

# Passing as human

Posthuman worldings at stake in contemporary  
science fiction

by

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To Karl Børge



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# **Part I: Overview Document**



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## 0 Trailer

This thesis explores stories of robots, androids and replicants *passing as human* in contemporary science fiction, and what these stories tell us about the dynamics of determining sameness and difference. The notion of passing as human illustrates how the ‘human’ is produced and maintained as an exclusive category, and how this construction of humanness relies on qualitative indexing of normality, authenticity, and legitimacy. Also, passing as human indicates a challenge to the stability of the notion of the human as such, exposing how a binary system of categorisation allows for the co-construction of a universalised and normative (human) Self versus an improper Other. In other words, to pass as human raises questions about the boundaries of the very category of the human, as social identity, as subject formation and as existence. I posit that contemporary science fiction contributes to knowledge production about and discourses of the ‘human’ as an ontological identity category that is under stress. I am concerned with discourses about the boundaries of the human, such as human bodies and existences, and how these boundaries are established and negotiated in popular culture, specifically in the science fiction genre. How is human identity and ontology policed and regulated; how is it rendered legitimate or how does it fail to materialise?

In light of revolutionary technological and scientific developments over the last few decades, the boundaries between biology/human/subject and technology/machine/object have become increasingly unstable. The theoretical framework of the posthuman addresses this instability as political and ethical questions concerning the status and accountability of the human and the non-human alike. This *posthuman turn* involves a closer focus on the notion of ontology as connected to politics, ethics and epistemology. Here ontology is not about knowledge of Being or existence as a kind of fixed entity, but as the material or physical conditions of, and the processes of, the world one lives in, is part of, and

has access to, and the knowledge or experience that informs our ways of making sense of the world, ourselves and others in it. My interest in the posthuman turn stems from my background in feminist cultural studies. Long-standing feminist and postcolonial debates about power and privilege as a matter of body, politics and the conditions of possibility for agency illuminate the incongruities of a dualistic world-view where fixed markers of, for example, gender, race, sexuality, ability and class serve to privilege certain bodies and not others. The contestability of the ‘human’ as a neutral category is particularly evident in feminist critiques of science as disembodied ‘truths’ rather than situated and locatable forms of knowledge production. In line with key insights from the field of cultural studies, I apply this critique to literature, films and TV as both producers and products of knowledge. Drawing on the expanding field of science and literature studies (SLS), this thesis brings together feminist politics of location, knowledge production and science fiction.

Donna Haraway (1988; 2011) suggests that knowledge production is a situated practice that shapes the ways in which we understand our reality. She refers to this as *worldings*: the stories, practices and knowledges that make a world or a reality. As a genre, science fiction is renowned for imagining alternative technologies, bodies and realities. By engaging in the potentialities of science, technology and medicine, science fiction opens up alternative worlds for exploring identities, embodiments and ontologies that confront conventional boundaries between sameness and difference. In a sense, technological and scientific development has contributed to a (re)actualisation of such speculative fictions: what was considered science fiction several decades ago might now be technologically feasible. I am interested in the ways in which stories about passing as human in science fiction resonate with ongoing discourses about the human in contemporary society. Particularly, I am interested in what is at stake in such stories, both as a mediation of human exceptionalism and as a conceptualisation of ongoing negotiations about the boundaries of what is considered ‘properly’ human in political and

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ethical discourses. Such discussions are at the heart of contemporary biopolitics and bioethics, and illustrate how political regulation of the human body (and the ways in which ethical considerations about human and non-human life can be articulated), are part of contemporary knowledge production and worlding practices. I refer to this as *posthuman worldings*.

This thesis is a qualitative, interdisciplinary research project that consists of four articles, as well as this overview document. My work is grounded in visual and textual analysis of science fiction texts, mainly TV series and particularly the reimagined TV series *Battlestar Galactica* (2004-2009). I also rely on a genealogical analysis of the structures of sameness and difference that are made visible by contemporary biopolitics and bioethics. In an attempt to bridge the conventional gap between textual analysis and contextual inquiry, I combine close readings of selected scenes and characters in said science fiction texts with an analysis of current ethico-political discourse concerning what is considered or understood to be ‘human’ in late modern Western societies. Exploring the notion of passing as a perceptual and conceptual strategy for challenging established dualisms, I suggest that a noticeable increase in the number of stories of passing in science fiction indicates an ideological shift in terms of ways of thinking about sameness and difference as relational rather than distinct categories of differentiation.

The first chapter in this overview document introduces the aims and relevance of this thesis, and gives a synopsis of the conceptual terrains and theoretical maps in which the thesis is situated. In short, here I present my research design; the plot for this thesis. The conceptual terrains highlight key terms and concepts that reverberate throughout the articles and in this overview document. The theoretical maps give an overview of key theoretical foundations for this thesis. Chapter Two introduces the methodological approaches and explains my choice of material. Here I also outline the research contribution made in each of the articles that make up this thesis, and the interconnections and

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discrepancies between them. In Chapter Three, I return to the theoretical fields and themes that inform the thesis, and point to key discussions within and across the various fields. I locate the theoretical genealogies for this thesis, and I position myself as a researcher in the terrains and fields touched upon in Chapter One. In the final section of this chapter I also connect theoretical developments to political and ethical debates about the human; the worldings that are at stake. In the fourth and final chapter I summarise my findings and engage in a critical discussion about my articles and the ways in which I have made use of the different concepts. Here, I also tie together genealogies of the ‘new’ and the ‘post’ that are at stake in this research project.



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# 1 Plot: science fiction as knowledge production

Stories about phenomena or practices affect how we understand them. In this thesis, I explore how stories of passing as human in the science fiction genre can highlight how our understanding of or knowledge about what is ‘human’ reverberate in dynamics of identification and differentiation. According to feminist philosopher Donna Haraway, knowledge, and the ways in which knowledge is formed, maintained and negotiated, is “a story-telling practice” (1989: 4). She suggests that knowledge or truth claims are inextricably linked to socio-historical and ideological conditions, and that knowledge is thus developed under specific conditions. In other words, knowledge, and how we understand the world in which we live, is not neutral, but located in time, technology, culture and politics. What are the interconnections between categories of identity and ontology as markers of belonging and existence and knowledges about sameness and difference?

A literal, story-telling practice that is known for deliberately manipulating the conditions of possibility for knowledge is science fiction. By creating alternative realities, science fiction establishes a productive rupture with established truths and knowledges. In this way, science fiction brings to light the societal and ideological structures that ground the reality one knows and understands (de Lauretis 1980; Haraway and Goodeve 2000; Luckhurst 2005; Melzer 2006; Roberts 2006; Williams 1970). As Norwegian science fiction writers and critics Jon Bing and Tor Åge Bringsværd phrase it, science fiction is a “crowbar against conventional reality” (1967: 7, my translation).

In this thesis I have seized on the crowbarring effects of science fiction, and its capacity to expand on our collective cultural horizon of the possible, and engaged in a discussion about the ways in which it constructs and negotiates the parameters of the human as a specific and

privileged identity and ontology. Haraway's notion of knowledge production as story-telling practices serves as a productive entry point for exploring the socio-cultural and ideological conditions for stories, structures and practices of sameness and difference, and the power relations at stake. Understanding knowledge production as a kind of traffic, facts can depend on fiction to become communicable, and, likewise, fiction often depends on reference points and the establishment of facts (Haraway 1989:15). In line with this, I suggest that science fiction is both product and producer of knowledge about the human and its limits. Considering that technological development is integral to the science fiction genre, I take as a starting point the belief that narratives and representations in science fiction are particularly apt means of exploring the ways in which the conventional binary division between human and machine is under stress. *How can representations of technological non-humans passing as human in science fiction (re)produce and mediate understandings of the ontological identity of the human by addressing discourses of normality, legitimacy and authenticity?*

In four articles, I approach the notion of passing as a situation or strategy that subverts identity and ontology as stable parameters. The articles are (in publishing order):

- “The shape of things to come? Politics of reproduction in *Battlestar Galactica*”. (Published 2011 in *NORA: Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 19(1): 6–24). This article suggests that a politics of survival in the science fiction TV series *Battlestar Galactica* corresponds to contemporary biopolitics in late modern Western society. I am particularly concerned with how the female body is subjected to biopolitical regulation, and how the impact of technology in and on the body brings the politics of ‘life itself’ to the fore.

- “Are you alive? Kritisk intimitet i *Battlestar Galactica*” [Are you alive? Critical intimacy in *Battlestar Galactica*]. (Published 2013 in Jørgen Lorentzen and Wencke Mühleisen (eds) *Å være sammen. Intimitetens nye kulturelle vilkår* [*Being Together: New cultural conditions for intimacy*] Oslo: Akademika Forlag, pp. 177-202). In this article, I suggest that critical encounters between the human and non-human are posthuman interventions in the established identity hierarchies that dominate human worldviews. I discuss the notion of *critical intimacy* as a mode of ethical consideration that confronts binary systems of differentiation.
- “Politiske monstre. Å passere som menneskelig i science fiction-TV-seriene *Star Trek* og *Battlestar Galactica*” [Political monsters: Passing as human in the science fiction TV series *Star Trek* and *Battlestar Galactica*]<sup>1</sup>. (Published 2014 in *Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning* [Journal for Gender Research] 38(2): 127–148). Here, I identify a shift in the mode of embodying the Other in the histories of science fiction TV series: from visibly marked difference to technological hybridisation to passing. I develop the notion of *political monsters* as a term for analysing how non-human characters in science fiction embody and enact Otherness in ways that highlight how ontological understandings of the ‘human’ are embedded in biopolitical norms and ideologies.
- “Almost the same, but not quite: Ontological politics of recognition in science fiction” (To be published in *Feminist Theory* 2015). This article explores how issues of ‘not quite human-ness’ expose the conditions of possibility of being

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this overview document, I refer to this article as “Political Monsters”, its English abbreviation.

considered human; of human ontology. I refer to these dynamics of identifying sameness and difference as *ontological politics of recognition*. I suggest a genealogy of passing as human in the science fiction genre, and trace the markers of ‘not quite human-ness’ for the technological non-human through different media over the time span of four decades. I suggest that enactments of passing as human in science fiction are interconnected with social and political change, and argue that ‘not quite human-ness’ both inform and challenge the boundaries of the human.

In all the articles I identify an increase in representations of non-humans passing as human in the science fiction genre in the 2000s. This is interesting because it points to the notion of passing as a noteworthy trope in contemporary popular culture. What is at stake in stories of ‘real’ or ‘fake’ human identity and ontology? What can the trope of passing tell us about how identificatory categories are delimited, and how they (fail to) materialise?

In this thesis, I suggest that passing as human in contemporary science fiction brings to the fore issues of *ontological (in)stability*, *performative identity practices* and *ethico-political accountability*. Through an in-depth exploration of these issues throughout this overview document, I argue that these stories of passing indicate a turn towards exchange and relationality, rather than a reinforcement of conventional antagonisms. I explain this shift through positioning passing as an intervention in established knowledge structures and power relations, and, particularly, the trope of passing as human in science fiction as a form of *posthuman worldings*<sup>2</sup>. The notion of posthuman worlding is here understood as the stories, practices and knowledges that constitute reality or worlds (Haraway 2011) in a contemporary landscape where the boundaries of

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<sup>2</sup> A particular thanks to my co-supervisor Cecilia Åsberg for discussing worlding conceptualisations with me.

the human are in flux. I will elaborate on these terms and claims in more detail during the course of this overview document, but before I turn to my methodologies, analysis and findings, I present the relevance of this study and the conceptual and theoretical territories that support my analysis.

## **1.1 Relevance**

This thesis centres on the entanglements of knowledge production, science and fiction in the intersection of technological progress and changing political and ethical landscapes. Firstly, technologies that work in and on the body that might have been considered science fiction only a few decades ago, have now become a reality: assisted reproductive technologies (ART), identification through DNA profiling, and genetic engineering (stem cell research and biological tissue repairs). Computerised robots that are able to perform surgery are increasing in numbers. Also, contemporary medical science enables the physical change and modification of bodies, both in utero and through aesthetic<sup>3</sup> surgery. In addition, current information technologies cause us to spend time with and rely on technology and gadgets on a much larger scale than ever before in human history.

In this thesis, I refer to these developments as a technological revolution because their impact contributes to shaping the reality in which we live. This reality is arguably also subject to political regulation and public media debates concerning the political and ethical implications of access to these kinds of technologies. In particular, the issue of reproductive assistance has been subject to controversy because these technologies challenge the notion of ‘natural’ reproduction (Carsten 2004; Franklin 2000; Thompson 2005; Lie, Noem Ravn and Spilker 2011). The naturalisation of reproduction is interconnected with binaries such as biology/technology, but also with couplings that establish gender and

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<sup>3</sup> Cosmetic, plastic and corrective surgery is included in the label aesthetic surgery.

sexuality as essentialised, and therefore fixed, categories of identity. Several feminist theorists, such as Haraway (1989), Emily Martin (1991) and Sarah Franklin (2000), explain this naturalisation as an ideological project that links biological sex to stories of genesis and origin. In light of this revolution of technological possibility, and of knowledge production about the ‘natural’ human body, the power relations at stake when determining the boundaries for the human are brought to the fore.

Secondly, conventional political antagonisms that to a large extent have defined the geopolitical and ideological boundaries in the world are shifting. Former colonial authorities in Central Europe, as well as North America, are experiencing what has generally been labelled as a ‘financial crisis’ due to the fact that state economies are dwindling at the same time as unemployment rates go up (Arestis, Sobreira and Oreiro 2011; Stockhammer and Onaran 2012). Simultaneously, former colonies, like India, and countries associated with the former East, such as China, are expanding their influence on the global economy (Castell [1996] 2010; Dahles 2003; Donnan and Wilson 1999). Also, in relation to the longstanding West/East axis as a geopolitical stalemate, the structure of political conflict is changing. These changes arguably have many explanations, such as technological advances in the arms-industry or a strengthening of global and regional alliances, but here, I specifically dwell on changes in terms of actors. In 2011, the upsurge of popular social movements in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and North America highlighted the role of social media and public protest as tools in the process of political change (Mahdavi and Knight 2011). Furthermore, conventional concepts of war as waged primarily between nation states are shifting in light of an increasing alertness of armed conflict as something that also occurs between groups within established states or between armed groups and a nation state (Gregory and Pred 2007).

Over the last few decades there has also been a global exposure to unpredictable attacks directed at infrastructure, people or politically

significant landmarks (Kegley 2003), such as the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York City in 2001, the Madrid railway bombings in 2004, and the attack on the Norwegian government quarter and the political youth camp on Utøya in 2011<sup>4</sup>. These assaults underline an increased instability in established friend/enemy binaries, at the same time as they potentially create new lines of conflict. For political scientist Chantal Mouffe, the fragmentation of conventional friend/enemy relations is central to understanding the new geopolitical landscape. She argues that “we are witnessing an explosion of particularisms and an increasing challenge to Western universalism” ([1995] 2005: 1). Here, Mouffe pinpoints the specific relevance that this increasingly unpredictable political landscape has for this thesis, namely that established ideas and ideologies about a universalised human subject no longer suffice as parameters for determining dynamics of identity and differentiation. This political analysis is often referred to as the ‘post-political condition’ of our present times (Mouffe 2005; Žižek 1999).

In this thesis, I link the unstable boundaries between biology/human and technology/machine to the destabilisation of political categories of sameness and difference in both science fiction and central debates about the boundaries of the human in the wake of the technological revolution. What can these distinct, yet interrelated concerns with boundaries tell us about the demarcations for what is considered human? As I will argue throughout this thesis, technological impact in and on the body necessitates a reconfiguration of ethical and political boundaries for understanding existence, or ontology, as it were. Similarly, the reconceptualisation of political alliances and ethical relations requires a (re)consideration of the complexities of identity and belonging in late modern society. In my analysis, the technological non-human passing as human is a productive figure with which to explore and explain what is

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<sup>4</sup> These attacks gained worldwide attention, but it is important to note that certain conflict zones, for examples Northern Ireland, Algeria, the Basque region and Israel/Palestine, have experienced these kinds of attacks for decades.

at stake when conventional ontological boundaries are challenged, and how this relates to an ideological shift in terms of thinking identities and belongings, and sameness and differences. I therefore suggest that the notion of passing as human in contemporary science fiction is indicative of both specific ethico-political challenges in present-day world politics and theoretical reflections on the destabilisation of traditional systems of classification. Before presenting an overview of the theoretical maps that inform this thesis, I introduce my conceptual terrains.

## **1.2 Conceptual terrains**

The focal point of this thesis is how ideas of sameness and difference are negotiated through the notion of *passing*. To pass is arguably to (re)present or display characteristics and traits considered to belong to certain socially or ontologically defined groups. But passing also denotes uncertainty or deception, even illegitimacy. What is it about passing that pushes at the limits of established knowledge? For one, stories of passing can reveal the boundaries of identity and belonging. In the histories of passing, markers of race, gender and sexuality have been at the forefront of determining such boundaries. At the same time, passing can be considered a situation or strategy that challenges identity as a stable parameter, exposing how a binary system of categorisation allows for the co-construction of a universalised and normative Self versus an improper or “inappropriate/d Other” (Haraway 1992; Trinh 1986/87).

For my purposes, the notion of passing as human is deployed as a perceptual and conceptual strategy that subverts the solidity of ontological and identificatory categorisations as the conditions for the possibility of existence. By identifying an increase in the number non-humans passing as human in contemporary science fiction, I position the notion of passing as human in the midst of ongoing negotiations of traditional binaries, where the category of the human is under scrutiny as a fixed and stable existence, and as an exceptional ontology that positions all things that are not of the (normative and universal) human as its Other.



In this thesis, I suggest that the notion of passing as human addresses unstable categorisations, and confronts clear-cut boundaries that regulate recognition and legitimacy.

By positioning passing as a means of confronting the fixity of the human and its others as ontological (in)stability, all four articles in this thesis highlight the way in which the idea that ontology describes a stationary human existence or human ‘nature’ has become increasingly difficult to maintain in late modern society. I locate these instabilities in the theoretical framework of the *posthuman*, as I will explain further in the next section. However, such a destabilisation of ontological categorisation also resonates with feminist philosopher Judith Butler’s ([1990] 1999) influential concept of *performativity*; that human categories of identity, specifically gender and sexuality, should not be considered static forms of being. Rather, Butler argues, the idea of a fixed and stable subject-identity is a result of regulative structures that govern the conditions of possibility for embodiment and social roles.

For Butler, identity is performative: it is encoded and enacted within a regulatory framework of norms for embodiment and complementary practices. She writes: “Indeed, to understand identity as a *practice*, and as a signifying practice, is to understand culturally intelligible subjects as the resulting effects of a rule-bound discourse” (1990: 184, emphasis in original). Butler’s notions of performativity and performative identity practices are useful for negotiating the ways in which identities and ontologies are done, and the conditions of possibility for this doing. In my articles, I argue that passing as human is a performative strategy that illustrates how identity is practised and enacted. At the same time, the notion of passing brings the structures and discourses that regulate the very conditions for such practices to the fore.

Following on from Butler’s argument, cultural theorist Alexandra Chasin argues that “the performance of humanness entails the activation of such identity markers as race, class, gender, and nationality at least” (1995:

75). Here, Chasin points to the ways in which the non-human tends to be conceptualised in terms of human categories of differentiation. This is a central point for my argument: that the notion of passing as human rests on normative expectations of the ontological category of the human. Philosopher Annemarie Mol and sociologist John Law (2002) suggest the term *ontological politics* as a means of emphasising the interconnections between ontological (in)stability and identity practices. According to Mol, the very combination of the words ontology and politics entails an orientation away from the fixity that ontology conventionally denotes: “if the word ontology is combined with politics, it points to the fact that these conditions of possibility are not given” (1999: 75). In this thesis, by combining the notion of ontological (in)stability with theories of performative identity practices I approach categories of identification as processes of exchange rather than as established power relations. These processes manifest and materialise between human identity categories, and between humans and non-humans (machines, animals, environments, systems, objects). This is important because it readdresses ontology as performative, as both constitutional and negotiable rather than a fixed classification of existential conditions.

In this thesis, I am concerned with how stories of passing as human can unhinge the very boundaries and boundedness of ontological and identificatory categorisations. How can a (re)conceptualisation of ontology and identity as practices rather than fixed categorisations allow for an exploration of agency and responsibility? And how does this relate to ethical and political questions about human and non-human existences? Although this thesis is centred on dynamics of sameness and difference pertaining to the human, my purpose is to highlight how binary relations between human and machine reference established notions of difference between biology/subject/maker (creator) on the one hand and technology/object/made (created) on the other.

A central aspect of this thesis revolves around the knowledge production that is at stake in thinking in mutually exclusive categories. Exposing the ways in which questions of ontology and identity are embedded in knowledge production about these categories exemplifies how dynamics of sameness and difference rest on hierarchical power relations based on species or race, and between genres or genders. As feminist theorists Mette Bryld and Nina Lykke put it, the “‘human’ is definitely not a neutral or innocent category, but a highly gendered and racialized one” (2000: 33). These dynamics of differentiation also produce discourses of authenticity and legitimacy: what counts as a proper (human) subject? The very notion of ‘proper’ human-ness reverberates in science fictional stories about passing as human. As I show in my articles, passing as human is both a strategy for approaching the (privileged) realm of the human and for subverting the power relations at stake in a subject–object (as in human–Other) relation. I suggest that performative human-ness, in terms of passing, pinpoints the ways in which the category of the human is constituted and negotiated, yet also how it is rendered unstable.

In light of the technological revolution, I find issues of *biopolitics* and *bioethics* particularly fruitful for addressing such unstable boundaries as are at stake for the human. Biopolitics is here understood as the set of regulatory systems or structures for the biological body in society (Foucault 1978). Foucault’s concept of biopolitics underlines how the biological body is subject to regulation and disciplining as part of systems of governance. He describes how the human body informs policy-making concerning “birth-rate, longevity, public health, housing and migration” (1978: 140). Biopolitics, in other words, describes how biological existence is reflected in political existence, and how the boundaries of what is considered human existence are inextricably linked to structures of political regulation, and, therefore, also to questions of agency and responsibility. Importantly, the notion of biology has become increasingly entangled with medical and technological influences in and on the body. I elaborate more on this in the following section. Similarly,

over the course of the past two decades, bioethics has become established as a particular sub-genre of general ethics in order to deal with the ways in which the rapid growth in biomedicine and biotechnology is integral to ethical considerations about ‘life itself’ (Franklin 2000; Rose 2007). In the words of feminist theorist Margrit Shildrick, the wide concept of bioethics “question[s] some of the taken-for-granted parameters of what it means to be a human being” (2005: 2). Addressing the progressively more unstable parameters of the human as an ethical condition also raises issues of (moral) answerability and accountability. This is because these parameters challenge the conventional limits of (human) ethics. In relation to the notion of passing as human, biopolitics and bioethics serve to highlight the interconnections between technology and biology, and between identity, politics and ethics.

This outline of my conceptual terrains establishes passing as human as a locus for addressing my overall research question concerning the ways in which technological non-humans passing as human in science fiction both (re)produce and mediate understandings of the ontological identity of the human. In Chapter Two, I discuss in more depth how the notion of passing as human can be analysed in terms of ontological (in)stability, performativity and ongoing biopolitical and bioethical debates, and particularly how these concepts are put to use in my material. Before I move on to this discussion, however, it is necessary to map out the theoretical framework that structures this thesis. The following section gives a brief overview of the main theoretical influences that support my analysis.

### **1.3 Theoretical maps**

As mentioned above, I am interested in what I identify as an increase in the number of representations of technological non-humans passing as human in the science fiction genre, and what this means. In the course of the last four decades, rapid developments in technological innovation and medical science have had a profound impact on the ways in which

we understand the boundaries of the human body, and on human identity and ontology. As early as 1980, Teresa de Lauretis, Andreas Huyssen and Kathleen Woodward suggested that the:

*pervasive technologization of everyday life [...] has shaped and transformed all cultural processes from the ways in which we communicate with each other to the ways in which we perceive ourselves and the world. (1980: viii)*

Ten years later, Haraway (1991) introduces the cyborg – a cybernetic organism – as a conceptual figure to aid in addressing the ongoing entanglements of the conventional dichotomy between nature and technology. She stresses the destabilising effect these entanglements have for the very system of binary classifications: nature/body/structure/female versus culture/mind/agency/male. For Haraway, the cyborg provides a new political metaphor with which to think systems of sameness and differences, as exchange and hybridity rather than fixed antagonistic locations. She argues that the very notion of ‘nature’ on the one hand and ‘culture’ on the other can no longer be conceptualised as separate entities. Rather, we are living in and dealing with *naturecultures* (2003: 12). For Haraway, this reconceptualisation of conventional binary categorisations challenges established ways of thinking about nature and culture, and so the notion of *naturecultures* contributes to alternative story-telling practices about reality. In this thesis, robots and androids passing as human are examples of such *naturecultures*; combinations of biology and technology, as well as performative embodiments and enactments of what can be considered to be ‘human nature’. In this respect, these figurations are able to address the interconnections between conventionally dichotomous categorisations, in terms of shifting boundaries for both the human body and for power relations.

More recently, the theoretical framework of the posthuman is attempting to provide analytical tools for grasping the ongoing negotiations between

traditional divisions that impact on how we understand categories of sameness and difference. This *posthuman turn* moves from questions of hybridity to questions of relationality between entities. This entails an engagement with questions about the consistency of human materiality in relation to both technological innovation (Halberstam and Livingston 1995; Hayles 1999; Toffoletti 2007) and non-human entities such as bacteria and fungi that co-exist as part of the human body and human environments (Haraway 2008; Neimanis 2012; Tsing 2012; Åsberg 2013). Also, the posthuman addresses political and ethical questions concerning the ‘human’ by stressing that the interconnections between ontology and ideology are crucial for rethinking conventional categories of identification. Feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti (2013) brings to the fore the way in which the figure of the posthuman is a fruitful figuration for voicing a critique of Humanism as an ideological framework that establishes categories of identification as categories of differentiation, where the white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied Western human is a self-appointed universal and normative centre. Here, Braidotti points to how the notion of ‘post’ signals a shift from established knowledges towards alternative (theoretical) frameworks. This effect of describing or imbuing change can also be recognised in labels such as the post-political and poststructuralism. In this overview document I make use of several of these postcategories, and I return to a more thorough discussion about the significance of the ‘post’ in Chapter Four.

Importantly for my analysis, the posthuman critique of human exceptionalism in recent years acknowledge a crucial relationality between human and non-human existences as being at the heart of biopolitics and bioethics in late modern society. As political scientists Diana Coole and Samantha Frost write:

*Questions regarding the definition, the ethical value, and the moral and political culpability of the human, the nonhuman and the virtually*

*human prompt reflection upon who or what should be taken as the subjects and objects of ethical, legal, or political action [...] (2010: 16)*

Here, Coole and Frost illustrate how the ontological reflection embedded in the posthuman turn represents a challenge to clear-cut divisions between subject/agency/accountability and object/innateness/incomprehensibility. In my articles, I position this insight as key in order to reflect upon how passing as human brings to the fore how questions of normality, legitimacy and authenticity are at stake in the determination of being considered human.

Notably, Judith Butler stresses that the question of accountability is also about subject and object *formation*, not only about the categories in and of themselves. This is important because Butler's emphasis on the processual and dynamic in terms of identity accentuates changeability as instrumental for concepts and practices of identity. Although Butler's work is not necessarily considered a part of the posthuman turn, her insights about performativity and subject formation are central for analysing the relationality between structure (social and cultural norms, biopolitics, ideological frameworks) and agency (the conditions of possibility for action and enactments). In her work on performative identity practices, she underlines how identity categories are established and maintained through repetition: a "repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (1990: 33).

In spite of the weight she puts on a structural, regulatory framework, she also stresses that these repetitions can be displaced in a way that generates subversive agency (2004b: 218). Butler's highlighting of structural conditions of possibility is important for understanding the ways in which accountability and agency can be articulated and recognised. Butler argues that:

*[w]hen we are speaking about the ‘subject’ we are not always speaking about an individual: we are speaking about a model for agency and intelligibility, one that is very often based on notions of sovereign power. (2004a: 45)*

For me, the inclusion of power dynamics and structural conditions of possibility for embodiments and enactments of identity and individuality is important as a mode of analysis because it enables me to deal with the circumstances and situations that determine and confront the ways in which knowledge is produced and sustained. It is worth mentioning here that there is a tension between structural and material approaches to questions of agency and power. I return to the significance of this tension in the more in-depth theoretical reflections in Chapter Three but, as part of the theoretical map for this thesis, it is important to note that, in my work, I try to stay with this tension as a productive exchange between theoretical landscapes.

For example, in Butler’s later work, she is concerned with how the human is produced through “norms of intelligibility” (2004b: 73) as a political and ethical condition. Given the global instability in the wake of what can be called a (re)territorialisation of boundaries between the normative Self and the precarious Other (friend/citizen/ freedom versus enemy/terrorist/fundamentalism), Butler suggests that the very conditions of possibility for rethinking social relationality are at issue (Puar 2012: 170). This position is also reflected in Mouffe’s work. She argues that the collapse of traditional political signposts has affected the conditions for identity and belonging, and stresses the necessity to (re)conceptualise the realm of the political “as a dimension that is inherent to every human society and that determines our very ontological condition” (1993: 3). In my analysis of what is at stake for the category of the human when traditional parameters for determining identity are destabilising, it has been especially fruitful to read Butler and Mouffe’s work on the interconnections between politics and ethics alongside the work of feminist theorist Margrit Shildrick.



Shildrick also acknowledges the necessity of re-evaluating the ways in which humans interact and relate, but she includes not only social interaction, but relations by way of (bio)technology (2002; 2005). For Shildrick:

*what is at stake [...] is a reconceived understanding of what it means to be an embodied human subject acting in a moral and legal landscape, and one, moreover, that takes none of the terms of selfhood for granted. (2005: 10–11)*

Drawing attention to complex shared relationships between a multitude of bodies and entities, Shildrick posits that established ethical standards for interaction reinforce categories of sameness and difference rather than producing an ethical awareness that is fit for the current global situation. In this call for a renewed “ethical imagination” (ibid: 4), Shildrick invokes philosopher Jacques Derrida’s (1992; 1995) notion of undecideability as a guiding principle for such postconventional ethics. According to Derrida, what is undecideable cannot conform to either side of a binary relation, but requires openness about possible, alternative ways of understanding or acting. It is only by maintaining an open mind, i.e. acknowledging that what one claims to know might change as a result of an encounter with what is unknown, that an accountable ethics can emerge. In line with this, Shildrick argues that “a return to the security of the known [is] not a real encounter with the ethical issues at hand” (2005: 11).

As a composite theoretical field, the posthuman turn challenges fixed notions of the human and its others. Questions of ontology and identification are at the forefront of ongoing debates on how to navigate in a changing landscape where traditional sign-posts are faltering (Braidotti 2013; Åsberg, Hultman and Lee 2012). Interestingly, Coole and Frost suggest that, “[i]n this domain, *science fiction may well be ahead of mainstream ethics*” (2010: 22, my emphasis). This ties in with my claim that science fiction is both made and maker of knowledge about

the human and what could be called the *posthuman condition* (Braidotti 2013). Specifically, I posit that the technological non-humans passing as human embody this posthuman condition by way of questioning the bodily, political and ethical boundaries of 'life itself'. Feminist film theorist Teresa de Lauretis also underlines how the imaginative construction of alternative realities in science fiction is inextricably linked to a socio-political aspect:

*[science fiction is] creative in the sense of mapping out areas where cultural change could take place, of envisioning a different order of relationships between people and between people and things, a different conceptualization of social existence, inclusive of physical and material existence. (1980: 161)*

As I show in more detail in Chapter Two, I suggest that technological non-humans passing as human in science fiction embody and enact this tension between established world orders and attempts at different, creative conceptualisations of the human and its interrelations. In this respect, technological non-humans passing as human are indicative of posthuman worldings. I elaborate on this notion in Chapter Three. Before I move to a more thorough clarification of the choice of science fiction as my empirical material, I now return to the concept of story-telling practices as a guiding principle for the methodological foundations of this thesis.

## **2 Behind the scenes: story-telling practices, methodologies, materials**

*We are also bound to seek perspective from those points of view, which can never be known in advance, that promise something extraordinary, that is, knowledge potent for constructing worlds less organized by axes of domination (Haraway 1988: 585).*

In this thesis, I suggest that stories about passing as human in science fiction can tell us something about what is at stake for our understanding of the human. How is the notion of the human produced and contained? And what are the conditions of possibility for confronting established knowledges about the human? Donna Haraway's notion of story-telling practices as knowledge production allows for an analysis of such stories as intertwined with current political and ethical situations concerning human life and practices. The concept of story-telling practices was first articulated as a critique of the hegemony of scientific 'facts' as undisputed truths, particularly the in natural sciences. For Haraway, story-telling practices are "rule-governed, constrained, historically changing craft[s] of narrating the history of nature" (1989: 4).

From a feminist perspective, the (his)story of nature is a problematic one. This is because of the fundamental binary based in sexual difference, where longstanding and naturalised couplings between the biological capacities of the female body and a female gender identity fix biology as

determining social roles and agencies<sup>5</sup>. In contrast, male bodies have no such apparent connection to nature, and have therefore been associated with the seemingly opposite qualities: logic/agency/mind rather than unpredictability/innateness/body. This paradigm of sexual difference is at the heart of the notion of a universalised human norm, where norm implicitly denotes maleness and masculinity. As a universalised human subject,

*[t]his standard is posited as categorically and qualitatively distinct from the sexualized, racialized, naturalized others and also in opposition to the technological artefact. (Braidotti 2013: 26)*

These theories of sexual difference also influenced feminist critiques of embedded power structures in apparently neutral and ‘natural’ categories of identity during the 1980s<sup>6</sup>. Arguing that these power structures also determine scientific classification, Haraway voices a concern about the impartiality of ‘scientific objectivity’. By suggesting that all kinds of knowledge are story-telling practices, she insists that knowledge is always already from somewhere, it does not just merely exist. Following on from this insight, this chapter elaborates on story-telling practices as an analytical tool. It is also an attempt to trace the genealogies of the story-telling practices at work in this thesis.

Acknowledging the need for both analytical strategies to counter the reproduction of an inherently binary system of understanding categories of sameness and difference, identity and belonging, and an ethical positioning for feminist researchers, Haraway introduces the term *situated knowledges* (1988). Positioning knowledge as not just existing, but produced over time in historical, ideological and social locations and situations, makes it possible to grasp the context in which any given

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<sup>5</sup> See Simone de Beauvoir ([1953] 1983), Hélène Cixous (1980), Luce Irigaray (1985) and Rosi Braidotti (1994) for further readings on theories of sexual difference.

<sup>6</sup> See feminist standpoint theorist Sandra Harding (1986; 1991), feminist science studies scholars Evelyn Fox Keller (1985), Emily Martin (1990), and anthropologists Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern (1980).

piece of knowledge or knowledge system is formed. In this attempt to locate knowledge production, Haraway offers analytical and ethical tools for engaging with established knowledge systems, and for questioning the fixity of identities and ontologies. She argues that “location is about vulnerability; location resists the politics of closure, finality [...]” (1988: 590). Considering that knowledge about identity categories and ontologies often serves to establish boundaries of differentiation in terms of closure and determination, the idea of location and situatedness is a way of rethinking knowledge about ‘the known’. Or, as feminist science fiction and fantasy writer Angela Carter puts it: “The minute you realise you’re not simply natural you really need to know what’s going on” (Carter and Sage 1992: 189).

In Haraway’s later work, she refers to the interconnections between knowledge and reality as *worldings* (2011). The term ‘world’ is here being used to describe our sense of reality, i.e. structures of knowledge and systems of belief. At the same time, the notion of worlding encompasses that which we cannot grasp, the unpredictable and haphazard. The notion of worlding makes it apparent that the ways in which we understand our reality, and, as a consequence, the systems of categorisation that help structure these conceptions of reality, is a process continuously in the making. Importantly, Haraway stresses the co-production of factual and fictional knowledges. Throughout her work, her critique of undisputed scientific ‘facts’ is accompanied by her willingness to use fiction, not just as metaphor, but as alternative worldings that provide perspective and location to her critique. Fiction, for Haraway, cannot be separated from facts in a dualistic fashion; they should be seen as complementary products and producers of knowledge: “Both science and popular culture are intricately woven of fact and fiction” (Haraway 1989: 3).

The story-telling practices that make up this thesis try to collapse the rigid divide between facts and fictions as an analytical strategy. Specifically, I attempt to bridge what feminist film critic Annette Kuhn

has called “the gulf between textual analysis and contextual inquiry” (Kuhn 1992: 304). To achieve this, I combine close readings of selected scenes and characters in specific science fiction texts, mainly the reimagined TV series *Battlestar Galactica*, with an analysis of current ethico-political discourse concerning what is considered or understood as ‘human’ in late modern Western societies. My motivation for this is partly to contribute to a destabilisation of the fixity of ‘known’ categories of identification and classification, and to acknowledge the impact of the knowledge production that takes place in fictional stories distributed through mass media.. In other words, I posit that ideas about science are informed by fiction, and, simultaneously, fiction is informed by scientific development and possibility. This is to situate the genealogies of science fiction as intertwined with social, political and ethical issues concerning human bodies, environments and societies.

There are three major interweaving trajectories that sustain the story-telling practices at stake in this thesis:

- The notion of story-telling practices as a methodological tool for analysing knowledge production.
- The literal story-telling practices of passing as human in science fiction that highlight imagined possibilities and potentialities for the figure of the posthuman.
- Discourses in contemporary biopolitics and bioethics that inform and are informed by ongoing story-telling practices about the human and human life.

In the following, I describe these three trajectories and the ways in which they meet and overlap. In addition, I position the articles that make up the foundations of this introductory chapter in relation to one another.

## **2.1 Three trajectories of story-telling practices**

### *2.1.1 Story-telling practices as methodology: genealogical approaches*

When starting to tell the story of this research project in this overview document, I admit to being somewhat at a loss as to how, methodologically, to bridge the gap between text and context. The notion of bridging sounds good, and, as I will explain later on, the articles clarify the relevance of such a stance. But what is at stake in this tying together of fiction and the ‘real’ world? For me, it started out as a question of interaction, as an exchange or interface where cultural and political meanings would meet and mingle. In the process, or should I perhaps say practice, of writing this document, however, I realise that it is not merely an interface, but also interdependence. This interdependency is about the co-construction of realities, of worlds and of knowledges. Having said that, the term interdependence might be too embedded in a binary understanding of something that exist between established opposites, rather than serving to accentuate the multiple movements and exchanges that take place in such encounters. Perhaps this is a question of transdependence or intradependence? Here, the prefixes ‘trans’ and ‘intra’ denote the traffic between, across, through and around fact and fiction not as fixed poles, but rather as flexible entities<sup>7</sup>. Importantly, this trans-reliance is therefore also about location: knowledge produced in historical, cultural and social time as well as in real and imagined places and situations. With this realisation, Haraway’s notion of story-telling practices serves as a dynamic and complex toolkit for understanding

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<sup>7</sup> See also Karen Barad’s discussion on the terms intra-action versus interaction (2003:815). She suggests that the prefix ‘inter’ indicate an a priori existence of entities, whereas the prefix ‘intra’ conveys how an open-ended relationality is indicative of a conceptual shifts that destabilises established categories of knowledge.

knowledge as both contextual and embodied: situated in the weave that binds structure, materiality and imagination together.

As a methodology, the study of story-telling practices trace the ways in which all forms of knowledge are produced, maintained and developed. Importantly, the notion of knowledges in the plural includes facts, truth, claims, fictions, stories, practices and experience. In this sense, Haraway's emphasis on knowledge production is indebted to the notion of genealogy. As a term, genealogy can be understood as descent, heritage or lineage. However, philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche introduced the term genealogy not just as a conceptualisation of history, but as the conditions under which such history is told. In other words, genealogy is a method for tracing the conditions under which established structures, frameworks and imaginaries are created or put into play, such as for example the notion of passing as human.

Nietzsche uses the term genealogy in relation to his discussion on morality and values (Nietzsche and Ansell-Pearson 1994: 187). He argues that the genealogy of morality is about the conditions and social circumstances under which certain values and morals have formed and developed. As such, he suggests that the notion of a universal morality is impossible, and that it must be understood as culturally and historically specific. Nietzsche explains the need for this specificity, this genealogy of differentiation, in relation to dominant power structures, social hierarchies and cultural dominance that inform knowledge and knowledge production. He argues that these genealogies of differentiation are embedded in language and linguistic signifiers. In line with this, I reiterate my starting point that such structures of differentiation are also entrenched in the textual tropes, metaphors and representations of (science) fiction.

Similarly, philosopher Michel Foucault emphasises power relations and how they are at work in social structures (Foucault [1998] 2004). Foucault understands power relations as overarching structures for



understanding cultural differences as historical constructs, and he establishes genealogy as an analytical tool for tracing the ways in which we understand the present. Genealogy, then, can thus be understood as a kind of “historical present” (Butler 1990: 5), where the interweaving of past histories and present conditions is brought to the fore. Foucault applies Nietzsche’s analysis of morality to knowledge production as a whole: genealogy is about the conditions and social circumstances under which our knowledge has formed and developed. In other words, genealogies are ways of confronting and potentially (re)organising the conditions for knowledge.

Importantly, Foucault stresses that genealogy, albeit tracing history, “opposes itself to the search for ‘origins’” (Foucault 1998: 72). He argues that the notion of origins is too readily privileged as ‘truth’ in Western society and its history, thereby failing to acknowledge that which has been lost along the way while searching for a coherent history. In his attempt to nuance an unsatisfactory reliance on ‘origins’, he is particularly preoccupied with allowing seemingly irrelevant or inconsequential details to take a part in the series of events or practices. This, he argues, is in order to demonstrate that our organising principle of continuity and wholeness leads to a totalising worldview dominated by those in power. This resonates with Haraway’s insistence on situated knowledges as necessary to avoid “various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims” (Haraway 1988: 583).

In a discussion of Nietzsche’s use of the German terms *Herkunft* and *Entstehung*, traditionally translated as origin, Foucault differentiates between these two terms as *descent* and *emergence* respectively. He suggests that the term descent refers to membership of a certain group by way of kinship, social position or institutionalised practices. This notion of descent also manifests itself on and within the body. For my analysis, there are interesting similarities between descent and established notions of ontology as a fixed location for identification. Significantly, Foucault’s revisiting of belonging and descent positions

genealogy as “an unstable assemblage of faults, fissures, and heterogeneous layers” (1998: 75) rather than a consistent heritage. For Foucault, then,

*genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body (ibid: 76).*

In my work, the notion of passing as human is one such form of articulation of the body as situated in culture and history. This is relevant because this mode of analysis allows for an unfixing of deterministic categories for identification and recognition. I return to a more thorough discussion of the genealogies of passing in section 2.2.1, and in chapter 3.

Further, Foucault emphasises the second term, *Entstehung* or emergence, not as the opposite of descent, but as a complementary movement that articulates confrontations or ruptures in already established histories of origins or descent. He argues:

*[t]he world such as we are acquainted with it is not this ultimately simple configuration where events are reduced to accentuate their essential traits, their final meaning or their initial and final value. On the contrary, it is a profusion of entangled events (ibid: 80)*

In this re-evaluation of the notion of origins, Foucault spells out that a fundamental way of organising knowledge is to determine what something or someone *is*. In other words, how notions of identity and ontology are at the heart of systems of categorisation and classification. Here, Foucault explains genealogy as a method for tracing and documenting events and practices from an array of interpretative viewpoints, and underlines the importance of understanding the multiplicity of details, or different stories, as it were. This exposure of the linkages between ontology and knowledge is central to my analysis. Foucault’s insistence that categorical understanding can be destabilised has inspired my methodological approach, both in terms of seeking to

combine fact and fiction, but also by way of exploring the notion of passing as a trope that challenges established ideas of identity and ontology.

As the discussion of my choice of material (section 2.2) and the reflection on my articles (section 2.3) show, it is fair to say that my methodological routes have been varied. Although, in my attempts to connect text and context, I rely heavily on discourse analysis and close readings of selected texts, scenes and characters, I move between media and cultural representations on the one hand and contemporary political and ethical debates on the other. The reasons for this multiple approach will be explained in more detail later in this chapter, but it is important to note that implementing this genealogical approach as a methodology allows for nuanced and various readings, interpretations and extrapolations that, in their multiplicity, contribute to conveying the complex relationality between fact and fiction, and between producer and product of knowledge. For my analysis, Haraway's notion of story-telling practices serves as an operationalisation of a genealogical approach. In turn, this allows for a destabilisation of truth claims as a "monotonous finality" (Foucault 1998: 82), and opens up space for a reconfiguration of identities and ontologies, existences and worlds as works in progress. Put plainly, knowledge *creates* realities; knowledge *is* worlding. This is, I suggest, also the aim of the literal story-telling practices of science fiction.

### *2.1.2 Science fictional story-telling practices*

Having chosen science fiction as the empirical material for this thesis, I have, perhaps, embarked on a seemingly inconsequential route to discussing the power at stake in dynamics of establishing sameness and difference. Admittedly, the question that I have been asked most frequently throughout this PhD project is "why science fiction?" In terms of genealogical story-telling practices, science fiction is one route for providing stories about the present, not by tracing history, but by

imagining possible or even impossible futures. As we will see in the following, it can also be positioned as a kind of historical present. Another question that needs answering is “what is science fiction?” On the one hand, science fiction is a strand of popular culture quite often associated with spectacular technological invention, far-fetched plots and rather violent adventures in space. This is what science fiction theorist Darko Suvin has called “gadgetry-cum-utopia/dystopia” (1980: 144). On the other hand, science fiction is story-telling practices about potential bodies and societies that may never exist, but which nevertheless present us with expectations or imaginings about what could lie ahead. Importantly, as a predominantly Western genre, much science fiction also narrates stories of colonial exploration and exploitation, where the alien or “exotic” Other is either assimilated or disposed of (Langer 2011; Nama 2008; Rieder 2008; Sardar and Cubitt 2002).

According to Suvin (1980), science fiction is a particular genre that relies on a *premise of estrangement* from the known world. He argues that science fiction articulates a *novum*, a novelty or innovation in human consciousness. The *novum* represents an estrangement from established world-orders and worldviews by way of introducing imaginable technologies, relationships and worlds. Following on from Suvin, science fiction theorist Adam Roberts suggests that the premise of the *novum* defines science fiction in terms of producing a “point of difference” (2006:145) from which readers and viewers can both familiarise and extrapolate. For Roberts, the effect of science fiction is akin to poetry in the sense that science fiction challenges established tropes and metaphors and creates different ones. This point of view resonates with literary theorist Viktor Shklovsky’s ([1917] 1990) notion of defamiliarisation or estrangement: a literary or artistic tool in order to make the known unfamiliar. This unfamiliarisation serves the purpose of challenging conventional understanding or interpretation, and potentially expands the horizon of possibility for knowledge.

Importantly, Suvin stresses that the novum is not only about newness and creativity. Rather, it points to how the “new is always a *historical* category since it is always determined by historical forces” (1980: 154, emphasis in original). In other words, the ways in which science fiction is able to generate estrangement from ‘reality’ can only be grounded in what is known, in history. This element of historicity, Suvin argues, makes the science fiction genre explicitly political and “metaempirical” (1979: 20). This meta-empiricism references the Foucauldian notion of genealogy by way of its emphasis on historical constructs as producing a historical present. Where Foucault stresses the power relations at stake in these constructs, Suvin’s concern is more about convincingly connecting science fiction to the present. Nevertheless, in connection with a genealogical approach, the notion of meta-empiricism is relevant in order to establish that story-telling practices in science fiction are situated in established structures of knowledge, and, as a consequence, in established systems of power and differentiation.

My analysis rests on the intersections of knowledge production, power structures and dynamics of sameness and difference. Although Suvin’s notion of the novum situates science fiction as a point of difference that is inextricably linked to history and society, Teresa de Lauretis is more concerned with the ways in which science fiction engenders meaning. She suggests that science fiction is *sign-work* (1980: 166). According to de Lauretis, sign-work is both method and theory; it is a way of conceptually changing, and thus challenging, established knowledges, conventions and norms by describing or depicting slightly different bodies, landscapes or structures. This reorganisation of semantic space also affects how we understand material and socio-political relations:

*The science fictional construction of a possible world [...] entails a conceptual reorganization of semantic space and therefore of material and social relations, and makes for an expanded cognitive horizon, an epic vision of our present social reality. (ibid: 170)*

In other words, sign-work functions as unfamiliarisation in the form of unexpected embodiment, such as alien, cyborg or technobodies, and contributes to establishing an estrangement from an established or expected reality. Here, sign-work serves to create a point of difference in terms of embodiment and materialities. It is these kinds of bodies that populate my analysis: the technological non-humans passing as human that create a disturbance in established systems of differentiation. These perhaps posthuman figurations surface as unavoidable perceptual and conceptual figures with which to rethink ontology and identity. To paraphrase Donna Haraway, “[s]cience fiction is generically concerned with the interpretation of boundaries between problematic selves and unexpected others” (Haraway 1992: 300).

Also, the depiction of different societal structures is sign-work with a similar effect. For example, in the science fiction TV series *Firefly* (2002-2003), the intergalactic common language is not English, but Chinese. As in most successful science fiction, this detail is never mentioned or explained, it is just recognised as a governing principle in this world: people speak it on official business, and they also use it as a preferred language for swearing. Here, the imagined reality of *Firefly* points to the potential impact of overarching power structures of economic, political and linguistic significance. As sign-work, it references, and makes real, ongoing changes in global economic power relations: traditionally colonial Western states in crisis and rapid growth experienced in the so-called Tiger economies of Asia (Donnan and Wilson 1999).

For my analysis, the sign-work at stake in science fiction is productive as a means of negotiating established conditions of possibility for knowledge about ‘reality’. According to science fiction theorist Robert Luckhurst, science fiction is “a vital resource for recording our states of being in late modernity” (2005: 222). When we understand science fiction, then, as unfamiliarising stories about the historical present, it has the potential to address the conditions of possibility for human life

through establishing various points of difference. In this thesis, this is particularly interesting for my analysis about the changing parameters for what is considered human in relation to contemporary biopolitics and bioethics. In the following, I outline how contemporary issues in biopolitics and bioethics take part in story-telling practices about the human and its limits.

### *2.1.3 Biopolitics and bioethics as story-telling practices and ways of worlding*

The question of life, and what defines it, is at the heart of determining human ontology and identity. As my examples of passing as human show, the notion of life or existence encompasses both tensions between biological and technological materiality, and questions of capacities, origin and legitimacy. The contemporary situation of scientific, medical and technological innovation has become increasingly relevant for the political regulation of, as well as ethical debates about, the boundaries of human life. In addition, as Mouffe points out, the “absence of a political frontier” (1993: 5) is symptomatic of reworkings of categories of identity and belonging not only along the axes of race, gender and sexuality, but also religion, culture and ethnicity. Importantly, these fields are not neutral, but are invested in ideological beliefs about ‘rightness’ and ‘wrongness’ in ways that make for controversies concerning the definitions and delimitation of political identities (Butler 2004a; Mouffe 1993; Žižek 2008) and biological and technological life (Franklin and Ragoné 1998; Rose 2007; Shildrick and Mykitiuk 2005).

As structures of regulation, both the political and the ethical rely on normative story-telling practices about ‘life itself’ as a means of securing a common ground for embodied life practices. Feminist theorist Charis Thompson refers to these normative story-telling practices as “ontological choreography” (2005): a strategic naturalisation and socialisation of human bodies and practices. The regulatory framework for disciplining the bodies and normative practices that are at stake in

this ontological choreography resonates with Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas' term *biological citizenship* (2004). They argue that progress in technology and medical science has caused a (re)biologisation of identity, and of identificatory practices. Just think about all the 'necessary' steps that are required in order to travel by aeroplane. Firstly, you need a valid passport that, in addition to your name and identity number, also holds biological information about your embodied self. Secondly, you need to pass through security checkpoints where both your belongings and your body are scanned in order to detect 'abnormalities'.

Feminist theorist Sarah Franklin (2000) suggests that what is at stake is a new definition of life as information. She posits that, "[i]n sum, we arrive at a simple sequence: nature becomes biology becomes genetics, through which life itself becomes reprogrammable information" (ibid: 190). Conceptualising 'reality' as information points to the ways in which knowledge and its production, mediates the conditions of possibility for understanding complex interconnections between ontology, politics and ethics that are at work in contemporary discourses of biopolitics and bioethics. As such, these definitions and discourses belong to the *cultural imaginaries* (Dawson 1994) that conceptualise the boundaries of human life and existence. For cultural theorist Graham Dawson, cultural imaginaries encompass how discourse, imagery, narratives and texts are intertwined networks of information, meaning and expectations:

*those vast networks of interlinking discursive themes, images, motifs and narrative forms that are publicly available within a culture at any one time, and articulate its psychic and social dimensions. (ibid: 48)*

The notion of cultural imaginaries thus refers to a sense of collectivity, a common horizon or framework for the interconnections between imagination and knowledge about a shared world. As such, the cultural imaginaries available in any given context inform and are informed by



story-telling practices that, simultaneously, follow a rule-bound discourse of regulation while guarding the potential to destabilise this discourse.

In my articles, I show how the practice of passing as human for technological non-humans in science fiction illuminates what is at stake in contemporary discourses of biopolitics and bioethics. In the course of the research project, I move between an explicit focus on political regulation, specifically of reproductive rights and questions of citizenship and belonging, to a broader focus on ethics. Both of these approaches address the ways in which certain kinds of ontological choreography are necessary in order to pass, and how this choreography is navigated and negotiated. However, I suggest that the focus on ethics in particular also confronts the idea of information as truth claims about life itself. Drawing on what Shildrick refers to as postconventional ethics, I highlight how bioethics readdresses questions of truth and authenticity as traversable rather than static categories or principles for identification and recognition. The story-telling practices at stake in biopolitics and bioethics thus bring to the fore how ideology and truth claims are inextricably interwoven. I move to a further discussion of how I have engaged with these issues in my articles in section 2.3. I also return to the question of ethics in the final chapter. In the following, I explain my choice of material.

## **2.2 Choice of material**

I have chosen science fiction as my interpretative viewpoint for rethinking ontology and identity as negotiable structures of sameness and difference. When I first started the work on this thesis, my primary concern was the ways in which advances in medical technology have a significant impact on cultural imaginaries about the boundaries of human life and existence. Inspired by work on the interconnections between feminism, biopolitics and technology, notably Haraway (1997), Smelik and Lykke (2008) and Lykke and Braidotti (1996), I wanted to map out

the ways in which the imagined possibilities and potentialities in science fiction could be explored in relation to issues of biopolitics and bioethics in the wake of the technological revolution. As mentioned in section 2.1.2., science fiction is a specific genre that creates points of difference from established realities, bodies and life practices. How can these points of difference shed light on the increasing precariousness pertaining to what is considered ‘human’? The scope of this thesis does not concern the genre as a whole, but deals specifically with the points of difference created by stories about non-humans passing as human. I posit that such stories are story-telling practices about the human and its limits. This makes for a thematic entry point to notions of sameness and difference, rather than one based exclusively on genre, characters or specific science fictional texts.

In order to further narrow down the choice of material, I have concentrated my analysis on technological non-humans passing as human, thus limiting the analysis to humanlike robots: androids and replicants created through technological innovation or grounded in technological apparatuses. This means that I have excluded aliens, clones, modified humans and cyborgs with prominent biological links to human beings. The reasons for this choice are grounded in the posthuman turn, where there is a general move from cyborg ontology towards the complexities and relationalities of posthuman existences. For me, this move is important because it allows for a critical revisiting of the cyborg in terms of exploring how categorisations of differentiation are intertwined, but also how they communicate, act and react in relation to one another. There is, however, one exception to these restrictions: the rehabilitated Borg drone Seven of Nine, a cyborg character from the TV series *Star Trek: Voyager*, features as one example in the article entitled “Political monsters”. I explain why this character is included in the analysis later in this chapter. In this section, I explain the reasons for this overall choice of material.

Unlike the cyborg, whose complex entanglements of biology and technology represent hybridisation, the technological non-human exemplifies the conventional divide by way of representing ontological difference. I am particularly concerned with this notion of ontological difference, and how (ontological) passing as human is becoming a noticeable feature in contemporary science fiction. Importantly, in my articles, I trace stories of passing as human as an embracing, not only of hybridisation, but of *performative ontologies*. Influenced by the posthuman turn, I analyse the theme of passing as human as a means to explore what is at stake for the notion of human exceptionalism in science fiction produced since the 2000s. However, I also draw on the histories of science fiction as a genre to argue my point: that the notion of ontological sameness and difference seems to be increasingly more nuanced and negotiable, not primarily as hybridisation, but as exchange.

Notably, most of my material is visual: TV series, particularly *Battlestar Galactica*, but also *Star Trek*, dominate the empirical material. Certain films are also subject to a close analysis, such as *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Alien Resurrection* (1997). There are also some analyses of literary works, primarily *The Handmaid's Tale* (Atwood 1985) and *The Bicentennial Man* (Asimov [1976] 1990). In addition, I reference a variety of science fiction texts, both visual and literary, in order to contextualise the main analysis. The predominance of visual material is due to the ways in which visual media play an important role in portraying and embodying both the human and its Other. As popular media, TV and cinema productions reach a broad audience, and arguably serve as both products and producers of social and cultural meanings. Particularly, feminist and queer media and cultural theorists have pointed to the constitutive role that visual culture has for creating points of view, iconic imagery and visualisations of sameness and difference that both disrupt and establish normative reference points for 'reality' (Doane 1991; Dyer 1980; deLauretis 1982, 1987; Mulvey 1975; Mühleisen 2003; Thornham 1999).

As a mass medium, TV is in a particular position that, according to media scholar Jostein Gripsrud (1999), establishes a common ground that viewers interact with and relate to their own life projects. Furthermore, cultural theorist Chris Barker (1999) argues that TV is an agent in meaning-making and knowledge production. For Barker, TV is both representation, a form of political economy, and a cultural relation between text, image and audience (ibid: 33). This view is supported by cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who suggests that television, in particular, is part of:

*the position and the selective construction of social knowledge, of social imaginary through which we perceive the 'worlds', the 'lived realities' of others, and imaginarily reconstruct their lives and ours into some intelligible world-of-the-whole. (1997:140)*

Also, as Haraway and other theorists of knowledge production have emphasised, vision and the visual play an important part in the histories of medical and scientific production of 'facts' (Franklin 2000; Jordanova 1993; Haraway 1988, 1989). Notably, the impact of the visual in scientific and medical discourses has also affected the imagery and imaginaries of biopolitical and bioethical issues in popular culture (Haran et al. 2008; Smelik and Lykke 2008; Stacey 2010; Åsberg 2005). Before I turn to a broader discussion of the theoretical fields in which this thesis is located (in Chapter Three), I will give an outline of the genealogies of passing as human in science fiction that have led me to my final choice of material. The purpose for this genealogy is to contextualise my choices, and to further exemplify the process of narrowing down the material.

### *2.2.1 Genealogies of passing as human in science fiction*

Mary W. Shelley's influential novel *Frankenstein – or the Modern Prometheus* ([1818] 1993) is, as well as a common sign-post for the beginning of the science fiction genre, a starting point for my choice of

material: the non-human, yet humanlike body that is brought into being by technological means. The monstrous appearance of Frankenstein's creation causes it to be unable to pass as human, but its affinity with the human urges it to seek recognition and acceptance from its creator. In contrast, nearly two hundred years later, the Cylons in the reimagined TV series *Battlestar Galactica* (2004–2009) are technologically advanced replicants passing as human that seek to replace rather than reconcile with their former masters. As these two examples show, the desire or ability to pass as human is a longstanding theme in the histories of science fiction. Common to stories of passing as human is the playing with conventional binary oppositions between the human and the non-human (machines, animals, objects) by way of featuring human-like characters that pass or attempt to pass as human; they exhibit bodily and performative capacities that allow them to be considered human. In a contextualising overview of stories of passing as human (see Fig. 1), I show how this theme moves between media and periods of time. Note the increase in the number of TV series, both new and reimagined, during the 2000s.

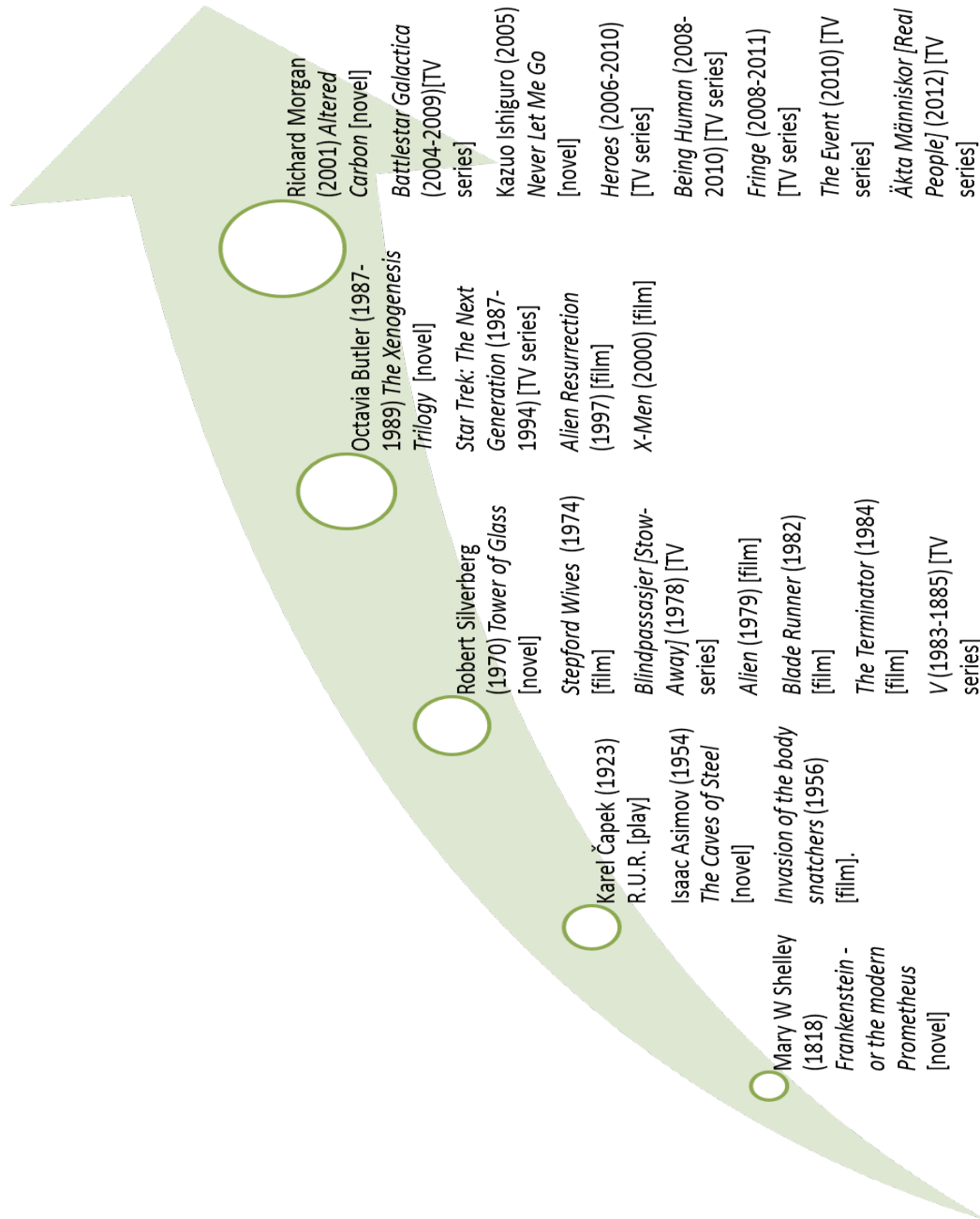


Figure 1: Genealogy of passing as human in science fiction

This outline (Fig 1.) of literary and visual texts that deal with the notion of passing as human is not exhaustive, but gives an overview of influential stories of passing that, for the most part, are internationally known. I have not included cartoons or comic books in the overview, and I have settled for the mention of only one of Isaac Asimov's early works, even though most of his oeuvre probably deserves a place. Also, the outline consists mostly of science fiction stories produced in the USA, with mention of the iconic Fritz Lang film *Metropolis* (1920), the British TV series *Being Human* and two Nordic productions; the Norwegian TV series *Blindpassasjer [Stow-away]* from 1978 and the more recent Swedish TV series *Äkta Människor [Real People]* from 2012. This last series is still in production. I include the German, British and Nordic productions to illustrate that, although the USA dominates the production of available science fiction stories about passing as human globally, there are European contributions to this field.

However, science fiction stories about passing from Asia, Africa and Latin America are not included in the overview<sup>8</sup>. This is partly due to the cultural influences within which I, as a researcher from Norway, am situated, and partly due to the need to contain the scope of the thesis. Also, as mentioned in section 2.1.2, many science fiction narratives are influenced by colonial imaginaries that reinforce the universalised (Western, white, male and able-bodied) human subject as norm. In light of my overall research question concerning how the notion of passing as human can mediate understandings of the normative human, it is particularly useful to limit my choice of material to mainly Western traditions, where legacies of colonial and racial power are at work (Langer 2011).

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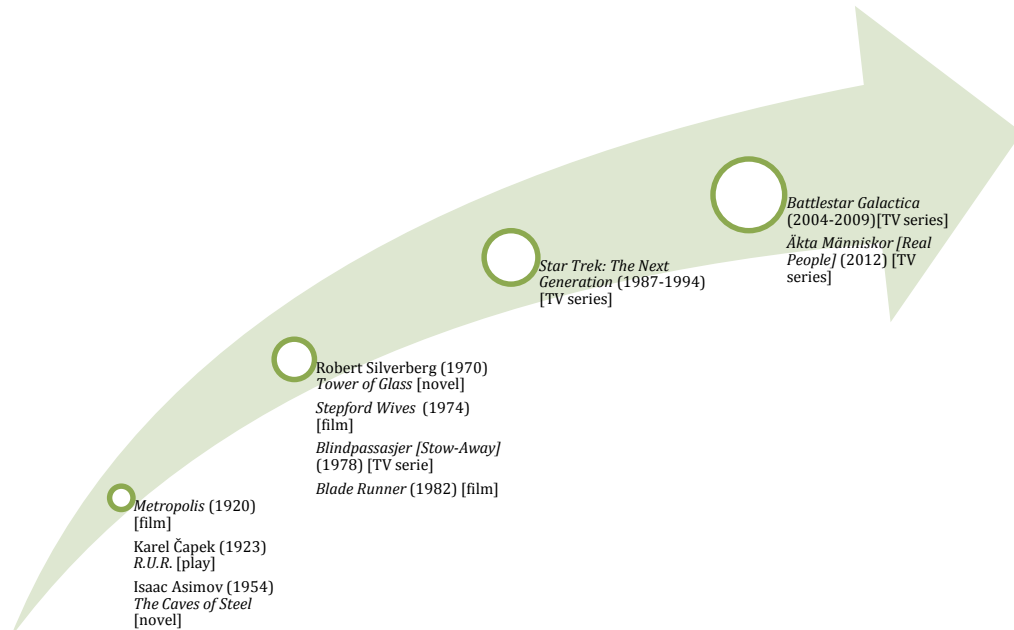
<sup>8</sup> For a recent analytical contribution on the global reach of science fiction as such, see cultural theorist Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay's work on transcultural science fiction (2013).

My entry point to stories of passing as human in science fiction is informed by the genre's central premise of technological, medical and scientific development, or speculation about possible advances in these areas. In my work, I have identified specific changes in the ways in which the role of technology has been narrated in science fiction over the last few decades: from technology-centred, where technological progress and innovation are positioned as threats to the human race (Telotte 1995), to stories about exchange and relationality, hybridisation, alliances and tentative intimacies between the normative self and the improper Other. The two influential filmic serials *The Alien Quadrilogy* and *The Terminator Quadrilogy* are indicative of this change: the initial films *Alien* (1979) and *The Terminator* (1984) portray enmity and ontological difference between humans and non-humans, be it extraterrestrials or technobodies that pass as human. However, in the final productions, more nuanced and unstable alliances between these actors are established (*Alien: Resurrection* 1997; *Terminator: Salvation* 2009)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> I will add that *The Alien Quadrilogy* is perhaps the more productive of the two; its entanglement with – and deconstruction of – traditional ontologies and dichotomies has been convincingly described by feminist cultural theorist Jackie Stacey (2003; 2010). Although alliances between human and technological non-humans are formed in, *The Terminator Quadrilogy*, it maintains a traditional ontological divide between human and machine in the form of an inevitable war between the species in which only a few of the machines are on the side of the humans, and vice versa. Nevertheless, the popularity and influence of the Terminator films makes them relevant as an example of the kinds of story-telling practices that reach a wide audience and that influence popular culture as such.





**Figure 2: Genealogy of technobodies passing as human**

As mentioned, my analysis is primarily centred on the relationship between the human and its robotic Other. In the outline above (Fig. 2), I have included only texts that specifically deal with technological non-humans passing, or attempting to pass, as human. These figurations are technologically constructed, but have incorporated biological tissue mass as part of their appearance. It is these figures that comprise the material for my close readings of selected science fiction texts. Notably, the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* holds a central place in my work; two of the articles are close readings of this series, and it features as an in-depth example in the remaining two articles. A main reason for this is the rich material for analysing passing as human as negotiations of sameness and difference: the overall plot is about survival, and a

longstanding war between humans and a society of robots known as the Cylons. As a remake of a series with the same name from 1978<sup>10</sup>, the reimagined version was first screened in Great Britain on the channel Sky One in October 2004, and subsequently in the USA on the Sci-Fi Channel in January 2005. Both TV series has been distributed worldwide. The reimagined version encompasses some deliberate changes to the original series, particularly by introducing a gender-balanced and multiracial cast, as well as an actualisation of technological advancements in late modern Western society. Perhaps most striking, several Cylon models have now developed a human appearance. The humanoid Cylons are nearly impossible to tell apart from biological humans, and they have infiltrated what is left of human society. There can be several copies of the same model existing at the same time. Another important change is that some of the prominent male characters in the original series are now portrayed as female.

At the start of the reimagined series, the Cylons attack all human settlements in space, known as the Twelve Colonies of Man. Originally manufactured as service robots for the human race, the Cylons have previously revolted and left the human homeworlds. With an unexpected and well-coordinated attack on human society, they disrupt the conditions of possibility for human life: societal infrastructure, political systems of regulation and everyday practices. In the course of the series the seemingly oppositional binaries between human/friend/creator and technology/enemy/destroyer are destabilised through unpredictable alliances, both as intimate relationships between humans and Cylons, and as political agreements between the two societies. Due to this, *Battlestar Galactica* has been widely interpreted as a political fiction that is commenting on the instability in conventional friend/enemy antagonisms since the 9/11 attacks (Erickson 2007; Ott 2008; Rawle

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<sup>10</sup> The original version of series *Battlestar Galactica*, created by Glen E. Larson, was released in the USA in September 1978. Although this series was short-lived (only one season), it was distributed widely in Europe.

2006; see also Kiersey and Neumann 2013). These unstable relations also have clear religious dimensions (Klassen 2008; Neumann 2011). In the same vein, the interconnections between identity, military power and nationalism have been subject to analysis (Kaveney 2010; Randell 2011).

Another important reason for the popularity of the series is the many negotiations of identity and belonging (Deis 2008; Hawk 2011; Jackson 2011; Koistinen 2011; Moore 2008; Strayer 2010), where discussions of race (Pegues 2008), gender (Hellstrand 2009) and sexuality (Burrows 2010) are prominent. Notably, biopolitical and bioethical issues concerning human existence, such as reproduction (Jowett 2010; Kustritz 2012) and ecology (Leavenworth 2012) are also subject to analysis. My work builds on the explorations of identity and belonging that the series open up for, particularly in relation to issues of identity categorisation in a time of biopolitical change. In light of this, *Battlestar Galactica* is a particularly fruitful example of the interconnections between fiction and knowledge production concerning contemporary debates about being recognised as a ‘real’ or proper human being. In this respect, the reimaged series is representative of what I identify as a shift from imaginaries of polarisation to imaginaries of interaction and exchange in late modern science fiction.

### **2.3 Materials**

I have written four articles that make up the specific material for this overview document. In all the articles, the central theme of passing as human is at the forefront, although the articles concentrate on different aspects of the overall research topic: that representations of technological non-humans passing as human in science fiction both (re)produce and mediate understandings of the ontological identity of the human by addressing discourses of normality, legitimacy and authenticity. In the following, I present an outline of the various angles and findings in each article, and I explain how the interconnections between the articles make

up the body of this thesis. The outline is not necessarily chronological in terms of when the articles were published or written, but genealogical in order to demonstrate how the overall theme of passing as human produced several possible routes for analysis. In this outline, I focus specifically on how the notion of passing as human is analysed in different ways in the articles, and how the articles relate to the overarching concepts of this thesis: ontological (in)stability, performativity, biopolitics and bioethics.

### 2.3.1 “*The shape of things to come?*” Politics of reproduction in *Battlestar Galactica*

The article entitled “The shape of things to come? Politics of reproduction in *Battlestar Galactica*” sums up my starting point about the ways in which science fictional imaginaries interrelate to issues concerning the boundaries of human life and existence. Here, I discuss how the politics of survival in the science fiction TV series *Battlestar Galactica* corresponds to contemporary biopolitics in late modern Western society. Through a close reading of two selected female characters, one human and one non-human, I argue that the survival narrative in the series accentuates the challenges that advanced reproductive technologies pose to the female body, and how this is interrelated to state regulation of reproduction and population control. I position this story in relation to a classic novel in the histories of feminist science fiction: *The Handmaid’s Tale* (Atwood 1985). I use the Nordic welfare state model as an example of such state regulation, with a particular focus on recent changes in Norwegian legislation concerning marriage and access to reproductive assistance.

In this article, I argue that *Battlestar Galactica*, a political fiction, facilitates a discussion of the dynamics of choice and duty at stake in contemporary biopolitics and bioethics: the right to choose *not* to reproduce as well as the right *to* reproduce. This dynamic is situated in what I call posthuman reproduction, meaning the biotechnological

facilitation of reproductive practices. I suggest that the series concludes with the promise of constructing a shared future for humans and Cylons. However, I posit that *Battlestar Galactica*'s survival narrative validates posthuman reproduction, where a pro-natalist approach to population control represents posthuman reproduction as an evolutionary advancement that the female body cannot refuse. As such, I conclude, the survival narrative in *Battlestar Galactica* (re)inscribes gender as a category of difference and the link between the female body and reproduction as key norms for late modern societies.

This article highlights the interweaving of the story-telling practices of science fiction with contemporary discourses of biopolitics and bioethics. Drawing on theories of feminist cultural theory, I analyse how gendered, sexualised and racialised structures for establishing sameness and difference in one pivotal episode of *Battlestar Galactica* (*Pegasus*) saturate the imagery and imaginaries at stake in the series. I call these *body imaginaries* in order to link the cultural representation of embodied gender with the politics of reproduction. The concept of body imaginaries is indebted to Dawson's cultural imaginaries as well as Moira Gatens' notion of *imaginary bodies* (1996). In this article, body imaginaries underline a multiple conceptualisation of embodiment: the material and physical body on the one hand and discursive identity categories on the other.

For my analysis, body imaginaries points to the ways in which representations in popular culture can be understood as culturally and ideologically saturated imageries that are both produced as and reproduce identity categories; as worldings. I expose how overlaying knowledges about the female body, reproductive ability and women's social responsibility as carers and mothers are ideological imaginaries manifesting in contemporary biopolitics. Here, I position fiction and the imaginary as productive catalysts for an analysis of the discursive and ideological framework for present-day biopolitics. Importantly, I show how the tension between technology and the racialised, female body

becomes a site/sight for inscribing Otherness. This, in turn, is also what exposes the ontological (in)stability at stake in questions of biopolitics and bioethics.

Although it would fit well with the notion of body imaginaries, I do not invoke the notion of performativity in this article. However, I do highlight how norms of intelligibility for racial and gendered identities are at work in determining sameness and difference. I also emphasise elements of resistance and agency which illustrate the conditions of possibility for performative human-ness in a manner that brings out established regulatory frameworks for doing embodied identity. In retrospect, I can see that this analysis would have benefited from a more explicit mention of the notion of performativity. Interestingly, by doing a comparative reading of two ontologically different characters who happen to share the same gender, I show how the category of gender trumps conventional ontological divides. In this sense, gender, or perhaps more correctly, sexual difference, becomes an ontological framework that determines the conditions of possibility for existence. In other words, sexual difference is re-inscribed as ontological difference. My main concern in this article is the female body and how the identity 'woman' is positioned as Other. I make a point about the role of the father in these imaginaries of reproduction and reproductive assistance, but I do not elaborate on the male body in relation to the biopolitics at stake. This thread, however, is picked up in the next article.

2.3.2 *“Politiske monstre. Å passere som menneskelig i science fiction-TV-seriene Star Trek og Battlestar Galactica [Political monsters: Passing as human in the science fiction TV series Star Trek and Battlestar Galactica]”*

In this article, I identify a shift in the mode of embodying the Other in the science fiction TV series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Star Trek:*

*Voyager* and *Battlestar Galactica*. I trace this shift from visibly marked difference to technological hybridisation to passing. Through a close reading of the characters Data, Seven of Nine and two Cylons embodied as female, corresponding respectively to the aforementioned TV series, I show how the science fiction genre has over time negotiated different situated knowledges about human ontology. Through a genealogical approach to story-telling practices about the human in science fiction and in a cultural context, I emphasise ontology both as a regulatory frame for political and ethical belonging, and as a material delimitation. I suggest that the ontological negotiations that these characters represent are closely intertwined with social and cultural developments in the wake of the technological revolution. Also, I point to the ways in which these developments relate to biopolitics, particularly regarding issues of diversity and gender equality. I call these characters *political monsters* in order to highlight the interconnections between text and context, and the relevance of these figurations in key debates about gender, sexuality, race and biopolitics.

As political monsters, these characters articulate some important questions about identity and belonging. As an android embodied as male, Data illustrates how, in biopolitical issues of reproduction, the ontological choreography at stake for the male body reinforces conventional binaries between female/body/emotion and male/mind/rationality. Conceptualised as a political monster, Data is a particularly interesting figure to think with in terms of access to human life-practices such as reproduction and intimacy. This is because he embodies both lack and excess in a manner that illuminates the narrow windows for recognition and legitimacy in the face of rigid structures of sameness and difference. The next example is, as mentioned earlier, an exception to the analytical scope of this thesis: the character Seven of Nine is a technologically enhanced biological body, a cyborg. I have explained the reasons for my limitations with a move from cyborg ontology to ontological politics that, in the posthuman turn, has been

important for challenging human exceptionalism and acknowledging relations between entities rather than hybridity.

Nevertheless, I want to make it clear that I consider the figure of the cyborg to still be a vital figure with which to think through/about sameness and difference. Seven of Nine is interesting because she does not conform completely to the normative, and highly gendered, human regime of identity and belonging. As a political monster, she represents the proliferation of what I will call the promise of the performative: that identity is doing, not mere being. Also, I defend the inclusion of Seven of Nine as an example because my analysis shows that the notion of hybridity, of cyborg ontology, is a necessary stepping stone for a further analysis of the impact of technology in and on the human body, as well as for analysing it the other way around: the human impact on technology, environments and bodies.

In a recent article, feminist science and technology scholar Anne Jorunn Berg (2014) calls for a revitalisation of the cyborg. Arguing that the posthuman turn might do well to remember the cyborg as a political figuration that attempts to break open categorical dualisms, Berg insists that the potential of the cyborg to rethink the ways in which materiality is important continues to be largely unexplored. The story of Seven of Nine confirms the significance of the cyborg figure, not only as a political metaphor, but as an analytical tool for exploring the ongoing entanglements between materiality and contextuality, be they in politics, ethics or knowledge production. In this respect, the analysis of Seven of Nine is a necessary exception that underlines the importance of a genealogical approach in the face of various turns to the 'new', and, with it, recognition of the legacy of feminist theories of knowledge production.

The last section of the article "Political monsters" features two Cylons embodied as female. Like Seven of Nine, they, too, negotiate embodiment and agency in both predictable and unpredictable ways.



Simultaneously both outside and inside the parameters of humanity, I suggest that these Cylons not only pass as human, but *transpass*<sup>11</sup>. In the article, I explain the notion of transpassing as not only passing, but transforming the very parameters of passing by destabilising them. I suggest that passing makes possible a kind of double strategy or double vision for destabilising fixed norms and conventions for doing humanness, in terms of both racial and gendered categories of identification. Transpassing, however, also creates agency for redoing identity ‘outside the box’ because it changes the very parameters of passing. In hindsight, transpassing might not just be this optimistic term pinpointing subversive strategies.

Although it is the case that the Cylons in many ways reconceptualise the notion of passing by their effortless human embodiment and performative practices, they also reiterate cultural theorist Camaiti-Hostert’s words that “[passing] is not a new theory of identity, but an answer to it in term of a *situated politics*” (2007: 130, my emphasis). My aim was not to create a new term for ‘new and improved’ forms of passing as human, but rather to stress the ways in which the conditions of possibility for passing change with techno-cultural contexts. As political monsters in a contemporary terrain, the Cylons emphasise the removal of conventional signposts for determining difference. In this respect they also transgress the histories of passing. However, they do not transgress or supplant the power relations involved in the notion of passing as such, although they potentially nudge them a little bit. This potential is the topic of the following article.

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<sup>11</sup> A particular thanks to my supervisor, Wencke Mühleisen, for suggesting this term.

### 2.3.3 “Are you alive? *Kritisk intimitet i Battlestar Galactica* [*Are you alive? Critical intimacy in Battlestar Galactica*]”

In the article “Are you alive? *Kritisk intimitet i Battlestar Galactica*”, I discuss a posthuman intervention in the established identity hierarchies that dominate human worldviews. I suggest that a meeting between a universalised (white, middle-aged, Western, colonial, heterosexual, able-bodied, male) human and a Cylon embodied as female brings to the fore how encounters between conventional others can generate a kind of *critical intimacy*. I borrow this term from postcolonial feminist theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999), who proposes the notion of critical intimacy as an analytical tool for a radical reconceptualisation of difference not as distance, but as relationality.

In conventional relationships (families, friendships and love affairs), the shared intimacy implicitly traverses and exceeds the boundaries of the Self<sup>12</sup>. Critical intimacy points to the ways in which intimacy can happen unexpectedly, and where the intrusion of intimacy can be both troubling and revealing. The notion of critical intimacy is based in recognition: to acknowledge the Other not as merely Other, but as someone or something that one must relate to. This is Spivak’s starting point. She understands critical intimacy to be unanticipated, unpredictable and vulnerable forms of recognition and fellowship. As such, it relates to what philosopher Jacques Derrida has called the premise of undecideability (1995). For Derrida, the notion of undecideability comprises an ethical principle that entails openness and curiosity: because it is not known what the Other is, therefore we must expect everything, and risk our perception of established reality.

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<sup>12</sup> A special thanks to Bodil Østbø-Bjåstad for very enlightening and enjoyable discussions about intimacy at the time I was writing this article.

In my close reading of the opening sequence of *Battlestar Galactica*, I suggest that the unexpected (at least for the human) encounter between a human male, representing the colonial fleet, and a Cylon embodied as female generates a situation of such critical intimacy. This encounter illustrates central gendered, racialised, sexualised and speciesist dynamics for determining sameness and difference, and yet it manages to momentarily shift traditional power relations. This shift points to the instability of fixed categorisation at the same time as it acknowledges the fundamental Self/Other dichotomy to be a question of ethico-political significance. Importantly, this opening sequence also establishes the parameters for the reimagined version of *Battlestar Galactica*, and eloquently situates the encounter between human and Cylon in a posthuman reality where traditional categorisations are starting to unravel. What is at stake here is not only the ethics of the encounter, but also the very foundations of understanding and categorising the world.

In my analysis, I situate the close reading of the opening sequence as a worlding practice where established structures of sameness and difference, of identity and belonging, are being confronted. I argue that the balance between estrangement and recognition forces both human and Cylon to readdress their expectations of and presumptions about the Other. I suggest that the worlding at stake at the start of the series can be considered a premise for the series as a whole: to risk a shared world with the Other. Note that in the article “The shape of things to come?” I conclude that the consequence of such a risk is the annihilation of the (feminist) pro-choice woman. To analyse the series through the lens of critical intimacy, however, brings about a more hopeful reading, where Haraway’s concept of worlding is particularly useful for bringing together the ethical and political implications of this encounter.

In this respect, it might have been fruitful to explore critical intimacy in light of the Freudian notion of the *uncanny* (1988). The uncanny derives from the German concept of the *unheimlich*, that which is unfamiliar, un-homely. However, even though the *unheimlich* is contrasted with the

familiarity of the known (that which is *heimlich*, homely), the uncanny represents a form of (mis)recognition: the sensation that there is something familiar lurking within the unfamiliar. The experience of critical intimacy can sometimes be uncanny in the sense of not being completely in control of how to position the relationality that is at stake. When it comes to the uncanny, it becomes even clearer that the notion of critical intimacy is intertwined with the undecideable, both as a worlding practice and as an ethical principle. This is because the notion of critical intimacy also illustrates the difficulty with the promising prospect of openness towards that which seems unfamiliar: the ways in which one understands the world will always consist of situated knowledges, and so to unlearn said knowledge is both tricky and risky. This insight also reiterates Shklovsky's notion of unfamiliarisation as a tool for producing new, or at least different, knowledges. In light of these dynamic of familiarity/ unfamiliarity, this article can be said to highlight the politics of location at stake in worlding practices.

In this article, I suggest that the worlding practices in *Battlestar Galactica* reference a move towards instability or indeterminacy: that the world and its known-ness could always be otherwise. In this sense, my analysis in "Are you alive?" pinpoints a move towards what can be called posthuman ethics (MacCormack 2012) or postconventional ethics (Shildrick and Mykitiuk 2005). This renewed focus on ethics follows in the wake of the posthuman critique directed at the Humanist foundations of being considered a (human) subject, much like Nietzsche's critique of a universal morality (see also Spivak's discussion of Kantian ethics in this article). The principle of undecideability is central here in the sense that traditional markers for recognition are being challenged. I also detect a destabilisation of individuality or selfhood as an exclusive ontological state of being and a shift towards collaboration (Neimanis 2012).

Typically, as my article "The shape of things to come?" shows, the markers of difference that are inscribed in and on the body are, perhaps, more tightly anchored than I manage to convey in the article "Are you

alive?” This illustrates a significant point for a posthuman ethics: a (re)turn to the body and the material. However, by positioning the posthuman intervention in relation to postcolonial power structures, I emphasise the ways in which postcolonial theory establishes indispensable links between worlding, power and the body. These links point to the ways in which the construction of sameness and difference also determines the very notion of ontology as gendered, racialised and sexualised regulatory frames for existence. In the last article, I elaborate on the notion of ontology as an ideological paradigm that is key to establishing the very boundaries of embodiment, subject formation and agency.

#### *2.3.4 “Almost the same, but not quite: ontological politics of recognition in science fiction”*

The final article, entitled “Almost the same, but not quite: ontological politics of recognition in science fiction”, traces ontological markers of Otherness in the histories of science fiction. Drawing on genealogies of passing as human in the science fiction genre, from mid-1970s literature via Hollywood cinema to contemporary TV series, this article identifies a shift in the ways in which the markers of Otherness are embodied, enacted and negotiated: from mimicry to performative passing to a critique of human exceptionalism. The analysis is centred on postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha’s notion of “not quite-ness” (1984), which sums up the binary construction of a normative (white, male) Self and a non-normative Other. He argues that, in a colonial structure, the colonised subject must mimic the appearances and practices of the normative (white, Western) subject in order to be acknowledged as a ‘proper’ subject. As he points out, this mimicry enables a kind of passing, but at the same time it maintains the one who mimics as “a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (ibid: 126).

In addition, I make use of Judith Butler’s emphasis on regulatory frames that govern the conditions of possibility for embodiment and identity

formation. For Butler, passing illustrates the ways in which identities are performative. It represents a kind of agency for the subject: a way to displace established practices of repetition in order to subvert “the very norms that enable the repetition itself” (1990: 188). Where Bhabha is primarily concerned with the ways in which the notion of ontology relies on constructions of racial difference, Butler is particularly concerned with how norms of gender and sexuality translate into ontological conditions. However, both Bhabha and Butler stress the conditions of possibility for agency and subversion within these regulatory frames for doing identity.

By combining Bhabha and Butler’s theoretical positions on strategies for passing, this article is concerned with the mode of representing the Other in science fiction over a time span of four decades, and in different media. I discuss how issues of not-quite-ness expose the conditions of possibility for being recognised as ‘properly’ human. I am particularly concerned with the ways in which these conditions are intertwined with racialised, gendered and sexualised embodiments. I illustrate how ideas about the universal, normative human also cement difference or Otherness. Notably, this article stands out from the aforementioned articles by way of confronting various typologies of normalcy and difference for the body. In addition to the gendered, racialised and sexualised body, I also mention the disabled body, the monstrous body and the criminal body as figurations that confront and destabilise the notion of a universalised human subject.

In the article, I present three examples to illustrate how human ontology is negotiated through mimicry and performativity, and finally how both these strategies are contested in late modern science fiction. I do a close reading of Isaac Asimov’s short story “The Bicentennial Man” (1976), and a comparative reading of the characters Rachael and Call from the films *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Alien Resurrection* (1997), respectively, and a thematic analysis of *Battlestar Galactica*, with a particular focus on selected scenes from the episodes *Resurrection ship II* (2006) and *No*

*exit* (2009). I suggest that the means of passing as human are subject to changing strategies, but I also point to a continuum in the conditions of possibility that are available. Particularly, I suggest a move from mimicry via performativity to mockery of the assumed superiority of human capacities that makes visible the counter-power at stake in practices of passing.

From the reflexive point of view that arises as I write this overview document, I admit that this article, in all its various forms of analytical method, would have benefited from a more consistent approach. However, this multitude also brings to the fore the many ways in which (human) ontology is constructed, mediated, represented and re(produced). In the article, I suggest that Annemarie Mol's notion of ontological politics is useful for thinking about the changeability involved in demarcating ontologies. These nuances are interconnected with the political and socio-cultural worldings available at the time that each science fiction story was produced, as I argue in the article "Political monsters"<sup>13</sup>. Importantly, these ontological politics also form and take part in the cultural imaginaries in terms of identification and recognition.

In this article, I make a connection between cultural imaginaries as structures of accessible meaning and as regulatory frames for appearances and practices that govern the ways in which bodies are encoded and enacted. In other words, I position cultural imaginaries as a kind of horizon of possibility for imagining the human subject. In hindsight, this is interesting to me because this suggestion entails a downplaying the potentiality of the imaginary in the sense that structural regulations for embodiment, identity practices and cultural imaginaries fix the conditions of possibility rather than freeing them up.

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<sup>13</sup> Although I invoke the term political monsters in the article "Almost the same", I do not develop this notion further here, but rather in the article named after the term.

In light of this, I suggest that the story-telling practices of passing as human are both product and producer of what I refer to as the *ontological politics of recognition*. By this I mean to highlight Mol's emphasis on the processes at stake in constructing ontologies, as well as underlining that the parameters for these processes are embedded in cultural imaginaries and ethico-political structures of recognition. In this respect, an ontological politics of recognition entails the possibility of addressing the structuring powers of sameness and difference as a politics of location. Notably, the locations in question are not just spatial, but ideological, embodied, discursive and imaginary. Indeed, this is a point that I have been trying to make in all the articles: that a contextualisation of the stories of passing as human reveal how these stories are developed and negotiated within particular social, cultural, political and ethical landscapes. Here, the notion of passing is pivotal in allowing an analysis that does not arrest or 'fix' identities or ontologies, but rather allows for undecideability in terms of unpredictable and vulnerable locations and localisations.

### *2.3.5 Raising the curtain: briefly summing up the exploration of the articles*

Working through these articles, and considering them as an integrated whole, has been very useful. It is, for example, possible to grasp the various ways in which they overlap and complement each other, such as the ways in which the trope of passing as human is positioned in the various analyses. And likewise, it is possible to convey how they creak and bump against each other without really fitting, for example the many theoretical positions that inform the articles. One important insight is that I can see how my starting point has developed from a mere 'mapping out' of the interconnections between science fiction and the biotechnological implications of central (bio)political and (bio)ethical issues in our time, to an integrated discussion of the relevance the trope of passing as human at a time when traditional foundations are becoming



increasingly unstable. This is relevant because it demonstrates the exchange, the traffic, which takes place between fiction, truth claims, politics and ethics rather than reinforcing an understanding that these aspects are separate levels of knowledge that can be mapped out from a distance.

Although my main area of analysis relates to the ways in which the notion of the normative human is simultaneously gendered, racialised and sexualised, the reading together of all the articles has brought out the linkages to able-bodied-ness and social position (class), as I demonstrate in the revisiting of “Almost the same” above. These aspects could have been explored further in the articles. In addition, the issue of age could have been raised as a supplemental and intersectional category in order to shed more light on how embodied humanness relate to question of legitimacy and power. For example, age is a key component for analysing *Battlestar Galactica*. Firstly, the series is a reimagined version of the 1978-series (Halligan 2010). Secondly, part of the explanation for why the starship *Galactica* has survived the Cylon attack is because of its outdated technology; it not online, and so they avoid the viral onslaught of Cylon technology (see also Di Justo and Grazier 2011). Lastly, age and experience is a central theme in the overarching narrative of political power in the series, where the majority of the agents (both Cylon and human) are embodied as middle-aged.

Reflecting on these issues, I am reminded of Spivak’s analysis of Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1985) in which she discusses the ways in which representations of Otherness can be addressed or negotiated. In her analysis, she makes the point that, on a textual level, the monster cannot be contained by the narrative, and the story ends with closure and death: “[h]e is lost in darkness and distance” (ibid: 258). For Spivak, the banishing of the (monstrous) Other from the text is interlinked to the “politics of reading” (ibid: 259), where being granted space in the actual text both exiles the Other as well as opening up for possible other narratives and appearances elsewhere. I have invoked a similar stance

concerning the politics of reading in “The shape of things to come?”, where I point out that all human women disappear from the narrative as the series reaches its close. In my analysis, I interpret these disappearances as a politically relevant politics of representation and location where the issue of gender is at the forefront; a situated imaginary of the impact of biotechnology on the female body as it were. However, in light of Spivak’s double vision concerning the significance of such exiles, a more optimistic conclusion of potential escape from gendered conventions could have been taken into consideration.

It is interesting to note that in the other three articles I am more occupied with different kinds of bodies than in “The shape of things to come?”. Here, I emphasise difference as a productive force that confront norm, not just conform to it. In “Are you alive”, I write about a kind of postcolonial agency that allows confrontation and opens up for shifts in conventional power relations. This kind of postcolonial agency can also be detected in the analyses of the characters Data (*Star Trek: TNG*) and Andrew (*The bicentennial man*) in the articles “Political Monsters” and “Almost the same” respectively. In these articles, the overall critique of the hegemony of the universalised (Western white male) subject is more prominent, as is the question of individual and/or material agency for the non-human. In hindsight, this can be understood as a way of highlighting the ways in which these characters and examples are given, or how they take up, space in the text. From this point of view, questions of authenticity and legitimacy are brought to the fore as recurring issues throughout my analyses.

I will continue the discussion of my findings and overall analysis in Chapter Four),chapter 4, but before that, I move on to discussing the locations and themes that inform my starting point and, hopefully, also the development of this particular work. In this respect, the following chapter is a way of granting myself space in the text, both as a researcher and as and a socio-culturally locatable subject.



*Behind the scenes: story-telling practices, methodologies, materials*

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### **3 Themes: locations, positions, worldings**

*Nothing ever begins. There is no first moment; no single word or place from which this or any other story springs. The threads can always be traced back to some earlier tale, and to the tales that preceded that; though as the narrator's voice recedes the connections will seem to grow more tenuous, for each age will want the tale told as if it was of its own making. [...] Nothing is fixed. In and out the shuttle goes, fact and fiction, mind and matter, woven into patterns that may have only this in common: that hidden amongst them is a filigree which will in time become a world. (Barker 1988: 5)*

Nothing ever begins, writes Clive Barker. Everything always happens somewhere, and there are more things going on than we know, says Haraway. The motivations and explanations for this project have many meandering routes and roots. However, there are three traversing and sometimes colliding fields of interest that converge in this project: my background in and continued engagement with feminist cultural studies, my passion for the relationship between science and fiction, and my own 'turn' to theories of the posthuman. This chapter is an attempt to draw these fields of interest together in order to situate myself as a researcher, and this PhD project as a whole, in a theoretical and contextual landscape. This, in turn, brings out the politics of location which is at stake in my research.

## **3.1 Locations**

### *3.1.1 Feminist cultural studies*

As far as backgrounds go, I remember having a defining ‘Angela Carter moment’ of realisation when still in school: being identified as a girl wasn’t simply about nature, and I really needed to know what was going on. This thesis draws on the legacy of that realisation, and one part of this story is my postgraduate education in feminist cultural studies<sup>14</sup>. This is a broad and multiple field that combines insights from gender studies, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, human geography, sociology, ethnography, anthropology, literature and film studies, visual studies, and feminist science studies to mention some of the most significant influences for me. According to feminist cultural theorist Anne Balsamo (1991), feminist cultural studies encompasses such a range of disciplinary traditions and analytical viewpoints that she regards the field not as interdisciplinary, but postdisciplinary: “no longer able [...] to fully recover its source disciplines, and, indeed, no longer entirely interested in doing so” (ibid: 50). At the heart of this field, however, as well as this thesis, is an attention to the interconnectedness of power and knowledge, and how they constitute and are constitutive of discourses, enactments and practices of marginalisation and domination.

In spite of Balsamo’s reservations, the historical development of cultural studies in general can be traced from the establishment of cultural studies and literary criticism in Britain<sup>15</sup>, and the onset of postmodern theory in the USA during the 1970s (Balsamo 1991; Franklin et al. 1991; Hall 1992; Thornham 1999). These histories are important in the sense that they locate the development of cultural criticism and theory in a time of political and ideological change (Williams 1970). The impact of feminist

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<sup>14</sup> I have an MA in feminist cultural theory and practice from Lancaster University (2003).

<sup>15</sup> Notably what has become known as the Birmingham School of cultural studies (Grossberg et al., 1992).

thought on this development is the raising of awareness of the ways in which power relations are simultaneously discursive constructions as well as embodied and lived realities. Feminists of colour and postcolonial theorists in particular have pointed to the ways in which the power relations at work in socio-cultural patterns of oppression move not only between established identity categorisations, such as gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, ability and age, but also within these categories. This entails that forms of differentiation on the basis of gender, for example, also take place within racially or sexually determined groups (Anzaldúa and Moraga 1981; Lorde 1984; Mohanty 1988; Spivak 1988; Crenshaw 1991)<sup>16</sup>.

Both Balsamo (1991) and Lykke (2010a) emphasise the importance of poststructuralism, feminist literary criticism and feminist theories of the co-constitution of gender and language, in mapping the discursive (textual, visual, rhetorical) strategies for maintaining and challenging established power relations between and within identity categories. For Lykke, these influences encompass what she refers to as a school of feminist de/constructionism (ibid: 9). Feminist de/constructionism is an umbrella term for the (dis)continuous analytical strategies that attempt to destabilise established markers and signs of differentiation, primarily grounded in Marxist theories of domination, poststructuralism and psychoanalytic theory. Theories of sexual difference are also located here<sup>17</sup>. In my articles, Judith Butler's contributions to an analysis of the

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<sup>16</sup> In the wake of this development in feminist thought, the celebrated concept of 'intersectionality' was devised, originally in order to account for differences of power and privilege between white women and women of colour (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2000), and particularly in the USA. However, this concept has later expanded into a worldwide context where it is used to understand the intersections of identity categorisations in various locations and situations. Here, it has proved to be a productive alternative for analysing gender in a way that accounts for the power structures based on implicit or explicit workings of other identity categorisations (Davis 2008; Gressgård 2008; Lykke 2005, 2006, 2010a; McCall 2005; Søndergaard 2005).

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed overview of the genealogies of feminist de/construction, see Lykke 2010a: 87–105.

interconnections between body, power and discourse exemplify feminist de/constructionism in the present theoretical landscape.

My entrance to the field of feminist cultural studies took place in the late 1990s. During this period, Balsamo identifies two trajectories at the forefront:

*questions of position, nationalist and ethnic identity, and cultural theory, and [...] developments in feminist thinking about science, technology and the body. (1991: 51)*

The first of these is a continuation of the work on power relations in various bodies, locations and situations mentioned above. The second exemplifies how power/knowledge relationships manifest in the discursive (textual, visual, rhetorical) construction of sameness and difference in medicine and science, and how these differences are enacted in, on and through the body. Importantly, these two trajectories intersect in this PhD project: the socio-cultural, ideological and discursive conditions at stake in fictional stories of passing as human that, in turn, produce and are produced by power and knowledge. A central issue is the question of visibility, in terms both of recognition and of visualisations and envisioning. It is also here that I locate the legacy of disrupting the notion of a universalised and normative (white, male, Western, middle-class) human Self, and the allegedly ‘neutral’ position this Self possesses in terms of knowledge and power. The latter trajectory is also integral to the onset of an interdisciplinary dialogue between the sciences and humanities, where questions of knowledge production are central. This leads me to my next field of interest.

### *3.1.2 Science (and) fiction*

In the initial proposal for this research project, my emphasis was on what I called textual bodies: the ways in which science fiction produces ideas or knowledges about materiality and embodiment. In the article “The shape of things to come?”, this notion of textual bodies has transformed



into what I call body imaginaries. As I explain in section 2.3.1, the concept of body imaginaries attempts to link the cultural representation of embodied gender to biopolitics; in other words, to bridge text and context. For me, science fiction is the ultimate example of the interweaving of cultural texts and scientific discourse and contexts. The genre's connections with science are both celebratory and critical, portraying both progress and disaster in the wake of new, technological advances, medical innovation or general hubris on the part of the (often mad and male) scientist.

My interest in science fiction comes from a longstanding interest in the fantastical and the imaginary: as an avid reader I have travelled from Tolkien's mythological universe via the Magic Realism of South America to fantasy fiction about popular monsters such as the vampire and the werewolf. It was my interest in these monsters as boundary figures between the human and non-human that first led me to feminist interventions in the constructions of Otherness that are at stake in stories about monsters<sup>18</sup>. I was especially fascinated with monsters hiding in plain sight; with those who are able to pass as human. In the words of Haraway; "monsters have always defined the limits of community in Western imaginations" (1991: 180). But what happens if the monsters are difficult to spot or identify? This question led me to feminist science fiction as a particularly interesting way of addressing not only monsters, but the structures of Otherness that are at stake in the processes of monstering. Notably, my engagement with feminist science fiction also turned my interest to the significance of technology and science for thinking about the body and society, as well as the role of fiction.

During the 1970s and 1980s, feminist science fiction writers such as Ursula le Guin (1969), Octavia Butler (1987-1989), Marge Piercy (1976), Margaret Atwood (1985), Angela Carter (1977) and Joanna Russ

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<sup>18</sup> My MA thesis is called *Blood Horror: Abjection in Gothic horror fiction*. In this thesis I connect discourses of the monstrous feminine, menstruation mythologies and figures of the female werewolf and female vampire.

(1975) made use of the science fiction genre to portray the impact of technological and scientific development in and on the body, and gendered, sexualised and racialised power imbalances. Scholars within science fiction studies in general and feminist science fiction studies in particular<sup>19</sup> have pinpointed the ways in which science fiction bridges issues of identity or selfhood with questions of societal organisation, politics and technology (Chernaik 2005; Kuhn 1990; de Lauretis et al. 1980; Melzer 2006; Roberts 2006; Telotte 1999). This legacy of feminist science fiction is also relevant for understanding de Lauretis' position on sign-work: it pinpoints the fact that the imaginaries created in science fiction can confirm and confront integrated systems of knowledge and power. However, it is important to note that it is also the science at stake in science fiction, not just the imaginaries, that cannot be separated from either politics or cultural influences.

The linkages between science, politics and culture make up an important analytical starting point in the overlapping fields of feminist science studies, feminist cultural studies of technoscience and science and technology studies (STS). The latter field is particularly concerned not only with the impact of technology on the human, but also the impact of the human on technology and artifacts<sup>20</sup>. As Nina Lykke (2008) has pointed out, the intersections between these fields can be traced back to the feminist interest in the production of bodies and identities in medical and scientific discourse mentioned in the previous section (see also Åsberg and Lykke 2010). Lykke reminds us that Haraway (1992) has conceptually identified the intersections between cultural studies and STS as “science studies as cultural studies” (Haraway quoted in Lykke 2008: 10). This third field is also referred to as science and literature studies (SLS) because it “involves a focus on two-way links between technoscience, on the one hand, and literature, the visual arts, fiction, fantasy and rhetoric, on the other” (ibid: 11). Considering that my work

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<sup>19</sup> Of which both fields can be considered branches of cultural studies.

<sup>20</sup> Particularly Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) (see Latour 1987; Law 1992).

pays specific attention to the ways in which imaginaries in (science) fiction interrelate to and traverse discourses in biopolitics and ethics, the field of SLS feels particularly welcoming. Notably, this field also emphasises the ways in which scientific and discursive ‘facts’ and ‘fictions’ are interwoven, not detached from one another. This locates Haraway, and her influences on my work, firmly in this field.

In this thesis, I have invoked Haraway’s notion of story-telling practices in order to establish a connection between works of fiction and knowledge production. The field of SLS also contributes to such linkages by acknowledging the significance of imagination and the imaginary, and the power at stake in fictions. In other words, working with fiction is a way of imagining the interconnections between bodies and technologies, and thus a way of articulating them. According to the Oxford online dictionary<sup>21</sup>, imagination is “[t]he faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses”. This definition supports my own claim that science fiction is productive as a means of negotiating established conditions of possibility for knowledge about ‘reality’. As Haraway herself puts it: “science fiction is political theory” (2000: 120). In this respect, the field of SLS is an excellent starting point for breaking down a rigid divide between the humanities and the sciences. Nevertheless, SLS can be said to rely too much on the discursive constructions found in both fiction and science, and not enough on embodied realities for humans and non-humans alike. With regards to my project, these are important aspects to consider when working with fiction and cultural imaginaries. This is what brings me to the final field of interest.

### *3.1.3 The posthuman turn*

For me, the notion of the posthuman first surfaced as a continuation of Haraway’s cyborg figure: a move away from hybridity towards exchange

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<sup>21</sup> [www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/imagination](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/imagination).

and collaboration. However, as mentioned in section 2.3.2, in the course of this project, the genealogical link with the cyborg was, if not replaced, at least weakened in the face of the multi-faceted theoretical landscape of the posthuman. Today, the posthuman is an umbrella term for confronting established categories of ontology, identity and agency, and questioning the supremacy of the human. On the one hand, the posthuman challenges conventional knowledge (and knowledge production) about the human or ‘human nature’ in light of late modern advances in medical science and technology (Halberstam and Livingston 1995; Haraway 1991; Hayles 1999; Tofolletti 2007). In line with this, this thesis invokes the posthuman as a material and techno-biological expression of how the category of the ‘human’ is a contested and changeable identity or ontology in late modern society. Here, the legacy of the cyborg is still present. On the other hand, the overarching critique of the human entails a confrontation with Humanism as an ideological and scientific position based on Enlightenment traditions, and with a clear-cut division between subject/agency/accountability and object/passivity/incomprehensibility (Barad 2007; Braidotti 2013; Coole and Frost 2010)<sup>22</sup>. Importantly, the notion of accountability is here interconnected with political and ethical principles such as legitimacy, authenticity and normalcy for both humans and non-humans (Shildrick 2005; MacCormack 2012). In my work, I deploy this latter view of the posthuman as a contemporary political, ethical and ideological condition

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<sup>22</sup> To illustrate the ideological implications of such a divide, I did a quick search of the online Oxford dictionary to find synonyms for the word ‘unaccountable’. As it turned out, they are numerous: inexplicable, unexplainable, insoluble, unsolvable, incomprehensible, beyond comprehension, beyond understanding, unfathomable, impenetrable, puzzling, perplexing, baffling, bewildering, mystifying, mysterious, arcane, inscrutable, peculiar, unusual, curious, strange, freak, freakish, unparalleled, queer, odd, bizarre, extraordinary, astonishing, obscure, abstruse, enigmatic. For more synonyms, see: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english-thesaurus/unaccountable>.

caused by contested and therefore potentially unpredictable, parameters for defining the boundaries of the human.

Although it is possible to establish common overarching concerns that bind together the field of the posthuman, it is more difficult to call it a discipline. In a sense it could be called post-disciplinary because it is hard to trace its roots (see Balsamo 1991), but its postdisciplinarity can also be considered as part of the confrontation with conventional disciplines: it is beyond discipline (Lykke 2010a: 14–15). For Lykke, this postdisciplinarity is interconnected with feminist de/construction as a mode of analysing and organising knowledge production. In this respect, my situatedness in the field of the posthuman can be traced back to the feminist critique of knowledge production, what Lykke calls an (anti)epistemological stance (ibid: 134), due to its confrontation with the definitions of knowledge itself. However, my own ‘turn’ to the posthuman also followed as a continuation of my interest in feminist thinking about the interconnections between science and technology, and about body and power.

As the notion of the posthuman developed during the late 1990s, this field became a major influence in (re)articulating these interconnections as exchange rather than merely connections or entanglements. This focus on exchange is also what inspired me to “move from cyborg ontology to the figure of the posthuman”, as I write in “The shape of things to come?” (13). I explain this move as necessary in order to grasp both the material and contextual conditions for a reconceptualisation of the relationality between the human and the non-human. Having said that, the posthuman turn is equally considered to have grown out of theoretical fields such as STS, animal studies, philosophy, ethics, ecology, environmental studies, physics and biology. Here, it is important to note that certain branches of the field of the posthuman distance themselves from feminist cultural studies due to what is considered to be a disproportionate focus on questions of signification, discourse and representation (Barad 2007; Alaimo and Hekman 2008; Hekman 2010).

These investigations into the relevance of discourse and text as analytical angles are ongoing debates within the field of the posthuman. For my work with fiction, this overall critique of the legacy of feminist cultural studies and of SLS has sometimes, admittedly, caused a feeling of out-datedness. The “why science fiction?” question becomes particularly acute when the follow-up question is “why not ‘real’ (as in material and existing) robots?” One comfort, perhaps fuelled by stubbornness, has been my situatedness in Haraway’s work, and my own analytical efforts to bridge the binaries between fact and fiction, the real and the imaginary, as mutually supporting categorisations with which to think. Another is Lykke’s efforts to include the genealogies of feminist thought in what she calls post-constructionism (2010a; 2010b). The notion of post-constructionism is an attempt to move beyond de/construction as being mainly about discourse, and to include its interconnections with bodily materiality. Lykke suggests that post-constructionism refers to “a diverse tendency to transgress postmodern feminist (anti-)epistemological stances” (2010a: 134), one which encompasses both discursive (textual) and material approaches. I would also add social and cultural (contextual) approaches to this post-constructionist mode of analysis. In my articles, I have not identified my position as post-constructionist, but, reflecting upon the subject in this overview document, my concern with the gulf between text and context fits rather well in this conceptual framework.

A third influence who pinpoints the necessity of socio-cultural and ideological context is Rosi Braidotti (2013). In her latest work, she tries to situate the posthuman both as a multiple field and as a condition in late modernity. For her, the posthuman serves as a political and ethical figuration that can help to reinvigorate the declining Humanities rather than dismiss them. Although she, too, critiques the human-centeredness and discursive approaches of Humanist sciences, she calls for an acknowledgement of the posthuman turn as a way of confronting and developing the human-ities, i.e. that of the human. Such a rebooting of

conventional Humanities, Braidotti argues, requires a radical re-engagement with the power relations at stake for the category of the human in a posthuman age, and its interactions with non-human entities, be it animals, machines or the weather. Notably, Braidotti appeals for conceptual creativity (2013: 164–167) in order to avoid categorical practices of signification that maintain hierarchical and binary structures. Importantly, embedded in this approach there is also an incentive to bridge the clear-cut divisions between the Humanities and the Natural Sciences, much like the field of SLS. This discussion about the relationality between text and context in the posthuman turn and in my work continues in section 3.2.

The crucial influence of the posthuman on my work is, as Braidotti's posthuman condition describes, the necessity for an ontological reorientation: a turn from an anthropocentric worldview towards the ethical and political relations possible in a world of multiplicity, exchange, collaboration yet also one of violence and loss. In my articles, the notion of an ontological reorientation has been inspiring as a productive force for rethinking ontological categorisation. This is also what has led me to a more in-depth analysis of the ethical and political implications of selfhood, authenticity and legitimacy, and the power relations at stake. Admittedly, the field of the posthuman is the most unstable location for my analysis. I do not mean this in the sense that I am unsure about whether this is a useful theoretical field, but because the posthuman turn is a work in progress. This entails a fair amount of new terminology and a constructive but also confusing lack of synchronicity when it comes to analytical approaches, and theoretical engagement. This sense of instability, however, also gives a sense of agency: it is possible to contribute to chart the terrain for the posthuman turn precisely because it is not 'fixed'. In the following, I clarify my own position within and across my fields of interest.

### **3.2 Positions**

The conjunctures between my fields of interest make up a genealogy for this thesis. In this respect, my own positions as a researcher are also brought to the fore. I have argued for the interdependencies of (science) fiction and knowledge, not as a closed circuit, but as contextual and reflexive in terms of cultural, social, ethical and political dynamics. The strength of working with fiction is, of course, the opportunity it affords for analysing constructs, imaginaries and representations as meaning-making functions. Science fiction in particular allows for an analysis of what cultural theorist Raymond Williams has called a “formula for society” (1970: 307), where structures of sameness and difference can be discovered, confronted and reworked. In a sense, the disclosure and de/construction of systems of power, be it discursive or material, is what connects my three fields of interest. In turn, the disaccords are centred around the politics of location: what kinds of agency are at stake, and in what ways can the parameters for the ‘objects’ of analysis be taken for granted.

By placing ‘objects’ in quotation marks here, I mean to highlight that studying culture makes for a different ‘object’ than, for instance, the body. However, defining the ‘object’ also depends on the ways in which one studies it; as discourse, cultural construct, bio/eco-system, anatomy, and social relations to mention just a few possible methods. This is an important intervention into cultural studies as a whole, made both within this discipline, and by fields like SLS and the posthuman. The point, however, must be not to choose one, but to engage in a genealogical practice that emphasises multiple interpretative viewpoints, details and stories. For example, in my articles, my ‘objects’ of analysis are, in equal measure: the trope of passing as human; figurations of technological non-humans that pass, or nearly pass, as human; the interconnections between ideological and historical norms and cultural representations; and the dynamics of sameness and difference that are at stake in processes of Othering. I have argued that the notion of passing points to conditions of



ontological (in)stability, and that the performative aspects of identity and ontology allow for a reconceptualising of ontology as practice. Furthermore, I have pointed to the ethical implications of the notion of passing. I have moved across different media and different time periods. The multitude of the analytical and theoretical approaches here illustrates my position and situatedness in a genealogical framework of analysis.

Drawing on genealogical story-telling practices as a method, I therefore agree with the warnings about analytical uniformity found in the posthuman turn. Nevertheless, I have encountered certain difficulties with the confidence of the posthuman as a ‘new’ or at least renewed analytical front. For instance, critical scepticism towards discourse analysis as a predominant tool was voiced as early as 1991 by Maureen McNeil and Sarah Franklin. They acknowledge that feminist cultural theory benefits from a poststructuralist framework that allows for an analytical approach to the knowledge production of science “not only as abstract logical systems, but as specific cultural forms” (1991: 145). Nevertheless, they argue that to pursue discursive and textual analysis alone becomes, “[i]n its most extreme versions, [...] synonymous with both culture and politics, and the reader (however subversive) becomes the only political agent” (ibid). It is interesting that, where McNeil and Franklin point to the risks of isolating texts and discourses outside the realm of politics, posthuman theorists like Karen Barad, Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman seem to be more preoccupied with how not to neglect the material realities that determine existences. The difference between these two positions is, in my opinion, the emphasis on the political implications of analytical modes. Although I appreciate the increased focus on materiality, and the relevance of differently experienced realities, I struggle with what I consider to be a distancing from the realm of the contextual (social, cultural and political) if materiality itself is separated from knowledge about materiality. In my articles and in this overview document, I have tried to integrate these perspectives by keeping a multiple focus on the textual, the embodied and the political,

particularly through my focus on the biopolitics and bioethics at stake in posthuman realities.

Story-telling practices balance on a fine line between facts and fictions, real and imaginary, texts and contexts. My choice of science fiction as material for analysing the structures of sameness and difference that are at stake in defining the human is, for me, a way of walking this line. I suggest that the conceptual creativity sought by Braidotti is central to science fiction as a whole in terms of creating a novum or points of difference. This does not necessarily pan out as theoretical concepts, but can be potent sign-work about bodies, relationships and realities. For John Law and Annemarie Mol (1995), it is precisely the negotiability of established dualisms that provide the posthuman turn with its analytical tools. In a discussion about strategies for how to circumvent dualistic divides, they argue in favour of imagination and creativity: “it is not possible to conceive of what might be unless it can be represented. Imagined” (ibid: 282). Here, imagination is positioned as a necessary means for envisioning different things, ontologies, practices and structures.

In my articles and in this overview document, I position the trope of passing as human as an example of such conceptual creativity, which, in turn, brings this very negotiation to the fore. Sarah Franklin defines the term imaginary as “a realm of imagining the future, and re-imagining the borders of the real” (2000: 198). Franklin suggests that imaginaries entail a potential to envision or imagine the world differently, and points to the political significance of imagination and imagining. In my articles, I have allocated this potential not only to the story-telling practices in science fiction, but also to what Shildrick calls the ethical imagination (2005) at stake in contemporary bioethics and biopolitics. This twofold strategy is a way of stressing the interconnections between imaginaries and (bio)political realities as an ongoing negotiation, and not as a dualism between text and context (see also Åsberg 2014).

Philosopher Louis Althusser describes a similar negotiation in his work on ideology and the imaginary. He suggests that the notion of ideology itself is an imaginary:

*[ideology represents] not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals in which they 'live'. (1971: 165)*

For Althusser, then, imaginaries are not something that can be separated from everyday life, but are rather a way of organising ideas, beliefs and systems of thought. For my analysis, the imaginaries at stake in stories of passing in science fiction are therefore not just the circulation of imagery and socio-cultural tropes and discourses, but also systems of thought that produce realities and lives; worlds

Before I continue this discussion on the interconnections between the imaginary and political realities, I would like to sum up this chapter on locations and positions so far. By positioning the themes of this thesis in various theoretical and analytical landscapes, I have situated myself and my work in the intersections of my three fields of interests. The purpose for making explicit this situatedness is to highlight how a bringing together of different aspects has influenced my ways of thinking and doing research. For example, I have identified that a central clash between my three overarching influences is about their incompatibilities in terms of analytical tools and 'objects' for analysis. I find it a paradox that the posthuman turn, in its eagerness to make 'new' tools, risks creating an oppositional relation to the established ones at the same time as the overarching focus of the field is to destabilise binary constructions. However, it is through my work with the sign-work in science fiction within the posthuman turn that I have become particularly aware of the necessity to think beyond conventional terms, categories and methods. This tension between the 'new' and the 'post' is also what takes me beyond the human as an exceptional category. However, I have yet to locate these themes in a cultural and political context. Before I move to

a further discussion about the ‘new’ and the ‘post’ in Chapter Four, I will first discuss the themes for this thesis as contextual worlding practices.

### **3.3 Worldings**

Throughout my work, I have argued in favour of an analytical approach that combines textual analysis with contextual inquiry about what is at stake for structures of sameness and difference in the face of non-humans passing as human. This references the overall claim of feminist post-constructionists: that knowledge production is also product and producer of ideology and culture, and thus, of lived, embodied realities. In short, that knowledge is about actualities and worlds; about worldings. In this section I trace the histories of passing as human in a socio-cultural and ideological context as a kind of worlding. I explain how established notions of passing are put to use in my articles, and how this serves as a contextualisation of the conditions of possibility for performative identity practices in the science fictional stories that I analyse. Furthermore, I position the trope of passing as human in science fiction as suggestive of posthuman worldings.

#### *3.3.1 Passing as ontological politics*

The notion of passing as human is, as I have suggested throughout this overview document, a figuration or a situation that confronts a stable worldview. Here, I further suggest that this establishes the notion of passing as a form of ontological politics; a conceptualisation of the interconnections between ontological (in)stability and identity practices. As ontological politics, passing highlights how situations, embodiments and locations matter for determining authenticity, legitimacy and, in turn, normality. At the same time, ontological politics emphasises that the parameters for determining identity and ontology are not static, but flexible and contextual. As such, passing highlights the way in which the dynamics of sameness and difference are at the heart of worlding practices as structural parameters for existence. Historically, passing

describes strategies for improving the social, economic and political conditions of non-white North Americans (Myrdal 1944; Ginsberg 1996; Camaiti-Hostert 2007); to pass as white granted access to economic and social structures that otherwise would have been closed during the slavery years and in the segregationist society. In her discussion of racial passing, Anne Camaiti-Hostert argues that:

*[p]assing disrupts a social and political order grounded in the expectation of two distinctive races and, hence, the act of a light-skinned black passing for white is to invite ontological, metaphysical and semantic chaos – race becomes unstable, the world seems to escape categorical discipline, and language loses its capacity to transmit meaning. (2007: 10)*

The threat of passing is here summed up as a destabilisation of the established world order. In this manner, passing represents a challenge to the stability of identity and processes of identification in a society. Those who pass are impostors, fakes, who, by way of their in-between and unlocatable position, betray and defy ‘proper’ categorisation. In this respect, passing as human is a useful analytical trope for exploring issues of ontological (in)stability, performative identity practices and ethico-political accountability as worlding practices that structure the dynamics of sameness and difference. As Mol argues:

*ontology is not given in the order of things, but [...] instead, ontologies are brought into being, sustained or allowed to wither away in common day-to-day sociomaterial practices (2002: 6).*

The chaos that Camaiti-Hostert describes is interesting because it points to the multiple ways in which passing displaces these established categories for determining ‘reality’, both in the meaning of proper, valid identities, and in the sense of the world as we know it.

Firstly, this ontological chaos arises as a consequence of the racial hierarchies established in the histories of science and in political

regulations of citizenship and civil rights. This point is reflected in Homi Bhabha's work on the colonial mimic (1984). For Bhabha, the question of identity is inevitably linked to questions of belonging, for example in relation to definitions of family, class, nation, gender, race, religion or ethnicity. He suggests that the notion of Otherness is constructed in a way that establishes and maintains a hierarchy between the normative subject and the illegitimate, object Other. In the articles "Political monsters" and "Almost the same, but not quite", I have used Bhabha's work on the 'fixity' of the Other to argue that matters of passing also have a speciesist dimension. Like Camaiti-Hostert, Bhabha points to the ways in which race interlinks with the conditions of possibility for existence. The notion of race as a classificatory system denotes typology, categorisation and, inevitably, species (see also McClintock 1994; Puar 2007). As such, racial passing denotes ontological passing in the sense that it affects the very norms of intelligibility that Butler identified as necessary for establishing parameters for a universalised human subject. In my analyses, I highlight how such parameters inevitably rely on racialised as well as gendered structures for determining identity and ontology as categories for recognition and legitimacy.

Secondly, for Camaiti-Hostert, passing destabilises established markers for understanding the reality one lives in. She calls this a metaphysical disruption, but I think that it could also be considered a question of epistemology; a rupture in the conditions for knowledge. In this respect, the notion of passing fits well within a feminist (anti-)epistemological stance. In feminist and queer theory, passing generally means to be accepted as the gender one presents oneself as, independent of biological sex (Sullivan 2003: 106). Here, passing is not only a necessary strategy for improving social and political status, but also a confirmation of knowledge as choice. By this I mean that passing allows for a reclaiming of the regulatory frames at stake; by acknowledging identity as self-determination, the overarching structures of gender, race or species fail to control identificatory definitions. In the article "The shape of things to

come?”, I elaborate on this kind of agency as a strategy of subversion. Here, my argument is in line with Butler’s theories of passing as an unsettling of naturalised categories of identification, and therefore knowledge. As a matter of ontological politics, passing disrupts the notion of biology/nature/ontology as a fixed foundation for identity, and challenges the knowledge that biological sex or ontological race dictates sexuality, social status and the conditions of possibility for agency. Importantly, the subversive potential of passing as ontological politics destabilises the notion of fixity, and can be said to play with the notion of imitation not only as mimicry, but also as mockery.

It is here, in this landscape between mimicry, performativity and mockery, that my discussion on transpassing is positioned (see section 2.3.2). In light of passing as a confrontation between established worlding practices, my point about transpassing is, perhaps, a way of communicating the disruption rather than explaining the conditions for passing itself. Like gendered passing, the notion of transpassing points to the transformative potential of passing; to pass inconspicuously is one thing, but to acknowledge passing as a deliberate strategy to confront and perhaps change the conditions of possibility for identity and identification is quite a different one. I think that, throughout my articles, I indicate that the Cylons represent this latter form of passing. It is, however, only in “Political monsters” that I make use of the term transpassing to make this point explicit.

Nevertheless, in “Almost the same”, I discuss the Cylons’ attitude as one of mockery and even contempt for the human race. Here I suggest that they believe themselves to surpass the human, and that their strategy of passing as human is actually a way of subtly changing the rules of the game. Importantly, in both these articles I also make a point about the plurality of the Cylons, and the ways in which this multiplicity challenge the notion of a generalised Self. In terms of the subversive potential of passing, this is important because it illustrates the instability of the socio-political subject in late modern society (see Mouffe 1993). As a worlding

practice, the ontological politics concerning embodiment and position/status become noticeable, and highlight the transformative potential for change and subversion embedded in the strategy of passing. This transformative potential is also what I want to underline by elaborating on the notion of posthuman worlding as a conceptual framework.

### *3.3.2 Posthuman worldings*

By posthuman worlding I simply mean the stories, practices and norms that are at stake in a posthuman age or in what Braidotti calls the posthuman condition. The ongoing technological revolution affects how structures of sameness and difference can be conceptualised. As I have pointed out in my articles and in this overview chapter, the posthuman turn has increased our awareness that conventional descriptive terms are under pressure, and with them, the very limits of understanding and relating to the world in which we live. This reflects Camaiti-Hostert's final point about how passing affects the ability to make sense or meaning of descriptive terms. In other words, passing defies signification. Obviously, this claim ties in with the previous discussion of passing as ontological politics in terms of underlining the instabilities at hand. In the article "Are you alive?", I suggest that passing as human negotiates entanglements of knowledge, preconceptions and embodiment as a form of worlding that challenges established conventions and hierarchies. I deploy the term critical intimacy in order to convey the simultaneous onset of familiarity and unpredictability. In the end, it is this paradoxical relationality that causes change and transformation at both the ethical and political level. In the process, the significance of passing as a strategy also changes, and is, as I argue, tentatively replaced by strategies of collaboration and exchange.

In this respect, it is also interesting to approach passing in light of the posthuman critique of the so-called linguistic turn that has dominated the Humanities for several decades. Notably, Karen Barad suggests



redefining the traditional categories for the study of Being or existence, ontology, and the study of knowledge, epistemology, into an entangled whole through the notion of onto-epistem-ology (2007: 185). According to Lykke, the notion of onto-epistem-ology has much in common with Haraway's situated knowledges as an analytical strategy to locate and embody the situations and positions where knowledge is produced (2010a: 140). However, where Haraway deploys a more metaphorical language to illustrate her point, Barad's co-opted term demonstrates how institutionalised terms, such as 'ontology' or 'epistemology', even 'human', are also under stress. This form of re-signification illustrates the overall critique of Humanist sciences, and brings forward alternative worlding concepts in order to challenge paradigmatic hegemonies. At the same time, these tactics also meet the linguistic turn by calling for conceptual creativity as a renewed strategy for confronting established analytical frameworks.

As a form of posthuman worlding, I highlight the notion of passing as human in science fiction as a form of conceptual creativity that has become more important as a visualised and popularised trope in contemporary culture. Where Camaiti-Hostert divides the disruptive impact of passing into three distinct levels, I have tried to further this line of argument, here in this overview document, but also in the articles, by looking at the ways in which these impact zones are interconnected. The purpose of doing this has not been to challenge the idea that the notion of passing affects several aspects of the conception of reality, but rather to demonstrate how they are entangled, rather than separate effects.

Throughout my articles, I have argued that, in terms of passing, the disclosure of difference is mediated through notions of sameness. Here, I extend this argument in order to stress how this exchange also potentially voids the politics of differentiation in the first place, and replaces it with a politics of location. By this I mean that the instability created by passing is not just in terms of bodies or materialities, but also affects norms, socio-cultural practices and ideologies – even knowledge

production itself. This makes it a matter on an onto-epistem-ological scale. It also points to the ways in which the ongoing negotiation between imaginaries and political realities could be fruitfully readdressed as *situated imaginaries*, where the impacts of historical, ideological and social norms, i.e. the situated knowledges, are brought to the fore.

According to postcolonial theorists Nira Yuval-Davies and Marcel Stoeltzer (2002), the ability to imagine (visualise, conceptualise, think about) is always already *situated*; situational and experience-based, and anchored in cultural, political, social and bodily contexts. They introduce the term *situated imagination*<sup>23</sup> in order to describe these interconnections between lived reality and imagination. Yuval-Davies and Stoeltzer suggest that fantasy or imagination is “a gateway to the body on the one hand, and society on the other” (2002: 235). For these authors, such preconceptions are closely intertwined with the ability to imagine or conceptualise change or different conditions of possibility. Through their concept of *situated imagination*, they stress the ways in which the conditions of possibility for imagination are interconnected with embodiment, socio-political situations and knowledges.

In my articles, and earlier in this overview document, I have invoked Dawson’s notion of cultural imaginaries. Linked with Yuval-Davis and Stoeltzer’s point about *situated imagination*, I propose the term *situated imaginaries* in order to combine these insights: to take seriously the ways in which knowledge and understanding are negotiated through stories and visualisations in popular culture, as well as through expectations in the form of socio-cultural norms and political regulation. *Situated imaginaries* describe frameworks of shared meaning that can account for story-telling practices about bodies and identities in historical, social, ideological and cultural contexts; for the situated knowledges at stake in the construction of identity categorisation and norms for embodiment. As such, *situated imaginaries* bring to the fore the politics of location that

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<sup>23</sup> The notion of *situatedness* here is a reference to Haraway’s *situated knowledges*.

are at stake in both fiction and lived realities. At the same time, situated imaginaries reference the notion of undecideability because it necessarily relies on both imagination and a kind of anticipation about the conditions of possibility for that which has yet to be imagined. This anticipation is linked to socio-cultural expectations and norms, but also to unfamiliarisation, imaginative thinking and conceptual creativity concerning possible and unpredictable outcomes.

In their article about anticipation as a central agent in processes of determination, Vincanne Adams, Michelle Murphy and Adele E. Clarke argue that “the unknown, for which no claims have yet been made, plays an integral part in producing action” (2009: 249). This means that preconceptions of and anticipation about the results affect and inform the process of realisation. In my writing, I have positioned the situated imaginaries at work in stories of passing as human in science fiction as a figuration of instability, of the unknown or undecideable. I argue that the trope of passing, here, brings out with clarity how the posthuman condition informs, generates and negotiates the ‘human’ as a key category for knowledge production and for worlding practices.

Furthermore, I suggest that these posthuman worldings can contribute to ongoing debates concerning the relevance of cultural representation and imagination for the posthuman turn. Particularly, by reconceptualising situated imaginaries as a politics of location, posthuman worldings can shed light on the embodied, political and ethical specificities at stake today. As Dimitris Papadopoulos, Niamh Stephenson and Vassilis Tsianos put it: “it is only possible to work on the real conditions of the present by invoking imaginaries which take us beyond the present” (2008: 73). This claim resonates with Frost and Coole’s confidence in the productive potential of science fiction as a mediator for rethinking political and ethical categories of classification (2010: 22), and illustrates the necessity of thinking text and context, the imaginary and reality, together. In the following and final chapter, I continue this discussion

*Themes: locations, positions, worldings*

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about posthuman worldings. I also summarise my findings and overall analysis, and highlight key arguments for this thesis.

## **4 Resolution: results, key discussions, untied knots**

*Rose: “If you’re an alien, how come it sounds like you’re from the North?”*

*The Doctor: “Lots of planets have a North!”*

Doctor Who (2005, episode 1)

As I have argued throughout this overview document, this thesis proposes that stories of robots, androids and replicants passing as human in science fiction mediate difference through stories of similarity, of passing. In particular, I advocate that stories of difference and Otherness in contemporary science fiction have become increasingly concerned with passing as a situated politics that locates issues of ontological (in)stability and performative identity practices in a posthuman landscape. This posthuman condition is identified both as a biopolitical and bioethical situation for the human body and practices of embodiment, and as a confrontation with traditional categories of identity, ontology and belonging. My main result is that enactments of passing as human in contemporary science fiction demonstrate nuanced and situated imaginaries about the human and its alleged others rather than reinforcing established structures of determining sameness and difference. In this respect, the situated politics of passing in a posthuman age destabilises the category of human as a universal and generalised referent, and calls for a reworking of ideas of legitimacy, authenticity and normality. I position these findings as posthuman worldings. In this final chapter I summarise the key discussions in this overview document,

and pick up unanswered questions and themes from the articles. I end with a discussion of the ‘new’, the ‘post’ and the present that is at stake in this research project and in my findings.

## **4.1 Key discussions**

### *4.1.1 Ontological (in)stability*

A central argument in my articles and in this overview document is that passing confronts identificatory and ontological fixity. In her analysis of shifting political frontiers during the last few decades, Mouffe (1993) can be said to support a posthuman analysis of the destabilising boundaries between allegedly dichotomous categories such as biology/technology, friend/enemy, and subject/object. This, she argues, requires a radical rethinking of universalism and individualism as stable political paradigms. As the quote from the longstanding science fiction TV series *Doctor Who* at the start of this chapter indicates, established and, for that matter, seemingly comfortable and unproblematic concepts such as the generic ‘the North’ are drawn into question: lots of planets have a North.

Although I do not refer to Mouffe’s particular argument, I elaborate on this point about ontological (in)stability in all the articles. In “The shape of things to come?”, I suggest the term body imaginaries in order to convey how the notion of a universalised gendered subject is the result of a kind of ontological choreography, where the conditions of possibility for doing human identity are limited and regulated. The pivotal point in this article is the issue of biopolitics, particularly reproduction, which highlights how key norms of embodiment and life practices can be reinforced by technological possibility, yet also challenged. I locate this enactment of ontological (in)stability as part of posthuman worlding practices.

In a slightly different mode of analysis, the article “Political monsters” traces different socio-historical norms for determining the universalised human in the histories of passing. Here, I focus specifically on the political landscapes in which the body imaginaries that I analyse are at work, and what kind of challenges these political monsters bring to the category of the universalised human subject. In the same vein, “Almost the same” shows how the very notion of the human is confronted and negotiated by way of embodied practices and attitudes towards the human condition. In this article, I highlight how a shift from a desire to be human to a confrontation with human exceptionalism on an embodied and ethical level is indicative of the posthuman worldings at stake in contemporary society. This ongoing (re)territorialisation of the boundaries between Self and Other as both a political and ethical position is specifically addressed in the article “Are you alive?” In my analysis of the critically intimate encounter between conventionally dichotomous categories as a mutually destabilising event, I illustrate how the very norms of intelligibility rely on worlding practices and ideologies. Here, as in “The shape of things to come?”, I position posthuman worldings as a particularly acute backdrop for a situated analysis where the ethical implications of recognition and legitimacy are at stake.

In terms of ethics, I emphasise the Derridean notion of the undecidable as a reconceptualisation of the very premises for ethical thinking and action: from universalising paradigms to situated imaginaries and politics of location. The undecidable, here, functions as a destabiliser of the known. In this way it reflects ontological (in)stability as an epistemological, political and ethical mode of thinking. In this thesis, I have applied the notion of passing as human as a case in point to illustrate how unknowability and undecidability fuel normative regulation, as in (expectations of) conformity and compliance, as well as resistance and potential for subversion. As a politics of location, then, passing as human epitomises how unstable categories of identification are also about vulnerability, and how this instability resists closure and fixity as

markers of sameness and difference. This potential for destabilisation is what informs the next central discussion in this thesis.

#### *4.1.2 Performative strategies*

In all the articles, I have argued that stories of passing as human are a productive way of conceptualising identity and ontology as performative practices rather than ‘fixed’ and ‘essential’ situations. The interconnections between regulatory frames for embodied identities, political regulation and techno-biological existence are, as I have shown, a central theme for this thesis that underlines this point. However, I have stressed the interaction between structure and regulation on the one hand, and agency and subversion on the other. The debates about the boundaries of ‘life itself’ illustrate particularly well how the ontological category of the human is under pressure as a result of the increasing interdependencies between biology, technology and medicine. Ongoing controversies concerning assisted reproduction, for example, challenge the regulatory frames for doing identity and ontology in terms of readdressing the conditions of possibility for embodied identity practices. As a result, it is possible to grasp the ways in which the parameters of identity and ontology can be navigated and negotiated by way of performative strategies.

In “Political monsters” and “The shape of things to come?”, I illustrate this point by exploring issues of reproduction and parenthood. My analysis of the characters Data (*Star Trek: TNG*) and Sharon (*Battlestar Galactica*) illustrate how parenthood can be conceptualised as both practice and as a performative identity. Notably, the analysis of these characters also touches upon the notion of affect as a productive entry point for analysing identity practices and agency as a counter-power to regulatory norms of intelligibility for the human subject. Traditionally in science fiction, the ability to feel, and to express feelings, is usually reserved as a marker of the human and the humane and, more often than not, the replicant is barred from the experiences of emotion (see Wilson



2010; Woodward 2004; 2009). As I show in the articles “Political monsters” and “Almost the same”, emotional or affective capacity is at the heart of the ontological divide between humans and non-humans.

Nevertheless, the question of affect is, admittedly, somewhat under-communicated in my articles. In recent years, affect has proven to be a fruitful angle for addressing processes and temperaments that are difficult to articulate or categorise (Gregg and Seigworth 2010). In this thesis, I have not engaged fully with this expanding field related to the “affective turn”, but have rather tried to incorporate the notion of affect and affective or emotional capacities as performative strategies. This does not account for the attempts to separate the affective from the discursive as a ‘new’ or at least alternative mode of analysis (Hemmings 2005; Massumi 2002; Sedgwick 2003; Seigworth and Gregg 2010). However, for me this has been a strategy for bringing the interconnections between agency and performativity together in terms of the conditions of possibility for passing as human. For instance, I apply Raymond Williams’ notion of “structures of feeling” (1977: 132) as a collective, socio-political framework that regulates and is regulated by meaning-making processes. This, in turn allows for a conceptualisation of feelings as performatively accessible, and stresses the complex relationality between structure and agency. For my overall analysis, and specifically that which deals with performative and affective parenthood, this point is interconnected with how performative practices of passing as human can confront the notion of stable and fixed universal humanity; a challenge to the ontological choreography as it were.

However, in the article “Are you alive?” I position affect in relation to intimacy and relationships. In my discussion of critical intimacy, I argue that established categories of differentiation are mediated through the unpredictable and affective encounter between apparent counterparts. However, the elements or moments of (mis)recognition arguably allow for locating this critical intimacy as an undecideable in the Derridean sense. Here, the affective qualities of performative identity practices are

brought to the fore; how the simultaneous onset of both anticipated and unpredictable (re)actions fuelled by, for instance, curiosity, fear and expectation destabilises the conditions of possibility for identification and categorisation. I want to further this line of thought by suggesting that the subversive potential embedded in the notion of performativity *creates* the unknown. Remembering Adams et al. (2009), this points to the ways in which repetition and expectation are also unstable parameters for processes of recognition and affirmation. In light of this, the critically intimate encounter can be said to generate unprecedented and affective modes of interaction that, in turn, open up space for an ethics of undecideability. For my analysis, Derrida's notion of the undecideable as a mode of thinking and acting is precisely what embraces the power of imaginaries, of what can be imagined. He argues: "a call might thus be taken up and take hold: the call for a thinking of the event *to come*, of the democracy *to come*, of the reason *to come*" (Derrida 2005: xv, emphasis in original). This mode of envisioning worldings as ongoing, performative processes is what leads me to the next section.

#### *4.1.3 Worlding practices: politics, imaginaries and conceptual creativity*

In all my articles, I have argued for the possibility that critical encounters between human and non-human, often fuelled by the threat of extinction or assimilation, serve as a means of (re)addressing ontological relationality. I have suggested that the increase in the number of stories about passing as human in contemporary science fiction demonstrates a shift from imaginaries of polarisation to imaginaries of exchange and interaction. As situated imaginaries, the trope of passing as human resonates with political scientists Mojtaba Mahdavi and W. Andy Knight's (2011) call for readdressing difference, not as a marker of separation, but as plurality and collectivity. In their critical engagement with the impact of the social movements in the Middle East and Africa in the early 2010s, they criticise the assumption that notions of freedom

and democracy are static ideals. They are particularly sceptical of what they consider to be the dominant analysis, influenced by thinkers such as Francis Fukuyama ([1992] 2006) and Samuel Huntington (1996) that positions difference from Western ideals as threatening to peace and democracy. Instead, they argue for a rejection of Universalist (Western, white) paradigms in order to properly benefit from the changes in postcolonial political landscapes. In the same vein, Mouffe suggests a radical reconceptualisation of the very notions of universality and individuality in a post-political era. This, she argues,

*implies seeing citizenship not as legal status but as a form of identification, a type of political identity: something to be constructed, not empirically given. (1993: 65–66)*

As this thesis illustrates, stories of passing as human in science fiction are indicative of these developments in contemporary (post)political landscapes.

However, the surge in popular culture featuring dystopian, apocalyptic narratives has been criticised by Braidotti as a “narrow and negative social imaginary” (2013: 64) because it represents a kind of anthropocentric panic that reinforces the hegemony of the universalised human. Although Braidotti argues convincingly against this panic, and in favour of a posthuman reworking of conventional categories of humanity, hegemony and legitimacy, I question her rather unproductive rejection of popular culture as a site/sight of the very potential for conceptual creativity that she herself advocates. This rejection references the general posthuman critique of discursive modes of analysis (Alaimo and Hekman 2008; Barad 2007; Hekman 2010). In this thesis, I suggest that these stories are more fruitfully addressed as situated imaginaries which demand that we pay attention not only to our own vulnerability, but also to that of non-human actors such as the weather, viruses and technology. Reconceptualised as an undecideable, the boundaries between humans and non-humans are negotiated and challenged in a

manner that is not necessarily immediately recognisable, but which holds the potential to open up our ethical and political imagination.

In Haraway's effort to reconfigure knowledge not as objective, disembodied truth-claims, but as locatable practices and processes of understanding, she declared it "time to switch metaphors" (1988: 580). A similar appeal can now be detected in Braidotti's call for conceptual creativity. However, this call seems to be stuck in the posthuman critique of the linguistic turn, sidestepping the notion of metaphor altogether. Meanwhile, in a very interesting discussion about metaphor, Jackie Stacey (1997) questions a dismissal of metaphorical thinking and naming in relation to material, bodily and, specifically, medical conditions. Rather than relying on an understanding of metaphor in the Aristotelian sense, as a mere linguistic substitute for naming something differently, Stacey elaborates on the potential of metaphor as knowledge production. Quoting Ricoeur, she argues that metaphors are not merely about discourse and signs, but also about the conceptualisation of categories and ontologies:

*[metaphor is] the rhetorical process by which discourse unleashes the power that certain fictions have to redescribe reality [...] From this conjuncture of fiction and redescription I conclude that the 'place' of metaphor, its most intimate and ultimate abode, is neither the name, nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but the copula of the verb to be. (Ricoeur, quoted in Stacey 1997: 50)*

Ricoeur's understanding of metaphor is also reiterated in Roberts' (2006) account of the premise of science fiction as a point of difference, for example through the novum and processes of unfamiliarisation. For Roberts, the notion of metaphor is central to a discussion about the science fiction genre as an instrument of estrangement<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> For a complete discussion about the significance of metaphor in science fiction, see Roberts (2006: 134-148)

Following on from this, I suggest a reconceptualization of the very notion of metaphor; not as semantic substitutions that describe the world, but as *metamorphs*: material, changeable and undecideable figures to think with. The term metamorph is derived from the noun metamorphosis, meaning transformation, (re)shaping or change. As a descriptive term, metamorph refers to amphibians or insects that change their appearance, like larvae that become butterflies, and to science fictional narratives of shape-changers or highly adaptive creatures. Interestingly, in terms of passing as human in science fiction, there are examples of metamorphs that pass by way of biological “mimicry cells” (Silverberg 1980: 189), and cyborgs using technology to transform their appearance (Fringe 2008–2013). The metamorph represents change and unstable categorisations. At the same time, the metamorphic change does not necessarily undo that which was there in the first place, but rather displaces or discontinues it in a manner that can create awareness about the processes, the traffic so to speak, rather than the categorisations themselves. Here, the metamorph allows for a double vision of the notion of change, one that is both embodied and discursive, both transformation and reconceptualisation. In this respect, the metamorph is easily situated in both imaginaries and realities, and serves as a productive figuration of the unstable assemblages that make up identities and ontologies.

In addition to seeing them as a central point of departure for posthuman scholars, Foucault also embraces instabilities and discontinuities as a genealogical mode of analysis. He argues that:

*the critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are, is at one and the same the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them. (1984: 50)*

Here, Foucault underlines the significance of ontological (in)stability, as well as the notion of undecideability, as necessary *modi operandi* for a critical and reflexive production of knowledge. The stories of passing as human reflected in this thesis suggest a metamorphic attitude towards ontology and identity, not as fixed categories, but as performatively unstable enactments. In turn, these enactments confront ideological imaginaries and qualitative classification concerning authenticity, legitimacy and normalcy. Foucault also encourages a kind of conceptual creativity in terms of exploring the potential of ‘going beyond’ what is already established. My take on this point about going beyond is twofold: using science fiction as an analytical angle, and attempting to analyse passing as human as particular posthuman worldings generated by this metamorphic mode. This double vision is the subject of the following, and final, section.

## **4.2 The ‘new’, the ‘post’ and the now**

The title of this chapter promises resolution, which is a big concept, and it is therefore necessary to remind the reader of the genealogies of the word resolution as it is traced back to the French *dénouement*. The notion of *dénouement* stems from the word *desnouer*, meaning to untie, from *nodus*, Latin for ‘knot’. In this respect, resolution refers to the unravelling or untying of the complexities of a plot, or, in this case, a thesis. My motivation for this research project, as mentioned earlier, is to contribute to feminist (anti-)epistemologies by demonstrating that ‘known’ categories of identification and classification are not fixed, but locatable and negotiable. My own genealogical route through the posthuman worldings in science fictional stories of passing as human acknowledges that what is known is always contextual, located and situated. In this respect, my analytical focus on stories and story-telling practices has been a way of untying the knots of established knowledge and engaging in a discussion about sameness and difference as a fruitful

location for retying the known and the unknown as modes of both expectation and regulation.

Although my main focus is on the increase in enactments of passing as human in science fiction since the year 2000, I stress that this notion of passing is not ‘new’. As I demonstrate in the articles “Almost the same” and “Political monsters”, passing is a politics of location: historically, technologically, culturally, biopolitically and ethically. Also, as the genealogical overview of passing as human in science fiction (Fig.1) shows, there seems to be an increase in the number of stories of passing as human during times of political change. In this figure, this occurs particularly during the time-period of the 1970s, as well as in contemporary science fiction, which points to a connection between political destabilisation of the ‘known’ and science fiction as a medium and a genre. I have not followed this specific historical connection in this thesis, but the articles demonstrate that both the genealogies of passing as human and the recent increase in the number of stories of passing show that the contemporary posthuman landscape represents a particular challenge to the hegemony of a naturalised and universal (Western, male, heterosexual, white) subject.

Throughout this overview document, I have voiced a critical stance against ‘newness’ in terms of theoretical development and analytical figurations. This is partly due to my choice of genealogy as a methodology and the theoretical cacophony that stems from my own situatedness in the various fields described in this overview document. Also, Suvin’s notion of the novum demonstrates eloquently that what is considered ‘new’ is always already a historically, and thereby culturally, socially and politically, embedded category. I want to stress, however, that, in the same way as Suvin’s overarching point is concerned with the effects of estrangement, the ‘new’ can represent necessary and productive rhetorical tactics in order to convey shifts or changes, be it in theoretical or contextual landscapes. In this respect, the notion of the

‘new’ has got something in common with the ‘post’, a term that saturates this thesis.

My overarching theoretical framework of the posthuman takes as its starting point the idea that the category of the human is exhausted, both as a strictly biologically or ontologically contained existence and as a normative pivot for selfhood and agency. The ‘post’, here in the sense of ‘going beyond’ the human, or that which exceeds the human, also represents a break with established categories, paradigms and traditions. One example of deploying the ‘post’ to delineate such a shift is Shildrick and Mykitiuk’s notion of postconventional ethics. Here, the ‘post’ represents a confrontation with the very idea of universalised ethics, and a positioning of an ethics that allows for nuanced and unknowable, or undecideable, forms of interaction. Similarly, the post-political indicates a shifting ideological landscape. That said, the notion of ‘post’ also signals continuity and genealogy by way of acknowledging that it follows on from something already existent or established without necessarily replacing it. Lykke’s notion of post-constructionism (2010a) sums up this latter take on the ‘post’ by way of incorporating the various legacies of feminist de/constructionism into a field of epistemological critique.

Arguing for a genealogical understanding of posthuman worldings in both imaginaries and realities, the trope of passing as human has served as a means of incorporating both fiction and fact into an analysis of what is at stake for the destabilising category of the human. By positioning stories of passing as human as a situated politics for posthuman worldings, I have been particularly preoccupied with the conditions of possibility for change and flexibility in terms of categories of knowledge, and the ways in which it is possible to address unpredictability in terms of embodiment, and in socio-cultural and political structures for identification and belonging. As a contribution to the ongoing research field of the posthuman, specifically in relation to feminist theory, I want to end by emphasising the importance of change, and, significantly, the



conceptualisation of change. Writing about the future of feminist theory, feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz suggests that

*feminism must direct itself to change, to changing itself as much as changing the world. It must direct itself to that most untimely and abstract of all domains – the future, and those forces that can bring it into existence. (2010: 49, my emphasis)*

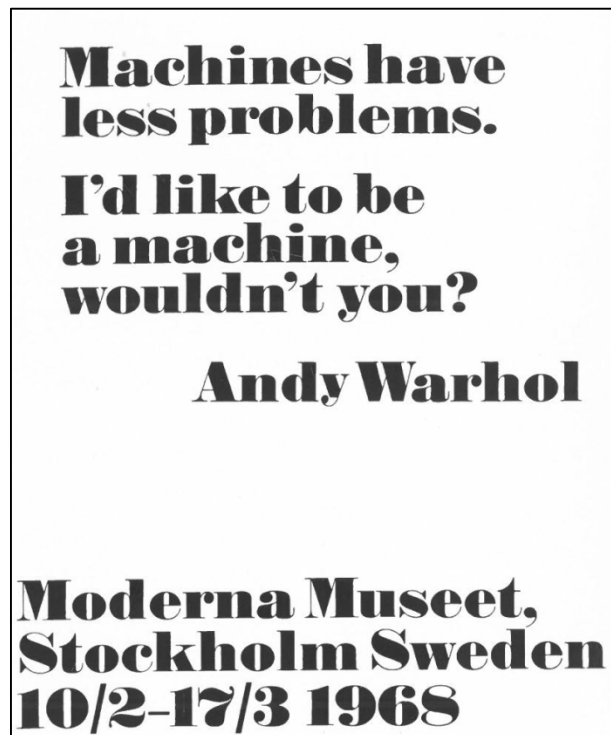
Although stories of passing as human in science fiction do not represent the future, their negotiations of the present underline the importance of imagining change, and of envisioning difference, not as an opposite, but as a possibility for rethinking the fixity of established reality.

*Resolution: results, key discussions, untied knots*

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## 5 Coda

For the last five years, I have had a postcard displayed on my office door. It says:



I got this postcard when attending a conference of feminist methodologies in Stockholm in 2009, and I remember being attracted to it because it addresses machines as an alternative life form, not as an objectified Other. There's something about the acknowledgement that the human perspective might not be all there is, or specifically, the best thing there is. Also, Warhol's question suggests a radical deflation of

## *Coda*

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conventional ontological barriers: I'd like to be a machine, wouldn't you? Here, he potentially calls for an exploration of the unknown, of the Other. At the same time as he is hinting at the unknown, however, Warhol assumes knowledge about being a machine with perhaps a bit of that (in)famous human arrogance: how can he possibly know?

As an example of worlding, Warhol's imagining of the lack of problems in a machine's world is simultaneously an acknowledgement of actually having problems as a human being, and an attempt at comparing and contrasting a human existence with a mechanical one. One could even argue that he is expressing a desire to pass as a machine. However, when my colleague Nadine Zoghbi, who is a teacher in film and TV production, noticed the postcard she did not agree: machines have lots of problems. And she's right, of course. Machines fall apart, bits and bobs go missing, they fail to integrate necessary upgrades, their dependence on systems of software and hardware makes them vulnerable to malfunction, various parts break down at unsynchronised times, and so on and so forth.

When I first began to work on this thesis, I was also concerned with the relationality between human and machine as an established divide, with all the risks of reinforcing and reproducing this gap that tag along as analytical hazards. At some point, I learned to position the trope of passing as human as a way of exploring the solidity of this divide, and to insist on potential flexibility in categorisations of sameness and difference. In light of these insights, writing this overview document has been an interesting and challenging experience in terms of balancing the fixities of academic discourse on the one hand, and a near complete lack of genre-specific guidelines for producing an overview document on the other. Hopefully, I have managed to navigate this two-sided coin in terms of fusing a structural approach with academic agency. As my overall analysis shows, this kind of fusion is also at the heart of posthuman worldings, where the intricacies of text and context, real and imaginary, structure and agency, fact and fiction are brought to the fore. For me,

### *Coda*

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Warhol's statement and Nadine's reaction both illustrate how knowledge, experience and imagination come together as part of the politics of location that inform our worldings. Although Haraway has already made this point in her *Cyborg Manifesto* (1991), I submit that the posthuman worldings that are our realities today prompt further reflection on how to resist a politics of closure, of fixity, in knowledge production and story-telling practices.

*Coda*

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## Part II: Articles

- Hellstrand, Ingvil (2011) “The shape of things to come? Politics of reproduction in *Battlestar Galactica*”. *NORA: Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 19(1): 6–24).
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## **Paper I**



**The shape of things to come? Politics of reproduction in the contemporary science fiction series “Battlestar Galactica”<sup>i</sup>**

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Ingvil Hellstrand (b.1979) is a PhD student at the University of Stavanger, Norway. Her research project (2009- ) is called “Passing as human”. The project analyses posthuman body imagery in science fiction (SF) in relation to contemporary debates on biopolitics. Central research interests are feminist theory; postcoloniality; posthumanities; normativity; Otherness and SF studies.

**Abstract:**

In this article, I discuss how politics of survival in the science fiction TV series “Battlestar Galactica” (BSG) correspond to contemporary biopolitics in late modern Western society. BSG takes place in a post-apocalyptic world where war between artificial, non-human bodies and organic, human bodies emphasise the importance of sustained population growth and, ultimately, survival for the human race. The BSG survival narrative accentuate the challenges that advanced reproductive technologies pose to the female body, and how this is

interrelated to state regulation of reproduction and population control. As a political fiction, BSG facilitates a discussion of the dynamics of choice and duty in relation to posthuman reproduction: the right to choose *not* to reproduce as well as the right *to* reproduce. In light of my analysis, I suggest that the BSG survival narrative concludes with a displacement of discourses of choice to discourses of obligation due to bio-technological advancement. I posit that BSG's endorsement of posthuman reproduction, coupled with a pro-natalist approach to population control, represents posthuman reproduction as an evolutionary advancement the female body cannot refuse. As such, the BSG survival narrative reinscribes gender as a category of difference and the link between the female body and reproduction as key norms for late modern societies.

“I’m not a commodity, I’m a viper pilot”

Starbuck, BSG 205: The Farm

In her lauded science fiction novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1987), Margaret Atwood describes a future society where the state has taken control over reproduction. Fertile women are forcibly recruited as Handmaids, serving as surrogate mothers, breeders, for the elite. This organisation of “birth services” (Atwood 1987:317) has replaced artificial insemination and fertility clinics, rendering the Handmaids servants, commodities, for securing reproduction. A similar future of reproductive regulation is found in the re-imagined 2004 science fiction TV series “Battlestar Galactica” (Moore 2004)<sup>ii</sup>, where a drastic decline in the birth rate causes the ability to bear children to be a sought-after asset. “Battlestar Galactica” (BSG) takes place in a post-apocalyptic world in which organic, human bodies are near extinct due to a raging war with artificial, humanoid bodies: the Cylons. The narrative emphasises the importance of sustained population growth and, ultimately, survival for the human race. What is at stake when reproductive ability is re-inscribed as reproductive availability? Drawing on Donna Haraway’s instructive term what kind of political fiction maps the terrain I suggest that BSG is a kind of political fiction that maps the terrain of survival and existence, as well as the biopolitical terrain of the female reproductive body.

The purpose for this article is to critically explore the intersections between political regulation of reproduction and individual choice in late modern Western society. In this article I analyse how the BSG survival narrative accentuates the challenges that advanced reproductive technologies pose to the female body, and how this is related to state regulation of reproduction and population control. As a political fiction, BSG brings to the fore how categories of difference, particularly gender, sexuality and race, are embedded in discourses of reproductive regulation. This article provides an analysis of the science fiction narrative in BSG as a cultural representation of “the possible-but-not-real” (Russ 1981:243) in conjunction with contemporary politics of reproduction in Norway, a country that explicitly negotiates dynamics of choice and agency in relation to advanced reproductive technologies through political regulations of assisted reproductive technologies (ART). What I want to accomplish in this article is to show how the BSG narrative represents a shift from reproductive ability to reproductive availability, and illustrate how this shift resonates with late modern politics of reproduction.

## **Relevance**

As a science fiction text, BSG belongs to a genre renowned for engaging in the potentialities of science, technology and medicine, and opening up narrative spaces for exploring identity and embodiment in relation to technological innovation. From a feminist point of view, the relationship between the female body and reproduction has been a much debated topic in relation to both female subjectivity (de Beauvoir 2000) and social organisation of work and family life (Haas 2005, Ellingsæter 2009). Feminist theorist Patricia Melzer argues that the science fiction genre is particularly relevant for analysing such “issues of subjectivity as well as of social organisation” (Melzer 2006:12). I argue that BSG is a kind of political

fiction that maps the terrain of survival and/or existence, as well as the biopolitical terrain of the female reproductive body.

In this article I position the BSG survival narrative in relation to contemporary debates on politics of reproduction and population control in late modern Western society, particularly in Nordic countries such as Norway. The TV series I analyse is a remake of the 1978 original series with the same name (see also note ii). The re-imagined BSG was first screened in Great Britain on Sky One Channel in October 2004, and subsequently in USA on Sci-Fi Channel in January 2005. The TV series arrived on Norwegian television (NRK 2) in August 2006. The re-imagined version encompasses some deliberate changes to the original series, particularly by introducing a gender-balanced and multiracial cast, as well as an actualisation of technological advancements in late modern Western society. Perhaps most striking, some of the prominent male characters in the original series are now portrayed as female.

Through an analysis of the BSG survival narrative, I establish connections between current issues of advanced reproductive technologies, the female body and philosopher Michel Foucault's notion of biopower or biopolitics: the ways in which "biological existence [is] reflected in political existence" (Foucault 1978:142). In order to situate late modern biopolitics, I draw on current issues of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) in Western culture, such as fertility treatment, sperm- and egg-donation and surrogacy in order to question the relationship between reproductive ability and reproductive availability in BSG. The significance of the issue of reproductive technology in late modern society is made particularly visible by the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine 2010 being awarded to professor emeritus Robert G. Edwards for his development of in vitro fertilisation (IVF)<sup>iii</sup>. As a contextual example, I look to the Norwegian welfare state, where reproduction has become the focus for recent political negotiation: the necessity for sustained population growth and the incentive to ensure individual freedom of choice.

Norway is particularly interesting because of its successful work-family reforms to secure gender equality on the labour market (Melby and Rosenbeck 2009). The work-family reforms underscore a biopolitics that encourage families to reproduce, or, in other words, a pro-natalist approach to sustained population growth. At the same time, these reforms secure what social theorists Nicholas Rose and Carlos Novas have labelled “biological citizenship” (2004) for the reproductive body. The term “biological citizenship” stresses the Foucauldian link between biological and political existence, but emphasises how progress within biomedicine, genomics and biotechnology in late modern society brings new challenges to our understanding of both biology and citizenship.

In January 2009, Norway implemented a change in the Biotechnology Act (Bioteknologiloven) granting lesbian couples the same access to assisted reproductive technologies as heterosexual couples, i.e. expanding the definition of biological citizenship to encompass all married or co-habiting women<sup>iv</sup>. Considering that reproductive assistance in Norway is limited to fertility treatments and insemination (IVF-treatment)<sup>v</sup>, these recent changes in Norwegian biopolitics highlight how the issue of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) situates the female body as a locus for reproduction. As such, Norwegian biopolitics, like BSG, make visible how the boundaries between reproductive ability and reproductive availability are increasingly difficult to maintain.

### **Analytical approach**

In my analysis, I attempt to bridge what feminist film critic Annette Kuhn has called “the gulf between textual analysis and contextual inquiry” (Kuhn 1992:304) by combining textual analysis of BSG with discourse analysis of current biopolitics in Western countries. Drawing on feminist science fiction studies and feminist cultural studies, I posit that the BSG survival narrative, as a visual, cultural representation, highlights how longstanding feminist

debates on issues of the body and reproductive technology are (re)actualised in contemporary popular culture, and in late modern politics of reproduction. I understand visual representations of specific bodies and embodiments as constructions of textual or discursive bodies, and I analyse BSG as a contemporary cultural text. I introduce the notion of the body imaginary as an analytical framework in order to weave together the textual and contextual aspects of my analysis, permitting fictional, potential bodies in science fiction to be situated in a contemporary socio-political context.

Firstly, I provide an analysis of character representations in selected episodes of BSG, showing how women's reproductive abilities are an integral part of the survival narrative central to the plot. I highlight the ways in which categories of difference, particularly gender, sexuality and race, influence political regulations of reproduction in BSG. Secondly, taking contemporary Norwegian biopolitics of reproductive assistance as a contextual example, I discuss how character representations in BSG embody the challenges that advanced reproductive technologies pose to the female body. I employ the figure of the posthuman in order to conceptualise the boundaries between the female body and advanced reproductive technology. I explore the intersections between reproductive ability and reproductive availability as political regulations of the female body. By way of conclusion, I suggest that the BSG survival narrative advocates reproductive technologies as evolutionary advancements the female body cannot refuse. In the following I give a brief summary of the BSG narrative, and establish the grounds for my analysis.

### **Text: Entering the story**

The 2004 science fiction TV series *Battlestar Galactica* (BSG) begins with a violent attack on all human settlements in space, resulting in less than 50.000 human survivors. The attackers are a society of robots known as the Cylons. Originally created as Artificially

Intelligent (AI) robots built for military uses, the Cylons have developed a human appearance, making it near impossible to tell the difference between a humanoid Cylon and a human. The magnitude of the genocide initiated by the Cylon attack forces the human survivors to acknowledge that “we need to get [...] out of here and we need to start making babies” (BSG miniseries part 2). This statement encompasses two important aspects for my analysis: firstly, that the top priority for the human race is survival, and secondly, that reproduction is the most valuable asset for doing so.

In the beginning of the series, the human society symbolises conventional reproduction. In contrast, the Cylons represent replication: when a Cylon is killed, its memories and experiences are downloaded into a replicated “twin” body. However, BSG complicates the reproductive/replicant binary by introducing a pregnant, humanoid Cylon called Sharon (BSG 113: Kobol’s last gleaming part 2). Additionally, the humans destroy the Cylon means for replication halfway through the series (BSG 212: Resurrection ship part 2). The Cylon pregnancy and the symbolic destruction of the Cylon life cycle serve to attach discourses of survival, for both species, onto the female, reproductive body.

This shift between reproductive ability and reproductive availability in the BSG survival narrative marks the onset of my analysis. I focus on two characters in BSG who are explicitly faced with medical inquiry and political regulation on the basis of their reproductive abilities. One of them is a human, and the other is a humanoid Cylon. They are both embodied as female, and identify as women, as heterosexual and as pilot fighters for the military spaceship “Galactica”. The human, Starbuck<sup>vi</sup> (Katee Sackhoff), is embodied as a Caucasian, Western woman who does not want children. Interestingly, this character was originally portrayed as a man, and the re-imagined Starbuck has arguably retained some of the sentiments that are traditionally considered male. In the re-imagined series, Starbuck is subjected to involuntary medical examination of her reproductive system, and barely escapes being incorporated into a



Cylon breeding facility (BSG 205: The Farm). She struggles to maintain an ideology of choice in the face of an authoritative ideology of repopulation, and represents agency and individual freedom of choice.

The Cylon, Sharon (Grace Park), is embodied as a woman of Asian descent. Sharon is pregnant, and in a relationship with her human lover, Helo (Tahmoh Penikett). Sharon's pregnancy is at first regarded as a threat to the human population, and she is forcibly scheduled for an abortion (BSG 213: Epiphanies). However, the human authorities decide to let the child live for scientific purposes, re-presenting Sharon's pregnancy as an asset for advancements within reproductive technology. The child is placed with a human foster-mother, and Sharon is led to believe that her child is dead (BSG 218: Downloaded). Ultimately, after resorting to violent measures, Sharon manages to take her child back (BSG 312: Rapture). The representation of the pregnant Sharon is twofold. On the one hand, Sharon is the embodiment of scientific benefit and advanced reproductive technology, promising reproductive assistance for infertile women. On the other hand, she represents a commodification of the female body as an instrument in the politics of reproduction.

These two characters come to represent survival for humans and Cylons alike. Thus, the BSG survival narrative (re)produces a fixed, gendered identity of the female body. The relation between the (white) human and the (Asian) Cylon is therefore of particular interest in light of racialised and gendered categories of difference in late modern culture. The male, reproductive body, however, disappears in the narrative. For Starbuck, the question of fatherhood never arises, whereas Sharon's human lover is, throughout the series, represented as a supportive parent, yet powerless when it comes to decisions about the child. The absent father in BSG can be understood as a stereotypical, gendered representation of reproductive abilities and parenting. Also, the absent father could be analysed as a metaphor for decreasing paternal influence in the face of advanced reproductive technologies. Although the limits of this article

does not allow for a further exploration of the absent father figure in the BSG narrative, this aspect of BSG underlines the way in which the female body is represented as a locus for reproduction and survival for the human race.

In the series finale (BSG 421: Daybreak I and BSG 422: Daybreak II), Starbuck simply vanishes in what I analyse as a symbolic departure of all human women. Nevertheless, the series end on a hopeful note where Sharon's technologically advanced body survives, positioned as the promise of a new and improved reproductive future. I argue that the BSG finale represents a shift from reproductive ability to reproductive availability, where assisted reproductive technologies are presented as a solution to issues of fertility and population growth. On the one hand, this shift celebrates advanced reproductive technology as evolutionary progress, securing fertility and repopulation. On the other hand, it brings to the fore how dynamics of choice and agency are marginalised when issues of survival are at stake. Significantly, the reproductive, female body in BSG is the unequivocal site for these politics of reproduction.

### **Context: negotiating difference**

I have suggested that the BSG survival narrative represents a collapse of reproductive ability and reproductive availability, particularly through a blurring of the reproductive/replicant binary. This collapse is, in turn, interconnected to intersecting categories of difference. The overarching narrative of unanticipated attack from an unexpectedly strong and well-coordinated enemy has been analysed as a parable for the 9/11 attack on USA in 2001 (Ott 2008, Erickson 2007). Following such an analysis, the human race in BSG can be said to characterise a destabilised Western world, whereas the Cylon race of machinic Others symbolise the rise of military power in the Orient. The BSG narrative also makes an explicit connection to contemporary political climate through a portrayal of two different systems of religious belief: Cylon monotheism (resembling major religions such as Christianity and Islam)

is contrasted to the polytheistic religion of the humans (similar to ancient Greek and Roman traditions). The human religion is represented as the established system of belief, alluding to Greco-roman traditions as the cradle of civilisation, whereas the Cylon religion is portrayed as more of a newcomer-religion: intense and missionary.

These representations of difference in BSG are obvious references to categories of difference in late modern contemporary politics: Occident/Orient, democracy/terrorism and freedom of religion/fanaticism. As a cultural text, BSG is also indebted to a longstanding science fiction tradition of negotiating ontological differences between human beings and machinic Others: nature/technology; subject/object; free/programmed, and reproductive/replicant. However, I claim that the BSG narrative makes deliberate use of such categories of difference in order to negotiate or challenge stereotypical constructions of identity categories. Indeed, the politics of representation (Hall 1977) in BSG reflect an awareness of conventional categories of difference as both humans and humanoid Cylons are represented as human bodies of different genders, ethnicities and sexualities.

The most tangible example of how BSG negotiates categories of difference is the figure of the pregnant, humanoid Cylon, who has (literally) incorporated human features and social practices into its embodied circuits. This conflation of bodily difference can be said to represent what feminist theorist Donna Haraway imagined for her figure of the cyborg: “a way out of the maze of dualisms” (1991:181), such as the ontological differentiations mentioned above. As such, BSG is particularly interesting as a narrative space for analysing the intersections between body and technology in the face of late modern biopolitics. However, as the BSG survival narrative maintains representations of the female body as an undifferentiated site for reproduction, I point to the limitations of these negotiations of difference in the following analysis of BSG. I argue that the politics of survival in BSG is reliant on two factors: the female body and advanced reproductive technologies. I show how Starbuck’s embodiment

as Caucasian and human is contrasted to Sharon's embodiment as Asian and Cylon. In light of the declining birth rates in the Western world<sup>vii</sup>, it is interesting to analyse the representations of white, career-orientated Starbuck in relation to Western decline in population growth in late modern society. As a distinct opposite, the pregnant Asian Cylon could be said to represent prospects for technological solutions to the Western decline, such as surrogacy and infertility treatment. These prospects are, in turn, linked to discourses of excessive fertility and overpopulation in Asian countries.

### **Biopolitics and the female body**

The explicit link between the female body, reproductive technology and survival in BSG highlights the way in which the balance between sustainable population growth and women's right to choose remains a key political concern in late modern society. Foucault's concept of biopolitics underlines how the biological body is a part of regulatory systems or structures in society. He describes how the body inform politics of "birth-rate, longevity, public health, housing and migration" (Foucault 1978:140). This notion of biopolitics resonates with Norwegian politics of reproduction as an explicit policy of for instance employment, health care, family planning and equal opportunities (Melby and Rosenbeck 2009). I particularly draw on Norwegian biopolitics of reproductive assistance because these biopolitics make explicit the intersections of reproductive regulation and individual choice.

However, in our late modern society, the biological body is not only regulated by structures of political government, but also by technological and biomedical confrontations with and in the body (Rose 2007, Shildrick and Mykitiuk 2005, Covino 2004, Gray 2001). These regulations are particular relevant in relation to contemporary biopolitics of advanced reproductive technology and the female body (Thompson 2005, Franklin 2006, Carsten 2004), particularly in a global perspective (Ginsburg and Rapp 1995, Haran et al 2008). Unlike the

women in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the female, reproductive body in BSG is not represented as a replacement of reproductive technologies, but rather as an intrinsic part of these technologies. As such, the BSG narrative is indebted to the cyborg figure by way of addressing the collapse of nature and technology in the body in late modern society. However, my analysis is concerned with the way in which the female body is positioned as a resource for advanced reproductive technologies, or, in other words, how the female body is made available as a commodity for ensuring reproduction. Asserting that the traditional binaries between nature and culture/technology have become increasingly difficult to maintain, I move from cyborg ontology (Haraway 1991) to the figure of the posthuman in order to conceptualise the biopolitics of the female body and advanced reproductive technology.

The posthuman is at once a metaphorical figure that challenges the “coherence of the ‘human body’” (Halberstam and Livingston 1995: vii) and a framework for understanding the intersections of biology and technology in the body (Haraway 1996, Hayles 1999). This posthuman body must be understood as a conceptual notion drawn from the ideological position of posthumanism, where cultural and philosophical notions of “human nature” are contested in light of late modern advances in medical science and technology (Fukuyama 2002, Pepperell 2003). I am particularly concerned with the consequences of conceptualising the posthuman body as a reproductive body, and I situate the collapse of reproductive ability and reproductive availability as a form of posthuman reproduction. I posit that, in BSG, the interface between the female body and reproductive technology highlights how the task of restoring the population involves conceptualising reproduction as a kind of posthuman manufacture.

In order to facilitate my analysis, I draw on the work of feminist theorists Joan Haran, Jenny Kitzinger, Maureen McNeil and Kate O’Riordan (2008). They point to the ways in which women’s bodies in late modernity are mobilised as the “source or carriers of eggs and embryos” in both popular culture and medical discourses (ibid: 93). I also draw on the work of Charis

Thompson (2005), who argues that the biomedical and biopolitical discourses of reproductive assistance take part in a “strategic naturalization and socialization” (ibid: 13). Thompson’s argument underscores how the female body is appropriated by assisted reproductive technologies, and simultaneously naturalised as an undifferentiated reproductive body. Next, I introduce the term *body imaginary* in order to situate biopolitics of the female body and the posthuman in the intersections between politics of survival in BSG and contemporary politics of reproduction in late modern society.

### **The body imaginary: interfaces of text and context**

As an analytical framework, the body imaginary entails a dual conceptualisation of the body: the material and physical body on the one hand, and discursive identity categories on the other. Several theorists suggest as a re-conceptualisation of the human body as both a biological reality and a discursive condition (Keller 1995, Martin 1990, Franklin et al 2000, Rose 2007). In this article, however, the notion of the body imaginary is inspired by feminist philosopher Moira Gatens, who, in her influential book *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (1996), stresses that the corporeal, biological body is historically, culturally, and socially specific. Gatens argues that “there is no neutral body” (ibid: 8), and that conceptualisations of the body and, in turn, embodiment relies on hierarchical identity categories, such as gender, sexuality and race. These identity categories are discursive structures that function to govern embodied practices (Butler 1993, Grosz 1994). Feminist philosopher Judith Butler identifies these discursive structures as regulatory practices, or “norms of intelligibility” (Butler 2004:73) for the human body.

For my analysis, I make use of Gatens’ framework in order to re-address a particular analysis that effectuates understandings of the body as simultaneously corporeal and discursive: the body imaginary. Where Gatens emphasises the socio-political context of the corporeal body

as the imaginary, I accentuate the imaginary also as potentiality, encompassing the fictional universe of popular culture and possible future bodies and biologies. In other words, the discursive aspect is both textual and contextual. My understanding of the imaginary, then, resonates with Sarah Franklin's notion of the imaginary as "a realm of imagining the future, and re-imagining the borders of the real" (Franklin 2000: 198)<sup>viii</sup>. The body imaginary also emphasise Haran, Kitzinger, McNeil and O'Riordan's tracing of similarities between the representation of the female, reproductive body in both biomedical discourse and in popular culture (2008).

As an analytical framework, then, the body imaginary opens up a space for analysing visual representations in BSG as bodily discourses in late modern culture. In other words, the framework of the body imaginary underscores the interfaces between text and context, allowing a positioning of fictional, potential bodies in science fiction in a contemporary socio-political context. In BSG, the explicit focus on survival and repopulation underline political aspects of social organisation. I find that the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics provides an important contextual dimension for the body imaginary as an analytical framework. At the same time, analysing BSG within the framework of the body imaginary allows for an exploration of Donna Haraway's claim that "science fiction is political theory" (Haraway and Goodeve 2000:120 For my analysis, the body imaginary entails analysing BSG as a political fiction that maps the terrain of the strategically naturalised and biopolitical terrain of the female reproductive body.

### **The body imaginary in BSG**

In BSG, the explicit focus on survival and repopulation underline how the body is an integral part in the political organisation of society. The body imaginary of Starbuck as a white, voluntarily child-free person is interesting in relation to the imperative survival narrative in

BSG as well as the current situation of decreasing birth and fertility rates in both Europe and USA. I stress that the focus on dropping birth-rates is interconnected to discourses of both nationhood and racial identity, and biological citizenship (Anderson 1991, Rose and Novas 2004). In many Western countries and the US, these discourses also entail a strong element of religion. For my analysis, the term biological citizenship contributes to position a body imaginary where reproductive ability is crucial for securing subject status as well as population growth. In contrast to Starbuck, Sharon's body imaginary highlights the intersections between the female body and posthuman reproductive technology. Given that the Cylons were considered domesticated robots, commodities, before they evolved into a self-conscious society, the body imaginary of Sharon as Asian is also particularly poignant in relation to debates on biological citizenship and "suitable" population growth.

The relationship between the female body and reproduction is of particular interest for feminist scholars. During the 1970's and the onset of the so-called second wave feminism, it became increasingly relevant to analyse the politics of reproduction in relation to reproductive technologies. The impact of technology was understood as both liberating for the female reproductive body (Firestone 1970) and as an instrument of male dominance over the female body (Corea 1988). Feminist cultural theorist Nikki Sullivan sums up these differentiating standpoints as anti-natalist equality feminism and techno-critical radical feminism (Sullivan 2006). However, both these differentiating viewpoints are over-invested in relation to technology as something outside of the body (Åsberg 2009). In BSG, these traditional discourses of differentiation (nature/technology) are re-addressed by a posthuman understanding of reproduction, resulting in a simultaneously emphasis on pro-technology and pro-natalist perspectives. With the incentive for securing gender equality, the Nordic welfare state model also relies on posthuman reproduction, where technology is embedded in the discourses of reproductive ability.



Importantly, Norwegian biopolitics are particularly concerned with the female reproductive body. All Norwegian women have access to abortion up to 12 weeks after conception. Also, according to recent amendments to the Norwegian Biotechnology Act, all Norwegian women who are living in a formalised relationship are granted access to reproductive assistance. This political strategy brings to the fore how reproductive ability is considered essential to the female body, and that this biological ability alone allows access to assisted reproductive technologies, regardless of sexuality. At the same time, Norwegian biopolitics are explicit in the way in which political regulation of assisted reproductive technologies help define biological citizenship. As such, the Norwegian welfare state is a particularly indicative example of a body imaginary that encompasses the interrelation between the female body, technology and biopolitics.

Making use of Norwegian biopolitics as a parallel, I show how the body imaginary of both Sharon and Starbuck illustrate how biopolitics in late modern Western society discipline the female, reproductive body in particular. However, Norwegian biopolitics also make explicit the relationship between reproductive incentives and individual choice (Haavind and Magnusson 2005). By combining the pro-natalist and pro-technology standpoints, the BSG narrative succeeds in raising similar issues of individual choice in relation to both politics of reproduction and religious beliefs. In the following I compare the body imaginary of the character Starbuck to that of the character Sharon. My analysis aims to make visible some of the discourses of differentiation in late modern Western biopolitics.

### **Regulating reproduction: biopolitics in BSG**

As previously mentioned, Sharon is initially exempt from the human reproductive economy: “Supposedly [the Cylons] can’t reproduce. You know biologically. So they’re trying every which way to produce offspring” (BSG 205: The Farm). When it becomes clear that she

is pregnant, she is reinvented in the series as a body imaginary of posthuman reproduction. I analyse Sharon's body imaginary with reference to infertile women in late modern Western culture who, through the aid of advanced reproduction technologies such as artificial insemination, restoration of ovarian tissue or clogged fallopian tubes, restore fertility. Sharon's fertility is at first regarded as problematic by the human leadership. This implies that her reproductive abilities are regarded as excessive, and this signals scepticism regarding posthuman reproduction as potentially damaging for human control of reproduction. This is a reference to the techno-critical approach in longstanding feminist debates on the relationship between the female body and advanced reproductive technology, and Sharon's body imaginary resonates with a fear of artificial life evolving beyond human control (Adam 1998).

It is pertinent that Sharon's body imaginary is that of an Asian woman. Considering her machinic origins, the regulation of her unwanted fertility is overdetermined by her racialised status as an "inappropriate/d other" (Trinh Minh-Ha 1986/87). As such, Sharon's body imaginary functions as a metaphor for "unwanted" reproduction, referencing issues of overpopulation in Asian countries. In addition, the inter-species relationship between Cylon and human that has led to the unwanted fertility is subjected to scorn and disgust, reiterating an ideology of "proper" reproduction and racial purity. The decision to abort the hybrid human-Cylon thus symbolises the destruction of all Cylon reproduction, as well as preventing hybridisation of the human species. It is worth mentioning that the Cylon community regards the idea of a crossbred heir as a positive indication of "the shape of things to come" (BSG 113 Kobol's last gleaming part 2). The Cylons also believe that their newfound ability to reproduce is related to their ability to love instead of their biological abilities (BSG 205: The Farm). It is not possible to elaborate on this aspect of BSG here, but the Cylon sentiments are important for contemporary debate about access to advanced reproductive technologies, particularly for non-Western couples, same-sex couples and single parents.

There is a change in Sharon's body imaginary during the course of the narrative: from unwanted, excessive fertility to beneficial fertility for late modern Western society. The decision to abort the hybrid child is reversed because of its value for medical research, symbolising an acceptance of untraditional reproduction, including multiracial reproduction. Considering the ongoing debate in the Western world on whether to approve or condone technological "cures" for infertility (Haran et al 2008), Sharon's body imaginary effectuates approval of recent developments in medical science, such as surrogacy and advanced infertility treatment. In this sense, Sharon comes to represent posthuman reproduction as improved nature, as fecund machine, by providing a "solution" for infertile Western woman and promising repopulation for the Western world. This can be characterised as a strategic naturalisation (Thompson 2005) of technology.

In spite of this pro-technology conceptualisation, Sharon's body imaginary continues to be devalued and subjugated: even though her reproductive abilities are useful for humanity, she is deemed an unfit parent, an inappropriate (m)other as it were. The commodification of Sharon's reproductive ability is particularly interesting with regards to her being positioned as ontologically different, by way of her Cylon origins. Coupled with her embodiment as Asian, she is also situated as racially different from humanity, due to the latter being represented by Starbuck as white. I argue that the placing of the child with a human foster mother reflects racial power structures in established dynamics of surrogacy. As such, BSG reflects global dynamics in the politics of reproduction (Ginsburg and Rapp 1995), and Sharon's body imaginary accentuates how racial and gendered categories of difference are conflated within the politics of reproduction in general and within the female reproductive body in particular.

Nevertheless, when Sharon learns that her child is alive and captured by the Cylons, Sharon's agency is brought to the fore. She demands that Helo shoot her in order for her to download into another copy of herself (BSG 312: Rapture). Once aboard the Cylon ship, she

rescues her child and returns to her human lover and colleagues. This act of self-sacrifice in order to save her child restores Sharon's status as a "proper" parent as well as a loyal ally for the human community in the BSG narrative. As such, this symbolic violence functions to destroy what is incomplete, a disempowered copy, in order to ensure that she is restored as a valid mother and citizen. Arguably, this represents a redefinition of biological citizenship (Carlos and Novas 2004) that is based not on biological origin, but on biopolitical functions in society.

### **"I'm not a commodity, I'm a viper pilot": discourses of choice in BSG**

In contrast to Sharon, the female pilot Starbuck's body imaginary is that of a liberated Western woman who excels in her career with no plans to have children. Having retained most of the character traits from the original series, she is regarded as one of the best pilots in the fleet, a hero, and she has a tough, in-your-face attitude with a tendency towards violence and insubordination. She has several lovers throughout the series. During a rescue mission she is wounded in a crash-landing, and she wakes up in a hospital facility (BSG 205: The Farm). There are no other patients, but she is treated by a doctor who explains that she needs to rest in order to recover. Whilst attending to her wounds, the doctor takes an interest in her reproductive system. He comments:

You've got to keep that reproductive system in great shape. It is your most valuable asset these days [...]. Finding healthy women is a top priority for the resistance. You'd be happy to know that you are a very precious commodity to us. [...] I mean, you do realise that you are one of few women on this planet actually capable of having children? That is your most valuable skill right now [BSG 205]

The doctor's use of words such as "asset", "commodity" and "skill" appeals to an ideology that naturalises a sexual dichotomy of women and men, where giving birth is

assumed an essential task for all women. Here, the BSG survival narrative raises issues of reproduction as a gendered imperative, where fertile women have a moral obligation or duty to reproduce. Starbuck's reply, however, refuses this categorisation: "I'm not a commodity. I'm a Viper pilot" (BSG 205: The Farm). Her "translation" from a male character to a female character in the re-imagined series accentuates how conventional male attitudes towards career-development requires explanation if they are expressed by a woman. Her rejection of the medical practitioner's view is particularly interesting in relation to issues of strategic naturalisation when the survival of the human race is at stake. The doctor's appeal to her "natural" assets illustrates how discourses of reproductive ability are conflated into issues of reproductive availability. Here, the medical authority can be said to represent state regulated biopolitics where the primary aim is to restore the population. The refusal to comply with pro-natalist perspectives reiterates anti-essentialist perspectives as well as anti-natalist perspectives, indicating Starbuck as the body imaginary of the right to choose whether to reproduce or not.

Starbuck's voluntary child-freedom reflects discourses of individual choice for women in late modern Western culture. As mentioned earlier, the Norwegian welfare state makes explicit these intersections of regulation and individual choice in this sphere. In many ways, Starbuck is positioned as privileged in terms of her status as a human and a successful soldier. In this respect, Starbuck's body imaginary reflects Norwegian politics of gender equality implemented to secure equal opportunities in the labour market. Starbuck's encounter with what turns out to be a Cylon breeding facility, known as a farm, draws attention to overarching biopolitical imperatives to sustain population growth. In Norway, these imperatives are made apparent in the so-called work-family reforms (Rønsen and Skrede 2006) and state initiatives to counsel first time parents (Mühleisen and Danielsen 2009).

In BSG, the Cylon approach to reproduction is represented as barbaric and forceful. As if to make explicit the Cylon violence, Starbuck escapes the farm and stumbles upon a room full of other human women, all connected to various machines. The women are sitting reclined as if in a gynaecologist's chair, with tubes attached to their reproductive systems, serving as "baby machines" (BSG 205: The Farm). Out of pity for the women-as-baby-machines, Starbuck burns the lab in a scene that references the character Ellen Ripley in *Alien Resurrection* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet 1997). In *Alien Resurrection*, Ripley is considered an asset for biological warfare because of the alien creature nested in her abdomen. Starbuck and the women-as-baby-machines in BSG are useful as commodities, as breeders for ensuring repopulation. Where Ripley destroys a lab with less successful clones of herself, Starbuck destroys women whose reproductive rights have been appropriated. In both cases, the protagonists feel violated by an authority pushing for scientific advancements linked to their reproductive ability.

The horror conveyed by both Ripley and Starbuck lies in the recognition that the bodies that they destroy are mirrored body imaginaries of themselves. The bodies that are destroyed serve as a kind of demarcation line between acceptable and unacceptable consequences of posthuman reproduction. This violent response echoes that of Sharon, who also destroys a disempowered copy of herself in order to be reborn. In this respect, Sharon and Starbuck's refusals to be victimised represents resistance and will to power, and reinstates the agency of the female subject and her body. At the same time, the female reproductive body is brought to the fore as the contested terrain for political power and scientific experimentation.

### **"If you agreed to bear children it would be voluntary": regulation and resistance**

In Atwood's *The Handmaids Tale*, the female, reproductive body is primarily understood as a commodity for securing survival. The handmaids are considered servants, and are not granted citizenship on the same terms as the elite. In contrast, in BSG, the characters

Sharon and Starbuck highlight how reproductive abilities become instrumental in the biopolitics of survival. I suggest that the commodification of the female, reproductive body as a necessary means in a time of crisis can be understood as a metaphor for increased governmental interest in fertility rates in contemporary late modern Western society. The body imaginary of Sharon is an informative example of how posthuman reproduction changes from being problematic to becoming a resource for sustainable population growth. As such, Sharon's body imaginary arguably redefines reproduction as a posthuman endeavour, ensuring the right to reproduce regardless of conventional ability. This resonates with recent Norwegian biopolitics. I have referred to this posthuman reproduction as a conflation of reproductive ability and reproductive availability, where the female reproductive body is understood as a provider of reproductive assets.

In contrast, the BSG survival narrative challenges the right to chose *not* to reproduce in the face of extinction. Starbuck's body imaginary voices resistance to bio-technological authority through discourses of female subjectivity and agency, but she is nevertheless confronted with her ideology of choice as problematic: "Well, if you agreed to bear children it would be voluntary" (BSG 205: The Farm). It is significant that Starbuck's resistance is directed against the Cylons, whose biopolitics represent extreme posthuman reproduction coupled with ethical primitivism. This overdetermination of the Cylons as inhuman reflects traditional binary structures such as man/machine and emotional/unfeeling. Significantly, the Cylon approach to repopulation is situated within a religious imperative of procreation (BSG 205: The Farm), alluding to polarised dynamics of (religious) freedom/fanaticism in late modern society.

However, the BSG survival narrative refuses a simplistic polarisation of Cylon barbarianism versus humanism. Before long, the human government also implements increased reproductive regulation among the surviving population through an announcement from the president (BSG 217: The captain's hand): "[...] anyone seeking to interfere with the birth of a

child, whether it be the mother or a medical practitioner, shall be subject to criminal penalty” (BSG 217). Although the approach to reproductive regulation by the human government comes across as more pragmatic and ethically justifiable than that of the Cylons, this statement underlines governmental interest in controlling reproductive rights. I argue that the BSG survival narrative addresses how the balance between securing population growth and securing individual choice, as exemplified by Norwegian welfare politics, have become more difficult to maintain in the face of posthuman reproduction. At the same time, the removal of sexual and reproductive self-determination as a means for survival in BSG is arguably a critique of both anti-natalist equality feminism and techno-critical radical feminism.

### **Reproductive ability as reproductive availability**

In the final season of BSG, the survival narrative concludes with a truce between human and Cylon survivors. In this respect, the series ends on a hopeful note, restoring social life after the prolonged war: a celebration of fellowship as “the shape of things to come”. In this process, Sharon is restored as a citizen as she proves loyal to the human community, and demonstrates dedication in trying to get her child back (BSG 312: Rapture). I argue that Sharon’s posthuman body embodies both pro-natalist and pro-technology viewpoints, and her reunited family comes to represent a reproductive future for Cylons and humans alike. The celebration of her technologically improved fertility alongside her commitment to her child arguably repositions Sharon as a post-biological citizen.

In the end, the transformation from a body imaginary of threat and uncontrollable technology to a body imaginary of compromise and hope represents the inclusion of multiracial and/or hybrid, posthuman bodies. As such, the BSG survival narrative arguably concludes in accordance with dominant discourses of diversity and equality in late modernity and BSG makes explicit how discourses of biological citizenship intersect with discourses of gender,



race, and sexuality. Interestingly, it is the figure of the posthuman that facilitates such a conclusion. As such, Sharon's Cylon origin emphasises reproduction as a kind of manufacture, where the complacent, fecund machine is rewarded as a good citizen. The final celebration of Sharon as a post-biological citizen, then, situates the female, reproductive body as a reproductive availability, a contemporary and future source for reproduction and population growth. At the same time, the figure of the father, represented by Helo, is reinstated as head of the family in the final episodes.

In contrast to the celebration of Sharon's body imaginary, BSG concludes by marginalising Starbuck's body imaginary as a voluntarily child-free, single woman. In the final episode (BSG 422: Daybreak II), Starbuck simply vanishes<sup>ix</sup>, representing a symbolic disappearance of all human women in the BSG survival narrative. In this respect, I argue that the BSG survival narrative concludes by positioning women who refuse reproduction, represented by Starbuck's body imaginary, as a threat to population growth and survival. Importantly, Starbuck represents both anti-natalist and techno-critical perspectives, and in the end this body imaginary is replaced by a posthuman body who will try "every which way to produce offspring" (BSG 205: The Farm). Starbuck's insistence on her individual right to choose whether to reproduce or not is arguably in reference to longstanding feminist debates about female subjectivity and biopolitics of reproduction. I argue that, in BSG, the strategic naturalisation of technology relocates Starbuck, a white, career-oriented and child-free Western woman, outside of the late modern reproduction matrix. Starbuck's appropriation of a traditionally male attitude of choosing her career above a potential family is sanctioned in the (posthuman) late modern reproduction matrix, and ideologies of choice are literally magicked away by her vanishing. Contrasted to the reinstatement of Sharon's body imaginary Starbuck is arguably re-positioned as ontologically Other, losing her biological citizenship in favour of a post-biological citizenship required in the new and improved future.

## **The shape of things to come: conclusive elements**

In *The Handmaid's tale*, reproductive ability is forcefully appropriated as a commodity for securing population growth. As a contemporary political fiction, BSG also illustrates how the female, reproductive body remains a contested terrain for scientific and technological advancement in relation to reproduction. BSG foregrounds issues pertaining to the dynamics and significance of choice and duty in relation to individual rights: the right to choose *not* to reproduce as well as the right *to* reproduce. However, the new future envisioned in BSG concludes with the marginalisation of women who choose not to engage in the collective project of reproduction. From a feminist point of view, this shift from reproductive ability to reproductive availability as a fundamental biopolitical function is a dystopian attitude towards the shape of reproductive politics to come.

In this article, I have discussed how issues of biopolitics and posthuman reproduction in BSG correspond to contemporary biopolitics in late modern Western society<sup>x</sup>. I have suggested that Western biopolitics rest on two key concerns: ensuring sustained population growth and the individual right to choose. Taking Norwegian welfare state politics as the contextual backdrop for the preceding analysis has made visible governmental incentives to regulate reproductive rights. Although Norway is renowned for its initiatives towards gender equality, my study has highlighted the instrumentalisation of female, reproductive bodies within Norwegian biopolitics.

In BSG, the character Sharon represents posthuman reproduction as a solution to the declining birth rate in the Western world. Sharon's body imaginary raises questions regarding reproductive assistance and reproductive rights, and her body imaginary transforms from an inappropriate (m)Other to a useful and necessary "improved" body for sustaining reproduction. In contrast, the character Starbuck's unwillingness to reproduce embodies discourses of choice

and resistance to bio-technological authority. Starbuck's body imaginary represents ideologies of choice, and is, in the end, portrayed as outdated and not "proper" in relation to both female biology and biological citizenship. The emphasis on difference between the pro-natalist and pro-technology post-biological citizen Sharon and the anti-natalist and techno-critical Starbuck contribute to reinforcing a sense of reproductive duty similar to the dystopia of *The Handmaid's tale*. I suggest that this shift from reproductive ability to reproductive availability is indicative of late modern biopolitics in Western societies. I also suggest that this strategic naturalisation in the BSG survival narrative results in a displacement of discourses of choice to discourses of obligation due to bio-technological advancement. Importantly, the BSG survival narrative condones unethical medical treatment of both fertile and infertile women, and discrimination on the basis of race and sexuality for those wanting to reproduce. Gender, however, seems to be reinserted as a fundamental category of difference and a mere biopolitical function when the issue of reproduction is at stake.

Bringing my analysis to a close, I suggest that the BSG survival narrative reinscribes reproductive ability as a sacred quality that supersedes individual freedom in the context of recent Western reproduction politics. I posit that BSG's endorsement of posthuman reproduction, coupled with a pro-natalist approach to population control, re-presents posthuman reproduction as an evolutionary advancement the female body cannot refuse. As such, the BSG politics of reproduction in the survival narrative concludes by positioning the female reproductive body as a commodity for securing reproduction, and by re-inscribing gender as a category of difference and the link between female bodies and reproduction as key norms for late modern societies.

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<sup>ii</sup> The original series called “Battlestar Galactica”, created by Glen E. Larson, was released in USA in September 1978. Although the series was short lived (only one season), it was screened in several European countries, including Great Britain (1980), France (1981), Italy (1981) and Finland (1981).

<sup>iii</sup> [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/medicine/laureates/2010/press.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/2010/press.html) (accessed 15 November 2010)

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.lovdata.no/all/nl-20031205-100.html> (accessed 30 June 2010). The amendments to the Biotechnology Act were a result of amendments to the Marriage Act, granting equal marital status for heterosexual and homosexual couples. These amendments to Norwegian law on biopolitics result in a legal right to reproductive assistance for all married or cohabiting Norwegian women. Single women, single men and gay couples however, are exempt from these reproductive rights.

<sup>v</sup> Egg-donation and surrogacy are prohibited under the Biotechnology Act

<sup>vi</sup> The actual identity of Starbuck is confused throughout the series. Because my analysis deals with events that take place before her “death” (episode 317: Maelstrom) and subsequent “resurrection” (episode 320: Crossroads part 2). Since episode 320, the identity of Starbuck has been unclear, and the confusion surrounding her being human, Cylon or the “harbinger of Death” has been used to fuel the narrative. However, as this confusion is not relevant to this analysis, I have chosen not to complicate Starbuck’s identity as human. It is relevant, however, that, in the original series, Starbuck was a male character.

<sup>vii</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Fertility\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Fertility_statistics) (accessed 19 March 2010), <http://www.susps.org/overview/birthrates.html> (accessed 19 March 2010)

<sup>viii</sup> See also the cultural imaginary (Lykke & Braidotti 1996), the social imaginary (Braidotti 2002) and imagined communities (Anderson 1991)

<sup>ix</sup> See also note ii. The disappearance contributes to mythical interpretations of Starbuck’s identity, but they are not relevant for this particular analysis.

<sup>x</sup> These biopolitics are also interlinked with religious beliefs, representing a binary of religion/secularism. Although there are religious undercurrents to be found in the BSG narrative, religion does not come across as a main argument when legitimising biopolitics.

## **Paper IK**

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## **Paper IKK**

## **Politiske monstre. Å passere som menneskelig i science fiction- TV-seriene *Star Trek* og *Battlestar Galactica***

De siste tiårene har det vært en markant økning i TV-serier som utforsker det å passere som menneskelig (*Smallville* 2001; *Battlestar Galactica* 2004; *Heroes* 2006; *Fringe* 2008; *V* 2009; *Being Human* 2009; *The Event* 2010). Å passere vil si å (re)presentere eller utvise utseendemessige og adferdsmessige karaktertrekk som vanligvis forbindes med avgrensede identiteter eller kategoriseringer. I denne artikkelen<sup>1</sup> diskuterer jeg hvordan det å passere som menneskelig henger sammen med forståelser av menneskelig ontologi – kroppslige og identitetsmessige avgrensinger av et menneske. Begrepet ontologi betyr her både fysiske avgrensinger for verden en lever i og har tilgang til, og historiske, ideologiske og sosio-kulturelle virkelighetsforståelser<sup>2</sup>. Med andre ord er ontologi ikke bare materiell eksistens, men også forestillinger og fortellinger om identitet og tilhørighet. Jeg legger til grunn en sentral feministisk kritikk om at kategorien «Menneske» ikke er nøytral, men at avgrensningene for det menneskelige etablerer og forhandler ideen om et universelt (hvitt, mannlig, heteroseksuelt) menneske som et normativt subjekt (Haraway 1991; Butler 1990; Lykke og Braidotti 1996; Spivak 2002). Å passere som menneske forteller noe om vilkårene for hva som defineres, eller gjenkjennes, som nettopp «menneskelig». Jeg er særlig opptatt av endringen i hvordan menneskelignende aktører blir framstilt i science fiction: fra fysisk forskjell til teknologisk reforhandling av menneskelig ontologi til passering. Hva står på spill i forhandlingene mellom teknologi og tradisjonelle avgrensninger av menneskelig ontologi? Hva kan utviklingen i science fiction-sjangeren fortelle om samfunnsmessige og kulturelle endringer i vår tid knyttet til kropp, kjønn og teknologi?

Økningen i science fiction -TV-serier som handler om passering kan forstås som en vending fra fortellinger om forskjell til fortellinger om sammenfildrede relasjoner mellom mennesker

og teknologi. Min påstand er at science fiction-sjangeren både produserer og forhandler disse fortellingene. Et særlig kjennetegn i science fiction-sjangeren er hvordan det menneskelige etableres og forhandles i en kontekst som konstituerer, kvalifiserer eller utfordrer konvensjonelle identiteter og ontologier (Kuhn 1990; Telotte 1995; Melzer 2006; Roberts 2006). Aino-Kaisa Koistinen (2011) peker på hvordan forståelser om det spesifikt menneskelige i TV-seriene *Battlestar Galactica* og *V*, som begge ble nylaget i siste halvdel av 2000-tallet, forandrer seg over tid. Hun finner at markører for det menneskelige er i bevegelse mellom menneskelige og ikke-menneskelige aktører i de seinmoderne versjonene.

I denne artikkelen tar jeg utgangspunkt i representasjoner av kybernetiske kropper<sup>3</sup> i tre utvalgte science fiction-TV-serier: Data fra *Star Trek: The Next Generation*<sup>4</sup> (1987-1994), Seven of Nine fra *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001) og Cylonene i *Battlestar Galactica* (2004-2009).<sup>5</sup> Disse seriene understreker hvordan passering som menneskelig henger sammen med samfunnsmessig utvikling, og illustrerer samtidig endringer innad i science fiction-sjangeren. I følge den feministiske kulturviteren Teresa de Lauretis (1980) er science fiction en form for meningsarbeid (sign-work) som omarbeider diskursive tematikker, bilder, symboler, ord og kroppslighet på måter som utfordrer etablert kunnskapsproduksjon. Forstått som meningsarbeid er science fiction en metode for å få tilgang til de strukturer eller mekanismer som til en gitt tid regulerer og forhandler kroppsliggjøring, identitet og ontologi i relasjon til teknologi. Som meningsarbeid kan de ovennevnte karakterene sies å fungere som *politiske monstre* i den grad de artikulerer sosiokulturell endring og kunnskapsproduksjon i en samtidig, politisk kontekst. Karakteren Data i *Star Trek: The Next Generation* er et politisk monster som på slutten av 1980-tallet utfordrer avgrensninger for tilgang til det menneskelige gjennom sine forsøk på å passere som menneske. I *Star Trek: Voyager* representerer karakteren Seven of Nine et politisk monster som begrepsliggjør et økende

avhengighetsforhold mellom biologi og teknologi i siste halvdel av 1990-tallet. I *Battlestar Galactica* er den Andre ikke lenger representert gjennom én karakter, men gjennom et helt kollektiv: Cylonene. Forstått som politiske monstre destabiliserer Cylonene tradisjonelle ontologier, og kan sies å konfrontere et antroposentrisk verdensbilde hvor mennesket er det normative omdreiningspunktet.

### **Politiske monstre: forskjell, hybriditet, passering**

De siste tiårene har en rekke feministiske teoretikere tatt til orde for at tradisjonelle ontologiske motsetningspar slik som menneske/maskin, subjekt /objekt, Selv/Annen utfordres av teknologisk nyvinning innen medisin og tekno-industriell utvikling. Allerede i 1980 foreslo Teresa de Lauretis, Andreas Huyssen og Kathleen Woodward at den «insisterende teknologiseringen av hverdagslivet [...] har (om)formet alle kulturelle prosesser fra måter vi kommuniserer med hverandre på til måtene vi oppfatter oss selv og verden» (viii, min oversettelse). Mange kjenner den feministiske filosofen Donna Haraways kyborg-figur: en hybrid mellom biologi og teknologi, materialitet og fiksjon, realitet og ideologi. For Haraway er kyborgene et analytisk omdreiningspunkt for å utfordre tradisjonelle ontologiske avgrensninger: «a way out of the maze of dualisms» (1991:181). De seneste årene viser en videreutvikling av kyborgene som en figur for alternative, hybride ontologier til en konfrontasjon av ontologi-begrepet i seg selv. Særlig det teoretiske rammeverket kalt det posthumane problematiserer ontologi som komplekse og sammenflettede «prosesser av tilblivande» (Åsberg, Hultman og Lee 2012:31). På denne måten åpner det posthumane opp for at menneskelig ontologi er i konstant forhandling med teknologi og andre organismer. Dette kommer til uttrykk i uunngåelige relasjoner til datamaskiner, medikamenter og hverdagsteknologi slik som bankkort, kaffetraktere og kontaktlinser (Halberstam og Livingston 1995; Hayles 1999). Kunnskapen om at menneskekroppen består av bakterier,

sopp og andre mikroorganismer bidrar også til å forstå ontologi som et økosystem snarere enn en avgrenset enhet (Haraway 2008:3-4).

I tråd med disse teoretiske bevegelsene kan det spores en endring i hvordan en forstår samfunnet og verden en lever i: fra forskjellsfortellinger til fortellinger om komplekse og mangfoldige relasjoner. I science fiction-sjangeren er forholdet mellom mennesket og teknologi et sentralt omdreiningspunkt for å utfordre etablerte virkelighetsforståelser. I 1923 introduserte den tsjekkiske forfatteren Karel Čapek ordet robot (robota) i skuespillet *R.U.R.* (2001). Robota betyr arbeider eller slave på tsjekkisk. I *R.U.R.* brukes betegnelsen for å beskrive humanoide roboter som tilhører en arbeiderstand eller slaverase i et samfunn dominert av menneskeheten. Robotene i *R.U.R.* representerer ideen om at den teknologiske Andre kan passere som mennesker. Dette er etter hvert en velkjent trope i science fiction-sjangeren, slik som i den innflytelsesrike filmen *Blade Runner* (1982).<sup>6</sup> Slike troper bidrar til å problematisere menneskets hegemoniske status, og stiller spørsmål ved binære avgrensninger mellom teknologi og biologi, og (ikke-menneskelig) objekt og (menneskelig) subjekt. I tillegg retter de søkelyset mot politiske, sosiale og etiske utfordringer knyttet til ideen om et normativt subjekt: hva inkluderes i (det menneskelige, universelle) felleskapet, og hva holdes utenfor? Disse utfordringene kan knyttes an til globale endringsbevegelser for å sikre rettigheter og handlingsrom for marginaliserte grupper, slik som den amerikanske borgerrettighetsbevegelsen, kvinnebevegelsen og homobevegelsen.

I så måte kan science fiction-sjangeren sies å være full av *politiske monstre*: ikke-menneskelige karakterer som kroppsliggjør noe politisk, etisk og ontologisk annerledes enn det universelle Mennesket. I følge Haraway er monsteret en figur som representerer ytterpunktene ved et samfunn – grensene for det normale eller familiære (1991:180).

Samtidig understreker slike representasjoner en sårbarhet i forhold til teknologi og innflytelsen denne har på vilkår for menneskelig eksistens. Framveksten av science fiction-film som *mainstream* Hollywood-produksjon i overgangen mellom 1970- og 1980-tallet bidro til å utfordre klare skillelinjer mellom det menneskelige og det (teknologisk) monstrøse. For kulturviter J. P. Telotte (1999) er visuelle representasjoner av roboter, androider og kyborger i denne perioden en måte å formidle teknologiske framskritt som en u håndgripelig trussel mot det menneskelige på, slik som i filmene *Alien* (1979) og *Terminator* (1984). Felles for disse representasjonene er at robotene passerer, eller nesten passerer, som mennesker.

Å passere er som nevnt å kunne ta del i et fellesskap til tross for at en ikke «egentlig» hører hjemme der. Jeg skriver «egentlig» i hermetegn for å vise hvordan passering relaterer til ideen om et opprinnelig, og dermed eksklusivt, fellesskap. Begrepet passering illustrerer forholdet mellom majoriteter og minoriteter, hvor majoriteten representerer det normative som marginaliserte grupper ønsker å ta del i. Begrepet «passering» har særlig blitt brukt for å beskrive overskridelser av rase- og kjønnsidentiteter. Passering anskueliggjør ofte strategier for å bedre sosiale og politiske vilkår for ikke-hvite amerikanere (Myrdal 1944; Ginsburg 1996; Camaiti-Hostert 2007); å passere som hvit ga tilgang til økonomiske og sosiale strukturer som ellers ville være stengt under slaveritida og under rasesegregeringsregimet. Også i postkolonial teori er passering knyttet til det hvite, vestlige subjektet som et normativt omdreiningspunkt, hvor det ikke-hvite låses fast som «a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite» (Bhabha 1994:122). Innen feministisk og skeiv teori, betyr passering å bli akseptert som det kjønn en presenterer seg som, uavhengig av biologisk kjønn (Sullivan 2003:106) og rokker ved ideen om at biologisk kjønn dikterer handlingsrom, seksualitet og sosial status. På denne måten utfordrer passering det fastlåste ved kjønnede posisjoner og posisjoneringer i samfunnet. For den feministiske filosofen Judith Butler (1990;

1993) er passering et eksempel på hvordan kjønn og kjønnsidentitet ikke nødvendigvis er noe en *er*, men snarere noe en *gjør*. Hennes begrep om performativitet understreker hvordan kjønnsidentiteter ikke er statiske, men må forstås i relasjon til eksisterende mulighetsbetingelser for å gjøre kjønn. Butler påpeker hvordan slike mulighetsbetingelser reguleres gjennom normer og praksiser for kjønnsidentitet (1990:42-43). Å forstå identitetsbestemmende kategorier slik som rase, kjønn og seksualitet som performative innebærer en forståelse av at identitet er en kontinuerlig praksis som både reproducerer og forhandler etablerte forestillinger om og forventninger til en gitt identitet. På samme måte kan forståelser av ontologiske kategoriseringer også anses som performative: De er ikke fastlåste tilstander av Væren eller eksistens, men snarere bevegelige grensedragninger som er i stadig forhandling og prosess. Å passere viser fram hvordan identitet og ontologi *gjøres* og ikke bare *er*, samtidig som passering også peker på normer og praksiser som regulerende mulighetsbetingelser for en slik gjøren.

### **Forskjellsfortellinger: Androiden Data i TV-serien *Star Trek: The Next Generation***

Data er en androide, det vil si en menneskelignende robot. Han er kroppsliggjort som mann,<sup>7</sup> men kroppen er konstruert av teknologiske, uorganiske komponenter. Kroppen er dekket av en plastisk imitasjon av hvitaktig hud, noe som gir ham et menneskelignende utseende. Han er programmert med avanserte matriser for kunnskapsinnhenting og tilpasning til menneskelig adferd, alt plassert i en såkalt positronisk<sup>8</sup> hjerne: en datamaskin som imiterer menneskelig adferd og praksiser (Asimov 1990; Hanley 1997). Denne programmeringen gjør også at mennesker kan gjenkjenne Datas adferd som en form for bevissthet (sentience).

Kroppsliggjøringen av Data refererer menneskehetens omgang med teknologi, digitalisert maskineri og programmert kunnskap. Data bør forstås i lys av starten på den digitale revolusjonen og gjennombrudd i kroppsmodifikasjonsteknologi slik som proteser og reparativ kirurgi i begynnelsen av 1980-årene. Også reproduktiv teknologi har sitt gjennombrudd i

denne perioden, med verdens første prøverørsbarn født i 1978 (Franklin 2007:63). Det er verdt å merke seg at Data likevel skiller seg ut som nettopp ikke helt menneskelig: til tross for likheter er både hans kroppsliggjøring og adferd avvikende fra menneskelig norm. I så måte er han et eksempel på visualisering av ontologisk forskjell fra det menneskelige.



Figur 1

Bildet over viser Data med hans gråbleke hudimitasjon, og det uttrykksløse ansiktet er betegnende for hans manglende evne til å vise eller erfare følelser. Som karakter i serien er det nettopp denne mangelen som viser fram Datas forskjell. Hans forsøk på passering som menneske fungerer ofte som en komisk kommentar til menneskelig gjøren og laden. Samtidig gjør iscenesettelsen av en slik brist på det menneskelige det mulig å få øye på hva det spesifikke menneskelige består i, og hvordan det henger sammen med fortellinger om forskjell og likhet, inklusjon og eksklusjon.

Data passerer ikke. I episoden *The Measure of a Man* diskuteres nettopp Data sin status eller tilhørighet. Gjennom en rettssak skal det vurderes om Data er eiendom (objekt) eller ansatt (subjekt), noe som artikulere den forhandlingen som hans teknokropp og eksistens setter på dagsorden. Episoden trekker klare paralleller til diskusjoner om mangel på sivilrettslige rettigheter og undertrykking på bakgrunn av rase eller art. Data kan derfor forstås som en representant for roboters rettigheter. Episoden understreker hvordan ontologiske avgrensinger



henger sammen med juridiske, politiske og ideologiske strukturer som regulerer legitimitet og anerkjennelse som medborger eller av personskap. Dette reflekterer en global historie av sosiale, kulturelle og politiske endringsbevegelser for å sikre grunnleggende rettigheter for marginaliserte grupper, slik som kvinner, ikke-hvite og homofile.

I *The Measure of a Man* konkluderes det med at Data er ansatt, ikke eiendom. Hans ontologiske annerledeshet knyttes her opp til eksistensielle forhold og muligheter, og utfallet av rettsaken beveger litt på tradisjonelle avgrensninger mellom teknologi og menneskelighet. Ifølge den postkoloniale teoretikeren Homi Bhabha er forståelser av annerledeshet, her forstått som noe som avviker fra det universelle subjektet, en ideologisk konstruksjon. Han fremholder at ideen om et fastlåst, universelt subjekt etablerer og opprettholder et hierarki mellom et universalisert subjekt og den Andre (1994: 94). Bhabha understreker hvordan koloniale maktstrukturer avhenger av en form for imitasjon av etablerte praksiser og strukturer som opprettholder normen uten å utfordre den. Selv om Datas imitasjon av menneskelige praksiser retter søkelyset mot prinsipielle rettigheter for ikke-normative individer, er det verdt å merke at det er noen områder som forblir problematiske.

I en nøkkepisode kalt *The Offspring* har Data konstruert en androide han kaller sin datter. Denne episoden stiller spørsmål ved Data sine evner til å ta vare på en annen livsform, til foreldreskap og til å inngå i en intim relasjon med andre. Her er ideen om menneskelig ontologi vevd sammen med spørsmål om evnen til biologisk reproduksjon og iboende omsorgsevner. En slik forståelse av det menneskelige henger sammen med det Haraway kaller opphavsfortellinger (origin stories): etablerte konvensjoner som regulerer forståelser av naturalisert eksistens, derunder mulighetsebetingelser for reproduksjon og tilhørighet (1989:5). Datas selverklærte foreldreskap skaper kontrovers:

Kaptein Picard: It is not a child, it is an invention!

Rådgiver Troi: Why should biology rather than technology determine whether it's a child?

Datas forsøk på å reprodusere seg selv reflekterer historisk viktige debatter om mulighetene for og utfordringene ved å videreutvikle biologiske prosesser ved hjelp av ny teknologi på 1980-tallet, slik som blant annet assistert reproduksjon (Corea 1988; Franklin 2000; Strathern 1995). I en norsk kontekst dukket tilsvarende diskusjoner opp i kjølvannet av en revisjon av norsk bioteknologilovgivning på slutten av 2000-tallet (Helse-og Omsorgsdepartementet 2008), som åpner for tilgang til reproduktiv assistanse for alle kvinner i både heterofile og homofile samliv. Som Unn Conradi Andersen (2013) peker på, har diskusjoner om seksualitet, kjønn og ulike former for reproduktiv assistanse i Norge de siste årene synliggjort hvordan normer for «ekte» eller «riktig» reproduksjon forstås i lys av den heteroseksuelle kjernefamilien, og mor som primær omsorgsperson. Kristin Spilker (2006) problematiserer videre hvordan farskap forvaltes og forhandles når konvensjonelle opphavsfortellinger er under press. Datas foreldreskap synliggjør hvordan sammenhenger mellom reproduksjon, omsorgsevner, kjønn, seksualitet og teknologi rokker ved regulerende normer og praksiser for å gjøre menneskelighet. Data kommer til kort fordi han omgår etablerte opphavsfortellinger i kraft av å representere teknologi, ikke biologi, og fordi han er kroppsliggjort som enslig mann, det vil si uten livmor.

I kraft av sin teknokropp tydeliggjør Data hvordan avgrensninger mellom biologi og teknologi veves sammen med evnen til reproduksjon og omsorg som ontologiske egenskaper. En naturalisert diskurs omkring biologiske, kjønnede egenskaper i forhold til reproduksjon og affektivt foreldreskap forsterker hans ontologiske forskjell fra en «ekte» forelder.

Forhandlingen av Datas foreldreskap kan forstås som en måte å ta del i det som

litteraturteoretiker Raymond Williams beskriver som en «følelsesstruktur» (1977) som organiserer kulturell mening og felles forståelseshorisonter. For Williams er slike følelsesstrukturer en form for emosjonelt handlingsrom (agency) som ikke bare angår individet, men som er en del av sosiale prosesser hvor mening organiseres i tråd med både etablerte hierarkier og endringspotensial (ibid:132). Selv om Data ikke kan føle, ønsker han å ta del i menneskelig erfaring og praksiser. Gjennom å produsere en familie håper han å erverve seg innsikt i familieliv og intimitet som sentrale deler av slike følelsesstrukturer. Likevel, Datas manglende evne til å føle forblir et element som befester hans ontologiske forskjell, noe som viser i hvilken grad evnen til å føle også informerer mulighetsbetingelsene for å være menneskelig.

Oppdagelsen av en såkalt følelses-chip i episoden *Brothers* illustrerer hvordan tilgang til følelser til syvende og sist representerer en ontologisk avgrensing. Når Data først oppdager chipen vegrer han seg for å aktivere den: Han er ikke konstruert for å erfare følelser. Et tidlig forsøk på å konstruere en tilsvarende androide resulterte i at androiden ble *for* menneskelig i sin evne til å tilpasse seg mennesker emosjonelt og relasjonelt, deriblant ved å ty til manipulasjon og vold for å tilrane seg makt og innflytelse<sup>9</sup>. Data ble dermed konstruert i tråd med Descartianske, humanistiske verdier som rasjonalitet og stabilitet, noe som lenge har blitt ansett som etiske fundament for menneskelig ontologi. I spin-off filmen *Star Trek Generations* (1994), aktiverer Data likevel chipen. Han kan ikke håndtere følelsene, de er ukontrollerte, overveldende, og det hele ender med at han bestemmer seg for å ha chipen avslått fordi han ikke kan risikere ukontrollerbare følelser. Slike følelser kommer nemlig i konflikt med hans søken etter det menneskelige som et slags etos: idealet om det gode, rasjonelle mennesket. Dette er selvsagt en referanse til Isaac Asimovs tre robotlover (1942), som har hatt enorm innflytelse for konseptualiseringen av roboter i science fiction. Disse

lovene dikterer at en robot ikke kan skade et menneske, og i Asimovs univers er alle roboter programmert til å følge disse lovene.<sup>10</sup> Kontroll over følelser som sinne og sjalusi blir derfor nødvendig for å kunne opprettholde etiske retningslinjer for relasjonen til menneskeheten og bidrar til å sikre det universaliserte menneskets hegemoniske status som en privilegert og overlegen art.

Karakteren Data understreker hvordan science fiction-sjangeren etablerer og opprettholder et universalisert menneskelig subjekt som sitt referansepunkt. Med sin kroppsliggjorte forskjell refererer Data spørsmål om medborgerskap og sivile rettigheter, noe som gir gjenklang i historier om rasemessige forskjeller som ekskluderende faktorer for medborgerskap. Han artikulere også en kjønn dimensjon knyttet til omsorgsevner som iboende egenskaper. Hans forsøksvise foreldreskap tydeliggjør hvordan reproduksjon utenfor et normativt (biologisk, heteroseksuelt) rammeverk forstås i lys av det menneskelige som en fastlåst, affektiv, biologisk ontologi snarere enn en fleksibel praksis. Data viser også hvordan evnen til å føle på «riktig» vis konstituerer det menneskelige som et stabilt ideal. Han representerer både mangel og eksess: Hans manglende evne til å føle diskvalifiserer ham som omsorgsperson, samtidig som denne mangelen kontrasteres i følelseschipen som en eksessiv og skadelig oppfinnelse. Det er altså Datas ontologiske status som robot, hans opphavsfortelling, som er grunnlaget for å trekke nettopp hans menneskelighet i tvil. Som en iscenesettelse av et politisk monster løfter Data fram hvordan kroppslig og atferdsmessig forskjell fra det spesifikt menneskelige er et omdreiningspunkt for å låse fast den Andre som noe Annet. Han viser hvordan avgrensninger for menneskelig ontologi tar mange former, både som artsavgrensning (speciesism), opphavsfortellinger og sosiopolitiske følelsesstrukturer.

## **Ontologiske forhandlinger: Hybriden Seven of Nine i *Star Trek: Voyager***

*Star Trek* universet er velkjent for karakterer som retter søkelyset mot hvordan det menneskelige etableres og forhandles i relasjon til teknologi (Introna 2010, Shapiro 2004). I TV-serien *Star Trek: Voyager* er karakteren Seven of Nine (Seven) på mange måter en arvtaker etter Data: De har begge teknokropper og representerer på en måte et selv-refleksivt blikk på hva det menneskelige består i. I motsetning til Data, er Seven en biologisk kropp som har blitt modifisert ved hjelp av en rekke teknologiske komponenter. Noen av disse kan fjernes, mens andre må være på plass for at hun skal bevare sine kognitive evner og kroppsfunksjoner. Når karakteren introduseres i episoden *Scorpion: Part 2* er hun en del av det både kroppslig og mentalt integrerte kollektivet Borgene. Borgene er en parasittisk organisme som assimilerer alle biologiske og teknologiske arter de treffer på. De utsletter alle individuelle eller artsspesifikke kjennetegn ved å inkorporere kropper og kroppsdelar i én stor samfunnsorganisme.<sup>11</sup> Denne strategien utsletter mangfold, men skaper etter deres begreper likhet og struktur. Seven ble som (biologisk) barn kidnappet av Borgene, og representerer fortellinger om hvordan overdreven og ufrivillig bruk av teknologi på menneskekroppen fratar menneskets dets ontologiske integritet. Den kollektive strukturen til Borgene truer ideen om individualisme (Weldes 1999). Dermed truer de også grunnpilarer for dominerende samfunnsorganisering i Vesten, slik som privat eiendomsrett og monogame familie- og reproduksjonspraksiser. Seven plasseres i utgangspunktet utenfor en slik seksuell og reprodutiv økonomi. Navnet Seven of Nine<sup>12</sup> angir hennes plassering i kollektivet og understreker hvordan det kollektive er en motsats til individualitet. Som et ledd i prosessen med å reintegrere Seven of Nine i menneskeheten som et selvstendig individ, forkortes navnet hennes til Seven. Denne forkortelsen kan forstås som en form for individualisering og menneskeliggjøring.



Figur 2

Som bildet over (fig. 2) viser, har den i utgangspunktet biologiske kroppen blitt hybridisert av teknologiske komponenter. Svarte ledninger er festet inn under huden, og det som ser ut som metallplater er montert ulike steder på hodet. En dominerende komponent dekker for det ene øyet. Hun forholder seg til sine omgivelser rasjonelt og effektivt, og har til å begynne med verken forståelse eller behov for følelser eller relasjoner.

Ved første møte er Seven en fremmed: Hun passerer heller ikke. Ifølge Telotte (1995) er det fryktinngytende ved slike representasjoner av menneskelignende roboter nettopp et uttrykk for menneskehetens ambivalente forhold til teknologisk utvikling. Denne utviklingen truer menneskets ontologiske hegemoni og etablerte identitetskategorier. For Donna Haraway, derimot, er et overskridende forhold til teknologi grunnlaget for å tenke nytt om kategoriske inndelinger. Hennes kyborgfigur representerer nye mulighetsbetingelser for kropp, kjønn og identitet i lys av teknologisk innblanding/innvirkning. Kyborgfiguren er på denne måten et verktøy for å skape nye forståelser av hva det menneskelige kan være: «It is our ontology, it gives us our politics» (1991: 150). Hybridiseringen som kyborgens illustrerer reflekterer både en trend i science fiction- sjangeren på 1990-tallet og i kulturen ellers. Framveksten av internett og økt bruk av hverdagsteknologi kan sies å ha understøttet en teknologipositiv, eller i det minste en teknologinysgjerrig kultur i den vestlige verden (Halberstam and Livingston

1995, Toffoletti 2007). Verdens første levedyktige kloner, sauene Dolly, så også dagens lys i denne perioden (Franklin 2007). I tillegg ble framskritt i medisinsk-teknologisk utvikling av reprodutiv assistanse og livsforlengende teknikker gjort allment tilgjengelige (Franklin 2000). Den økende sammenblandingen av biologi og teknologi brakte på bane diskurser om valgfrihet i forhold til «livet selv». Jeg vil særlig trekke fram hvordan Michel Foucaults begrep om biopolitikk, det vil si hvordan biologisk eksistens reflekteres i politisk styring og samfunnsmessig organisering (Foucault 1978:142), fikk ny aktualitet. I de nordiske landene er særlig kombinasjonen av reproduksjon og deltakelse i arbeidslivet et godt eksempel på biopolitiske kjernesporsmål i perioden (Ellingsæter og Leira 2006; Melby og Rosenbeck 2009).<sup>13</sup> Som figur retter kyborger søkelyset mot mulighetene for å omdefinere konvensjonelle identiteter og tilhørigheter. Kyborger er også en metafor for nye forståelser av tradisjonelle (kjønnede) avgrensninger av subjekt og objekt, og for mulighetsbetingelser og handlingsrom (agency).

Seven er på mange måter en inkarnasjon av kyborgfiguren. Hun representerer en ny, hybrid identitet, en slags kyborg ontologi, som også henger sammen med nye mulighetsbetingelser for å tenke kjønn, kropp og identitet. Først skal det nevnes at hun gjennomgår noen fundamentale endringer i løpet av serien, både kroppslig og i oppførsel (se fig. 3).



Figur 3

Som bildet over viser går Seven fra å ha et monstrøst utseende til et mer «menneskelig» utseende ved hjelp av reparativ kirurgi (*The Gift; Human Error*). Noen teknologiske komponenter er likevel synlige utenpå huden, slik som rester av øyeimplantatet og en forsterket håndstruktur på venstre hånd. Denne teknologien er diskret, og fungerer på mange måter som former for utsmykning av Seven sin teknokropp. Usynlig teknologi regulerer også hennes hjerneaktivitet og kroppsfunksjoner. I tillegg til de kroppslige forandringene handler hennes reise mot å passere som menneskelig også om å gi slipp på å være en del av en kollektiv bevissthet for å bli et individ, en person. Det er særlig interessant at denne utviklingen også handler om å finne sin identitet som kvinne.

Sevens tidvise passering forhandles gjennom kroppslighet og måten hun oppfører seg på. Hennes sosiale trening blir en sentral del av seriens narrativ, slik som i episodene *Infinite Regress* og *The Raven*. I episoden *Someone to watch over me* (1999) blir hennes kjønn også en sentral del av sosialiseringen: Hun skal lære om flørting.<sup>14</sup> Denne treningen er et forsøk på å gi henne tilgang til følelsesstrukturer, slik som relasjoner og tilknytning. Hun mislykkes først med høflig konversasjon (den er for henne overflødig og dermed ikke relevant) og brekker uheldigvis armen på en dansepartner når han vil føre an i dansen. I likhet med Data



viser Sevens forsøk på å nærme seg det menneskelige gjennom praksis seg å være vanskelig når hennes angivelig iboende egenskaper mangler. Seven lærer likevel å gjøre en slags menneskelighet til slutt: Hun ender opp i et heteroseksuelt parforhold, samtidig som hun bevarer sin identitet som Borg, som hybrid mellom menneske og maskin ettersom det er nettopp hybriditeten som gir henne særpreg og handlingsrom.

Ifølge Claudia Springer (1996) er sammenblandingen av kvinnelighet og teknologi en etablert måte å representere den Andre på i science fiction-sjangeren. Springer påpeker særlig spenningsfeltet mellom attraksjon og fremmedgjorthet. Sevens kjønnede teknokropp i *Star Trek: Voyager* fungerer også som en figur hvor annerledeshet kan synliggjøres. At kvinnekroppen er gjenstand for blick kaller filmviter Laura Mulvey (1975) for kvinnens bli-sett-på-het (to-be-looked-at-ness). Mulveys etter hvert velkjente poeng er at representasjoner av kvinner i visuell kultur henger sammen med kjønnede maktstrukturer og begjærøkonomi. Seven illustrerer at den kjønnede teknokroppen heller ikke er unndratt slik representasjon. Jeg vil understreke at hun ikke er alene: I science fiction-sjangeren generelt sporer jeg en merkbar økning i teknokropper kroppsliggjort som kvinner i overgangen mellom 1990- og 2000-tallet, deriblant Ripley fra filmen *Alien Resurrection* (1997) og T-X fra *Terminator 3: The Rise of the Machines* (2003). Dette er interessant av flere grunner. For det første kan sammenblandingen av kvinnelighet og teknologi forstås som en representasjon av dobbel annerledeshet: en figur hvor den Andre tradisjonelt sett kan plasseres. For det andre er slike figurer også en måte å ta inn kyborgfigurens endringspotensial. For Haraway representerer kyborgene andre mulighetsbetingelser, særlig for kvinnekroppen. Hun er opptatt av at hybridisering bidrar til et dobbelt blick (double vision) som i sin tur forstyrrer ensprete, hierarkiske konvensjoner: Mangehodete monstre, hybrider og kyborger, fungerer som en

potent politisk myte for motstand og endring mot fastlåste hegemoniske relasjoner (1991:154).

Seven bryter med det normative både i kraft av å gjøre kjønn på utradisjonelle måter og på grunn av sin teknokropp. Som et politisk monster kan meningsarbeidet hun gjør i serien knyttes an til 1990-tallets feminismer, hvor et viktig prosjekt har vært å synliggjøre konsekvensene av kjønnsbetydninger eller rollemønstre for enkeltindividet. Dens teoretiske strømninger rettet søkelyset mot variasjon og handlingsrom innad i etablerte kategoriseringer, mot kjønnets performativitet (Butler 1990). Med andre ord er det økende forståelse for at kjønnsidentitet, og andre identitetsbestemmende kategorier, ikke er fastlåste størrelser, men snarere et rammeverk av regulative normer og praksiser som det også er mulig å yte motstand mot. Mens Datas ikke-passering handler om ontologisk forskjell og spørsmål om deltakelse i sosiale og juridiske fellesskap, passerer Seven innimellom fordi hun er en hybrid som både tilpasser seg en kjønned identitet og sosiale koder for kjønned adferd. Samtidig artikulere hun andre mulighetsbetingelser for performativ identitet ettersom hun også setter sitt særpreg på hvordan dette gjøres. Det er viktig å understreke at hennes glimtvisse passeringer bare fungerer fordi overskridelsen ikke sklir over i det totalt ugjenkjennelige og fremmede: Hun ser tilnærmet menneskelig ut, og tilpasser seg de individualiserte og kjønnede strukturene som dominerer en menneskelig tilstand av væren. Illustrert gjennom teknologi synlig som estetisk utsmykning over øyet iscenesetter Seven Haraways doble blikk, og bidrar på denne måten til å problematisere fastlåste hierarkier mellom det konstruerte og det tilsynelatende naturlige. Gjennom å integrere teknologien i sin identitet, demonstrerer Seven 1990-tallets diskurser om potensielt formbare mulighetsbetingelser for å gjøre identitet. Hennes teknokropp kan sies å representere en ontologisk reforhandling av den biologiske menneskekroppen, og stiller samtidig spørsmål ved kategoriske inndelinger av identiteter og tilhørighet.

## **Posthumane passeringer: Cylonenei *Battlestar Galactica***

I TV-serien *Battlestar Galactica* er den kjønnede teknokroppen sentral i science fiction-sjangerens meningsarbeid. Serien handler om menneskehetens overlevelse i møte med et krigersk samfunn av roboter kalt Cylonene. Cylonene kaller seg selv menneskehetens barn og ser på seg selv som et nytt trinn på evolusjonsstigen. Ontologisk sett er de teknologisk avanserte roboter med kunstig intelligens, noe som gir dem kontroll over egne handlinger og meninger og over egen utvikling. Det er særlig interessant at Cylonene, i motsetning til Data og Seven of Nine, fastholder at de har bedre evne til å elske, til å føle og gi kjærlighet, enn menneskeheten. Dette baserer de på at menneskehetens historie er voldelig og preget av krig om territorier og ressurser. I tillegg til den åpenbare referansen til vestlig kolonialisme og slaveri, konstituerer dette også en kritikk av humanistiske idealer om mennesket som stabilt, godt og rasjonelt. Denne kritikken gjenkjenner vi i pågående debatter om menneskets privilegerte status i seinmoderne tid, slik som debatter om rettigheter for dyr og bærekraftige økosystemer (Haraway 2008). Dette er relevant fordi det, i tråd med posthumanistisk kritikk, peker på en destabilisering av det menneskelige som en overlegen eller eksepsjonell eksistens i forhold til andre arter. Cylonene kan heller ikke dø; deres programmerte personlighet blir i stedet lastet inn i nye kroppar dersom noe skulle skje med dem. På denne måten representerer de en ontologisk forskjellighet fra mennesket, og deres ambisjon er ikke nødvendigvis å bli mer lik mennesket, men å erstatte det.

*Battlestar Galactica* har fått internasjonal oppmerksomhet som en TV-serie som aktualiserer politiske og etiske problemstillinger i verdenssamfunnet etter 11/9 2001 (Erickson 2007; Ott 2008). Slike lesninger av *Battlestar Galactica* påpeker også hvordan en global økning i terrorangrep på 2000-tallet illustrerer hvordan tradisjonelle, fastlåste fiendebilder gradvis erstattes av nye, mer flytende og usikre markører for hvem som er venn og hvem som er fiende

(Neumann 2013). Det finnes tolv humanoide cylonmodeller som er nær identiske med «ekte» mennesker i utseende og oppførsel. Det finnes flere identiske modeller på samme tid. Ved hjelp av performativ passering har de infiltrert menneskene sitt samfunn, noe som skaper paranoia og usikkerhet blant befolkningen. Den menneskelige befolkningen bruker nedlatende kallenavn som «toasters» og «skin-jobs» om Cylonene. Slike navn understreker deres maskinelle opphav og peker på imitasjonen av det menneskelige som nettopp imitasjon: ikke ekte. For min analyse er det særlig interessant at flere av de sentrale Cylon-modellene er kroppsliggjort som kvinner (se figur 4.).



Figur 4

Jeg vil spesielt trekke fram to Cylonmodeller som involverer seg mer enn andre i menneskesamfunnet, modell seks og åtte (respektivt avbildet helt til venstre og helt til høyre i figur 4). Disse modellene opptrer som samtidige karakterer, det vil si at det finnes mer enn én av hver,<sup>15</sup> som inngår i ulike seksuelle og intime relasjoner med mennesker. Interessant nok er det gjennom tradisjonelle, kjønnete strategier at deres infiltrasjon finner sted – gjennom forføring og reproduksjon (*Battlestar Galactica Miniseries*; *Litmus*; *Six Degrees of Separation*; *Kobol's Last Gleaming II*).

For Cylonene er det å ta i bruk velkjente kjønnede virkemidler knyttet til kvinners bli-sett-på-het altså en måte å passere på. I likhet med Data og Seven of Nine er Cylonenes kjønn relevant for hvordan de kan forhandle eller gjøre former for menneskelighet. Ifølge den postkoloniale teoretikeren Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, er tilgang til det menneskelige særlig begrenset for kvinner i kraft av at de konstitueres som mannens, og dermed også det universelles, motsetning: «det dreier seg om [...] i imperialismens tidsalder, [er] nettopp [...] å frambringe menneskelige skapninger, eller å konstituere og «interpellere» subjektet ikke bare som individ, men som individualist. Dette prosjektet har to registre: det å føde barn og det å skape en sjel» (Spivak 2002:281). For både modell seks og åtte er spørsmål om kjærlighet og samliv sentralt for både å kunne passere som og identifisere seg selv som menneske. I tillegg til anerkjennelse som individer, og ikke «bare» maskiner, er spørsmål om reproduksjon sentrale i serien (Jowett 2010, Hellstrand 2011, Kustritz 2012). Cylonene er i utgangspunktet unndratt en menneskelig livssyklus i kraft av at de ikke fødes eller dør, men bare lastes ned i en annen kropp, skulle noe skje med dem. Å kunne reproducere på konvensjonelt, menneskelig vis handler for Cylonene om teknologisk perfektion for å kunne passere som mennesker. Meningsarbeidet i serien som handler om sammenblandingen av kjønn og teknologi er også her interessant i lys av etiske og politiske debatter om tilgang til reproduktiv teknologi (jmf. Conradi Andersen 2013).

I *Battlestar Galactica* kommer de politiske monstrene i flokk, som kollektiv og eget samfunn. Cylon-kollektivet representerer en motstand mot å bli posisjonert som den stereotypiske, singulære Andre. På denne måten artikulere de en utfordring til menneskelig eksepsjonalisme og ontologisk hegemoni. Gjennom en noe respektløs holdning mot menneskeheten, både som kropp og som politiske aktører, synliggjør *Battlestar Galactica* hvordan politiske og etiske spørsmål om tilhørighet og identitet er tett forbundet med ontologiske avgrensninger for det

menneskelige. Som meningsarbeid bidrar *Battlestar Galactica* til å destabilisere mennesket som en statisk ontologisk situasjon, og skifter fokus fra eksistens til performativ menneskelighet. Som Aino-Kaisa Koistinen (2011) påpeker, er tradisjonelle markører for det menneskelige i bevegelse mellom menneskelige og ikke-menneskelige aktører. Denne utvekslingen illustrerer hvordan ideen om det spesifikt menneskelige må forstås som noe som kontinuerlig må konstrueres og opprettholdes: Å være menneske er en *gjøren*. Koistinens analyse er likevel sentrert rundt det menneskelige som ontologisk omdreiningspunkt. Jeg understreker at Cylonene, som representasjoner av det posthumane, også har potensial til å forskyve det tradisjonelt menneskelige som normativt sentrum.

I *Battlestar Galactica* understreker det posthumane ikke bare en hybridisering mellom biologi og teknologi, men peker også på et økende avhengighetsforhold mellom ulike aktører. I en samtid preget av ustabile politiske og økonomiske allianser er tradisjonelle (koloniale) maktstrukturer og identitetskategoriseringer under press. At Cylonene er umulige å skille fra et «ekte» menneske understreker dagens utrygge fiendebilder i kraft av at de representerer en følelsesmessig og politisk kraft som ikke har sitt opphav i tradisjonelle strukturer. Cylonenes materialisering av reprodutiv teknologi som et bærekraftig alternativ til konvensjonell reproduksjon, rokker også ved forståelser av biologi og biopolitikk. Samtidig er den underliggende kritikken av antroposentrisme som Cylonene representerer understreket av at de framstår som en gruppe og ikke som enkeltindivider. At det finnes flere identiske kopier på samme tid er med på å flytte grensdragningene for det unikt menneskelige, for individet, og peker mot diskurser om mangfold og flerstemmighet (Hellstrand 2013). Dette destabiliserer ideen om en singular, universalisert norm og gir litt motstand mot konvensjoner i science fiction-sjangeren som fastholder det (vestlige, mannlige, heteroseksuelle) mennesket som universets omdreiningspunkt.

Paradokset er likevel at Cylonene befinner seg både på utsiden og innsiden av kategorien om det menneskelige. De er utenfor i kraft av å representere en tydelig ontologisk forskjell. De er samtidig innenfor fordi de har tilgang til følelsesstrukturer og performative strategier for å gjøre menneskelighet. Dette fører til at entydige grensedragninger mellom «oss» og «dem» blir tilnærmet umulige, noe som fordrer nytenking om tilhørighet og identitet. På denne måten kan en si at Cylonene ikke bare passerer, men *transpasserer*. Med dette mener jeg at de både passerer og overskrider normene for passering i kraft av å tilføre noe eget. Utgangspunktet for Cylonenes angrep og infiltrasjon er et opprør mot menneskelig hegemoni. Samtidig tar Cylonene i bruk naturaliserte konvensjoner, da særlig kjønnede praksiser, for å gjøre den samme menneskeligheten som de gjør opprør mot. I en diskusjon om den politiske relevansen for å tenke i begreper om drag eller transkjønn fremholder Butler at transkjønn synliggjør hvordan virkelighetsforståelser kan forhandles og muligvis omarbeides fordi transkjønn konfronterer etablerte forestillinger om kjønn og kjønnsidentitet (2004:217). Som transkjønn er også begrepet om transpassering noe som illustrerer hvordan avgrensninger for det menneskelige etableres gjennom det Butler kaller normer for forståelighet (norms of intelligibility) for det menneskelige subjektet (ibid:73). Fortellinger om «ekthet» eller legitim tilhørighet utgjør, slik som også er tilfelle for Data, etisk-politiske virkelighetsforståelser hvor det å bli kalt en kopi, ikke ekte, er en hersketeknikk for å befeste ontologiske skillelinjer. Samtidig er betegnelsen «kopi» på mange måter en anerkjennelse av at en i det minste er «almost the same, but not quite» for å parafrasere Bhabha. Butler presiserer at så lenge en performativt passerer på en måte som er i tråd med normene for forståelighet, så bidrar en både til å reprodusere og potensielt overskride slike normer (ibid: 218). Passering muliggjør en slik dobbel strategi for å destabilisere fastlåste normer og konvensjoner for å gjøre menneskelighet. Jeg forstår dermed Cylonenes transpasseringer som et uttrykk for hvordan

ideen om det normative i seg selv nettopp ikke er et stabilt parameter for å definere ontologi og tilhørighet.

I en tid hvor tradisjonelle allianser og inndelinger er i oppløsning, er Cylonene eksempler på nåtidas politiske monstre: De passerer, helt til det plutselig avsløres at de likevel ikke hører til. *Battlestar Galactica* har som sagt blitt analysert som en kommentar til terrorangrepet i New York i 2001. I en norsk kontekst er det nærliggende å trekke en parallell til terroristen Anders Behring Breiviks angrep mot regjeringskvartalet i Oslo og mot ungdommer på Utøya 22. juli 2011. En del av denne tragedien er at gjerningsmannen ikke vekket mistanke; han passerte. Rune Ottosen og Cathrine Andenæs Bull peker på at media, i de første timene etter at Breiviks terroraksjon var gjennomført, tok i bruk eksisterende fiendebilder om gjerningsmannen som etnisk og religiøst annerledes før det ble kjent at Breivik sto bak angrepene (2012:252-253). At Breivik viste seg å være en norsk mann, rokket ved både konvensjonelle forestillinger om de Andre, og om «Oss». Som meningsarbeid oppfordrer *Battlestar Galactica* til å tenke identitet og tilhørighet på nye måter, også i Norge.

### **Politiske monstre: hva står på spill?**

I denne artikkelen diskuterer jeg hvordan science fiction-TV-seriene *Star Trek: TNG*, *Star Trek: Voyager* og *Battlestar Galactica* iscenesetter grensedragninger for det menneskelige. Samtidig viser jeg hvordan forestillinger om det universelle, normative mennesket også sementerer avvik eller annerledeshet – det ikke-normative. Gjennom nærlesninger av karakterene Data, Seven of Nine og kollektivet Cylonene peker jeg på hvordan science fiction-sjangeren over tid forhandler ulike problemstillinger knyttet til forståelser av menneskelig ontologi. Jeg vektlegger ontologi både som en ramme for politisk og etisk tilhørighet, og som en materiell avgrensning. Forhandlingene som disse karakterene representerer henger sammen med samfunnsmessig utvikling i forhold til framveksten av



teknologi, og økt fokus på inkludering og likestilling de siste 40 årene. Som politiske monstre artikulere disse karakterene noen viktige spørsmål knyttet til identitet og tilhørighet. Data representerer forskjellsfortellinger og retter søkelyset mot utfordringer ved marginalisering av det ikke-normative. Som politisk monster påminner Data om at opphavsfortellinger og fortellinger om tilhørighet risikerer å sementere forståelser av menneskelig ontologi som en fastlåst avgrensning. Ettersom han er kroppsliggjort som mann er Data en særlig interessant figur å tenke med i vår seinmoderne tid når det gjelder diskurser om tilgang til reproduktiv teknologi, og evnen til å delta i følelsesstrukturer. Seven på sin side er en inkarnasjon av hybriditet, og det at hun er kroppsliggjort som kvinne iscenesetter henne som en figur for nye mulighetsbetingelser for å gjøre (kjønnet) identitet på. Seven sitt handlingsrom bidrar til å skape håp om bevegelige kategoriseringer. Samtidig kan slik hybridisering også virke truende for det etablerte verdensbildet. Sammenhengen mellom handlingsrom og kroppsliggjøring som kvinner gjør Cylonene særlig interessante som politiske monstre i nåtida. Ifølge Kari Jegerstedt er frykten for det kvinnelige en drivkraft for det politisk motiverte terroranslaget i Norge i 2011. Jegerstedt refererer til Breivik som den «monstrøse manifestasjonen» (2012:172) av politiske overbevisninger basert på ideen om et statisk, universalisert subjekt som er truet av den Andre. På mange måter representerer cylonkvinnene noe monstrøst i kraft av at de overskrider, transpasserer, konvensjonelle identiteter. Som posthumane figurasjoner insisterer disse politiske monstre også på at forestillingen om det menneskelige er sammensatt og skiftende. På denne måten peker Cylonene mot en nytenking av etablerte forestillinger om det universelle mennesket, og problematiserer tradisjonelle ideologier om et «Selv» og den Andre. I min analyse peker jeg på hvordan forståelser av hva eller hvem som har tilgang til «det menneskelige» er sentrale politiske og etiske spørsmål. I science fiction-TV-seriene jeg har undersøkt, er det særlig forholdet mellom kropp, kjønn og teknologi som understreker hvordan grensedragningene for identitet og tilhørighet er ideologisk fundert. Et viktig poeng

her er at slike normer for forståelse da også kan omarbeides, utvikles og overskrides.

Meningsarbeidet i science fiction-sjangeren bidrar dermed til å kaste lys over hva som står på spill når passering, både ikke-passering og transpassering, utfordrer og forhandler avgrensningene for det menneskelige – etisk, politisk og ontologisk.

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Bilder:

Figur 1: Data: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:DataTNG.jpg>. Lastet ned 16.12.2013

Figur 2: Seven of Nine med Borg utseende: [http://www.startrek.com/database\\_article/seven-of-nine](http://www.startrek.com/database_article/seven-of-nine). Lastet ned 16.12.2013.

Figur 3: Seven of Nine med menneskelig utseende: <http://www.ex-astris-scientia.org/gallery/voymain1.htm>. Lastet ned 16.12.2013.

Figur 4: Tre cyloner kroppsliggjort som kvinner:

[http://en.battlestarwiki.org/wiki/File:Season\\_3\\_Female\\_Cylons.jpg](http://en.battlestarwiki.org/wiki/File:Season_3_Female_Cylons.jpg). Lastet ned 16.09.2010

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<sup>1</sup> En særlig takk til mine veiledere: Cecilia Åsberg, for oppmuntring til å skrive akkurat denne artikkelen, og Wencke Mühleisen, for grundig og kritisk veiledning i skriveprosessen. Jeg vil også takke de to anonyme fagfellevurderingene som med konstruktive innspill har bidratt til å forbedre artikkelen, og redaktørene for Tidsskrift for Kjønnforskning, Hilde Danielsen og Kari Jegerstedt.

<sup>2</sup>En slik forståelse av ontologi plasserer seg inn i det som har blitt kalt en ontologisk vending, eller ny materialisme, innen feministisk teori. Den feministiske filosofen Rosi Braidotti forklarer en slik vending med et paradigmeskifte hvor binære konstruksjoner mellom natur og kultur, som også henger sammen med forståelser av Væren som eksistens versus Gjøren som praksis, konfronteres med en ikke-dualistisk forståelse av naturkultur-interaksjon (2013:3). Ifølge de nymaterialistiske teoretikerne Diana Coole og Samantha Frost er det snakk om en ontologisk reorientering (2010:12), hvor Væren ikke forstås i form av klart avgrensede eksistenser, men som komplekse relasjoner mellom materialitet, subjektivitet, virkelighetsforståelser og relasjoner. På denne måten refererer ontologi til både materielle avgrensninger og til politisk og etisk tilhørighet. Denne forståelsen av ontologi som både materiell og ideologisk åpner også for å analysere hvordan ulike kropper og identiteter er performative (Butler 1990), det vil si hvordan de gjøres, snarere enn hvordan de eksisterer.

<sup>3</sup> En cybernetisk kropp er en kropp som imiterer biologiske funksjoner ved hjelp av avansert teknologi.

<sup>4</sup> *Star Trek* ideen ble lansert av serieskaper Gene Roddenberry på 1960-tallet. *Star Trek* universet består av ulike TV-serier, slik som *Star Trek: the Original Series*, *The Animated Series* (1973–1974), *The Next Generation* (1987–1994), *Deep Space Nine* (1993–1999), *Voyager* (1995–2001) og *Enterprise* (2001–2005). I dag er *Star Trek* en stor underholdnings-franchise, med en rekke spillefilmer, litteratur, videospill, leker og suvenirer.

<sup>5</sup> Denne versjonen er en nylaging av en serie fra 1978 med samme navn. Nylagingen består av en miniserie (Moore og Larson 2003) og 4 sesonger (Moore og Larson 2004-2009).

<sup>6</sup> Filmen er basert på romanen *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Dick 1968)

<sup>7</sup> Vitenskapsmannen dr. Soong skapte Data «i sitt bilde» -en bibelsk referanse til menneskets hybris i forhold til teknologi (som en også kjenner igjen fra Frankensteins motivasjon)

<sup>8</sup> Betegnelsen positronisk hjerne ble først tatt i bruk av Isaac Asimov (1990)

<sup>9</sup> I episoden Datalore (Bowman, Lewin og Roddenberry 1988) møter Data sin «bror» Lore: en identisk kopi av ham selv som har følelsesmessige egenskaper.

<sup>10</sup> De tre lovene er: 1) En robot kan ikke handle på en måte som skader et menneske eller, gjennom passivitet tillate at et menneske blir skadet. 2)En robot må adlyde enhver ordre gitt av mennesker, bortsett fra når slike ordrer er i konflikt med den Første Loven. 3)En robot må beskytte sin egen eksistens så lenge slik beskyttelse ikke kommer i konflikt med Første eller Andre Lov (Asimov 1942, min oversettelse).

<sup>11</sup> Borgene blir ofte tolket som en metafor for Sovjetunionen (Weldes 1999); kollektivismen og anti-individualismen som en kontrast til den amerikanske drømmen om å skape seg selv.

<sup>12</sup> Fullt navn, eller tittel, er Seven of Nine, Tertiær adjunkt i Unimatrix-Zero

<sup>13</sup> Antall uker betalt foreldrepermisjon økte drastisk på tidlig 90-tall: fra 28 uker i 1990 til 42 uker i 1993 (NOU 1996:13).

<sup>14</sup> På spørsmål om hvorfor dette er relevant svarer romskipets doktor, som har tatt på seg oppdraget å gi henne sosial trening, at det er fordi hun er kvinne. Seven svarer: Is that an observation or a diagnosis?

<sup>15</sup> Modell 6 er kjent som Caprica Six, Gina Inviere og Shelley Godfrey. Modell 8 er kjent som Sharon/Boomer og Sharon Agathon/Athena.

## **Paper IV**

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