strategies implemented by the commissioning parents and the medical practitioners to repress the parental love the surrogate feels for the child have led to the conversion of the surrogate’s reproductive labor into an alienated labor.<sup>52</sup> She thus emerges as a mere utility-based body who performs a temporary carrier-function in the ART industry, denied any social agency and emotional kinship with the human commodity of the bioengineered child she carries in her body. The commodification of surrogates and the babies throws light on new forms of unequal exchanges that are allied to the notions of neo-colonialism and neo-cannibalism in a neoliberal consumerist economy. It is interesting to note how in the current

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<sup>50</sup>Kelly Oliver, “Marxism and Surrogacy,” *Hypatia* 4.5 (1989), 105.

<sup>51</sup>See Seth Mydans’ article entitled “Surrogacy Denied Custody of Child.” *New York Times*(1990), accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/23/us/surrogate-denied-custody-of-child.html>. In October 23<sup>rd</sup>, *New York Times* published an article on child custody where the gestational surrogate Anna L. Johnson’s request for granting her parental rights to the child she gave birth to was denied by the court. Mrs. Johnson argued that although the child is not biologically related to her, she had bonded with the child during her pregnancy and had given birth to him. Hence, the court should allow her to share parental rights but the court denied the surrogate mother’s request for parental rights and argued that Mrs. Johnson “had served in the transitory role of a foster parent” (n.pag). The Judge Parslow argues that the surrogate mother Mrs. Johnson served for nine months as a “‘home’ for an embryo that was the product of an in vitro fertilization by its genetic parents” (n.pag), hence the biological relatedness of the child with the surrogate mother will not be legally acknowledged.

<sup>52</sup>See Brandon Showalter’s article titled “Washington State to ‘Monetize Wombs’, Legalize ‘Baby Selling’, Redefine ‘Parent’.” *The Christian Post*, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2018, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018. <https://www.christianpost.com/news/washington-state-to-monetize-wombs-legalize-baby-selling-redefine-parent-219933/>. The article discusses the impact of legislative act titled “Uniform Parentage Act” on the parent-child relationship which will soon be legally enforced in Washington state. Showalter argues that the enforcement of the legislative act will legalize commercial surrogacy which will by default promote the existing global market for baby selling. In her interview with Showalter, Kathy Faust, the head of the children rights organization named Them Before Us states, “once you legalize something and commercialize something, you’re going to set more of it... Washington legislation contains no restriction and more economically disadvantaged and vulnerable women who think this is just another way to make money will be exploited” (n.pag).

culture of “baby shopping”<sup>53</sup> notions of property and ownership are extended to human body.<sup>54</sup>

Advancement in the domain of biomedical surgeries and the rapid growth in medical tourism have further amplified the existing division between First World/Third World, center/periphery, haves/have not-s. In *Origins of Love* the doctor named Maria Hansen of the fertility clinic Mybaby.com says to Simran Singh that in the current culture of biocapitalism Third World countries like India are conceived as potential hubs for manufacturing “an army of surrogates for producing children for the Western world”.<sup>55</sup> Sharon Jacob argues that the rise in the surrogacy industry “has created a new class of proletariat in India. The meaning of labor is redefined as the maternal body of the Indian surrogate mother laboring for another is exchanged for a price in the free market system”.<sup>56</sup> The socio-cultural status of the fictional characters like Sonia and Preeti in Desai’s novel throws light on how the surrogates are conceived as dispensable entities who are subjected to strict medical surveillance and are not medico-legally acknowledged as the proprietor of their progeny and their body. The dehumanized status and the alienation of labor experienced by the surrogates appear to corroborate Francis Fukuyama’s argument that the human agency is compromised in the era

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<sup>53</sup>Spar, *The Baby Business*, xi.

<sup>54</sup>Growing acceptance of the use of artificial reproductive technology has led to the reinforcement of proprietary concept of parenting that is based on the belief that parents have the authority to govern the life of their children because they have exerted themselves in bringing their children into existence. William Shakespeare’s plays like *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1601), *King Lear* (1601), and *The Tempest* (1611) dramatize the proprietary concept of parenting that historically informed the ideology of parenting in Elizabethan England. The plays fictionally explore how the autonomy of the children were compromised in Elizabethan England where the state and the church grant supreme rights to parents, especially the father to govern the life of their children. The father-daughter relationships of Eugenes and Hermia, Miranda and Prospero, King Lear and Cordelia throw light on how the daughters are bound to live a scripted life as decided by their fathers. In the current culture of genetic engineering we notice a revival of the proprietary concept of parenting that is perpetuated by biotechnological practices like pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) that enable parents to configure and reconfigure desirable genetic traits in the child they design through in vitro fertilization (IVF). These biomedical practices have triggered ethical debates related to the notion of children’s autonomy and parenthood.

Jodi Picoult’s *My Sister’s Keeper* (New York & London: Atria Books, 2004) fictionally explores the ethical issues related to proprietary concept of parenting and agentic crisis of a genetically tailored child through the character of Anna Fitzgerald. In the novel, Picoult foregrounds how the thirteen-year-old protagonist Anna perceives herself as a biomedical commodity that is being manufactured by her parents in order to serve as spare parts for Kate, her elder sister who is suffering from leukemia. Anna is a designer baby who is conceived by means of IVF and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) in order to become a perfect genetic match for her sister. Ann often enquires, what would have happened to her if Kate had been healthy. She says, “Chances are, I’d still be floating up in the Heaven or wherever, waiting to be attached to a body to spend some time on earth” (8).

<sup>55</sup>Desai, *Origins of Love*, 265.

<sup>56</sup>Sharon Jacob, *Reading Mary Alongside Indian Surrogate Mothers*, xiii.

of genetic engineering and has led to the creation of a class-based hierarchical society.<sup>57</sup> Fukuyama states that the domain of human genetics is haunted by the spectral presence of eugenics and this chapter is in consonance with Fukuyama's argument that developments in the domain of bio-enhancement technologies like artificial reproduction have further intensified the existing social inequalities. Fukuyama expresses his concerns related to the biotechnological developments thus:

As we discover not just correlations but actual molecular pathways between genes and traits like intelligence, aggression, sexual identity, alcoholism and the like, it will inevitably occur to people that they can make use of this for particular social ends. This will play itself out as a series of ethical questions facing individual parents and also as a political issue that may someday come to dominate politics. If wealthy parents suddenly have open to them the opportunity to increase the intelligence of their children as well as that of all their subsequent descendants, then we have the making not just of a moral dilemma but of a full-scale class war [sic].<sup>58</sup>

Charis Thompson argues that although in the current culture of reproductive technology it is possible for a child to share biological substance with multiple individuals, legally parental rights are accorded to the commissioning parents of the child born to a surrogate.<sup>59</sup> Thus this medico-legal entanglement clinically re-inscribes the heteropatriarchal model of family which artificial reproductive technology was originally supposed to have problematized, in a classic instantiation of Deleuze's ideas of re-territorialization as a post-deterritorialization phenomenon in a clinically capitalist economy. The re-inscription of the bio-normative concept of family-making as dramatized in *Origins of Love* may be interpreted as an ironic fulfillment of Victor Frankenstein's dream of re-establishing the heteronormative and phallogocentric notion of family formation by annihilating the progeny he engineered. In one of the episodes in the novel *Origins of Love*, when the social worker Simran Singh requests the proprietors of the fertility clinic Madonna and Child to encourage and advise the infertile couple adoption as a possible solution, Dr. Anita Pandey states that the reason behind the success of ART industry lies largely in its assured reified retention of genetic relatedness and racial purity of the child. Hence, ART offers a more desirable option than

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<sup>57</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Starus, and Giroux, 2002).

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>59</sup>Charis Thompson, "Strategic Kinship".

adoption for buyers anxious to preserve their racial and genetic hygiene, with the added dimension of the hygiene of caste in the Indian context of Desai's novel.

Desai's fictional exploration of the politics of parenting in the current culture of reproductive medicine is in consonance with Dorothy Roberts arguments discussed in an article entitled "Race and New Reproduction" (1996). Roberts argues that reproductive technologies are "more conforming than liberating: they are more often than not reinforce the status quo than challenge it" [sic].<sup>60</sup> Reproductive technology does not subvert the bionormative understanding of family making, rather it enables the infertile couples to have children who are genetically related to them, thus protecting and perpetuating the heteronormative architecture of the family.<sup>61</sup> In "Race, Gender, and Technologies" (2009) Dorothy Roberts amply argues that the fertility clinic's incorporation of race as a criterion for the selection of reproductive gamete has led to the "erroneous belief that race is a biological classification that can be determined genetically or the genetic traits occur in human beings according to their race".<sup>62</sup> Social scientists' arguments that race is an invented social grouping is validated by the genomic studies of human variation including the Human Genome Project but the use of race in genetic research and biotechnology has reconfigured assisted reproduction as a race-based medicine.<sup>63</sup> Dorothy Roberts argues that the knowledge of genetic differences has promoted research in the domain of race-based medicine which is not merely scientifically flawed but is also politically dangerous. Roberts states, "By reinforcing a biological definition of race and cure for health disparities that are false, race-based

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<sup>60</sup>Dorothy E. Roberts, "Race and New Reproduction," *Faculty Scholarship*, 935.

<sup>61</sup>See also the article by Jennifer Maher entitled "Something Else Besides a Father" *Feminist Media Studies* 14.5 (2014): 853-867. Maher argues that "assisted reproduction resides in a tenuous rhetorical space, with one foot in a discourse of nature- of course every woman longs for a family- and the other is medical technology. For assisted reproductive technology to be palatable enough for the mainstream, its rhetoric constantly (re) mobilized on the nature side of the equation and away from its sci-fic dystopian connotation" (860). In the narrative of biomedicine reproductive technology is explained as a form of assistance that is offered in order to enable nature to perform its natural course of procreation. Rather than portraying artificial reproductive technology as a subversive force that denaturalize the organic order of procreation, "it is packaged as a path through which to make mothers when Mother nature needs little help" (860).

<sup>62</sup>Dorothy E. Roberts, "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?" *Faculty Scholarship*, 781.

<sup>63</sup> The Human Genome Project (HGP) was an international collaborative programme started in the year 1990. The Human Genome Project was developed in collaboration with the United States, Department of Energy and its goal was to complete the mapping and understanding of all the genes of human being. The Human Genome Project revealed that there are probably about 20,500 human genes. On 26 June 2000, the Democrat US president Bill Clinton on the basis of the report submitted by the scientists associated with the Human Genome Project, declared that human beings regardless of "race are 99.9 percent the same". See Dorothy Roberts, *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Recreate Race in the Twenty First Century*. (New York & London: The New Press, 2012).

medicine supports a new biopolitics of race, that threatens to make health and other social inequalities even worse”.<sup>64</sup>

By the middle of the twentieth century, social scientists had optimistically stated that the developments in the domain of natural sciences will eliminate biology as an important factor in determining human behaviors. In *Ethnicity and Race* (1998) Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann describe race as a social phenomenon that is configured and reconfigured by the political, economic, and historical contexts in which it is embedded (cited in Morning 2012).<sup>65</sup> Ann Morning argues that “race as a social product can be found at all levels of the disciplinary literature, the constructivist perspective on race has become an article of conventional wisdom in contemporary sociology”.<sup>66</sup> It was scientifically proven that human beings irrespective of the racial and ethnic categorization “appear to be remarkably homogenous species which support our post Enlightenment moral intuition concerning the universal dignity of all people”.<sup>67</sup> However Francis Fukuyama in *Our Posthuman Future* argues that knowledge of genetic differences has continued to inform the research of human genetics. Fukuyama states that although the notion of “scientific racism”<sup>68</sup> is empirically proven to be invalid, the accumulation of knowledge about the genetic differences among the different human races has continued to cause endless medico-legal and political controversies. Fukuyama argues:

Even if we do not posit any break-through in genetic engineering that will allow us to manipulate intelligence, the sheer accumulation of knowledge about genes and behavior will have political consequences. Some of the consequences may be very good [...] on the other hand, the life science may give us news we would rather not hear. The political firestorm set up by Bell curve will not be the last on this subject, and the flames will be fed by further research in genetic, cognitive, neuroscience, and molecular biology [sic].<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Dorothy Roberts, “What’s Wrong with Race-Based Medicine? Genes, Drugs, and Health Disparities”, *Minnesota Journal of Law, Science and Technology* 12.1 (2011), 10. Roberts arguments basically focus on the race-based medicine known as BiDiI that is manufactured by a pharmaceutical company for curing heart diseases of the African American citizens.

<sup>65</sup>Ann Morning, “Everyone knows it’s a Social Construct: Contemporary Science and the Nature of Race,” *Sociological Focus* 40.4 (2012): 436.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future*, 39.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Cited in Fukuyama’s *Our Posthuman Future*. In their book *The Bell Curve* (1994) Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein argue that intelligence is largely inherited. Murray and Herrnstein say that “60% to 70% of the variance in intelligence was due to genes, the rest to environmental factors [...] Genes and not social background will be the key to success” (25-26).

The passage in the novel *Origins of Love* where Dewan Nath Mehta visits a cryobank in order to take his fertility report aptly captures how the biomedical practitioners commercially consolidate the belief that socially constructed phenomena such as race, caste, and religion are biologically configured. Mehta is advised by the clinician to select a gamete donor and to create a baby through IVF. Following the advice, Mehta randomly chooses a donor but the clinician refuses to proceed with the medical procedures stating, “*Arrey baba*, he is a Muslim, and you are a Hindu? No, no, we don’t encourage that because later you can say we gave you wrong advice?”<sup>70</sup> The clinician’s reluctance to forgo the religion, caste and racial binaries throw light on the fact that the practice of assisted reproduction is strictly guided by the notion of purity and anxiety of contamination in complete consonance with hierarchical hygiene-based norms which are discursively determined. Thus, it is clearly demonstrated that far from unsettling the institution of family, the medical technology assisting reproduction here acts as a strong consolidation of phallogocentric family production in complete and clinical collusion with capitalist and consumerist principles of hygiene and purity.

The novel further explores how reproductive medicine is deployed by the proprietors of the fertility industries in the passage where the social worker Simran Singh visits a cryobank in order to study how the fertility industries operate in India. She is surprised to know about the selection criteria that are being applied for purchasing reproductive cells. A baffled Simran exclaims, “you can check DNA but surely not caste”.<sup>71</sup> The manager who is in-charge of the clinic explains:

What caste are you looking for? Madam, that’s how we like to do it. The genetic pool is kept clean. It is the child of the family. The same caste...Otherwise, Madam, you

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<sup>70</sup> Desai, *Origins of Love*, 323.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 172. Similar to the Indian context, the donation and selection procedures of reproductive gametes in the fertility industries in USA are informed by the heteronormative notion of family and normative gender performances. Although caste is not taken as a criterion for selecting gamete donors, in USA, “differently sexed and gendered bodies” who are considered to be not allied to procreativity are not encouraged to donate or biologically participate in the process of procreating babies through artificial reproductive technology. Laura Halcomb’s study of the reproductive industries in USA throws light on how the fertility clinics encourage white, tall, educated men with normative sexual and gender orientation for donating reproductive gamete, thus upholding hegemonic masculine ideals. See Laura Halcomb, “Constructing Parents: The Heteronormative Recruitment of Sperm and Egg Donors in the Reproductive Market.” Master’s Thesis, University of Houston, 2015, accessed on 15 April 2018. <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/uh-ir/bitstream/handle/10657/1828/HALCOMB-THESIS-2015.pdf>.

know how worrying it is- lower castes can pollute the Brahmins. I know that in South India there are sperm banks only for Brahmins. No one else can go there!<sup>72</sup>

The manager's explanation of the caste-based-cataloguing of reproductive cells foregrounds how the consumers' choices are linked to social demands and desires that are enmeshed with the market of consumer culture. Simran's interaction with the manager enables us to reflect on how the hierarchical structure of society is vigilantly guarded by the medical practitioners thereby reinforcing the notion of racial and caste purity. Desai's *Origins of Love* dramatizes how the characters in the novel conceive artificial reproductive technology as a means through which it is possible to create a legitimate political heir. Renu Mishra, a politician who holds a respectable position but has no political heir to whom she can leave her wealth and political legacy, is advised by her maid Champa to have a baby through IVF because it will enable her to beget a child with her genes and political mantle. The episode where Renu Mishra visits Madonna and child with an intention to create a baby of her choice deserves close reading as she enquires to Dr. Subhash and Anita Pandey about the artificial baby-making process:

I understand that you provide surrogacy here, right? That's what I have come to discuss. Firstly, I would like to have a child. Secondly, I need to be very sure that it does not suffer from any physical and mental disability. Thirdly, the child should carry my and Vineet Bhai's genes...I need to do all this for the future of my party-I don't have a political heir and this has become very important in recent days.<sup>73</sup>

Through the character portrayal of two Brahmin politicians Renu Mishra and Vineet Bhai, Desai offers a fictional representation of how the caste ideologies are strategically and covertly applied by the consumers of reproductive technology while selecting surrogates and gamete donors for designing babies. Renu Mishra and Vineet Bhai plan to hire Sonia, a Dalit woman as surrogate to carry their baby who will be genetically related to them in order to create a political dynasty that will appeal to a larger pool of voters, foregrounding a complex entanglement of dynastic and identity-based markers characterizing Indian political and electoral systems. Vineet Bhai justifies his choice of Sonia as a surrogate thus:

One of your potential surrogates, Sonia, lives in one of our servant quarters. I would like her to carry the child. As I said, she is actually a Dalit, and when the child is born,

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 172-173.

<sup>73</sup>Desai, *Origins of Love*, 249.

I will take it from her...For the sake of authenticity, we are prepared to forgo the issue of racial purity. Strictly speaking we should get a Brahmin girl, but politically that doesn't seem like a good idea. This will be a masterstroke.<sup>74</sup>

In “Biosociality and Biocrossing” (2008) Aditya Bharadwaj argues that although in the domain of anthropology and sociology we are aware of how developments in genetic engineering have problematized the normative understanding of reproduction and family making, it is observed that patients, clinicians, and scientists tend not to think critically about how technocratic biomedicine has deconstructed the binary between nature and culture.<sup>75</sup> Instead, attempt is made to appropriate the “supposed difference into familiar categories (kinship and relatedness)”.<sup>76</sup> In a similar vein, in “Race and a Transnational Reproductive Caste System” (2014) Amrita Banerjee argues that the proselytization of the notion that race, class, and caste are genetically configured and can be transmitted by the proper selection of gamete donor have led to the reification of these socially constructed phenomena that can be purchased by the consumers of biomedicine, especially in the ART industry.<sup>77</sup> Banerjee suggests that it is interesting to analyze how caste politics manifests itself covertly and overtly in the practice of artificial reproductive technology. Banerjee argues that, “caste preference and the obsession with caste-matching in the case of third-party selection carries the dangerous potential of upholding an erroneous belief in the biological origin of caste-projecting it as a heritable biological fact rather than a social form”.<sup>78</sup>

In a study that corroborates this reading of Desai's *Origins of Love*, Saritha Rai argues that the fertility treatment specifically in India is enmeshed with the age-old biases about the caste hierarchies.<sup>79</sup> She states that in contrast to the West, where medical fitness of the donor is the most significant criterion for selection of gamete donors, in India medical diagnosis

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<sup>74</sup> Desai, *Origins of Love*, 251.

<sup>75</sup> Aditya Bharadwaj, “Biosociality and Biocrossings: encounters with assisted conceptions with embryonic stem cells in India”, in *Biosocialities, Genetics and Social Sciences: Making Biologizes and Identities*, edited by Sahra Gibbon & Carlos Novas, 98-116 (London & New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>77</sup> Amrita Banerjee, “Race and Transnational Reproductive Caste System: Indian Transnational Surrogacy”, *Hypatia* 29.1 (2014): 113-128.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>79</sup> Saritha Rai, “More and more Indian Wants Egg Donors, but only if they're from right caste”. *The Global Post*, September 22, 2010, accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017. <https://www.minnpost.com/global-post/2010/09/more-and-more-indians-want-egg-donors-only-if-theyre-right-caste>.

begins after the commissioning parents are convinced about the donor or the surrogate's caste background. The politics of procreation and parenthood as dramatized in Desai's *Origins of Love* carries interesting resonances with sociological study of France Winddance Twine who argue that the practice of engineering babies through medical technologies like IVF and embryo transfer is embedded in racial, class-based, and economic inequalities. In *Outsourcing the Womb* (2011) Twine examines how the categorization and selection procedures followed for purchasing genetic and reproductive gamete throw light on how socially constructed phenomena such as race, caste, religion, and educational qualification of the gamete donor shape the choices regarding the selection of biomatter for the creation of babies. Desai's *Origins of Love* enables us to speculate on how the technological artifacts are adopted and appropriated by society in order to achieve its desired discursive designs. The act of appropriating technological artifacts as replicated in the novel corresponds with the theory termed as social construction of technology (SCOT) that throws light on how different actants of the society determine the way a technology operates in a particular context.<sup>80</sup>

The sociologist E.W. Bijker argues that technological innovation is a complex process of co-construction in which technology and society negotiate the meaning of new artifacts, alter technology through resistance and construct social and technological frame of thought through collaborative practices and actions. Jennifer Maher in an article entitled "Something Besides a Father" observes:

While we live in a world that has witnessed unprecedented redefinition of kinship-including sperm banking, gestational surrogacy, gamete and embryo transfer, transnational adoption, open domestic adoption and outsourcing of fertility procedure and surrogacy as such, redefinitions are counterbalanced through a simultaneous tightening of discursive and legal control of such kinship relations via anti-gay marriage activism, the chipping away of abortion rights and new legal mandates against anonymous sperm donation in Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, and the UK.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Social construction of technology (SCOT) is a theory that is primarily applied in the discipline of Science and Technology Studies (STS) for the purpose of analyzing how the society influences the acceptance, appropriation, and rejection of technology in order to fulfill its desired objectives. In contrast to the theory of technological determinism (technological constructivism), advocates of social construction of technology argues that the acceptance and failure of a technology in a particular society have to be studied amidst the larger social context in which it is embedded. See Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes and Trevor Pinch (Eds), *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (Cambridge, London, and England: The MIT Press, 1989).

<sup>81</sup> Maher, "Something Besides a Father" 861.

Maheer's study throws light on how socio-cultural, medico-legal, and political discourses strategically operate for the purpose of appropriating biomedical technologies in order to assuage its subversive potentials. This process of technological appropriation occurs at different levels- "in language through assimilation, in media through dissemination, in rules through normalization, and in custom through habituation".<sup>82</sup> Andrew Jamison states that appropriation of a technology is also influenced by geo-political factors and by regional and locally distinctive organizational and institutional culture in which it is embedded.<sup>83</sup>



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<sup>82</sup>Andrew Jamison, "From Innovation to Appropriation: On the Politics of Technoscience," in *Focus on Biotechnology: Issues Related to R & D in Biotechnology-Denmark in a Comparative Perspective*, edited by Niels Mejlgaard, 94-105 (Finlands: The Danish Institute for Studies in Research and Research Policy 2002/2, 2002).

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 99.

### 4.3 Revival of Neoliberal Eugenics in the Era of Artificial Reproductive Technology

Advancements in molecular genetics and simultaneous developments in biomedical technologies like pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) that enable designing of babies with selective genetic traits and elimination of harmful genetic diseases have perpetuated practice of “new eugenics”<sup>84</sup> in the era of biotechnology. Amrita Banerjee argues that the eugenics practices that are stimulated by developments in the domain of reproductive medicine are entangled with the notion of biocapitalism. Banerjee states that the legitimization of “race as a purchasable good on an international scale, private enterprise paves the way for legitimizing the commodification of physical ability, mental aptitude, and many other traits”.<sup>85</sup>

Drawing on such study, one may argue that Desai’s *Origins of Love* aptly replicates how in the age of bioengineering the physical attributes and reproducible biomatter are reified and are transformed into biocapital that are purchased and consumed by the privileged sections of society through markers of discursively determined hierarchy and privilege. In this context, one may refer to the episode in the novel where Sharmaji, the agent of the fertility clinic Madonna and Child, visits Kate and Ben to know their preferences about the physical attributes they would like to have in donor and the surrogate. Sharmaji proudly mentions to Kate and Ben that he is capable of catering to all kinds of demands made by his clients. The narrator says, “Sharmaji launched into another list once more: ‘Just tell me your requirements: tall, short, fat, thin, straight hair or curly hair- because you also need the egg from her, right?’”<sup>86</sup>, in an instantiation as well as a caricature of the customized and consumerist culture of the ART industry. In a similar vein, the leaflet that is designed by the agent of the fertility clinic Madonna and Child aptly depicts how the vital matter and physical features are transformed into purchasable commodities:

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<sup>84</sup>Marius Turda, *Crafting Humans: From Genesis to Eugenics and Beyond* (Taiwan: Taiwan National University Press, 2013), 92. In his book Turda argues that there is a transition from the earlier notion of eugenics that focused on improving nation’s population by denying procreative rights to prostitutes, drug addicts, criminals, and people who are categorized as abnormal and new eugenics of the biomedicalized society. Turda states that the new eugenics’ focus is laid on elimination of genetic diseases that are primarily caused by single gene mutation.

<sup>85</sup> Banerjee, “Race and a Transnational Reproductive Caste System”, 124.

<sup>86</sup>Desai, *Origins of Love*, 372.

Don't Worry Be Happy  
Just Come to Collect Your Baby  
Use our Courier Cryogenic Service  
At 100 percent No Risk

...

That We Can Get You Egg Donor  
Any Way You Want Her

Big, Small, Slim, Tall  
It's Your Call

...

You and Your Wife Can Take Rest  
New Life- Cheap and Best.<sup>87</sup>

The lampoon-like quality of the sing-song advert emerges as a pointer to the easy deliverables in the ART industry as depicted in the novel, an industry which puts high premium on consumer happiness akin to a high-selling commodity. In this context, one may refer to Donna Dickenson's *Body Shopping* (2008) in which she examines the working policies of the fertility clinics.<sup>88</sup> Dickenson's study throws light on how the fertility clinics mimic the commercial companies in their act of advertising the bio-products and the babies as commodities and addressing their patients as clients who can choose gamete donors on the basis of their physical attributes that are allied to their racial preferences. Amrita Banerjee further argues that although the act of choosing the physical traits of the baby might be conceived as apolitical, it is enmeshed with the discourse and motivations of eugenics. Fertility industries can be studied as important zones that promote subtle forms of eugenics at macro as well as metonymic levels by offering liberties to the consumers to choose their donors and design babies on the basis of biogenetic traits like skin and eye color, hair texture and height. One may here refer to Marius Turda's *Modernism and Eugenics* (2010) in which he states that eugenics may be defined as a biological theory that is guided by the concept of human perfectibility and it aims to create a system of racial sanitization by protecting the nation from those who are categorized as unhealthy, diseased, and anti-social. Turda explains:

The external attributes of physical and mental infirmity were accentuated in order to legitimize eugenicists' actions against individual who did not conform to the normality of the national community. The individual who was eugenically stigmatized

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<sup>87</sup> Desai, *Origins of Love*, 343.

<sup>88</sup> Donna Dickenson, *Body Shopping: The Economy Fuelled by Flesh and Blood* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008).

was an individual whose biological and social identity was called into question and castigated accordingly.<sup>89</sup>

In *Biopolitics* (2011) Thomas Lemke argues that the epistemic developments in the domains of biotechnology like organ transplantation, reproductive technology, and cloning have problematized Foucault's explanation of biopolitics that is based on the notion of the human body as an integrated organic whole. "Biotechnology and biomedicine allow body's dismantling and recombination that Foucault did not anticipate"<sup>90</sup> and hence, Lemke suggests a revision in the notion of biopolitics that is confined to the notion of an integral body. In a similar vein, Nikolas Rose argues that in the current culture of human genetics the notion of biopolitics is entwined with the process of "subjectification" of biomedicine.<sup>91</sup> The notion of subjectification throws light on how since the second half of twentieth century citizens have refused to remain as the passive recipients of the medical products, rather they have grown as active consumers who make decision about the medical treatments on the basis of the information available on the medical websites and multiple other sources that influence their decision-making process. In the era of biomedicalization, citizens have transformed into informed and active agents who are involved in making decisions about their health and vitality. Rose argues that in the current culture of ethopolitics, the molecular biopolitics is not guided by state led policies of population control and improvement of the national stock. Rather biopolitical regimes of modernity have been replaced by the individual management of genetic risk in the context of bioeconomy. In the new culture of "active citizenship" the agency accorded to the citizens is extended to the domain of reproductive technology where parents are offered liberties to make decision about the genetic traits that they would like to customize and configure in the baby they are planning to design through IVF.<sup>92</sup>

In contrast to Rose's argument, Carolin Schurr argues that although in the current culture of biocapitalism parents appear to exercise their agency in reproductive matters, the notion of neoliberal eugenics has to be interpreted within the larger narratives of biopolitics that aim to regulate the quality and quantity of the population for the purpose of creating a healthy nation. This study is in consonance with Schurr's argument that neoliberal eugenics

<sup>89</sup> Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 67.

<sup>90</sup> Lemke, *Biopolitics*, 94.

<sup>91</sup> Rose, *Politics of Life Itself*, 21.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidi.*, 23.

practices “recast rather than replace traditional state biopolitics”.<sup>93</sup>Biopolitics in the era of human genetics evolves as a result of collusion between government, pharmaceutical companies, and the citizens who are the active consumers of the biomedical products. The fair and healthy baby boy that the surrogate Sonia gives birth to in *Origins of Love* becomes an external manifestation of the complex entanglement between neoliberal eugenics and state-led biopolitics that aims to produce a fair and able male body that can be represented as the face of the Indian nation state, fairness and maleness being major markers in the politics of dynastic privilege in the Indian electoral context. Rohit narrates to Sonia about Renu Mishra’s eldest son who is not acknowledged as the member of the family because he was born differently able and hence is considered unfit to act as an extension of Renu Mishra’s political career and become the face of the nation. Rohit describes thus:

The child may have been an accidental product of another relationship, but partly because he was illegitimate and partly because he needed constant care, Renu Madam was advised that he would have to be smuggled away. He should not even be mentioned ever again. She could have brought him up in the house as someone else’s child but there were many who told her that a child with special needs might be politically risky, as voters like to see healthy, happy families.<sup>94</sup>

Renu Mishra’s family may be considered as a metonymic representation of the Indian nation state embedded in the biopolitical eugenics-driven policies that aim to purge the national community from the biological and political degeneration thereby creating a strong and healthy nation through bioengineered processes. The novel *Origins of Love* fictionally dramatizes how the genetic preferences enlisted by the parents are covertly entangled with the notion of neoliberal eugenics. Neoliberal eugenics may be defined as a practice of designing babies by eliminating the harmful cells that might cause mental and physical disabilities. In the novel, the health minister Renu Mishra says to Dr. Subhash and Dr. Anita Pandey that she wants to design a fair baby boy who in future will take over her political position and will rule the nation. Veenit Bhai carefully delineates the genetic traits he wants in the bioengineered baby:

We know that certain genetic qualities are important. Is there any way you can ensure that? Most importantly, it should have Renuji’s sagacity and my intellect; the rest we

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<sup>93</sup>Carolyn Schurr, “From Biopolitics to Bioeconomies: The ART of (re-)producing white futures in Mexico’s Surrogacy Market”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35.2 (2017), 241.

<sup>94</sup> Desai, *Origins of Love*, 194.

can teach. The looks are unimportant but the child should be fair in complexion, because fairer babies do better.<sup>95</sup>

The designer baby in Desai's *Origin of Love* throws light on how a structural homology is established between the body of the nation and the body of the baby who is presumed to embody an order of masculinity aligned to the political ideologies of the ruling party.

A parallel may be drawn between the fictional representation of the fair, tall, and intellectually superior designer baby portrayed in the novel *Origins of Love* and the current cultural climate of ultra-right-wing Hindutva domination that intends to create a pure racial imaginary for the purpose of reviving the supposed sanctity of the Aryan martial race. On 7th March 2017, *The Indian Express* published an article entitled "RSS wing has prescription for fair, tall, and customized babies" that discusses the Garbh Vigyan Sanskar (Uterus Science Culture) project of the R.S.S.'s (Rashtriya Svayamsevaka Sangha) health wing Arogya Bharati which is driven by the objective of helping Indian parents to produce perfect progenies.<sup>96</sup> The office bearer associated with the programme states that the project is inspired by Nazi eugenics and it aims to purge and restructure the Indian national community for creating a race of super humans with an urge to build a modern masculine nation with a high premium placed on purity and hygiene.<sup>97</sup>

Asish Nandy in *Intimate Enemy* (1983) discusses the reform movement of the nineteenth century colonial India that attempted to resurrect the image of Kshatriyahood that was considered to be emblematic of the authentic Indian warrior. Nandy argues that during the reform movement, Hindu reformers like Vivekananda and Swami Dayananda stated that

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<sup>95</sup> Desai, *Origins of Love*, 250.

<sup>96</sup> Ashutosh Bhardwaj, "RSS wing has prescription for fair, tall, 'customised babies'", *The Indian Express*, May 7 2017. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/rss-wing-has-prescription-for-fair-tall-customised-babies-4644280/> (accessed on 1 August 2017). See also Shiv Viswanathan's "Time, Modernity and the BJP" *The Hindu*, 28 July 2018. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/time-modernity-and-the-bjp/article24534804.ece> (accessed on 6 August 2018). In the article Viswanathan speculates on how in the current political climate of India the Bharatiya Janata Party is playing the role of a "surrogate modernizer" by drawing on an analogy between the Indian mythic narratives and the current biomedical developments like "test-tube babies and plastic surgery to biotechnology" (n.pag).

<sup>97</sup> See Mukul Kesevan, "In his Image: The Importance of Being Sashi", *The Telegraph*, 14 May 2017, [https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170514/jsp/opinion/story\\_151438.jsp](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170514/jsp/opinion/story_151438.jsp) (accessed on 23 August 2017). Kesevan's article discusses the R.S.S.'s health wing Arogya Bharati's project of designing customized babies in order to build a strong nation. Kesevan states that the Arogya Bharati project claims to liberate Indians from the burden of being non-white.

the loss of masculinity and cultural regression of the Hindus were due to loss of the original Aryan qualities. Nineteenth-century Bengali poet and dramatist Michael Madhusudan Dutt attempted to fictionally revive the image of the martial race by endorsing the order of masculinity embodied by mythic characters like Meghnad, Ravana and Krishna.<sup>98</sup> In a similar vein, in an article entitled “The Theory of Aryan Race and India” (1996) Romila Thapar traces the historical development of the concept of Hindutva<sup>99</sup> in the early part of twentieth century by a group of people closely associated with the formation of R.S.S that was informed by the superiority-theory of Aryan race.<sup>100</sup> Thapar’s article foregrounds how the theory of Aryan race has shaped the concept of Hindutva nation, and has informed current political ideologies of the country and Indian identity. The R.S.S group supported the eugenics policies implemented in Germany for purifying the nation from the Jews and proposed the formation of a Hindu nation state on similar principles by excluding the Muslims and the Christians.<sup>101</sup> The image of the Hindu Arya is used by the political party as a major component for structuring the political ideologies and privileged identity-politics in India.

It is interesting to note how the order of masculinity embodied by the mythical Aryans had not merely historically informed the reform movement during the colonial period but has had a revival in the dominant discursive as well as the immediately lived domains in the current notions of national purity and identity.<sup>102</sup> It is argued that although the “scientific

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<sup>98</sup>See also Charu Gupta’s “Redefining Obscenity and Aesthetics in Print” in *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu Public in Colonial India* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001): 29-84.

<sup>99</sup>See Shashi Tharoor’s interview titled “Shashi Tharoor on his book Why I am a Hindu, and why he believes Hinduism is inherently liberal,” *Firstpost*, April 20 2018, where Tharoor discusses how Hinduism differs from Hindutva a political ideology that is used as an instrument for political mobilization by right-wing party. <https://www.firstpost.com/living/shashi-tharoor-on-his-book-why-i-am-a-hindu-and-why-he-believes-hinduism-is-inherently-liberal-4350753.html> (accessed on 29 April 2018).

<sup>100</sup>Romila Thapar, “The Theory of Aryan Race and India: History and Politics”, *Social Scientist* 24.1/3 (1996): 3-29.

<sup>101</sup>See Robert Jay Lifton’s *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (USA: Basic Books, 1986). In his book Lifton examines the “biomedical vision as a central psychohistorical principle of the Nazi regime and the psychological behavior of the individual doctors”. (4) Lifton’s study discusses the collusion of the biomedical ideology with the Nazi political ideology that was geared towards the systematic annihilation of the Jews who were perceived as “gangrenous appendix in the body of the mankind”. It is interesting to note, how the Nazi doctors drew a parallel between a diseased human body and the nation (16). Lifton argues that the *medicalized killing* was performed by the Nazi doctors in order to revitalize the Aryan racial virtues that they argued were contaminated by the Jewish characteristics.

<sup>102</sup>See also, Avishek Parui’s “Masculinity and Populist Rhetoric in the Political Sphere: A Study of Post-2014 India.” (presentation, Political Masculinities and Populism Conference. Political Masculinities Network, University of Landau, Germany, December 1-3 2017).

purification of womb project” of the Hindu nationalist group has adopted a pseudoscientific mode for the creation of customized babies, ideologically they collude with the biomedical practitioners’ attempt to design the perfectly pure progeny through artificial reproductive technology.<sup>103</sup>In Desai’s *Origins of Love*, the fair and intellectually superior baby boy born to the surrogate Sonia may be interpreted as an extreme extension of Victor Frankenstein’s desire to create a perfect progeny informed by the notions of human perfectibility, rationality and agency inherited from Western European notions of Humanism and Enlightenment. In Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the Enlightenment-centric science is deployed in Victor Frankenstein’s experiments aimed to produce a perfect male body with superior order of intellectuality and rationality. Such fantasy for purity and perfectibility bears resonance with Renu Mishra’s criteria for designing a bioengineered baby for inheriting her political legacy. Desai’s fictional representation of the racial caste-based preferences made by the prospective parents throws light on how sections of people are perceived as the producers of the “biological and affective labor” that are commodified and consumed by the privileged sections of society.<sup>104</sup> Apart from showcasing the biomedically produced and controlled commodity-exchange between First World consumers and Third World laborers, *Origins of Love* also emerges as a complex and compelling depiction of the anxiety of contamination and consolidation of caste-based identity-markers in the social and political discourses in India today.

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<sup>103</sup> “Hindu nationalist group promises ‘superior’, fairer, babies full of values and culture,” *Hindustan Times*, May 09, 2017. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/customised-babies-anyone-hindu-nationalist-group-promises-superior-fairer-offspring/story-58DXkYE2HGXgpXzM74JnjM.html>. (accessed on 21 October 2017)

<sup>104</sup>Vora, “Indian Surrogacy and Commodified Vital Energy”, 267.

## 4.4 Conclusion

The chapter concludes by stating that works of fiction like *Origins of Love* enable us to speculate on how in the current culture of artificial reproductive technology, the consumerist choice offered to parents and medical practitioners to select genetic traits of bioengineered babies has led to the reinscription of a more selectionistic, hierarchical, and phallogocentric architecture of family. In Shelley's *Frankenstein*, with which this thesis opened, Victor Frankenstein's creation of a bioengineered being deterritorializes the bionormative notion of family-making. It may be argued that the monstrosity in *Frankenstein* emanates as a result of the accidental disruption of the normative notion of family formation whereas, Desai's *Origins of Love* dramatizes how the monstrous and schizophrenic potential of biomedical technologies are reterritorialized and domesticated by the medico-legal practitioners and commissioning parents in a perfectly consumerist economy of production and purchase. The fair baby designed with supposedly superior order of intellectuality and rationality as portrayed in the Desai's *Origins of Love* aptly replicates the collusion between the neoliberal eugenics and state-led biopolitics. It thus allows us to think about the practices of artificial reproductive technology with renewed attention on the strategies and fantasies which inform shared notions of privileged subject-identities and citizenship.

## CONCLUSION

I began my study with a novel published in the first half of the nineteenth century that dramatizes how the male protagonist's bioscientific endeavor to create a human being artificially by supplanting the female from the process of procreation leads to the destruction of the heteronormative notion of family. I end this study by examining a novel that portrays how in the neoliberal consumerist society medico-legal institutions strategically deploy artificial reproductive technology (ART) for re-inscribing bionormative architecture of family that is guided by the notions of hierarchy and hygiene around religion, caste and class in contemporary India. The medical culture with which this thesis began was undergoing a process of epistemic transition that problematizes the binaristic understanding of the world order which examines life through the dualistic prisms of human and non-human, life and death. The trans-species being that the bioscientist in Mary Shelley's novel designs by pre-selecting its physical attributes evolves as a super-human creature dangerously transgressing normative human orders, and hence is classified as monstrous before being abandoned by his progenitor. The final chapter examines the current biocapitalist culture of the twenty-first century technocratic biomedicine which witnesses a revival of neoliberal eugenics practices that offer scope to design super-human babies with supposedly higher order of intelligence and reasoning faculties. It foregrounds how the monstrosity embedded in the practice of artificial reproductive technology in Shelley's novel is domesticated and appropriated for the purpose of manufacturing babies who are customized, commodified, and consumed by a capitalist clientele.

Through the study of the selected literary text, the final chapter has attempted to examine how the notions of hierarchies of caste, class and race are further accentuated and consolidated rather than being obliterated through the practice of artificial reproductive technology within a consumerist capitalist structure. Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to throw light on how the narratives of technocratic biomedicine are informed by the biocapitalist consumerist frame that produces a class of *wasted lives* like brain-dead patients, surrogates, and human clones who are used as biomedical commodities for therapeutic purposes that are subsequently converted into biomedical trash. In the thesis, trash is studied as a liminal phenomenon, as well as conceptual category applied by humans for the purpose of classifying entities that occupy space outside the normative cognitive schema. Trash as a

concept has been discussed both as a material phenomenon as well as a symbolic order that is metaphorically used to denote humans who occupy the margins of the society.

In essence, I have tried to foreground how the literary texts are complexly reflective of the bioethical crisis that is generated by technocratic biomedical practices that have problematized the ontology of human subjectivity, embodiment, agency and citizenship. In the current culture of biotechnology, where human vitality is subjected to new forms of authority, expertise and medical surveillance and capitalization, biomedicine plays a key role in converting citizens into “flat mimesis”<sup>1</sup> of state ideologies by claiming to turn individuals’ health and appearances into copies of standardized version of beauty and engineered perfection. These harmful biomedical and political practices that pervade human history in such forms of “stereotypes, stigma, exclusions and exertion of violence and so forth” are critiqued in the fictional frame of the literary narratives.<sup>2</sup> I hope to have highlighted how the fictional frame of the literary narrative is not a mere representation of biomedical practices that inform our normative notions of lived reality but that rather literature performs an ethics of resilience by critiquing stereotypical representations of lived realities. Literary narratives do so often by offering alternative modes for interpreting our existential realities by according voices to characters who are socio-politically conceived as non-citizens and social outcasts.<sup>3</sup>

By examining literary representations of bioengineered lives like brain-dead patients, engineered humans, clones and surrogates and drawing on the tenets of biomedical science and bioethics, this research hopes to have shown how the notions of embodiment, agency, and consciousness evolve as distributive phenomena with ambivalent attributes. The existential anxiety experienced by Cook’s medical intern Susan Wheeler, Priscille’s neurosurgeon Dr. Matthew and Picoult’s heart recipient Claire Nealon’s narrative crisis foreground the schism between the biomedical understanding of the body as a mere processing machine and the phenomenological experiences of the consumers of biomedicine who narrate their notion of subjectivity being hybridized and extended by biotechnological intervention. The ambivalent, liminal, and *deterritorialized* order of subjectivity and agency exhibited by posthuman bodies support the principle thesis of my research that an investigation of the subjective experiences of biomedical consumers can offer epistemic complexities and existential interruptions, thus enabling us to interrogate the hegemonic

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Mack, *How Literature Changes the Way we Think*, 10.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

biomedical understanding of the human body that continues to inform the notions of personhood, agency, and citizenship we consume and internalize uncritically. I hope to have investigated how the Cartesian understanding of the human self is being interrogated and subverted by the phenomenological experiences of the fictional characters, thus defying the notion of cadaveric organ donors as disposable entities who are maintained on medical ventilators for procuring organs for a rich consumer clientele.

By focusing on the neo-cannibalistic feature of the neoliberal biocapitalist era, I have tried to examine how the plastic and disposable features of commodities are extended to human bodies that have led to the reduction of a section of humans classified as *wasted lives* as purchasable carefree biocommodities, thus discussing how biocitizenship as an evolving social phenomenon has intensified the existing hierarchical structure of the society. The fictional representations of the dehumanized and non-agentic status of the posthuman bodies and human clones in Kureishi's "The Body" and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* offer us scope to speculate on the issues of bioethics, agency, and humanness that are problematized in the current culture of genetic engineering and organ transplantation. Through the study of the selected literary texts I hope to have investigated the socio-cultural and political status of the bioengineered lives and the people who occupy the margins of the society whose bodies are disaggregated, biomedically processed and converted into therapeutic products to be consumed by privileged clientele. It has also attempted to examine the unequal economy of production and consumption between the First and Third worlds, thus lending a political perspective into the biomedical research attempted in this study. The thesis as a whole is offered as a modest yet hopefully complex commentary on the neoliberal orders of production and consumption that we inhabit and internalize today.

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