From Source to Stage:
Representations of Disability and Degeneration in Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* and Alexander Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*

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ABSTRACT

Addressing the dearth of critical engagement between opera studies and disability studies, this thesis situates the representation of disability in Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* and Alexander Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* within a broader narrative of social, political and cultural upheaval in which both composers and their works were condemned as 'degenerate'. The operas' disabled protagonists reflect the growing prevalence of distinctly physical and, by association, visible manifestations of disability in modernist opera, which represents a wider tendency towards the 'enfreakment' of disability by artists and writers as a means through which to represent their own outsider identity.

Disability's figurative potential throughout literary and broader cultural history has been demonstrated within disability studies, and the use of the disabled body as a symbol of personal and social upheaval is a narrative device that maintains popularity today. As such, a fundamental tenet in this thesis is that the metaphorisation of disability in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* is not only (historically) texted, but also (presently) performed. Having laid the foundations for and put forward my central argument – that the operas use disability as a metaphor for outsider identity – in Chapters One and Two, the latter half of this thesis critically assesses several contemporary productions of the operas, each of which are associated with the *Regietheater* tradition. Here, I interrogate diverse aspects of mise-en-scène, illuminating broader and heretofore overlooked issues surrounding the politics and practice of (re)interpreting physical disability and historical ideology on opera stages today.

In tracing the representation of disability and degeneracy from source to stage, this thesis constitutes one of the first investigations into the ways in which disability is imagined and depicted in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, illuminates the critical potential of disability studies as a perspective from which to study opera and responds to the calls of opera and performance studies scholars to locate and implement new modes of reading both opera and disability in performance.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

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INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTS AND PERSPECTIVES

'Write about the tragedy of the ugly man'.[1] This simple request prompted the creation of the two operas with which this thesis is concerned, as, in what Christopher Hailey refers to as 'the most curious chapter in their relationship', Alexander Zemlinsky approached Franz Schreker with his invitation to collaborate in 1911.[2] Schreker was a well-known composer, conductor and teacher but, although a renowned librettist, he is not known to have previously written any librettos that were not for his own operas. Many accounts of the subsequent arrangement refer to Schreker's attachment to his libretto, of which he said:

> The more I worked on it, the more abhorrent, the more unbearable I found the thought that not I, but another would compose the music to it, music that was already taking firm shape and form within me. And it seemed to me as if, along with the libretto, I was giving him my musical self, as if I were selling my innermost soul, my very life. And I decided I would fight for the libretto. It wasn't necessary. My colleague in Apollo was a reasonable man and understood me without having to say much.[3]

The libretto would become that of the three-act opera *Die Gezeichneten* (*The Stigmatised* or *The Marked Ones*), which Schreker went on to complete 1915 and which received its world premiere in Frankfurt in 1918 under the baton of Felix Weingartner. 1918 was also the year in which Zemlinsky's 'tragedy of the ugly man' began to take shape, when the librettist Georg Klaren used Oscar Wilde's fairy tale 'The Birthday of the Infanta' as the basis for a libretto. The resultant opera, *Der Zwerg*, premiered at Cologne's Stadttheater in 1923, conducted by Otto Klemperer.

Die Gezeichneten and *Der Zwerg* emerged at the beginning of a period in which both Schreker and Zemlinsky would face increasing critical hostility. This was partly as a result of socio-political and economic vicissitudes which led to the development of a reactionary critical climate in which a number of and artworks were condemned as 'degenerate'. In this thesis, I argue that both operas bear traces of these pre-Fascist discourses of degeneracy and that, moreover, they offer reflections on or reactions against the associated development of bodily and artistic aesthetic 'norms'. It is significant, I suggest, that the aspects of cultural commentary in Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas are formulated around the bodies of their disabled protagonists. Situating the question of disability's meaning in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der*

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[1] Franz Schreker, 'Über die Entstehung meiner Opernbücher,' *Das Feuer*, 1/3 (1919), 109–10, quoted and translated in Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878-1934: A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 65.
[2] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 65.
[3] Schreker 'Über die Entstehung meiner Opernbücher,' quoted in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 65.

Zwerg within a broader narrative of social, political and cultural upheaval, I propose that, in these operas, physical disability reflects personal and cultural anxieties about a burgeoning critical discourse that would drive both Schreker and Zemlinsky to obscurity under the charge of degeneracy.

As this introduction will show, disability studies attests to disability's figurative potential throughout literary and broader cultural history, and the use of the disabled body as a symbol of outsider identity is a long-established narrative device that continues to be used with some frequency today. It therefore follows that the metaphorisation of disability in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* does not exist within a historical vacuum, and a fundamental tenet in this thesis is that this metaphorisation is not only (historically) texted, but also (presently) performed. Indeed, disability's manifold meanings in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* are discernible firstly though the depiction of Alviano and the Dwarf in the operas' source texts, scores and librettos and, secondly, on stage. Having laid the foundations for and put forward my central argument – that the operas use disability as a metaphor for outsider identity – in Chapters One and Two, the latter half of this thesis critically assesses several contemporary productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. Here, I will interrogate aspects of dramaturgy, casting, costume and set design, illuminating broader and heretofore overlooked issues surrounding the politics and practice of (re)interpreting physical disability and historical ideology on the opera stage. In tracing the representation of disability and degeneracy from source to stage, this thesis constitutes one of the first investigations into the ways in which disability is imagined and depicted in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, illuminates the critical potential of disability studies as a perspective from which to study opera and responds to the calls of opera and performance studies scholars to locate and implement new modes of reading both opera and disability in performance.

Although my research is narrow in focus, the scope of the relevant background material is broad. Combining the insights of opera studies, disability studies, historical and cultural studies and performance studies, this thesis is informed by a number of scholarly contexts and theoretical perspectives and adopts a sustained interdisciplinary approach. In order to establish a clear starting point, this introduction offers an overview of these contexts and perspectives, highlights the dearth of critical engagement between them and aims to familiarise the reader with a number of key texts which have been integral to the development of the project. To begin, it seems logical to introduce the relevant aspects of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's lives, works and reception, along with their position in existing literature and narratives of musical modernism in particular. Next, I provide an overview of degeneration theory as a discursive trend of vital significance to both the composers' reception and the

representation of disability in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. Indeed, the operas can be read as reflections of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's respective experiences within a cultural and discursive context in which individuals, societies and cultural productions were deemed susceptible to the effects of 'degeneration', while the disabled bodies of the operas' protagonists appear to act as 'magnets' to which the composers secure their anxieties.[4] Given the growing prevalence of disability theory as a valuable critical perspective, no study concerned with the representation of such bodies can reasonably refuse its insights. This introduction provides an initial overview of the scope and tone of the discipline, introduces the emerging subfield of music and disability studies and, in light of disability's frequent occurrence in the operatic canon, emphasises the need for critical intersections between opera studies and disability studies. In order to study opera from a disability studies perspective, I further propose the importance of undertaking analyses not only of scores and librettos, but of productions. As such, this introduction also surveys the role of production in opera studies scholarship alongside approaches to the study of disability in performance. Here, particular emphasis is placed on how my approach to 'reading' five contemporary productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* draws upon the work of David Levin. Finally, having introduced the various contexts and perspectives encompassed in my research, I offer an outline of the thesis.

Franz Schreker, *Die Gezeichneten*

Die Gezeichneten centres around the love triangle between 'Genoa's Ugliest Man', Alviano Salvago; the virile Count Tamare, one of a group of noblemen known as the 'eight' who kidnap and rape the young women of Genoa; and the beautiful painter Carlotta, whose outward appearance hides a hidden heart defect that ultimately proves fatal. The action takes place during the Italian Renaissance on the island of Elysium, created by Alviano as a shrine of aesthetic beauty and an attempt to compensate for his own physicality. The opera begins as Alviano discovers the misuse of Elysium by his noblemen friends, who have used the island as a 'grotto' of sexual misconduct, thus transforming it into a hotbed of corruption and depravity. The protagonist consequently resolves to gift his paradise to the people of Genoa, and the city's officials visit the island to discuss arrangements with Alviano. The Podestà (the city's chief magistrate) is accompanied by his daughter, Carlotta, who rejects the romantic solicitations of Tamare and, instead, expresses an interest in Alviano. Alviano and Carlotta

[4] This 'magnet' metaphor is borrowed from the disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland Thomson. Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 'Introduction: From Wonder to Error – A Geanology of Freak Discourse in Modernity,' in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosiemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 2.

exchange a confession of love as she paints his portrait, but she ultimately gives in to the sexual advances of the hedonistic Tamare. Alviano initially believes that Tamare has raped Carlotta, but upon discovering that she gave herself freely, the broken-hearted protagonist stabs and kills the count. Carlotta is overwhelmed with horror and revulsion and dies calling out for Tamare. The dissolution of his hopes for love drives Alviano to madness.

Schreker had experienced an initial period of success in the early 1900s, but this was cut short with the outbreak of World War One. Following its premiere in 1918, *Die Gezeichneten* was a sensation that enabled Schreker to take up a place among the era's musical elite. Theodor Adorno records that during this time, 'every stage of any significance' was graced with a production of the opera and, between 1918 and 1930, it was performed in twenty-two cities across Europe to critical acclaim.[5] Following the opera's Munich premiere in 1919, the composer A. Albert Noelte wrote that 'behind this sophisticated score which is literally laden with an unheard-of, colourful wealth of sounds, lies a powerful will to create, enormous skill, and a sacred idealism, which deserves our unlimited admiration'.[6] The composer's rise to fame was also documented outside of Europe, with César Saerchinger of the American periodical *Musical Courier* describing Schreker as 'the most talked about composer in Germany and Austria today' and 'the pride of Vienna'.[7] Schreker's popularity at this time was owed in no small part to the Frankfurt-based critic Paul Bekker, for whom the composer had created 'new, personal formulations of the old aesthetic ideal of "opera" from the vantage point and needs of a coming age'.[8] The 1920s would play host to Schreker's most prolific period, and Hailey points to 1920 and 1921 as years of particularly notable success.[9] Looking ahead to the 1920/21 season, the composer himself remarked, 'I think there is hardly an opera house on this side of the trenches that is not going to do one of my works next season'.[10] Indeed, Schreker's operas were performed over 150 times across Austria and Germany in this period, more than doubling the royalties amassed in the previous season.[11]

1920 was also the year in which the composer would leave his longtime home in Vienna (where he had taught composition at the Music Academy and had founded and led the

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[5] Theodor Adorno, 'Schreker (1959),' in *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 130; Marc Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky: A Lyric Symphony* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 171.
[6] A. Albert Noelte, 'Die Gezeichneten,' trans. Mirjam Galley. Review of the Munich premiere of *Die Gezeichneten* (1919) held at the Deutsches Theatermuseum (Munich). No date or publication name is provided.
[7] Franz Schreker, quoted in César Saerchinger, 'What Schreker Has to Say,' *Musical Courrier* 79, no. 1 (1919): 36, available at: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951002198706s&view=1up&seq=7 (accessed 02.08.2019).
[8] Paul Bekker, *Neue Musik* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1923), 76, quoted in Hailey, Franz Schreker, 98.
[9] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 132.
[10] Saerchinger, 'What Schreker Has to Say,' 36.
[11] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 132.

city's Philharmonic Chorus) to accept a post as the director of Berlin's prestigious Hochschule für Musik. In 1922, the musicologist Hugo Leichtentritt observed that '[s]ince Schreker was appointed director of the Hochschule für Musik, Berlin has become the centre of a progressive school of young artists, who are attracted to Schreker's reputation as a protector, defender, and promoter of modern tendencies'.[12] During the early twenties, public opinion of Schreker largely corresponded with Leichtentritt's view of the composer as a progressive artist. He was, in fact, a somewhat provocative figure within the musical community – with their complex scores and controversial sexual subject matter, his operas, in particular, were surrounded by an air of scandal.[13] In this light, it certainly seems that Schreker was, as John L. Stewart has suggested, a 'daring artist, [who] belonged to the heart and soul of the fin de siècle'.[14]

Following the initial success of *Die Gezeichneten*, however, Schreker's particular brand of modernity would be engulfed by waves of experimentation and challenges to traditional modes of musical expression which were pioneered by a younger generation of composers, many of them Schreker's students, such as Alois Hába, Stefan Wolpe and Ernst Krenek. According to Krenek, for the upcoming generation of composers, the 'generally accepted view of modernism' was a 'territory vaguely delineated by the landmarks set up by Debussy, Max Reger, Richard Strauss, and perhaps Scriabin'.[15] Krenek continues that, although Schreker 'was at home in that territory […] Schoenberg was looked upon as a dangerous lunatic'.[16] More recently, Sherry D. Lee has drawn a comparison between the tonal and homophonic musical tendencies of Alexander Zemlinsky (which will be considered shortly) and Schoenberg's preference for counterpoint, noting that 'Schreker's compositional idiom exhibits both these traits'.[17] Schreker's music is certainly characterised by the prevalence of an intermediary harmonic character that sits between atonality and functionality and, during the composer's lifetime, music critics frequently drew comparisons between Schreker and the composers listed by Krenek, particularly Debussy.[18]

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[12] Hugo Leichtentritt, 'Ultra-Modern "Schreck"-Lichkeit,' *Musical Courier* 84, no. 16 (20.04.1922), 40, quoted in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 123.
[13] See Peter Franklin, '"Wer weiss, Vater, ob das nicht Engel sind?" Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's Die Gezeichneten,' in *Music, Theatre and Politics in Germany: 1848 to the Third Reich,* ed. Nikolaus Bacht (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 174–75.
[14] John L. Stewart, 'The Composer Views his Time,' in Ernst Krenek, John L. Stewart and Will Ogdon, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music* (Berkley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 103.
[15] Krenek, Stewart and Ogdon, *Horizons Circled*, 20.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Sherry D. Lee, 'A Minstrel in a World without Minstrels: Adorno and the Case of Schreker,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 3 (2005): 642, available at: https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2005.58.3.639 (accessed 12.06.2018).
[18] For example, see Saerchinger, 'What Schreker Has to Say,' 36. See also Schreker's own commentary on his musical style, which I consider in Chapter Two, 94.

Although experimental tendencies are displayed through extended tonalities and unusual timbres, Romantic sonorities are ever-present in Schreker's works. For example, *Die Gezeichneten* plays host to the familiarly sensuous sound of a monumental Straussian orchestra, the iridescent, rippling semi-quaver movement reminiscent of Debussy and the lush, Tristanesque suspensions of dissonant chords. Hailey has described Schreker's music as 'Romanticism filtered through turn-of-the-century sensibilities […] in short, a radically different style of Viennese modernism'.[19] The author, however, acknowledges that this view of the composer is altogether contemporary, and it is evident that, although commentaries on Schreker's musical style (such as Krenek's) eventually moved away from comparisons to earlier, Romantic composers, he was not always perceived as a progressive musician. The composer's success began to wane in 1924 with the reception of his fifth opera, *Irrelohe*, and Hailey provides an account of largely apathetic critical reception of the opera in light of its failure to give any indication that Schreker had changed with the times.[20] When *Die Gezeichneten* premiered, the composer was largely perceived as a credible successor to Wagner and a promising exponent of new music. However, although once considered to be daringly modern psychological explorations of human fragility and sexuality, his librettos now garnered a reputation as passé. His music, too, generated an impression that Schreker was disinclined to cross the boundary from the fin-de-siècle and fully embrace the trends of the *Neue Musik*. Hailey attributes much of the critical hostility towards Schreker's work in the mid-1920s to the fact that it represented an 'intensification of rather than a departure from the musical and dramatic patterns' of earlier, more successful works like *Die Gezeichneten*.[21]

Schreker's ambiguous position in the critical landscape at this time can be attributed to what Áine Sheil describes as the uncomfortable coexistence of 'the forces of creativity and the desire for familiarity' amidst a period of economic and political 'liminality'.[22] Sheil describes the effects of the era's economic crisis on German opera houses, which faced budget cuts and an evolving audience demographic.[23] The perception of Schreker as a composer whose works were deliberately designed to appeal to the masses can be attributed to these cultural shifts, particularly in terms of his works' appeal to commercial tastes.[24] Indeed, as Peter Franklin has

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[19] Christopher Hailey, 'Franz Schreker and the Pluralities of Modernism,' *Tempo*, no. 219 (2002): 4.
[20] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 191–95.
[21] Ibid., 195.
[22] Áine Sheil, 'Displacement, Repetition and Repression: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* on Stage in the Weimar Republic,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 29, no. 2 (2017): 120–21. For a detailed account of the economic crisis in Weimar Germany, see Eric D. Weltz, 'A Turbulent Economy and an Anxious Society,' in *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 129–68.
[23] Sheil, 'Displacement, Repetition and Repression,' 120–21.
[24] See Peter Franklin, 'Style, Structure and Taste: Three Aspects of the Problem of Franz Schreker,' *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 109 (1982): 134–35; Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 145–49.

suggested, Schreker 'had achieved something that ran counter to the most cherished unspoken dogma of twentieth century artistic radicalism. He had become popular'.[25] Paradoxically, however, Schreker's musical and dramatic patterns would also find him condemned within a different kind of critical discourse that began to emerge in the 1920s alongside this period of economic upheaval. Schreker's earlier reputation as a progressive musician and a promoter of the modern in music would not stand him in good stead in this context, as notions of progress and modernity in music would take on profoundly negative connotations in conservative music criticism. Within a discursive framework in which social and political 'outsiders' were held responsible for the decline of healthy culture, Schreker would be implicated as a degenerate composer.

Schreker was born in Monaco to an Austrian mother, Eleonore von Clossmann, and a Jewish Hungarian father, Ignaz Schreker. Despite the latter's conversion to Protestantism, their marriage instigated scandal within Clossmann's aristocratic Catholic family.[26] Having moved to Monaco before the birth of Franz Schreker, the family spent time living in France, Belgium, Croatia and Austria before Ignaz's death in 1888.[27] The family's subsequent settlement in Vienna was marked by financial strain, ill-health and the death of his younger sister, and Hailey attributes Franz Schreker's 'aesthetic proclivity toward disjunction, reversal, and abrupt contrast' to both his dissonant parentage and the itinerant and tragic nature of his childhood.[28] Though raised as a Catholic, the composer's Jewish heritage would have a profound impact on his career. Hailey explains:

> Anti-Semitism was never far from the surface in the Germany of the twenties, but the economic hardships and cuts in the budget of the end of the decade fed a new strain of virulent xenophobia. Every position or study place held by a foreigner – and in the opinion of many all Jews, whether native born or recent immigrants from eastern Europe, were just that – meant one less for an "Aryan" German […] For those concerned with the "Judaization of German culture" (*Verjudung der deutschen Kultur*), Schreker's appointments at the Hochschule and the presence of "foreign" students were an easy target.[29]

As implied in the above passage, it was as a result of this particular cultural mindset that Schreker was subject to increasing critical hostility, which appeared to come to a head in 1932 when right-wing demonstrations took place at the world premiere of his last opera, *Der Schmied von Gent*.[30] The following year, Schreker was accused of being a 'racial' Jew in light of his

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[25] Franklin, 'Style, Structure and Taste,' 134.
[26] Hailey, 'Pluralities of Modernism,' 3.
[27] Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878-1934,* 9–11.
[28] Hailey, 'Pluralities of Modernism,' 3.
[29] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 264.
[30] For an account of these protests, see Hailey, 'Pluralities of Modernism,' 6; Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 272–73.

father's Jewish heritage, and his tenure at the Hochschule came to an end amid rows about the numbers of Jews and foreigners in the school's faculty and student body.[31] Schreker was ousted from his subsequent position at the Prussian Academy of the Arts, where he taught alongside Arnold Schoenberg, and died two days before his fifty-sixth birthday in 1934. This, however, did not mark the end of his persecution under anti-Semitic policy.

In the accompanying booklet to the 1938 *Entartete Musik* exhibition (four years after Schreker's death), his photograph was displayed alongside that of fellow Austrian composer Ernst Toch under the heading 'Two Jewish Scribblers'.[32] The caption below reads 'Franz Schreker was the Magnus Hirschfield of opera composers. There was no sexual-pathological aberration he would not have set to music'.[33] Hirschfield was a German sexologist and sexual rights advocate who founded the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft*, the first sexual research institute in Berlin, and led the movement against the pathologisation of homosexuality beginning in the 1890s until his exile in the 1930s as a result of the Nazis' rise to power.[34] Schreker's association with Hirschfeld demonstrates the way in which the composer gained a reputation as an 'erotomaniac' and would be maligned (in his own words) as 'a corruptive influence on the German people'.[35]

Alexander Zemlinsky, *Der Zwerg*

When Georg Klaren set about adapting 'The Birthday of the Infanta' for the operatic stage, Wilde's fairy tale had already provided a creative stimulus for a number of musical works that were composed in the early years of the twentieth century, including the ballets of Bernhard Sekles (1913), Miklós Radnai (1918) and John Alden Carpenter (1919). Schreker had also been commissioned to compose a ballet-pantomime in 1908, which was entitled *Der Geburtstag der Infantin*, and Adorno's description of *Die Gezeichneten*'s central characters as 'the stunted dwarf obsessed with his lust for beauty; the mortally sick artist by whom he is destroyed; [and] his gloriously vital antagonist' highlights lingering traces of Wilde's fairy tale the libretto.[36] Klaren's

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[31] Albrecht Dümling, 'On the Road to the "Peoples' Community" [Volksgemeinschaft]: The Forced Conformity of the Berlin Academy of Music under Fascism,' *The Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (1993): 464–65. As Michael Haas points out, Schreker had likely never stepped foot in a synagogue, and moreover, he would not have been considered Jewish by Jewish law due to the religion's system of matrilineal descent. See Michael Haas, *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 8–9.
[32] Hans Severus Ziegler, *Entartete Musik: Eine Abrechnung von Staatsrat Dr. H.S. Ziegler* (Düsseldorf: Der Völkische Verlag, 1938), 13 (my translation), available at: https://archive.org/details/EntarteteMusik_758 (accessed 01.07.2018).
[33] Ibid.
[34] Elena Mancini, *Magnus Hirschfeld and the Quest for Sexual Freedom: A History of the First International Sexual Freedom Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) ix–xvi.
[35] Franz Schreker, 'Mein Charakterbild,' *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (April 1921), reprinted in Paul Bekker, *Franz Schreker: Studie zur Kritik der modernen Oper* (1918; repr. Aachen: Rimbaud Presse, 1983), 11–12 (my translation).
[36] Adorno, 'Schreker,' 140.

adaptation for Zemlinsky tells the story of a nameless dwarf who is gifted to the Spanish princess (the Infanta Donna Clara) at her birthday celebrations. The Dwarf is unaware of his abnormal appearance and envisages himself as a brave knight. He falls for the princess and sings her a love song, only to be mocked by the Spanish court and toyed with by the Infanta, who gives him a white rose in an act of feigned reciprocation. The Dwarf's illusion is shattered when he sees himself in a mirror for the first time and, upon the discovery of his ugliness, he dies of a broken heart.

Der Zwerg's world premiere in Cologne in 1923 proved a triumphant success and was considered by one critic to be 'artistically superior to almost all modern works that had been presented on the Cologne operatic stage in recent years'.[37] Felix Adler's review for the newspaper *Bohemia* was similarly enthusiastic:

> Zemlinsky has delivered a work of such convincing uniformity and such strong inspiration, overpowering in moments of passionate ecstasy, so gripping in tenderness and the utmost feeling for lyrical expression, that there is certainly very little in the realm of contemporary opera that can compare with it. Here a great success has been achieved – it is the work of a master.[38]

However, Marc Moskovitz credits the work's popularity in Cologne to the city's tendency to be 'wary of novelty'.[39] In 1921, Schoenberg wrote that 'anyone who has been at a first performance of a Zemlinsky opera and witnessed its great success, then expected the opera to go on a triumphal progress through all the opera houses. But after a few performances it was all over'.[40] Sure enough, *Der Zwerg* premiered in Vienna in 1924 and accumulated much more cynical reviews. After attending a rehearsal, Alban Berg predicted that 'the opera won't have any big success […] the production is too second-rate'.[41] In his review for the *Neue Freie Presse*, Julius Korngold failed to pass judgment, writing only a description and analysis of the work.[42] Other more openly hostile reviews cemented the work's waning reputation, and *Der Zwerg* soon faded into insignificance.

Zemlinsky's inability to attract prolonged success was partly as a result of his stylistic conservatism, but on the whole, his compositional style is perhaps best described in terms of its eclecticism. Like Schreker's, his music is characterised by its aesthetic pluralities, but where

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[37] *Kölnischen Volkszeitung* (May 31, 1922), quoted in Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 163.
[38] Felix Adler, *Bohemia* (May 31, 1922), quoted and translated in Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 163.
[39] Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 163.
[40] Arnold Schoenberg, 'Zemlinsky,' in Leonard Stein and Leo Black, eds., *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 486.
[41] Bernard Grun, *Alban Berg: Letters to His Wife*, ed. and trans. Bernard Grun (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), 329.
[42] Antony Beaumont, *Zemlinsky* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 312.

Schreker appears to have maintained the same enigmatic musical style throughout his career, Zemlinsky's works exhibit a constant flux of traditional and modern styles. Walter Frisch summarises that the composer 'began as a I of Brahms, became an ardent Wagnerian, then turned briefly to the more dissonant style of Schoenberg, and by about 1920 was writing in an idiom very like that of Mahler'.[43] The uneasy presence of these then-divergent musical influences created an impression of Zemlinsky's oeuvre, which displays progressive musical thought alongside instances of a much more traditional style, as a clash of musical influences. Existing literature on *Der Zwerg* points to the coexistence of these conflicting musical idioms in the score, where both neoclassicist and expressionist styles can be identified.[44] Zemlinsky had become familiar with traditional counterpoint under the mentorship of Robert Fuchs at the Vienna Conservatory in the 1880s and 90s, and his early works demonstrate the influence of the conservative musical styles of Brahms and the Schumanns.[45] Some of Zemlinsky's more radical musical material is presented in the Second String Quartet (1915), which is notable for the absence of clear tonal centres or cadential closure, stretching 'traditional concepts of motivic and structural relationship to their furthest limits'.[46] The return of a musical idiom more in keeping with Wagner and Mahler is apparent in the 1938 song cycle, *Entführung*, where Zemlinsky incorporated shifting harmonies, extended tonal centres, polytonality and chromaticism. In a 1939 interview for *The New York Times*, shortly after his emigration to the United States of America, Zemlinsky was asked what he thought of Schoenberg's music.[47] His response was '[t]o be frank, I do not understand it'.[48] Indeed, despite the more advanced sensibilities evidenced by his brief flirtation with symbolism and other experimental styles, like Schreker, he did not explicitly embrace the atonality of the Second Viennese School. Lorraine Gorrell concludes that the composer's reluctance to adopt either an earnestly traditional or a truly modern style left him unable 'to capture the imagination of the public who loved to hate or embrace the works of his more startling musical peers'.[49]

Demonstrating certain parallels to that of Schreker, Zemlinsky's lukewarm critical reception can be attributed to both the stylistic character of his work and the growing socio-

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[43] Walter Frisch, 'Music and Jugenstil,' *Critical Enquiry* 17, no. 1 (1990): 151.
[44] Christopher Hailey, 'Zemlinsky's Mirror,' American Symphony Orchestra, 2002, available at: http://americansymphony.org/zemlinskys-mirror/ (accessed 12.04.2019); Sherry D. Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror, or, Recognizing the Self: Wilde's and Zemlinsky's Dwarf,' *Music and Letters* 91, no. 2 (2010): 210; Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 308–09.
[45] Moskovitz discusses the influence of Brahms on Zemlinsky in *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 16–31.
[46] Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 229.
[47] H.T, 'Zemlinsky Comes to Live Here,' *The New York Times* (8 January, 1931), 7, available at: https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1939/01/08/94661174.html (accessed 09.09.2019).
[48] Ibid.
[49] Lorraine Gorrell, *Discordant Melody: Alexander Zemlinsky, His Songs, and the Second Viennese School* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), xiv.

cultural unrest that accompanied the Nazis' rise to power. Moscovitz explains that, in 1933, 'the Reich had yet to establish its "official" policy regulating what could and could not be performed, but already its intent was clear where Jews and Jewish music were concerned'.[50] Zemlinsky was one of the many composers at this time whose performances were unexpectedly cancelled 'for reasons of public safety' and, in the years that followed, his career would be marked by a series of displacements, many of which were imposed in light of his Jewish heritage.[51] For example, having been invited by Schreker to teach at Berlin's Hochschule für Musik in 1927, his forced resignation six years later occurred in the wake of the establishment of the Third Reich. Within a fortnight, students would be burning books by Jewish authors and Joseph Goebbels would announce that '[t]he era of exaggerated Jewish intellectualism has come to an end'.[52]

Narratives of Modernism/Modernist Narratives

Although Schreker and Zemlinsky experienced differing degrees of success, for many early-twentieth-century critics, both composers were perceived to be frozen in time. At the same time, they were maligned by an increasingly conservative medically-imbued and anti-Semitic discourse that rendered them representatives of 'unhealthy' and 'un-German' cultural productions. Both Schreker and Zemlinsky would eventually be listed in Herbert Gerigk and Theo Stengel's *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*, but interestingly, where Schreker received a somewhat lengthy entry in the tome's first edition, Zemlinsky was only added to the amended second edition in 1941, in which he was listed as 'H' (half-Jewish) and only briefly discussed in relation to his brother-in-law, Schoenberg.[53] Consigned to relative obscurity – due in no small part to the Nazi regime – *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* remained unheard for decades, and Schreker and Zemlinsky have subsequently occupied an ambiguous position in narratives of musical modernism.

Since the resurgence of interest in Schreker and Zemlinsky in the 1970s, the critical abandonment of both composers in favour of their more musically daring contemporaries has often been cited. In his 1978 article on Schreker for *The Musical Times*, Robert Blackburn argued that time and scholarship had been less generous to Schreker and Zemlinsky than to

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[50] Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 218.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Joseph Goebbels, speech recited at the Berlin book burnings on 10 May 1933, quoted and translated in Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 220.
[53] Herbert Gerigk and Theo Stengel 'Schreker (Schrecker), Franz,' in *Lexikon der Juden in der musik: Mit einem Titelverzeichnis jüdischer Werke* (Berlin: Hahnefeld, 1940), 250–51; Herbert Gerigk and Theo Stengel, 'Zemlinsky, Alexander von,' in *Lexikon der Juden in der musik: Mit einem Titelverzeichnis jüdischer Werke* (Berlin: Hahnefeld, 1941), 324.

other luminaries of early-twentieth-century musical Vienna.[54] Peter Franklin has more recently (and more imaginatively) suggested that these composers 'slipped into the dustbin of cast-off cultural accessories' and 'failed to catch the *Strassenbahn* of artistic destiny upon which Schoenberg, Berg and Webern had ridden earnestly into the future'.[55] A collective call to reintegrate the forgotten composers of the twentieth century into accounts of musical modernism has materialised since the millennium, coinciding with efforts to bring Schreker and Zemlinsky back to the forefront of dialogues about Viennese modernism.[56] In fact, echoing Adorno's 1963 assertion that 'the sound of Berg's late works would be unimaginable without Schreker's', Hailey proposes that Zemlinsky, Schreker and Berg might 'represent an aesthetic and musical triumvirate at least as compelling as the more familiar constellation of Berg, Schoenberg and Webern'.[57] The author therefore calls the tidy narrative of Viennese modernism into question and proposes 'redrawing the city's artistic faultlines' to yield new insights into 'a cultural environment that was, like our own, a world of pluralities'.[58]

To upset often-oversimplified conceptions of musical modernism is to reconceptualise its chronology. The critic Adolf Weissmann devoted his 1922 study, *Die Musik in der Weltkrise* (*The Problems of Modern Music*), to the belief that 'during the last twenty-five years a great change has come over the whole art of music', and indeed, the notion of modernism in music might simply describe the period of change and development that took place in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.[59] In this light, resultant manifestations of the 'modern' in music can be seen as a sign of the crisis caused by challenging and reinterpreting traditional musical idioms. Nonetheless, scholarship has highlighted the inherent complexity of defining musical modernism and, more specifically, the ambivalent relationship between 'late Romanticism' and 'Modernism'.[60] Many attempts to describe the musical styles of Schreker and Zemlinsky have been marked by this stylistic and conceptual complexity. Adorno, for example, wrote that a 'disorganized image of modernism beckoned seductively' from Schreker's music, whilst

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[54] Robert Blackburn, 'Franz Schreker, 1878-1934,' *The Musical Times* 119, no. 1621 (1978): 224.
[55] Peter Franklin, 'Modernism's Distanced Sound: A British Approach to Schreker and Others,' in Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper and Clive Brown, eds., *Art and Ideology in European Opera: Essays in Honour of Julian Rushton*, 353.
[56] See Leon Botstein, 'Rethinking the Twentieth Century,' *Musical Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (1999): 145–49; Hailey, 'Pluralities of Modernism,' 2–7.
[57] Adorno, 'Schreker (1959),' in *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 136; Hailey, 'Pluralities of Modernism,' 5.
[58] Hailey, 'Pluralities of Modernism,' 2, 5, 7.
[59] Adolf Weissmann, *The Problems of Modern Music*, trans. M. M. Bozman (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1925), v.
[60] See Peter Franklin, 'The Bitter Truth of Modernism: A Late Romantic Story,' in *Reclaiming Late Romantic Music: Singing Devils and Distant Sounds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014), 140–70; Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson, 'Introduction,' in *Transformations of Musical Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1–20.

Zemlinsky's oeuvre was characterised by 'conflicting currents'.[61] Noting the emergence of a 'breakaway mood' in music from the year 1890, Carl Dahlhaus offers one solution to the problem of defining musical modernism and, by association, constructs a musical era into which both Schreker and Zemlinsky are more easily categorised.[62] Challenging the tendency towards nomenclature as a means by which to impose a 'unity of style' onto the so-called 'newness' of music around 1900, Dahlhaus opts to adapt the notion of the long nineteenth century to describe the extended period of musical modernism from the 1890s until 1920.[63] In the context of a conventional twentieth century, Schreker and Zemlinsky might be seen as exhibiting a compositional style that could be considered regressive in relation to the great advances in stylistic tendencies around 1910. The notion of a long-nineteenth century, however, facilitates these composers' consideration as part of the compositional 'breakaway', which Dahlhaus also suggests played host to 'the interaction of the Schönberg school with Mahler and composers such as Zemlinsky and Schreker, who did not take full part in the march to atonality but nonetheless continued even later to represent modernism'.[64]

Dahlhaus's 'breakaway' and Hailey's 'world of pluralities' are useful concepts in the context of this thesis, as both Schreker and Zemlinsky tend to evade clear allocation into established models of musical modernity. Central to the formation of my arguments here, moreover, is a belief that the stylistic complexities of both composers are bound up as much in the textual and thematic aspects of their work as in their music. Peter Franklin has referred to Schreker as 'a representative of a kind of music, specifically a kind of twentieth-century music that was regressively tonal, but confusingly modern in its textual, dramaturgical and theoretical affiliations'.[65] His words reveal that the pluralistic nature of Schreker's works is not exclusively linked to the composer's use of harmonic language, an assessment that also applies to Zemlinsky. Indeed, despite Schreker's and Zemlinsky's profoundly ambivalent relationship with modernism, *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, in particular, are enveloped in the movement's ideas and practices. As I will demonstrate in Chapters One and Two, the operas can very much be viewed as products of the zeitgeist that brought about Expressionism, psychoanalysis and modernist art and literature, yet also accommodated the development of medically-imbued discourses of degeneracy and decline which contributed to the rising social and cultural anxieties that eventually became the central premises of Nazi-era Fascism.

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[61] Adorno, 'Schreker,' 133; Theodor Adorno, 'Zemlinsky (1959),' in *Quasi Una Fantasia*, 117–18.
[62] Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, vol. 5, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 334–45.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Peter Franklin, 'Modernism's Distanced Sound,' 351.

Degeneration Theory

Operating as a dark and antithetical underbelly to the ideals of evolution, transformation and enlightenment, the notion of degeneration emerged in the mid-nineteenth century and saturated the era's zeitgeist with notions of personal and social relapse, transgression and decay. In the wake of a period of scientific progression, the closing years of the century, in particular, were partly characterised by an air of cultural pessimism. The widely influential yet multifaceted concept of degeneration had its roots in psychology and took its cues from pre-scientific conceptions of heredity. The term had its origins with Frenchman Bénédict Morel, whose thesis outlined the traditional notion of heredity as a means for the transmission of illness and 'cretinism'. Morel defined degeneration as 'a morbid deviation from an original type', a deviation which he considered to be both unavoidable and incurable:

> I do not believe in the curability of cretinism when the illness is confirmed. All the pedagogic procedures, and best hygienic influences are in vein in the case of the complete cretin. He will remain what he is: a monstrous anomaly, a typical representation of the state of *dégénérescence,* which nothing could prevent…[66]

Richard F. Wetzell attributes the development of criminology in Germany to the influence of Morel's philosophy, summarising that

> [d]egeneration theory appealed to psychiatrists for a variety of reasons. First, at a time when brain anatomy had failed to provide psychiatry with the somatic underpinning for which many had hoped, degeneration theory linked mental illness to clearly detectable physical signs. Second, because the process of degeneration manifested itself in changing symptoms over the course of several generations, degeneration theory could be used to explain almost any mental illness. Finally, since Morel regarded degeneration as a process of hereditary transmission that could be set in motion or accelerated by adverse environmental influences, degeneration theory offered the advantage of combining both genetic and environmental factors in a single explanatory theory.[67]

Daniel Pick's *Faces of Degeneration* (1989) traces the origins and transformations of degeneration theory within medico-psychiatric and natural scientific contexts throughout the nineteenth century.[68] Fittingly, theories of degeneration have often been read as a prelude to Nazi ideology. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the concept of degeneracy was an international phenomenon. The limitation of Pick's central analyses to the notion of degeneration in

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[66] Alexis Billiet, *Influence de la constitution géologique du sol sur la production du Crétinisme: Lettres de Mgr. Alexis Billiet. Réponses de M. le Dr. Morel* (Paris, 1855), v, quoted and translated in Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848–c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 47.
[67] Richard F. Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 46–52 (46).
[68] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration.*

European counties outside of Germany highlights the pervasiveness of ideas relating to degeneration in other geographical contexts. Meanwhile, the work's subtitle, 'a European disorder', calls to mind the characteristic language of disease that was used in degenerationist discourse and nods to the theory's pan-European scope. The three parts of the book deal respectively with England, France and Italy, but Pick dedicates a subheading in the opening chapter to nineteenth-century German writings on social evolution which were integral to the development and popularisation of the theory. The work of early social Darwinists such as Anton Dohrn and Ernst Haeckel, he suggests, culminated in the use of degeneration theory as the backbone of fascist policy under the Nazi regime.[69] Elsewhere, Stefan Vogt identifies German engagement with the notion of degeneracy at the turn of the twentieth century through the prolific use of the term *Untergang* (decay) by writers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Julius Langbehn and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck.[70] 'The concept of Untergang', Vogt writes, 'played a particularly prominent role […] in contexts that were either directly nationalist or applicable to nationalist causes'.[71] Certainly, the emphasis placed in Germany on the effects of cultural decay on the national collective or *Volk* was an idea that would be espoused with particular vehemence by the National Socialists.

The concept of degeneration held a strong appeal for the natural sciences, but the implications, contexts and expressions of its discourse were wide-reaching and often contradictory, as I will demonstrate in Chapter One. The potential intersection of genetic and environmental factors appealed to the exponents of degeneration theory, who relied heavily on popular understandings of 'normality' and placed great emphasis on its variants and anomalies. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the language of degeneration was increasingly used to project otherness onto certain groups, whose labelling as such was derived from considerations of race, gender, disability and disease. Cultural constructions of the abhuman, the New Woman, the *femme fatale* and the male aesthete were bound up with the ideas and language of degeneration theory, and these figures can be found throughout late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century literature.[72] Opera, too, with its glut of marginalised identities, is rich with negotiations with the notion of degeneracy:

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[69] Ibid., 27.
[70] Stefan Vogt, 'Between Decay and Doom: Zionist Discourses of "Untergang" in Germany, 1890 to 1933,' in *The German-Jewish Experience Revisited*, ed. Steven E. Aschheim and Vivian Liska (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 75–79.
[71] Ibid., 77.
[72] Several scholars have recognised Gothic literature as a particularly pertinent example of popular cultural engagement with theories of degeneration. See Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Stephan Karschay, *Degeneration, Normativity and the Gothic at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

> In opera, as in the other arts, femininity, masculinity and perversity were primary metaphors through which early-twentieth-century artists reacted to social changes that seemed to point towards the collapse of rational or natural order.[73]

As Heather Hadlock's words suggest, the operatic canon is saturated with themes and ideas that developed alongside and, often as a result of, the discourse of degeneracy. Nicholas Till positions Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and Georges Bizet's *Carmen* amongst a number of so-called 'exotic operas' which present an encounter between the Western male and the non-Western female; these narratives, he proposes, often frame women as 'irrational' either in their weakness and passivity or in their desire to wield their sexuality for predatory ends.[74] These kinds of ideas about women can be traced back to the degenerationist belief that the 'rational', civilised, masculine and Western somatic ideal finds its counterpart in the irrational, barbaric, primitive and frequently feminine body of the other. Further pointing to the relationship between women, sexual pathology and degeneracy in the operatic canon, Jeremy Tambling reads Richard Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra* as 'portrayal[s] of degeneracy' in that they reflect discourses about women and sexuality at the fin-de-siècle.[75] From orientalism and perverse sexuality, to disease, disability and decay, the tenets of degeneration theory are often reflected in and around the bodies of operas' others. As the genre's engagement with the notion of degeneracy suggests, degeneration theory largely promoted the healthy Aryan male as a prototype of 'normality', which, in turn, enabled its exponents to adopt broad constructions of the antithetically 'sick' or degenerate other.

However, the emphasis placed on health and beauty at this time was not exclusive to discussions of 'normality' in a strictly somatic context. Michael Hau notes the expansion of medicalisation beyond the discursive space of scientific medicine in Germany between 1890 and 1930, when 'Germans increasingly defined their personal problems in medical terms, described them in medical language, and understood them in a medical framework'.[76] The application of biological and medical frameworks to diverse reaches of the cultural imagination lead to the emergence of a trend whereby 'healthy' aesthetics and ideals were compared with 'unhealthy' counterparts in sociology, culture and the arts. As Chapter One of this thesis will demonstrate, the methods and rhetoric of degeneration theory filtered into considerations of

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[73] Heather Hadlock, 'Opera and Gender Studies,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, ed. Nicholas Till (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 269.
[74] Nicholas Till, '"An Exotic and Irrational Entertainment": Opera and Our Others; Opera as Other,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, ed. Nicholas Till (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 298–324 (304).
[75] Jeremy Tambling, 'Daughters of Kundry: *Salome* and *Elektra*,' in *Opera and the Culture of Fascism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 161–85 (166).
[76] Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3.

music in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries alongside increasingly national-conservative critical perspectives, thereby laying the groundwork for the demonisation of Jewish and 'Bolshevist' composers, such as Schreker and Zemlinsky, in the later years of the Weimar period and into the Third Reich. Despite the changing targets of degenerationist discourse between its inception at the turn of the century and its espousal by the Third Reich, both Schreker and Zemlinsky remained vulnerable to denunciation as degenerate in light of the musical and dramatic content of their work. This was perhaps a result of their ambiguous relationship with musical modernism, but equally, it can be attributed to their narrative engagement with the hallmarks of supposedly degenerate society, which, in the case of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, appears in the form of the physically disabled protagonists.

Indeed, despite the translation of degeneration theory from its medical context, ideas about and diagnoses of artistic degeneracy often referred back to distinctly corporeal concepts of ill-health and deformity. Carol Poore's *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture* offers insights into the social, political, economic and medical aspects of disability in Weimar era Germany.[77] Poore identifies Weimar Germany as a place in which images of disability in popular culture, the labelling of modern art as 'degenerate' and the real-world presence of disabled people resulted in 'clashes' between social and aesthetic norms.[78] Despite the wide-reaching scope of degeneration theory, physical disability was frequently framed as the definitive degenerative condition in many scientific works of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (especially those concerned with medicine and eugenics) due to the tendency of degenerationist discourse to dwell on anxieties about bodily difference. Drawing upon the development of degeneration theory into pre-Fascist ideology, Poore attributes attempts to remove disabled people from the public sphere in light of fears for public health and safety to the influence of degeneration theory.[79] Indeed, many exponents of the theory predicted a gloomy sequence of acquired deviant characteristics as a result of heredity and contagion, thereby altering the general attitude toward bodily difference at this time from one of shame to one of fear. Under the influence of degeneration theory, disability became bound up with notions of responsibility and blame and, moreover, degeneration theory implied the connection between the degenerate as an individual and the collective degeneration of society as a result of social and reproductive irresponsibility. Physical impairment, therefore, was particularly rich with interpretative potential at the time in which *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* were composed.

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[77] Carol Poore, *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).
[78] Ibid., 52.
[79] Ibid., 51–52.

Disability Studies

For many years, scholarly enquiries into disability were the preserve of the medical profession and were characterised by a distinct focus on medical progress and techniques for the treatment and 'management' of people with disabilities. This 'medical model' approach largely understood disability as a pathology that required treatment or rehabilitation or, as a problem in need of a solution.[80] Reflecting recent political and social rights agendas, the late 1980s and 1990s saw the development of a new 'social model' that acknowledged people with disabilities as a historically oppressed group and destabilise the view of disability as a 'problem' of an exclusively individual nature.[81] The social model makes a key distinction between 'impairment' and 'disability', suggesting that an *impairment* is a personal functional limitation, but *disability* is the result of social processes of discrimination that enable the creation of certain restrictive barriers. The prominent disability theorist Tobin Siebers summarises that 'social attitudes and institutions determine, far greater than biological fact, the representation of the body's reality'.[82] For example, a wheelchair user might have a mobility impairment, but they are only rendered disabled by the absence of ramps or other access facilities. Similarly, the social model would suggest that someone with a visual impairment is disabled by a lack of provision for accessible formats such as braille or Alternative Text. In short, the social model of disability stresses the distinction between disability (which is invariably produced by society) and the body.

The social model of disability is not without its critics. Tom Shakespeare and Nick Watson challenge the inherently dualistic nature of the social model as restrictive in scope, questioning, for example, '[i]f someone has an impairment which causes constant pain, how can the social environment be implicated?'[83] Instead, the authors propose the improvement of the social model by overhauling its reluctance to engage with the personal, bodily and wider cultural aspects of impairment and incorporating knowledge and lived experience of disability into its approach. Similarly, Claire Tregaskis acknowledges the model's 'emancipatory' effects but questions its materialist nature in light of intersectional considerations such as race and gender: 'removing structural barriers alone has not led to equality for women or members of

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[80] For an overview of the medical model or 'medicalization' of disability, see Michael Oliver, *Politics of Disablement* (London: Macmillan: 1990), 46–53.
[81] For a comprehensive and insightful review of the social model of disability, see Tom Shakespeare, 'The Social Model of Disability,' in *The Disability Studies Reader,* 5th ed., ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 2017), 195–203.
[82] Tobin Siebers, 'Disability in Theory: From Social Constructionism to the New Realism of the Body,' *American Literary History* 13, no. 4 (2001): 737.
[83] Tom Shakespeare and Nicholas Watson, 'The Social Model of Disability: An Outdated Ideology?' in *Exploring Theories and Expanding Methodologies: Where We Are and Where We Need to Go*, ed. Barbara Mandell Altman and Sharon N. Barnartt, vol. 2 (Amsterdam and London: JAI, 2001), 9–28 (17–18).

minority ethnic groups, so it is perhaps I to assume that it will be any different for disabled people'.[84] Another strand of criticism focusses on the model's tendency to boil the complex experience of disability down to a single and unmoving category of otherness. For example, Shelley Tremain suggests that 'the strict division between the categories of impairment and disability which the social model is claimed to institute is in fact a chimera'.[85] Notwithstanding these critiques, the social model of disability played a vital role in the formation of disability studies as an academic discipline, and Lennard Davis likens the development of disability studies in the 1980s to the appearance of African American studies in the wake of the civil rights movement, suggesting that 'there is a reciprocal connection between political praxis by people with disabilities and the formation of a discursive category of disability studies'.[86]

Disability studies has, at its core, the notion that representations and interpretations of physical difference reveal and underwrite the culture in which they are created. The historical significance of disability remained largely unexplored until the publication of Henri-Jacques Stiker's *A History of Disability* in 1983, which explores the various ways in which societies from antiquity to the (then) present day have segregated, integrated and celebrated people with disabilities.[87] Following on from Stiker's work on the history of disability, Paul K. Longmore's influential review essays, 'Uncovering the Hidden History of People with Disabilities' and 'The Life of Randolph Bourne and the Need for a History of Disabled People' made the case for bringing disability studies into mainstream historiography.[88] Pointing to the history of people with disabilities as one of oppression, segregation and stigma, this early work on disability called for a collectively-imagined disabled community throughout history by highlighting the considerable fluctuation in the classification and interpretation of physically disabled bodies across time and place. In addition to highlighting the climate of social exclusion that has surrounded disability throughout history (in line with the discipline's reformist roots), many early disability studies scholars questioned and condemned the omission of disability from cultural studies. In 1997, Rosemarie Garland Thomson suggested that,

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[84] Claire Tregaskis, 'Social model theory: the story so far,' *Disability and Society* 17, no. 4 (2002): 460–61.
[85] Shelley Tremain, 'On the subject of impairment,' in Mairian Corker and Tom Shakespeare, eds., *Disability/ Postmodernity: Embodying Disability Theory* (London: Continuum, 2002), 42.
[86] Lennard J. Davis, 'Introduction' in *The Disability Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Lennard J. Davis (Routledge: New York and London, 2006), xvi.
[87] Henri-Jacques Stiker, *A History of Disability,* trans. William Sayers (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
[88] Paul K. Longmore, 'Uncovering the Hidden History of People with Disabilities,' *Reviews in American History* 15, no. 3 (1987), 355–64; Paul K. Longmore, 'The Life of Randolph Bourne and the Need for a History of Disabled People,' *Reviews in American History* 13, no. 4 (1985), 581–87. The historiographically-informed approach to disability studies received a renaissance around the millennium. See Paul Longmore and Lauri Imansky, *The New Disability History: American* Perspectives (New York: New York University Press: 2001); Catherine Kudlick, 'Disability History: Why We Need Another Other,' *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (2003): 763–793; David M. Turner and Kevin Stagg, *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity: Bodies, Images and Experiences* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006).

> [a]lthough much recent scholarship explores how difference and identity operate in such politicized constructions as gender, race, and sexuality, cultural and literary criticism has generally overlooked the related perceptions of corporeal otherness we think of variously as "monstrosity," "mutilation," "deformation," "crippledness," or "physical disability".[89]

Thomson's stance was shared by other proponents of the emerging interdisciplinary subfield of cultural disability studies in the 1990s who, as Clare Barker and Stuart Murray have summarised,

> drew from […] social model methodologies and worked in the wake of the waves of feminist, queer, postcolonial, and critical race studies scholarship that had produced oppositional and revisionist reading strategies, offering up new accounts of canonical texts and bringing new critical paradigms through which to consider disability representation.[90]

Recognising a significant gap in discussions of outsider identity and its representation in literary and cultural productions, scholars such as Thomson, Lennard J. Davis and Sharon L. Snyder and David T. Mitchell adopted this approach and suggested the place for disability studies in interdisciplinary discourse.[91] In the preface to the twentieth anniversary edition of the seminal *Extraordinary Bodies*, Thomson provides a useful overview of the emergence of cultural disability studies (which she more clunkily terms 'disability studies in the humanities' or 'the new disability studies'), as scholars from diverse disciplines began exploring disability and 'examining the call […] that disability is everywhere, that it concerns all of us, and that it is interesting'.[92]

In acknowledging the culture-bound nature of disability as a form of identity, cultural disability studies is principally concerned with 'how representation attaches meanings to bodies', with its exponents viewing depictions of disability in the arts as a platform for the projection of social attitudes towards disability throughout history and into the present day.[93] Michael Bérubé has pithily summarised that disability 'demands a story' and, in the same vein, Mitchell and Snyder have coined the term 'narrative prosthesis' in their formative text of the

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[89] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Disability in American Culture and Literature* (1996; repr. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 5.
[90] Clare Barker and Stuart Murray, 'Introduction: On Reading Disability in Literature,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Disability*, ed. Clare Barker and Stuart Murray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 3.
[91] See David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 3; Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London and New York: Verso, 1995).
[92] Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, vii–xviii (xiii).
[93] Ibid., 5.

same title to describe the phenomenon whereby 'disability has been used throughout history as a crutch upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potency, and analytical insight'.[94] Literary disability studies scholarship has continually attested to the pervasiveness of disability in cultural productions alongside its figurative potential, and the recurrent objectification of disability as a narrative device has generally been a point of critical contention. In arguing that disability is frequently used in literature as shorthand for 'a repressed deviation from cultural imperatives of normativity', Mitchell and Snyder touch upon the ways in which the recurrent aestheticisation of disability in the arts has enabled harmful depictive tropes to become entrenched within narratives about disability.[95] Certainly, the representation of disability can operate as a vehicle through which to shore up hegemonic ideals of normality, a way in which to gloss over the realities of disability as a lived experience and as a damaging tool for the formation and perpetuation of stereotypes.

An initial effort to catalogue disability stereotypes in literature was made in the late 1980s by Leonard Kriegel, who identified the existence of two poles of disability representation throughout literary tradition: victimhood and villainy.[96] More recently, Mitchell and Snyder have pointed to 'Shakespeare's murderous, hunchbacked king, Richard III; Melville's obsessive, one-legged captain, Ahab; and Dickens's sentimental, hobbling urchin, Tiny Tim' as three characters who encompass the most pervasive of disability stereotypes.[97] In light of the authors' observation that disability finds an 'uneasy home', not only in literature but also in the wider arts, there now exists an increasing body of work dedicated to locating and understanding the existence of 'grotesque', diseased, disabled and 'abnormal' bodies within the literary and visual arts, where familiar representational trends have also been found to predominate.[98] Collectively, cultural disability studies scholars have identified the use of

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[94] Michael Bérubé, 'Disability and Narrative,' *PMLA* 120, no. 2 (2005): 570; David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 49.

[95] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 8.

[96] Leonard Kriegel, 'Disability as Metaphor in Literature,' *Kaleidoscope: International Magazine of Literature, Fine Arts and Disability* 17 (1988): 6–14.

[97] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 17.

[98] On disability in literature, see Ato Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness*: *Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 32–53; Barker and Murray, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Disability*); Alice Hall, *Literature and Disability* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2015). On art, see Ann Millett-Gallant and Elizabeth Howie, eds., *Disability and Art History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017); Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 'The Politics of Staring: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography,' in Sharon L Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann and Rosemarie Garland Thomson, eds., *Disability studies: Enabling the humanities* (New York: Modern Language Association of America: 2002), 56–75. On film and television, see Paul K. Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People,' *Social Policy* 16, no. 1 (1985): 31–37; Martin F. Norden, *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Sally Chivers and Nicole Markotić, eds., *The Problem Body: Projecting Disability on Film* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015); Nicole Markotić, *Disability in Film and Literature* (Jefferson, McFarland, 2016).

disability as a symbol for moral deficit and evil, social transgression, divine intervention and punishment for sin within literary narratives, where disabled characters have also been depicted variously as omens, vengeful villains, naïve victims and bearers of spiritual insight.

The relevance of the insights offered by cultural disability studies to this thesis is substantiated, on one hand, by the suitability of opera to analysis from a similar perspective, not least because of the arguable legitimacy of opera librettos as literary and dramatic texts. Libretto analysis often centres on markedly literary considerations of narrative, metaphor, thematic and dramatic devices and so on. Furthermore, many librettos are derived from literary texts (as is the case for Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*), thus inviting examination from a literary perspective. With this in mind, the analyses in this thesis execute a variety of theoretical frameworks which are used in conjunction with literary and other cultural disability studies; these can help to inform an understanding of the representation of disability in Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas.

Opera and Disability Studies

In contemporary musicology and specifically opera studies, most discussions of 'abnormality' and difference have generally referred to the representation of the more commonly visited categories of gender (as famously explored by Susan McClary, Catherine Clément and Mary Ann Smart) and race.[99] The role of disability has seen somewhat less critical attention, but nevertheless, revisionist discussions of disability in the field of musicology reflect a vibrant and growing sub-discipline. The first steps towards bringing disability studies into the field of musicology were taken in 2006 with the publication of Joseph Straus's article 'Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory' and the volume *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music,* which was co-edited by Straus and Neil Lerner.[100] These works marked the first stages in the development of music and disability studies (a sub-discipline incorporating the central premises of disability studies into the established practices and methods of music theory and historical musicology). In 2011, Straus's *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* - arguably marked the point of arrival for disability studies in musicology.[101] The work (the title

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[99] See Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Catherine Clément, *Opera, Or The Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997); Mary Ann Smart, *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000). On race and ethnicity, see Naomi André, Karen M. Bryan and Eric Saylor, eds., *Blackness in Opera* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Mary Ingraham, Joseph So and Roy Moodley, eds., *Opera in a Multicultural World: Coloniality, Culture, Performance* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2015).

[100] Joseph N. Straus, 'Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59, no. 1 (2006): 113–84, and Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus, eds., *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music,* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006).

[101] Joseph N. Straus, *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

of which nods to Thomson's influential *Extraordinary Bodies*) asserts the fundamental message that disability is a social and cultural construction, surveying the impact of disability on composers, performers and listeners and charting musical representations of disability and their reception. The publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* in 2015 represented a significant stride in addressing the fact that music has been largely overlooked in scholarship on disability and the arts.[102] The essays in this volume incorporate ideas about disability and performance, disability as a feature of musical identity (composers and performers with disabilities), disability and music education and representations of physical and cognitive impairment in musical works.

Much of this existing literature on music and disability studies reveals the presence of two distinct perspectives or approaches. The first takes a sociological or ethnographical approach, exploring the way in which composers and musicians may have identified as disabled and how disability may have impacted upon the creation and reception of their music. Straus's chapter 'Composers with Disabilities and the Critical Reception of their Music' in *Extraordinary Measures* provides an example of this approach, along with essays from the 'Disability Communities' and 'Performing Disability' sections of the *Oxford Handbook*.[103] The second perspective more closely resembles the approach taken in this thesis, placing special emphasis on the representation of disability in musical works. Blake Howe and Stephanie Jensen-Moulton summarise that disability is often presented as a deviation from musical convention, suggesting that 'in musical compositions, especially those that specifically reference disability, this social hierarchy deems some notes consonant and others dissonant; some rhythms as falling on the beat and others off it; some forms conformational and others deformational'.[104] Within this framework, musical features such as harmonic imbalance, melodic 'stuttering' or disfluency and the disruption of conventional formal structures, may be said to embody various states of deviance or abnormality, including physical and cognitive impairment.[105] Scholars who have adopted this hermeneutic methodology often emphasise cultural context and consider the role of supplemental material in musical representations of disability. These include, but are not exclusive to composer biographies, programmatic texts,

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[102] Blake Howe, Stephanie Jenson-Moulton, Neil Lerner and Joseph Straus, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies,* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[103] Joseph N. Straus, 'Composers with Disabilities and the Reception of Their Music,' in *Extraordinary Measures*, 15–44. See also Howe et al. *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies,* v–vi.
[104] Blake Howe and Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, 'On the Disability Aesthetics of Music,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 69, no. 2 (2016): 526.
[105] See Strauss, *Extraordinary Measures*, 75–77, 86–88; Laurie Stras, 'The Organ of the Soul: Voice, Damage, and Affect,' in Lerner and Straus, eds., *Sounding Off*, 173–84; Floyd Grave, 'Narratives of Affliction and Recovery in Haydn,' in Howe et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, 563–89; Bruce Quaglia, 'Musical Prosthesis: Form, Expression, and Narrative Structure in Beethoven's Sonata Movements,' in Howe et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, 618–39.

librettos, aspects of performativity (such as costuming and dance) and song lyrics.[106] This thesis places great emphasis on the insights to be garnered from such materials, considering *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* not only within the cultural and discursive contexts from which they emerged, but as part of an established canon of cultural productions which have much to divulge about disability's representational meanings. When considering opera, which of course combines examples of text, dance and drama within a musical framework, the supplemental materials which often appears in hermeneutic considerations of music and disability can be an invaluable source of insight into how disabled characters are imagined and portrayed in opera.

Albeit an ample starting point for this evolving sub-discipline, the scope of the literature cited here is by no means indicative of the diverse possibilities offered by considering music from a disability studies perspective. One of the stated aims of the *Oxford Handbook* is to 'address an important lacuna within a Disability Studies that has mostly overlooked (or underheard) the musical arts as a medium through which disability has and continues to be constructed'.[107] These recent contributions have certainly begun to address the lack of scholarly interest in music and disability, but interdisciplinarity between music and disability studies remains in its infancy, and there remain several largely overlooked areas of enquiry, including opera. This thesis aims to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring how disability is represented in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* and, more broadly, by offering an interdisciplinary methodological approach that can be adapted for future studies on the manifestation of disability throughout the operatic canon.

A leading voice in the emergent field of music and disability studies is Blake Howe, who has curated a database of musical representations of disability from 1400 to the present day.[108] In the database, each representation of disability in music is placed into one of the following categories: addiction, cognitive impairment, disease, disfigurement, hearing impairment, infertility, mental disorder, mobility impairment, visual impairment and vocal disfluency.[109] Howe's preamble states that the central aim of the database is to demonstrate 'the pervasiveness of disability within musical discourses', and the author also includes a note about the nature of categorisation:

> [t]o group similar disabilities together, the database uses mostly medical terminology, and in many instances this compresses a complex representation of bodily difference to

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[106] The section 'Film and Musical Theatre' in the *Oxford Handbook* provides several good examples of this type of scholarly approach.
[107] Blake Howe, et al*., The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, 8.
[108] Blake Howe (ed.), *Musical Representations of Disability,* available at: http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/bhowe/disability-representation.html, (accessed 22.04.18).
[109] Ibid.

> one reductive label. This is an inherent problem in typologies such as this; users should consider these entries as starting points for their research, not as concrete diagnoses.[110]

Certainly, the database espouses something of a medical model approach to disability in terms of its taxonomy, with some categories (addiction, infertility) appearing problematic in that that they might not be considered as disabilities at all. Nevertheless, disability studies scholars in the humanities have noted the pervasiveness of disability in literature, film and television, and Howe's database is a valuable resource in that it reveals an apparently comparable prevalence of disability narratives in opera.

From deadly diseases and debilitating wounds, visual impairments and deafness, to cognitive and mental disorders and physical impairments such as lost limbs and spinal deformities, the opera stage has always been a platform for the representation of disability. Of the 262 examples listed in the Howe's database, an overwhelming 161 (over sixty per cent) occur within opera. Despite opera's clear participation in the process of narrative prosthesis (as defined by Mitchell and Snyder) literature on the representation of disability in opera is surprisingly lacking. Howe's database serves as a useful tool for charting the modes of disability representation in the operatic canon, which, as a closer look at some of the included examples reveals, often sees the use of disability as 'a stock feature of characterization' and 'an opportunistic metaphorical device'.[111] The chart below illustrates how the 161 examples of disability in opera are broken down according to the categorisation of the impairment.

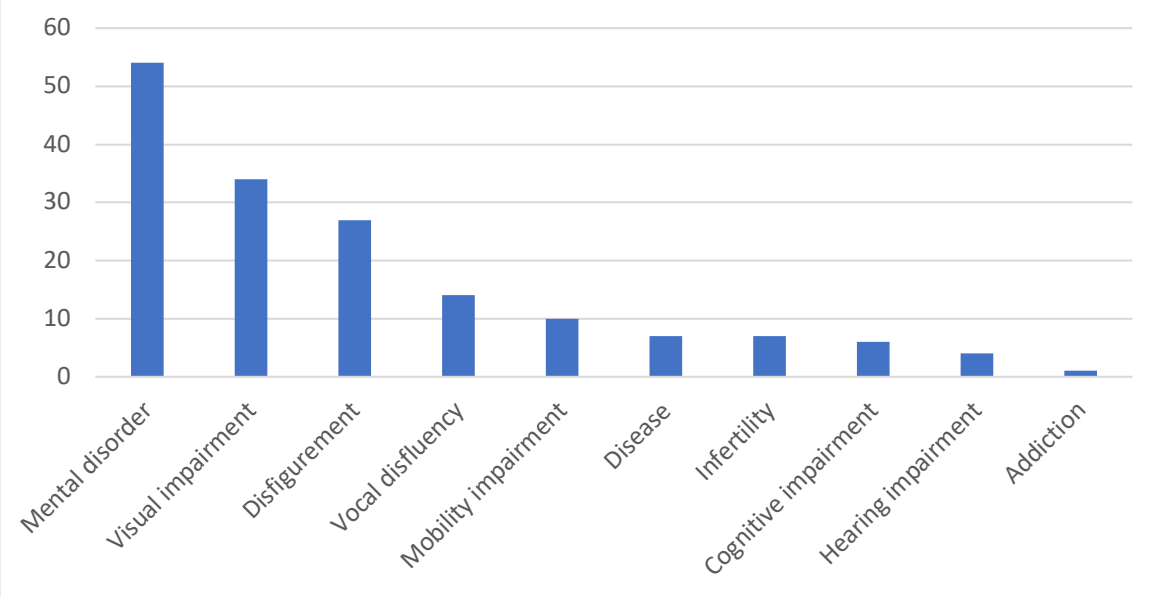

Figure 1.1. Representations of disability in opera by category of impairment. Data retrieved from Blake Howe, *Musical Representations of Disability*.

[110] Ibid.
[111] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 47.

As the wealth of scholarly attention that has been afforded to opera's 'mad' characters would attest, mental disorders are most frequently represented among the listed categories.[112] The complex role of 'madness' within the field of disability studies is summarised by Sander Gilman, who writes that 'to attempt to capture the relationship between "madness" and "disability" is to define one ambiguous and constantly shifting term by another'.[113] Despite the relatively small number of examples in the database, the representation of disease in opera prompted Linda and Michael Hutcheon's interdisciplinary study *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (1996), which concentrates on a handful of illnesses which commonly afflict opera's ill-fated characters.[114] As the title insinuates, each malady, in the social context of its respective opera's composition, was commonly associated with supposedly inappropriate sexual appetites, indiscretions and perversions. Most of Hutcheon and Hutcheon's examples cite nineteenth-century opera's consumptive heroines (such as *La bohème*'s Mimì and *La traviata*'s Violetta), madness (such as Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*), or illnesses that were typically associated with sexual transgression (such as cholera and syphilis).

By contrast, there do not appear to exist any substantial scholarly considerations of the representation of visual impairment in opera, despite its prevalence in the canon (see figure 1.1). Blind and visually impaired characters frequently appear in the stereotypical form of the 'blind seer' (as in several adaptations of the *Oedipus* myth) or are depicted as having extraordinary musical capabilities (as in Kancheli Giya Alexandrovich's *Muzïka dlya zhivïkh* [1984]). The depiction of blind characters as possessing these kinds of extraordinary abilities has been recognised by some disability studies scholars as part of the wider representation of disabled people as 'supercrips', that is, 'a human being who lacks what is presumed to be the requisite sensory input but is still 'superhumanly' capable of performing a certain task'.[115] In opera, blindness is metaphorically depicted in other instances as a bad omen, as in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, when the title characters come across three blind beggars in the second act. Visual impairment is also utilised in opera narratives as a means through which to generate

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[112] I have previously outlined the scholarly discourse on madness in the operatic canon in Charlotte Armstrong, 'Where Music Meets Science: Traces of Nineteenth-Century Scientific Naturalism in Representations of Madness in Richard Strauss's Salome' (MA by Research dissertation, University of York, 2015), 26–30.

[113] Sander L. Gilman, 'Madness,' in *Keywords for Disability Studies*, ed. Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss and David Serlin (New York and London: New York University Press, 2015), 114.

[114] Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

[115] Catalin Brylla, 'Bypassing the Supercrip Trope in Documentary Representations of Blind Visual Artists,' *Disability Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2018), available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v38i3.6485 (accessed 30.06.2019).
See also Sami Schalk, 'Reevaluating the Supercrip,' *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 10, no. 1 (2016): 71–86; Alex Lubet, *Music, Disability, and Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 21.

comic confusion. In Fromental Halévy's *L'éclair* (1835), for example, Lyonel is struck by lightning and becomes blind before regaining his sight at the end of the opera.[116] This kind of 'temporary' disability features with some frequency in the operatic canon and can be seen in Carl Maria von Weber's *Silvana* (1810), where 'the title character begins the opera mute, but then regains her voice'.[117] The loss and restoration of sanity is another common narrative device and can be found in comic settings (as in Meyerbeer's *Dinorah* [1859]) and in opera seria (Vivaldi's *Orlando* [1727]). Related to this is the trope of 'feigned' disability, particularly madness, which, with the exception of Donizetti's *I pazza per progetto* (1830), appears to occur predominantly in operas of the Baroque era.[118] The 'redemption' of disabled characters through heroic acts can also be identified as a recurring dramatic theme in opera plots, for example, in Robert Schumann's 1849 opera *Genoveva* which features a young boy with a hearing impairment (deafness) and vocal disfluency (muteness), who saves the title character from death. This character also shares some characteristics with the 'afflicted child' stereotype defined by Martha Stoddard Holmes.[119] As much as these representational trends want for and are worthy of further study, my focus in this thesis is on the concentration of physical disability in opera.

Thirty-seven of the listed examples (twenty-three per cent) fall into Howe's categories of 'mobility impairment' and 'disfigurement'. The catalogue of stereotypes surrounding physically disabled characters will be significant in the context of this thesis, as almost half of the examples of physical disability in the database, including those featured in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, are more specifically labelled as 'dwarfism/hunchback'. For Holmes, the aforementioned 'afflicted child' finds its contrast in 'a host of terrifying, leering old men with avarice, deception, and a smoggy sexuality hovering about them'.[120] Here, the author touches on the long-established tendency of disability narratives to frame disabled characters within the restrictive categories of either victimhood or villainy. As previously noted, this phenomenon was first observed by Kriegel, who writes that 'the cripple is threat and recipient of compassion, both to be damned and to be pitied – and frequently to be damned as he is pitied'.[121] As Kriegel implies, however, the categories of victimhood and villainy are not always mutually exclusive. The author cites Shakespeare's *Richard III* as an example of the

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116 Blake Howe, *Musical Representations of Disability*.
117 Ibid.
118 Examples of 'feigned' madness can be found in Francesco Sacrati, *La finta pazza* (1641), Andrea Ziani, *Le fortune di Rodope e Damira* (1657) and Domenico Freschi, *Helena rapita da Paride* (1677).
119 Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 9.
120 Ibid., 95–96.
121 Kriegel, 'Disability as Metaphor in Literature,' 32

amalgamation of these properties of characterisation and, within the operatic canon, perhaps the most exemplary figure is Verdi's *Rigoletto* (1851), whom I will revisit in Chapters Two and Three. It is also significant, I would suggest, that villainous disabled characters frequently appear to have either a spinal deformity or dwarfism. Indeed, featured among opera's physically disabled characters them are several examples of the 'evil dwarf' stereotype, such as Alberich, who can be found in Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1874). Characters with dwarfism are also frequently depicted as having supernatural abilities: in the case of Ignacy Jan Paderewski's 1898 opera *Manru*, for example, the dwarf, Urok, is an evil sorcerer.

In that they are 'acutely sensitive to signs of the supernatural', as Lee has recognised, the three disabled brothers (the one-eyed, the one-armed and the hunchbacked) in Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1911) bear characteristics of what Martin Norden describes as the 'saintly sage' stereotype, such as 'a high degree of spirituality' and 'the ability to "see" (i.e., understand) things' that others do not.[122] At the same time, Lee argues that these brothers are depicted in Strauss's opera as somehow 'bestial' or 'subhuman', suggesting that their premonitions are more closely associated with the 'ancient belief that animals are able to sense impending weather changes or natural disasters'.[123] Common disability stereotypes can also be found in operatic renderings of literary narratives about disability, such as Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843, adapted by Thea Musgrave in 1979), and Wilhelm Grimm, Jacob Grimm and Audrey Daly's *Hansel and Gretel* (1812, adapted by Engelbert Humperdinck in 1893), where the witch is a stereotypical disabled villain.

Further to revealing the existence of certain disability stereotypes in the operatic canon, the database serves as a useful tool for measuring representational patterns. The information gathered suggests that the fluctuating prevalence of disability in opera narratives between 1600 to the present day. However, closer study reveals the existence of certain patterns regarding the types of disability that are represented during certain periods. Between 1810 and 1850, for example, the database lists twenty-seven representations of disability in opera (figure 1.2). Fifteen of these examples (around fifty-five per cent) fall into the category of 'mental disorder'. Sensory impairments such as visual and hearing impairments account for four (almost twenty-three per cent) of the examples, and five (almost nineteen per cent) are labelled 'disfigurement'. This selection attests to the fact that, up until around 1890, depictions of mental disorders dominated on the opera stage, but with the turn of the twentieth century, a significant change appears to have taken place (figure 1.3).

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[122] Sherry D. Lee, 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* ed. Blake Howe et al., 672; Norden *The Cinema of Isolation*, 131.
[123] Lee, 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects,' 672.

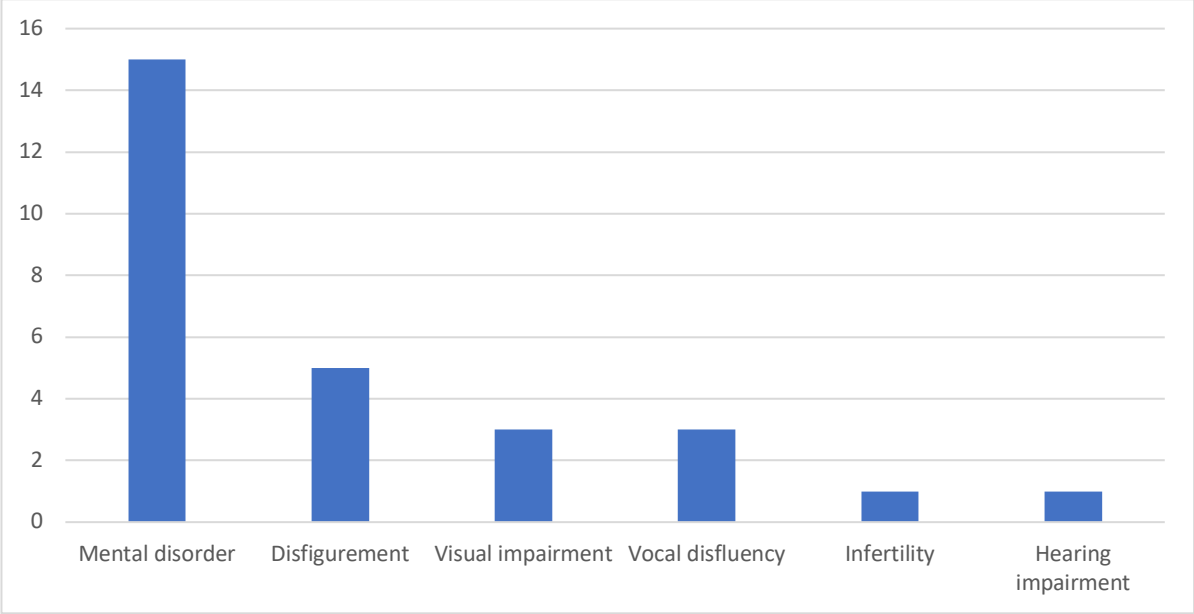

Figure 1.2. Representations of disability in opera, 1810-1850 by type of impairment. Data retrieved from Blake Howe, *Musical Representations of Disability*.

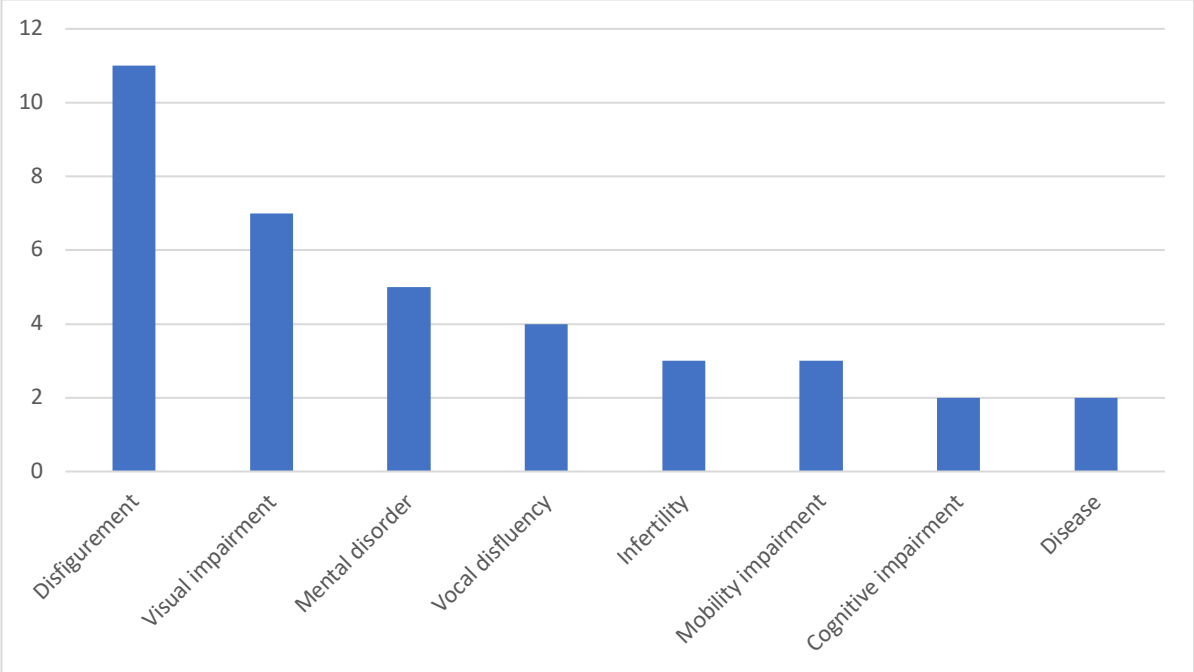

Figure 1.3. Representations of disability in opera, 1890-1930 by type of impairment. Data retrieved from Blake Howe, *Musical Representations of Disability*.

Of the thirty-seven representations of disability in opera between 1890 and 1930, fourteen examples (almost forty per cent) fall into the categories of 'disfigurement' and 'mobility impairment'. These examples can be categorised in broader terms as 'physical impairments' in that they comprise dwarfism, spinal deformities, absent limbs, facial disfigurements and

debilitating wounds. By contrast, only seven examples (just under twenty per cent) can be thought of as 'psychological', falling into the categories of 'mental disorder' and 'cognitive impairment'. It seems, therefore, that the depictions of 'madness' that dominated opera stages in the early nineteenth century gave way to a newfound fascination with a more 'visible' (and indeed, physical) manifestation of the abnormal. This raises a question that will be of central importance to the course of study pursued in this thesis: why did the operas of the twentieth century favour a distinctly physical and visible form of otherness over the seemingly 'hidden' abnormalities of the previous century?

Lee has suggested that Alviano and the Dwarf, along with some of opera's other 'stigmatized subjects', reflect the growing prevalence of distinctly physical and, by association, visible manifestations of disability in modernist opera. As Chapter Two, in particular, will show, Schreker's and Zemlinsky's apparent engagement with both the disabled body and the broader cultural discourse of the era in which these works were composed is complex and multifaceted. For the purpose of this introduction, it is perhaps most important to note that this representational change is symptomatic of the broader fascination with atypical corporeal forms in modernist music, art and literature, which can arguably be attributed to the insidious late-nineteenth-century discourse of degeneration.[124] Several scholars have touched upon the apparent intersection of disability and the theme of moral degeneracy in modernist music. Joseph Straus, for example, observes that 'a surprising number of early modernist musical works […] reveal a pervasive preoccupation with common grotesque features, including disease, deformity, and disability'.[125] However, there do not appear to be any significant studies on the intersection of disability and the themes and discourses of degeneracy – an omission that this thesis seeks to remedy. Indeed, to truly understand the multitudinal meanings taken on by the disabled bodies in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, there is a need to combine the insights of disability studies (by examining the works' participation in the process of narrative prosthesis and its associated modes of representation) and the particularly time-bound cultural discourse from which these operas emerged and on which they also appear to reflect. Moreover, in charting the representation of disability in these works from source to stage, I

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[124] Joseph Straus discusses the intersection of disability, degeneracy and the grotesque in the music of Schoenberg and Webern. See Joseph N. Straus, *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 77–79. For a more detailed introduction to the prevalence and functions of the disabled body in modernist art, see Tobin Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010); Michael Davidson, *Invalid Modernism: Disability and the Missing Body of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 26–45.

[125] Joseph Straus, 'Inversional Balance and the "Normal" Body in the Music of Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern,' in *Sounding Off,* 263.

would further point to the valuable insights offered by the performance-oriented subfields of both disability studies and opera studies.

Opera and Disability in Performance

The critical juncture between disability studies and performance studies was first explored in *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance* (co-edited by Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander) and *Understanding Disability Studies and Performance Studies* (co-edited by Bruce Henderson and Noam Ostrander) in the early 2000s.[126] The contributions to these volumes explore the performance of disability in film and television, sport, dance and performance art, demonstrating the intersections of performance studies, disability studies, visual culture and embodiment. Throughout both anthologies, the notion of disability in performance appears to take on three fundamental meanings: the theatrical performance of disability by disabled performers,[127] the performance of disability in everyday life,[128] and the performance of disability through its metaphorical representation in dramatic and other cultural productions.[129] A motif that runs throughout much of this work is the dramaturgical metaphor of disability as an identity in performance. This is an idea that draws upon postmodern and poststructural notions of identity as the stylised repetition of acts associated, by society, with sex, gender, race, class and, indeed, ability. Sociologist Erving Goffman, for example, frames the 'presentation of the self in everyday life' as a kind of theatrical performance and undertakes a dramaturgical analysis of human characteristics and interactions as fundamentally shaped by social norms.[130] The disability theorist Petra Kuppers has played a prominent role in bringing these ideas into the sphere of disability studies. In 'The Wheelchair's Rhetoric: The Performance of Disability', Kuppers highlights some of the ways in which the lived experience

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126 Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander, eds., *Bodies in Commotion: Disability in Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Bruce Henderson and Noam Ostrander, eds., *Understanding Disability Studies and Performance Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

127 See Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 'Dares to Stares: Disabled Women Performance Artists and the Dynamics of Staring,' in Sandahl and Auslander, eds., *Bodies in Commotion*, 30–41; Margaret M. Quinlan and Benjamin R. Bates, 'Dances and Discourses of (Dis)Ability: Heather Mills's Embodiment of Disability on Dancing with the Stars,' in Henderson and Ostrander, eds., *Understanding Disability Studies and Performance Studies*, 64–80.

128 See the chapters in 'Part IV: Performing Disability in Daily Life,' in Sandahl and Auslander, eds., *Bodies in Commotion*, 215–68; Sheila C. Moeschen, 'A Crippling Deceit: Mendicancy and the Performance of Disability in Progressive America,' in Henderson and Ostrander, eds., *Understanding Disability Studies and Performance Studies*, 81–97.

129 Stacy Wolf, 'Disability's Invisibility in Joan Schenkar's *Signs of Life* and Heather McDonald's *An Almost Holy Picture*,' in Sandahl and Auslander, eds., *Bodies in Commotion* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 302–18.

130 Erving Goffman, The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1971). See also Judith Butler on the concept of 'performativity' see Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

of disability and disability's dramatisation interreact, emphasising, for example, the centrality of material 'signholders' of disability, such as wheelchairs and crutches, in both reality and staged representation.[131]

In 'Beyond "Cripping Up"', an introductory article for a special edition of the *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* on drama, theatrical performance and disability, Carrie Sandahl and Ann M. Fox point to the relative absence of theatre and drama in both literary studies and disability studies.[132] 'And yet,' they write, 'there is much in dramatic literature for disability studies: much that has been and remains to be discovered'.[133] The author's frame the need for more scholarly attention on disability and drama as a series of questions:

- What do we really mean when we talk about inclusion in drama?
- Who is disability in drama really for?
- Who are its multiple audiences?
- How does drama record, recount, and rewrite disability history?
- How might we understand the aesthetic possibilities of disability for drama, and the political possibilities of drama for disability?[134]

Sandahl and Fox suggest that attempts to unpick and answer such questions should be informed by considerations of inclusion, history and aesthetics and politics.[135] Like disability and theatre, opera's expressive means are partly rooted in the body. It follows, therefore, that in examining the performance of disability in opera, the insights to be offered by the dual perspectives of disability and performance studies are rich. The need for the development of a critical vocabulary with which to interrogate the performance of disability has also been echoed with regards to studying contemporary opera productions.

In *Opera Through Other Eyes*, Levin suggests that the 'suppression or banalization of the libretto' in opera studies has enabled and perhaps prioritised a form of criticism that 'places music at the centre'.[136] Levin's 1993 edited volume is characteristic of an approach to opera studies that emerged around the late 1980s and challenged traditional score-based musicology (whereby the musical 'text' is perceived as an unchanging artefact of composer intention) as restricting the meaning that can be derived from operatic works. Over the last few decades, an increase in scholarly approaches to opera has reflected a growing interest in the

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131 Petra Kuppers, 'The Wheelchair's Rhetoric: The Performance of Disability,' *Drama Review* 51, no. 4 (2007): 80–88 (80). See also Petra Kuppers, 'Going to the theatre,' in *Theatre and Disability* (London: Palgrave, 2017), 1–5.
132 Ann M Fox and Carrie Sandahl, 'Beyond "Cripping Up": An Introduction,' *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 12, no. 2 (2018): 121–27.
133 Ibid., 121.
134 Ibid., 123.
135 Ibid., 123–27.
136 David J Levin, ed., *Opera Through Other Eyes* (Stanford: Staford University Press, 1993), 2.

interdisciplinary nature of the art form. Linda Hutcheon (herself a literary theorist) traces this interdisciplinarity back to feminist scholars such as Catherine Clément and Susan McClary, whose works anteceded the examination of opera from the perspectives of body criticism, race studies, cultural representation, political history and so on.[137] 'In short', Hutcheon writes, 'the impact of all the major theoretical and ideological concerns in literary and cultural studies was likewise felt (sometimes with a certain delay) in the interdisciplinary scholarship on opera as a cultural artefact'.[138] Hutcheon's article provides a useful overview of the increasingly diverse perspectives from which opera has been examined since the late 1980s. Further movement away from the score-based approach to opera studies around the turn of the twenty-first century led to new developments in musicology's performative and dramaturgical turns, which impacted specifically and significantly on the field of opera studies.

Nicholas Cook observes the effects of the wider performative turn in the arts on musicology in the last decades of the twentieth century, resulting in the emergence of trends such as 'historically informed performance', 'analytically informed performance' and 'close listening'.[139] However, Cook indicates the staying power of musicology's deeply embedded 'textual paradigm' within many of these approaches to musicological thinking, arguing that the notion of 'music as performance' is more closely allied with theatre studies.[140] Certainly, while the performative turn in musicology primarily questioned the notion of the score as a source of objective meaning, scholars have often clung to the musical 'work' as the primary object of focus. Musicologists such as Cook, Carolyn Abbate and Richard Taruskin began to bridge this gap with work that advocated treading a line between text and performance.[141] Much of this work is characterised by the pursuit to derive meaning from musical works. Cook, for example, writes that '[t]he basic principle of performance studies is that meaning is generated in the act of performance. To think of music as performance is therefore to focus on how meaning is

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137 Linda Hutcheon, 'Interdisciplinary Opera Studies,' *PMLA* 121, no. 3 (2006): 803–05.
138 Ibid., 804. The lacuna in her 2006 guide (perhaps unsurprisingly) is disability studies, which, as I have argued, is often a latecomer to interdisciplinary scholarly discourse, only arriving in musicology around 2005 and not considered in relation to opera until the publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* in 2015.
139 Nicholas Cook, 'Bridging the Unbridgeable? Empirical Musicology and Interdisciplinary Performance Studies,' in *Taking It to the Bridge: Music as Performance*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 71, 74.
140 Ibid, 70–72.
141 See Nicholas Cook, 'Music as Performance,' in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 215–26; Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Carolyn Abbate, 'Music—Drastic or Gnostic?' *Critical Enquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004): 505–36; Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1995).

created in real time – in the act of performing it, and equally in the act of hearing it, whether live or on a recording'.[142]

For Abbate, the search for meaning in music is hindered by the 'gnostic' attitude that is characterised by an overemphasis on the 'metaphysical mania' of interpretation, which she suggests 'encourages us to retreat from real music to the abstraction of the work'.[143] The author proposes that '[i]t is real music, music-as-performed, that engenders physical and spiritual conditions wherein sound might suggest multiple concrete meanings and associations'.[144] Her approach to opera studies is similarly characterised by a desire to distance herself from the tendency to prioritise 'the work' above performance, and she sets this out in the introduction to a 1989 work co-edited with Roger Parker: "'Analyzing opera" should mean not only "analyzing music" but simultaneously engaging, with equal sophistication, the poetry and the drama'.[145] However, the role of hermeneutics in opera studies is complicated by the multimodal nature of the art form or, what Levin refers to as opera's 'excess of expressive means'.[146] Abbate points out that there are those who believe that '[s]omeone who analyses a specific operatic staging, performance, or recording appears to traffic in what is least important'.[147] Yet, the suggestion that opera production and particularly mise-en-scène are topics worthy of consideration has been the focus of a number of musicological considerations in recent years.[148]

Hutcheon notes the emergence of a 'Dramaturgical Turn' in opera studies during the first decade of the twenty-first century.[149] This 'new' approach saw a shift in focus from the relationship between music and text to the physical and visual aspects of opera production, thereby mirroring Regietheater's overarching emphasis on mise-en-scène. Work in this subfield concerns 'operatic stagings both historical and contemporary, their material traces, mechanical practices, hermeneutic implications, and medial dissemination', promoting the idea that

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142 Nicholas Cook, 'Between Art and Science: Music as Performance', *Journal of the British Academy* 2 (2014): 6.
143 Abbate, 'Drastic or Gnostic?' 505.
144 Ibid., 532.
145 Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (eds.), 'Introduction: On Analyzing Opera,' in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1989), 4.
146 David J Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2007), x.
147 Abbate, *In Search of Opera*, x.
148 In opera studies, the performative approach has also led to a number of interesting considerations on how the live, embodied voice impacts critical readings of opera. See Michelle Duncan, 'The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004): 283–306; Clemens Risi, 'Opera in Performance—In Search of New Analytical Approaches,' *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2011): 283–95; Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001) and 'Opera, or, The Envoicing of Women', in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Musical Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), 225–58.
149 Hutcheon, 'Interdisciplinary Opera Studies,' 808.

productions are objects worthy of a place in the critical analysis of opera.[150] Levin uses stagings of Wagner's operas to illustrate the way in which 'the mode of interpretation' in a given opera production corresponds with an associated 'mode of reading'.[151] This is an idea that characterises much of his work, where he proposes the development of an academic approach that enables scholars to recognise and analyse the interpretative dramaturgical frameworks that underpin opera productions. Risi has been another prominent figure in the study of opera in performance. He advocates for a methodology similar to Levin's, proposing that 'we treat the performance not as an interpretation of a score, but instead conceive of the score as one of many materials used to produce a performance'.[152]

Abbate stands in partial opposition to this approach, as indicated by her suggestion that 'opera needs a defence against performance (and staging)'.[153] While the author acknowledges that the questions and speculations which emerge from musical hermeneutics can be realised on stage, she argues that '[d]ramaturgy occupies an odd no-man's land between theatrical practice and academic immaterialism', and notes the difficulty in reconciling interpretative meanings in the context of music's material reality.[154] Levin seems to accept this difficulty in his suggestion that 'dramaturgy can pose the challenge of applied criticism, transplanting textual theory and analysis from the library and the classroom into the rehearsal room and onto the stage'.[155] Yet for him, the theory and practice of opera are not conflicting entities, but rather, in opera productions, 'criticism and theory find an outlet in real life'.[156] Levin warns scholars against speculation – which invariably leads to 'a deeply impressionistic hole' – and instead promotes the importance of dramaturgy in opera productions and attempts to derive meaning from them.[157]

Reading Contemporary Regietheater: Dramaturgy and (Re)Interpretation

Levin observes the presence of a rift between critical and literalist approaches to opera production.[158] This rift can be identified as geographical in that, broadly speaking, it demarcates

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[150] Clemens Risi and Gundula Kreuzer, 'A Note from the Guest Editors,' *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2011): 149.
[151] David J Levin, 'Reading a Staging/Staging a Reading,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9, no. 1 (1997): 47–71 (51).
[152] Clemens Risi, 'Opera in Performance: "Regietheater" and the Performative Turn', trans. Jake Fraser, *The Opera Quarterly* 35, no. 1–2 (2019): 9.
[153] Abbate, *In Search of Opera*, x.
[154] Carolyn Abbate, '. . . And in Response,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21, no. 2 (2009): 200–01. This extract echoes the author's sentiments in 'Music—Drastic or Gnostic?' where she argues that '[i]t is virtually impossible to sustain [gnostic] speculations while playing or absorbed in listening to music that is materially present'. See Abbate, 'Drastic or Gnostic?' 510–11.
[155] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 32.
[156] Ibid., 33.
[157] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 8, 32–35.
[158] David J Levin, 'Reading a Staging/Staging a Reading', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9, no. 1 (1997): 49–51.

the approaches of the United States and Europe, with the largely traditional, naturalist stagings of the former finding their antithesis in the critical and highly experimental Regietheater (Director's Theatre) productions of the latter. Following Peter Gelb's appointment as General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera in 2006, an article by Paul Liberman in the *LA Times* declared him to be 'the great hope of, if not an entire ageing art form, at least the 123-year-old-Met'.[159] During his tenure, Gelb has led the *Live in HD* initiative, securing the company's role at the forefront of the opera industry's adoption of digital media. Despite this, a further extract from Liberman's article corroborates an understanding of the geographically drawn boundary between the 'old' and 'new' approaches to opera production:

> Some critics will no doubt be waiting for the Met's new GM to cross the line between selling that art form and selling it out. Gelb addressed that recently when he recalled seeing one of those 'Euro-trash' productions that try anything to connect. It was a Rigoletto conceived by a German film director as 'Rigoletto Meets the Planet of the Apes.' Set amid the shattered remains of the world's opera houses, it had the singers dressed, yes, as apes. 'There will be no ape suits,' Gelb declared, 'in our new productions'.[160]

Now, the distinction between the stylistic approaches of Europe and the United States has become less distinct over the past decade or so, but nevertheless, the *Regietheater* productions to which Lieberman applies the moniker 'Euro-trash' remain a more regular occurrence outside of the United States, and particularly in Germany.[161] As Nicholas Payne has observed, 'is still the dominant influence in Germany and in many of its adjacent countries […] The further away from this epicentre, the greater the scepticism'.[162]

Ulrich Müller defines modern Regietheater productions as ones in which 'the director and [their] team present the drama or musical theater in what is often a surprisingly new and often provocative manner'.[163] Indeed, such productions are often a source of controversy with critics and scholars alike, with the most vocal protests to be found in musicology's blogosphere.[164] Also drawing upon its tendency to attract polemic, Gundula Kreutzer and

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[159] Paul Lieberman, 'A Populist Path to Opera's Door,' *Los Angeles Times*, 15 October, 2006.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Some of the more prominent directors associated with this trend include Hans Neuenfels, Calixto Bieito and Peter Konwitschny.
[162] Nicholas Payne, 'Opera in the Marketplace', in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 316.
[163] Ulrich Müller, 'Regietheater/Director's Theatre', in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 586. Such a team will invariably include a dramaturg, a figure whose work takes on a more prominent role in opera productions in Germany and across mainland Europe.
[164] For example, see Lynn René Bayley's 'Regietheater, The Ruination of Opera', The Art Music Lounge, 7 May, 2016, https://artmusiclounge.wordpress.com/2016/05/07/regietheater-the-ruination-of-opera/ (accessed 17.01.2020), or Brian Robins similarly-titled 'Regietheater – the death of opera?' which begins, 'Opera is sick. Very sick'. Brian Robins, 'Regietheater – the death of opera?', Early Music World , January 2013, https://www.earlymusicworld.com/regietheater-the-death-of-opera (accessed 17.01.2020). See also Heather Mac

Clemens Risi suggest that contemporary Regietheater is characterised by its tendency to veer 'between interpretation and deconstruction', and it is the matter of interpretation that is significant in the context of this thesis.[165] The relevance of (re)interpretation to opera stagings and resultant analyses of such stagings can be traced back to the emergence of operatic Regietheater in the hands of Walter Felsenstein and Wieland Wagner in post-Second World War Germany.[166] Characterised by a psychologically-probing turn towards abstraction and symbolism, Wieland Wagner's approach laid the foundations for the Regietheater productions found across Europe today. Under the co-direction of Wieland and his brother Wolfgang, the postwar re-opening of the Bayreuth festival saw not only the 'clearing out' of lavish, naturalistic sets in favour of a quite radical, minimalist approach to mise-en-scène; the 'New Bayreuth' also released the festival from its ties to National Socialism. As Patrick Carnegy summarises, 'when Wieland spoke of the necessity of "entrümpeln" – of clearing out the rubbish and making a clean start – he was speaking of more than tired old scenery, costumes and stage props'.[167] Müller notes the director's affinity towards incorporating the then-contemporary social and psychological theories of Freud, Jung and Steiner into the sphere of production, at the same time de-nationalising and de-historicising the opera text in favour of a more universal conceptual framework.[168] Despite typically avoiding uprooting a work from its historical and cultural contexts, Walter Felsenstein's East-German *Musiktheater* productions at the Komische Oper Berlin between the 1940s and 1970s were also radical in that they emphasised the importance of dramatic action over other aspects of performance. Another aspect of his directorial approach integral to contemporary Regietheater practice was the emphasis placed on undertaking in-depth literary analyses of textual sources.[169]

For Christopher Morris, early forays into radical staging such as Wagner's and Felsenstein's set in motion the development of a form of 'dissonance between a canonic continuity and theatrical practices that potentially disrupt that continuity based on critical or "outside" perspectives' in contemporary opera production.[170] Today, the author recognises, this dissonance (which manifests itself most conspicuously in opera produced in German-speaking countries) can be attributed to the fact that 'contemporary practice is not based on

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Donald, 'The Abduction of Opera', City Journal, 2007, https://www.city-journal.org/html/abduction-opera-13034.html (accessed 12.09.2017).

165 Gundula Kreuzer and Clemens Risi, 'Regietheater in Transition: An Introduction to Barbara Beyer's "Interviews with Contemporary Opera Directors"', *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2011): 303.

166 See Müller, 'Regietheater/Director's Theatre', 585–86; Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 18–24; Kreuzer and Risi, 'Regietheater in Transition', 303–4.

167 Patrick Carnegy, *Wagner and the Art of the Theatre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 263.

168 Müller, 'Regietheater/Director's Theatre', 585–86.

169 Ibid.

170 Christopher Morris, *Modernism and the Cult of Mountains: Music, Opera, Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2012), 39.

competing directorial interpretations but on the very possibility of reinterpreting in the first place'.[171] The connection Morris makes between reinterpretation and 'outside' perspectives is significant. Opera studies' interdisciplinarity has a profound effect on radical European productions since the late 1970s, as contemporary trends in mise-en-scène have come to intersect with contemporary critical concerns in opera studies with increasing frequency.[172] Today, responsibility for these ever-popular on-stage ventures into conceptual and critical matters often lays with the dramaturg, a figure customarily found in opera houses in Germany and across mainland Europe, and less-so in the United Kingdom and in North America. Once concerned principally with preparing manuscripts and translating scripts and librettos, the role of the dramaturg shifted alongside the emergence of the 'director' towards the end of the nineteenth century. Since that time, dramaturgy has become 'more and more frequently concerned with close analytical and critical readings of an opera text'.[173] However, this in-depth engagement with an opera's score and libretto does not typically result in the dismantling of its musical dramaturgy. Rather, as Kreutzer and Risi have observed, high-concept contemporary opera production often 'treats the music and sung texts as sacrosanct, but takes interpretive freedom on the level of direction'.[174] Given the fact that the process of producing operatic Regietheater habitually begins with academic research (the work of the dramaturg), contemporary stagings therefore present manifold opportunities for examination from an array of disciplinary perspectives.

The emergence of several new productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, each associated with the practices of contemporary Regietheater, during the 2016/2017 and 2017/18 European opera seasons presented an opportunity to interrogate a selection of interpretative approaches to these works on contemporary opera stages. The question, then, becomes one of how and by what means can we begin to assess and interrogate these productions. It is perhaps pertinent to note here that that the scope of Levin's aforementioned approach to analysing opera in performance is not limited to 'reading' alone; the author further proposes the criteria by which an opera production can be judged based on its 'conservatism'/'radicalism' or 'weakness'/'strength'. He qualifies that a superficial radicalism does not necessarily render a production strong, nor can productions that appear outwardly to be conservative be dismissed as weak. Rather, a strong reading should be

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171 Ibid.
172 Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 6–7.
173 Ibid., 29.
174 Kreuzer and Risi, 'Regietheater in Transition', 303–04.

> …surprising, illuminating previously invisible points in the text and thus asserting some distance from prevailing and predictable accounts. A weak reading fails to do so, tending instead to embrace the prevailing understanding of the work's meaning, seeking to reproduce the work's prevailing aesthetic identity, and often presenting itself as a nonreading, one that does not consciously venture an interpretation but instead merely seeks to present the work in its most familiar form.[175]

While I am inclined to adopt this particular view, the emphasis Levin places on seemingly essentialist comparative value judgements has been a point of critical contention. James Treadwell suggests that the above binaries are misleading in that, in order to determine whether a production is 'conservative' or 'radical', one needs only an objective knowledge of the extent to which a staging adheres to the given directions of the score, libretto, or stage directions.[176] By contrast, a judgement based on 'weakness' or 'strength' requires a degree of interpretation in and of itself, because, according to Levin, a 'strong' reading is 'one that accounts for the most meaning of a given text'.[177] Treadwell argues, then, that analysis and assessment are bound together by Levin's approach, and as a result, '[w]hat we read when we read a staging is whether that staging is good or not'.[178]

> Musical analysis does not primarily aim to determine whether the piece in question is good or not. Discussions of stagings ought likewise to seek a position that avoids straightforward comparative value judgements. Academic criticism may not be able to read the stage, but it can suggest a method offering more sensitive conclusions than simple evaluation. If this involves surrendering a critical attitude towards the 'object' for a stance truer to the nature of the medium, that is not an abrogation of critical responsibility, because the medium is not empty of meaning.[179]

In his response, Levin addresses a number of the flaws outlined by Treadwell, yet the matter of value judgements is seemingly overlooked.[180] The author stresses once again the need for the development of a critical vocabulary with which to interrogate contemporary productions, and this need was arguably met with the publication of *Unsettling Opera* a decade later, where, interestingly, his 'Reading a Staging/Staging a Reading' was adapted to form the second chapter without any amendments to his judgemental criteria.[181]

Albeit slightly hermetic, I consider Levin's approach to be useful in the context of this thesis, particularly in light of both its interdisciplinary and the fact that the productions I read

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[175] Ibid., 45–46.
[176] James Treadwell, 'Reading and Staging Again', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 10, no. 2 (1998): 207–12.
[177] Levin, 'Reading a Staging/Staging a Reading', 51.
[178] Treadwell, 'Reading and Staging Again', 211.
[179] Ibid., 216.
[180] David J. Levin, 'Response to James Treadwell', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 10, no. 3 (1998): 307–311.
[181] See Levin, 'Reading a Staging/Staging a Reading: Wagner's Die Meistersing von Nürnberg in Performance', in *Unsettling Opera*, 37–67.

belong to the Regietheater tradition. Áine Sheil has effectively paraphrased that, for Levin, 'the nub of the matter lies in the maximization of meaning'.[182] Levin argues that in order to both produce and understand 'strong' productions, reading and staging should be informed by cultural and literary theory. As a theatrical practice, the Regietheater dictates a degree of academic engagement with the historical and cultural context of a work as a result of dramaturgy and its importance in the production process. It can also be said that the work of the dramaturg is to maximise meaning. As such, I opt to utilise Levin's value judgement methodology with the caveat that I am concerned less with a production's conservatism/innovation than with its critical engagement with the historical and cultural contextual frameworks of the opera texts in question. In short, the primary concern of my research and the readings it encompasses is the translation of and critical engagement with the colliding narratives of disability and degeneracy in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* from source to stage.

Thesis Outline

As the preceding sections of this introduction would suggest, a number of individual subjects are pursued in the course of this thesis and, although these topics are self-contained in one sense, they are linked by large-scale processes and underlying dialogues which link both the historical discourse of degeneracy and the representation of disability. Chapter One of this thesis provides some historical context for the readings that follow: many of the materials visited here provide vital points of reference for the discussions which take place throughout this thesis. Drawing largely upon existing scholarship, I trace the development of the notion of degeneracy from its use in the late-nineteenth-century as a biologically-informed theory of individual and social decline to its adaptation around the turn of the century into a vehicle for nihilistic cultural critique and, finally, its adoption by the National Socialists, who weaponized the term in order to condemn and ultimately eradicate the supposedly weakest (and crucially 'un-German') members of society.

Max Nordau's adaptation of degeneration theory from its biomedical origins into cultural critique (a trend that was paralleled in the adoption of the language of disease in subsequent music criticism) provides a useful starting point for examining *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* within this context. Nordau's work has often been considered as a crucial component in the development of 'degeneracy' as a relevant classification for the arts, however, there do not appear to be any significant scholarly investigations into his

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[182] Áine Sheil, 'Opera Production in Ireland: No Place for Politics?', *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* 5 (2009-10): 35.

consideration of the degenerate in music. With reference to the author's *Entartung* (*Degeneration*, 1892), I demonstrate some of the ways in which *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* were susceptible to condemnation as 'degenerate' in incipient models of artistic degeneracy. Critical reception of these operas during the lifetimes of Schreker and Zemlinsky is saturated with the medically-imbued rhetoric of degeneration theory, and therefore points to the wide-reaching influence of Nordau's ideas. Moreover, much of this criticism foreshadows the treatment and fate of the composers and their works within the national-conservative framework into which the concept of degeneracy was co-opted during the Third Reich. The conclusions sought in Chapter One are not hard and fast rules that boil down either an entire era or the reception of these composers and their works to a dominant mode of thought. Rather, I attempt to make sense of the web of connecting narratives about degeneracy (both bodily and artistic) out of which these operas were born and to which they also contribute. Indeed, by considering the ways in which they incorporate the discourse of degeneracy and its associated themes into their dramatic and contextual frameworks, this chapter contributes to extant literature on *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* and lays the foundations for my reading of the operas as forms of self-reflective commentary on this turbulent cultural climate.

Alongside the development of degeneration theory as a model for artistic criticism, there emerged newfound apprehensions and anxieties about the nature of identity. In Chapter Two, I explore the effect of these dialogues on Schreker and Zemlinsky, as well as on the characterisation of their disabled protagonists. Here, I argue that disability can be understood in the operas as symbolic representations of wider socio-cultural conceptions of otherness. The composers' engagement with narratives of cultural sickness and physical impairment is emblematic of the growing prevalence of physical disability in modernist opera and also emphasises the intersection of disability and degeneration in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. In my earlier overview of the representation of disability in the operatic canon, I outlined some of the ways in which composers and librettists have employed common modes of representation, often appropriating disability as a narrative obstacle and subjecting disabled characters to the narrow confines of stock characterisation. In Chapter Two, I draw upon the insights of disability studies scholarship to argue that the narratives of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* utilise the process of narrative prosthesis and traffic in disability's metaphorical meanings. I examine the extent to which these operas contain biographical detail and aspects of cultural commentary, all the while adhering (at least in part) to stereotypical modes of disability representation such as those outlined by Norden, Longmore and Mitchell and Snyder. By incorporating the insights of disability studies, this chapter offers a new perspective on the way in which Schreker's and Zemlinsky's disabled protagonists are imagined and depicted, the

narrative functions they serve, and the extent to which they reflect socio-cultural attitudes towards disability (and by association, degeneracy) from the time in which the operas were composed.

Chapters One and Two deal with the literary and cultural origins of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. However, the contextual frameworks of these operas, as well as the ways in which they represent disability, are subject to interpretation (and indeed reinterpretation) in contemporary production. Chapter Three therefore takes as its starting point the dramaturgical turn in opera studies scholarship during the first decade of the twenty-first century and, in this and the following two chapters, I respond to various calls for scholars to locate and implement new modes of reading both opera and disability in performance. Here, focus will be placed less on *Die Gezeichneten*'s and *Der Zwerg*'s 'opera texts' than on their 'performance texts' – productions (on stage), which offer novel readings of a work at the same time as referring to its textual (on-page) elements.[183] Centring my discussions around two productions of *Der Zwerg* (at Oper Graz and the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos (TNSC) in Lisbon) and three of *Die Gezeichneten* (at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, the Komische Oper Berlin and Oper Köln), I critically assess aspects of production design whilst also acknowledging the potential for engagement between bodies, production materials (such as programmes), mise-en-scène and the theoretical discourse of performance studies, opera studies and disability studies.

In Chapter Three, I explore the performance of the operas' literary and cultural origins in the productions of *Der Zwerg* in Graz and Lisbon and that of *Die Gezeichneten* in Munich. From Oscar Wilde's 'The Birthday of the Infanta' – which Georg Klaren imbued with the discourse of social and cultural degeneracy to reflect Zemlinsky's biography – to Schreker's incorporation of self-referential allusions to issues of gender, creativity, autonomy and morality, I survey the translation of these works' literary and cultural origins from source to stage. Each of these productions, I suggest, exemplifies what Ulrich Müller describes as contemporary opera production's concern with the 'visualisation of subtext'.[184] The analyses in this chapter support my reading of both operas as forms of cultural commentary and further point to opera production's capacity for historical reception, a phenomenon explored by Alexandra Wilson.[185] In their ability to engender contemporary relevance for the central themes of abnormality and outsider identity in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, I suggest that these productions demonstrate the enduring significance of the anomalous bodily form as a metaphor for personal, social and political ostracisation. In turn, questions are raised about

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[183] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 11.
[184] Müller, 'Regietheater/Director's Theatre,' 591.
[185] Alexandra Wilson, 'Golden-Age Thinking: Updated Stagings of "Gianni Schicchi" and the Popular Historical Imagination', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 25, no. 2 (2013): 189.

how the process of narrative prosthesis and its associated modes of representation are rendered on stage and, moreover, what meaning disability's taxonomy of figural connotations can take on in performance.

In Chapters Four and Five, I assess how stereotypical modes of representation and characterisation can be perpetuated and even transformed on the opera stage. Chapter Four initially places focus on the body, considering the embodiment of disability by non-disabled performers (or 'disability mimicry') in the productions in Graz, Lisbon and Munich with reference to broader performance studies scholarship. Erica Fischer Lichte's notion of the 'feedback loop' and what Peggy Phelan considers to be the 'presentness' of live performance are complicated, even problematised, in light of disability studies. I illustrate the disabled body's capacity to serve as both medium and subject, as well as the potential for such bodies to be rendered expendable on the theatrical stage, thereby mirroring disability's elimination from literary narratives throughout history as a result of the 'kill or cure' paradigm. Throughout the course of this chapter, I also highlight what the performance of disability has to offer considerations of casting, bodily authenticity and liveness, all of which have amassed increasing attention in opera studies scholarship in recent years, albeit with the distinct omission of disability.

Further to this somatic focus, I will assess the ways in which disability was represented in the three contemporary productions through broader aspects of mise-en-scène. I will show that each of the performances in question utilised visible aspects of production design (including costume and set design, staging, gesture and so on) to signify disability and explore its potential meanings through modes of aesthetic choice. As will be revealed, the dramatisation of disability in these productions often echoed the depictive trends to be found in literature, film and television. However, the productions also partially upheld *Die Gezeichneten*'s and *Der Zwerg*'s aspects of cultural commentary by unsettling representational paradigms. My analyses therefore demonstrate the novel insights to be found by moving beyond attempts to discern the value of a production based on its adherence to often-challenged modes of representation, and instead indicates the significance of interpretation in contemporary opera production and its associated capacity to problematise (as opposed to perpetuate the problematic nature of) canonical representations of marginalised identities.

Chapter Five is concerned with notably radical, concept-led *Regietheater* productions – increasingly directed by those from outside of the opera industry – and their tendency to deconstruct, question or, crucially, transform an opera's narrative. With reference to relevant questions of creative autonomy and (re)interpretative liberty, I assess two further productions of Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* in Berlin and Cologne, where the protagonist's disability was

'sidestepped' or substituted for another form of outsider identity. These radical interpretations initially appear to render the crux of the opera's figurative narrative (the disabled body) obsolete. However, in both productions, the metaphorical significance of the anomalous bodily form was emphasised almost beyond recognition, despite its invisibility. Both productions certainly offer a sensational retelling of Schreker's narrative, but I consider them, respectively, as more and less successful examples of contemporary *Regietheater*. Patrick Kinmonth's production in Cologne exemplifies what Barbara Beyer has described as the 'superficial updating' of a work. By contrast, Calixto Bieito's production in Berlin reinforces and modernises the opera's aspects of cultural critique.[186]

Several scholars have begun to read *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* as products of both their distinct cultural context and as part of the broader location of disability in cultural productions. Lee, for example, interprets *Der Zwerg* as a drama of recognition, and her argument is framed by nineteenth and early-twentieth-century ideas of self and otherness, which Michael Davidson expands upon in his reading of the work as an allegory of 'dysgenic characterology'.[187] For Hailey, Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* is rich in 'incidents and ideas […] obviously [drawn] from his own cultural environment'.[188] Elsewhere, Franklin has called for the development of a framework in which the opera can be understood not only as 'symptom' of, but also a contribution to pre-Fascist discourses of degeneracy.[189] This thesis builds on existing literature about the operas by proposing a reading of both *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* as responses to or reactions against aspects of the early-twentieth-century cultural zeitgeist as a result of disability's narrative mobilisation. The addition of a disability studies perspective in my research reveals new insights into the way in which Schreker's and Zemlinsky's protagonists are imagined and portrayed, the narrative functions they serve and the extent to which they reflect socio-cultural attitudes towards disability and degeneracy from the time in which the operas were composed to the present day. Although my examination of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwer*g does not neglect musical analysis, my focus gravitates towards historical and cultural context, and, in Chapters Three, Four and Five in particular, I am concerned with the politics and practice of performing disability. As the first extended study on the representation of disability in opera (in both text and performance), this thesis demonstrates that widening the scope of opera studies to include the key concepts of disability

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[186] Barbara Beyer, Gundula Kreuzer and Paul Chaikin, 'Interviews with Contemporary Opera Directors, Selected from Barbara Beyer's Warum Oper? Gespräche Mit Opernregisseuren (2005),' *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2011): 307–8.
[187] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror', 198–223; Davidson, '"The Rage of Caliban": The Mirror of Recognition,' in *Invalid Modernism*, 46–61.
[188] Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878-1934*, 65–66.
[189] Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy,' 177.

theory facilitates valuable insights into the representation of opera's disabled subjects. Furthermore, my research reveals the important role occupied by *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg,* not just in considering opera from a disability studies perspective, but as primary sources for both opera and disability studies and twentieth-century cultural studies.

1. MODERNISM AS DISEASE: DISCOURSES OF MORAL AND MUSICAL DEGENERACY, 1890-1945

The notion of 'degeneracy' in music has most commonly been associated with the attempts made by Hans Severus Ziegler (on behalf of the Nazi Party) to galvanise public hatred of music deemed 'un-German' at the *Entartete Musik* Exhibit in 1938, or by Theo Stengel and Herbert Gerigk in their 1940 *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* (*Encyclopedia of Jews in Music*). However, in an interview for the 1990 documentary *Forbidden Sounds: Composers in Exile*, Hans Ulrich Engelmann said:

> It is not Hitler's or Goebbels' fault that after 1945 the appreciation of contemporary music did not increase much. There are probably other reasons, but those reasons need to be given some thought. Of course, the word 'degenerate' is still used by the older generation, especially in Germany. Whenever they dislike a sculpture, painting or a piece of music, one is quick to say 'that is degenerate art'. But I must emphasize, we don't get much further if we believe that it is purely a legacy of the Nazis. The Nazis simply picked up on it.[1]

Indeed, whilst the classification of certain art as degenerate is often thought to be a distinct practice of the Third Reich, dialogues of degeneration emerged within a scientific context in the middle of the nineteenth century and were translated into artistic critique as early as the 1890s. Composed and received in a turbulent socio-political climate in which disease and health were increasingly used as contexts for the criticism of artists and artworks, Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* and Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* can be understood as manifesting the symptoms of 'degeneracy' observed by cultural critics around the turn of the twentieth century. As such, Christopher Hailey's appeal for scholars to 'widen the circumference' of their enquiries into musical modernism and to engage with the diverse voices in what was a 'world of pluralities' takes on a new significance in the context of this thesis.[2] To truly understand the changing attitudes towards music during this time, I propose expanding the scope of enquiry not only within the world of music (as Hailey proposes), or even in terms of a historical time-frame (as with Dahlhaus)[3], but also within the wider cultural and political landscape, where ideas which came to inform music criticism had their roots in diverse intellectual arenas, from biology and medicine to sociology and criminology.

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[1] Christine Fischer-Defoy and Norbert Bunge (dir.), *Verbotene KLÄNGE: Komponisten Im Exil*, DVD (Vienna: Winklerfilm, 2004).
[2] Christopher Hailey, 'Franz Schreker and the Pluralities of Modernism,' Tempo 219 (2002): 7.
[3] See Introduction, 18–21.

This chapter draws upon the varied voices from within this world of pluralities. Exploring ideas that saturated the intellectual backdrop of the turn of the century, I trace the transformation of degeneration theory from its biological origins into a vehicle for socio-cultural critique and a framework for the denunciation of degenerate art. Focusing principally on Max Nordau's *Entartung* (1892), this chapter considers the appropriation and manipulation of the rhetoric of popular science to promote the idea that certain works of literature, art and music were symptomatic of the supposedly endemic degenerate condition. Emphasis is placed specifically on references to popular pseudoscience in Nordau's distinctly iatrogenic model of degenerate music, which he frames around the operatic compositional techniques of Richard Wagner. Nordau's interpretation of degeneration theory is paradigmatic of the more extreme attitudes towards modernism and degeneracy with regards to society, culture and the arts at the fin-de-siècle. As this chapter will demonstrate, the wide-reaching influence of his notion of musical degeneracy informed a phase of change and development during the twentieth century, leading to a period of cultural barbarism in which certain works – including *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* – were implicated as 'sick' and 'degenerate' despite (or perhaps even because of) their ambiguous relationship to musical modernism.

Historical criticism of both Schreker's and Zemlinsky's music is punctuated with the language of degeneration and its associated themes and ideas. With reference to incipient frameworks of musical degeneracy such as Nordau's, this chapter considers the susceptibility of both composers' idioms to condemnation as degenerate, also acknowledging that their denigration as such was not exclusively linked to their musical style. By considering the ways in which the discourse of degeneration is further (and perhaps deliberately) incorporated into the dramatic and contextual frameworks of both *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, this chapter finally lays the foundation for a discussion, in Chapter Two, about the extent to which these operas incorporate aspects of self-reflective critical commentary on this most turbulent socio-cultural and aesthetic cultural climate. The intention in this chapter is to elucidate the relationship between the operas in question and the social, cultural and discursive contexts from which they emerged, along with the broader engagement with themes of abnormality and outsider identity in the early modernist arts. Ultimately, my aim is to trace the translation of these ideas onto the contemporary stage in my readings of five productions of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas in chapters three, four and five of this thesis.

Degeneration: From Biological to Cultural Commentary

The disability theorist Lennard J. Davis notes the emergence of a constellation of terms – including, but not exclusive to 'normal', 'normality', 'average' and 'abnormal' – within a

number of European languages around 1840.[4] Davis proposes that it is therefore 'possible to date the coming into consciousness […] of an idea of the norm over the period 1840-1860'.[5] For Foucault, the concentration on a positive prototype in medicine occurred in the eighteenth century, where focus was not yet placed upon the norm, but instead upon the 'ideal' or the 'healthy', as opposed to the disease of the individual.

> Medicine must no longer be confined to a body of techniques for curing ills and of the knowledge that they require; it will also embrace the knowledge of *healthy man*, that is, *a non-sick man* and a definition of the *model man*.[6]

The new methodology for the treatment of disease can therefore be summarised as a shift in thought whereby the doctor no longer focussed solely on the illness of the patient, but also sought to understand the difference of the ailment from a prescribed model of health. Foucault notes the importance of understanding 'how and in what manner the various forms of medical knowledge pertained to the positive notions of "health" and "normality"', and summarises that nineteenth-century medicine 'formed its concepts and prescribed its interventions in relation to a standard of functioning and organic structure'.[7] Simply put, from the nineteenth century, the ideal type became the closest to the perceived norm, any deviation from which was likely to be deemed abnormal and unhealthy.[8] Moreover, though conceived in a medical context, this new approach was increasingly used to prescribe normative standards not just for physical health, but also for the 'moral relations [of a patient] and of the society in which he lives'.[9] This framework endured until the mid-twentieth century, increasingly informing ideas about heredity, degeneration and, eventually, eugenics.

Sander Gilman suggests that the importing of degeneration theory into the social sciences and the arts around the turn of the twentieth century 'soon incorporated, not to say overwhelmed, the purely biological character of the paradigm'.[10] Many exponents of the theory cited social degeneration as the result of technological advancement, urbanisation and the

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[4] Lennard J. Davis, 'Introduction: Normality, Power, and Culture,' in *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 1–2.
[5] Ibid., 2.
[6] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2003), 40.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Davis attributes responsibility for this conceptual transition to the field of statistics, which emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century and promoted the application of mathematical formulae to biology. In the second part of the nineteenth century, early statisticians and eugenicists Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) and Karl Pearson (1857-1936) combined mathematics with the theory of evolution to study the distribution of biological characteristics. See Davis, 'Normality, Power, and Culture,' 3–4.
[9] Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic,* 40.
[10] J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman, *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), vii.

popularisation of modern city life. Some perceived the burgeoning metropolitan lifestyle as exposing citizens to a number of factors deemed physically and mentally detrimental, from air and noise pollution, to the stress caused by the hectic pace of urban life and the growing availability and popularity of vices such as illicit sexual activity and alcohol.[11] In essence, newfound freedom from traditional social values was believed to have rendered society at risk of deterioration, and its inhabitants vulnerable to diseases of the body and mind. The translation of degeneration theory from its biological and medical origins soon led to its development as a framework for cultural critique and the denunciation of supposedly 'degenerate' art. From the 1890s, alongside the emergence of the musical 'breakaway' noted in the introduction, cultural commentators began to condemn artists and artworks that were deemed to pose a threat to the 'healthy' aspects of society. Just as the exponents of social degeneration theory cited the upending of traditional social or moral values with the rise of urbanisation, those who denounced modern literature, music and visual arts as degenerate frequently referred to the destabilising of traditional aesthetic styles and techniques. Moreover, for many of those who theorised degeneration, the power granted by scientific (and more-specifically, medical) expertise, enabled them to make claims about society which were crafted from esoteric medical language.

Michael Hau notes the extended use of medical vernacular beyond the discursive space of medicine in Germany between 1890 and 1930, when 'Germans increasingly defined their personal problems in medical terms, described them in medical language, and understood them in a medical framework'.[12] Foucault's consideration of the doctor's traditional power of 'governance' over a patient offers an interesting explanation for the use of medical terminology by the exponents of degeneration theory. In *Madness and Civilisation*, the author explores the doctor/patient relationship alongside associated notions of power, governance and control that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[13] At this time, physicians found themselves in possession of a newfound power which, according to Foucault, materialised in conjunction with the so-called 'medical gaze'.[14] This newfound ability to see disease went hand in hand with the ability to describe disease: 'a new alliance was forged between words and things, enabling one to *see* and to *say*'.[15] As Foucault notes, 'this did not mean that, after over-indulging in speculation, they had begun to perceive once again, or that they listened to reason

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[11] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848–c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 43.
[12] Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3.
[13] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 159–98.
[14] Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic*, 8–9.
[15] Ibid., xiii (author's emphasis).

rather than imagination'.[16] Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century, there developed a complex medical language that began to elude patients, thus placing the doctor in a position of trust and power.

The notion of degeneracy began to appear in music criticism from the closing years of the nineteenth century and continued to be a prevalent theme in the years leading up to World War II. At this time, medical vernacular was frequently appropriated in order to condemn certain musical works as 'sick' or 'unhealthy'. In 1911, for example, Karl Wolfskehl wrote that 'Music is the most important, perhaps the most hopeless form of sickness in a Europe that has fallen to sickness'.[17] In the following year, the music critic Felix Weingartner suggested that 'in general terms something is wrong and somewhere things are rotten in the development of music today […] music must become healthy again'.[18] Alexandra Wilson observes a parallel between the way in which 'society was frequently depicted in physiological terms' and the Italian critical press's preoccupation with concepts of 'wholeness' and 'organicism' as indicators of musical 'health', with metaphors of physical weakness pointing to the contrary.[19] As I will demonstrate in the latter half of this chapter and in Chapter Two, this rhetoric would have a great impact on the reception of Schreker and Zemlinsky, as well as on the creation of the operas with which this thesis is concerned.

Arguably, the fact that notions of musical sickness became increasingly popular around this time was due – at least in part – to the influence of works that engaged with the concepts of decadent and degenerate art. Perhaps the most influential text of this kind was written by the physician Max Nordau, whose *Entartung* (*Degeneration*, 1892) – much like the concept after which it was named – forged a path from scientific to cultural commentary.[20] The work was first published in German, but within two years it had been translated into French, Italian, Russian and English, leading Nordau to become 'a household name to educated late-

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Karl Wolfskehl, 'Über den Geist der Musik (Vol. 2),' *Gesammelte Werke*, 1960, 237–49, quoted and translated in James Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations: The History of the Idea of Music as a Cause of Disease* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 104.
[18] Felix Weingartner, "Zurück zu Mozart?" in *Akkorde: Gesammelte Aufsatze* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Hartel, 1912), 108–112, quoted and translated in Leon Botstein, 'Nineteenth-Century Mozart: The Fin-de-Siècle Mozart Revival,' in *On Mozart,* ed. James M. Morris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 204. Carola Darwin points out that when Weingartner replaced Gustav Mahler as the director of the Vienna Hofoper in 1908, scheduled rehearsals for Zemlinsky's opera *Der Traumgorge* (*Görge the Dreamer*, 1907) came to a halt and the work's premiere was cancelled. It would not be performed until 1980. See Carola Frances Darwin, 'The "I" of the Other: Opera and Gender in Vienna, 1900-1918,' (PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2009), 89–90.
[19] Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism, and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 46–57.
[20] Max Nordau, *Degeneration, Translated from the Second Edition of the German Work* (London: William Heinemann, 1895). For the sake of clarity, the work will be cited as above but referred to by its German name throughout this thesis.

nineteenth century Europeans'.[21] The work is paradigmatic of a specific kind of ideological framework in which artists and artworks were condemned as posing a threat to the 'health' of society, due in part to the contamination of the artist by the conversely 'unhealthy' facets of modernity.

Max Nordau's *Entartung*: An Introduction

Entartung surveys the landmarks of late-nineteenth-century decadent European culture as the author outlines the degeneration of society, which he sees as both reflected in and incited by art. Nordau utilised the language of science and medicine to undertake what he describes as a 'long and sorrowful wandering through the hospital' of European culture, in order to diagnose the 'severe mental epidemic' of the contemporary arts.[22] Numbered amongst his targets were Émile Zola, Oscar Wilde, Walt Whitman, Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner. For a late-nineteenth-century reader, these personalities may have been well-regarded for their contribution to the development of contemporary culture, but for Nordau, it was precisely their modernism that rendered them regressive, at odds with the ideal of normality and, above all, detrimental to 'healthy' society. The work spoke largely to a public who would eagerly accept scientific validation of their growing social anxieties and prejudices, and is notable for its application of pseudo-scientific analysis, borrowed from sociobiological and psychological models of degeneration theory, as a tool for the criticism of contemporary art. As Hans-Peter Söder writes, 'Max Nordau was not just another doctor who dabbled in cultural criticism; his usage of medical metaphors was broadly based, systematic, and long in developing'.[23] In this way, Nordau's ideas about degenerate music constitute a defining example of the way in which notions of musical degeneracy were formulated and disseminated.

Entartung opens with a dedication to the Italian physician Cesare Lombroso, who was an enthusiastic exponent of degeneration theory and the progenitor of criminology.[24] Appropriating the medical and pseudo-scientific terminology of degeneration theory, Nordau declares that 'we now stand in the midst of a severe mental epidemic; of a sort of black death of degeneration and hysteria'.[25] The cautionary character of the author's dedication certainly suggests his careful handling of scientific knowledge in a way that appealed to those who had

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[21] Steven E. Aschheim, 'Max Nordau, Friedrich Nietzsche and Degeneration,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 28, no. 4 (1993): 643.
[22] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 537–38.
[23] Hans-Peter Söder, 'Disease and Health as Contexts of Modernity: Max Nordau as a Critic of Fin-de-Siècle Modernism,' *German Studies Review* 14, no. 3 (1991): 476.
[24] Nordau, *Degeneration*, vii.
[25] Ibid., 537.

been swayed the rise of popular science. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of his engagement with such fields occurs as he declares:

> Degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists. These, however, manifest the same mental characteristics, and for the most part the same somatic features, as the members of the above-mentioned anthropological family.[26]

Nordau's reference to the 'mental characteristics' and 'somatic features' reveals his engagement with popular science, as his words nod to the nineteenth-century pseudoscience of phrenology. Phrenologists such as Lombroso, L.A. Vaught and the German physiologist Franz Joseph Gall believed that supposedly abnormal behaviour was biologically genetic and that degenerates were identifiable by common physiological 'markers' or 'stigmata' such as the shape of a head, the curve of a nose, or the size of an ear.[27] In the same way that these criminal anthropologists had measured the craniums and documented the physical features of their supposedly degenerate subjects, Nordau measured the value of the contemporary arts by outlining the prevalence of certain stigmata within works of a degenerate nature. The author asserts that certain signs of degeneration and defect were recognisable within artistic productions, suggesting that 'it is not necessary to measure the cranium of an author, or to see the lobe of a painter's ear to class him as a degenerate'.[28] Throughout *Entartung*, he extends this sentiment to encompass not just the head, as in phrenology, but the whole body. For example, in his assessment of the American poet Walt Whitman, Nordau draws a comparison between the 'stigmata of degeneration' present in Whitman's work and the rheumatic ankylosis with which he was physically marred.[29] Indeed, it was not only works of art that Nordau believed to have the capacity for degeneracy: creators, the act of creating and the appreciation of the degenerate arts were, for the author, all bound up with the spirit of degeneracy. The author suggests that the creators of degenerate art possessed a 'degenerate condition', but in fact, this term that might be more appropriately used to describe what was a multifaceted, undeniably indistinct,

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[26] Ibid.
[27] See John G. Benjafield, *A History of Phrenology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 157–59; David de Giustino, *Conquest of Mind: Phrenology and Victorian Social Thought* (London: Routledge, 2016), 12–31; David Horn, *The Criminal Body: Lombroso and the Anatomy of Deviance* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1–28. For an interesting example of popular phrenology, see L.A Vaught, *Vaught's Practical Character Reader* (Chicago, 1902), available at: https://archive.org/details/vaughtspractical00vaug (accessed 27.09.2017).
[28] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 17.
[29] Ibid., 232. Incidentally, Schreker would set Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (*Grasbladen,* 1855) to music in the 1923 song cycle *Vom ewigen Leben*. See Werner Grünzweig and Walter Grünzweig, 'Eros, Expressionism, and Exile: Whitman in German Music,' in *Walt Whitman and Modern Music: War, Desire, and the Trials of Nationhood*, ed. Lawrence Kramer (London and New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), 48; Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878-1934: A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 214.

yet widely appropriated notion of cultural sickness that could be traced back to biological anomaly.[30]

On the one hand, Nordau's novel application of scientific theory to the criticism of art may have been the source of *Entartung*'s great success between 1892 and 1900. The work was vociferously discussed during this time, and praise for it predominantly stressed Nordau's extensive breadth of knowledge.[31] In an 1895 review for the *Psychological Review*, William James wrote '[i]t must be admitted that he is really learned, not only in contemporary German, French and English *belles lettres*, but in the literature of neurological medicine as well'.[32] However, the extensive circulation of the work and its accumulation of critical attention did not necessarily reflect the esteem in which it was generally held. Though widely read, the work amassed criticism, much of which can be seen as an attack on the amalgamation of biological science and artistic critique. H.T. Peck took a particularly sceptical approach to Nordau's value as a scientist, and in his response to *Entartung* in *The Bookman* in 1896, he wrote of the work's waning popularity and proposed that readers had 'tested the logic of his deductions; and as a result of their examination they have laid his book aside and turned to other and more profitable themes'.[33] Even Lombroso, to whom the work had been dedicated, wrote that 'even though starting from a new and just position, Nordau has gone astray'.[34]

Alongside countless reviews in newspapers and periodicals, several book-length responses to *Entartung* were also published.[35] Pick suggests that 'it was not the validity of degeneration as a diagnostic category that was questioned, but only Nordau's imprudent generalisations and his "hysterical" style of address'.[36] In fact, recognition and endorsement of degeneration as a credible theory is evidenced in a number of responses to *Entartung* in which Nordau himself is implicated as a degenerate. In *A Musician's Retort*, for example, Anton Seidl referred to Nordau as 'a man of unbalanced mind, like one of those unfortunates frequently met with in lunatic asylums' and remarks that *Entartung* 'might have been written by a caged-up lunatic!'[37] For Seidl, Nordau's attempts to condemn musical works as degenerate was 'more

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[30] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 111.
[31] See Charles Dudley Warner, 'Degeneration, by Max Nordau,' in *Library of the World's Best Literature: Ancient and Modern, Vol. XLIV, 2.*, ed. Charles Dudley Warner (New York: R. S. Peale and J. A. Hil, 1898), 2; "'Imbeciles All": Review of *Degeneration* by Max Nordau,' *The Nation*, 25 April 1895: 327.
[32] William James, 'Psychological Literature and Genius: Review of Degeneration by Max Nordau,' *Psychological Review* 2, no. 3 (1895), reprinted in William James, *Essays, Comments, and Reviews* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987): 507.
[33] H.T Peck, 'Degeneration and Regeneration,' *The Bookman* 51 (1896): 403.
[34] Cesare Lombroso, 'Nordau's "Degeneration": Its Values and Its Errors,' *The Century Magazine*, 1895, 936–37.
[35] See Alfred Egmont Hake, *Regeneration: A Reply* (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1896); Bernard Shaw, *The Sanity of Art: An Exposure of the Current Nonsense about Artists Being Degenerate* (London: New Age Press, 1908).
[36] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, 25.
[37] Anton Seidl, 'Nordau's Theory of Degeneration: A Musician's Retort,' *The North American Review* 160, no. 463 (1895): 740–41.

than moral degeneration'.[38] In this sense, despite the frequent denunciation of the work as 'quackery', the fact that *Entartung* attracted refutation lends some merit to the weight of his central theme: the fear of degeneration.

Aschheim writes that Nordau's 'thought and work, so it appears today, achieved widespread popularity amongst the middle classes precisely because it was so time-bound, tied to the conventions and postures of a positivist outlook that ceased to be relevant after the First World War'.[39] Certainly, the fear of socio-cultural decay was very much a mood of the fin-de-siècle, yet Aschheim's suggestion that Nordau's work bore little relevance after World War One seems somewhat precipitous in light of the National Socialist's adoption of the notion of degeneracy. As Nordau warns his readers against degenerate artworks, literature and music, he suggests that 'it is from these productions that an age derives its ideals of morality and beauty. If they are absurd and anti-social, they exert a disturbing and corrupting influence on the views of a whole generation'.[40] Ironically, *Entartung* itself seems to have had a toxic influence on the development of ideas about degenerate art. Nordau's sentiments here foreshadow those of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who suggested in a 1901 speech that 'if art, as now happens again and again, shows us misery, made out to be as hideous as it is in reality, then it sins against the German people'.[41]

Similar echoes of *Entartung*'s rhetoric can be found throughout the artistic criticism of the early-twentieth century, and Kennaway suggests that 'the mainstream discourse of sick music in the press became increasingly philistine, populist, and anti-Semitic during the late-nineteenth century, providing much of the basis for the Nazi institutionalization of the idea of degenerate music'.[42] As a physician, Nordau incorporated into his doctrine of degeneracy a belief that would be espoused with particular enthusiasm by the Third Reich:

> It is easily conceivable that the emotion expressed by an artist may precede from a morbid aberration, may be directed, in an unnatural, sensual, cruel manner, to what is ugly or loathsome. Ought we not in this case to condemn the work and, if possible, to suppress it? How can its right to exist be justified?[43]

If something is diseased, it must be treated or eliminated. This was an idea at the heart of the Nazi Party's attempts to eradicate supposedly degenerate works, and Richard Taruskin wittily

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[38] Ibid., 743.
[39] Aschheim, 'Max Nordau, Friedrich Nietzsche and Degeneration,' 643.
[40] Nordau, *Degeneration*, viii.
[41] *Die Reden Kaiser Wilhelm II*, Vol. III, ed. Johannes Penzler (Leipzig, 1907), 61, quoted in Shearer West*, The Visual Arts in Germany 1890-1937: Utopia and Despair* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 16.
[42] James Kennaway, 'From Sensibility to Pathology: The Origins of the Idea of Nervous Music around 1800,' *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 65, no. 3 (2010): 424.
[43] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 325–26.

imagines that 'many copies of Dr Nordau's *Entartung* must have fed Dr Goebbels's bonfires even as the book's theses were being oh-so-selectively appropriated to fuel the latter's propaganda mill'.[44] Indeed, much as the value awarded to German artworks that celebrated the 'blood and soil' ideology during the 1930s and 1940s echoed Nordau's derision of late-nineteenth-century decadent culture, the Nazis would not acknowledge Nordau, perhaps because of his Jewish heritage and his role as a Zionist activist, or even conceivably because of his derision of Wagner and Nietzsche. However, though the targets of its discourse changed, the notion of degenerate music endured, and as the following sections of this chapter will demonstrate, Nordau's *Entartung* was partly responsible for bringing the notion of unhealthy music into the public consciousness.

Nordau's Diagnosis of Musical Degeneracy

In the introduction to *Entartung*, Nordau laments the lack of public appreciation for the 'old' musical style:

> At opera and concert the rounded forms of ancient melody are coldly listened to. The translucent thematic treatment of classic masters, their conscientious observance of the laws of counterpoint, are reckoned flat and tedious. A coda graceful in cadence, serene in its 'dying fall', a pedal-base with correct harmonization, provoke yawns.[45]

The author goes on to consider the aspects of modern music valued by contemporary audiences, such as dissonance, sudden changes in key and pitch and 'vigorous' polyphony, proposing that these elements 'agitate the mind' and conjure 'nervous exhaustion'.[46] Early on in his deliberation, Nordau cites the works of Wagner as the most noxious example of dangerous modernity, but his denunciation of musical degeneracy begins in earnest in the chapter 'The Richard Wagner Cult', the largest section of *Entartung* to be dedicated to degeneration in music.[47] Here, Nordau declares that 'high musical talent is compatible with a very advanced state of degeneration – nay, even with pronounced delusion, illusion, and idiocy'.[48] He frames the chapter around the belief that Wagner's work epitomises musical degeneracy and the foremost, yet undeniably vague, charge against the composer is the possession of 'a greater abundance of degeneration than all the degenerates put together'.[49]

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[44] Richard Taruskin, 'The Golden Age of Kitsch,' in *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*, ed. Richard Taruskin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 243.
[45] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 12.
[46] Ibid., 12–13.
[47] Ibid., 171–213.
[48] Ibid., 195–96.
[49] Ibid., 171.

Nordau accuses Wagner of having 'concocted certain theories, which represent so many fits of aesthetic delirium', and more specifically, he proposes the existence of two 'stigmata' of degeneracy within the composer's operas, which he isolates as 'the dogmas of the *leitmotif* and of the unending melody'.[50]

The leitmotif is the means through which Wagner strips his operas of all musicality, thus transforming music to 'dry speech'.[51] This is due to the proposed inability of music to express ideas, since 'language provides for that as completely as could be desired'.[52] The author finds the notion that a short musical sequence could represent a 'definite conception' absurd, noting the inevitable failure of the leitmotifs, which are bound to 'lose all significance, for they pose in themselves nothing which compels us to grasp the meaning arbitrarily lent to them'.[53] Nordau's further comments on Wagner reveal his belief that the leitmotif represents a literal decline or reversion to a lower stage on the evolutionary ladder. He writes that the leitmotif has the ability to 'annul the differentiation of the arts arrived at by long historical evolution, and lead them back to the period of the lacustrines, nay, of the most primitive troglodytes'.[54] To validate this particular claim, Nordau calls upon the work of the nineteenth-century evolutionary naturalist Herbert Spencer, who theorised that all music had passed through three distinct stages of development from the simplicity of speech, to the more heightened emotion of recitative to the complexity of song.[55] Nordau cites Spencer's model of musical evolution to enforce his belief that the leitmotif is equivalent to a simplistic, even primitive form of musical expression akin to early recitation and chanting and, therefore, illustrative of a kind of musical evolutionary throwback.[56] The idea that degenerate music represents the regression of the art form is one that Nordau reiterates in his condemnation of the second of Wagner's musical crimes: the 'unending' melody.

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[50] Ibid, 197.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 199.
[53] Ibid., 197.
[54] Ibid., 198.
[55] Herbert Spencer, 'The Origin and Function of Music,' in *Essays: Scientific, Political and Speculative*, vol. 2 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1868): 400–51, available at: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/53395/53395-h/53395-h.htm#p400 (accessed 12.11.2016). Spencer's model of musical evolution was published in 1857 and centred around a tripartite pattern of development inspired by the work of French philosopher Auguste Comte. Comte proposed the existence of three distinct stages of development through which every society, being and branch of knowledge must pass: the theological stage, the metaphysical stage and the positive stage. See H.S. Jones, 'Auguste Comte,' in *Nineteenth-Century Philosophy of Religion: The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 4, ed. Graham Oppy and N. N. Trakakis (New York: Routledge, 2014), 97.
[56] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 200. Adorno would also write of Wagner's use of leitmotif in terms of musical regression, suggesting in 1952 that 'the degeneration of the leitmotiv is implicit' in his music since 'it leads directly to cinema music where the sole function of the leitmotiv is simply to announce heroes or situations so as to help the audience to orientate itself more easily'. See Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 36.

'Healthy' music, as with its counterparts in the visual and literary arts, is linked to what Nordau believes to be the capacity for attention, where the degenerate arts appeal to an incapacity for attention. In music, the artist's capacity for attention 'expresses itself in completed forms *i.e.,* in well-defined melodies', and its absence is revealed by 'the dissolution of form, the obliteration of its boundary lines, and thus by unending melodies as with Wagner'.[57] Thomas Grey notes that a common complaint in anti-Wagnerian criticism around 1860 was the absence of perceptible melody, and the prevalence, instead, of formlessness.[58] In response to this criticism, Wagner's 1861 essay *'Zukunfstmusik'* ('Music of the Future') despairs at the public outcry for conventional melody, and details the 'shrill and frequent outcry of our shallow musical dilettanti for "Melody! Melody!"'.[59] The composer's seeming exasperation with the public's preoccupation with traditional melody affirms Grey's suggestion that '[i]n Wagner's aesthetics, as in his sociology, "convention" is the root of all modern malaise and the inexorable alienation from all that is genuine, true, and natural', thereby placing the composer's view at odds with that of Nordau.[60] Wagner also disputes the use of conventional operatic forms such as aria and recitative, as he states that his own *Rienzi* (1840) was inspired by such supposedly regressive forms.[61] He stresses that this type of traditional idiom has no place in the music of the future, and instead presents the idea of 'endless melody'.[62]

Summarised by the composer as a means by which to 'stretch out the melody, through richest evolution of all the motives laying in it, to one vast, one solid piece of music, which in itself is nothing but one sole continuous melody', the endless melody marked the point of Wagner's departure from established musical form.[63] According to Grey, issues raised by those who opposed the idea of endless melody included technical problems such as excessive musical declamation, a lack of rhythmical clarity and the inability to express the syntax of human speech.[64] One critic described the singers in *Tristan* as 'sighing and lamenting, shouting and rejoicing, seething and roaring', rhetoric that calls to mind concerns about populations described as 'unevolved', 'savage' and 'primitive' in racially-charged contemplations of social degeneracy by the likes of E. B. Tylor and Ernst Haeckel.[65] Overall, it seems that many critics

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[57] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 199.
[58] Thomas S. Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 242.
[59] Richard Wagner, 'Music of the Future,' in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works, vol. 3, The Theatre*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (London: Keegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1907), 332.
[60] Grey*, Wagner's Musical Prose*, 242–50.
[61] Wagner, 'Music of the Future,' 327.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 334.
[64] Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose*, 242–57.
[65] 'Actenstücke aus München,' *Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung* 13 (1865), 158, quoted in Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose*, 245. See also E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: John Murray, 1871), available at:https://archive.org/details/primitiveculture01tylouoft (accessed 12.12.2016); Ernst Haeckel, *The Evolution*

shared the view that Wagner's endless melodies were an affront to traditional musical values, alongside the implication that they were nothing more than a regressive musical idiom that harked back to ancient, even primitive forms of musical expression. Nordau certainly believed that, like the leitmotif, endless melody constituted a return to music's primaeval starting point.

> A searching examination has thus shown us that this pretended musician of the future is an out and out musician of long-ago. All the characteristics of his talent point not forward, but far behind us. His *leit-motif*, abasing music to a conventional phonetic symbol, is atavism; his unending melody is atavism, leading back the fixed form to the vague recitative of savages.[66]

By adopting the dialectical character of Social Darwinism, Nordau's vilification of Wagner's music in this passage draws upon the intellectual backdrop of nineteenth-century evolutionary science. The author manipulates the authority of pseudo-scientific language to orchestrate his attack on the supposed 'stigmata' of degeneracy in Wagner's music, employing a similar methodology to suggest that Wagner's music had a detrimental effect on its listeners, and that, furthermore, the supposed sickness of the composer and his works had the ability to 'infect' the upcoming generation of composers.

Discourses of Music, Disease and Contagion

Nordau's derision of Wagner's musical style centres around the leitmotif and the endless melody, but his broader comments on modern music reveal another crime of degeneracy of which the composer would likely have been found guilty. Nordau believes that the objective of modern music is to 'agitate the mind by its form' and to arouse a state of nervousness in the listener.[67] His fixation on the idea of nervousness throughout *Entartung* is perhaps owed to his belief in a condition known as neurasthenia.

> [T]he physician, especially if he have devoted himself to the special study of nervous and mental maladies, recognises at a glance, in the fin-de-siècle disposition, in the tendencies of contemporary art and poetry […] degeneration (degeneracy) and hysteria, of which the minor stages are designated as neurasthenia.[68]

Roy Porter describes this long-discredited diagnosis as 'nervous breakdown produced by the frantic pressures of advanced civilization'.[69] The term was coined by the American physician

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of Man: A Popular Exposition of the Principal Points of Human Ontogeny and Phylogeny, trans. Joseph McCabe (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892).
[66] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 204.
[67] Ibid., 12–13.
[68] Ibid., 15.
[69] Roy Porter, *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 151.

George M. Beard and was popularised after the publication of his *A Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia): Its Symptoms, Nature, Sequences, Treatment* in 1880 and *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences* in 1881.[70] Beard's overview of neurasthenia in the preface to *American Nervousness* reveals that, like much nineteenth-century pseudo-scientific discourse, the work was an attempt to highlight the detrimental effects of modernity and the associated decline of western civilisation.[71] Encompassing such concerns as technological advancement, industrialisation, the rise of urban living and the associated access to the corruptive influence of alcoholism and sexual promiscuity, Beard argued that modernism was the genesis of this ailment.[72] Despite being originally conceived as an American condition that was triggered by fast-paced and industrialised city life, neurasthenia soon gained recognition in Europe and was commonly associated with the arts. In 1903, the renowned psychiatrist and author of the foundational *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, warned that '[n]ervousness and nervous sickness can also be created by straining of the aural nerves'.[73] Indeed, one of the most popular amongst the vices and 'sensual' enticements offered by city life in recent years was music, specifically modern music. As Kennaway demonstrates in *Bad Vibrations*, the idea that music was a cause of disease was by no means novel at the turn of the twentieth century, but with a newfound focus on psychiatry, along with the supposed perils of industrialisation, 'the idea of pathological music was never as widespread in serious science and culture as in the period between the mid-nineteenth century and the First World War'.[74]

Whereas 'healthy' music might demand the attention of its listener, Nordau suggests that the formlessness of Wagner's music 'makes no sort of demand on the mind' and, as such, listeners emerge from the concert hall 'with a merely sensual feeling of having enjoyed a hot, nervously exciting tone-bath'.[75] Kennaway describes the way in which the notion of music and nervous disease was interwoven with discussions of female hysteria in the late 1800s, as Wagner's music was thought to attract the 'weak-willed' members of society.[76] In 1854, Friedrich Hinrichs referred to Wagner's endless melodies as the musical representation of the 'emancipated woman, who exchanges logic for eccentricity, who may perhaps achieve a certain

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[70] Volker Roelcke, 'Electrified Nerves, Degenerated Bodies: Medical Discourses on Neurasthenia in Germany, circa 1880-1914,' in *Cultures of Neurasthenia from to the First World War*, ed. Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Roy Porter (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001). See also George Beard, *A Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion* (New York: W. Wood & Co., 1880) and *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881).
[71] Beard, *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences*, vi–ix.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Über gesunde und kranke Nerven* (Tübingen, 1903), 71, quoted in Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations*, 68.
[74] Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations*, 63.
[75] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 211.
[76] Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations*, 71–74.

level of geniality this way, but often succumbs to her own confusion'.[77] Hinrichs' comment showcases his engagement with fears of the New Woman, who was widely perceived to be a serious threat to, and a degenerative force upon social structures which typically favoured the rationality of the masculine. Nordau, too, forged a connection between the supposed degeneracy of Wagner's music and the female population, as he suggests that 'hysterical women were won over to Wagner chiefly by the lascivious eroticism of his music'.[78] Nordau also calls to mind the aforementioned threat of the New Woman here, as he proposes that '[n]othing enchants an "intense" woman so much as demoniacal irresistibleness on the part of the woman, and trembling adoration of her supernatural power on the part of the man'.[79] The association of Wagner's unending melody with the modern woman, therefore, not only implicates his music as degenerate, but also charges it with a degree of femininity, which commonly incorporated notions of irrationality and dangerous sexuality.

Gilman suggests that Wagner himself had set the stage for growing fears about 'unhealthy music' in his *Das Judenthum in der Musik* in 1850, but paradoxically, dialogues of music and disease at the fin-de-siècle frequently referred to Wagner's music as the defining example of the relationship between music and ill-health.[80] Friedrich Nietzsche wrote that 'Wagner is a great corrupter of music. With it, he found the means of stimulating tired nerves – and in this way he made music ill'.[81] The philosopher's attack on Wagner's music, which is presented in *The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem* (1888) and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (1895), refers to the supposed effects of music on the nerves, and the associated attraction of unhealthy individuals to unhealthy art: 'Wagner increases exhaustion – therefore he attracts the weak and exhausted to him'.[82] A comparison can be drawn here to Nordau's discussion of Wagner's music, which he believed to be 'of a nature to fascinate the hysterical. Its powerful orchestral effects produced in them hypnotic states'.[83] Mark Berry describes the way in which Nietzsche's view of Wagner as a composer of 'sick' music led to the use of 'Wagner' as 'a generic term for cultural malady, akin to *décadence* and Romanticism'.[84] Nordau's condemnation of the composer was similarly suited to adaptation; he established a framework by which

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[77] Friedrich Hinrichs, *Richard Wagner und die neuere Musik. Eine kritische Skizze aus der musikalischen Gegenwart* (Halle, 1854), 63, quoted in Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose*, 246.
[78] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 211.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Sander L. Gilman, *Diseases and Diagnoses: The Second Age of Biology* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 95.
[81] Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem,' in *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche Contra Wagner, and Selected Aphorisms*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (1888; repr. Edinburgh and London: T. N. Foulis, 1911), 14, available at: https://archive.org/details/thecaseofwagnern25012gut/ (accessed 17.06.2017).
[82] Nietzsche, 'The Case of Wagner,' 13.
[83] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 210–11.
[84] Mark Berry, 'Nietzsche and Wagner,' in *The New Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Tom Stern, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 111.

broader conceptions of modernity in music could be considered unhealthy on the basis of their relationship to Wagner's compositional techniques.

Nordau mordantly remarks that the composer 'had the good fortune to endure until the general degeneration and hysteria were sufficiently advanced to supply a rich and nutritious soil for his theories and his art', thus implying his works' capacity to endure within a world now spoiled by the effects of degeneracy.[85] His belief that 'Wagner's hysteria assumed the collective form of German hysteria' further stresses the view that the composer's music not only fed upon pre-existing signs of 'nervousness' within German society, but also exploited and encouraged the proclivity for nervous hysteria amongst the German people.[86] Nordau's despair at Wagner's crimes is further intensified as he takes cues once again from the scientific model of degeneration theory, and incorporates the notion of hereditary degeneration into his argument. Commenting on what he sees as Wagner's ability to command the respect and support of the upcoming generation of composers, Nordau predicts the contamination of music by decadent artists in the coming years. Noting the composer's ability to incite the admiration and replication of his musical style, Nordau reports 'the imitation of musicians possessed of no originality, who witnessed his triumph, and, like genuine little boys wanting "to be taken," clung to his coat-tails'.[87] Arguably, what Nordau depicts here – albeit from a somewhat cynical standpoint – is the 'post-Wagnerian' composer.

Nordau's unenthusiastic view of Wagner as a potentially dangerous influence on the German people was shared only by a handful of critical thinkers (including Nietzsche, who referred to Wagner as a 'disease' and said that '[e]verything he touches he contaminates'),[88] but the author was certainly not alone in viewing those who were influenced by the composer's style in a negative light. In a 1915 article for the *Musical Quarterly*, musicologists Edgar Istel and Janet Wylie discussed the way in which the post-Wagnerian musical generation had become 'more and more shallow'.[89] Their article reports the way in which, in the years following the composer's death '[o]ut of these scraps of Wagnerian musical language a musical broth was concocted with the help of alliterating poets which became more and more distasteful to the public'.[90] Like Nordau's, this stance certainly constitutes a pessimistic view of Wagner's legacy, specifically with regards to its impact upon the future of German opera. In 1918, the Frankfurt-based critic, Paul Bekker, lauded Schreker as the only plausible successor to Wagner and a promising

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[85] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 205.
[86] Ibid., 206–10.
[87] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 213.
[88] Nietzsche, 'The Case of Wagner,' 27.
[89] Edgar Istel and Janet Wylie, 'German Opera Since Wagner,' *Musical Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1915): 267.
[90] Ibid.

representative of the new face of German opera.[91] Schreker was undoubtedly influenced by Wagnerian tradition, as evidenced chiefly, Franklin suggests, by the fact that '[l]ike Wagner's, Schreker's dramas (and he said as much himself) were born out of music and tended to resolve themselves back into it in preludes, postludes and lengthy intermezzi'.[92] Further to this, Schreker's operas often see the use of complex networks of leitmotifs, with his rich, post-Romantic harmonic language and deployment of vast orchestras also conjuring an image of his musical predecessor. Despite placing the composer in the high esteem of Bekker, his music also constituted an example of the supposed 'rot' that – for Nordau, at least – had already set in on the basis of Wagnerian principles.

Schreker's Degenerate *Klang*

> …the impoverished grasp of harmonic movement; the clumsy chord-shifting from one pedal-point to the next, as if from one cushion to another; the absence of thematic clarity, which had a disastrous effect on the later works especially; and the frequently amorphous rhythms.[93]

So reads Adorno's summary of the objections raised against Schreker's music by critics during the composer's lifetime. The passage bears some resemblance to Nordau's description of degenerate music, which he describes chiefly in terms of its deficiencies: 'conscientious observance of the laws of counterpoint', 'pedal-base with correct harmonization' and 'rounded' melodic forms and 'translucent' treatment of thematic material'.[94] Peter Franklin writes that *Die Gezeichneten* 'is clearly to be numbered amongst works of the kind that Nordau and his critical descendants would denounce as degenerate', and indeed, the language of degeneration and its associated themes and ideas permeates criticism of Schreker's oeuvre .[95] His second opera, *Der ferne Klang*, was described by a reviewer for the German periodical *Der Merkur* as a reflection of 'our tempo of life, our magnificent technology and – our neurasthenia'.[96] Hailey refers to another commentator who 'likened the effect of Schreker's music to that of hashish or opium upon the nerves' and suggested that it ultimately lead 'to the exhaustion of the attentive

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[91] Paul Bekker, *Franz Schreker: Studie zur Kritik der modernen Oper*, (1918; repr. Aachen: Rimbaud Presse, 1983).
[92] Peter Franklin, 'Style, Structure and Taste: Three Aspects of the Problem of Franz Schreker,' *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 109 (1982): 136–137.
[93] Theodor Adorno, 'Schreker (1959),' in *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 132.
[94] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 12.
[95] Peter Franklin, "'Wer Weiss, Vater, ob das nicht Engel sind?" Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*,' in *Music, Theatre and Politics in Germany: 1848 to the Third Reich*, ed. Nikolaus Bacht (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 173.
[96] Richard Specht, 'Der Ferne Klang (review),' in *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* (20 August, 1912), quoted in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 38.

listener'.[97] In their entry on Schreker in the Nazi-sponsored *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*, Theo Stengel and Herbert Gerigk refer to the composer as the product of a 'time of decay' and an exponent of 'mysticism', which, interestingly, is the rubric under which Nordau places his vilification of Wagner in *Entartung*.[98] Such extracts demonstrate the way in which Schreker's work became intertwined with the discourse of degeneracy, which, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Two, ultimately led to the suppression of his music within a cultural zeitgeist that was increasingly informed by the insidious discourse of degeneration.

Complaints waged against the composer in the press also frequently invoked his perceived talent as a *Klangphantast* (sound fantast).[99] Hailey summarises that, with regards to Schreker's musical style, the term 'Klang' (which scholars have also referred to as a form of phantasmagoria or a 'distant sound') 'usually refers to a combination of orchestration (subtle doublings and instrumental effects) and harmonic ambiguity (sonorities with two functional roots, added non-harmonic tones, indefinite bass)'.[100] The resultant impression of enigmatic iridescence is encapsulated especially well in the prelude to *Die Gezeichneten*, which can be said to characterise the work as a whole, or even, as Hailey has suggested, Schreker's entire oeuvre.[101] Here, we find pedal points which span long periods as chord progressions move swiftly through several tonal centres, or the parallel movement of triads resulting in bi-tonal flourishes which remain unresolved or simply dissipate as quickly as they materialised. Finding a place for such his 'distant sound' within the narrative of musical modernism is no simple task, as demonstrated in the introduction to this thesis.[102]

The composer's writings demonstrate an astute awareness of the critical opinion on him, and *Klangphantast* was, in fact, a label that the composer had given to himself on several occasions. In 1921 he wrote: 'I am a sound-artist, sound fantast, sound-magician, sound-aesthete and have no trace of melody'.[103] Elsewhere, he talks of orchestrating 'passionately –

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[97] P. Daehne, quoted in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 51.

[98] Herbert Gerigk and Theo Stengel 'Schreker (Schrecker), Franz,' in *Lexikon der Juden in der musik: Mit einem Titelverzeichnis jüdischer Werke* (Berlin: Hahnefeld, 1940), 251 (trans. Mirijam Galley).

[99] See Christopher Hailey, 'Rethinking Sound: Music and Radio in Weimar Germany,' in *Music and Performance During the Weimar Republic*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 27–28; Peter Franklin, 'Modernism's Distanced Sound: A British Approach to Schreker and Others,' in Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper and Clive Brown, eds., *Art and Ideology in European Opera: Essays in Honour of Julian Rushton* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 355.

[100] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 49–50.

[101] See Christopher Hailey, 'Franz Schreker: Discovering a Distant Sound,' *MusikSalon*, available at: http://musiksalon.universaledition.com/en/article/franz-schreker-discovering-a-distant-sound (accessed: 12.01.2017).

[102] See Introduction, 18–21.

[103] Franz Schreker, 'Mein Charakterbild,' *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (April 1921), reprinted in Bekker, *Franz Schreker*, 11–12.

perhaps too well'.[104] 'My themes and motives often lie' he continues, 'embedded in a world of sound'.[105] This so-called 'embedding' of motivic material is a characteristic feature of Schreker's *Klang*. Referring to this ability to create a 'comprehensive body of sound', Adorno wrote that Schreker 'really only acknowledged one possible instrument as an accompaniment for opera: the orchestra itself'.[106] Indeed, his melodies (as well as the sonic identities of individual instruments) are often obscured by, and even refracted through a dense fog of 'shimmering' orchestral colour. *Die Gezeichneten*'s evocative opening melody (Alviano's principal motif) is played by bass clarinet, with unison doublings in viola and cello masking the rich sonority of the woodwind to create a uniquely 'Schrekerian' orchestral colour. The melodic line is further enveloped by the accompanying oscillation of D major and B-flat minor triads played by piano, divisi violins, four harps and two celestes, which also further diffuses any sense of instrumental hierarchy.

Lewis Wickes compares this feature of Schrekerian composition to the 'fusion between figure and background' in *Jugendstil* art.[107] He suggests that, in featuring 'a central figure, represented with broadly swinging or whip-like curvatures, set against an ornamental mosaic-styled backdrop or background plane of (virtually) abstract colour-patchwork', the opening of *Die Gezeichneten*'s prelude figures as distinctly 'Klimtian'.[108] A reviewer of the 1919 Munich premiere of the opera stated that the performance reinforced his impression that 'the musical drama style as used by Schreker already represents the downward curve at the end of which impressionism and verism will meet to conclude their fateful alliance'.[109] Certainly, the opera serves as an illustration of the type of proto-expressionism implied in Lee's description of Schreker's style as 'a chromatic idiom that does not yet completely reject tonality but often suspends tonal function'.[110] The relationship between D major and B-flat minor is of particular significance in *Die Gezeichneten*, and this is apparent from the beginning of the prelude, where the right-hand piano (doubled by Harp 1) plays a descending D major triad while the left hand (doubled by Harp 2) is in B-flat minor. Along with the chordal celesta, the second violins

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[104] Franz Schreker, 'Zwiespaeltiges. Aus meinem Leben,' in *Der Volksfreund* (12 March, 1923) quoted in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 97.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Theodor Adorno, 'Schreker (1959)', in *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 139, 135–36.
[107] Lewis Wickes, 'A Jugendstil consideration of the opening and closing sections of the Vorspiel to Schreker's opera *Die Gezeichneten*,' *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984): 206.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Review of the Munich premiere of *Die Gezeichneten* (1919) held at the Deutsches Theatermuseum (Munich). No author name, date or publication name is provided.
[110] Sherry D. Lee, 'A Minstrel in a World without Minstrels: Adorno and the Case of Schreker,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 58, no. 3: 640, available at: https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2005.58.3.639 (accessed 12.06.2018).

resonate this bitonality with pizzicato triads and, above, another layer of tonal ambiguity materialises from chromatic sextuplets in the first violins.

The genesis of Schreker's unique musical style is revealed by his own comments on his work: 'I am a bad poet, but a good musician; my poetic talent, however, is much more relevant than my musical talent; my music grows from my poetry, and my poetry from my music…'.[111] Here, Schreker alludes to his tendency to compose an entire opera based simply on an elusive musical intuition. Bekker described this phenomenon as the '[c]rystallization of image out of musical mists', which he elaborates on as:

> […] his ability to generate an entire stage work out of an aural impression, from which it springs and into which it returns at the close, in an organic unity of music, scene, and action, in which one brings the other: it is the mark of a natural theatre talent who does not compose operas on librettos, but rather writes stage works out of music-dramatic inspiration.[112],

This description of Schreker's compositional modus operandi provides a context for the apparent 'formlessness' of his style. The melodic contour of the first episode of prelude, which is largely driven by the exposition of the principal leitmotifs, can be thought of as one long, drawn-out melody. New material is seamlessly incorporated without any interruption to the rippling semi-quaver accompaniment in upper strings, celeste, harp and piano. Furthermore, although the leitmotifs heard in the opening section form part of a larger, overarching melodic contour, the nature of Schreker's orchestral writing allows them to exist free from the hierarchy of distinct melody and accompaniment or tension and resolution by cadence. As Bekker suggests, 'Schreker is primarily a melodist', yet his melody is not harmonically or cadentially motivated, but is instead a 'free-flowing' and 'horizontally flowing melody'.[113]

A comparison might be drawn here to Nordau's view of Wagner's compositional style as formless and without purpose. This seemingly 'degenerate' characteristic of Schreker's compositional style can also be thought of as an example of the dissolution of conventional, goal-oriented movement in modernist music. Schreker's *Klang* may therefore represent an example of the way in which '[d]eformity and disfigurement enter modernist music as the shattering of traditional norms of formal continuity'.[114] Joseph Straus explains:

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[111] Franz Schreker, 'Mein Charakterbild,' *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (April 1921), reprinted in Paul Bekker, *Franz Schreker: Studie zur Kritik der modernen Oper* (1918; repr. Aachen: Rimbaud Presse, 1983), 11–12 (my translation).
[112] Paul Bekker, *Gesammelte Schriften. Vol. 2*, *Klang und Eros* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1922), 30–31, quoted and translated in Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878-1934,* 88.
[113] Bekker, *Franz Schreker*, 49–50.
[114] Joseph N. Straus, *Broken Beauty: Musical Modernism and the Representation of Disability* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 18.

> The idea of *motion* – usually toward climaxes or cadences – plays a central role in traditional canons of musical beauty. But modernist music very frequently prefers harmonies that are relatively static, turning in on themselves, lacking a sense of direction, circular rather than teleological. The time of modernist music is relatively nonlinear, preferring a sense of simultaneity to a sense of one thing leading purposefully toward a logical successor: instead of one chord leading to another, their notes may be commingled.[115]

Harmonic motionlessness and waywardness of form are constituent features of the Schrekerian *Klang*, and in modernist music, these features characterise sonic manifestations of disability. It is notable, then, that in this opening section of the prelude, the only leitmotifs heard in their completed form are representative of Alviano's character. However, Strauss identifies fragmentation as a key characteristic of the relationship between modernist music and disability, writing that 'the modernist musical body is fractured, deformed, and grotesque'.[116] He describes the work of composers more closely aligned with modernism (such as Schoenberg and Stravinsky) as shattered, fractured or dismembered, and thus as embodying various 'disabled' physical states. Schreker avoided any radical departures from musical convention, opting, instead, to compose in a style that maintained ties to both Romantic and modernist musical idioms. His music appears to concern itself less with deformation than with 'degeneracy', with the constituent features of the Schrekerian *Klang* serving as musical evocations of 'sickness' and 'decadence' in Nordau's sense of the term. Schreker's compositional style thus represents not only a form of proto expressionism, but a precursor to modernist music's disability aesthetic.

Although the prelude serves as a self-contained sample of the of the composer's signature sound world, this material reoccurs throughout the opera in dramatic moments which traffic in notably 'degenerate' or 'decadent' themes. As I will further explore in the following section, this alignment of musical and dramatic 'degeneracy' is not insignificant. Franklin observes that 'historians of twentieth-century music have spent so much time coming to terms with the problematic surface of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, that they have, almost inevitably, neglected the equally problematic *content* of such an apparently decadent stylistic conservative as Schreker'.[117] *Die Gezeichneten* draws upon decidedly decadent, modernist subject matter, dealing with issues of personal identity, the nature of art and the ideals of health and beauty, often alongside allusions to the ubiquitous notion of degeneracy.

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[115] Ibid., 24.
[116] Ibid., 18.
[117] Peter Franklin, *The Idea of Music: Schoenberg and Others* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1985), 144.

Colliding Narratives of Aesthetic Beauty and Moral Degeneracy in *Die Gezeichneten*

Fin-de-siècle discourses of degeneration often referred to the bodily stigmata of degeneracy which had been proposed and popularised in pseudoscientific phrenological texts such as those of Lombroso and Gall. The influence of these concepts on wider society is illustrated by the way in which ideas about the supposedly visible signs of degeneracy were incorporated into the popular fiction of the time. Gothic villains seem to have been embraced as a particularly amenable vehicle for the transmission of these ideas in that they were consistently described in Lombrosian terms (with reference to the shape of their heads, the proportion of their facial features and the particularities of their gait). Yet, as Pick points out, there also existed a tension at this time between 'the image of the degenerate and the unseen essence of degeneration'.[118] Cultural fears of heredity and 'hidden' degeneracy were encapsulated in novels such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). In Stephenson's novel, the seemingly respectable Henry Jekyll distils the evil side of his character into the deformed body of his alter-ego, Edward Hyde. *Dorian Gray* similarly deals with the theme of concealment, as the interior depravity of the protagonist is masked by the beauty and vitality of his exterior form. Lee observes a number of comparisons between Schreker's opera and Wilde's novel, both of which contain 'elements of transgressive sexuality, flouting of social mores in pursuit of hedonistic pleasure, and meditation on art and artists and their relation to their subjects'.[119]

References to both heredity and phrenology can be found in *Die Gezeichneten*'s libretto. In Act One, Scene Four, for example, Alviano describes his circle of noblemen friends as 'the best of Genoa's nobility – on their brow you can read the names of their illustrious lineage'. Albeit a potentially inadvertent inclusion on the composer's part, this phrenological reference may speak to the enduring popularity of the pseudoscience well into the twentieth century. Moreover, in light of such an allusion, it is perhaps significant that Carlotta's aesthetic beauty belies internal fault. Throughout the opera, Carlotta is described in terms of her beauty and vitality, yet, as her confession during the atelier scene of Act Three reveals, her aesthetically normative exterior conceals an interior defect. Here, she relays the story of a 'friend' to Alviano:

> From earliest youth my friend had a heart condition. It often wanted to beat much too strongly; and sometimes she felt as if a hand, a hard, merciless hand, grabbed the

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[118] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration,* 52.
[119] Sherry D. Lee, '"Deinen Wuchs Wie Musik": Portraits, Identities, and the Dynamics of Seeing in Berg's Operatic Sphere,' in *Alban Berg and His World*, ed. Christopher Hailey (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 178.

> pulsating thing and squeezed it, in an awful and painful way, so that it would calm down! She painted this hand, this cruel hand, and painted her pains.

The painter to whom Carlotta refers, of course, is herself, and she goes on to reveal that the source from which she takes inspiration is suffering, 'not of the heart, but of the body'. In its desire 'to beat much too strongly', her heart can be understood as a symbolic representation of her own yearning for autonomy and independence. In the opera's opening scene, Carlotta's father, the Podestà, suggests that Alviano may find his daughter 'too free-minded', confessing that, to his 'dismay […] she cares little about the standards of society'. The language of free-spiritedness was often used to describe women who failed to adhere to conventional gender roles, particularly in the context of the discursive trend of the fin-de-siècle New Woman, which often intersected with the discourse of degeneracy. Sally Ledger notes that the New Woman's 'association with modernity and the cultural avant-garde meant that [she] was often linked to the decadent movement in art and literature'.[120] The related tendency to consider female artists as dangerously intellectual and emancipist in modernist German literature is outlined by Marsha Meskimmon, who suggests that female artists were 'constructed most commonly as "creative" or "bohemian" versions of the modern, urban *neue Frau*'.[121]

Questions about the relationship between art and gender are raised at various points in Schreker's libretto, as, for example, at the beginning of Act Three, when a female citizen of Genoa expresses her fears about the magical inhabitants of Elysium, and a male citizen responds: 'Woman – you do not understand: that is "art"'. For Lee, Schreker's endowment of Carlotta with artistic ability emboldens and empowers her, especially given her designation as a portrait artist (which suggests her appropriation of the male gaze) and in light of the policy debates in the early-twentieth century regarding the admission of women into esteemed art schools.[122] Schreker's inclusion of a talented female artist in *Die Gezeichneten* is notable, but nevertheless, Claire Taylor-Jay points out that 'the conceptualization of creativity as a truly masculine phenomenon was widespread in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries', and the author observes the overlooking of Carlotta as the work's 'true' artist figure both within the opera's libretto and by several scholars of the opera.[123] Indeed, when the Podestà first encounters Elysium, he says 'it is utterly stupefying, that a single person's brain could have

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[120] Sally Ledger, 'The New Woman and Feminist Fictions,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 165.
[121] Marsha Meskimmon, *We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 233.
[122] Lee, 'Portraits, Identities, and the Dynamics of Seeing,' 179.
[123] Claire Taylor-Jay, "'I Am Blessed with Fruit": Masculinity, Androgyny and Creativity in Early-twentieth-Century German Music,' in *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice*, ed. Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 183, 199–200.

conceived this magical realm!', and despite Alviano's assertion that '[t]he artists created it – I only contributed the yearning', he is lauded by the people of Genoa as a 'Bringer of Beauty' and a 'Friend of the muses'. I would suggest, then, that Carlotta seems first and foremost to be positioned as a threat to the 'masculine' creativity that manifests itself on the island. Weininger wrote that female emancipation 'is not the wish for an outward equality with man, but […] the deep-seated craving to acquire a man's character, to attain his mental and moral freedom, to reach his real interests and his creative power'.[124] In this light, Carlotta's role as an artist demonstrates her lack of adherence to conventional gender norms, yet Alviano's continuous designation as an artist challenges her artistic autonomy.

Certain parallels can be drawn between Carlotta's treatment and fate as an artist and as a sexually independent woman. Implications of moral degeneracy actually surround her romantic and sexual encounters throughout the opera, and this is conveyed musically as well as textually. Characteristics of the *Klang* appear during her flirtatious exchange with Tamare in scene four of the first act. Here, rippling semi quaver arpeggio movement in the harps (first heard at the opening of the prelude) accompanies much of their conversion. Tamare declares that he would give his life for Carlotta (having only set eyes on her a single time), and in response, she says:

> And if this were just what I wanted?
> You are so tall, so powerful and
> Strong – so far above me.
> I have to stretch, see, just to look into these
> *(mockingly)* eyes of yours, oh so confident of victory!
> *(In a different voice, like a pleading, spoilt child)*
> Yet I desire to see you small and low and poor,
> far beneath me, so that my feet can touch you.

In her desire to usurp Tamare's physical and symbolic masculine dominance, her words (as well as Schreker's accompanying directions) suggest her role as a quintessential *femme fatale*. Her chromatic vocal line is doubled by the oboes and muted first violins, while the accompanying arpeggio movement is shared between piano and harp, almost as if to obscure its source (bars 440-443).The relationship between disease, degeneracy and sexual desire in the opera is further indicated by the fact that the symptoms of Carlotta's heart condition only manifest in overtly erotic scenes, and moreover, these dramatic moments often coincide with instances of the Schrekerian *Klang*. For Lee, the wordless yet inherently decadent sonorous quality of the opera's prelude is 'lent dramatic concretion' when it materialises in the atelier scene of Act

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[124] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 64.

Three.[125] If the prelude serves as a self-contained example of the 'degeneracy' of Schreker's music, the studio – a site of decadence and degeneracy (art, sex, disease) in the context of the opera – is an apt location for its dramatisation.[126]

Having professed her love to Alviano in the Atelier scene, Carlotta frantically attempts to complete her painting, but Schreker's stage directions describe her as 'breathing painfully and with difficulty' as she 'clutches at heart' before collapsing from exhaustion upon completion of her artwork. In this moment, we hear the *Mißgestalt* (misshapen figure or deformity) motif in the horns in bars 812-815. In the prelude, the initial exposition of this motif at rehearsal figure 2 is followed by sequential repetition of the motif described by Schreker as Alviano's 'love-seeking', which represents his yearning for love and beauty, and more specifically, his inability to obtain them due to his physical appearance.[127] Schreker describes the following section as a 'fierce intensification' (*heftige Steigerung*), which reaches a climax in the 3/2 bar at rehearsal figure 3 –2. The occurrence of what Franklin describes as 'a sudden cinematic cut' at rehearsal figure 4 marks the end of the first section of the prelude, which might be considered as the first 'episode' (example 1.5).[128] The return of this musical climax accompanies the dramatic climax of the Atelier scene – the moment in which Carlotta completes the painting and collapses:

> With a pleading gesture she holds him back, making him stay in his place, and continues to paint with visibly mounting, almost feverish excitement. He remains there, devouring her with his eyes, breathing heavily, as if fighting against an overwhelming emotion. Breathing deeply, she throws the brush away while examining the painting. Then she suddenly staggers, clutching at her heart, and is about to fall.

In the aforementioned *American Nervousness*, George M. Beard listed 'tremulous and variable pulse and palpitation of the heart' among the various symptoms of neurasthenia, and his words call to mind Carlotta's description of her own heart. This somatic effect is also depicted musically by the fluttering of the arpeggiated harps. Earlier in this chapter, I outlined the way in which notions of female free-spiritedness and sexuality were incorporated into discussions about dangerous music at the fin-de-siècle. However, the belief that women were more receptive to the ill-effects of degeneracy was not restricted to considerations of music: the

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[125] Sherry D. Lee, '"Deinen Wuchs Wie Musik": Portraits, Identities, and the Dynamics of Seeing in Berg's Operatic Sphere,' in *Alban Berg and His World*, ed. Christopher Hailey (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 182.
[126] Lee describes the portrait studio as 'historically coded as a site of seduction', with the relationship between artist and model 'tinged with the erotic'. See Lee, 'Portraits, Identities, and the Dynamics of Seeing,' 179.
[127] Franz Schreker, *Die Gezeichneten: Einführung in den Inhalt und die Thematik* (Vienna and Leipzig: Universal-Edition, 1918), 2 (all translations from this source are my own). Schreker himself sets out the opera's motifs in this guide, when I refer to motifs in my analysis, I use the names assigned by him.
[128] Franklin, 'Style, Structure and Taste,' 142.

discursive intersection of female sexuality and 'nervousness' was similarly associated with the wider cultural avant-garde. In 1927, for example, Oskar Goguel suggested that responsibility for the decline of 'masculine' German music lay with 'feminine-neurasthenic artist-types'.[129] Suhc ideas were founded in fears of increasing female autonomy and separation from traditional social and sexual norms in light of degeneration theory. As Jane Wood describes, '[t]he spectre of nervous degeneration loomed large over women's sexual lives as claims of inferior brain capacity and over-sensitive nervous organisation called into question their constitutional fitness for the roles that nature and society had assigned them'.[130] Indeed, for many of those who formulated theories of degeneration, women represented a less-evolved portion of humanity who were more susceptible to the 'symptoms' of degeneration. In this light, Carlotta's artistic autonomy appears to be destabilised by her heart condition, and interestingly, the two leitmotifs attributed to her character are representative of her artistry and her weakness.[131] Her collapse upon completion of the painting may be linked to both her expression of sexual desire and her lofty artistic ambitions, which she reveals when she confesses her 'greed to be famous'.[132]

In a final demonstration of her sexual autonomy, Carlotta rejects Alviano and yields to the amorous advances of Tamare in Act Three, causing a second collapse (and a further indication of her bodily degeneracy). His description of their sexual encounter in the final scene of the opera is undeniably sinister:

> Her lips begged for mercy;
> stammered the age-old song
> of fearful resistance.
> But her eyes begged for lust.
> From her mouth escaped – an
> agonized confession;
> Fear and horror; yet her eyes, wild and
> uncontrolled, sparked with aroused desire.

Nevertheless, Carlotta briefly awakens to confirm her love for him. Upon discovery of their tryst, Alviano's initial understanding that Tamare has raped Carlotta seems to upset the protagonist less than the suggestion that she gave herself freely. In keeping with prevalent understandings of female sexuality as inherently pathological, Carlotta dies as a result of sexual

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[129] Oskar Goguel, *Sterbende Kultur: Die Niedergang der deutschen Tonkunst* (Freiburg: 1927), 20, quoted and translated in Taylor-Jay, 'Masculinity, Androgyny and Creativity,' 193–94.
[130] Jane Wood, 'New Women and Neurasthenia: Nervous Degeneration and the 1890s,' in *Passion and Pathology in Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 163.
[131] Schreker, *Einführung*, 14.
[132] As Taylor-Jay observes, this is 'hardly a normal preoccupation for a woman of her social status'. See Taylor-Jay, 'Masculinity, Androgyny and Creativity,' 199–200.

exhaustion. Her death at the end of Act Three can therefore be understood as neutralising both her artistic and sexual autonomy.

As a sexually independent woman, an artist and the sufferer of an invisible disease, Carlotta's susceptibility to 'degeneracy' appears to be threefold. For the likes of Nordau, the degeneracy of artists was divulged not only by their bodies, but by their work, and the nature of Carlotta's paintings further reveals her role as a typically 'degenerate' figure. Hailey observes an interesting connection between the artwork of Carlotta and that of Schoenberg,[133] who had been 'singled out as a locus of hostility' since the early years of the twentieth century and whose oeuvre eventually became 'the Nazis' prime exemplar of entartete music'.[134] In the portrait studio, Carlotta reveals that the true objects of her paintings are the souls of her subjects, and that, furthermore, these souls manifest themselves on her canvas in the form of hands. She describes 'two hands, closely entwined with one another, […] pained like a heaving ocean', a hand 'which clawed itself into living flesh', and from another painting, 'a weak purple glow […] like a silent lament, like a suppressed whimpering cry and like a scream, restrained and in deadly fear, like a restrained scream of deliverance'. Hailey points out that these overtly expressionistic descriptions bear 'an uncanny resemblance' to Schoenberg's studies of hands, which he was painting during the period in which *Die Gezeichneten* was composed and which had 'a deep impression on Schreker'.[135] Schoenberg shared his artistic style with expressionists such as Oskar Kokoschka, Edvard Munch and Egon Schiele, whose works were displayed at the 1937 *Entartete Kunst* exhibit in Munich.[136] I would argue, therefore, that the similarities between the artistic approaches of Schoenberg and Carlotta are significant, with the latter's heart condition ostensibly constituting an example of the oft-drawn connections between artists and the somatic manifestations of their degeneracy.[137] As I will demonstrate in Chapter Two, Carlotta is not *Die Gezeichneten*'s most markedly 'degenerate' character. The opera plays host to a rich and complex subtext of art and moral and physical degeneracy, reflecting the way in which notions of bodily degeneracy had become increasingly entwined with perceptions of cultural 'sickness' in the cultural and discursive context of the fin-de-siècle. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Carlotta serves as a symbol of increasing anxieties about both female sexuality and avant-garde artistic sensibilities, thereby demonstrating Schreker's probable familiarity, if

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133 Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 65–67.
134 Jennifer Shaw, 'Schoenberg's Collaborations,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schoenberg*, ed. Jennifer Shaw and Joseph Auner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 234; Joy H. Calico, *Arnold Schoenberg's A Survivor from Warsaw in Postwar Europe* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2014), 1.
135 Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 66.
136 Allen Shawn *Arnold Schoenberg's Journey* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 62.
137 For example, in Nordau's assessment of Walt Whitman (see 56).

not his engagement, with the identity politics of the early-twentieth-century German-speaking realm.

Zemlinsky's 'Imitation' of Musical Degeneracy

Like Schreker's, Zemlinsky's musical style can be characterised in terms of its conflicting aesthetic currents. These currents are clearly incorporated into the musical landscape of *Der Zwerg*, which, with a conservative tonal palette and formal organisation, is partly in keeping with more traditional musical idioms. Hailey and Beaumont have both observed 'neoclassical' elements in the music of the Infanta, which, as Lee summarises, is 'lightly orchestrated, clearly phrased, and largely harmonically consonant; a dancelike character and overall clarity of texture predominate'.[138] Alongside its adherence to such traditional musical tendencies, the music of *Der Zwerg* is also in keeping with a more early modernist aesthetic. From lavish orchestration and timbral complexity to angular melodies and extremes of register, post-Romantic tropes permeate the Dwarf's music, which displays proto-expressionistic qualities akin to those of Schreker's score for *Die Gezeichneten*. In fact, Lee argues that certain parts of *Der Zwerg* are distinctly 'Schrekerian', and she describes the garden scene as follows:

> …high chromatic arpeggiations on muted strings, piccolo, harp and celesta, ascend and descend between a tritone pedal sustained by strings five octaves apart. This wide spacing, combined with the long sustained notes and weak rhythmic articulation, lends the texture a floating, suspended feeling. Running passages in the harp are punctuated by the triangle. The melody of the soprano-alto chorus is echoed in a timbrally strange doubling of high solo cello and trumpet. Crystalline textures, timbral blurring and harmonic ambiguity: the passage is saturated with hallmarks of Schreker's 'phantasmagoric' style.[139]

Sections of Wilde's 'The Birthday of the Infanta' might equally be described as phantasmagorical in terms of the quintessentially decadent, dreamlike iridescence evoked in his description of the garden.

> The purple butterflies fluttered about with gold dust on their wings […] the pomegranates split and cracked with the heat, and showed their bleeding red hearts. Even the pale yellow lemons, that hung in such profusion from the mouldering trellis

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[138] Sherry D. Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror, or, Recognizing the Self: Wilde's and Zemlinsky's Dwarf,' *Music and Letters* 91, no. 2 (2010): 211. See also Antony Beaumont, *Zemlinsky* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 304–09; Christopher Hailey, 'Zemlinsky's Mirror,' American Symphony Orchestra, 2002, available at: http://americansymphony.org/zemlinskys-mirror/ (accessed 12.04.2019).

[139] Sherry D. Lee, 'Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity,' (PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia, 2003), 157–58.

> and among the dim arcades, seemed to have caught a richer colour from the wonderful sunlight, and the magnolia trees […] filled the air with a sweet heavy perfume.[140]

Zemlinsky adopts certain stylistic aspects of the work of Wilde, whom Nordau dubbed the 'chief' aesthete and an author who 'admires immorality, sin and crime'.[141] Nordau observed in Wilde and his works a 'love of the artificial' and an 'aversion […] to all forms of activity and movement'.[142] This sense of stasis – invoked in the above passage by the description of the mouldering trellis, hanging lemons and cracked pomegranates basking in the sunlight – arguably finds a parallel in *Der Zwerg*, the dramatic action of which, though tragic, is rudimentary. The composer builds tension towards the Dwarf's anagnorisis by incorporating, in Berg's words, 'much that is undramatic', and Beaumont implies Zemlinsky's adoption of Wilde's penchant for 'decorative' adornment by suggesting that 'almost a third of the opera is given over to embellishment'.[143] Along similar lines, albeit in the form of a characteristically negative critique of the opera, Adorno stressed that Wilde's tale 'does not have enough substance to yield a full-scale dramatic work' and that as a result, Zemlinsky's opera 'degenerates into dramatic padding'.[144] In these moments of embellishment, Zemlinsky's music is in keeping with the neoclassical quality identified by Beaumont and Hailey, but Lee also observes the presence of 'altered scales, parallel chords, and strokes of percussion (including tambourine, triangle, and cymbals)', which generate an effect of 'exotic' strangeness in the work's orchestral introduction.[145] The similarities between Zemlinsky's work and both the compositional style of Schreker and the 'decadent' literary techniques of Wilde calls to mind Nordau's claim that, just as society is susceptible to the negative impact of the contemporary arts, it is 'the same power of obsession with which the degenerate in mind wins imitators'.[146]

Further to evoking the colouristic traits of Schreker's *Klang*, the score for *Der Zwerg* also includes aspects of the Wagnerian musical degeneracy outlined in *Entartung*, once again calling to mind Nordau's and Nietzsche's identification of Wagner as the index case of musical sickness. Zemlinsky employs a system of leitmotifs that represent both the concrete and the abstract, and Antony Beaumont notes that '*Der Zwerg* is the only opera of Zemlinsky's to use anything approaching Wagnerian leitmotif technique'.[147] Moreover, the composer himself

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[140] Oscar Wilde, 'The Birthday of the Infanta,' in *A House of Pomegranates* (London: Methuen & Co., 1915), 31–32.
[141] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 317, 320.
[142] Ibid., 317.
[143] Bernard Grun, *Alban Berg: Letters to His Wife*, ed. and trans. Bernard Grun (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), 526; Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 51.
[144] Theodor Adorno, 'Zemlinsky (1959),' in *Quasi Una Fantasia*, 125.
[145] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror,' 211.
[146] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 32.
[147] Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 51.

described the music of *Der Zwerg* as 'continually flowing' and as having 'no arias as in Italian opera', thereby invoking Wagner's deliberations on the 'endless melody' as a departure from traditional operatic forms.[148] Like Schreker, Zemlinsky was praised during his own lifetime for the post-Wagnerian appeal of his work: Arnold Schoenberg wrote 'I do not know of one composer after Wagner who could satisfy the demands of the theatre with better musical substance than he'.[149] However, unlike Schreker, comparisons to Wagner were often accompanied by insinuations of imitation, not innovation. In an early review of *Der Zwerg*, one critic referred to aspects of self-imitation within the opera, remarking that 'it sounds like a confession to oneself when one notices that the beautifully formed love theme […] is a quotation from an early work, four little-known piano pieces, and frothing, genuinely tragic melody in the same scene stems from *Traumgörge*'.[150] The author of this review suggests that these elements of self-quotation constitute 'a rejection of the siren call of some modern music' and 'builds on solid ground', thus guaranteeing the 'longevity' of Zemlinsky's musical appeal.[151]

The more openly negative aspects of Zemlinsky's reputation as an imitator are encapsulated in Mark Moscovitz's account of the creation, revision and reception of his second opera, *Es War Einmal* (*Once Upon A Time*, 1911).[152] Moscovitz notes that, when Zemlinsky submitted an early version of the opera's piano score to Gustav Mahler in 1898, the latter composer commented on its derivative nature, which he perceived to be 'full of resemblances and plagiarisms'.[153] Even following substantial cuts and revisions, the opera received criticism which, although largely approving of Zemlinsky's dramatic talent, condemned the overly imitative aspects of the score. Eduard Hanslick wrote that 'it could not harm anything at this stage to also make mention of one of its drawbacks…Must everything be so Wagnerian?'[154] Of course, in the following years, Wagner's work was to become the paradigm of musical 'health' against which all manifestations of degeneracy were gauged, and Kennaway summarises that 'the fact that much of the discourse of nervous music had been developed in attacks against Wagner was slowly forgotten and a new more nationalist and racist medical critique of music emerged'.[155] At this time, degenerate music was increasingly

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148 Ibid., 304, fn.
149 Arnold Schoenberg, 'My Evolution,' in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg,* ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 80.
150 Dr. R. St. Hoffmann '„Der Zwerg" von Alexander v. Zemlinsky'. Review of *Der Zwerg* held at the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung, University of Cologne. No date or publication name is provided (my translation).
151 Ibid.
152 Marc Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky: A Lyric Symphony* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 55–59.
153 Henry-Louis La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 3, *Triumph and Disillusion* (1904–1907) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 550, quoted and translated in Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 59.
154 Eduard Hanslick, *Aus neuer und neuester Zeit* (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für deutsche Literatur, 1900), 44–46, quoted and translated in Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 60.
155 Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations*, 109.

linked to race, and it was within this framework that both Schreker and Zemlinsky were most profoundly affected by the discourse of degeneracy.

During Zemlinsky's lifetime, increasingly anti-Semitic discourses of musical degeneracy frequently referred to the idea that Jews could only ever imitate German music (an idea first put forward by Wagner in his 'Judaism in Music').[156] The influence of Mahler and Schoenberg was cited in a review of Zemlinsky's seventh opera *Der Kreidekreis* (*The Chalk Circle*, 1932) by Hans Stuckenschmidt, causing 'Nazi hackles to rise'.[157] In response, Rudolf Bilke referred to Zemlinsky in 1934 as 'a wolf in sheep's clothing', his accusations against the composer taking on a familiarly reactionary quality:

> While masquerading as a serious composer, he is attempting to smuggle that music back into Germany whose leading exponents (Schoenberg, Schreker) have at last left the country […] To speak approvingly of Zemlinsky would be to demand of these other persons to be welcomed back on the red carpet.[158]

Clare Carrasco demonstrates that even the less overtly national conservative critiques of Zemlinsky's music carried anti-Semitic undertones, and the author highlights a link between designations of Zemlinsky's music as expressionist and 'Bolshevist' around 1918 with the tendency for contemporary writers to portray 'both bolshevism and expressionism as components of an international Jewish conspiracy to undermine German culture'.[159] Under the charge of degeneracy, Schreker and Zemlinsky faded into insignificance shortly after their lifetimes and were long relegated to the 'historical footnotes' of the musical canon.[160] Nordau warned that 'the two things that every artist should avoid are modernity of form and modernity of subject matter'.[161] As implied in my previous discussion of the dramatic stasis in Zemlinsky's opera, the condemnation of both works as 'degenerate' was not exclusively linked to their musical style.

Racial and Sexual Degeneracy in *Der Zwerg*

As noted, *Der Zwerg* has its literary origins in Oscar Wilde's fairy tale 'The Birthday of the Infanta', which the eighteen-year-old librettist Georg Klaren 'freely adapted' in order to incorporate his own interpretation of the work of the Viennese psychologist Otto Weininger

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156 See Richard Wagner, 'Judaism in Music,' in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works, vol. 3, The Theatre*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (London: Keegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1907), 92–93.
157 Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 406.
158 Rudolf Bilke, *Die Musik*, xxvi/6 (March 1934), 445–56, quoted and translated in Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 407.
159 Clare Carrasco, 'Zemlinsky's "Expressionist" Moment: Critical Reception of the Second String Quartet, 1918–1924,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71, no. 2 (2018): 391.
160 Franklin, 'Modernism's Distanced Sound,' 354.
161 Nordau, *Degeneration*, 320.

and related notions of cultural degeneracy. Weininger's monograph, *Sex and Character*, is 'a text that intertwines contemporary theories of biology, psychology, sexuality and race into an account of cultural degeneracy utterly characteristic of, and highly influential on, the *fin de siècle* society in which it was written'.[162] Throughout the work, Weininger attempts to quantify the pitfalls of both the Jewish and female populations against the prototype of the 'healthy' and normative Aryan male, drawing frequent comparisons between Jews and women with regards to their feminised sexual pathology and the threat it posed to the masculine hegemonic order. For Klaren, the polemics of *Sex and Character* were profoundly influential: while collaborating with Zemlinsky on *Der Zwerg*, he worked on a monograph entitled *Otto Weininger: der Mensch, sein Werk und sein Leben* (*Otto Weininger: the man, his work and his life*), which was published in 1924. His adaption of Wilde's fairy tale for Zemlinsky is therefore intended

> …to represent an abstract idea: the confrontation of *every* man with *every* woman; his ugliness should be interpreted in a wider context, as representing that sense of inferiority which – as Weininger teaches […] overcomes every eroticist when confronted by the object of his idolization…[163]

Now, Klaren was not the only figure in the musical world of the fin-de-siècle to find a source of inspiration in this reactionary manifesto of misogyny and anti-Semitism: its themes of degeneracy, female sexuality and, in particular, pathological sexual excess had captured the cultural imagination. Julie Brown suggests that Berg and Schreker, amongst others, were followers of Weininger and his work, and in his thesis, Klaren proposed that Schreker ('the mightiest living composer') had set Weininger's 'gender problems' to music.[164] In light of Zemlinsky's professional relationship with and previous attempts to collaborate with Schreker on the 'tragedy of the ugly man', Klaren's Weininger-inspired libretto for Zemlinsky is indicative of the complex network of cultural interchange in early-twentieth-century Vienna. Specifically, *Der Zwerg* is a defining example of the way in which theories of racial and sexual pathology filtered into the era's Austro-German operatic landscape, with Klaren adapting the themes of self and otherness in Wilde's source text to reflect contemporary discourses of degeneracy.

The influence of *Sex and Character* on Klaren's libretto is clearly manifested in the relationship between the Dwarf and the Infanta, which Klaren constructs as one in which '[a]

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[162] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror,' 205 (author's emphasis).
[163] Georg Klaren, 'Der Zwerg und was er bedeutet,' quoted in Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 301.
[164] Julie Brown, *Schoenberg and Redemption* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 56–77; Georg Klaren, *Otto Weininger: Der Mensch, Sein Werk, Und Sein Leben* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1924), 229 (my translation). Michael Davidson also notes Weininger's impact on modernist figures such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein and Franz Kafka. See Michael Davidson, *Invalid Modernism: Disability and the Missing Body of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 55.

man comes into contact with his fellow men, unaware that he is *different* […] and is destroyed by a woman who […] does not tell him *how* he differs, but simply plays with him'.[165] In Wilde's original narrative, the Spanish princess is twelve, yet in Zemlinsky's opera, her age is amended to eighteen, thereby bringing her into line with cultural figures such as the *femme fatale* and the New Woman, discussions of which frequently intersected with the discourse of degeneration. By making the Infanta an adult, Klaren may also have sought to align her with Weininger's perception of women. Weininger describes women as 'neither high-minded nor low-minded, strong-minded nor weak-minded. She is the opposite of all these […] she is mindless'.[166] This belief in the 'mindlessness' of women echoes the wider cultural belief in the 'unevolved' other, who, for those who believed in degeneration, constituted both an unfortunate deviation from and a threat to the healthy and normative masculine Aryan prototype. Weininger also observes a form of calculated cleverness in women, who, in his view, manipulate men for the sole, selfish purpose of sexual satisfaction.[167] *Entartung*'s dedicatee, Lombroso, had similarly posited the underdevelopment of women's brains in 1895, arguing that 'women have many traits in common with children; […] their moral sense is deficient; they are revengeful, jealous, inclined to vengeances of a refined cruelty'.[168]

Klaren's modification of the Infanta's age, in his mind, renders her 'not yet an adult but no longer a child', and throughout the opera, she is presented as a somewhat puerile character.[169] This is indicated by her desperation to view her birthday presents in the opera's opening scene, and later, when she stamps her foot 'impatiently' while exclaiming 'I do not wish to be disturbed!'[170] The Infanta is also depicted as a cruel figure who is emboldened and empowered by her physical beauty. She intentionally taunts the Dwarf in a long duet scene (an addition to Wilde's original drama), referring to him mockingly as 'strong and handsome' and 'a dazzling hero', before rejecting his offer of love by remarking on their physical differences ('I know that I am beautiful, just as you know what you look like').[171] Later, upon the Dwarf's discovery of his appearance, the Infanta reveals that she only loves him 'out of pity and disgust' before dehumanising him by stating that she could not love him 'as one loves a human

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[165] Georg Klaren, 'Zemlinsky vom psychologischen Standpunkte,' *Der Auftakt*, 204–07, quoted and translated in Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 300.
[166] Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character, Authorised Translation from the Sixth German Edition* (London: William Heinemann, 1906), 253, available at: https://archive.org/details/sexcharacter00wein (accessed 12.04.2019).
[167] Ibid., 260.
[168] Cesare Lombroso, *Female Offender* (1895; repr. New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), 151.
[169] Georg Klaren, 'Der Zwerg und was es bedeutet,' *Kölnische Zeitung,* 17 June 1922, quoted and translated in Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 189.
[170] Georg Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), trans. Roger Clement, liner notes for *Der Zwerg*, Frankfurter Kantorei, Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne, Conducted by James Conlon (EMI Classics, 1996), compact disk, 8–10, 20.
[171] Ibid., 20–24.

being'.[172] The relationship between the Infanta and the Dwarf thus reflects Weininger's suggestion that 'love of woman is doomed to unhappiness', as well as his understanding of romantic love as something that 'always implies inequality, disproportion'.[173]

The aesthetic disproportion of the opera finds a real-world parallel in the relationship between Zemlinsky and Alma Schindler, whom the composer had met and fallen for in 1900. In a journal entry, Schindler refers to Zemlinsky as 'dreadfully ugly, almost chinless', and accounts of his 'ugliness' appear with some frequency in her diaries.[174] Even after Zemlinsky and Schindler's relationship had developed into a romantic affair, she imagined their marriage and noted 'how ridiculous it would look…he so ugly, so small – me so beautiful, so tall'.[175] She ultimately rejected Zemlinsky in favour of Gustav Mahler, and *Der Zwerg* has long been understood as reflecting the composer's own insecurities about his physical appearance, which are summarised in his denigrating self-portrait: 'Short and skinny (low marks: unsatisfactory, ß-). Face and nose: impossible; every facial feature: ditto. […] Everything else as outlined above. Hence summa summarum: hideous!!'[176] The aesthetic disparity between the Dwarf and the Infanta, as well as its parallels with Zemlinsky's romantic relationship with Schindler, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Two. More pertinent to the present discussion is the fact that, beyond echoing Zemlinsky's relationship with Schindler, *Der Zwerg* deals with broader themes of outsider identity and projects aspects of the composer's biography in order to encapsulate aspects of the tempestuous cultural climate from which the opera emerged.

As Moscovitz explains, there are 'deeper and more compelling connections, such as Zemlinsky's struggles to find acceptance within critical Viennese musical society, or his feelings of being isolated and forgotten in Prague'.[177] An example of this struggle for acceptance can be found in the humiliation faced by Zemlinsky at the hands of Felix Weingartner at the Vienna Court Opera during the 1907-08 season, when performances of his opera *Der Traumgörge* were cancelled despite the fact that rehearsals were already underway. These details certainly resonate in the libretto, but whether or not the incorporation of these allusions was intentional on the part of Klaren is open to interpretation. Less speculative, Beaumont suggests, is the librettist's alteration of the Dwarf's origin to align with Zemlinsky's multicultural heritage.[178]

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[172] Ibid., 31.
[173] Weininger, *Sex and Character,* 247, 245.
[174] Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Alma Mahler-Werfel: Diaries 1898-1902,* trans. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 253.
[175] Alma Mahler-Werfel, quoted and translated in K.M. Knittel, *Seeing Mahler: Music and the Language of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 40.
[176] Alexander Zemlinsky, unpublished letter to Alma Mahler-Werfel, quoted and translated in Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 27.
[177] Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 160.
[178] Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 301.

Zemlinsky's father had converted to Judaism from Catholicism in 1870 in order to marry Clara Sevo, a Bosnian Sephardic Jew who had both Turkish-Islamic and Turkish-Jewish heritage. Their son, Alexander Zemlinsky, was a quarter Jewish, and was raised in the Leopoldstadt district of Vienna, which was known in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries for its large Jewish population. These details are reflected in the libretto for *Der Zwerg* in that, in comparison to Wilde's original protagonist (the son of a charcoal-burner who sells his son to the court), Klaren's exoticized Dwarf is a gift from the Sultan, and allegedly of noble birth.[179]

I would suggest that Klaren's interpretation of the Dwarf reflects contemporary anxieties about the Jew as 'Other', which had developed alongside the discourse of degeneracy. Wilde's protagonist has a 'mane of black hair', in Zemlinsky's opera, the Dwarf's hair is described as 'fiery'.[180] Wendy Cooper suggests that the fear of red-haired people was displayed through the profiling of red-headed women in the European witch hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in the pursuit for curative interventions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as barbers, for example, offered corrective treatments for red hair.[181] In the cultural climate of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, red hair became synonymous with barbarism, libidinousness and racial and moral degeneracy. In the 1898 book *Degeneracy: Its Causes, Signs, and Results,* Eugene Talbot suggests the existence in the British Isles of three types of man, each descended from the three chief anthropoid apes, as a result of what he refers to as 'race mixing'.[182] He describes the 'orang descendant' as having 'long arms and red hair', and argues that 'these races persisted long enough to stamp their savage beliefs on coming races and intermingled with them'.[183] The connotation of deviancy surrounding red hair has featured in popular cultural productions from the medieval and early modern periods and into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where it was increasingly used as a marker of moral and racial degeneration. For villainous Jewish characters such as Shylock from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Fagin from Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, red hair has signified moral decay and racial degeneration.[184] In this sense, Zemlinsky's opera, too, demonstrates its creators' engagement with the contemporary discourse of degeneracy. By

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[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.; Wilde, 'The Birthday of the Infanta,' 64.
[181] Wendy Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, and Symbolism* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 75.
[182] Eugene S. Talbot, *Degeneracy: Its Causes, Signs, and Results* (London: Walter Scott Ltd., 1898), 94–95, available at: https://archive.org/details/degeneracyitscau00talb (accessed 22.09.2017).
[183] Ibid., 95.
[184] See Robert I. Lublin, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2016); Heidi Kaufman, *English Origins, Jewish Discourse, and the Nineteenth-Century British Novel: Reflections on a Nested Nation* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); Deborah Heller, 'The Outcast as Villain and Victim: Jews in Dickens' Oliver Twist and Our Mutual Friend,' in *Jewish Presences in English Literature*, ed. Derek Cohen and Deborah Heller (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990), 40–60.

infusing the fairy tale's themes of perilous female beauty, obsession, alienation and the crisis of identity with references to Weininger's manifesto, Klaren appears to have constructed a psychoanalytic character study on Zemlinsky against a subtextual backdrop of social and physical degeneracy. In turn, and as I will expand upon in Chapter Two, it can be argued that the opera's physically degenerate protagonist provided Zemlinsky with a vehicle for the expression of his anxieties about his physical appearance and Jewish identity, thereby demonstrating the influence of (and the opera's contribution to) the era's discourse of degeneracy.

Conclusion

Whilst Franklin refers to Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* as an example of distinctly Nordauean musical degeneracy, he also urges his readers to look beyond the superficially decadent aspects of the work.[185] Stephen Downes has interpreted Franklin's sentiments here as a call to 'get beyond "culturally inherited Nordauism" and the more unsophisticated polemics which can characterise discourses of the "anxiety of decadence"'.[186] *Entartung* can certainly be viewed as one such example of the 'unsophisticated polemics' which surround considerations of degenerate art. However, it also offers interesting insights into the notion of supposedly degenerate music which go beyond a simple fascination with anything condemned by the Nazis. This chapter has demonstrated the extent to which pre-Fascist discourses of degeneracy drew upon diverse interdisciplinary strands in order to condemn the 'unhealthy' aspects of society and culture, thereby informing later models for medicalised artistic criticism. The associated changes in German music criticism between the late 1890s and the end of the Weimar era, which were arguably instigated by the rhetoric of *Entartung*, had a significant impact on the reception and ultimate suppression of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*.

As outlined in the final sections of this chapter, this impact is also evidenced in the musical and dramatic content of these works. From Schreker's phrenological references to Klaren's allusions to racial and sexual degeneracy in *Der Zwerg*, both operas bear familiar hallmarks of the discourse of degeneracy, arguably drawing upon the pessimistic facets of the era's intellectual climate as a means through which to foster narrative impact. In highlighting the degree of discursive exchange between these operas and their shared cultural context, this chapter has partly answered Franklin's call for scholars to consider the contribution of Schreker's opera (and those like it) 'to discourses about art and degeneracy in the spirit of the

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185 Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy,' 177.
186 Stephen Downes, *Music and Decadence in European Modernism: The Case of Central and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 214.

times in which it was written'.[187] I will expand on this idea in the following chapter as I further consider allusions to degeneracy in both *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, proposing that the notion of degeneration may have been deliberately drawn upon by artists like Schreker and Zemlinsky as means through which to create self-reflective contributions to the wider discourse of degeneracy.

[187] Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy,' 177.

2. Narrative Prosthesis: The Degenerate Body and Cultural Commentary

Die Gezeichneten and *Der Zwerg* were born out of and thus reflect a web of connecting narratives about bodily and artistic degeneracy that had its roots in the likes of Nordau's *Entartung*. The operas' contributions to this discursive network are reflected in their many allusions to the way in which iatrogenic concepts of bodily degeneracy became entwined with perceptions of social sickness and 'unhealthy' cultural productions in the early-twentieth-century German-speaking realm. In this chapter, I illustrate how Schreker and Zemlinsky refer to these prominent cultural anxieties in their respective works while drawing, often introspectively, upon related issues of morality, creativity and identity which had a profound effect on the era's cultural avant-garde. Both the operas themselves and their critical reception are bound up with the discourse of degeneracy and, in this sense, *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* can be seen to serve as platforms for (albeit possibly inadvertent) cultural critique. It is also significant, I suggest, that the aspects of self-reflection and cultural commentary in Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas are constructed around the bodies of their physically disabled protagonists.

Carol Poore refers to 'clashes over the actual presence of disabled people in public, cultural representations of disability, and the labelling of modern art as degenerate' during the era in which *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* were composed.[1] This chapter further highlights the fact that much of what can be thought of as 'degenerate' in these works (sex, sickness, disability), is directly linked to the body. I propose, therefore, that Alviano and the Dwarf reflect the growing prevalence of distinctly physical and, by association, visible manifestations of disability in modernist opera, which can be attributed to the influence of late-nineteenth-century degeneration theory. Building upon the previous chapter's consideration of moral and musical discourses of degeneracy, this chapter offers an extended exploration of the works' literary and cultural origins, providing insights into the largely underexplored intersections between degeneration theory and disability in Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas. Emphasis is placed here on the seemingly (self)reflexive nature of both *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, as a result of which it can also be argued that Alviano and the Dwarf serve as metaphors for wider notions of outsider identity which were conceived alongside degenerationist discourse which ultimately led to the suppression of both composers and their works. As such, these operas can be thought of not only as contributions to the discourse of degeneracy (as Franklin

[1] Carol Poore, *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 51.

suggests),[2] but as being characterised by something of a 'degenerate condition' in that they are, in the context with which this thesis is concerned, 'degenerate' works about 'degenerate' bodies written by 'degenerate' composers.

In utilising physical impairment to articulate the theme of outsider identity, Schreker and Zemlinsky reveal and underwrite the distinctly time-bound cultural context in which *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* were composed. The appropriation of disability in the operas' narratives represents the wider tendency towards what disability studies scholar David Hevey refers to as the 'enfreakment' of disability by artists and writers as a means through which to represent their own outsider identity.[3] This chapter illustrates the way in which Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas undertake or participate in a process of narrative prosthesis through which Alviano and the Dwarf come to serve a distinctly metaphorical purpose. Indeed, the representation of disabled bodies within the arts can provide insight into how disability has been perceived and how value has been assigned across various times and cultures, yet, narrative depictions of disability also demonstrate the enduring significance of the atypical corporeal form as a source of narrative embellishment, dramatic convention and self-reflection. Turning then to the narrative depiction of disability in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, this chapter examines stereotypical modes of disability representation which have been found to exist in literature, film and television, assessing the extent to which they are both sustained by and unsettled in the operas' narratives.

Self-Reflection and Cultural Critique in *Die Gezeichneten*

For Wolfgang Molkow, 'the reflection and refraction of art in the artwork' is a central problem in Schreker's operas, all of which, he contends, are *Künstleropern* (artist-operas).[4] Music and musicians appear with striking prevalence in Schreker's works, as in the case in *Der feme Klang* (1912), *Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin* (1913), *Der Schatzgräber* (1920), *Irrelohe* (1923) *Der singende Teufel* (1927), and *Christophorus* (1929). In that it is centrally concerned with visual art and artists, *Die Gezeichneten* appears to stand apart. Nevertheless, like Schreker's other works, the opera is fundamentally concerned with art and artists, and viewing it as an example of *Künstleroper* offers insights into its role as cultural critique and, more importantly, its mobilisation of disability as a narrative agent. Claire Taylor-Jay defines works of this genre (she deploys the English

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[2] Peter Franklin, "'Wer Weiss, Vater, ob das nicht Engel sind?" Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*,' in *Music, Theatre and Politics in Germany: 1848 to the Third Reich*, ed. Nikolaus Bacht (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 177.
[3] David Hevey, *The Creatures Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53.
[4] Wolfgang Molkow, "Der Rolle der Kunst in den frühen Opern Franz Schrekers," *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 44, no.5 (1989): 219.

translation of the term) as an explorations and statements of self-identity in which the 'central artist-characters acts as a projection by the composer and embodies an attempt at self-definition'.[5] Her book (a volume to which Schreker's operas are a notable omission) surveys the artist-operas of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith, and she makes the fundamental supposition that these operas often reflect a composer's efforts to 'construct [his life] through the persona of the fictional artist'.[6] Now, certain quasi-biographical aspects of *Die Gezeichneten* were observed by A. Albert Noelte, a reviewer of the 1919 Munich premiere who describes Schreker as 'an artistic individual blessed with real creativity, a personality with the purest passion for beauty who will never give up his artistic convictions for a safe success', and proclaims that 'a few scenes […] bring to life an emotive world of strongest intensity' which can only 'originate from a passionate, overflowing soul of a musician'.[7] Arguably, this depiction of the composer and his work allies Schreker with Alviano, particularly given the so-called 'passion for beauty' with which the composer is credited, and which he also bestows upon his protagonist. Franklin, too, observes the similarities between the composer and his protagonist, realising that the Podestà 'accused Alviano of doing what Schreker was himself often accused of – giving too much, in his artistic beneficence'.[8] The composer's reluctance to part with the libretto therefore begins to take on new significance: 'it seemed to me as if, along with the libretto, I was giving him my musical self, as if I were selling my innermost soul, my very life'.[9]

Although it is tempting to view *Die Gezeichneten*'s protagonist as a kind of autobiographical self-portrait, Taylor-Jay stresses that, in Künstleroper, '[h]ow far the composer is conscious that his fictional artist may be compared to himself is open to speculation'.[10] The author points to the significance of political commentary over autobiography in the works she studies, suggesting that these operas present 'a view about art which may be based on [the composer's] stated aesthetic purposes'.[11] She further cites the 'antagonism between artist and society' as a defining characteristic of the genre.[12] As explained in the introduction to this thesis, the laws of the time dictated Schreker's classification as

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[5] Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 24.
[6] Ibid.
[7] A. Albert Noelte, 'Die Gezeichneten,' trans. Mirjam Galley. Review of the Munich premiere of *Die Gezeichneten* (1919) held at the Deutsches Theatermuseum (Munich). No date or publication name is provided.
[8] Peter Franklin, 'Die Gezeichneten (Review),' *The Opera Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2007): 492. Franklin refers here, of course, to Alviano's decision to gift Elysium to the people of Genoa. Incidentally, a common theme of the Künstleroper genre is 'the creation of some kind of artistic eutopia', which of course, we find in *Die Gezeichneten* in the form of the island. See Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith*, 93.
[9] Franz Schreker 'Über die Entstehung meiner Opernbücher,' *Das Feuer*, 1/3 (1919), 109–10, quoted in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 65. For an account of the libretto's creation as a result of Zemlinsky's collaborative invitation, see Introduction, 8.
[10] Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith*, 24.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 34.

Jewish, according to his heritage. As an artist, his relationship with society was therefore filled with conflict, and this conflict looms large over the narrative of *Die Gezeichneten*.[13] In the previous chapter, I touched upon the way in which criticism of Schreker's music often incorporated the medically-imbued language of degeneration theory, with frequent references to infection, contamination and nervous disease to be found in reviews of his operas.[14] In conjunction with the increasingly anti-Semitic character of music criticism and the gradual incorporation of degeneration theory into fascist ideology, Schreker's Jewish heritage was also implicated as the basis of his stylistic degeneracy.

In 1921, following the Leipzig premiere of Schreker's *Der Schatzgräber* (*The Treasure Seeker*, 1920), Alfred Heuss published an article in which he referred to Schreker as one of a handful of 'Alberichs of the opera', who held sway over the era's contemporary operatic repertory via a 'brutal capitalistic power system' piloted by an exclusively Jewish collective of composers and publishers.[15] Hailey notes the influence of Jewish stereotypes on Heuss's position, noting that, 'at a time in which large sections of the population associated "Jewishness" with capitalistic profiteering and international influence, Schreker's success and his "un-German" musical internationalism were easy targets'.[16] By deriding the notion of Schreker's 'visions of sound' and instead focusing on the implicitly decadent characters in his operas, Heuss's sentiments also exemplify the way in which the apparently 'degenerate' nature of Schreker's operas is not exclusively linked to their musical style:

> It is out of the spirit of this system – and certainly not out of "visions of sound" – that the main figures of Schreker's operas are born: whores, murderesses, people sick with a perverse sexuality, "branded souls" (*Gezeichnete*) of the most varied kind: these are the sorts that are inflicted upon the German people in dozens of performances.[17]

Here, the author's engagement with the rhetoric of degeneration theory is evidenced in his use of the language of disease to describe Schreker's influence on the healthy German population.

I have previously suggested that *Die Gezeichneten* incorporates allusions and direct references to the notion of degeneracy. As well as reflecting the spirit of the times in which it was written, the work can also be seen as contributing to the era's time-bound discourse of cultural degeneracy, as Franklin has suggested. In light of the scope and tone of much criticism of Schreker and his work, I would suggest that the composer constructs these allusions as part

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[13] See Introduction, 15–16.
[14] Chapter One, 69.
[15] Alfred Heuss, 'Über Franz Schreker's oper *Der Schatzgräber* – seine Geschäftspraxis, die Schreker-Presse und Anderes,' *Zeitschrift für Musik* 88, no 22 (1921), 567–70, quoted and translated in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 145, 147.
[16] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 148.
[17] Heuss, 'Über Franz Schreker's oper *Der Schatzgräber*,' quoted and translated in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 147.

of a wider attempt to critique the discursive framework in which artists and artworks were considered unhealthy and corruptive. Schreker's conscious understanding of the cultural anxiety of degeneracy is evidenced in his own reflections on the reception of his music. In 1921, the composer's sardonically self-deprecating description of himself and his art, 'Mein Charakterbild' ('A Sketch of my Character') was published in the *Musikblätter des Anbruch*. Here, the composer lists the many contradictory criticisms that had been levelled against him in recent years.

> I am an impressionist, an expressionist, an internationalist, a futurist, a musical verist; Jewish and raised by the power of Judaism, Christian and "made" by a Catholic clique under the patronage of a princess of Vienna. […] I am a sound artist, sound-visionary, sound-magician, sound-aesthete, and have no trace of melody […]. I am a creator of melodies of pure blood, my harmonies are anaemic and perverted, however, I am a full-blooded musician! I am (unfortunately) an erotomaniac and have a corruptive influence on the German audience (apparently eroticism is my very own invention, despite Figaro, Don Juan, Carmen, Tannhäuser, Tristan, Walküre, Salome, Elektra, Rosenkavalier, etc.) […] I am also an idealist (Thank you God!), symbolist, on the left wing of modernism (Schoenberg, Debussy), not standing too far left […] I am 'full of sweet wine', 'a grandiose document of the downfall of our culture', insane […] I appeal to the audience; write only to make people angry, and recently I seriously considered to emigrate to Peru. What – for heaven's sake – am I not? I am not (yet) crazy, no megalomaniac, not bitter; I am no ascetic, no bungler or dilettante; and I have never written a critique.[18]

Schreker's words speak to the cultivation and celebration of aesthetic (bodily and artistic) norms on his reception in the years leading up to the composition of *Die Gezeichneten*, touching upon themes found in the era's discourse on artistic degeneracy. The 'corruptive influence' described by the composer calls to mind certain ideas about the dangers of modern music as a cause of disease that had been emerging during previous years, such as Nordau's belief that the objective of modern music was to 'agitate the mind by its form', or Nietzsche's summary of Wagner's music as 'the means of stimulating tired nerves – and in this way [making] music ill'.[19] The designation 'erotomaniac' also seems to encapsulate popular sentiments about decadent culture, and more importantly, it can be understood as foreshadowing the denunciation of Schreker as a degenerate composer under the Nazi regime. The authors of the 1940 *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* would cite Paul Bekker's 1919 comments on Schreker as a worthy successor to Wagner whilst also noting the composer's penchant for erotic themes:

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[18] Franz Schreker, 'Mein Charakterbild,' *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (April 1921), reprinted in Paul Bekker, *Franz Schreker: Studie zur Kritik der modernen Oper* (1918; repr. Aachen: Rimbaud Presse, 1983), 11–12 (my translation).
[19] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 12; Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem,' in *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche Contra Wagner, and Selected Aphorisms*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (1888; repr. Edinburgh and London: T. N. Foulis, 1911), 14.

> 'The most important question, whether a such a talent would ever reoccur after Wagner, whether it didn't just occur this once, this question can now be answered: Franz Schreker is such a talent, the first once since Wagner, similar in its kind but quite differently embodied.'
>
> With these words, the Jewish music author Paul Bekker presented his *Rassegenosse*[20] Franz Schreker as Wagner's successor to the puzzled public. This advertisement seemed to have fulfilled its purpose, because shortly thereafter, in March 1920, the 'Messiah of German opera' was announced director of the Hochschule für Musik. It was quite typical for the cultural politics during the time of decay to make a 'poet-composer', who chose diverse sexual aberrations as themes for his musical plays […] the head of the main music academy of the empire.[21]

Hans Severus Ziegler echoed these sentiments in the accompanying booklet to the 1938 *Entartete Musik* exhibition, where he described Schreker as a Jewish 'scribbler' whose operas were concerned principally with 'sexual-pathological aberration[s]'.[22] Ideas about pathological sexuality were central to right-wing discussions about the degeneracy of the artistic avant-garde. Playing host to Freudian undercurrents of sexuality and self-reflection and dealing with the artistic creations and clandestine activities of the distinctly degenerate noble elite, *Die Gezeichneten* incorporates many of these anxieties by drawing upon issues of creativity, personal identity and moral social conduct that were prevalent after the turn of the twentieth century. In this sense, the opera not only encapsulates, but participates in the antagonism referred to by Taylor-Jay.[23]

Schreker worked as his own librettist, and Hailey therefore describes his librettos as 'documents of a very personal, sometimes confessional nature [which] offer insights into the development of his aesthetic philosophy'.[24] The author notes that Schreker's 1924 opera *Irrelohe* was the first work that the composer had written outside of the comfort of Vienna, and he suggests that, in reflecting 'both standards and pressures imposed from without' the opera instigated a period of self-conscious reflection.[25] A degree of introspection is certainly evidenced in Schreker's 'Mein Charakterbild', which was published whilst he was composing *Irrelohe*. However, the prevalence of artist-figures in Schreker's operas from 1912 (*Der ferne*

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[20] The term 'Rassegenosse' was one of many compound expressions which became part of the Fascist lexicon in Nazi Germany. It was used almost exclusively to refer to Jews and can be translated as 'racial comrade' (according to the Nazi belief that Judaism was a race rather than a religion). See Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 499–501.
[21] Herbert Gerigk and Theo Stengel 'Schreker (Schrecker), Franz,' in *Lexikon der Juden in der musik: Mit einem Titelverzeichnis jüdischer Werke* (Berlin: Hahnefeld, 1940), 250–51 (trans. Mirijam Galley).
[22] Hans Severus Ziegler, *Entartete Musik: Eine Abrechnung von Staatsrat Dr. H.S. Ziegler* (Düsseldorf: Der Völkische Verlag, 1938), 13 (my translation), available at: https://archive.org/details/EntarteteMusik_758 (accessed 01.07.2018). See also Introduction, 15–16.
[23] Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith*, 34.
[24] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 7.
[25] Ibid., 195.

Klang) until 1929 (*Christophorus*) points to the significance of this self-reflective impulse (which is shared by each of the Künstleroper composers in Taylor-Jay's study) throughout his career. The composer's incisive self-awareness is manifested in his comments on the creation of *Die Gezeichneten*, thus substantiating the work's role as Künstleroper and as a vehicle for cultural critique:

> I succumbed – miserable, unpatriotic, un-German fellow that I was, under the spell of my work – to the ruinous influence of Southern magic, and gave Italianate colouring to the Italian setting! The war came, and popular feeling carried over destructively into art. So I became an 'Internationalist'. Even in 1913 when I began the work I foresaw, like a second Nostradamus, with the prophet's speculative eye, the coming events. Already – unconsciously considering the situation with regards to rates of exchange – I have an eye still open for the borders. The collapse of Germany, even the decline of our culture, is clearly presaged in the music and in the degenerate character [degenerierten Charakter] of this work, like [the] writing on the wall.[26]

The composer's words reflect the work's cultural origins, and the final sentence reveals Schreker's deliberate engagement with the notion of degeneracy, a further reference to which can be found in his mention of the 'popular feeling' that 'carried over destructively into art'. This is perhaps a nod to the way in which the notion of degeneracy had forged a path from scientific to cultural commentary, saturating the spirit of the times with ideas about the potential for works of art to be 'degenerate'. In this passage, Schreker unabashedly defines himself as both 'unpatriotic' and 'un-German' and, as Lee has observed, the 'international' flavour of Schreker's stylistic multiplicity, which he also acknowledges in the extract, 'could not have stood in him good musical stead within a politically-driven cultural atmosphere that sought to eradicate all that might be construed as "un-German"'.[27] As noted, the popular association of the Jewish population with capitalistic opportunism during the composer's lifetime further rendered him vulnerable to condemnation as Bolshevist and degenerate.[28] Given the composer's proclivity for irony, along with his first-hand experience of the growing cultural and aesthetic unrest of his time, *Die Gezeichneten* can therefore be read as an attack on an increasingly reactionary cultural climate.

Throughout the opera, Alviano's pursuit of aesthetic beauty is surrounded by notions of depravity, sexual indulgence and malevolence, thereby calling to mind denunciation of Schreker as both an erotomaniac and a degenerate. However, Alviano is by no means *Die*

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[26] H Schreker-Bures, H.H Stuckenschmidt and W. Oehlmann, *Franz Schreker* (Vienna, 1970), 22, quoted and translated in Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy,' 176.
[27] Sherry D. Lee, 'Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity,' (PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia, 2003), 157–58.
[28] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 148.

Gezeichneten's sole 'degenerate', or, incidentally, it's only artist figure. As previously suggested, the beautiful yet congenitally afflicted 'painter of souls', Carlotta, conjures an image of the degenerate aesthete, particularly in light of prevalent fin-de-siècle anxieties about hereditary disease and hidden degeneracy. The moral ills of the opera's noblemen also reveal a degree of social decay. Yet, it is Alviano who is ultimately misunderstood by the people of Genoa and branded a 'monster', as demonstrated by his being framed and wrongly accused of kidnapping and abusing Ginevra Scotti in Act Three. With Alviano positioned as a scapegoat for the sins of his noblemen friends, the protagonist arguably serves as a symbolic counterpart to the cultural decay of the opera's narrative. It can be argued, then, that the character of Alviano constitutes a reflection of the composer himself, whilst the protagonist's treatment within the course of the opera's plot serves as a grim foreshadowing of Schreker's fate under the creeping anti-Semitic regime. So too can narrative framework of *Der Zwerg* be understood as reflecting of aspects of Zemlinsky's biography and incorporating aspects of cultural critique, with the character of the Dwarf also serving, it seems, as a projection of the composer himself.

Aestheticism and Anti-Semitism: Biographical Projection and Cultural Commentary in *Der Zwerg*

In *Sex and Character*, Weininger proposes that 'the Jewish race […] is intimately bound up with many of the most troublesome problems of the day'.[29] Klaren's Weininger-inspired alterations to Wilde's fairy tale imbue the opera's thematic landscape with allusions to Zemlinsky's Jewish heritage alongside the broader denigration of the social and political other in popular degenerationist discourse. Moskovitz explains that '[f]or Zemlinsky, as for any other Jew in Vienna, anti-Semitism was a way of life, even if it was not confronted every day'.[30] In the previous chapter, I outlined the way in which the reception of Zemlinsky's music became bound up with both the discourse of degeneracy and the era's anti-Semitic attitudes. In addition to his frequent labelling as an 'imitator' (a term that carried undertones of conservative intolerance), instances of anti-Semitism also befell Zemlinsky's personal life. Alma Schindler's journal entries, for example, reveal her secret anxieties about the composer's Jewish identity. Having received a postcard from Zemlinsky from a coffee-house in the Leopoldstadt district in 1901, she asks, 'is he one of those little half-Jews who never succeed in freeing themselves from their roots?', thus evoking Rudolf Bilke's aforementioned description

[29] Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character, Authorised Translation from the Sixth German Edition* (London: William Heinemann, 1906), 303, available at: https://archive.org/details/sexcharacter00wein/ (accessed: 12.04.2019).
[30] Marc Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky: A Lyric Symphony* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 54.

of the composer as a 'wolf in sheep's clothing'.[31] Elsewhere, she paints a cruel picture of Zemlinsky's physical appearance: 'He was a hideous gnome. Small, chinless, toothless, always smelling like a coffee house, unwashed…'.[32] Remarking on the saturation of Schindler's journal with such slurs, K.M. Knittel observes that many of Schindler's reservations about Zemlinsky (smell, voice, lack of creativity) all refer to 'traits ascribed by her culture to the Jews'.[33] The physical attributes described by Schindler also resonate visually in the many caricatures of the composer, with which Antony Beaumont's biography is punctuated, and in which Zemlinsky is depicted as chinless, with a hooked nose and, like Wilde's Dwarf, a mane of unkempt black hair.[34] Incidentally, Sherry D. Lee recognises a number of common Jewish stereotypes in the depiction of Wilde's 'ugly, dark-complexioned' Dwarf, and the author suggests that the protagonist shares similarities with Wagner's Mime:

> Wagner's original description coincides closely with that of Wilde's Dwarf: "Mime…is small and bent, somewhat deformed and hobbling. His head is abnormally large". Even the grotesque nature of the Dwarf's movements and gestures in Wilde marks him like the Wagnerian Jewish caricature: "When he stumbled into the arena, waddling on his crooked legs and wagging his huge, misshapen head from side to side, the children went off into a loud shout of delight".[35]

In Zemlinsky's opera, the protagonist is further aligned with the visual rhetoric of the Jewish other due to Klaren's alternation of his hair colour.[36] Moreover, as a gift from the Sultan, the Dwarf is orientalised, whilst Klaren's reinterpretation of his dramatic anagnorisis as an erotic crisis evokes Weininger's understanding of feminised Jewish sexuality, as Lee has recognised.[37]

Many of the changes made by Klaren to Wilde's fairy tale infuse the opera with echoes of Zemlinsky's biography. In his operatic rendering, the Dwarf is a gift from the Sultan (perhaps as a reference to the composer's partly-Turkish heritage); he is carried into the court in a sedan chair carried by Moors (Zemlinsky's mother was a Bosnian Muslim), and he claims

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[31] Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Alma Mahler-Werfel: Diaries 1898-1902*, trans. Antony Beaumont and Susanne Rode-Breymann (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 402–03. See also Rudolf Bilke, *Die Musik* xxvi, no. 6 (1934): 445–56, quoted and translated in Antony Beaumont, *Zemlinsky* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 407.

[32] Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Mein Leben* (Frankfurt: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1989), 29 (my translation).

[33] K.M. Knittel, *Seeing Mahler: Music and the Language of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 41–42. See also ibid., 38, where the author notes Schindler's use of the term 'degenerate race' to describe Jews and her references to 'pure, Aryan blood' and 40, where, even in her marriage to Gustav Mahler, Schindler expresses concerns that they would produce 'Kleine degenerierte Judenkinder' ('little degenerate Jewish children').

[34] Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 263, 360, 399, 439. A further example can be found in Kenneth M. Smith, 'Lacan, Zemlinsky, and "Der Zwerg": Mirror, Metaphor, and Fantasy,' *Perspectives of New Music* 48, no. 2 (2010): 79.

[35] Sherry D. Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror, or, Recognizing the Self: Wilde's and Zemlinsky's Dwarf,' *Music and Letters* 91, no. 2 (2010): 206.

[36] The modification of his hair colour reflects changing representations of red-headed people as Jewish antagonists alongside increasingly influential theories of racial degeneration. See Chapter One, 87–88.

[37] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror,' 206–07.

to be of noble birth, which Beaumont reads as an allusion to Zemlinsky's partly-Jewish ancestry, particularly given the 'von' that the composer omitted from his original family name.[38] Moreover, where Wilde's protagonist dances to win the Infanta's affections, in Zemlinsky's opera, the Dwarf is a musician whose 'reputation as a singer precedes him from distant lands'.[39] In this sense, although the opera is a less definitive example of Künstleroper, than *Die Gezeichneten*, it nevertheless displays the aspects of projection so often found in the genre. The figure of the Dwarf can be thought of as a projection of the anti-Semitic stereotypes levelled against Zemlinsky, whilst his treatment by the Infanta bears echoes of his failed relationship with Schindler.

Given his knowledge of Weininger's work and its reactionary treatise of racial and sexual degeneration, the motivations behind Zemlinsky's enthusiastic deployment of Klaren's libretto, with its subtext of veiled anti-Semitism, are something of a mystery. Throughout his life, the composer struggled to dissociate himself from his Jewish heritage and its associated stereotypes, taking the first steps towards religious conversion in 1899 when he registered with the city magistrate as 'undenominational' before visiting the Vienna synagogue to withdraw his name from its records.[40] In 1907, he would convert to Protestantism ahead of his appointment as the assistant conductor under Mahler at the Vienna Hofoper (a position, Moscovitz suggests, that may have 'hinged on his conversion').[41] Nevertheless, the composer remarked that Klaren's libretto suited him 'uncommonly well […] despite all objections', and Beaumont understands his perseverance with the opera as an 'Orphic ritual of self-destruction and self-purification'.[42] Yet, in light of these unidentified 'objections', the narrative's potential to serve as cultural critique is perhaps significant.

A comparison can be drawn between the extent to which both Wilde and Zemlinsky were denounced during their own lifetimes for the stigmas surrounding them. Wilde's condemnation as a homosexual rendered him subject to imprisonment, exile and an early death, and as Michael Davidson has noted, '[h]is widely publicized trial and subsequent imprisonment made him a spectacle and scandal throughout Europe, not excluding fin-de-siècle Vienna where Zemlinsky would have encountered him'.[43] Zemlinsky was subject to torment due to his physical appearance, eventually coming under harsh scrutiny for allegations of 'racial degeneracy' regarding his Jewish descent. The shared experience of outsider identity

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[38] Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 301.
[39] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), 13.
[40] Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 54.
[41] Ibid., 93.
[42] Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 309.
[43] Michael Davidson, *Invalid Modernism: Disability and the Missing Body of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 51.

between both Wilde and Zemlinsky and the figure of the Dwarf may, in fact, have had its roots in the story's cultural genesis, Diego Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas* (1656), which depicts figures from the Spanish court during the rule of King Phillip IV, including two dwarfs.[44] Betty Adelson suggests that the most 'clearly defined' faces in the painting are those of Maria Barbola (one of the dwarfs) and Velázquez himself, and the gazes of both are directed outwards, towards the viewer.[45] In her interpretation of these figures as 'alert outsiders – observers and witnesses', Adelson implies the existence of some kind of affinity, perhaps even aspects of a shared experience, between the artist and the dwarf.[46] The literary and musical renderings of Wilde and Zemlinsky similarly suggest a form of kinship with the central figure of the Dwarf, with the ostracisation endured by both creators reflected through the treatment and fate of the protagonist.

The extent to which certain biographical details of Wilde and Zemlinsky manifest in their respective works supports a reading of 'The Birthday of the Infanta' and *Der Zwerg* as cultural commentaries in that they appear to confront the cultivation and celebration of cultural and aesthetic norms. For Davidson, 'Wilde fuses the two meanings of the term "decadent" – aesthetic and eugenic – which often substitute for homosexuality'.[47] Jerusha McCormack likewise reads Wilde's text as a political and autobiographical exploration of the conflicts of his sexuality, questioning the extent to which the Dwarf's ugliness might be 'a reflection of Wilde's own confrontation of himself in the mirror of homosexual love?'[48] Certainly, the fairy tale deals with themes of identity, illusion, vanity and, most notably, artificiality. This sense of artificiality is reflected in the aesthetic opposition of the Infanta and the Dwarf, as summarised by Isobel Murray: 'The Infanta is very beautiful, and has no heart; the Dwarf is, unknown to himself, very ugly, but full of heart'.[49] The Dwarf's ugliness can therefore be understood as a symbol for Wilde's stigmatisation, whilst the superficial beauty of the court contradicts its cruelty and injustice. Throughout the fairy tale, the linguistic juxtaposition of beauty and death implies the inherent artificiality and immorality of the court, which calls to mind the real-world society in which Wilde was rendered degenerate. The languid decadence of the author's descriptive text is punctuated with the uncomfortable language of death and decay, such as references to 'bleeding red hearts', 'dead hobby horses',

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[44] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror,' 303.
[45] Betty M. Adelson, *The Lives of Dwarfs*: *Their Journey from Public Curiosity Toward Social Liberation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 150.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Davidson, *Invalid Modernism*, 51–52.
[48] Jershua McCormack, 'Wilde's Fiction(s),' in *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*, ed. Peter Raby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 107.
[49] Isobel Murray, 'Introduction,' in Oscar Wilde, *Complete Shorter Fiction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 15.

'the mouldering trellis' and 'moss-grown statues'.[50] Arguably then, Wilde constructs his cultural critique through the insincerity of the Infanta and the kindness and heroism of the Dwarf, with these symbols of pain, death and stagnation serving as the means by which the author exposes the artifice of the court and tacitly condemns its aestheticism.

Klaren adapts this juxtaposition of beauty and death in the libretto for *Der Zwerg*. In the opening scene, for instance, the Infanta's playmates sing '[l]et us crown the Infanta with a crown of May flowers, of young blossoms!' before exclaiming: 'The dying blossoms are wishing her a happy birthday!'[51] However, the opera departs from its source text by placing more emphasis on the aesthetic beauty of the Infanta than on that of the court, and significantly, the Dwarf frequently invokes images of suffering and death during his exchanges with his female counterpart. When professing his love for the princess, he says 'even if you were my death, it is you that I want […] only you'.[52] Elsewhere, his lute song concludes with the phrase 'I am dying, for the blood orange was my heart…'.[53] The Dwarf's allusions to his own mortality are recurrent, yet throughout the opera, he remains oblivious to the proximity with which he faces death at the hands of the Infanta. Within the context of Klaren's Weininger-inspired libretto, the opposition of beauty/cruelty and ugliness/innocence not only draws upon Zemlinsky's real-world relationship with Alma Schindler, but also calls to mind fin-de-siècle notions of 'hidden' degeneracy and prevalent ideas about dangerous femininity.[54] As in Wilde's original narrative, the contrasting symbols of beauty and death in *Der Zwerg* reflect the inherent duplicity of the Infanta, who, by association, holds up a mirror to the vanity and artificiality of the court and thereby implicates it in the tragic demise of the Dwarf. However, Klaren's subtext of degeneration additionally implies that the Infanta's hidden degeneracy symptomises wider cultural decay, much like that of cultural figures such as the *femme fatale*.

As I have suggested, Klaren's and Zemlinsky's motivations for utilising Wilde's narrative likely differed. Klaren updates the opposition of death and beauty to reflect contemporary ideas about female sexuality, and Zemlinsky appears to build upon the work's tragic elements to emphasise the Dwarf's role as a social outsider and, in doing so, he draws upon the aspects of cultural commentary in Wilde's source text. The composer considered the protagonist's lack of awareness of his own appearance to be the source of the work's tragedy,

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[50] Wilde, 'The Birthday of the Infanta,' 32, 40.
[51] Georg Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), trans. Roger Clement, liner notes for *Der Zwerg*, Frankfurter Kantorei, Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne, Conducted by James Conlon (EMI Classics, 1996), compact disk, 8.
[52] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), 20.
[53] Ibid., 18.
[54] As discussed, Schreker's opera also explores these ideas through the character of Carlotta, whose external beauty acts as a foil to her interior (bodily and artistic) degeneracy (77–79).

explaining that 'my Dwarf seeks his fortune in fairy-tale like ignorance of his deformity, and thus becomes tragic'.[55] In this sense, *Der Zwerg*'s updated emphasis on the innocence of the protagonist, along with the court's eagerness to toy with him, only enhances the moral degradation and social injustice of the latter. Lee describes the use of the mirror in 'The Birthday of the Infanta' as a symbol of political notions of self-identity and recognition.[56] The theme of reflection, she suggests, encompasses 'the struggle of marginalized subjects for social recognition of their worth and dignity' and implies the narrative's denunciation of 'excessive aestheticism'.[57]

Like Schreker's Alviano and, to a point, Zemlinsky himself, the Dwarf is seemingly obsessed with physical beauty, and this is his downfall. Furthermore, as Zemlinsky suggests, the opera places special emphasis on the tragic aspects of the tale, which Alban Berg described as 'harrowing' and 'hardly bearable'.[58] In Wilde's text, for example, the fondness with which the birds (who 'did not mind his being ugly') and the lizards (who 'took an immense fancy to him') view the Dwarf provides a counter to the wickedness of the court, whilst in Zemlinsky's opera, the treatment of the protagonist is universally and unrelentingly cruel.[59] Klaren's adaptation for Zemlinsky certainly built upon the composer's request for 'the tragedy of the ugly man', namely by positioning the Dwarf at the centre of the narrative, incorporating a subtext of Weiningerian psychology, and modifying the protagonist to reflect aspects of the composer's biography, specifically his failed relationship with Alma Schindler.

One early reviewer of the work noted the extent to which the opera's narrative appears to be grounded in reality, suggesting that the idea of 'a grotesque looking, crippled and deeply emotional person as a deranged toy in the hands of a selfish child' was 'designed to be real'.[60] The opera's librettist stressed that the Dwarf's physical appearance 'should be interpreted in a wider context' and, for Zemlinsky, the protagonist's outsider status perhaps served the additional purpose of echoing his own stigmatisation in light of his physical appearance, along with his place on the periphery of Viennese musical society and his later marginalisation in light of his Jewish heritage.[61] It can be argued, therefore, that Klaren's Weiningerian libretto actually provided Zemlinsky with an opportunity for introspection and an outlet for his

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[55] 'Zemlinsky über seinen "Zwerg",' *Kömodie*, November 1923, quoted and translated in Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 303.
[56] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror,' 203.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Bernard Grun, *Alban Berg: Letters to His Wife*, ed. and trans. Bernard Grun (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), 329.
[59] Wilde, 'The Birthday of the Infanta,' 51–52
[60] Dr. R. St. Hoffmann '„Der Zwerg" von Alexander v. Zemlinsky'. Review of *Der Zwerg* held at the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung, University of Cologne. No date or publication name is provided (my translation).
[61] Georg Klaren, 'Der Zwerg und was er bedeutet,' quoted in Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 301.

personal anxieties about both his physical appearance and his Jewish identity. The opera can thus be perceived as a self-reflexive commentary on, and conceivably even a confrontation of the practice of aesthetic elitism that was becoming increasingly ubiquitous during its creation.

Disability as Commentary: Narrative Prosthesis in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*

In constructing their critiques of the early-twentieth-century's fixation on aesthetic 'norms', both Schreker and Zemlinsky frame their protagonists as social outcasts, thereby reflecting, whether knowingly or not, on their own experiences in an increasingly conservative critical climate. In both operas, the many allusions to the notion of degeneracy are connected to the body, frequently occurring in relation or in close proximity to their physically disabled protagonists. Tobin Siebers proposes that 'works of art engaged explicitly with the body serve to critique the assumptions of idealist aesthetics', further noting that the types of bodies used to engage in cultural critique frequently 'register as wounded or disabled'.[62] With this in mind, it can be argued that both composers formulate their self-reflective cultural commentaries around the bodies of their disabled protagonists. Their respective operas thus undergo a process of narrative prosthesis, which, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, is a phenomenon whereby disability is used 'as a crutch upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potency, and analytical insight'.[63] In short, disability serves in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* as a projection of their composers' outsider identities and as a metaphor for the cultural anxiety of otherness that pervaded the cultural and theoretical landscape in which the operas were conceived.

However, whilst the operas bear traces of the cultural context of pre-Fascist Austria and Germany, the dramatic action of both works is spatially and temporally distanced from their composers' realities. Wilde's original fairy tale is set in the court of the fictional King Phillip of Spain in an unspecified time period, yet the extent to which the author was inspired by Velázquez's *Las Meninas* suggests that the action takes place some time during the mid-seventeenth century. Time and place, however, are something of an enigma in the fairy tale. For example, Wilde capriciously mentions the Italian castrato Caffarelli, who indeed sang in Spain, but not until the eighteenth century.[64] Such anachronisms contribute to the blurring of reality and fiction in Wilde's story, which he also achieves through the amalgamation of the factual historical figure, the Infanta Margarita Teresa (as depicted in the painting), and the

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[62] Tobin Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 2.
[63] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 49.
[64] Oscar Wilde, 'The Birthday of the Infanta,' in *A House of Pomegranates* (London: Methuen & Co., 1915), 47.

Infanta Donna Clara of his own narrative, of whom there is no historical record. However, despite the ambiguity surrounding the geographic and historical placement of its narrative, Adrian Daub views Wilde's story as 'much more specific about history and culture, character and place than Klaren's libretto', noting that 'a work with an *Infanta* in the title can take place only in a circumscribed set of cultural contexts'.[65] Like that of Wilde's fairy tale, the action of *Der Zwerg* appears to take place in Spain, but the setting is further orientalised by details such as the 'Moorish loggia' and 'saffron-yellow' curtains. The time period in which the action of the opera takes place is also unclear, but nevertheless, the opera's setting departs from the cultural context in which it was created and, crucially, from which Klaren drew inspiration for his subtext of degeneracy.

As a result of the 'ruinous influence of Southern magic' (in his own words), Schreker sets his opera in Renaissance Genoa. Though bound up with implications of decadence, this setting, like that of *Der Zwerg*, deviates from the distinctly time-bound cultural discourse of the opera's subtext. The spatial and temporal distancing of both works' settings from the context in which they were conceived appears to enable Schreker and Zemlinsky to keep their protagonists at arm's length from the realities of their own outsider status, which is understandable given the nature of much of the critical attention these composers received. Schreker demonstrates his clear familiarity with contemporary music criticism in his comments on the creation of *Die Gezeichneten* and reflections on his broader musical idiom. As such, it can be argued that the composer envelops the opera in something of a degenerate condition, utilizing the physically disabled Alviano as a narrative agent for self-projection and cultural commentary. The opera therefore represents a pertinent example of the way in which Schreker, in Hailey's words, shares 'solidarity with life's outcasts and misfits'.[66] The same can arguably be said of Zemlinsky, and this is particularly evident in the biographical subtext of *Der Zwerg*'s libretto. In fact, Michael Davidson understands *Der Zwerg* as 'symptomatic of a tendency among many modernist artists to create novelty through racial and sexual difference, mocking bourgeois pretentions by adopting the primitive mask…'.[67] In light of the aspects of Alviano's and the Dwarf's characters that reflect their creators' lived experiences, this 'mask' is arguably offered to Schreker and Zemlinsky in the form of their protagonists' disabled bodies, thereby enabling them to participate in the practice of narrative prosthesis.

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[65] Adrian Daub, *Tristan's Shadow: Sexuality and the Total Work of Art after Wagner* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 73.
[66] Hailey, 'Pluralities of Modernism,' 5.
[67] Davidson, *Invalid Modernism*, 54. This would not be the first time that the composer turned to socio-cultural commentary; his 1910 comic opera *Kleider machen Leute* (*Clothes Make the Man*) is a satire on bourgeoise pretention and complacency written by the composer in the aftermath of his failed relationship with Schindler.

In relation to the wider shifts, progressions and transformations of the time in which *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* were composed, disability was a striking and prominent theme. As highlighted in Chapter One of this thesis, scientific ideas of heredity were just coming into being, and medically-imbued narratives of degeneracy and decline were culturally prevalent, contributing to the rising social and cultural anxieties that eventually became the central premises of Nazi-era Fascism. As such, people with disabilities occupied a space in the era's cultural mindset as a kind of universal other. Carole Poore has explored the intersection of degeneration theory and attitudes towards disability in the Weimar republic and leading into the Third Reich, pointing to the Nazi architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg's *Kunst und Rasse* (*Art and Race*, 1928) as a defining example of the employment of 'fascist vocabulary to label modern art as degenerate, subhuman, subversively Jewish, or culturally Bolshevist'.[68] *Kunst und Rasse* features images of supposedly 'degenerate' modern artworks alongside photographs of people with disabilities, who, in his mind, were only to be found in the 'deepest depths of human misery and human scum'.[69] The broad reach of such approaches to art had been established by Nordau at the end of the nineteenth century, and their conspicuously dangerous ramifications some forty years later are implied in the third edition of Schultze-Naumburg's book, where he wrote that 'the eradication of the inferior is no longer an ideology out of touch with life, but rather it has been anchored in legislation and thus in reality'.[70]

The connection between the hostility towards disability and the cultural avant-garde during this time is encapsulated by Tobin Siebers, who writes that:

> [The Nazis'] campaign against modern art stemmed from the inability to tolerate any human forms except the most familiar, monochromatic, and regular. Specifically, the Nazis rejected the modern in art as degenerate and ugly because they viewed it as representing physical and mental disability.[71]

However, attitudes towards disability at this time were often conflicting, and while it was derided as a symptom and manifestation of cultural degeneracy on the one hand, Siebers suggests that bodily difference was celebrated, particularly by the era's artists, on the other. Indeed, alongside the more sinister alignment of disability with personal and cultural degeneracy, there emerged what the author calls 'disability aesthetics', which he provocatively describes as '[m]odern art's love affair with misshapen and twisted bodies'.[72] In the midst of

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[68] Poore, *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture*, 53.
[69] Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kunst und Rasse* (Munich: Lehmann, 1928), 89, quoted and translated in Poore, *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture*, 54–55.
[70] Schultze-Naumburg, preface to the second edition of *Kunst und Rasse* (Munich: Lehmann, 1934), quoted and translated in Poore, *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture*, 54.
[71] Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics*, 5.
[72] Ibid., 4.

this disability aesthetic, creators drew upon the visual rhetoric of the disabled body as a means through which to celebrate difference and counter traditional notions of aesthetic health, beauty and normality. Siebers conceives of the disabled body as a constitutive feature of modernism that 'refuses to recognise the representation of the healthy body – and its definition of harmony, integrity, and beauty – as the sole determination of the aesthetic'.[73] I would suggest that the use of the disabled body in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* reflects the cultural pessimism explored by Poore alongside the era's more affirmative approach to physical difference as outlined by Siebers. The use of disability in the operas is therefore in keeping with the idea, often posited in disability studies scholarship, that cultural representations of physical difference reveal and underwrite the culture in which they are created. For example, Rosemarie Garland Thomson writes:

> Although extraordinary bodily forms have always been acknowledged as atypical, the cultural resonances accorded them arise from the historical and intellectual moments in which these bodies are embedded. Because such bodies are rare, unique, material and confounding of cultural categories, they act as magnets to which culture secures its anxieties, questions and needs at any given moment […] Thus, singular bodies become politicized when culture maps its concerns upon them as meditations on individual as well as national values, identity, and direction.[74]

The author's suggestion that disabled bodies function as 'magnets to which culture secures its anxieties' sheds light on the process of narrative prosthesis that is undertaken in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, where the disabled bodies of Alviano and the Dwarf simultaneously exemplify and challenge prevalent cultural anxieties about the visibility of otherness. Indeed, as degeneration theory and eugenics rose to popularity towards the end of the nineteenth century, disease and disability were increasingly configured as threats to domestic 'normality'. People with disabilities became perceived as a danger and, in Weimar Germany in particular, 'right-wing discourse of degeneracy combined attacks on disabled people […] Marxists, and Jews as threats to the racial makeup and political stability of the German nation'.[75] This context may account for the growing prevalence of characters with physical disabilities in opera in the years leading up to the turn of the twentieth century, as opera underwent a shift in representational focus whereby the earlier penchant for 'madness' was displaced in favour of visible/physical manifestations of the abnormal.[76] Lee identifies a paradox in modernist opera's seeming

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[73] Ibid., 2–3.
[74] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 'Introduction: From Wonder to Error – A Geanology of Freak Discourse in Modernity,' in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 2.
[75] Poore, *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture*, 51.
[76] See Introduction, 36–38.

fascination with disabled bodies, where 'the insistence on the performance of their visible and sometimes audible disfigurement onstage' contradicts the specifically figurative nature of such bodies.[77] Essentially, Lee is referring to the fact that, although distinctly visible disabilities such as facial deformities found increasing prominence on opera stages during the modernist era, the anomalous body almost invariably served a symbolic or metaphorical purpose. Opera's disabled characters habitually indicate meaning in other registers, and in the case of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, disability appears to signify outsider status, despite the emphasis placed, in both librettos, on the visual qualities of impairment.

Both operas emerged from a context in which increasing cultural capital was bestowed upon the ideals of health and beauty, and both bodies and artworks which failed to conform to the notion of normality were condemned as degenerate. *Die Gezeichneten* centres around a physically deformed male protagonist and reflects certain early-twentieth-century attitudes towards physical abnormality, contemporary culture, the nature of art and the ideals of beauty, all of which were inflected by the wide-reaching phenomenon of degeneracy. In the opera, Alviano is described as an 'ugly man of about 30 years, hunchbacked, big shining eyes, hurried'. Throughout the work, he refers to himself as a 'fool', a 'cripple' and a 'monster', lamenting the fact that nature has given him 'this grimace and this hump'. Yet, these descriptions of Alviano suggest that the significance of his disability is grounded in its figurative value because they refer exclusively to the aesthetic qualities of his impairment as opposed to physical pain or difficulties with mobility. As I have suggested, in that it is principally concerned with the visual impact of disability alongside the opera's subtext of moral and artistic degeneracy, *Die Gezeichneten* metaphorises impairment in order to articulate the theme of outsider identity, with the distinctly visible nature of Alviano's disability making seen the aforementioned 'unseen essence of degeneration'.[78] The paradox, then, lies in the contradiction between the markedly graphic nature of his deformity and the distinctly emblematic function it serves.

The representation of disability in *Der Zwerg* also constitutes an example of Lee's paradox alongside its participation in the practice of narrative prosthesis. The Dwarf's stature sets him apart from the healthy normality of the court, whilst the broader context of the opera, (in terms of both its literary and cultural origins and Klaren's alteration of the source text) establishes the protagonist's socio-political otherness in parallel with Zemlinsky's biography and the opera's subtext of racial and sexual degeneracy. Because both composers draw upon

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[77] Sherry D. Lee, 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, ed. Blake Howe et al. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 668.
[78] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 52.

the cultural currency of the abnormal body as a means through which to formulate cultural commentary, the symbolic purpose of the disabled body in these operas may also speak to Siebers' aforementioned disability aesthetic. In Zemlinsky's opera, rather than serving as a signpost for moral decrepitude, the physically anomalous form of the Dwarf belies traits of kindness, heroism and good humour. In this light, the opera may be an example of the way in which, as Siebers writes, 'disability aesthetics embraces beauty that seems by traditional standards to be broken, and yet it is not less beautiful but more so, as a result'.[79]

At the same time, the use of disability as a figurative symbol of personal struggle against hegemonic social norms reduces the Dwarf's significance to that of a stereotypical symbol of cultural upheaval. Daub observes Klaren's alteration of Wilde's original title, which is particularly significant in terms of the historical and cultural limitations of the designation 'Infanta', as opposed to that of a dwarf, which is, in his words, 'timeless'.[80] Wilde places the Infanta at the centre of his narrative, which, like many of his works, draws upon notions of vanity, self-reflection and obsession, and arguably constitutes a condemnation of the rituals of aestheticism. As the updated title indicates, Zemlinsky's opera utilises the Dwarf's physical form as a catch-all symbol of social and political otherness, perhaps even more so than in Wilde's original narrative. In Schreker's opera too, Alviano's disabled body allegorises broader conceptions of outsider identity in light of the cultural anxiety of degenerate bodily and artistic forms. By appropriating disability's figurative capital in this way, both operas are pertinent examples of Thomson's 'magnet' metaphor, in that the protagonists' bodies are 'politicised' by their reflection of cultural concerns.[81]

Hevey's work on the 'enfreakment' of disability is principally concerned with the representation of disabled bodies in photography, but the author's observations highlight the broad scope of Mitchel and Snyder's theory of narrative prosthesis. He observes the use of visible disability 'as a site of fear, loss or pity', 'to warn the "normal" world that their assumptions are fragile', and as a 'symbol of the alienation of humanity'.[82] As I outlined in the introduction to this thesis, many of the depictive tropes outlined within the fields of literature, film and television studies can also be found to exist where disability is portrayed in opera, and as such, I would contend that the central thesis of narrative prosthesis carries transdisciplinary potential.[83] Understanding the ways in which disability representation has typically augmented certain character stereotypes and narrative formulae in other forms of cultural productions can

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[79] Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics*, 2–3.
[80] Adrian Daub, *Tristan's Shadow*, 73.
[81] Thomson, 'From Wonder to Error,' 2.
[82] David Hevey, 'The Enfreakment of Photography,' in *The Disability Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. ed. Lennard J. Davis (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 411.
[83] See Introduction, 34–36.

enhance critical examinations of how disabled characters are imagined and portrayed in opera. As such, the following sections of this chapter explore some of the dominant narrative and characteristic tropes found in representations of disability across literature, film and television, illustrating the degree of their manifestation in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*.

Constructions of Normality and Abnormality in *Der Zwerg*

Cultural disability studies scholars have frequently attributed disability's representational ubiquity to the universal mystery and intrigue of the 'abnormal' corporeal form.[84] Yet, Derridean thought suggests that terms such as 'abnormality', 'disability' and 'illness' only gain significance when considered in relation to their ideological counterparts.[85] Jack Balkin simplifies:

> Différance simultaneously indicates that (1) the terms of an oppositional hierarchy are differentiated from each other (which is what determines them); (2) each term in the hierarchy defers the other (in the sense of making the other term wait for the first term), and (3) each term in the hierarchy defers to the other (in the sense of being fundamentally dependent upon the other).[86]

Abnormality, disability and illness, then, cannot possess meaning in isolation. These terms can only be defined as one of two parts of a binary opposition (abnormality/normality, disability/able-bodiedness, illness/health). As Balkin's above use of the word 'hierarchy' would suggest, however, one binary is generally privileged or valued over the other, which almost invariably comes to light where disability is represented in cultural productions. Lennard J. Davis puts forward the idea of the 'norm' and its relevance to studies of disability representation in *Enforcing Normalcy*, where he suggests that '[t]o understand the disabled body, one must return to the concept of the norm, the normal body'.[87] Drawing upon the interwoven political, ethical and aesthetic aspects of disability, G. Thomas Couser has similarly suggested that 'the unmarked case – the 'normal' body – can pass without narration; the marked case – the limp, the scar, the wheelchair, the missing limb – calls for a narrative'.[88] His words reflect the way in which cultural disability studies tends to adopt a social model view by emphasising the body's independence from the social construction of disability, suggesting that cultural representations of disability commonly produce, by way of narrative prosthesis, a

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[84] See Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis,* 6; Bérubé, 'Disability and Narrative,' *PMLA* 120, no. 2 (2005): 570.
[85] Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 39–40.
[86] J.M. Balkin, 'Deconstructive Practice and Legal Theory,' *The Yale Law Journal* 96, no. 4 (1987): 752.
[87] Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 23–49 (23).
[88] G. T Couser, *Signifying Bodies: Disability in Contemporary Life Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 16.

binary opposition between disability and able-bodiedness in order to bolster societal standards of 'normalcy'.

In noting the tendency of disability in modernist narratives to '[interrupt] a certain aesthetic modality through which an empirical norm is usually seen', Davidson touches upon the frequent placement of impaired characters in direct opposition to a healthy and heroic counterpart.[89] This is nowhere more evident than in the narratives of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, where the influence of the notion of degeneracy was evidenced in the contrasting of disabled characters with those whose bodily health provided a romanticised image of 'normality'. Angela Smith suggests the significance of popular fin-de-siècle pseudoscience in the 1925 cinematic adaptation of Gaston Leroux's *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (1910) as she notes the skull-like appearance of the protagonist's face, which 'reveals his degeneracy to the world'.[90] The monstrosity of the Phantom is underscored by the presence of Christine and Raoul, whose beauty and vitality (or 'normality') is defined only by the existence of their physically anomalous antagonist. So too does the preoccupation with blood and brains in Gothic novels such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* invite a reading that accounts for anxieties about hereditary disease and inherited mental 'degeneracy' within the popular discourse of degeneration. Here, again, the disabled protagonist is diametrically opposed to his physically healthy creator, whose 'fear that his monster might mate and produce a race of monsters emphasizes the terror with which the "normal" beholds the differently abled'.[91]

Disabled characters are also frequently figured alongside aesthetically normative or conventionally beautiful counterparts in the operatic canon, where the representation of disability (to borrow Thomson's phrase) 'buttresses an embodied version of normative identity'.[92] The most notable example is perhaps Verdi's enigmatic hunchbacked jester, Rigoletto. To a degree, an archetypical disabled villain, his misshapen body is stereotypically framed as a reflection of his twisted mind, as evidenced by his machinations to have the Duke murdered. Moreover, the deformities of Rigoletto's body and mind are juxtaposed with the beauty and wholesomeness of his daughter, Gilda.[93] Although similar examples of aesthetic discordance can be observed between disabled characters and their physically 'normal'

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[89] Davidson, *Invalid Modernism*, 8.
[90] Angela M. Smith, *Hideous Progeny: Disability, Eugenics, and Classic Horror Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 127. Jerrold E. Hogle also provides an interesting account of the Phantom's deformity from the perspective of degeneration theory in *The Undergrounds of the Phantom of the Opera: Sublimation and the Gothic in Leroux's Novel and its Progeny* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 66–72.
[91] Lennard J. Davis, 'Introduction: Normality, Power, and Culture,' in *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 4.
[92] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (1996; repr. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 7.
[93] It should be noted that Rigoletto's adherence to disability stereotypes is ambiguous, as I will explore later in this chapter.

counterparts throughout the operatic canon, it can be argued that a greater degree of symbolic meaning is concentrated in what Lee terms 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects'. The author points to the modernist era as a time in which 'the crisis of social and psychological incapacity represented on the opera stage – both the stigma and its resultant suffering (which may even prove fatal) – all hinge on unsightly appearance'.[94] It certainly seems that Schreker and Zemlinsky harness the figurative potential of disability in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, creating protagonists whose physical abnormality sets them apart, both visually and socially, from the dramatic world in which they function.

This trend towards depicting disabled/non-disabled characters in terms of their aesthetic disproportion is clearly reflected in the bodily juxtaposition of the Infanta and the Dwarf in Zemlinsky's opera.[95] In the first scene, the obsequious description of the Infanta by the maids depicts her as a paradigm of health and beauty:

> Infanta, you are beautiful. Your shoulders are smooth,
> you are slender, your radiant hair filters the sun of your beauty.
> How shall we express our thanks?
> Infanta, we love you.[96]

Later in the scene, Don Estoban's histrionic account of the appearance of the Dwarf, who has been sent as a gift to the Infanta, provides a striking contrast:

> The Sultan has sent a dwarf, a freak of nature's cruelty.
> He limps, his hair is like fiery bristles,
> His head juts out from his shoulders, which are
> abnormally high. He is bent in two by a hump, and
> his entire body is stunted and misshapen.
> He might be no more than twenty years old,
> or maybe as old as the sun.[97]

The conflicting physical attributes of the Dwarf and the Infanta as described in these passages distance the protagonist from the realm of bodily 'normality' exemplified by the princess. This dramatic opposition of the two central figures finds a parallel in the musical disjunction between what Lee describes as the 'neoclassicist' court (which is characterised musically by tonal formality, rhythmic rigidity and ornamental artificiality) and the 'expressionist' Dwarf

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[94] Lee, 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects,' 668.
[95] As I noted in Chapter One, the contrasting physical attributes of the Infanta and the Dwarf also call to mind Zemlinsky's relationship with Schindler, who repeatedly referred to his 'ugliness' as a counter to her beauty. See Chapter One, 86.
[96] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), 8.
[97] Ibid., 13.

(whose music is highly lyrical, rhythmically flexible and harmonically nuanced).[98] The protagonist's placement alongside an aesthetically idealised counterpart therefore adheres to a familiar mode of disability representation and illuminates the opera's participation in the practice of narrative prosthesis. Furthermore, the dramatic othering of the protagonist mirrors the historical socio-cultural othering of dwarfs and sheds additional light on the opera's subtext of cultural degeneration.

In Don Estoban's description, the gifting of the Dwarf calls to mind the practice of keeping people with disabilities (dwarfs in particular) at courts, a trend documented from as early as Ancient Egypt and which lasted until the end of the nineteenth century.[99] As Janet Ravenscroft explains, the presence of court dwarfs in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries enabled royal families, such as the one depicted in 'The Birthday of the Infanta' and *Der Zwerg*, to 'demonstrate their moral, intellectual, and physical superiority'.[100] The kind of cultural mindset implied in this statement – one that places the disabled body in direct opposition to a paradigm of health and normality – obtained new significance at the time in which *Der Zwerg* was composed, as the aesthetic dissonance between the protagonist and the Infanta would suggest. Moreover, the sense of mystery and intrigue that has been attached to the bodies of dwarfs in both reality and fictional representation also encapsulates what cultural disability theorists have identified as the objectification of the disabled body as a bolster for normative identity.

In A. Haag's sketch of the costume design for the premiere of *Der Zwerg* (figure 2.1), the Dwarf's costume reflects the original historical period of Wilde's narrative and provides a striking visual impression of the protagonist's physical appearance, which seems to adhere closely to Don Estoban's description. The red and green colouring of the costume calls to mind the archetypal court jester or 'fool', long associated with intellectual disability.[101] In Blake Howe's database of musical representations of disability, two-thirds of the listed representations of 'cognitive impairment' can be found in operas featuring 'loyal Fool' or 'holy Fool' characters, such as Schreker's *Der Schatzgräber*.[102] In fact, Schreker also draws upon the

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[98] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror,' 222.
[99] Adelson, *The Lives of Dwarfs*, 4–21; Touba Ghadessi, 'Perfected Miniatures: Dwarves at Court,' in *Portraits of Human Monsters in the Renaissance: Dwarves, Hirsutes, and Castrati as Idealized Anatomical Anomalies* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2018), 53–98. For a comprehensive account of the gifting of dwarfs and their role in the Spanish royal courts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Janet Ravenscroft, 'Dwarfs – and a Loca – as Ladies' Maids at the Spanish Habsburg Courts,' in *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting across Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 147–77.
[100] Ravenscroft, 'Dwarfs – and a Loca,' 149.
[101] Irina Metzler, *Fools and Idiots?: Intellectual Disability in the Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 184–220.
[102] Blake Howe (ed.), *Musical Representations of Disability,* available at: http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/bhowe/disability-representation.html, (accessed 22.04.19).

popular association of disability with court jesters or fools in *Die Gezeichneten*, where, the final scene, Alviano searches deliriously for 'my cap – my pretty cap – red and with silver bells'.

Figure 2.1. A. Haag, Costume design, *Der Zwerg* (jpeg of painting, Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung, University of Cologne, 1922).

In European courts between 1600 and 1800, dwarfs, like jesters, were seen as a source of entertainment, and this is certainly the case for Zemlinsky's protagonist, who, despite his obliviousness to his condition, is asked to perform for the court at the Infanta's birthday celebrations. In the 2008 production of *Der Zwerg* at the Los Angeles Opera, the Dwarf's costume (designed by Lesley Cho) bore certain similarities to the original sketch by Haag for the 1922 premiere.[103] The style of Cho's design is in keeping with that of the Spanish baroque and the colour scheme calls to mind the jester figure, whilst the costume's decorative embellishments, including jewels and beading, conjure characteristics of oriental opulence. Around the time that Wilde's fairy tale is set, dwarfs were surrounded by a sense of intrigue

[103] Image available at: http://www.lindacho.com/427450/the-dwarf/ (accessed 15.09.2017).

and exoticism and were employed as royal companions, marvels and fantastical curiosities.[104] Due to their perceived exoticism, these figures were sought alongside unusual objects and animals which were to be displayed as an exhibition of mystery and wealth, and also frequently featured in paintings.

Mitchell and Snyder have attributed disability's narrative potential to a certain sense of mystery surrounding the idea of bodily difference, accrediting disability's capacity to incite narration and imagination to its 'very unknowability'.[105] In a similar vein, Bérubé suggests that the pervasiveness of disability as a metaphorical device is grounded in the 'underrecognized and undertheorized facts of bodily difference'.[106] Many representations of disability in opera (as in literature, film and theatre), situate physical impairment alongside notions of the unknown or abnormal, framing bodily difference as an exotic or mysterious manifestation of otherness. Given the work's literary and cultural origins, this is particularly true of Zemlinsky's opera. As I have suggested, some of Klaren's alterations to Wilde's original narrative imbue aspects *Der Zwerg* with the cultural discourse of degeneracy. In Don Estoban's description, details about the Dwarf's origin (as a gift from the Sultan) and the suggestion that he may be 'as old as the sun', are loaded with implications of mystery and exoticism, with the Dwarf himself embodying the era's fears of and fascination with the figure of the cultural outsider. A reading of the protagonist's characterisation as including a subtext of the discourse of degeneration demonstrates the way in which disability narratives frequently convey undertones of mystery and otherness, particularly when situating their protagonist alongside a 'healthy' counterpart. Much like *Der Zwerg, Die Gezeichneten* draws upon many of the themes and ideas associated with degeneration theory – particularly those concerned with physical difference and internal, moral decay.

Disability and Moral Ambiguity in *Die Gezeichneten*

Paul K. Longmore's 1985 essay 'Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People' highlights the prevalence of disability in film and television and outlines a number of common tropes and character stereotypes associated with disability – such as the disabled criminal, the disabled person as 'monster', and disabled people as victims of fate – as the author unearths some of the underlying socio-political meanings behind them.[107] The article also indicates some of the typical plot devices used in narratives of disability, emphasising the often restrictive narrative

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[104] Ravenscroft, 'Dwarfs – and a Loca,' 147.
[105] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis,* 6.
[106] Bérubé, 'Disability and Narrative,' 570.
[107] Paul K. Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People,' *Social Policy* 16, no. 1 (1985), 31–37.

potential of disabled characters on screen, along with the bleak fates to which they are so often subjected. Whilst Longmore's article focusses on live-action fictional depictions of disability (and, indeed, was written in 1985), much of the imagery discussed can also be found to exist where disability is depicted in opera and, moreover, can be identified in relation to the disabled protagonists in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. Furthermore, some of the stereotypes outlined by Longmore are elucidated by the broader discursive contexts of this thesis, as the presentation of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's disabled protagonists also calls to mind many of the ideas about physical 'abnormality' that were perpetuated by nineteenth-century degeneration theory.

In his analysis, Longmore identifies the archetypal disabled criminal, whose 'physical handicaps are made the emblems of evil'.[108] The idea that disability (or, indeed, any visible manifestation of difference) is a signifier of internal, psychological or moral fault has long been found by disability theorists to be a prevalent theme in cultural representations of disability. This was a concept at the heart of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century degeneration theory, as degeneration was thought to be visibly transparent, allowing the differentiation of the morally-decrepit individual from the 'healthy' members of society. As discussed in Chapter One, Max Nordau's understanding of the degenerate artist as displaying the same 'somatic features' as 'criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics' encapsulates the typical association of the deviant body with the degenerate personality by those who subscribed to the idea of degeneracy.[109] The associated pseudoscience of phrenology – which principally aimed to measure, calculate and document the human skull with the intention of detecting 'abnormalities' – provides a further example, and sheds new light on the frequent depiction of the disabled person as 'monster'. The 'disabled monster' stereotype is connected to that of the disabled criminal and can similarly be understood as related to the central premises of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century degeneration theory. Beginning with the burgeoning visual rhetoric of the anomalous body in popular Weimar-era silent film, the historical representation of the 'monstrous' disabled villain within films from the horror genre frequently see extreme physical disfigurements (typically of the face and head) connected to gross deformities of personality and soul.[110] In opera, the 'evil dwarf' stock character is often depicted in this light. In narratives featuring these 'criminal' and 'monster' stereotypes, disability is often portrayed as a cause of or punishment for evil, whilst disabled characters themselves are often associated with the loss of humanity.

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[108] Ibid., 32.
[109] Nordau, *Degeneration*, vii.
[110] Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 32–33.

Alviano's description as 'hunchbacked' draws upon the long-established cinematic paradigm of 'characters with orthopaedic impairments as villains', which 'took firm root in the movies from the early to-mid-1910s'.[111] In the 2017 production of *Die Gezeichneten* at the Bavarian State Opera, which will be examined in Chapters Three and Four, projected images of classic horror films brought the idea of monstrosity to the fore, featuring Frankenstein's monster, Nosferatu, the Golem and The Phantom of the Opera. The representation of Alviano in this production, particularly with regards to the use of these references from popular culture, also highlights the tragic aspects of the work. The interpretation of the protagonist's disability as a facial deformity, which he frequently hides with a burlap sack, is a nod to John Hurt as Joseph Merrick in David Lynch's *Elephant Man* (1980). This costuming choice raises a number of questions about the distinctly aesthetic nature of Alviano's disability and the associated connotations of 'enfreakment' in disability performance, which will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis. More pertinent to the present consideration, however, is the simultaneous presentation of the protagonist as a monstrous villain and tragic victim of fate. As discussed, disability often serves in cultural productions as a marker of internal (moral or psychological) decay, or as a visual or descriptive cue for the polarised character tropes of villainy or victimhood.

Die Gezeichneten tells the story of Alviano's placement on the margins of society, with his fate reinforcing the stereotypical conflation of disability and danger; he eventually loses control and kills Tamare, subjecting Carlotta to danger along the way. This is an example of what Longmore defines as the 'spread effect', whereby the disabled villain is perceived as lacking in humanity and self-control and thus represents a danger to society.[112] In murdering Tamare, Alviano displays the stereotypical 'violent loss of self-control [which] results in the exclusion of the disabled person from human community'.[113] His loss of sanity and associated absconding can be interpreted as a form of exclusion, and as such, by the opera's ending, he is brought into line with the stock disabled monster. A particularly pertinent comparison can be drawn between the plot of Schreker's opera and Martin F. Norden's description of a trope in which disabled outcasts 'worshipped some able-bodied woman from afar and then invariably lost control of their emotions after an able-bodied male rival appears on the scene'.[114] However, Alviano is by no means an unambiguous example of this stereotype. His treatment within the course of the narrative suggests the misinterpretation of his character by the people of Genoa, as demonstrated by his framing for the kidnap and sexual abuse of Ginevra Scotti in

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[111] Norden, *The Cinema of Isolation*, 51–2.
[112] Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 33.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Norden, *The Cinema of Isolation*, 52.

Act Three. Certainly, disability is not always connected to villainy or malevolence, and this is a point that Longmore exemplifies by citing the television adaptation of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1980), where Lennie is presented as a tragic victim of fate despite the violence he displays as a result of his disability.[115] The author summarises that 'even when the [disabled] character is presented sympathetically as a victim of bigotry, it remains clear that severe disability makes social integration impossible'.[116] At times, Schreker appears to present his protagonist as a victim, a character stereotype which also comes to light when considering his abandonment by Carlotta in favour of the physically healthy Tamare, whose healthy body stands in stark contrast to his own.[117]

Overall, the protagonist is characterised by moral ambiguity, which Schreker establishes quite plainly from the very opening moments of the opera. Conceivably, the composer places such an emphasis on the protagonist's moral ambiguity in an effort to oppose the increasingly popular yet parochial notion of aesthetic abnormality as a signpost for moral degeneracy. The work opens as Alviano discovers the exploitation of Elysium by his friends, who regale him with sinister accounts of kidnap and rape in the so-called 'grotto', which for them, is 'designed especially for feasts of love'. Lee ponders whether, by gifting the Island to the people to Genoa, 'he seeks to halt his companions' depraved activities out of virtuous principle or spite at his exclusion from their hedonistic pursuits'.[118] In Alviano's opening lines, he rebukes the noblemen's tales of corruption and sexual depravity and grieves his role in creating Elysium, yet his words also cast his motivations for gifting the island into doubt. Seemingly covetous of his friends' hedonistic ability to embrace 'what life gives you willingly', Alviano laments his appearance and goes on to curse being burdened with 'such feelings, such desires!' The altruistic intentions of Alviano's gift are thus called into question, as the protagonist's words imply envy rather than virtue. Whilst suggesting his possible role as the archetypal 'disabled monster', this introductory scene also encapsulates a central aspect of the protagonist's moral ambiguity – his sexuality.[119]

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[115] Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 33.
[116] Ibid.
[117] As I will discuss in Chapter Three, in the Munich production of the opera, the imagery of Lynch's biopic calls to mind the dramatic prototype of a beautiful soul trapped in a monstrous body (also found in *Der Zwerg*). Within this context, it is difficult to disconnect the tragic aspects of Alviano's experience from the fates of those deemed 'abnormal' due to the wide-reaching appeal of the multifaceted discourse of degeneracy in Schreker's Europe.
[118] Lee, 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects,' 673.
[119] The term 'sexuality' does not refer to sexual orientation, but rather to the relationship with sex and the sexual experience.

Disability and Sexuality in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*

Many disability theorists have considered the construction of images of and ideas about disabled peoples' sexuality, both in reality and in fictional representation. The literature reveals the prevalence of two polarised stereotypes: asexuality (sexual lack) and hypersexuality (sexual excess). Longmore outlines a trend in disability narratives whereby 'people with disabilities are often perceived as sexually deviant and even dangerous, asexual, or sexually incapacitated either physically or emotionally'.[120] Elsewhere, Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow describe the linking of disability and sex as inciting 'marginalization or marvelling' in the public imagination, whilst the depiction of disabled peoples' sexuality in cultural productions is limited to contradictory notions of 'tragic deficiency or freakish excess'.[121] Arguably, Alviano's moral ambiguity is partly a result of his indistinct adherence to any one of these archetypal categories of sexuality. Indeed, Schreker's stage directions indicate that Alviano's sexuality shifts from the tragically lacking to the dangerously excessive. Despite repeatedly rejecting Carlotta's advances in the atelier scene of Act Two, for example, he is described as exhibiting 'almost feverish excitement', 'devouring her with his eyes, breathing heavily' and becoming 'gripped by violent desperate passion'. A tangible contrast is thus created between Alviano's words and the description of his behaviour. His characterisation corresponds to the stereotypical association of disability with deterministic assumptions of sexual deviance and excess, yet the distinction between his actions and his words generates confusion (or, indeed, 'marvelling').

Die Gezeichneten deals with the 'subjective awakening of the psychosexual longing' of the protagonist, whilst the island of Elysium – Alviano's aesthetic paradise – can be interpreted as an attempt to fulfil his yearning for beauty.[122] Throughout the opera, the pursuit of aesthetic beauty is surrounded by notions of depravity, sexual indulgence and malevolence, but as Franklin suggests, the creation of the island may represent a paradoxically loaded attempt for redemption, in Freudian terms, as 'compensation for Alviano's inability to attract a sexual partner'.[123] The narrative depiction of characters with disabilities as sexually uninterested or inept echoes the way in which, as Carrie Sandahl proposes, 'the diagnostic gaze aimed at disabled bodies tends to negate sexuality'.[124] This might lead to people with disabilities being viewed as deficient in sexual potential or potency, yet Alviano's sexual lack is framed as a problem of desirability, rather than one concerning the existence of desires or their fulfilment.

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120 Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 35.
121 Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow, eds., 'Introduction,' in *Sex and Disability* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 1.
122 Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy,' 178.
123 Ibid.
124 Carrie Sandahl, 'Queering the Crip or Cripping the Queer?: Intersections of Queer and Crip Identities in Solo Autobiographical Performance,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 9, no. 1–2 (2003): 46.

Moreover, his interactions with Carlotta suggest that his presumed inability to attract a sexual partner are partially self-inflicted (an issue which, in itself, draws upon another stereotype of disabled characterisation). In Act One, for example, as Carlotta expresses an interest in Alviano as a subject for a painting, the protagonist interprets her proposal (which is romantically and sexually loaded) as derisive:

> Perhaps as a fool in a picture,
> among beautiful lords and ladies,
> as an effective contrast –
> with a cap and bells –
> the hump fits in well for the –
> mockery of the people –
> immortalized for all time!

Longmore suggests that the 'disabled character may […] spurn opportunities for romance because of a lack of self-acceptance, a disbelief that anyone could love him or her with their "imperfections"'.[125] In Act Two, during the atelier scene, the protagonist repeatedly rebuffs Carlotta's advances, believing them to be scornful and sarcastic. He calls her a 'devil', to which she responds:

> You are a man
> and without any belief in yourself.
> Is it so unthinkable,
> that a woman should feel affection
> and friendship towards you?

Longmore suggests that in some disability narratives, 'nondisabled characters of the opposite sex have no trouble finding the disabled persons attractive or falling in love with them, and have no difficulty in accepting them with their disabilities'.[126] On the one hand, this contradicts the idea of otherness and the associated binary representation of disabled peoples' sexuality as either lacking or excessive. Yet Longmore's words also suggest that some disabled characters undergo a process of self-inflicted or even imagined 'othering', as a result of which, disability is framed as an individual 'struggle', as opposed to a social issue. For the author, this contradicts the realities of disability as a lived experience, and also enables audiences to justify or distance themselves from their anxieties and prejudices about disability.[127] In *Die Gezeichneten,* the source of the problem – the problem being Alviano's inability to accept his physical appearance or the

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[125] Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 36.
[126] Ibid.
[126] Ibid. Longmore's assumptions about sex, gender and sexuality here appear somewhat parochial, and it is perhaps worth reiterating that the focus of this piece is the film and television of the 1980s.
[127] Ibid.

advances and affections of Carlotta – is shifted onto the protagonist. Since his marginalisation is presented in the aforementioned section as being somewhat self-imposed, only he can be to blame, whilst the non-disabled character, as well as the audience, are granted freedom from the responsibility for his stigmatisation. This is a wider issue where stories about disability are concerned, since, as Davis observes, the 'narrativizing' of impairment tends to 'link it to the bourgeois sensibility of individualism and the drama of an individual story'.[128]

Carlotta asks Alviano why, 'among millions of beating hearts', he should not find one that loves him. Alviano's reluctance to accept Carlotta's affection is an example of the quintessential behaviour of protagonists in what Longmore describes as 'portrayals of adjustment', where 'the disabled central characters are bitter and self-pitying because, however long they have been disabled, they have never adjusted to their handicaps, and have never accepted themselves as they are'.[129]

> Me, me, who hates himself,
> who flees from himself,
> who bans the mirrors
> from his chambers!

In these 'portrayals of adjustment', disabled protagonists eventually overcome their feelings of hopelessness, and 'become well-adjusted adults'.[130] Again, the solution to the 'problem' of disability in such narratives is framed as one of individual overcoming, and can therefore enforce damaging assumptions that disability is an intensely personal, even private, matter, and not a problem of social stigma. It can also be argued that Alviano's inability to realise his romantic and sexual desires is due to his voluntary exclusion from Elysium, a decision rooted in the belief that his ugliness would tarnish his creation. In this sense, Alviano's character can be seen to conform to another narrative trope whereby the disabled character is subject to exclusion and separation from the community. This, Longmore suggests, 'is portrayed as the inevitable consequence of a severe impairment that prevents normal functioning, normal relationships, and normal productivity'.[131]

Zemlinsky's Dwarf, too, can be seen as conforming to many narrative stereotypes about disability and sexuality. As noted, Klaren's reinterpretation of the original fairy tale saw the infusion of the opera with a distinctly Weiningerian subtext. In light of this, several scholars have understood the opera as a drama of masochistic emasculation. Lee, for example,

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[128] Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 4.
[129] Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 34.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 33.

detects the explicitly fetishistic context of the Dwarf's lute song, which 'places the subject in a passive, feminine sexual position, that of an orange being penetrated by a hairpin'.[132]

> O maiden, take the radiant orange which has ripened in my garden, take it! I am poor, and my garden has but one little tree. This radiant orange ripened on it, take it! The maiden lets out a proud, hard laugh, takes the silver needle from her soft hair and stabs it before throwing the radiant orange to the ground, with a deeply wounding laugh. Maiden, ah! Your laughter and the needle did not pierce a blood orange – your sharp needle and sharp laughter struck me. See, I am dying, for the blood orange was my heart.[133]

Michael Davidson similarly perceives this 'reverse penetration of the male by the phallic female' as reflecting Weininger's description of female sexuality as the 'active use of coitus as a means to an end'.[134] These readings of the Dwarf's erotic crisis could be said to invoke the 'freakish' or 'hypersexual', but at the same time, they suggest that he, like Alviano, is characterised by a degree of sexual ambiguity. The amendment of the Infanta's age from twelve to eighteen results in a degree of sexual tension between her and the Dwarf. Lee summarises that 'his love is not a childlike affection, as it is in Wilde, but rather erotic in nature, as is evidenced by his attempt to kiss her, a gesture from which she withdraws in unfeigned horror and repulsion'.[135] The Infanta's reaction in this moment frames the Dwarf's advance as somewhat predatory. However, in what Lee describes as a 'final twist', the opera's narrative eventually 'locates the Dwarf's erotic crisis at the point of the castration crisis, figuring his sexuality as infantile', and thus bringing him into line with the representational convention of disabled peoples' sexuality as passive, childlike and, ultimately, lacking.[136] The Dwarf's sexual duality in Zemlinsky's opera can in fact be attributed to the libretto's Weiningerian influence, for, if the opera's narrative indeed depicts the protagonist's feminisation, it also brings him into line with Weininger's suggestion that '[t]he female, who is only sexual, can appear to be asexual because she is sexuality itself, and so her sexuality does not stand out separately from the rest of her being, either in space or in time, as in the case of the male'.[137] Whilst the theme of sexuality is treated in markedly different ways by Schreker and Zemlinsky, the sexual experiences of their disabled protagonists results in their inability to integrate with 'normal' society. The fates of both characters in light of their broader disabled

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[132] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror,' 206.
[133] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), 18.
[134] Davidson, *Invalid Modernism*, 58.
[135] Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror,' 205.
[136] Ibid., 206.
[137] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 200.

identities raise important questions about the narrative function of disability in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*.

Kill or Cure: The Fates of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's Disabled Protagonists

As well as constructing a taxonomy of disability stereotypes that can be adapted into considerations of disability in the wider narrative arts, Longmore's essay begins to shed light on the fates of disabled characters in film and television. He, amongst other disability scholars, notes the frequency with which the outcomes of narratives about disability fall into one of two categories: kill or cure.[138] In her collection of short stories entitled *Call Me Ahab,* the renowned disability activist Anne Finger refers satirically to the tendency of Hollywood film narratives of disability to 'linger on the border between cure and death (the only two acceptable states).'[139] Certainly, the fact that disability narratives so often end with the elimination of impairment (either through the death of the disabled character or by way of treatment or cure) fosters damaging ideas about the expendability of the disabled body, along with the notion that disabled people are somehow 'better off dead'. For Rosemarie Garland Thomson, the deterministic killing-off or rehabilitation of disabled characters in disability narratives – which reflects what she refers to as the 'cultural logic of euthanasia' – promotes the kind of binary thinking that considers certain disabled bodies redeemable and others disposable.[140]

Much like the depiction of disabled characters as 'uncharacteristically' heroic, the 'kill or cure' paradigm enables the creation of what might be described as 'redemption narratives', in that they offer a form of compensation for (or a solution to) the 'burden' of disability. Mitchell and Snyder write that '[w]hereas the removal of social barriers delimits the environment as a target of intervention, in cure/resurrection/redemption narratives, bodies are fixed to fit an unaccommodating environment'.[141] The rehabilitation of impairment modifies the disabled body into something deemed to be more socially practical, rather than making social provisions to accommodate the disabled body. The expulsion of the disabled body in 'kill' scenarios similarly depicts the removal of the inconvenient presence of disability. Both 'kill' and 'cure' narratives can be thought of as promoting a medical model view of disability,

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138 See Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 33–4 and Jay Timothy Dolmage, *Disability Rhetoric* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 39.
139 Anne Finger, *Call Me Ahab: A Short Story Collection* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 4.
140 Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 'The Cultural Logic of Euthanasia: "Sad Fancyings" in Herman Melville's Bartleby,' *American Literature* 76, no. 4 (2004): 777–806.
141 David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, 'Jesus Throws Everything Off Balance: Disability and Redemption in Biblical Literature,' in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*, ed. Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher and Jeremy Schipper (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2007), 179.

since the solution to the problem of disability is presented at an individual level.[142] The purging of disability from a plotline, either through rehabilitation or the elimination of the disabled character, often leads to the resolution of a narrative problem. As such, it can be argued that the narrative possibilities offered by the medical model view of disability are more closely aligned with conventional dramatic structures.

Many operas adhere to a similar pattern of narrative determinism to that which has commonly been recognised across literature and film. The narrative structure of an opera often requires tension before release or the presentation of a problem before its resolution, and disability frequently serves as such a problem. As such, opera's disabled bodies become 'problematic' bodies. As in literature, film and television, the solution to the 'problem' of disability often falls into the 'kill' or 'cure' category of narrative resolution. Within this paradigm, disability presents a problem within the opera's narrative arc, whilst its elimination or rehabilitation is a key element in the story's resolution. Instances of such a 'cure' might involve the restoration of a character to a state of so-called 'normality'. Here, opera's 'mad' characters might have their sanity restored, the blind might regain their sight (as is the case for the title character of Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* [1892]) and so on. In Wagner's *Parsifal* (1882), the fate of Amfortas is both redemptive and curative, as Parsifal's intervention heals his 'unhealing' wound and absolves him of his shame and suffering. On the other hand, the cure may not be literal and might involve the rehabilitation of an impairment through the likes of prosthetics, as in Sergei Prokofiev's *Povest' o nastoyashchem cheloveke* (*The Story of a Real Man*, 1948). The 'problem' of disability in opera can also be met with a solution in the form of a 'kill' narrative. Examples include the death of Chernomor, an example of the evil dwarf stereotype in the Russian opera *Ruslan and Lyudmilam* (Mikhail Glinka, 1842), and the demise of various 'mad' characters including Lucia di Lammermoor and Peter Grimes. There also exist many operas adapted from literary texts featuring the death of a disabled character.[143] Much like examples taken from the 'cure' bracket of narrative resolution, the 'kill' might not be literal, with many characters experiencing tragic and violent fates that include oppression, abuse and loss of sanity. For example, whilst Verdi's Rigoletto survives the narrative of the opera, the loss of Gilda, the only person for whom he feels love, renders his fate undoubtedly tragic.

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[142] For an overview of the medical model of 'medicalization' of disability, see Michael Oliver, *Politics of Disablement* (London: Macmillan: 1990), 46–53. See also Introduction, 25.

[143] Examples include the death of Tiny Tim in Thea Musgrave's 1979 opera *A Christmas Carol,* and that of Quasimodo in various operatic adaptations of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Louise Bertin, 1836; Alexander Sergeyevich Dargomïzhsky, 1847; William Henry Fry, 1864; Franz Schmidt, 1904).

McRuer writes that '[t]here is no guarantee that even the most foundational disability studies theses will function in the same way when we talk about global bodies'.[144] Whilst his statement is grounded in the sensible suggestion that disability studies ought to expand its lens of consideration to include non-Western cultural productions, it can also be argued that the perspectives of musicology (and more specifically opera studies) can reveal representational trends not often found where disability features in literature, film and television. Whilst examining the fates of opera's disabled characters exposes their almost unfaltering depiction as narrative 'problems', it also reveals the existence of forms of narrative resolution less often found in literature, film and television. For example, there are a number of operas in which the fate of disabled characters is uncertain, and predictably, there also seems to be a correlation between such undocumented fates and minor characters. In the introduction to this thesis, I noted the trend towards 'feigned' disability in the operatic canon.[145] This is another interesting deviation from the 'kill or cure' trajectory as, although these instances may be interpreted as an example of the 'cure' in that disability is eventually removed from the sphere of normality, it is difficult to overlook the fact that, in these narratives, disability never truly existed. Minor characters depicted as disabled also occasionally survive the narrative of the opera (as is the case for Demo in Cavalli's *Giasone*); nevertheless, this becomes problematic as disability is appropriated as a universal symbol of difference and as a vehicle through which to demonstrate a form of deviation from the normality of either the narrative or the hero. Even in cases where the disabled character is a protagonist, instances of survival are typically equipoised by the use of disability stereotypes, the appropriation of disability as a metaphorical device, or the use of disability as a tool for comedic relief.

The argument that *Der Zwerg* offers a form of cultural commentary is supported by the partial removal of the protagonist from stereotypical constructions of disability. Unlike many of the examples cited previously, the Dwarf is by no means a peripheral manifestation of difference or a mere narrative obstacle; he is the opera's protagonist. Similarly, that *Die Gezeichneten* offers a commentary on the cultural and discursive landscape of pre-Fascist Austria and Germany is demonstrated by the fact that, in the original libretto, the protagonist's morality is notably ambiguous: whether or not his outward appearance indicates internal depravity is open to interpretation. Joseph Straus refers to both works as examples of the introduction of 'protagonists whose personalities are only partly shaped by or reflected in their

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[144] Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2006), 201.
[145] See Introduction, 34.

deformity' in modernist opera.[146] However, disability and its associated themes take on a fundamental role in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. Furthermore, while Straus suggests that we find 'narrative trajectories that do not require the normalization or death of the disabled character' in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, I would suggest that this is most certainly not the case. Both Alviano and the Dwarf are subjected to catastrophic and violent fates in a manner concurrent with the 'kill or cure' paradigm.

In Zemlinsky's opera, upon discovering his disfigurement in a mirror, the Dwarf 'collapses with an inarticulate scream, as if struck by lightning'.[147] His reluctance to accept his disability is indicated as he pleads with the Infanta: 'say that it isn't true, that I am not ugly, not misshapen […] Say it isn't true, say that I am handsome'.[148] The opera ends as he dies of a broken heart. The death of the Dwarf can be read an example of the way in which, as Longmore describes, disability narratives present death as 'a release from the living death of catastrophic disablement'.[149] Furthermore, the Infanta's response dehumanises the Dwarf, trivialises his death and implies his expendability: 'My gift is already broken, the toy I received for my eighteenth birthday. Good, I will return to the dance'.[150] Her words also call to mind the aforementioned role of dwarfs as spectacles and curiosities at European courts during the era in which the opera is set. As I have argued, this mistreatment of the protagonist throughout the opera suggests a form of cultural critique, and this is further demonstrated by the opera's apparent adherence to the social model of disability, which I outlined in the introduction to this thesis.[151] The model suggests that disability is the result of social processes of discrimination that enable the creation of restrictive barriers: disability is created by society, not by impairment. The Dwarf's treatment throughout the opera's narrative and the function of disability in relation to his death adheres to a social model perspective in that the protagonist experiences no issues of a medical nature (he communicates no physical pain), nor does he struggle with issues surrounding movement or access. Rather, his pain is entirely emotional and only occurs upon discovering his socially prescribed disabled identity. Indeed, whilst in *Die Gezeichneten*, Alviano is the first to speak of his disability, the Dwarf's physical difference is first revealed in Don Estoban's description and is consistently defined by the attitudes of the court. In short, the social stigma attached to his dwarfism causes his issues, not the impairment itself.

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[146] Joseph N. Straus, *Broken Beauty: Musical Modernism and the Representation of Disability* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 83.
[147] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (Libretto), 32.
[148] Ibid., 30–31.
[149] Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 33.
[150] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (Libretto), 32.
[151] See Introduction, 25–27.

As Zemlinsky himself pointed out, *Der Zwerg* is the antithesis to *Die Gezeichneten* in the sense that, whilst Alviano is acutely aware of his disability, the Dwarf is ignorant of his appearance.[152] Nevertheless, Schreker's opera can also be understood from a social model perspective, as this very awareness can be perceived as the catalyst for Alviano's suffering and eventual madness. Schreker's protagonist seeks solitude on Elysium as a result of his appearance, leading to its misuse by the Noblemen for which Alviano is wrongly accused in light of his deformity. The opera draws to a close as Alviano, who has succumbed to insanity, staggers through a stunned crowd and exits the stage. His madness arguably constitutes a form of exclusion from the community, which, alongside his murderous actions contributes to the representation of what Longmore calls the 'spread effect'. In such an interpretation, Alviano's withdrawal from 'normal' society means the elimination of his disability from the view of the public, and the associated purging of the 'problem' of disability from the sphere of normality.

Conclusion

There is a macabre parallel to be drawn between Alviano's disappearance at the end of *Die Gezeichneten* and Schreker's own ostracisation from the musical community in an increasingly fascist 1930s Europe. Of course, the opera was written some years before the composer experienced the effects of the Nazi regime first hand, but nevertheless, his earlier writings reveal an acute awareness of the critical hostility he faced during the creation of *Die Gezeichneten*, as well as the increasingly conservative nationalist and anti-Semitic motivations of those who disparaged him. The treatment of the disabled protagonists in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* demonstrates the occurrence of the 'kill or cure' paradigm, but in light of both operas' capacity for cultural commentary, it can be argued that these tragic fates act as a deliberation on (if not a mouthpiece for critiquing) the turbulent social and political climate of pre-Fascist Austria and Germany. As this chapter has argued, the construction of Alviano and the Dwarf as projections of personal ostracisation and emblems of otherness speaks to the cultural anxiety of difference during this period, in which the currency of health and normality was increasingly valued. In this light, *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* are revealed to be pertinent examples of modernist opera's fascination with 'stigmatized subjects', and both operas use disability as a means through which to interrogate elusive (and ever-changing) ideals of normality.

Given the extent to which Schreker and Zemlinsky utilise their disabled protagonists as instruments for cultural commentary (which by association sees the occasionally sympathetic

[152] See 101–02.

treatment of Alviano and the Dwarf in the course of the operas' narratives), the adherence of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* to stereotypical modes of disability representation is striking. Indeed, many of the most ubiquitous narrative and characteristic trends observed by disability studies scholars in literature, film and television can be found to exist in relation to Schreker's and Zemlinsky's disabled characters. The presentation of their sexuality as either tragically lacking or dangerously excessive, their stock characterisation within the narrow confines of villainy or victimhood and the mobilisation of the formulaic 'kill or cure' paradigm brings these characters into line with the constructs of stereotypical disability representation. However, as I have demonstrated, the simultaneous circumvention of disability stereotypes in the operas underscores the works' cultural critique.

Within the emergent field of music and disability studies, hermeneutical considerations of disability place great emphasis on cultural context and consider the role of supplemental material in musical representations of disability. This chapter has taken as its starting point the assumption that, when considering opera – which of course combines examples of text, dance and drama within a musical framework – a work's literary and cultural context can be an invaluable source of insight into how disabled characters are either imagined and portrayed, sourced from literature (as in *Der Zwerg*), or grounded in personal experience. However, a return to Alviano's fate in the narrative of *Die Gezeichneten* illuminates the critical lacuna inherent to this approach. In comparison to the Dwarf's death, Alviano's fate constitutes a less literal example of the 'kill' trajectory. Nevertheless, the disappearance of the protagonist's disabled body 'alleviates discomfort by removing the unsightly from view', much like a prosthesis.[153] This disappearance and subsequent alleviation occurs not only within the opera's narrative, but also physically and visibly on stage. Alongside various narrative considerations, film and television studies examine the role of costuming and stage design in constructing images of disability. Beyond the depiction of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's disabled protagonists in the operas' librettos and scores, productions of the works feature diverse interpretations and representations of Alviano and the Dwarf which rely on similar aspects of production design. As such, the following chapters of this thesis consider the ways in which the colliding narratives of disability and degeneracy are represented, on stage, in contemporary productions of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas. Five such productions are the objects of my analysis in the readings that follow, as I consider the extent to which my understanding of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* is reflected and refracted in contemporary performance.

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[153] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 8.

3. Issues in Contemporary Production: Staging Literary and Cultural Origins

I have previously argued that Schreker and Zemlinsky utilise physical disability in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* as an allegory for (and even a criticism of) wider notions of cultural degeneracy and outsider identity that were prevalent in the early-twentieth-century German-speaking realm. Such a reading of these works places great emphasis on their literary and cultural origins. In Chapters One and Two of this thesis, my exploration of these origins revealed the presence of multifaceted discursive and thematic networks within the narratives of the operas: from Klaren's Weiningerian interpretation of Wilde's 'The Birthday of the Infanta' (its own artistic origins in Velázquez's *Las Meninas*) to reflect Zemlinsky's biography, to Schreker's incorporation of self-referential allusions to time-bound issues regarding gender, creativity, autonomy and morality in *Die Gezeichneten*, a work that also evokes the composer's own ostracisation from the musical community on the grounds of his supposed degeneracy. Both the latter opera and Schreker's comments on its creation include deliberate references to the preoccupation with social and artistic 'norms' which emerged after the turn of the century alongside popular discourses of socio-cultural degeneracy. This context is also reflected in the critical reception of both Schreker's and Zemlinsky's works and, as such, *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* can be understood as reflecting and contributing to the era's discourses of social and cultural degeneracy. The works' literary and cultural origins therefore reveal the way in which both operas are characterised by something of a degenerate condition, and moreover, these details provide a contextual framework for exploring the intersection of disability and degeneracy in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*.

Particular emphasis has been placed in the previous chapters of this thesis on these works' 'opera texts' – a term coined by David Levin to describe scores, librettos and stage directions.[1] In the introduction to this thesis I outlined the dramaturgical turn which has taken place in opera studies since the millennium. Charting the course 'from page to stage' (to borrow Clemens Risi's turn of phrase), this approach is best described in terms of its tendency to bypass the traditional musicological focus on the relationship between music and text, instead placing newfound emphasis on the physical and visual aspects of opera production.[2] In his efforts to focus scholarly attention on the place of objects other than the score in opera

[1] David Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2007), 11.
[2] Clemens Risi, 'Opera in Performance—In Search of New Analytical Approaches,' *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2011): 283.

studies, Levin, in particular, demonstrates the significance of properties of production such as set and costume design, as well as the likes of programmes, directors' notes and design sketches.[3] Building upon the examinations which have taken place in Chapters One and Two, this chapter maps the translation of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*'s literary and cultural origins from source to stage, analysing the incorporation of allusions and direct references to such cultural beginnings in original productions of *Der Zwerg* at Oper Graz and the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos (TNSC) in Lisbon in March and April 2017, and in a new production of *Die Gezeichneten* that was mounted at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich in July of the same year. Here, as in Chapters Four and Five, I am specifically concerned with the visual aspects of opera production (blocking, gesture, set and costume design) and the meaning that can be derived from them. In my readings, I adopt Levin's belief that, for an interpretation of an opera text to be 'strong', 'the mise-en-scène needs to engage the dramaturgy of the text, and criticism needs to illuminate that engagement'.[4] The extent to which a production incorporates and critically interrogates the historical context of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* thus becomes a tool by which I will assess its value. In short, in order to consider a production 'strong', I seek evidence of dramaturgical engagement with the operas' cultural contexts, and by association their deployment of disability as a metaphor for outsider status.

Der Zwerg – Oper Graz (March 2017)

Oper Graz's new production of *Der Zwerg*, which opened at the theatre in March 2017, formed the first half of a double bill with Luigi Dallapiccola's 1949 opera *Il prigioniero* (*The Prisoner*), directed by Paul Esterhazy. A critical examination of the use of costume, set design, blocking and gesture in this production reveals a number of references to the opera's literary and cultural origins, beginning with its genesis in Wilde's 'The Birthday of the Infanta' and Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. The production focusses on the ambiguity of time and place in the opera's narrative (which was adopted from its cultural predecessors), its subtext of psychological pathology (as introduced in Klaren's alterations from Wilde's original fairy tale), and the associated early-twentieth-century notions of bodily abnormality and outsider identity upon which this thesis concentrates.

[3] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 33.
[4] Ibid., 35.

Staging Ambiguity, Performing Pathology

Thematic associations and cultural allusions are established in this production by references to visual art in the set design, the abstract nature of which upholds the ambiguous nature of time and place in Velázquez's painting, Wilde's fairy tale and Klaren's libretto. Mathis Neidhardt's simple but visually striking scenography consists of a black panelled cube featuring a vast, gold-gilded picture frame and a negative of the 1659 portrait of the eight-year-old Infanta Margarita Teresa by Velázquez (figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. *Der Zwerg,* Oper Graz. Photograph by Werner Kmetitsch (2016)

Throughout the production, the empty frame glides back and forth across the stage, representing the mirror that brings about the Dwarf's cataclysmic self-recognition. The production's dramaturgical engagement with the role of the mirror in Zemlinsky's opera is evident both on-stage and in the programme booklet, which features stanzas from Annette von Droste-Hülshoff's 1844 poem 'Das Spiegelbild' ('The Reflection) and an extract from Jean-Paul Sartre's childhood memory in which he describes an encounter with a mirror 'the mirror taught me what I already knew'.[5] The enlarged negative of the Infanta is likely a

[5] Programme for Alexander Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*, Oper Graz, ((2017), 4, 12 (my translation).

reference to Velázquez's earlier painting *Las Meninas* (from which 'The Birthday of the Infanta' took its inspiration) and, in fact, several critics of the performance in March 2017 incorrectly identify the image on stage as *Las Meninas*.[6] On the surface, *Las Meninas* depicts a typical scene in the life of the Spanish court: the Infanta is tended to by her ladies in waiting, whilst two dwarfs and a dog are situated to her left, presumably present to provide entertainment for the princess.[7] The artist in the painting (whom critics have identified as Velázquez himself) pauses at his canvas, the content of which is not seen by the viewer, but some suggest depicts King Phillip IV and Queen Mariana, who are reflected in the mirror at the back of the room.[8] The painting is one of the most widely debated in western art history, having been subject to, in Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt's words, a 'bewildering number of approaches […] and interpretations'.[9] Joel Snyder and Ted Cohen identify the artist's use of multiple vanishing points, which, along with the clever use of perspective, renders the life-sized painting a theatrical and immersive three-dimensional world that viewers can walk into, thus muddying the waters between art and reality.[10] The empty frame in the Graz production thus serves as a reference to the complex role of the canvas in Velázquez's painting and a play on its immersive quality.

In his analysis of the painting, Foucault observes the visual centrality of the Infanta, whose gaze is directed at the viewer despite the ambiguities regarding the 'true' subject of both *Las Meninas* and the painting it depicts.[11] Nevertheless, due to the aforementioned use of perspective, the Infanta is not the work's only central figure. Leo Steinberg begins to unpick the complexities of representation in the painting, suggesting that 'the picture's focal center keeps shifting. Ask where the center is, and the answer returned by the picture is not any one point, nor any two, but three and four'.[12] The three prospective centre points of the painting – the Infanta, the back doorway out of the studio and the mirror in which King and Queen are

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[6] For example, see Michael Tschida, 'Ein Gift Namens Hoffnung,' *Kleine Zeitung*, 28 March 2017, www.kleinezeitung.at/kultur/klassik/5190182/Opernpremiere_Ein-Gift-namens-Hoffnung (accessed 21.09.2017).

[7] As I have noted, people with dwarfism were frequently employed in European courts between 1600 and 1800. See Chapter Two, 112–114.

[8] The mirror has been a contentious point in scholarly responses to the painting. Some have argued that, in fact, the image of the King and Queen is a painting, or even a mirror reflection of a painting. See George Kubler, 'The "Mirror" in Las Meninas,' in *The Art Bulletin* 67, no. 2 (1985), 316.

[9] Suzanne L. Stratton-Pruitt, 'Introduction,' in *Velázquez's Las Meninas*, ed. Suzanne L. Stratton-Pruitt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

[10] Joel Snyder and Ted Cohen, 'Reflexions on "Las Meninas": Paradox Lost,' in *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 2 (1980), 429–47. See also Sheldon Brown, 'Troiage Aesthetics', in *The Structure of Style: Algorithmic Approaches to Understanding Manner and Meaning*, ed. Shlomo Argamon, Kevin Burns, and Shlomo Dubnov (Heidelberg: Springer, 2010), 207–08.

[11] Michel Foucault, 'Las Meninas,' in *The Order of Things: An archaeology of the human sciences* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 13.

[12] Leo Steinberg, 'Velázquez' "Las Meninas,"' *October*, 1981, 45–54 (51).

reflected – have led to radically different interpretations of the work.[13] In many ways, these three foci echo the tensions embodied within the work: the 'ideal' image of the Infanta, the 'real' world outside of the studio and the 'reflected' image of the King and Queen. These three characteristics are translated into Wilde's 'The Birthday of the Infanta' and Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*, both of which also deal with ideas about identity, illusion and the fabric of reality. In fact, the titles of both Wilde's story and Zemlinsky's opera can be thought of, in a sense, as contributions to the conversation about the ambiguous role of the mirror image in Velázquez's painting. As I noted in Chapters One and Two, Wilde places the Infanta at the centre of his narrative, which, like many of his works, draws upon notions of vanity, self-reflection and obsession, and arguably constitutes a condemnation of the rituals of aestheticism. Zemlinsky's opera, on the other hand, adopts the Dwarf as its central figure, around whom the theme of social and political otherness is constructed in line with Klaren's distinctly time-bound subtext of degeneracy. This repositioning of the story's central figure can be seen as echoing the fluctuating visual foci in *Las Meninas*, but moreover, it can be argued that it enabled Klaren to exaggerate the historical and geographical ambiguity of Wilde's narrative. The 'timelessness' of the figure of the Dwarf, as well as the opera's deliberately ambivalent setting establishes a sense of spatial and temporal distancing between Zemlinsky's biography and his disabled protagonist, despite the opera's participation in the process of narrative prosthesis and the Dwarf's resultant role as a metaphor for the composer's outsider status.

In the Graz production of *Der Zwerg*, the air of sterility evoked by the stark set design is reminiscent of a contemporary art gallery, an asylum and even a prison (perhaps in anticipation of the second work of the double bill). Initially, the empty, grandiose frame and the Velázquez negative are the only visual cues of the splendour of the seventeenth-century Spanish court, where the drama takes place.[14] However, as I have argued, playfully anachronistic details (likely the influence of *Las Meninas*) render time and place something of a mystery in 'The Birthday of the Infanta' and *Der Zwerg*, and the Graz production of Zemlinsky's opera upholds this sense of ambiguity through the use of costume and staging. Dressed in grey, knee-length skirts, white blouses and black ties, the costumes of the Infanta and her playmates are reminiscent of a contemporary school uniform. In contrast to her description in Wilde's fairy tale and Zemlinsky's opera, as well as the depiction of Infanta Margarita Teresa in Velázquez's painting, this production only sets the Infanta apart from her playmates by the addition of a gold headscarf. Despite the eerie timelessness and ambiguous geographical setting of the

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[13] Ibid, 51. For several interesting interpretations of the painting, see Madlyn Millner Kahr, 'Velázquez and Las Meninas,' in *The Art Bulletin* 57, no. 2 (1975), 225–46; Emily Umberger, 'Velázquez and Naturalism II: Interpreting "Las Meninas,"' in *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 28 (1995), 94–117.

[14] I outlined the spatial and temporal ambiguity of Wilde's and Zemlinsky's narratives in Chapter Two, 103–04.

production, the trappings of the lavish Spanish court are brought to life by the preparations for the Infanta's birthday party at the opera's opening. The opulent gifts mentioned in the libretto – such as the 'little crown of gold and rubies' and a 'crucifix of topaz and ivory' – are gold and ornate, and along with the mirror and the Infanta's scarf, they are the only visual departures from the otherwise minimalistic, monochromatic set and costumes. Given the juxtaposition established between the Infanta and the Dwarf in the libretto – most notably through the respective descriptions of the playmates and Don Estoban – the use of gold accents in this production is a subtle yet visually striking representation of Donna Clara's beauty, which is described in both the fairy tale and the opera in terms such as 'radiance' and 'sun'.

In the role of the Infanta, Tatjana Miyus's costume distances her from the historical specificity of Velázquez's Infanta paintings, bringing her into line with the ambiguity of the opera's narrative and the production's setting with regards to both time and place. Nevertheless, the historical specificity of the source text is represented on stage by the presence of a motionless young child dressed in the luxurious Infanta-style gown of Velázquez's painting. The child serves as a reminder of Donna Clara's infancy, since, though Klaren's adaptation of the story for Zemlinsky saw the amendment of the Infanta's age from twelve to eighteen to align her with the archetypal *femme fatale*, her character nevertheless maintains a sense of puerility, as in the opera's libretto. The childlike nature of the female protagonist, is implied by both her schoolgirlesque attire and frequent clutching of a small doll (figure 3.1). The production's three Infanta figures (represented by Miyus, the child and the doll) also serve as a visual manifestation of the ideal, the real and the reflected foci of *Las Meninas*.

Further to reflecting the historical and geographical ambiguity of the opera's setting, the severity of the production's monochromatic, uniform-like costumes fosters an air of institutionalisation. This is perpetuated further by the aforementioned sparseness of the clinical scenography, as well as the rigidity and, at times, absurdity of the staging and dramatisation of the court. The psychoanalytic influences of Klaren's libretto are made manifest through the bodily demeanour of Donna Clara and her playmates. For example, evoking Weininger's description of women as 'subject to hypnotic trances', the Infanta sits stiffly and with a vacant expression at a desk next to Ghita.[15] Meanwhile, the playmates line up along the right and left-hand edges of the stage, facing inwards to enact repetitive movements and convulsions: one intermittently raises her arm, another kicks her leg, another pulls at her hair and so on. All the while, Don Estoban's exasperation (as depicted in the libretto) is augmented into seeming

[15] Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character, Authorised Translation from the Sixth German Edition* (London: William Heinemann, 1906), 267, https://archive.org/details/sexcharacter00wein (accessed 12.04.2019).

frenzy, as he rushes around the stage attempting to call the court to order. His characterisation in this production thus evokes Weininger's position on pathologically hysterical men: 'I do not deny that there are hysterical men, but these are comparatively few'.[16] Their hysteria, Weininger believes, is 'of a different kind and never so hopeless in character as woman's'.[17] The production's setting, then, appears to be that of an asylum or institution, and the notion of psychological pathology so entrenched in Weininger's ideology (and translated into Klaren's libretto for Zemlinsky) is clearly present.

Mirror Images: *Der Zwerg* and *Il prigioniero*

In addition to the aspects of dramaturgy, staging and costuming particular to the Graz production of *Der Zwerg*, those of its companion piece reveal further insights into the interpretative framework of the production. In fact, the works staged alongside Zemlinsky's opera at Oper Graz and the TNSC in Lisbon (to be examined shortly), suggest markedly different ideological and interpretative directorial approaches, in keeping with Regietheater's tendency to disrupt established narrative and interpretative approaches. In Graz, the companion piece is Luigi Dallapiccola's *Il prigioniero* (*The Prisoner*, 1949), which draws upon notions of power, corruption and control, as well as the tragedy of loss and the dangers of hope. Dallapiccola began his musical career composing in a style that was rich with chromatic, quasi-tonal language not dissimilar to that of Schreker. *Il prigioniero*, however, represents a departure from such a style, with the work's twelve-tone, boldly modernistic musical idiom providing a stark contrast to the largely traditional musical landscape of *Der Zwerg*.

Despite their musical differences, *Il prigioniero* and *Der Zwerg* share aspects of setting, theme and plot. Dallapiccola's opera takes place in sixteenth-century Saragossa and depicts the despair and tragic fate of a prisoner during the Spanish Inquisition. During a visit from his mother, the prisoner (who, like Zemlinsky's Dwarf, is nameless) tells of his friendship with the gaoler, who refers to him as 'brother', thus raising his hopes of an escape. After the departure of his mother, the prisoner is visited by the gaoler, who informs him of an uprising in Flanders and the associated weakening of the power of Philip II. The gaoler leaves the cell door open as he leaves, and the prisoner flees. After his escape, the prisoner hears the word 'brother' and falls into the arms of the gaoler, who is revealed, in fact, to be the Grand Inquisitor. The deceived prisoner, tormented by unfulfilled hope for a life beyond the gaol, is led to his execution: his death an allegory for freedom.

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

Ben Earle suggests that Dallapiccola's works 'bear witness to a profound involvement in the socio-political currents of their times', and indeed, despite *Il prigioniero*'s historical setting, the opera's central theme of persecution echoes Dallapiccola's own treatment within the context of twentieth-century Italian Fascism. *Il prigioniero* was conceived in the midst of the Second World War, and Dallapiccola, a Jewish composer, was impelled to leave his long-time home in Florence following the implementation of anti-Semitic legislation.[18] The composer's writings in the 1970s reveal his impetus for the work:

> More compelling than ever I saw the necessity of writing an opera that could be at once moving and contemporary despite its historical setting, an opera that would depict the tragedy of our time – the tragedy of persecution felt and suffered by the millions and tens of millions.[19]

It seems that Dallapiccola, like Schreker and Zemlinsky, intended to denounce the cultural landscape of his time whilst maintaining a safe distance between the opera's narrative and his socio-political circumstances. In this light, the similarities between *Il prigioniero* and *Der Zwerg* appear to go beyond their superficial engagement with early modern Spain and, in Graz, these similarities are also represented on stage through the continuity of set and costume design across the two productions.

The sustained use of Neidhardt's minimalistic scenography across both productions suggests their shared Spanish setting. After the interval, the only alteration to the set is the replacement of Velázquez's painting of the Infanta Margarita Teresa with a similar negative of a portrait of Grand Inquisitor Fernando Niño de Guevara (c. 1600) by the artist Doménikos Theotokópoulos (commonly known as El Greco). The Infanta and the Inquisitor function, in their respective works, as symbols of cruelty and the corruption of power. The dominating on-stage placement of the projections thus illuminates the notion of power and its misuse in the deception of both the Dwarf and the prisoner. Moreover, the inclusion of images of the real figures upon which both fictional villains were based serves as a symbolic representation of ideas surrounding the muddying of reality and the dangers of (self-)deception, which loom large over both works.

Both productions in the Graz double bill also feature non-singing figures, whose presence underscores the works' shared themes. In *Der Zwerg*, a shackled man (representing Dallapiccola's prisoner) frequently appears alongside the Dwarf, and apart from a few

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[18] Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

[19] Luigi Dallapiccola, *On Opera: Selected Writings of Luigi Dallapiccola*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Rudy Shackelford (Exeter: Toccata Press, 1987), 51–52.

moments in which he is struck, pushed or otherwise treated with contempt by Don Estoban, he appears invisible to the remainder of the cast. In *Il prigioniero*, the protagonist is similarly shadowed by a silent figure (representing Zemlinsky's Dwarf), this time a man with dwarfism, whose role is restricted to the ringing of a golden bell. The latter production also features a number of girls who, like the playmates in *Der Zwerg*, line the edges of the stage and carry out similar convulsions (see figure 3.2). In the same scene, a young girl, her face covered by a gold headscarf, sits motionless at a desk, and the actor with dwarfism sits in the centre of the gold frame – mirroring the staging of a scene in the previous production. As shown in figures 3.2 and 3.3, the two productions also make use of almost identical costumes.

Figure 3.2. *Der Zwerg,* Oper Graz. Photograph by Werner Kmetitsch (2016).

Figure 3.3. *Der Gefange* (*Il prigioniero*), Oper Graz. Photograph by Werner Kmetitsch, 2016.

A sense of continuity is forged between the seemingly disparate musical worlds of Zemlinsky and Dallapiccola by the striking resemblance between the staging of these two scenes. This continuity is further emphasised by the shared use of props and costumes, along with the interesting addition of the silent, doppelgänger protagonists from the respective companion work. The visual unity between the productions illustrates the interconnected ideological content of the two works, over which the themes of power, corruption and (self-)deception hold sway.

Der Zwerg – Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, Lisbon (April 2017)

March 2017 saw the opening of a unique double bill featuring *Der Zwerg* alongside Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (1892) at the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos (TNSC) in Lisbon. This production of *Der Zwerg* constituted the work's Portuguese premiere, and according to the company's artistic director, Patrick Dickie, the decision to combine the canonical Italian operas favoured by the patrons of São Carlos with a number of lesser-known works was part of a wider effort to diversify the content of the theatre's repertoire, as well as its audiences.[20] As part of the theatre's endeavour to challenge a predominantly traditional audience to hear new works in conjunction with more familiar repertoire, the company also seeks to engage with a younger generation of creative professionals. Perhaps a byproduct of this strategic move is the alignment of certain aspects of the double-bill with the Regietheater tradition more frequently to be found in German-speaking Europe. Unlike the double bill at Oper Graz – in which *Der Zwerg* and *Il prigioniero* shared an entire production team – the Lisbon productions pool their set and costume designers, as well as their musical direction by Martin André, but were directed, respectively, by Rodula Gaitanou (*Pagliacci*) and Nicola Raab (*Der Zwerg*).

The creative team is notable for its interdisciplinarity, or, indeed, the presence of 'outside perspectives' which frequently characterise Regietheater production ensembles. Responsibility for the set design lays with architect José Capela, film and television specialist Mariana Sá Nogueira takes the lead on costume design, while the lighting is overseen by architect and interior designer Rui Monteiro. Despite what appears to be a move towards Regietheater practices, the TNSC production stands alone among those discussed in this thesis as the only one without a dedicated dramaturg. Given the popular view of Regietheater as one component in an ideological and geographical rift between the United States and Europe, it is

[20] Patrick Dickie, interview with LUSA news agency. See 'ENTREVISTA: Programador do Teatro de S. Carlos quer renovar público com opções "menos convencionais,"' in *LUSA* (Lisbon), 1 July 2016, available at: https://www.lusa.pt/article/20939223/ (accessed: 23.09.2017).

notable that this production is the furthest removed (geographically, that is) from Germany, which Nicholas Payne has dubbed as the movement's 'epicentre'.[21] Nevertheless, my reading of this particular production reveals a degree of critical engagement with the historical and cultural origins of Zemlinsky's opera text. The mounting of *Der Zwerg* with *Pagliacci* underscores the works' explorations of bodily difference, stigma and rejection. The pairing of these operas will be considered in detail in Chapter Four, where particular attention will be paid to the way in which *Der Zwerg*'s central themes of fatal passion, physical difference and tragic recognition are brought to the fore by Raab's dramaturgy. Given the focus of the present chapter, however, the following analysis focuses on the way in which the historical and geographical ambiguity of the opera's narrative, as well reflections of its literary and cultural contexts are made manifest through the production's carefully considered use of costume and scenography.

Traces of Wilde and Weininger

As in Graz, certain aspects of the TNSC production's stage design suggests the enigmatic nature of time and place in the narratives of Wilde's fairy tale and Zemlinsky's opera. Albeit in keeping with *Der Zwerg*'s literary and cultural origins, the ambiguously abstract scenography is in fact a result of Dickie's commissioning of a 'universal set', suitable for use in up to eight independent productions. Capela realises Dickie's brief as a large, multi-purpose and abstract structure which functions variously throughout the two performances as a table, a stage, a platform and a walkway. At the opening of *Der Zwerg,* it has been altered into large rectangular cuboid, which protrudes out of the fabric backdrop towards the audience. Presents wrapped in white paper with red bows are stacked on top of the oblong platform, which serves as a table in the opera's opening. At other points during the production, the structure is taken apart and reassembled to create a set of steps and later to form an elevated walkway. The black panelling that lined the edges of the stage remain in situ throughout the production, but otherwise, elements of the scenery are movable and function in a variety of ways.

Sá Nogueira's costume design for the TNSC production of *Der Zwerg* sees the incorporation of subtle references to the opera's literary and cultural origins. The costumes of the Infanta and her playmates, in particular, call to mind the reimagining of certain aspects of Wilde's original story in Klaren's libretto for Zemlinsky. The Infanta's full-length gown is contemporary in terms of its clean lines and striking colours, yet its botanical print is

[21] See Introduction, 43–44; Nicholas Payne, 'Opera in the Marketplace', in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 316.

reminiscent of the decadent garden in Wilde's fairy tale, which is depicted as an over-ripe Eden on the verge of excess and decay.[22] Sá Nogueira explains that the garden was a particularly important aspect of consideration with regards to the costume design for the production, '[e]specially an idea of an unpleasant (or nightmarish) garden full of odd animals and plants'.[23] This imagery was concentrated within the illustrated print of the Infanta's dress (figures 3.4 and 3.5), which features leafy vines redolent of the 'mouldering trellis' of Wilde's description, along with the image of the rose, a token of the Infanta's spurious affection and the catalyst of the Dwarf's misguided infatuation and eventual downfall. Whereas a number of productions of *Der Zwerg* draw upon the moral ambiguity of the Infanta (based upon a reading of the opera that might make concessions for her behaviour due to her sheltered life) at São Carlos, her intentions are palpably sinister. Her unmistakable depiction as a stereotypical *femme fatale* is signalled by her visible flirtation, the sexualised touching of her body and, eventually, her stripping of the Dwarf. Her duplicity is further symbolised by a feature of the dress's illustrated print – a serpent entwined within the lush foliage (figure 3.5).

Figure 3.4. Mariana Sá Nogueira, 'infanta pattern' (email correspondence with the author, 16.02.2018).

[22] See Chapter One, 80–81.
[23] Mariana Sá Nogueira, email correspondence with the author, 16.02.2018.

Figure 3.5. *Der Zwerg*, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, 2017, available at: https://owlartistmanagement.co.uk/talents/sarah-jane-brandon-soprano/ (accessed 08.05.2018).

Apparently in keeping with the imagery of the garden, the Infanta's playmates wear long, A-line skirts in dull hues of red, pink, green and yellow, and hold petals in their arms. In the production's opening scene, the playmates seem mesmerised and lethargic as they throw the petals adoringly at the Infanta. But with the arrival of the Dwarf, their listlessness gives way to an air of haughty self-importance, and their body language became markedly more alert, even agitated. In the libretto, the playmates react to the Dwarf's arrival with hyperbolic exclamations such as, '[a] monster! […] I have never seen anything so hideous in my life!'[24] In Wilde's narrative, the anthropomorphised flowers, upon setting eyes on the Dwarf, 'curled up in disgust' and cried, "'[h]e is really far too ugly to play in any place where we are […] He is a perfect horror!'".[25] In the Lisbon production, the playmates scurry across the stage to form a huddled group in an apparent effort to create distance between themselves and the protagonist. Their bodily demeanour in this moment reflects the narrative tendency of disability to incite curiosity, fear and revulsion, as discussed in Chapter Two. In both the opera and the original fairy tale, the playmates' reaction to the Dwarf is an example of 'freakery', which David Church defines as the process by which a 'nondisabled audience retains the

[24] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), 15.
[25] Wilde, 'The Birthday of the Infanta,' 49.

power to subject a non-normative body (traditionally, that of a person with disabilities) to the ableist gaze as entertaining spectacle, enjoying a mixture of shock, horror, wonder, and pity'.[26] The excerpts above demonstrate the way in which the enfreakment of the Dwarf is embedded in both Wilde's narrative and the opera's libretto. The TNSC production emphasises the parallels between the two works in this moment, as the playmates are characterised along similar lines to the residents of Wilde's garden.

Performing Weininger's Thesis of Female Sexuality

In addition to these visual and dramatic allusions to the opera's source text, as in the Graz production, aspects of the dramatisation of the TNSC production also call to mind elements of Klaren's libretto, specifically the extent to which it was influenced by Weininger's *Sex and Character*. Klaren, of course, had a special interest in Weininger and went on to publish a monograph on the man and his works in 1924. Certain aspects of the TNSC production also allude to this aspect of *Der Zwerg*'s literary and cultural genesis. For example, upon the Dwarf's arrival, the female characters abandon their flowers and turn, instead, to reading. From the perspective of Weininger's influence on the libretto, this calls to mind the fin-de-siècle notion of the New Woman, whose desire to learn placed her at odds with the typical association of womanhood with marriage, childbearing and sexual subjugation. During the early-twentieth century, constructions of the New Woman in the popular imagination were inexorably linked to theories of degeneration, frequently referring to the undermining of traditional social values, specifically that of a healthy masculine 'norm'. The popular press's preoccupation with both the New Woman and the dangers associated with women's reading around the turn of the century are well-documented.[27] In Germany, the 'excessive' reading habits of women and young people were pathologised as an addiction and termed *Lesesucht*, which, as Kerstin Barndt has illustrated, led to the development of government initiatives designed to regulate the

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[26] David Church, 'Freakery, Cult Films, and the Problem of Ambivalence,' *Journal of Film and Video* 63, no. 1 (2011): 3.

[27] See Jochen Hung, 'The Modernized Gretchen: Transformations of the "New Woman" in the Late Weimar Republic,' *German History* 33, no. 1 (2015): 52–79; Atina Grossmann, 'Girlkultur or Thoroughly Rationalised Female: A New Woman in Weimar Germany?' in *Women and Culture and Politics: A Century of Change*, ed. Judith Friedlander et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 62–80; Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990); Susan C. Shapiro, 'The Mannish New Woman: "Punch" and Its Precursors,' *Review of English Studies* 42, no. 168 (1991): 510–22. For literature about the perceived dangers of reading in relation to female sexuality, see Jacqueline Pearson, 'The Pleasures and Perils of Reading,' in *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750–1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 87–121; Sally Ledger, 'The New Woman and Feminist Fictions,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 153–68.

consumption of literature.[28] Sally Ledger summarises the wider European practice of waging pseudoscientific arguments against women who flouted conventional conceptions of femininity, noting the way in which anti-feminist commentators cited the supposed dangers of academic pursuit on the female reproductive system.[29]

In *Sex and Character*, such a position is implied as Weininger proposes that women's education should be 'directed solely to preparing them for their marriage, the happy state in which they are to find their crown', and should serve 'to accentuate woman's womanliness, her dependence, and her servile condition'.[30] For many of those who cited the perils of literary pursuits, reading was an omen of women's incompatibility with the conventions of femininity, and their vying, instead, for a place in the 'masculine' sphere of intellect and rationality. In the production of *Der Zwerg* at the TNSC, the act of reading by the Infanta and her playmates represents of the upheaval of traditional gender roles that valued women as natural and men as rational. Moreover, the additional portrayal of the Dwarf holding fruits and flowers places him in the 'feminine' sphere of nature, and thus conforms to a reading of Klaren's Weiningerian libretto as a dramatisation of emasculation.[31]

Marc Moskovitz has deciphered Klaren's description of the libretto as an allegory for 'the confrontation of every man with every woman' as referring to the way in which the Infanta's 'beauty and dominance' render the Dwarf 'weak and submissive in her presence'.[32] If the opera does indeed depict the Dwarf's feminisation, it is only as a result of his interactions with Donna Clara, who mobilises her sexuality as an instrument for the manipulation and control of the Dwarf, who serves as mere entertainment. In Lisbon, the Infanta's stripping of the Dwarf constitutes a dramatic enactment of the former's sexually exploitative nature, calling to mind some of Weininger's views with regards to women and sex. Christine Achinger suggests that *Sex and Character* can be interpreted as a series of 'variations on the idea that women want to be passive, to be used, subjugated, humiliated, and maltreated'.[33] Statements by Weininger such as 'Coitus is the price man has to pay to women […] for their oppression' certainly verify Achinger's sentiments.[34] Nevertheless, Weininger simultaneously stresses the fact that for men, only humiliation and shame can be derived from sex, because 'in it woman

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[28] Kerstin Barndt, 'Mothers, Citizens, and Consumers: Female Readers in Weimar Germany,' in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, ed. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kriston Mcguire (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 96. See also Gideon Reuveni, *Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany Before 1933*, trans. Ruth Morris (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 35, 151.
[29] Ledger, 'The New Woman and Feminist Fictions,' 156.
[30] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 348.
[31] Lee and Davidson have both interpreted the opera in this way. See Chapter Two, 93, 120–21.
[32] Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 189.
[33] Christine Achinger, 'Allegories of Destruction: "Woman" and "the Jew" in Otto Weininger's Sex and Character,' *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 88, no. 2 (2013): 133.
[34] Weininger, *Sex and Character,* 343.

becomes the object, the cause'.[35] He outlines the corruption and feminisation of men by women who seduce them for purely selfish ends, and amongst the wealth of contradictions that flood his manifesto, perhaps the most notable is the declaration that 'woman requires man to be sexual, because she only gains existence through his sexuality'.[36] Here, he paradoxically interprets the fulfilment of men's sexual urges – albeit from a staunchly misogynistic standpoint – as something that can only empower women.

Weininger's judgement of female sexuality as a purely narcissistic instinct is related to his impression of women as predatory and hyper-sexualised, particularly those pertaining to the 'prostitution', as opposed to the 'motherhood' type.[37] In his definition of these two camps (which he believes to be the only 'categories' of womanhood), Weininger suggests that 'the essence of motherhood consists, as the most superficial investigation will reveal, in that the getting of the child is the chief object of life, whereas in the prostitute sexual relations in themselves are the end'.[38] In both instances, he implies that female sexual desire can only be self-serving and is almost invariably dangerous. With this in mind, the Infanta's stripping of the Dwarf serves as a dramatic culmination of her flirtations and provocations throughout the production at São Carlos. On the one hand, this aligns her with Weininger's particular take on the notion of the predatory and sexually exploitative woman. However, the Infanta's use of her sexuality as an instrument of manipulation places her at odds with Weininger's belief that woman is 'willing to be used by man as a tool, as a thing, as an object, to be treated as his property, to be changed and modelled according to his good pleasure'.[39] Instead, it is the Dwarf who truly conforms to this particular take on female sexual identity, since, as Davidson observes, the opera is saturated with visual reversals that render the Dwarf sexually submissive.[40] The Dwarf's kneeling before the Infanta, his kissing of her stool and his adoption of a foetal position at her feet (all of which are dramatised in the TNSC production), reflect not only the Infanta's wielding of her sexuality as a means through which to garner control, but also the protagonist's masochistic feminisation (and by association, his sexualisation) at the hands of his female counterpart.[41] For Davidson, then, 'the dwarf's fate is not that he is deformed but that he has linked his fortune to a woman. What he sees in the mirror is the emasculating power of the femme fatale'.[42] Of course, I would suggest that both are true, and

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[35] Ibid., 347.
[36] Ibid., 335.
[37] Ibid., 219.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 337.
[40] Michael Davidson, *Invalid Modernism: Disability and the Missing Body of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 58.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

that, in feminising and sexualising the Dwarf, the libretto brings the protagonist into line with long-standing tropes of disabled peoples' sexuality as either asexual or hypersexual.[43] I have previously noted the conflation of disability with sexual deviance and excess in many disability narratives, and, as I will further demonstrate in Chapter Five, such stereotypes, in both fictional representation and reality, render disability unable to 'escape its association with shame'.[44] In the TNSC production, the sense of humiliation and shame attached to the Dwarf is only heightened by his nakedness, adding a supplementary layer of tragedy to his ruinous anagnorisis. Moreover, in light of Weininger's conflation of female and Jewish pathological sexuality, the production's emphasis on the Dwarf's sexual subjugation highlights both the misogynistic and anti-Semitic subtexts of Klaren's libretto.

Out of Place and Time: Costume as a Signifier of Difference

The contextual similarities between the Graz and TNSC productions also extend to their mutual references to the historical ambiguity of Wilde's original narrative. In Lisbon, this is most notably upheld through the use of costumes. In keeping with the eclectic mix of period allusion and timelessness specific to the costumes of the Infanta and her playmates, Ghita and Don Estoban are dressed, respectively, in a cobalt blue dress and a purple suit. The use of colour in the costumes for these characters forms a contrast to the natural tones of the Infanta and the playmates. Nevertheless, a certain congruence is established by the stylised simplicity of their garments, and together, the members of the court are costumed in an elusively timeless style. Both these costumes and that of the Dwarf are a testament to Sá Nogueira's aim to create 'an abstract and unsettling atmosphere'.[45] The lack of historical specificity in the costume design for the protagonist is brought to light in Sá Nogueira's sketches, for which he drew inspiration from a number of popular cultural figures. The collage below (figure 3.6) features a character from David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* known as 'The Man from Another Place', played by the American actor Michael J. Anderson. The Man from Another Place inhabits a realm of erotic and phallic symbolism known as 'The Red Room', and the protagonist, Dale Cooper, refers to him as 'the little man' (like Anderson himself, the character is a dwarf). The black and white image above shows the German actor and circus performer Harry Earls, also known as 'Harry Doll' of the 'Doll Family'. Below is a snippet of Irving Penn's 1947 photograph of Salvador Dalí.

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[43] See Chapter Two, 118–22. The stereotypes surrounding disability and sexuality will be further discussed in Chapter Five.
[44] Tobin Siebers, 'Sex, Shame, and Disability Identity With Reference to Mark O'Brien,' in *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 175.
[45] Mariana Sá Nogueira, email correspondence with the author, 16.02.2018.

Figure 3.6. Mariana Sá Nogueira, costume design images for the Dwarf (email correspondence with the author, 16.02.2018).

Juxtaposed with this selection of twentieth-century popular cultural figures is the inspiration taken by Sá Nogueira from period styles more in keeping with the time-setting of the original narrative (figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7. Mariana Sá Nogueira, costume design images for the Dwarf (email correspondence with the author, 16.02.2018).

In the production, the Dwarf's costume comprises a long cloak, breeches and ankle boots in heavy, red velvet – described by Sá Nogueira as 'the most tragic of all fabrics' – along with a Regency-style white shirt.[46] Whilst his attire forms a contrast to that of the other characters due to the fact that it is more historically informed, its period of origin is ambiguous. This vague backdating of the Dwarf's costume implies the difference of the protagonist from the court.

His visible incongruence also implies a lesser degree of civilisation. In Wilde's original narrative, the Dwarf is the son of a local charcoal-burner and, as such, his otherness is underscored by his class distinction, which conflicts with that of the court. As I outlined in Chapters One and Two, one aspect of Klaren's quasi-biographical interpretation of the story for Zemlinsky was the inclusion of certain details that imply the protagonist's mysterious and exotic origins. Despite these changes (which incidentally result in his raised social status) and the high regard in which his musical talents are held, his discordance with the Spanish court is maintained: the Dwarf is mocked by the court as an ignorant fool, and the Infanta makes the assumption that he does not speak Spanish.[47] His treatment by the court suggests their supposition that he is somehow less developed, either as a result of his 'primitive', exotic origin or his disability.

In the TNSC production, the implication of the Dwarf's otherness as a result of his 'primitive' nature is denoted by the anachronistic backdating of his costume – which renders him not only out of place, but out of time. In contrast to the persistent neatness of the court, his appearance also becomes gradually more dishevelled throughout the production, further emphasising his otherness and reflecting the way in which he is perceived as less rational (and less civilised) in conjunction with the increasing clarity with which he sees himself and, crucially, his difference. An interesting parallel can be drawn between the notion of the protagonist as a 'primitive' or less-evolved figure and *Der Zwerg*'s own standing as an example of fairy-tale opera. Adrian Daub summarises the judgements levelled against the genre by various twentieth-century critics, including Walther Niemann, for whom it represented the 'bankruptcy of post-Wagnerian composers' and 'a retreat into "mere" composing'.[48] By flouting Wagnerian values, fairy-tale opera was thought to constitute an unfortunate step away from the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and a reversal, instead, to a lower stage on the (musical) evolutionary

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), 16. Davidson has also discussed the characterisation of the Dwarf as a Jew in relation to Weininger's influence on the libretto. See Davidson, *Invalid Modernism*, 618.
[48] Walther Niemann, *Die Musik der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Schuster and Loeffler, 1913), 263, 102, quoted in Adrian Daub, *Tristan's Shadow: Sexuality and the Total Work of Art after Wagner* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 73.

ladder. However, this was an idea that was introduced in Nordau's *Entartung*, as the author declared that opera was undergoing a form of regression in the hands of Wagner.[49]

The careful use of costume and (at least in the case of the Dwarf) its transformation throughout the performance is one of the ways in which, as in Graz, certain aspects of the São Carlos production generate a sense of ambivalence regarding the historical and geographical setting of the story. Alongside its reflection of the ambiguous nature of time and place in the creations of Velázquez, Wilde and Klaren, the use of costume in this production also calls to mind the wider cultural context of the opera, in which Zemlinsky was cast in the role of cultural outsider. Also embedded in the framework of the production are the associated notions of 'primitive' culture and identity, which were bound up with the evolutionary discourse of degeneration theory, itself leading to the condemnation of Jews like the composer, within the anti-Semitism of the early-twentieth century. As I argued in Chapter Two, the otherness of Zemlinsky and his protagonist are not mutually exclusive, and the TNSC production's strength lies in its critical engagement with this context, through which it lends credence to such a biographical reading of the opera.

Die Gezeichneten – Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich (July 2017)

In July 2017, the Bayerische Staatsoper mounted a new production of *Die Gezeichneten*, produced by Krzysztof Warlikowski in collaboration with Małgorzata Szczęśniak (set and costume design) and Denis Guéguin (videography). Of the productions encountered thus far, this was the most closely aligned with the Regietheater tradition, due in no small part to its striking critical engagement with the historical and cultural contexts of Schreker's opera (most likely as a result of Hackenbeck's dramaturgical work). When I refer to a 'strong' reading in this this thesis, I refer to those productions which engage critically with the contexts and subtexts of an opera text and make that engagement apparent on stage. In many ways, the Bayerische Staatsoper's *Die Gezeichneten* is a defining example of such a reading, which, as Levin argues, is wholly dependent upon the work of the dramaturg. The interpretative framework of this production draws heavily on the notion of curation, emphasising Alviano's creation/curation of Elysium, which is depicted as a museum. In fact, the production itself can be understood as an exercise in the careful selection and exhibition of popular cultural references to form a complex network of imagery and metaphor, many of which allude to (and, crucially, engage critically with) the opera's literary and cultural origins.

[49] See Chapter One, 62–65.

I have previously noted the emergence of opera studies' new critical paradigms at the beginning of the twenty-first century and, according to Levin, the (re)interpretative and interdisciplinary approach of this work was echoed on the stages of many leading European opera houses.[50] This influx of scholarly perspectives also made its mark on production programmes:

> …a number of houses have freely incorporated recent academic work in their production protocols (dramaturgical materials employed in preparing new productions) and in their program books. In Europe, and especially in Germany, opera houses often prepare extensive pro- gram books to accompany and elaborate upon new productions. Beyond listing the cast and production team, these Programmhefte often include historical and interpretive materials, such as the libretto, historical documents, critical essays, a director's or dramaturg's statement, and associative materials, such as paintings, photographs, prose, or poetry.[51]

In keeping with the Munich production's emphasis on curation, the materials through which it engages with the cultural discourse that was prevalent at the time in which the opera was composed are collected and compiled in the expansive programme booklet. In fact, Hackenbeck's own contribution to the programme begins, 'Let's say that we were invited to the opening of an art show called "Elysium!"'.[52] The dramaturg bookends his essay with sections entitled 'in the foyer' and 'exit' with the sections in between exploring themes of taboo, the body, and the role of the viewer and the spectator from a variety of scholarly perspectives and with reference to many of the ideas encompassed in the remainder of the booklet. Drawing upon the geographical rift between radical and conservative approaches to theater, Martin Esslin suggests that, in Germany, *Programmhefte* provide 'infinitely more than those supplied to English or American audiences'.[53] The booklet for the Munich production was indeed extensive, containing several scholarly articles, a wealth of visual resources and several translations of the synopsis. It is thus emblematic of the way in which, as Levin suggests, Regietheater programmes 'extend and embed the interpretative work done in the production, affording a further forum in which to elaborate the ideas presented onstage'.[54] In fact, the booklet proved an invaluable source for the reading that follows.

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[50] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 3–5. See Introduction, 39–42.
[51] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 5–6.
[52] Miron Hakenbeck, 'Anstelle eines Guides durch Alvianos *Elysium*,' in Program for Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, 2017, 27–32 (27).
[53] Martin Esslin, 'The Role of the Dramaturg in the European Theater', in *What Is Dramaturgy?*, ed. Bert Cardullo (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 46.
[54] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 6.

Artistic Autonomy and Female Performance

Whilst the title of Schreker's opera is most commonly translated into English as 'the stigmatised', another interpretation is 'the drawn'. The interpretation and presentation of the 'stigmatised' (or indeed degenerate) central protagonists in this production provides a platform for articulating the opera's fundamental exploration of early-twentieth-century debates about bodily and artistic aesthetic norms, particularly given the presentation of both characters as artists – Carlotta as a portrait artist and Alviano as the curator of his aesthetic paradise, Elysium. As explored in Chapter One of this thesis, the idea of artistic agency is a central theme in the libretto and plays a comparably substantial role in the Bayerische Staatsoper production. References to recent art history – and popular performance art in particular – foster themes of creative identity and autonomy and raise questions about the relationship between artist and subject, artwork and performance. Such questions are articulated most clearly in the presentation of Carlotta. In Schreker's libretto, Carlotta claims to be able to 'paint souls', yet, in a nod to the composer's friend and contemporary, Arnold Schoenberg, her works feature human hands.[55] The Munich production maintains yet modernises the idea of Carlotta as a well-known artist, as her character resembles that of the 'grandmother of performance art', Marina Abramović. The performance artist's influence looms large over the dramaturgical vision for this production, as evidenced by the prevalence of her work in the extravagant programme book. In her recollection of the performance piece, *The Artist is Present* (upon which the atelier scene in this production is based), the artist describes the way in which, for 'maybe six, seven, eight minutes – they would enter this zone where sound disappears. I disappear. They become mirrors of themselves. And these incredible emotions surfaced'.[56] In the Munich production, the reimagined atelier scene sees Carlotta and her subject sitting across from one another at a small table. Hakenbeck's description of this encounter bears traces of Abramović's, as she suggests that in this moment, 'Alviano is reflected in Carlotta and Carlotta in Alviano. In his glance, which neutralizes his monstrosity for a short time, he becomes present to himself, feels what he is, what he may be, what he could be and what he will never be'.[57] In the opera's libretto, Carlotta speaks of her preference for painting souls, revealing her desire to depict her subjects' innermost selves. Her creative vision appears somewhat aligned with that of Abramović, at least in relation to *The Artist is Present*. like Abramović, the opera's

[55] See Chapter One, 79–80.
[56] Iwona Blazwick and Marina Abramović, 'The Artist Is Present: Marina Abramović Interviewed by Iwona Blazwick,' *Art Monthly* 349 (2011): 5.
[57] Hakenbeck, 'Anstelle eines Guides durch Alvianos *Elysium*,' 31.

female protagonist exists in this moment as both artist and artwork, thus calling her autonomy as an artist into question, as in the opera's libretto.[58]

The programme for the production includes a short excerpt from an article published in *Der Zwischenakt* for the Munich premiere of the opera in 1919. Here, Hermann Swoboda asserts that 'if the term female genius has any justification at all, then it is valid only in relation to performing artists, and not in relation to creative artists'.[59] The author further proposes that the principal difference between the creative 'genius' of men and women is that whilst 'the man produces works, the woman produces herself'.[60] Swoboda's thesis bears the familiar hallmarks of turn-of-the-century attitudes towards women, and his complaints are not dissimilar to those of Weininger. As such, the decision to include this (somewhat contentious) excerpt in the programme results an impression of the kind of cultural discourse that was prevalent in the years leading up to and during the period of the opera's composition. This material also sheds light on the production's interpretation of Carlotta. With this excerpt in mind, the parallels drawn between her and Abramović not only align the opera's female artist with a comparable contemporary, but also emphasise her place on the borderline between artist and performer, and detach her from traditional (if outmoded) connotations of 'serious' art. From Swoboda's perspective, however, the craft of portraiture arguably only grants Carlotta mimetic ability, as opposed to 'true' artistic genius, whilst her depiction as a painter of souls places her at odds with the notion of 'serious' art. In this sense, her presentation as both creator and performer in this production renders her autonomy as an artist compromised.

In Chapter One, I suggested a reading of Carlotta's death as a vehicle through which her artistic and sexual autonomy is neutralised. In the Munich production, this idea is expounded by the dramaturgical nature of her death. Carlotta climbs into a glass case shortly before her demise, evoking the imagery of David Lachapelle's painting *Lonely Doll* (1998) and Tilda Swinton's performance piece *The Maybe,* both of which are pictured in the production's programme.[61] In '*The Maybe*: Modes of Performance and the "Live"', Swinton recalls her 'elision' as 'the author' of the performance piece, which took place at MoMA in 2013, attributing the tendency to overlook her artistic autonomy in critical reviews of the work to the fact that the mainstream press misinterpreted her role as being strictly performative (as

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[58] See Chapter One, 74–80.
[59] Herman Swoboda, 'Die Darstellende Künstlerin,' *Der Zwischenakt*, 1919, quoted in Programme for Franz Schreker *Die Gezeichneten*, Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich (2017), 90 (my translation).
[60] Ibid.
[61] Her death in this production was also reminiscent of the late Queen in Wilde's 'The Birthday of the Infanta'. Jeremy Tambling observes the way in which 'the Infanta's mother's body has been embalmed, not buried, treated as a fetish and a relic'. See Jeremy Tambling, *Opera and the Culture of Fascism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 211.

opposed to conceptual or creative).[62] Joanna Scanlan further suggests that this misconception was 'partly as a consequence of her wilfully presenting herself in a vitrine as an "object" or fetish (like an artwork)'.[63] For Swinton, *The Maybe* consequently 'provides a case study for […] the shift of the "author" to a position of objectification'.[64] Carlotta's placement in the glass case in the Bayerische Staatsoper production of *Die Gezeichneten* similarly purges the female protagonist of her artistic autonomy, whilst the sustained exhibition of her body after her death consigns her status to that of morbid installation in Alviano's Elysium. Indeed, the island paradise is perhaps more accurately described (in this production, at least) as a gallery or museum, particularly given the extent to which the production centres around artistic references, as evidenced in the programme. In this sense, Carlotta's fate as an artefact of the island implies the distorted realisation of Alviano's desire to possess beauty, which is emphasised here through his creation/curation of the island. When considered in conjunction with the aforementioned debates about female attendance of art education institutions around the time of the opera's composition, alongside gendered discourses about creative genius such as Swoboda's, Carlotta's death implies the re-establishment of the hegemonic norm, featuring Alviano as an archetype of 'true', masculine, creative genius.

The Artist is Present: Performing Biography

The suggestion of Alviano's role as an artist is most strikingly communicated in the Munich production before the resumption of the opera with the third act, when the performer playing Alviano, John Daszak, returns to the stage to read extracts from Schreker's satirical self-portrait 'Mein Charakterbild'. The inclusion of this material points to the relationship between performance and artwork and artist and subject. The words themselves draw upon some of the deeply self-reflective aspects of the work, and their narration by Daszak in character as Alviano – which can be read as a not-so-subtle allusion to the title of Abramović's performance piece – sheds light on some of the similarities between Schreker and his protagonist. An excerpt from Franz Kafka's last short story, *Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse* (*Josephine the Singer or The Mouse People*), was also included in production's programme, and was one of several possible motivations for the presence of mice at various points during the production.[65] Kafka's story deals with the relationship between artist and audience, featuring a mouse,

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[62] Tilda Swinton and Joanna Scanlan, 'The Maybe: Modes of Performance and the "Live,"' in *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect Books, 2012), 471.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Franz Kafka, 'Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk,' in *The Complete Short Stories of Franz Kafka*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (London: Vintage, 1999), 360–76.

Josephine who believes she possesses a gift for singing and composition and, despite the narrator's scepticism towards her ability, she enthrals the flocks of mice who gather to hear her sing.

Kafka's work has often been understood as bearing witness to the human condition and, for Forrest L. Ingram, *Josefine* represents the 'struggle between identity and community, individual and society, inner call and social function'.[66] In the context of *Die Gezeichneten* and the centrality of its theme of outsider identity, both Alviano and Carlotta, as well as the composer, can be understood as having undergone this struggle, the universality of which is noted by Ingram.[67] In Walter H. Sokel's Dionysian reading of Kafka's work, Josefine 'insists on her uniqueness, the uniqueness of genius'.[68] In this sense, the inclusion of this reference calls to mind Carlotta's approach to her own artistry, the critical yet simultaneously self-admiring sentiments of Schreker's 'Mein Charakterbild' and A. Albert Noelte's comments on the opera's 1919 premiere.[69] The emphasis placed on artistic genius in the opera's libretto and this production certainly lends itself to the way in which Kafka's story deals with the complexities of creativity.

Josefine has also been understood, however, as the author's own reflection on his perception by his readers during the final years of his life.[70] Given the extent to which this production highlighted the biographical nature of *Die Gezeichneten*, the inclusion of Kafka's story is perhaps intended to draw a comparison between the self-reflective nature of both narratives. Warlikowski's approach certainly underscores the similarities between Alviano's misunderstood creative genius and the reception of Schreker himself. Moreover, just as the opera's central protagonist creates (or curates) the island of Elysium as a shrine of art and aesthetic beauty, the Munich production presents itself as an exercise in the careful selection and presentation of popular cultural artefacts in an effort to home in on a pertinent set of questions or messages. The use of contemporary cultural references mirrors Schreker's own incorporation of allusions to his own cultural environment. Such an environment, of course, saw the gradual medicalisation of music criticism with the language of pathological decay,

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[66] Forrest L. Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century: Studies in a Literary Genre* (The Hague and Paris: Moulton, 1971), 63. For an overview of the concept of the universal in relation to Kafka's work, see Arthur Cools and Vivian Liska, 'Kafka and the Universal: Introduction,' in *Kafka and the Universal*, ed. Arthur Cools and Vivian Liska (Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 1–10.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Walter H. Sokel, 'Nietzsche and Kafka: The Dionysian Connection,' in *Kafka for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Stanley Corngold and Ruth V. Gross (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2011), 72, available at:www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt1x72j1 (accessed 17.08.2018)
[69] See Chapter Two, 94, 92.
[70] See Clayton Koelb, 'Kafka Imagines His Readers: The Rhetoric of "Josefine Die Sängerin" and "Der Bau,"' in *A Companion to the Works of Franz Kafka*, ed. James Rolleston (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), 347–60.

providing a basis for the Nazis' campaign against both cultural and racial degeneracy, which the composer himself 'foresaw […] with the prophet's speculative eye'.[71] This piece of the opera's reception history is brought into the Munich production, in part, by the rodent figures who were understood by many reviewers to be an allusion to the American cartoonist Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, a series of graphic novels depicting the experiences of Vladek Spiegelman, the author's father and a Holocaust survivor.[72] As such, the production offers a somewhat candid representation of Schreker's reception as a degenerate composer within the deleterious climate of twentieth-century German Fascism.[73]

In the programme, the production's dramaturg Hakenbeck writes:

> We do not live in times when we needed intoxicating fantasies, even less do we need to realise utopian world designs. In a present where realities are manipulated, a back reference to the complexity of our world would be more important than ever in the spaces of theatrical experiences, such as galleries, museums, or opera houses.[74]

Given *Die Gezeichneten*'s fall to obscurity under the implications of 'degeneracy', Hakenbeck's words seem equally applicable to the time in which the opera was composed. Serving as a kind of cultural artefact, the opera is bound up with the spirit of its time, whilst its fate at the hands of Nazis' take on cultural degeneracy and its subsequent rediscovery echo many of its most complex themes. Within the microcosm of Schreker's opera, complex notions of creativity, truth, obsession, eroticism, destruction and abnormality are encapsulated in the noblemen's mantra '[b]eauty be the prey of the strong', but as Hakenbeck's comments suggest, these themes transcend the historical context in which the opera was composed. Szczęśniak's contemporary stage design consists of a large conference table, a well-stocked bar with plush red leather stools and vast mirrored panels in which the audience of the National Theatre was reflected on the stage. The imposing mirror image was perhaps a harbinger of the fact that the artificial, fragile world of Alviano's Elysium is closer than we think.

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[71] H Schreker-Bures, H.H Stuckenschmidt, and W. Oehlmann, *Franz Schreker* (Vienna, 1970), 22, quoted and translated in Peter Franklin, '"Wer Weiss, Vater, ob das nicht Engel sind?" Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*,' in *Music, Theatre and Politics in Germany: 1848 to the Third Reich*, ed. Nikolaus Bacht (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 176.

[72] See Marco Frei, 'Der Untergang,' *Bayerische Staatszeitung,* 2 July, 2017, available at: https://www.bayerische-staatszeitung.de/staatszeitung/kultur/detailansicht-kultur/artikel/der-untergang.html (accessed 19.09.2017); Bernhard Neuhoff, 'ECHTE BOXER UND MONSTERFILME,' *BR-KlASSIK*, 7 July 2017, available at: https://www.br-klassik.de/aktuell/news-kritik/die-gezeichneten-schreker-opernfestspiele-muenchen-staatsoper-100.html (accessed 19.09.2017); Georg Etscheit, 'Schreker-Oper in München Als Kunsthistorisches Seminar,' *Musik-Heute*, 2 July, 2017, available at: http://www.musik-heute.de/16056/schreker-oper-in-muenchen-als-kunsthistorisches-seminar/ (accessed 20.09.2017).

[73] Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus* (London: Penguin, 2003).

[74] Hakenbeck, 'Anstelle eines Guides durch Alvianos *Elysium*,' 32 (my translation).

Conclusion

Ulrich Müller describes operatic Regietheater in terms of 'a visualisation of subtext(s)', emphasising the significance of 'connotations and allusions that lie "below the surface"' of the manifest text.[75] Each of the productions discussed in this chapter deal explicitly in the subtexts of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, and what my readings of these productions have demonstrated is that an opera's subtext often contains more and less distinct strands, resulting in multiple layers of meaning that can be derived from a given performance text. Visual references to *Las Meninas* in Graz and to Wilde's fairy-tale garden in Lisbon, for example, call to mind *Der Zwerg*'s artistic and literary genesis as a matter of interpretation. A closer reading of Zemlinsky's opera text, however, reveals a further subtext of Weiningerian psychology in Klaren's reinterpretation of Wilde's fairy tale for the operatic stage, and this is alluded to in both Graz and Lisbon through the careful use of costume and gesture. Klaren's fascination with Weininger – whose thesis allied him with the modes of thinking that were bound up in the era's discourses of cultural and individual degeneracy – and its translation into the libretto for Zemlinsky constitutes one example of the opera's labyrinthine subtexts. In Munich, the Bayerische Staatsoper production of *Die Gezeichneten* evidences close dramaturgical analysis of Schreker's opera text, placing special emphasis on the work's cultural beginnings by exploring the relationship between art and reality and paying close attention to themes of beauty, gender, creativity, autonomy and morality. These themes foreshadow Schreker's own condemnation and fall to obscurity under the implications of degeneracy, and the Bayerische Staatsoper production encapsulates this important piece of the works' history and reception into both the performance and its accompanying programme. Most notably, the production at Munich's National Theatre communicates the complexly self-reflective aspects of Schreker's opera, which were considered in Chapter Two.[76] These subtexts are brought to the fore by Warlikowski, Szczęśniak and Guéguin as a consequence of careful curation and characterisation, and, more importantly, as a result of the research conducted by the production's dramaturg.

The multiple strata of meaning (or indeed, layers of subtext) described above are arguably indicative of the three production teams' careful research on, critical engagement with and nuanced interpretation of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*'s literary and cultural origins. In this sense, all three of the productions can be thought of as 'strong', but beyond merely assessing quality as a reflection of radicalism, like Levin, I apply the term to interpretations that

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[75] Ulrich Müller, 'Regietheater/Director's Theatre,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 591.
[76] See Chapter Two, 91–97.

illuminate 'previously invisible points in the text […] thus asserting some distance from prevailing and predictable accounts'.[77] 'In reading opera texts and opera's performance texts', he continues, 'we animate the intersection of creative interpretation in the academy and onstage, adding vibrancy and substance to both'.[78] As I suggested in the introduction to this thesis, however, the borderline between scholarship and performance is bridged in Regietheater practice by the academic research undertaken in the course of a production's dramaturgical process, and this was nowhere was this more apparent that in the Munich production.

What is presented to spectators in an opera production is often the result of a highly subjective interpretive vision of a director. As such, the flexibility of live production allows directors to reframe an opera's cultural context from a modern perspective, thereby applying a new interpretative framework to the given work. A central concern in this chapter has been to uncover the ways in which these contemporary productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* incorporate and critically engage with the operas' original contexts. By considering not only the representation of the operas' literary and cultural origins, but also their reinterpretation in these productions, this chapter has demonstrated that, whilst the operas' themes and subtexts are intricately linked with the cultural zeitgeist from which they emerged, contemporary productions of the works present an opportunity for these themes and subtexts to maintain and take on new relevance for a present-day audience. Each production encountered in this chapter evokes the cultural moments from which the operas emerged by engaging with the works' manifold subtexts. At the same time, the productions embrace the inherent obscurity of the cultural and historical contexts occupied by the narrative worlds of both *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. These uncanny dramatic settings constitute a further layer of meaning to be derived from the operas and their literary and cultural origins. The ambiguities of time and place in *Der Zwerg* can be traced back to Velázquez's *Las Meninas* and the fairy tale it eventually inspired, both of which are characterised by the enigmatic nature of their narrative environments. The productions in Graz and Lisbon pay homage to these inflexions of ambiguity, the former by incorporating not one, but three Infanta figures (the singer, the child and the doll), which are reminiscent of the ideal, the real and the imagined foci of the original painting, thereby calling into question the relationships between reality and illusion and subject and spectator. The TNSC production upholds an air of ambiguity throughout as a result of the intangibility of its set and costume design, which complicate the historical and geographical setting of the production and similarly muddy the waters between art and reality. Paying close

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[77] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 45.
[78] Ibid.

attention to the aforementioned themes of creativity and morality, the Bayerische Staatsoper production of *Die Gezeichneten* also places special emphasis on exploring the link between art and reality, as well as between the cultural incidents and objects that led to the creation of the opera.

If, as Alexandra Wilson has argued, 'stagings that update an opera consistently to a single historical era act as a form of "reception" of the period to which the work is being transplanted', then the ambiguity of these productions' settings can be understood as a sign of the universality of the themes with which the works are concerned.[79] Indeed, the central argument of this thesis – that disability serves in these works as an allegory for wider notions of otherness – is closely allied to an understanding of the historical and cultural contexts from which they emerged and from which they took their inspiration. This chapter has demonstrated the way in which these three contemporary productions serve as a window into the historical and cultural zeitgeist of the time in which *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* were composed, whilst also communicating the enduring significance of the operas' central theme of outsider identity. Within the broader context of this thesis, this raises questions about the enduring appeal of disability as a metaphorical narrative device and the associated translation of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's allegorisation of disability to contemporary stages. The next chapter aims to address some of these questions by examining the representation of physical disability in contemporary productions of the operas.

[79] Alexandra Wilson, 'Golden-Age Thinking: Updated Stagings of "Gianni Schicchi" and the Popular Historical Imagination,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 25, no. 2 (2013): 189.

4. Issues in Contemporary Production: Performing Disability

Linda and Michael Hutcheon suggest that much literature on opera and the body has focussed specifically on the voice, but as they suggest, '[o]pera is not only texted; it is staged, and therefore the body is not only verbally represented, it is literally and physically embodied'.[1] The previous chapter identified some of the ways in which the three contemporary productions in Munich, Lisbon and Graz allude to *Die Gezeichneten*'s and *Der Zwerg*'s manifold literary and cultural subtexts, thereby drawing upon the enduring appeal of the theme of outsider identity. The multifaceted interpretive frameworks of these performance texts frame the operas' preoccupation with the anomalous body as a source of 'representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight' in a manner in keeping with the cultural practice of narrative prosthesis.[2] This chapter begins by exploring the corporeal depiction of physical disability in the same three productions, considering the myriad of metaphorical meanings which the body in performance is able to represent. As will be demonstrated, these meanings are compounded when the object of representation is the disabled body. The depiction of Zemlinsky's Dwarf in the productions in Graz and Lisbon makes use of several seemingly controversial performance techniques in an attempt to signify the physical attributes of the protagonist's dwarfism. In Munich, the presentation of Alviano's disability is similarly problematic in light of the fact that the performer playing the role is non-disabled. This process, which I term disability mimicry, forms the basis of the first part of this chapter, which ponders the question posed by Carrie Sandahl and Ann M. Fox: 'Who gets to play disabled and to what end?'[3]

Disability scholars and activists alike have deliberated upon this issue, often highlighting the inherent problems associated with attempts to 'perform' disability. Many texts discussing the notion of disability mimicry refer to film and television, yet, as this chapter will demonstrate, the issues surrounding this kind of embodied representation are somewhat complicated by live performance. The combined theoretical insights of performance studies and disability studies serve as a useful springboard from which to consider the function and

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[1] Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, 'Embodied Representation in Staged Opera,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and the Body*, ed. Youn Kim and Sander Gilman (Oxford University Press, 2018), no page, available at: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190636234.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190636234-e-11 (accessed 08.08 2018).

[2] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 49. For my consideration of narrative prosthesis in relation to *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, see Chapter Two, 103–09.

[3] Ann M Fox and Carrie Sandahl, 'Beyond "Cripping Up,"' *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 12, no. 2 (2018): 123.

representation of disability on the operatic stage, and the ideas explored in this chapter are informed by the notions of presence and immediacy which often surface in discussions of 'live' versus 'recorded' performance, alongside matters of embodiment and authenticity. Further focus is placed on work in disability performance studies, as well as the voices of several disability activists whose considerations of the notion of disability mimicry have offered valuable contributions to understandings of disability and performance. In seeking to unpick some of the important issues surrounding the representation and performance of disability in these contemporary productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, this chapter partly answers Stacy Wolf's call for 'scholars in disability performance studies […] to continue to develop ways of seeing, listening, and being that are available only in the live, embodied, present-tense theater'.[4] The interdisciplinary nature of this work also represents an endeavour to avoid what Michelle Duncan describes as opera studies' tendency towards 'embracing "performance" on the one hand while ignoring the scholarship of performance studies on the other'.[5]

The discussions featured here emphasise the way in which each solution to the various 'problems' of disability in live performance seems to present a unique set of challenges. Sandahl uses the term 'representational conundrums' to describe 'challenging, puzzling, or paradoxical issues that are unique to or complicated by disability's presence', with regards to those instances where disability is represented on stage.[6] This chapter highlights and attempts to unpick some of the representational conundrums which emerge when analysing these productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. In doing so, it acknowledges the fact that the representation of disability in opera production is not limited to the embodiment of impairment by performers. Indeed, each of the productions utilises aspects of production design (including costume and set design, staging, gesture and so on) to signify disability visually and to explore its potential meanings. Here, I traverse the ways in which ostensibly problematic attempts to depict disability can paradoxically result in unique opportunities to reflect upon the treatment of disability both historically and in contemporary society – thus, in the case of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, maintaining the operas' aspects of cultural critique and rendering them pertinent examples of the 'unsettling' nature of the art form.

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[4] Stacy Wolf, 'Disability's Invisibility in Joan Schenkar's *Signs of Life* and Heather McDonald's *An Almost Holy Picture,*' in *Bodies in Commotion*, ed. Sandahl Carrie and Auslander Philip (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 316.
[5] Michelle Duncan, 'The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004): 228.
[6] Carrie Sandahl, 'Using Our Words: Exploring Representational Conundrums in Disability Drama and Performance,' *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 12, no. 2 (2018): 130.

Disability Mimicry: Exhibition and Erasure

In the productions of *Der Zwerg* in Graz and Lisbon, the Dwarf's disability is demonstrated on stage by non-disabled performers who intermittently mimic certain physical attributes of dwarfism. For Tobin Siebers, one of the key disadvantages of this practice (which he terms 'disability drag') is that 'disability appears as a facade overlaying able-bodiedness'.[7] In essence, he refers to the fact that the presence of non-disabled performers in disabled roles highlights their able-bodiedness and therefore constitutes the erasure of authentic disability. Siebers draws a comparison between disability mimicry and both blackface minstrelsy and cisgender and straight actors playing LGBTQ characters, suggesting that casting performers without subjective experience of these groups not only expunges that group's identity from the public view, but also 'transforms its reality and its fundamental characteristics'.[8] His approach runs the risk of amalgamating frequently marginalised communities into one category of otherness, but he does make an interesting point with regards to disability. He suggests that inauthentic casting represents actors' 'able-bodiedness as much as their pretence of disability', thus 'insinuating ability into [disability's] reality and representation'.[9] The use of disability mimicry in both productions of *Der Zwerg* serves as an effective illustration of this erasure of disability.

In Graz, Aleš Briscein shuffles onto the stage wearing his shoes on his knees in an attempt to imitate short stature. Though he returns to his feet in several later scenes, Don Estoban (played by Wilfred Zelinka) then enters the stage on stilts in a questionable effort to maintain the illusion of dwarfism. Towards the end of the performance, following the protagonist's discovery of his appearance in the final scene, Briscein also seems to adopt a limp. Briscein's alteration of his gait only in the final moments of the production comes across as careless, even cartoonish. In the TNSC production in Lisbon, Peter Bronder's entrance as the Dwarf bears certain parallels to the Graz production. In a pantomimic effort to imitate short stature, he too enters by walking on his knees – a technique that, surprisingly, does not seem to raise concerns for either company. As I outlined in the previous chapter, each part of the Graz double bill also includes two silent figures: a prisoner in *Der Zwerg* and a dwarf in *Il prigioniero*.[10] The fact that the latter role is played by an actor with dwarfism raises an interesting question. Whilst his presence in *Il prigioniero* functions as a means through which to create dramatic unity between the two halves of the double bill, from Sieber's perspective, his

[7] Tobin Siebers, 'Disability as Masquerade,' *Literature and Medicine* 23, no. 1 (2004): 18.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] See Chapter Three, 135–36.

absence in *Der Zwerg*, and the preference instead, for Briscein's disability mimicry, can be understood as a quite literal example of the erasure of disability from the production.

Often, the erasure of disability in performance is complicated by its simultaneous exhibition or amplification, by which it becomes a spectacle to be consumed by the audience. This can also be understood as a form of 'enfreakment' in that it offers a stylized presentation of physical difference for the benefit of a 'normal' audience.[11] The process of enfreakment is problematised in light of disability mimicry, given the fact that the disability presented is performed as opposed to real. Siebers refers to disability mimicry as 'a variety of the masquerade […] providing an exaggerated exhibition of people with disabilities but questioning both the existence and permanence of disability'.[12] The sense of exhibition described by the author is perhaps more palpable where disability is represented on stage, particularly when it is depicted by non-disabled performers. In fact, the simultaneous exhibition and erasure of disability falls into the category of Sandahl's representational conundrums. In Graz, for example, Briscein's attempt to signify short stature by walking on his knees, as well as his adoption of a limp at the end of the production, paints a sensationalised picture of physical difference, whilst the appearance of Don Estoban on stilts only exacerbates the sense of caricature and offers disability as a spectacle to be consumed by the audience. This performance of disability is therefore very much in keeping with typical modes of enfreakment, yet, the conundrum presents itself in the fact that, whilst this hyperbolic performance encourages the gaze of the audience, it does so while concealing disability from the public view, as the disability presented is not real.

Additionally, Briscein's feigned limp illustrates the way in which disability mimicry can often undermine perceptions of disability as real and/or permanent. As illustrated in Chapter Two of this thesis, disability narratives in opera, particularly comic opera, often present disability as transitory, with the elimination of disability from a plot (typically by way of a cure) coinciding with a return to order or normality.[13] Whilst the fate of Zemlinsky's protagonist is in keeping with the more deterministic tendency for characters with disabilities to die, the presentation of his disability on stage serves as an example of the way in which the representation of disability is complicated by live performance. In both productions of *Der Zwerg,* the 'temporary' nature of disability is signified by the blatancy of the fact that the performers playing the Dwarf are inconsistent in their simulated stature. However, when disability is represented on stage, the immediacy of the live body also enables the erasure of

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[11] David Hevey, *The Creatures Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53–74

[12] Siebers, 'Disability as Masquerade,' 18.

[13] See Chapter Two, 122–26.

disability following the performance. Indeed, after the enactment of disability on stage, the curtain call provides the opportunity for non-disabled performers to return to and even assert their able-bodied identity to the audience. This is the case in Lisbon and Graz, where disability is suggested by the alteration of the performers' bodily demeanour and gait, but the curtain calls consequently enable the transformation of Briscein and Bronder back into their real-world able-bodiedness at the end of the performance.

The conditions for this process are also met when disability mimicry relies on the use of props, as in David McVicar's 2001 production of *Rigoletto* at the Royal Opera House.[14] Here, the protagonist's deformity is depicted by the performer's altered bodily demeanour to suggest a hunched back and by the sustained use of crutches. Petra Kuppers writes about crutches, wheelchairs, white sticks and other disability aids as 'signholders of disability that can be and are referenced by nondisabled people when they "act" disabled'.[15] When considering the performance of disability and the associated capacity of non-disabled performers to cast aside the corporeal or material properties of impairment following performance, the lack of such 'signholders' during the curtain call (as in the aforementioned production of *Rigoletto*) can emphasise the absence of authentic disability. This erasure, Siebers suggests, can reassure the audience 'that the threat of disability is not real, that everything was only pretend'.[16] The use of disability aids, altered bodily demeanour and the transformation into able-bodiedness facilitated by the curtain call all emphasise the transitory nature of disability in performance.

In her prominent work on the ontology of live performance, Peggy Phelan writes that 'performance's only life is in the present'.[17] Her emphasis on the relationship between theatre and time is significant. Arguing that performance 'cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations', she suggests that the value of performance lies precisely in its visibility and subsequent disappearance.[18] Christopher Morris discusses this phenomenon with regards to attitudes towards live (as opposed to recorded) opera productions in 'Digital Diva: Opera on Video', where he challenges the tendency of purists such as Phelan and Fischer-Lichte to 'reinforce a hierarchy that relegates the recording of theater to a derivative and debased status in relation to the unique and inimitable condition of a live performance'.[19] In the context of disability mimicry, this understanding performance in terms of ephemerality and disappearance is problematic

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[14] This production was most recently revived in the 2017/18 season, with Dmitri Platanias in the title role.
[15] Petra Kuppers, 'The Wheelchair's Rhetoric: The Performance of Disability,' *Drama Review* 51, no. 4 (2007): 80.
[16] Siebers, 'Disability as Masquerade,' 18.
[17] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 146.
[18] Ibid., 146–48.
[19] Christopher Morris, 'Digital Diva: Opera on Video,' *The Opera Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2010): 96–119 (96).

in that it points to the boundaries of the stage as a means through which to contain disability within the present of the performance. In this sense, disability can only ever be temporary when presented on stage, particularly when the disabled body is in some way simulated. The curtain call provides a literal barrier between what is performed and what is real and also reinforces the erasure of disability from the sphere of performance. But what of productions in which the disability mimicry continues into the curtain call?

In the Bayerische Staatsoper production of *Die Gezeichneten*, Daszak's costume, complete with facial prosthetics occasionally covered with a burlap sack, is a nod to John Hurt as Joseph Merrick in David Lynch's *Elephant Man* (1980). Despite his designations as 'a cripple' and 'a monster', Alviano is presented – in Schreker's original libretto and in this production – as being largely able-bodied, in that the descriptions of his impairment more frequently refer to aesthetic qualities as opposed to physical pain and difficulties with mobility. In Munich, John Daszak's performance of disability draws upon the description of Alviano in the libretto as 'an ugly man', with his facial prosthetics giving the impression of a visually striking, but not debilitating facial disfigurement. Whilst the decision not to mimic the bodily demeanour associated with certain disabilities is reassuring, his costuming still constitutes an example of disability mimicry and, what is more, his facial prosthetics remain intact during both his post-intermission monologue as Schreker and the curtain call.[20]

> In performance, the body is metonymic of self, of character, of voice, of "presence." But in the plenitude of its apparent visibility and availability, the performer actually disappears and represents something else – dance, movement, sound, character, "art".[21]

Phelan's belief that performers become ensconced by that which they seek to represent would suggest that the identity of the physically disabled Alviano in this production displaces that of the performer. Yet I would argue that in instances of disability mimicry, the truth of a performer's authentic body never fully disappears. This position is supported by Siebers as he expands upon his masquerade metaphor:

> When actors play disabled in one film and able-bodied in the next, the evolution of the roles presents them as cured of a previous disease or condition. The audience also knows that an actor will return to an able-bodied state as soon as the film ends.[22]

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[20] As noted in Chapter Three, Daszak read extracts of Schreker's 'Mein Charakterbild' before Act III of the production.
[21] Phelan, *Unmarked*, 150.
[22] Siebers, 'Disability as Masquerade,' 18.

The author refers specifically to film here, but once again, live theatre and opera serve as a more pertinent example of the inherent ephemerality of disability mimicry. For those with a knowledge of Daszak and his work, for example, or anyone who had looked at the singer's photograph in the programme booklet, the suggestion of his facial disfigurement (and disability more broadly) can remain only a temporary illusion.

Bodily Authenticity

In the prologue to *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre*, Erika Fisher-Lichte draws upon Johann Jakob Engel's theories of mimic art – an acting technique whereby an audience's fears that the performer may be in any real danger are dispelled – to make a distinction between the semiotic and the phenomenal body.[23] The phenomenal body, Fisher-Lichte explains, is the performer's real-world body, with the semiotic body conveying the fictional reality of the character.[24] The author's focus is on the performance of violence, yet her theoretical framework is largely applicable to on-stage representations of disability, since, as Chapter Two has shown, opera's disabled bodies are often sites of physical or emotional suffering. The notion of a distinction between the semiotic and phenomenal body also provides a useful perspective from which to approach complex questions about bodily authenticity that are central to debates about disability mimicry.

In terms of a spectator's impression of what is real and what is an illusion on stage, Fisher-Lichte writes 'it is the semiotic body which brings forth the expression of suffering, while the phenomenal body does not actually suffer'.[25] In the context of performing disability, the semiotic body is the illusion of disability that is presented to the audience, where the phenomenal body is the (often non-disabled) body of the performer. In the Oper Graz and TNSC productions of *Der Zwerg*, the boundaries between the phenomenal and semiotic bodies of both Briscein and Bronder (as the Dwarf) are clearly delineated, most notably due to the temporary and largely unconvincing nature of their attempts to mimic the physical attributes of dwarfism. Fischer-Lichte's focus, however, is on performances in which such boundaries are blurred. The author uses Max Reinhardt's 1903 production of *Electra* as the basis of her discussion. This production, in which Gertrud Eysoldt (as the protagonist) performed acts of violence on her own body, is cited as a defining example of the way in which boundaries between the semiotic and phenomenal bodies of actors were becoming increasingly distorted

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[23] Erika Fischer-Lichte*, Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2005), 1–15.
[24] Ibid., 4.
[25] Ibid.

in turn-of-the-century theatre, resulting in a direct impact on the 'senses and the nerves of the spectators'.[26] In the case of *Die Gezeichneten* in Munich, the lines of demarcation between Daszak's semiotic and phenomenal bodies are less clear due to the fact that his facial prosthetics (the signifier of his disability) remain intact throughout the performance and into the curtain call. Nevertheless, this production, much like those in Graz and Lisbon, arguably preserves the separation of the semiotic/phenomenal boundary as a result of the able-bodiedness of the lead performer. As suggested, any awareness of the Daszak's able-bodiedness by the audience would provide a clear indication of the fact that the body presented on stage was semiotic. This begs the question: would liminality between the phenomenal and semiotic body be achieved if disabled performers were cast in roles such as that of Alviano and the Dwarf? If so, would the representation of disability be more convincing and less problematic?

Fisher-Lichte provides a partial answer to these questions in her continued discussion of the body in performance in *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. The author refers here to a production of *Giulio Cesare* at the Hebbel Theatre Berlin in 1998, the cast of which included 'a very frail and infirm old man', a man who had recently undergone surgery on his larynx, an obese man and two women with anorexia.[27] In the author's understanding,

> [t]he actors' and actresses' individual physicality had such an immediate and disturbing impact on the spectators that they were unable to establish any relationship to the dramatic characters the performers supposedly represented […] the actors were not perceived as signs for a particular character but solely in terms of their specific materiality.[28]

The audience's reaction is emblematic of the way in which, as Kuppers argues, '[w]hen disabled people perform, they are often not primarily seen as performers, but as disabled people. The disabled body is naturally about disability'.[29] In provoking a severe, visceral reaction from their respective audiences, both the *Giulio Cesare* cast and Gertrud Eysoldt failed to make their semiotic body discernible. For the latter, this was achieved through self-inflicted violence. For the former, it was a result of the mere presence of anomalous bodies. Fisher-Lichte explains that, 'by bringing forth their specific and individual corporeality, the artists perform processes that embody their bodies' vulnerability, their exposure to violence, their

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[26] Ibid., 13.
[27] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2008), 86.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Petra Kuppers, 'Deconstructing Images: Performing Disability,' *Contemporary Theatre Review* 11, no. 3–4 (2001): 26.

aliveness, and the resulting dangers and risks'.[30] Regarding the on-stage presence of the disabled body, Wolf similarly suggests that 'a visibly disabled performer's body forces spectators […] to confront their own feelings and knowledges about disability and to see disability's meaning and significance as socially and culturally constructed'.[31]

There may be some correlation, then, between a clearly discernible separation between the semiotic and phenomenal body on stage and the process of disability mimicry. When able-bodied actors appear for the curtain call with no remnants of the disabled identity they have been performing, the audience are released from their engagement with the experience of disability. Siebers' masquerade metaphor offers an effective summary: the reality of disability dissipates when an able-bodied performer removes the mask, whereas for disabled performers, 'the mask, once removed, reveals the reality and depth of disability existing beneath it'.[32] On the other hand, when performers operate within the liminal space between the semiotic and phenomenal, spectators become 'conscious of their own perception as emergent and elusive' and 'perceiving subjects begin to perceive themselves self-reflexively, thus opening up a further sphere of meaning and influence on the perceptual dynamics'.[33] The suggestion, then, is that the use of authentic disabled bodies might facilitate audience engagement with the realities of disability, both in contemporary society and, in the case of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg,* historically. Furthermore, the blurring of the semiotic/phenomenal boundary as a result of bodily authenticity could generate a more convincing and therefore more dramatically rich performance.

However, with regards to the aforementioned production of *Giulio Cesare*, Fischer-Lichte suggests that the physicality of the performers prevented them from being perceived as characters, with the spectators being confronted, instead, with the realities of the anomalous body.[34] The result was not – as Wolf would suggest – a form of productive engagement with the experience of bodily difference, but rather a reaction in keeping with the enfreakment of physical abnormality as a source of horror and revulsion.[35] Fischer-Lichte writes that the spectators' perception of these bodies was by no means 'devoid of meanings and associations', but that 'any attempt to interpret the performers' individual physicality in terms of their characters after the end of the performance must be understood as a way of distancing oneself

[30] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 90.
[31] Wolf, 'Disability's Invisibility,' 304.
[32] Siebers, 'Disability as Masquerade,' 18.
[33] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 149.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Wolf, 'Disability's Invisibility,' 304.

from the immediate threat that those bodies emanated. It was a way to master and oppress them'.[36]

Siebers argues that disability mimicry 'acts as a lure for the fantasies and fears of able-bodied audiences', but that the absence of authentic impairment in performance reassures audiences and releases them from any form of interaction with disability.[37] However, Fischer-Lichte's discussion of audience reactions to the semiotic/phenomenal body suggests that this distancing of spectators from the reality of physical difference is not exclusive to instances of disability mimicry. Thus, another representational conundrum is revealed. When an audience sees an authentically disabled performer, they fail to connect to the character that the performer seeks to represent: the body's metonymic status is negated as a result of the enfreakment of disability. Yet, when the process of disability mimicry is used, the audience cannot connect to disability due to the inauthenticity of the disabled body. This double bind is emblematic of the wider and more practical issues surrounding notions of authenticity and disability in performance.

Authentic Casting

A seemingly logical solution to the various issues surrounding the performance of disability discussed in this chapter is authentic casting. But whilst authentic casting (that is, casting disabled performers in disabled roles) provides a solution to the many problems associated with disability mimicry on the one hand, it also generates a number of associated questions and contradictions on the other.[38] The dearth of disabled actors in the film and television industries has often been considered in disability studies and has received increasing attention in the popular media in recent years.[39] Although very little scholarly focus has been given to the presence of similar problems in the opera industry, there is an apparently similar paucity of disabled performers. Alexis Shotwell claims that '[t]here are substantive epistemically relevant social features involved in the praxis of being a singer', which result in 'body shaming and

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[36] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 86–87.
[37] Siebers, 'Disability as Masquerade,' 18.
[38] For Sandahl, casting is a prime example of a 'representational conundrum'. See Sandahl, 'Exploring Representational Conundrums,' 130.
[39] See Alyssa Rosenberg, 'In Hollywood, People with Disabilities Are Almost Nonexistent,' *The Washington Post*, 7 September, 2016, available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/act-four/wp/2016/09/07/in-hollywood-people-with-disabilities-are-almost-nonexistent/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ac28cbc91493 (accessed 19.02.2019); Ian Birrell, 'Where Are the Disabled Actors?' *Independent*, 24 January, 2016, available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/where-are-the-disabled-actors-a6831001.html, (accessed 04.09.2018); Crystal R. Emery, 'Hollywood Needs to Include People With Disabilities on Both Sides of the Camera,' *Variety*, 8 August, 2018, available at: https://variety.com/2018/voices/columns/hollywood-people-with-disabilities-1202898254/ (accessed 04.09.2018).

monitoring […] producing as if by accident opera singers who are not disabled'.[40] In opera, as in film and television, there seem to exist a number of barriers for disabled performers. The oft-cited lack of accessibility to training institutions for actors with disabilities appears to be a significant factor in the lack of disabled opera singers.[41] In his memoir, the German bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff recalls the barriers to education and musical training he faced during his youth:

> I complete an application but don't hear anything for weeks. When the deadline for matriculation has almost passed, Father reaches for the phone. He will not be deterred, not by the president's secretary nor by Professor Jacobi. But the head of the academy is an arrogant man who refuses to discuss the matter. He won't even let me audition. "Dear man, the German academic regulations require command of at least one instrument— the piano." "But I already told you he is a thalidomide child with maimed arms." "And if I understood you correctly, your son is—for whatever reason—not capable of doing so, which is why he will not be accepted here. And I tell you right now he will not be accepted elsewhere either. Good-bye".[42]

The American baritone Weston Hurt points to the continued presence of such barriers even following professional training.[43] In a 2017 interview for the Seattle Opera Blog, he describes a period of time at the beginning of his career in which he was frequently overlooked for roles based on his disability.[44] Born without a right hand, Hurt would initially 'wear a suit and pin or sew the sleeve of the right arm up' for auditions, but after being told to acquire a prosthesis, he began auditioning and 'started getting gigs and gigs and gigs'.[45] The singer now uses his prosthesis less frequently, noting that his disability allows him to create unique theatrical moments: 'He'll never forget the audible gasps he received each night during one production where he actually got to remove his prosthesis onstage'.[46]

There seems to exist something of a double-bind for disabled performers, whereby, as Sandahl outlines, they must 'battle on two fronts: to be cast in roles that resemble their own identities and to be cast in roles that do not'.[47] Non-traditional casting provides a partial

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[40] Alexis Shotwell, 'Forms of Knowing and Epistemic Resources,' in *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, ed. Ian James Kidd, José Medina, Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 82.
[41] The lack of training opportunities for disabled actors is explored in Carrie Sandahl, 'The Tyranny of Neutral: Disability & Actor Training,' in *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance*, ed. Carrie Sandahl and Phillip Auslander (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 255–68.
[42] Thomas Quasthoff, *The Voice: A Memoir*, trans. Kirsten Stoldt Wittenborn (New York: Pantheon, 2008), 88.
[43] Lauren Brigolin, "'Embrace what makes you unique" – Weston Hurt Lives by Example,' *Seattle Opera Blog*, 9 August 2017, available at: http://www.seattleoperablog.com/2017/08/embrace-what-makes-you-unique-weston.html (accessed 12.02.2019).
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Carrie Sandahl, 'Why Disability Identity Matters: From Dramaturgy to Casting in John Belluso's Pyretown,' *Text and Performance Quarterly* 28, no. 1–2 (2008): 237.

solution to this problem, as it concerns 'the casting of ethnic, female, or disabled actors in roles where race, gender or physical capability are not necessary to the characters' or play's development'.[48] For example, rather than being perpetually cast as characters such as Rigoletto or Zemlinsky's Dwarf, disabled singers should be considered for roles often assumed to be able-bodied. With regards to Quasthoff, Joseph Straus draws upon both the unique perspective that a visibly impaired singer might lend to a disabled role:

> In a world of operatic casting that is willing to suspend disbelief when it comes to race, age, and various other physical characteristics, one would like to see Quasthoff offered the full range of operatic roles to which his voice is suited. On the other hand, his portrayal of Amfortas – the suffering, wounded king in Wagner's *Parsifal* – takes on a special resonance in Quasthoff's performance, and it is probably an improvement of the pervasive practice, in film and theatre as in opera, of having able-bodied performers appear as disabled characters.[49]

Yet Quasthoff resisted performing in staged opera productions for many years, writing that it 'seems an unnecessary display of my disability'.[50] He also notes the frequency with which he was offered the role of Verdi's Rigoletto, thus highlighting some of the complex issues surrounding the representation and the perpetuation of stereotypes with regards to the casting of disabled performers in disabled roles.[51]

For Kuppers, '[t]he performance of disability relies on the understanding that disability is transparent, uni-vocal, easy to see, and wholly reproducible in theatre'.[52] The author alludes to a kind of oversimplification here, which has its roots in real-world understandings of disability and further manifests itself in the ways in which disability is depicted in cultural productions (in this case, on stage). I would argue that, in turn, the interpretation of disability in theatre/opera production further entrenches disability stereotypes, which themselves go on to inform public understandings of disability. As such, the oversimplification or dilution of disability, as described by Kuppers, results in a problematic cycle of representation. This process will be more closely considered in Chapter Five, but in the context of the present study, it can be argued that if a disabled character is cast in a role that adheres to negative disability stereotypes, the translation of narrative stereotypes into real-world attitudes is all the

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[48] Angela C Pao, *No Safe Spaces: Re-Casting Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in American Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 1.
[49] Joseph N. Straus, *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 142.
[50] Quasthoff, *The Voice*, 128
[51] Ibid., 135.
[52] Kuppers, 'Deconstructing Images: Performing Disability,' 29

more damaging. This representational conundrum is just one of the many that emerge when considering the matter of authentic casting.[53]

In fact, almost all of the issues surrounding disability and performance discussed here are labyrinthine: attempting to uncover solutions to the problems of disability in performance seems, more often than not, to unearth further challenges. But Sandhal warns scholars in the field of disability and performance studies against 'fall[ing] into the trap of all-or-nothing labeling: bad or good, right or wrong, authentic or inauthentic', instead pointing to Socratic questioning as a useful tool for engaging with disability in performance beyond resorting to reductive judgements of productions as authentic (and therefore inclusive) or inauthentic (and therefore ableist).[54] The author returns to the example of disability stereotypes to demonstrate the ways in which Socratic questioning can enhance the meanings to be derived from disability in performance, beyond labelling theatrical practices of disability representation as merely 'good' or 'bad':

> How might a stereotype have value as a narrative device? If a stereotype is a shortcut to meaning, what meaning is implied? How are stereotypes established in different times and places? Might we harness a stereotype's power and instant recognizability to purposeful ends as is done, for example, in parody? If disability always signifies in representation, can we replace negative stereotypes with more positive ones? If so, what criteria would we use to distinguish the good from the bad? Are they distinguishable? If they are not, is it even possible to do away with stereotypes in representation altogether? How and why do disabled artists use stereotypes critically in their work?[55]

In addition to this move away from challenging the use of stereotypes and towards embracing them as a tool for gaining a deeper understanding of the performance of disability, I would suggest that equally meaningful avenues of critical exploration can be found by looking beyond the body. This chapter has heretofore focussed on the representation of disability in the productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* in relation to the staged body. In these productions, however, notions of exhibition, disappearance and authenticity are not limited to the corporeal enactment of disability by the performers. As such, the following sections of this chapter analyse the ways in which these productions depict physical impairment beyond employing the practice of disability mimicry.

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[53] Sandahl outlines and begins to provide answers to some of the questions raised by this conundrum in 'Exploring Representational Conundrums,' 131, 136–37. Further exploration of contemporary casting practices in the opera industry lie beyond the scope of this thesis, but the opportunities for further study are rich.

[54] Sandahl, 'Exploring Representational Conundrums,' 133.

[55] Ibid., 133–34.

Beyond the Body: Staging Disability Stereotypes

Chapter Two of this thesis outlined the representation of the 'monstrous' disabled villain within the horror genre, which, as Longmore suggests, typically sees the use of severe bodily disfigurement (typically of the face and head) as a metaphor for gross deformities of the personality and soul.[56] The ways in which *Die Gezeichneten* conforms to associated narrative stereotypes, such as the linking of disability and danger, the inference of lost humanity and the elimination of disabled characters from 'normal' society (typically by way of death or cure), has also been illustrated in this thesis. Responsibility for the translation of these ideas from source to stage lays with the dramaturg, and as such, their integration into and interpretation within the context of the performance and its associated materials can become a measure of a production's strength. The Munich production of Schreker's opera serves as a pertinent example of the way in which such tropes are represented in live performance, not only through the embodiment of disability by the performer, but by wider aspects of mise-en-scène. The theme of monstrosity is emphasised in the production by the projection of a montage of classic silent horror films, designed by Denis Guéguin and featuring Frankenstein's monster, Nosferatu, The Golem and The Phantom of the Opera. The 1925 American silent horror film *The Phantom of the Opera* is an adaptation of the novel *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (1910) by Gaston Leroux.[57] The famous 'unmasking of the Phantom' scene, which is incorporated into the montage, is replete with connotations of the deformed body mirroring a decrepit soul.[58] Also included is a notorious moment from *Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (*Nosferatu – A Symphony of Horror*, 1922), in which the vampire's shadow is shown grasping at Ellen's heart, an image that is bound up with notions of monstrosity and sexual excess.[59] In one way or another, the stories of each of these figures bear similarities to the treatment of Alviano in the narrative of Schreker's opera, which is in keeping with the broader practice of linking physical

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[56] Paul K. Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People,' *Social Policy* 16, no. 1 (1985): 32–33.
[57] The facially disfigured Phantom haunts the Paris Opera house, wreaking havoc in an effort to make Christine, with whom he is infatuated, a star. Eventually, he is captured by a mob and thrown into the River Seine, where he drowns. For an extended synopsis and overview of the film's central themes, see Robert K. Klepper, 'The Phantom of the Opera,' in *Silent Films, 1877-1996: A Critical Guide to 646 Movies* (Jefferson and London: McFarland, 2005), 322–25.
[58] The 'revelation' of the Phantom's deformity in the context of degeneration theory and eugenics is explored in Angela M. Smith, *Hideous Progeny: Disability, Eugenics, and Classic Horror Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 121–58.
[59] *Nosferatu* is an adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula,* documenting Thomas Hutter and his wife Ellen's encounter with the vampire Count Orlok in the Carpathian Mountains. After unleashing his vampiric 'plague' on the local townspeople, Orlok escapes, but when the virtuous Ellen sacrifices herself to him, he is so gripped by the desire to drain her blood that he is destroyed by the rising sun. For a more thorough account of the film adaptation, see Thomas Elsaesser, 'No End to Nosferatu (1922),' in *Weimar Cinema: An Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*, ed. Noah Isenberg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 79–94; Judith Mayne, 'Dracula in the Twilight: Murnau's Nosferatu (1922),' in *German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformations*, ed. Eric Rentschler (New York: Routledge, 2012), 25–39.

abnormality with monstrosity and moral degeneracy in narratives about disability. Moreover, each figure featured in the montage meets their end as a direct result of their bodily difference and in a manner concurrent with the 'kill or cure' paradigm. At the same time, however, excerpts of Boris Karloff's iconic portrayal of Frankenstein's monster in the 1931 American horror film call to mind some of the more ambiguous aspects of Alviano's character.[60]

The tale of Frankenstein's monster resonates with the way in which Schreker's opera challenges cultural values that denounce those who fail to meet narrowly-defined standards of aesthetic 'normality'. At the same time, the central figure of the monster, like Alviano, is bestowed with a degree of moral depravity. In fact, one reviewer of the 1979 revival production of *Die Gezeichneten* in Frankfurt also drew a comparison between Alviano and Frankenstein's monster.[61] Like that of Frankenstein's monster (and, as I suggested in Chapter Two, Zemlinsky's Dwarf), the treatment and fate of The Golem – illustrated in the movie montage through selected passages from the 1920 silent horror film, *Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam* (*The Golem, how he came into the world*) – is arguably in keeping with the social model of disability in that he is only ill-treated by society in light of his bodily difference.[62] This difference also brings him into line with the stereotypical Gothic monster. By highlighting the aspects of Alviano's character which align him with the conventions of both the disabled villain/monster and the disabled victim of fate, Guéguin's movie montage in fact plays on the inherent ambiguities of his character, which I outlined in Chapter Two. Levin suggests, and I agree, that 'it is one of the characteristics of a successful production that it does not simply alert us to but indeed clarifies an opera's specific incongruities, the precise terms of its contradictions'.[63] Certainly, the montage offers a more nuanced reading of Alviano's character, whilst also acknowledging the long-standing visual rhetoric of physical disability in film and television.

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[60] The 1931 film is based on a play by Peggy Webling that premiered the preceding year, itself an adaptation of Mary Shelley's original novel (1918). The story centres around a young scientist, who, with the help of his assistant, constructs a creature from human remains. Brought to life by electricity, the monster initially appears to be an innocent yet simple-minded creature, but his imprisonment by his creator, along with the fact that he has been given the brain of a killer, causes him to develop a violent temperament. After committing a series of murders, he is pursued by a mob of townspeople and trapped inside a burning windmill, where he dies.

[61] 'Frankenstein's Liebe: „Die Gezeichneten" von Franz Schreker in Frankfurt,' in *Rheinischer Merkur*, 26 January, 1979. Held at the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung, University of Cologne.

[62] The film takes as its inspiration the anthropomorphic 'Golem' of Jewish folklore and tells the story of a Rabbi who constructs the creature from clay and brings it to life. Though created to free the Jews from their persecutors, the Golem constitutes a monstrous threat to civilised society, and the status quo is only restored when he is destroyed. See Noah Isenberg, 'Of Monsters and Magicians: Paul Wagner's *The Golem: How He Came Into The World* (1920),' in *Weimar Cinema: An Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*, ed. Noah William Isenberg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 33–54. See Introduction, 25–27 for my overview of the social model and Chapter Two, 125–27 for its relevance to *Der Zwerg*.

[63] David Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2007), xi–xii.

Guéguin's horror montage is projected across the large wall at the back of the stage, with Carlotta and Tamare, along with dozens of members of the Genoese public (dressed as mice), seated with their backs to the audience, seemingly engrossed in the images before them. For Angela M. Smith, the cultural preoccupation with atypical bodily forms is realised in the horror genre through 'the pleasurable display of the monstrous body […] so that we can again and again be frightened and repulsed and excited by its [re]appearance'.[64] This fascination with abnormal bodies is also reflected in the persistent narrativising of disability in literature, film, television and even opera as an emblem of moral depravity. The placement of the montage's projection at the National Theatre creates a strange sense of unity between the audience and the action on stage, calling to mind the universality of the enfreakment of bodily difference and the enduring appeal of the atypical corporeal form as a source of revulsion and excitement.[65] In a sense, this production exemplifies the ways in which the reliance on diluted notions of disability eradicates authentic disability from live performance.

However, the deliberate incorporation of disability stereotypes into the production's mise-en-scène, as well as the use of disability mimicry, also serves as a means of signifying historical, culturally embedded meanings of the anomalous body. In that it is principally concerned with the visual impact of disability, *Die Gezeichneten* metaphorises impairment in order to articulate the theme of outsider identity. This appropriation of disability in the opera's narrative can be perceived as a vehicle for socio-cultural commentary regarding the aesthetic ideals of health and beauty and as an illustration of the preoccupation with the visibility of otherness that was so ingrained in the public mindset at the time in which the opera was composed. The idea that disability (or, indeed, any visible manifestation of difference) is a signifier of internal, psychological or moral fault has long been found by disability theorists to be a prevalent theme in cultural representations of disability. As demonstrated in Chapter One of this thesis, this was a concept at the heart of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century degeneration theory, as degeneracy was thought to be visibly transparent, allowing the differentiation of the morally decrepit individual from the 'healthy' members of society. Max Nordau's understanding of the degenerate artist as displaying the same 'somatic features' as 'criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics' encapsulates the typical association of the deviant body with the degenerate personality by those who subscribed to the idea of degeneracy.[66] As previously observed, Nordau's reference to the 'somatic features' of

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[64] Smith, *Hideous Progeny*, 118.
[65] These ideas are also incorporated into the production's programme: of the artworks featured, several are concerned with the grotesque, such as Ron Mueck's sculpture 'Untitled (big man)', (2000) and Michael Fliri's 'My Private Fog' (2017). The idea of gazing or staring at difference is also suggested by the inclusion of Philip Lorca DiCoricia's, 'W. November 2003 #12' (2003) and Alex Prager's 'Orchestra Center (intermission)' (2016).
[66] Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (London: William Heinemann, 1895), vii.

degenerate artists and writers calls to mind the culturally prevalent pseudoscience of phrenology, which aimed to measure, calculate and document the human skull with a view to documenting personality types and detecting 'abnormalities'.[67]

The Lisbon production of *Der Zwerg* also articulates both time-bound and enduringly prevalent ideas surrounding physical difference beyond its participation in the practice of disability mimicry, particularly given its billing alongside *Pagliacci*. Leoncavallo's opera has received sustained celebration as a paradigm of operatic verismo. Despite being sued for plagiarising Catulle Mendès' *La femme du tabarin* (1887), the composer maintained that he found inspiration for the opera in a real-life criminal case encountered by his father, who was a police magistrate in Naples.[68] Wherever the composer found his inspiration for the story, certain similarities seem to exist between the incident recalled from the composer's childhood and Mendès' narrative. So too, of course, did an event from Zemlinsky's life – his rejection by Alma Schindler – find a macabre parallel in the narrative of Wilde's fairy tale. Art and life are interwoven in both operas, and the double bill at TNSC reflects the parallels that exist between the seemingly biographical inspiration of the creators and the associated blurring of reality and fiction in both works. Although the comparisons drawn between the two halves of the double bill (in terms of production design) are less prominent at São Carlos than in Graz, the dramaturgical parallels – most notably the mutual prevalence of the theme of outsider identity – gives the performances a collective poignancy.

Leoncavallo's opera features a stereotypical disabled villain in the form of Tonio, the hunchbacked clown whose 'wild desire' for the beautiful Nedda leads to his rejection and embitterment.[69] In his declaration of love for Nedda, he states 'I know I am ugly, my body is repulsive: I know that contempt is my lot in this world. Yet I too can dream, I feel a passionate longing, desire fills my heart!'[70] Tonio's words reveal that, like *Die Gezeichneten*'s Alviano, he is all too aware of his physical difference and the extent to which (in his own estimations, at least) it renders fruitless his hopes of love. As is the case for the protagonists of both Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas, the characterisation of Tonio in *Pagliacci* utilises a number of common disability stereotypes, from the implication of dehumanisation (Nedda describes him as a 'filthy dog' and a 'half-wit'), to the conflation of physical disability with moral degeneracy ('[y]our mind is just as twisted as your body') and the convergence of disability and danger ('[h]e could be very dangerous').[71] Certain parallels exist between the judgements

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[67] See Introduction, 55–56.
[68] See Michele Girardi, 'Pagliacci,' *Grove Music Online*, ed. Laura Macy, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O903808 (accessed 12.02.2018).
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ruggiero Leoncavallo, *Pagliacci* (Libretto), trans. Joseph Machlis (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1963), 4.
[71] Ibid., 5.

levelled against Tonio by Nedda and the denigration of the Dwarf by the Infanta, who cries 'you are a hideous, misshapen dwarf! You are so ugly that you are ridiculous! You are a monster, you aren't a man! You are so repulsive that it is absurd!'[72] In the TNSC double bill, the similarities between the experiences of the disabled characters are emphasised – in one of the only visual motifs carried across both productions – by the use of clown make-up. In *Der Zwerg*, this also establishes a visual distinction between the protagonist and the court, in that the natural complexions of the Infanta and her entourage are juxtaposed with the deliberately viscous, clown-like makeup of the Dwarf. His painted face also fortifies his association with the historical commodification of dwarfs as a source of entertainment.[73] The Dwarf's role as an object of amusement is evidenced throughout the opera, from his arrival in the palace (when he is asked to perform for the court) until his death (which the Infanta understands to be nothing more than the loss of a favourite 'toy').

The dramatic stereotypes utilised in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* are emphasised in the productions at the Bayerische Staatsoper and the TNSC, enabling these performances to more effectively engage with and incorporate pertinent ideas about physical difference. From a critical standpoint, moving beyond simply identifying and adjudicating processes of disability representation on stage offers diverse insights into the ways in which disability functions on stage, not just in terms of its literal depiction, but with regards to its cultural, historical and metaphorical implications. By utilising aspects of programming and mise-en-scène in this way, these productions also serve as an example of the way in which the representation of disability is not limited to its physical/bodily enactment.

Dramatising Recognition: Playing with the Feedback Loop

Just as the use of Daszak's costume in Munich highlights the transitory nature of disability in performance, in Lisbon, the aforementioned process of exhibition and erasure described by Siebers is integrated into the sphere of the performance. The TNSC production referred to the cultural inclination towards the enfreakment of abnormality, as the Dwarf's discovery of his disability is dramatised in a manner that made a spectacle of the (performed) atypical body. José Capela's set design for the double bill draws upon the theatrical omnipresence of curtains, which was in keeping with the idea of universality noted in the previous chapter.[74] The backdrop for *Pagliacci* is a large sheet of PVC, on which a photograph of São Carlos's pink and gold velvet curtain was printed. In *Der Zwerg,* the site-specific image of the theatre's curtain

[72] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), 31.
[73] See Chapter Two, 112–14.
[74] See Chapter Three, 139.

plays a more substantial role. The backdrop is similar, but this time it is printed on a large sheet of lightweight fabric (due to its additional role as a covering for the large mirror that was to be revealed in the final scene). An identical velvet curtain that had formerly been in use at the theatre serves as a tablecloth in the opening scene, then as a covering for the steps formed by the removable structure later in the production. The layers of curtains are successively removed in conjunction with the increasing disintegration of the Dwarf's naivety until the falling of the final curtain reveals a large mirror, itself bringing about the protagonist's ultimate confrontation with reality. If, as I argued in Chapter Three, the protagonist's gradual dishevelment and undressing reflected his increasingly primitive nature in the eyes of the court, the stripping of the curtains echoes the dismantling of the Dwarf's claim to 'normality' and by association, his civilisation. The removal of the curtains alongside the unveiling of his body by the Infanta constitutes the exhibition of both his disability and his outsider identity.

The size and shape of the mirror itself bears certain similarities to that of a model theatre that was used in the production of *Pagliacci* (producing a sense of consistency between the two performances), and its placement also facilitates the reflection of the theatre's interior. Referring to theatre's immediacy, Guillermo Gomez-Peña writes:

> Performance is a disnarrative and symbolic chronicle of the "now" and the "here". Performance is not about presence, not representation; it is not (as classical theories of theatre would suggest) a mirror, but the actual moment in which the mirror is shattered.[75]

The final revelation of the mirror in Lisbon can be understood as a literal example of Gomez-Peña's mirror metaphor. The visual exposure of the theatre inevitably comprises a reflection of the audience therein, and the associated removal of the fourth wall constitutes the erasure of the disability on stage. In keeping with Phelan's comments on the temporary nature of performance, the punctuation of the 'here and now' in this moment serves as a reminder of disability's containment within the world of the drama. However, the symbiosis between the props, the set and the theatre itself comes to full fruition with the revelation of the mirror, thus lending extra symbolic weight to the themes of deception and reality that sit at the heart of both *Pagliacci* and *Der Zwerg*. Moreover, this moment brings the audience into direct contact with the production's scenographic materials.

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[75] Guillermo Gómez-Peña, *Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 9.

Arnold Aronson has established a framework for analysing set design from a Foucauldian perspective, based on the philosopher's reading of Velázquez's *Las Meninas*.[76] The particular attention Aronson pays to the mirror depicted in the painting draws upon pertinent ideas regarding the use of reflective surfaces on the theatrical stage. He posits that when the mirror on stage is angled so as to reflect the audience, 'the spectator is in some way incorporated into the context of the performance'.[77] The use of the mirror at São Carlos reframes the audience's role as one in which they became part of the performance. By association, the objects and actions of the drama are no longer representative of a fictional world. Rather, the scenography reflects the audience's own subjectivity. Instead of creating distance between the audience and the disability in the opera's narrative, the former's reflection brings them into contact with the weighty themes of the opera. The visual symmetry generated by the reflection of the house at São Carlos serves as an allegory not only for the mirror itself, but also for the shared experience of the Dwarf and the spectator, since, like the protagonist, what is revealed to them in this moment has been there all along. Indeed, unlike Wilde's Dwarf, Zemlinsky's protagonist is no stranger to his reflection, which he describes as 'the evil one', who 'follows me around, but is only a lifeless spirit, a creature of my dreams'.[78] The Dwarf has only seen the spectre of his reflection 'in clouded glasses and smooth marble, or insidiously hiding under water…'.[79] Lee writes that in such moments, the Dwarf 'simply has not recognized [his reflection] for what it is: a "true" image of himself' – 'the recognition remains, […] a partial one'.[80] The São Carlos production dramatises this reading of the work through the gradual unveiling of the stage in conjunction with the progression of the Dwarf's recognition from unconscious partiality to ruinous actuality – the audience's implied meta-theatrical participation allowing them to share in the Dwarf's journey of discovery and eventual recognition.

In her 1983 work *The Semiotics of Theatre*, Fischer-Lichte observes the co-presence between performers and spectators in her attempt to define the very nature of theatre, arguing that 'the minimum pre-conditions for theatre to be theatre are that person A represents X while S looks on'.[81] In the more recent *The Transformative Power of Performance*, the author further stresses 'the bodily co-presence' between performers and spectators to examine the concept of

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[76] Arnold Aronson, 'Looking into the Abyss,' in *Looking Into the Abyss: Essays on Scenography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 97–116.
[77] Ibid., 99.
[78] Klaren, *Der Zwerg* (libretto), 28.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Sherry D. Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror, Or, Recognizing the Self: Wilde's and Zemlinsky's Dwarf,' *Music and Letters* 91, no. 2 (2010): 207.
[81] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Semiotics of Theatre*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 7.

performance and to propose 'an aesthetics of the performative'.[82] In the chapter 'Shared bodies, shared spaces', Fischer-Lichte explores the idea that 'performances are generated and determined by an ever-changing feedback loop'.[83] This feedback loop is governed by the performative cycle of action and reaction that forges a connection between the stage and the auditorium and, by association, between the performer and the spectator. With the emergence of Wagnerian theatre towards the end of the nineteenth century, the feedback loop between the actions of a performer and the reaction of an audience was disrupted, only to re-emerge with the advent of director's theatre in the twentieth century.[84] As a result of the performative turn of the 1960s, which saw with increasing frequency 'the transformation from a work of art into an event', the feedback loop became 'an autopoietic, self-referential' system.[85] According to Fischer-Lichte, performance today enables the exploration of and experimentation with the interaction between performers and spectators, and the job of directors is to develop 'relevant staging strategies which can establish appropriate conditions for this experiment'.[86] The author notes the inherent difficulties in ascertaining performative experiments with the feedback loop, as opposed to performances which simply 'play with its diverse variables and parameters'.[87] However, she offers three factors by which a productions' experimentation with or deliberate engagement with the feedback loop can be determined: 'the *role reversal* of actors and spectators', 'the *creation of a community between them*' and 'the creation of various modes of mutual, physical *contact* that helps explore the interplay between proximity and distance, public and private, or visual and tactile contact'.[88]

The use of scenography in the TNSC production of *Der Zwerg* highlights the extent to which aspects of production design can create an environment in which the audience is brought into contact with the fictive world of the drama, thereby negating their role as passive observer. The Dwarf's realisation of his physique alongside the audience's recognition of themselves in the mirror image is a role reversal of sorts, whilst the co-presence of the two in this moment establishes a community between performer and spectator and also constitutes a form of visual contact. In this sense, this part of the production can be understood as both a literal representation of Fischer-Lichte's feedback loop and a form of experimentation with its effects and outcomes. Nevertheless, in conjunction with a reading of Zemlinsky's opera as a critique of society's preoccupation with aesthetic norms, the mirror image in the TNSC

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[82] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 23.
[83] Ibid., 37–74 (38).
[84] Ibid., 38–40.
[85] Ibid., 23, 29.
[86] Ibid., 40.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., 40–41 (author's emphasis).

production may not, in fact, incorporate the audience as participants in the theatrical anagnorisis of the narrative. By coming into contact with (and indeed, becoming part of) the production's mise-en-scène in this moment, the audience certainly become part of the opera's narrative arch. However, rather than partaking in the vital moment of recognition alongside the Dwarf, their role becomes more closely aligned with that of the court. Indeed, a further case can be made for the audience's symbolic participation in the ill-treatment of the Dwarf by the Infanta and her entourage. Certain issues surrounding the attitudes towards social and political in the original setting of Wilde's fairy tale, as well as in Zemlinsky's Europe, remain equally pertinent today. If the audience is, in fact, confronted with a reflection of society's treatment of difference, there might be some value in pondering the question posed by Aronson: 'what happens when, more than three centuries later, we find ourselves implicated in the Spanish court?'[89] In short, does the audience's forced participation in the dramatic action of *Der Zwerg* implicate them in the mistreatment of the protagonist, thereby causing them to reflect on attitudes towards society's others, both historically and in the present day? Certainly, the audience's transplantation into the world of the drama still renders this moment an example of the modern tendency to experiment with the feedback loop, but it also raises questions about *Der Zwerg*'s aspects of cultural commentary and how they can be translated from source to stage.

Spectacles of Difference: Performing the Non-Disabled Stare

Scholars in the field of disability studies have often explored the enduring use of disability as a source of intrigue and excitement for non-disabled onlookers. As this chapter has thus far demonstrated, the process of making a spectacle of disability is dramatised in each of the productions analysed, thus demonstrating dramaturgical engagement with the themes and ideas surrounding the works (and their treatment of disability, in particular). Associated with this enfreakment is the act of looking, gazing or staring at physical difference, and this is something that is also incorporated into the various performances of disability in Lisbon, Graz and Munich. The act of looking at disability is referred to variously by disability theorists as the 'non-disabled gaze', the 'able-bodied gaze' and 'the ableist gaze', yet Thomson makes a distinction between gazing and staring, suggesting that 'we may gaze at what we desire, but we stare at that which astonishes us'. [90] She expands upon this by noting that

[89] Aronson, 'Looking Into the Abyss,' 100.
[90] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Staring: How We Look* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13. The author explores the distinction between staring and gazing with reference to the male gaze and the colonial gaze on pages 40–42. See also Bill Hughes, 'The Constitution of Impairment: Modernity and the Aesthetic of Oppression,' *Disability & Society* 14, no. 2 (1999): 155–72.

> [w]e don't usually stare at people we know, but instead when unfamiliar people take us by surprise. This kind of staring between strangers […] offers the most revealing instance of the stare: how it works and what it does. An encounter between a starer and a staree sets in motion an interpersonal relationship, however momentary, that has consequences. This intense visual engagement creates a circuit of communication and meaning-making.[91]

A comparison can be drawn between Thomson's words here and Fischer-Lichte's notion of the feedback loop – both are autopoietic in nature and neither starer/spectator can function within the cycle without staree/performer.

As described in the previous chapter, the Dwarf's entrance in the TNSC production elicits simultaneous fear, excitement and revulsion on the part of the playmates. Before picking up their books and beginning to read, they rotate their small, handheld mirrors so as to catch a glimpse of the protagonist – their actions emblematic of the tendency to treat disabled bodies as the 'voyeuristic property of the non-disabled gaze'.[92] By contrast, certain moments in the Oper Graz production see the reversal of the Dwarf's role as the object of the non-disabled stare. Despite the fact that the portrayal of the playmates as inmates in a 'madhouse' arguably constitutes a somewhat problematic portrayal of mental illness, the absurd bodily repetitions and rituals of the Spanish court draw the gaze of the audience and, in light of Thomson's evaluation that the stare 'sculpts disabled people into a grotesque spectacle', the binary between the 'normality' of the court and the 'abnormality' of the Dwarf is thus overturned.[93] The court is othered (or 'enfreaked') as a result of its presentation as a spectacle or curiosity and, as such, the homogenous paradigm of 'normality' that sets the Dwarf apart from the Infanta is eliminated. Instead, the protagonist is presented, in this opening scene, at least, as the only rational figure in a seemingly irrational world. Nonetheless, such an interpretation still renders Zemlinsky's protagonist incompatible with the customs of the Spanish court – his juxtaposition reinforcing his outsider identity.

Given my previous comments on this production's strength as a result of its interpretation of and critical engagement with the opera's central themes, it follows that, of the three productions, nowhere is the enfreakment and visual appeal of disability more prominently incorporated into the performance than in *Die Gezeihneten* at the Bayerische Staatsoper. Through its characterisation of the central protagonist, the production upholds the

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[91] Thomson, *Staring*, 1.
[92] David Hevey, *The Creatures Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 72–73
[93] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Disability in American Culture and Literature* (1996; repr. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 26.

work's aspects of cultural commentary by integrating ideas about the treatment of people with disabilities into the context of the performance. As suggested by Daszak's costuming as Joseph Merrick, the production team reads Alviano's character as a helpless object of the non-disabled stare and a source of *schadenfreude*, much like the protagonist in Lynch's biopic. In view of the opposition of the protagonist's disabled body with that of his aesthetically normative counterparts, Schreker's opera places emphasis not on what the disabled body *is*, but on what it is *not*. According to Kenneth C. Kaleta, Lynch's film 'focuses not on what is, but on how it is seen'.[94] Taking a similar approach, Nolan Boyd has examined the role and function of the non-disabled stare in the film, summarising that 'at the level of narrative and the level of cinematic technique, Lynch explores the nature of the look in order to reveal its power to both objectify the disabled body and, alternatively, recognize the disabled body as a site of shared humanity'.[95] Indeed, Merrick is the object of the non-disabled stare in both the freak show and the hospital and, in this way, the film is concerned with the interplay between the observed disabled body and the stare of the non-disabled spectator. The film's scopophilic focus is translated into Warlikowski's *Elephant Man* interpretation of *Die Gezeichneten* at the Bayerische Staatsoper. In the production, Alviano's face is covered by a burlap sack for the entirety of the prelude. Just as his face is not revealed to the audience until some time into the production, Merrick's body is not revealed to the audience until over thirty minutes into the film – a fact that, for Boyd, 'aligns the audience's spectatorial position with that of […] a non-disabled, voyeuristic perspective'.[96]

This voyeuristic perspective is also reflected in the Bayerische Staatsoper production through the presentation of Carlotta as a performance artist, as her interactions with the protagonist emphasise the similarities between Alviano and Merrick, raising questions about perceptions of and reactions to visible disability. As noted, the opera's Act Two atelier scene is staged as Marina Abramović's *The Artist is Present*, an extended performance that took place at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York in 2010. For the three months over which the performance took place, Abramović sat motionless for the entire day in the museum's atrium, positioned at a table across from a stream of spectators at whom she would direct her gaze. If Alviano's character is conflated with Lynch's presentation of Joseph Merrick, in the atelier scene, Carlotta's gaze constitutes an example of the stare that is often aimed at disabled bodies. By objectifying the disabled body as a corporeal anomaly, the voyeuristic non-disabled stare bolsters the spectator's perceived sense of normality, and thus constitutes an example of

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[94] Kenneth C. Kaleta, *David Lynch* (New York: Twayne, 1993), 49.
[95] Nolan Boyd, 'The Warped Mirror: The Reflection of the Ableist Stare in David Lynch's *The Elephant Man*,' *Disability & Society* 31, no 10: 1321–1332 (1322).
[96] Ibid., 1324.

the way in which 'the extraordinary body is fundamental to the narratives by which we make sense of ourselves and the world'.[97] In this light, as the subject of a performative artwork in which he is the object of the prolonged stare, Alviano undergoes a process of enfreakment that Carlotta exploits to interrogate her position in relation to his bodily abnormality. The interplay between the two protagonists in this scene once again calls to mind Fischer-Lichte's feedback loop. The author's work also sheds light on Chapter Three's discussion of the way in which Carlotta 'performs herself' in this scene (in relation to the inclusion of Hermann Swoboda's contentious comments on performance in the production's programme).[98] In observing the 'performative turn' and the related shift from object/artwork to event, Fischer-Lichte highlights the increased interdependence between performer and spectator. This co-presence and the resulting autopoiesis can also be understood as indicative of the disappearance of the absolute performer. Carlotta's waning autonomy is dramatised in the Munich production by her impersonation of Tilda Swinton in *The Maybe* (where she herself becomes an artefact of Elysium), whilst the atelier scene plays out at once as an enactment of the unending feedback loop and the cycle of looking and 'meaning-making' engendered by the non-disabled stare.

In each of the productions, then, the gazes of both the audience and the non-disabled characters dramatizes the non-disabled stare and facilitates the enfreakment of disability. This reflects the persistent use of disabled bodies as a metaphor for outsider identity, and, moreover, constitutes a realisation of the collective urge to visually consume that which is perceived to be sensational and extraordinary. Smith notes the representation of 'our desire to both see and experience bodily debilitation and aberration' in horror films, but this fascination with the disabled body has become increasingly reflected in broader contemporary entertainment.[99] As I argued in Chapter Two, both *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* offer some form of cultural commentary on the treatment of society's others at the time in which they were created. In light of this, and perhaps to hold these contemporary interpretations of the operas to a higher standard, it can also be argued that these productions updated Schreker's and Zemlinsky's cultural commentaries to reflect modern-day attitudes towards disability. Indeed, each of the interactions between the non-disabled starer and the disabled staree in these productions calls to mind the work of several disability theorists on the performative aspects of disability in daily life, of which John Belluso's personal account of entering a public bus provides a pertinent example: 'I'm lifted, the stage is moving up and I enter, and people

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[97] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 'Introduction: From Wonder to Error – A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity,' in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 1.
[98] See Chapter Three, 150.
[99] Smith, *Hideous Progeny*, 118.

are along the lines, and they're turning and looking, and I make my entrance. It's theatre, and I have to perform'.[100]

Conclusion

Through its initial considerations of disability mimicry, authenticity and matters of casting, this chapter has explored the performer's body as both medium and subject in the three contemporary productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. In each of the performances, the phenomenal bodies of Bronder, Briscein and Daszak are unable to convincingly embody the physicality of the operas' protagonists. The metonymic nature of the body in performance is negated during instances of disability mimicry, because the impairment presented on stage is inauthentic. Whether as a result of altered gait and bodily demeanour, costuming and make-up or the use of visible disability aids, it would seem that in the theatre, disability mimicry invariably results in disability's simultaneous exhibition and erasure. These coinciding yet conflicting outcomes are expounded by the notions of ephemerality and disappearance to be found in performance studies. In the productions discussed in this chapter, the erasure or disappearance of disability is most palpably reflected in the transition of the performers from their semiotic to phenomenal bodies between the dramatic action and the curtain call. However, even the seeming solution to this problem – the use of authentic casting – is equally affected by this particular conundrum.

Initially, Fischer-Lichte's discourse on the semiotic and phenomenal bodies of the performer seemed to suggest that a blurred boundary between the performer and that which they seek to represent might result in a more convincing portrayal of disability. Nevertheless, as Thomson effectively summarises, 'history bears ample witness to [the] profound disquiet stirred in the human soul by bodies that stray from what is typical or predictable'.[101] Both disability studies and performance studies point to the inability of non-disabled audiences to 'see beyond' the extraordinary corporeal form and the associated desire to create distance between such forms and the safety of 'normality'.[102] But disability can be and is portrayed in myriad ways. Although disability studies scholars such as Siebers problematise disability mimicry on the grounds that it engenders modes of perceiving disability from a voyeuristic perspective, each of these productions in fact utilise the process of enfreakment and the non-

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[100] John Belluso, interview with Carrie Sandahl, Los Angeles, July 2, 2001, quoted in *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance*, Carrie Sandahl, Philip Auslander ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 2. See also Petra Kuppers, 'Going to the theatre,' in *Theatre and Disability* (London: Palgrave, 2017), 1–5; Petra Kuppers, 'The Wheelchair's Rhetoric,' 80.
[101] Thomson, 'From Wonder to Error,' 1.
[102] See Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 90; Wolf, 'Disability's Invisibility,' 304.

disabled stare to present disability, theatrically, through the use of costume, set design, video projection and even programming.

The analyses in this chapter have revealed that, although perpetuating disability stereotypes is seemingly unavoidable when staging historical works, productions can constructively utilise familiar tropes of narrative and characterisation to lend a sense of critical awareness to a work. Within the context of this thesis, this kind of engagement with disability stereotypes thus becomes a further tool with which to measure a production's 'strength'. The Bayerische Staatsoper production mirrors Schreker's characterisation of Alviano within the restrictive confines of archetypal disability representation, but it also manipulates the protagonist's identity as a means through which to generate additional meaning and uphold the work's original aspects of cultural critique. Here, the depiction of Alviano's disability draws upon the cultural contexts of both the historical discourse of degeneracy and the horror genre's proclivity towards facially disfigured antagonists. Moreover, the concept of the non-disabled stare is translated into the action on stage, where the enfreakment of disability is explored in conjunction with ideas about looking at and perceiving the anomalous bodily form. So too does the TNSC production translate complex ideas about disability and performativity into the action on stage. The exhibition of the Dwarf's disability is dramatised through the use of curtains, with the audience's figurative participation in the protagonist's cruel fate revealed with the uncovering of the mirror (in which they themselves are reflected) in the final scene.

However, by the logic of Fischer-Lichte's semiotic/phenomenal opposition, any responsibility to grapple with such issues is dissipated alongside Bronder's return to his phenomenal body during the curtain call. Nevertheless, the revelation of the Dwarf's physicality in this moment meets the trifecta of conditions to constitute a form of experimentation with the feedback loop. The audience's resulting intrusion into the fictive world of the drama renders them active participants as opposed to passive observers. These particular productions therefore exemplify the analytical insights to be found by moving beyond attempts to discern productions as either 'good' or 'bad' on the grounds of their adherence to problematic modes of performing disability and, instead, constitute strong interpretive readings, in the sense that they generate 'more complex and less predictable' outcomes, both 'onstage and in criticism'.[103] The next chapter of this thesis turns to two more contemporary productions of Schreker's opera, notable for the fact that they emphasise the figurative significance of disability but remove its visible aspects.

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[103] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 35.

5. Issues in Contemporary Production: Sidestepping Disability

Adorno observed that during the 1920s, a production of Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* was to be found on 'every stage of any significance' and, in the years surrounding the opera's centenary, this remark begins to hold new relevance.[1] In addition to Warlikowski's staging for the Bayerische Staatsoper, July 2017 saw a revival of Patrick Kinmonth's take on *Die Gezeichneten* at Oper Köln and, in January 2018, Catalan director Calixto Bieito returned to Komische Oper Berlin with a further new production of the work.[2] That these productions were to be found on the stages of foremost German opera companies is not insignificant. As I touched upon in the introduction to this thesis, the trend for radical stagings in Europe (and particularly German-speaking Europe) has been traced back to the work of Wieland Wagner and Walter Felsenstein following the Second World War.[3] Just as the 'innovative waves' which began to characterise opera studies in the early 2000s also made their way onto opera stages, the influx of non-musicological approaches to opera studies at this time found a parallel in the tendency for concept-led Regietheater productions to be directed by those from outside of the opera industry, as Christopher Morris has observed.[4] Patrick Kinmonth has frequently been described as a creative 'polymath' and, in terms of opera production, he has described his role to be 'to come up with the story that we are going to tell about a great work of art that may not have been seen in those terms before'.[5] Calixto Bieito has been a notable figure in Spanish theatre since the 1980s, and Maria Delgado notes his 'recognition of the need to work across boundaries'.[6] Frequently dubbed an *enfant terrible* of opera, he compares his style of opera direction to Picasso's *Las Meninas* (1957), due to the fact that the painting constitutes a version, as opposed to a copy, of Velázquez's 'original'.[7] The approach of both directors, it seems, is

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[1] Theodor Adorno, 'Schreker (1959),' in *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 130.
[2] The opera continues its tour of major German opera houses in 2019 with a new production by Johannes von Matuschka at Staatsoper Hannover.
[3] See 'Introduction', 44.
[4] Christopher Morris, *Modernism and the Cult of Mountains: Music, Opera, Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2012), 39.
[5] Iain Eklann, 'Alain Elkann Interviews: Patrick Kinmonth,' 22 January, 2017, available at: https://www.alainelkanninterviews.com/patrick-kinmonth/ (accessed 13.03.2019). See also Valerie Barber Public Relations, 'Opera Director and Designer Patrick Kinmonth Unlocks Searing Emotions in a New Production of Franz Schreker's Rarely Staged Die Gezeichneten in Cologne (20 April –18 May 2013),' available at: http://www.vbpr.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Patrick-Kinmonth-Press-Release-Feb-2013.pdf (accessed 13.03.2019); Tim Blanks, 'The Ecstacy of Influence,' *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 October, 2012, available at: https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970204425904578072633736545850 (accessed 13.03.2019).
[6] Maria M. Delgado, 'Calixto Bieito: Staging Excess in, across and through Europe,' in *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, ed. Maria M. Delgado and Dan Rebellato (Abingdon and New York, 2010), 277–98.
[7] Sarah Wright, 'Consuming Passions: The Aesthetics of Cultural Consumption in Calixto Bieito's *Don Giovanni* (2001),' *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 5, no. 3 (2004): 332.

characterised by a desire to either update or transform the 'opera text' in line with the practice of contemporary *Regietheater*.

Gundula Kreuzer and Clemens Risi summarise that

> …practitioners of *Regietheater* seek to question, reexamine, or recontextualize the seemingly obvious layers of meaning of an opera as conveyed by the libretto, the full score, and other documents concerning the work's genesis and performance history.[8]

The three productions examined in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis can be seen as falling within the bounds of Risi and Kreuzer's definition, particularly in light of (to borrow Müller's phrase) their 'visualisation of subtext(s)' as a means through which to reflect the literary and cultural origins of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*.[9] But Regietheater is more commonly associated with its propensity to deconstruct, question, or crucially, transform an opera's narrative, and the productions discussed in the present chapter are two particularly pertinent examples of this tendency towards narrative transformation.[10] In Kinmonth's production for Oper Köln, a present-day industrial underworld and the opulent Renaissance paradise of the protagonist's design are merged to create a sensationalised take on Schreker's opera, for which the director takes cues from Hitchcockian horror and contemporary psychological crime drama. Notions of stigmatisation, unrequited love and moral depravity remain at the fore, but Alviano's psychosis (his concluding fate in the original narrative) is evident from the opening moments of the production and is depicted as a dangerous catalyst for the events of the opera. *Die Gezeichneten* is subject to similar narrative readjustment in Bieito's production for Komische Oper Berlin, which sees the transformation of the already difficult libretto into a perverse, contemporary psychodrama that makes for particularly uncomfortable viewing.

In this chapter, I assess these productions as challenging and, to an extent, contrasting examples of contemporary operatic Regietheater. In line with my proposal that the strength of a production lies not only in its deviation from the interpretative 'norm', but by demonstrating close critical engagement with an opera text and its associated contexts, I argue that the performances in Berlin and Cologne respectively represent more and less successful attempts at radical interpretation. Particularly significant within the context of this thesis is the fact that, in both cases, the reinterpretation of Schreker's 'opera text' enables the protagonist's physical disability to be removed from the sphere of performance. The Oper Köln and Komische Oper

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[8] Gundula Kreuzer and Clemens Risi, 'Regietheater in Transition: An Introduction to Barbara Beyer's "Interviews with Contemporary Opera Directors"' *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2011): 304.
[9] Müller, 'Regietheater/Director's Theatre,' 591.
[10] Ibid., 582.

Berlin productions present a unique opportunity to reflect on the impact of radical (re)interpretation on disability representation and, in this chapter, I consider the implications of 'sidestepping' Alviano's physical impairment in light of disability theory, also addressing associated questions about composer intention and director authority that frequently emerge in debates about Regietheater.

Sidestepping Disability

Schreker's libretto depicts the kidnap and rape of the ageless 'daughters of Genoa' by the hedonistic 'eight'. In the first scene, the noblemen sing of snatching women from 'the arms of their lovers', making light of the rapes they have committed by implying the enjoyment of their victims: 'A misunderstood woman does not shed a tear for a husband who is inexperienced in the art of love'. Bieito's *Die Gezeichneten* at the Komische Oper Berlin amplifies these details to create a disconcertingly modern drama of child sexual abuse, and the dramatisation of opera's prelude lays the foundations for an uneasy grappling with this controversial subject matter. After the curtain rises, a young boy dressed in a dishevelled school uniform enters, followed by a hurried Alviano (played by Peter Hoare), who, after holding the boy in a sinister gaze for several moments, falls to his knees in seeming anguish.[11] Later in the prelude, a throng of children gather around the distraught Alviano and present him with an extravagant gift box containing a doll that resembles the dishevelled boy. The boy stands at a distance from the merriment at the centre of the stage, looking on at the now-joyous protagonist with a troubled expression. Alviano becomes increasingly overwhelmed as he tightly clutches the doll, which, it is now clear, represents the object of his forbidden desire.

As this chapter will show, certain parts of Bieito's production include the provocative displays of erotic sensationalism that characterise his oeuvre. The exaggerated violence and uncomfortable realism that typify his productions, however, are largely absent. The sexual abuse of children by the noblemen, for example, is implied, as opposed to overtly stated, and, as previously observed, Bieito's stripping down of the work in this way also results in the omission of Alviano's bodily abnormality. Yet, though the production avoids dramatising the metaphorisation of disability as a physical manifestation of moral degeneracy, it is still implied that the protagonist is psychologically, even morally, impaired. In the interview for the programme, Bieito explains that

> [t]he term Peter-Pan complex characterises Alviano's neurotic personality very well. He is a man who cannot and does not want to grow up - he is afraid of the world and the

[11] This opening image of Alviano called to mind his description in the libretto as having 'big shining eyes' and being 'hurried'.

> sexuality of adults. Therefore, he feels very close to children and would like to be a child himself. This polarizes and tears his personality in an almost schizoid manner. Therefore he behaves crazily and eccentrically, plays with dolls and dreams in children's worlds. […] For this he has created a place: the island Elysium. To a certain extent, this is a sanctuary, but at the same time, it also preserves its suppressed desires.[12]

In this light, Alviano is characterised along the lines of the Jungian archetype of the Puer aeternus, or 'eternal child', which Jung described as 'simply the personification of the infantile side of our character, repressed because it is infantile'.[13] In itself, this condition does not necessarily render Alviano morally corrupt and, by issuing Alviano with a Peter-Pan complex, the director foregoes the typical theatrical allegorisation of impairment as a mere signpost for moral degeneracy. The protagonist does, however, endure a degree of physical pain, which is not the case in the original libretto. In fact, in the programme, Bieito dismisses the interviewer's attempt to call into question Alviano's lack of visible, physical difference, and emphasises that in his interpretation, the protagonist's stigma is connected to a dark 'secret'. The suppression of the erotic desires associated with Alviano's Peter-Pan complex cause 'a severe pain that eats into his body'.[14] The psychosomatic manifestation of his implied paedophilia is dramatised both in the opening vignette – in the form of the visible discomfort he experiences when looking at the small child – and throughout the remainder of the performance – as he beats the side of his head with his hand upon each utterance of the words 'cripple' and 'deformed'. The protagonist also appears to inflict pain upon himself in an attempt to curb his sexual yearnings. For example, when visually fixated upon the doll at the beginning of the first scene, he repeatedly strikes his crotch with his fists, rocking back and forth on his knees.

As in the Berlin production, Kinmonth's *Die Gezeichneten* at Oper Köln undertakes a radical departure from the opera's original narrative. The production in July 2017 took place in the Staatenhaus am Rheinpark, the company's then-temporary venue, which is located within a large exhibition complex on the outskirts of the city. The site consists of a large, empty hall, one corner of which had been sectioned off with black curtains in an attempt to form something resembling a typical performance space. The stage is on the same level as the first

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[12] Calixto Bieito, 'Ein Gebirge aus Angst und Scham: Regisseur Calixto Bieito Im Gespräch Über Schmerzen Tabus Und Künstliche Welten,' production programme, *Die Gezeichneten*, Berlin: Komische Oper Berlin, 2018, 4–5 (all translations from this source are my own).
[13] C.G. Jung, *C.G. Jung, Dream Analysis: Notes on the Seminar Given in 1928-1930*, ed. William McGuire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). See also C.G. Jung, 'The Psychology of the Child Archetype,' in *Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 9 (Part 1): Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham and Gerhard Alder, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 151–81.
[14] Bieito, 'Ein Gebirge aus Angst und Scham,' 4.

few rows of spectators, and behind it is an elevated platform on which the orchestra is situated. With no curtain to be raised, the production's set is fully visible as the audience enter the performance space. With the starkness of the Staatenhaus already at odds with the sumptuous Elysium of Schreker's imagination, the contents of the stage only further emphasise the jarring departure from the opera's original setting. The set resembles a scrapyard, complete with a wrecked car and piles of tires and tools scattered across the floor. Metal railings have been fixed across the back and sides of the stage, and two elevated structures stand on either side – a control room on the right and a glass-panelled studio-cum-bedroom on the left. As the orchestra begins playing the opera's prelude, a tangible contrast is created between Schreker's luxuriant sound world and the bleakness of the scenography (itself a seeming extension of the Staatenhaus' austerity).

In addition to this relocation of the opera's plot, the production sees a refocussing of *Die Gezeichneten*'s narrative, resulting, once again, in the sidestepping of Alviano's disability. Instead, emphasis is placed on the 'jealousy that has made [Alviano] mad and the delusion that comes from it'.[15] In the libretto, Alviano's murderous actions towards the end of the opera cause his psychosis, but in this production, it is implied that the protagonist's mental state causes the ostracisation and stigmatisation to which he is subjected throughout, as well as the violent fates of Carlotta and Tamare. Kinmonth's take on the opera is described in a press release about the production from the director's public relations company:

> His filmic approach to Schreker's study of dysfunctional human relationships blends sixteenth-century Genoa with strong traces of modernity, directly inspired by paintings of Genoese nobles from the time of Rubens, the film noir of Alfred Hitchcock and contemporary Scandinavian television detective series.[16]

The influence of popular horror and crime drama on Kinmonth's creative vision is explicitly represented in the dramatisation of the prelude, as Marco Jentzsch, in the role of the central protagonist, descends from the control room in dirty blue overalls with a corpse in tow. After disposing of the body in the boot of the wrecked car, he enters the studio on the opposite side of the stage and slit the throat of the young woman inside. In these opening moments of the production, there is no trace of Schreker's Renaissance setting.

Towards the end of the prelude, the arrival of Tamare and his fellow noblemen, dressed in doublets and ruffs, provides a visual reminder of the original setting, an epoch only

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[15] Patrick Kinmonth, quoted in Valerie Barber Public Relations, 'Creative Direction,' press release, available at: www.vbpr.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Patrick-Kinmonth-Press-Release-FINAL1.pdf (accessed 03.02.2018).
[16] Ibid.

cited in this production through certain characters' costumes. These visual cues serve as a means through which to distinguish the 'real' world of the drama and the illusory world of Alviano's imagination. Throughout the production, fantasy is superimposed onto reality as the protagonist repeatedly closes his eyes as if suffering surreal, dreamlike delusions. During these episodes, masked female dancers in white, Renaissance gowns and men in historical black robes surround Alviano on the stage (figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. *Die Gezeichneten*, Oper Köln, 2017, available at: https://www.oper.koeln/de/programm/die-gezeichneten/2177 (accessed 09.05.2018).

These dreamlike passages permeate the gritty realism of the scrapyard, whilst certain details, such as the addition of Carlotta's contemporary cream raincoat to each female dancer's costume, serve as totems of reality. The dream perspective established in this opening scene leaves open to interpretation whether the murderous action of the prelude is the product of a hallucinatory fever dream, a matter of course for Kinmonth's Alviano or simply a foreshadowing of the opera's gruesome end. At the beginning of Act Three, the addition of yellow police tape to the set, along with the visibility of the corpses of Alviano's victims in the 'real' world within the production, reveal that the violent events of the prelude were in fact reality. Moreover, whereas in the libretto, Carlotta's death is a result of sexually aggravated exhaustion due to her weak heart, in this production, her throat is slit by Alviano, as foreshadowed in the opening moments of the performance.

For Kinmonth, *Die Gezeichneten* 'is about one man's descent into madness', and in this production, the protagonist's role is not that of a physically deformed and morally ambiguous

nobleman, but a psychologically impaired yet stereotypically depraved killer.[17] Alviano partly conforms to the stereotype of the 'Obsessive Avenger', a term coined by Martin F. Norden to describe 'a character (almost always an adult male) who in the name of revenge relentlessly pursues those he holds responsible for his disablement, some other moral-code violation, or both'.[18] Longmore's 'criminal' and 'monster' stock-characterisations are also called to mind.[19] However, the figurative correlation between morality and the body is undermined on stage by the absence of Alviano's physical 'abnormality'. Indeed, as in Berlin, the alterations made to aspects of narrative and characterisation include the omission of the visible aspect of the protagonist's disability. On the one hand, these productions therefore avoid the problematic practice of disability mimicry found in the TNSC and Oper Graz productions of *Der Zwerg*, which to an extent is also seen in the Bayerische Staatsoper production of *Die Gezeichneten*. On the other hand, the elimination of disability from the opera's plot can be understood as a further example of the way in which disability can be 'erased' in performance.[20] This raises the question, do the productions in Berlin and Cologne replicate the formulaic tendency to conflate disability with moral corruption, or is the omission of a 'performance' of physical disability a reassuring step in the right direction?

Disability Stereotypes Sustained

Alviano's homicidal behaviour and the pervasiveness of his 'delusions' throughout the performance in Cologne suggest that his character still functions within the conventional narrative framework of disability representation. The characterisation of the protagonist as a Hitchcockian villain suggests some understanding of and engagement with the use of disability as dramatic shorthand for internal depravity. In the Bayerische Staatsoper production in Munich, the portrayal of Alviano plays upon the ambiguities of his character found in the original libretto. By contrast, Kinmonth's protagonist is depicted as an explicitly monstrous figure who plays out his violent fantasies on the outskirts of society. In this sense, the radical narrative adjustment in the Oper Köln production manoeuvres the protagonist further into the purview of the disabled criminal stereotype. For Longmore, this particular stock character 'show[s] that disability deprives its victims of an essential part of their humanity, separates

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Martin F. Norden, 'The "Uncanny" Relationship of Evil and Disability in Film and Television,' in *The Changing Face of Evil in Film and Television* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 125.
[19] Paul K. Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People,' *Social Policy* 16, no. 1 (1985), 32–33. See also Chapter Two, 115.
[20] See Chapter Three, 159–63.

them from the community, and ultimately requires that they be put to death'.[21] Alviano's fate in the original libretto partially aligns him with the 'kill or cure' paradigm, but in this production – given that his madness has been stretched to fill the entire drama – his tragic fate is secured not by insanity, but by suicide. His death is therefore more in keeping with the dramatic tendency of characters pertaining to the 'criminal' or 'monstrous' categories of disability representation to meet a violent end. The production also reads as an extended dramatisation of what Longmore terms the 'spread effect', in that, from the very opening vignette, the 'spoiling' effects of abnormality on wider society are documented through Alviano's killings.

The characterisation of the protagonist as a psychologically impaired murderer (as opposed to the morally ambiguous character of Schreker's imagining) raises additional questions about the representation of mental illness in the production, particularly as an extension of the genres that influenced it. Russell D. Covey describes the move away from the depiction of 'mad criminals as physically grotesque monsters' in Hollywood over the course of the twentieth century alongside the waning popularity of biological theories of criminology in favour of psychological and psychiatric explorations.[22] Psychological film noir is saturated with depictions of mental illness and violent crime, as volatile protagonists grapple with emotional demons, psychological disorders and homicidal urges. As Covey suggests, however, the murderous antagonists of the 1960s were no longer the physically monstrous villains of the silver screen, such as those featured in the montage during the production of *Die Gezeichneten* in Munich. Instead, Hitchcockian protagonists such as Norman Bates (*Psycho*, 1960) represented psychologists' rejection of the idea that criminality is manifested in the body.[23] Anthony Carlton Cooke outlines the emergence of the 'slasher movie', a horror subgenre featuring murderous, mentally ill and predominantly male antagonists following the release of *Psycho*.[24] 'These types of suspense films', he writes, 'have assumed a high degree of cultural resonance due to continuing popular moral panics linking mental illness with violent criminality'.[25] The version of Alviano presented in this production of *Die Gezeichneten* is aligned him with stock characters whose prevalence in popular culture shores up negative stereotypes of mental illnesses and personality disorders, particularly psychopathy.

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[21] Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People in Television and Motion Pictures,' in *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 138.
[22] Russell D Covey, 'Criminal Madness: Cultural Iconography and Insanity,' *Stanford Law Review* 61, no. 6 (2009): 1401.
[23] Ibid., 1404.
[24] Anthony Carlton Cooke, *Moral Panics, Mental Illness Stigma, and the Deinstitutionalization Movement in American Popular Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 53–54.
[25] Ibid., 54.

Cary Federman et al. argue that the 'historically ill-defined concept' of the psychopath and its representation in cultural productions (often in the form of the archetypal 'psycho-killer') 'is capable of characterizing anyone who deviates from the norm as dangerous to persons and to society'.[26] This calls to mind Rosemarie Garland Thomson's analogous suggestion that the convergence of disabled bodies and damaged, dangerous personalities 'exemplifies culture's preoccupation with the threat of the different body'.[27] Norden also touches upon the tendency to oversimplify disability in cultural productions as he proposes that the 'Obsessive Avenger' archetype 'reinforces mainstream society's most deeply entrenched negative beliefs about disabled people'.[28] In the previous chapter, I touched upon the cycle of representation, which is a consequence of the oversimplification of disability in both real-world understandings and fictional representation. The cycle is fuelled by the dilution of disability to a series of stock characteristics and narrative archetypes, the familiar hallmarks of which are certainly borne by Kinmonth's Alviano. From both a film and disability studies perspective, then, in drawing upon the film noir of Hitchcock, the production perpetuates negative connotations of mental illness as a dangerous problem within society. At the same time, it participates in the familiar practice of converging disability and morality. In this sense, the Oper Köln production exemplifies the way in which, even when attempts to embody disability in performance are avoided, productions can still shore up negative disability stereotypes.

Many of the stereotypes perpetuated by the cycle of disability representation also rear their head in the Berlin production, despite the absence of the protagonist's visible impairment. Where Kinmonth's *Die Gezeichneten* sees the archetypal conflation of disability and moral depravity, for example, Bieito's production draws upon common stereotypes regarding disability and sexuality, some of which I outlined in Chapter Two.[29] The protagonist's paedophilic desires align him with established paradigms of negative disability representation, particularly with regards to the depiction of disabled characters as either sexually lacking or excessive. However, just as existing scholarship has pointed to the ubiquity of such cursory tropes in disability narratives, so too has disabled peoples' sexuality been perceived in the real world as veering between asexuality and hypersexuality.[30] Ideas about disabled peoples'

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[26] Cary Federman, Dave Holmes and Jean Daniel Jacob, 'Deconstructing the Psychopath: A Critical Discursive Analysis,' *Cultural Critique*, no. 72 (2009): 37.
[27] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Disability in American Culture and Literature* (1996; repr. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 36.
[28] Norden, 'The "Uncanny" Relationship of Evil and Disability in Film and Television,' 126.
[29] Chapter Two, 118–22.
[30] See Hilary Brown, '"An Ordinary Sexual Life?": A Review of the Normalisation Principle as It Applies to the Sexual Options of People with Learning Disabilities,' *Disability & Society* 9, no. 2 (1994): 123–44; Alison

sexuality thus serve as a useful example of the process of oversimplification and the associated cycle of representation, with binary perceptions of excess/deviance and absence/innocence being prevalent in both public perception and narrative representation.

In her book *The Intimate Lives of Disabled People*, Kirsty Liddiard argues that people with disabilities are often 'positioned largely as asexual' and 'assumed to lack the capabilities and capacity to embody sexuality, sensuality, expression and desire'.[31] Elsewhere, the sexual activities of disabled people have been described in terms of deviance or malignance and as inciting shame.[32] Alison Kafer suggests that there has long existed 'an excited discourse around disabled people's sexuality as inherently kinky, bizarre and exotic'.[33] The interpretation of disability in the Berlin production saw Alviano placed at the intersection of these preconceptions. The paedophilic desires associated with the protagonist's Peter Pan Syndrome point to the stereotypes of disabled peoples' sexuality as deviant and often sinister, but at the same time, Bieito's own description of Alviano as 'afraid of the world and the sexuality of adults' is reminiscent of the kind of public thinking outlined by Liddiard.[34] Indeed, the protagonist's reluctance to act upon his sexual urges in this production may distance him from the perceived 'lack of control' often associated with the sexuality of disabled people. Antithetically, the protagonist's striking of his crotch and beating of his head as he represses his urges aligns him with public perceptions of people (particularly men) with intellectual disabilities as lacking the capacity and capability to safely process sexual desire.[35] Moreover, as the physical indicator of his desires, Alviano's self-harming behaviours reinforce the oft-drawn connection between physical pain and moral degeneracy.[36]

Whilst the physical component of Alviano's disability was excluded in both productions, its figurative significance is emphasised almost beyond recognition. In Berlin, the reliance on the theme of paedophilia only reinforces the stereotypical tendency for disabled peoples' sexuality to be considered in terms of tragic deficiency or freakish excess. However, as I argued in the previous chapter, opera productions have the ability to use disability stereotypes to articulate a more nuanced reading of a work and its central themes, and,

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Kafer, 'Compulsory Bodies: Reflections on Heterosexuality and Able-Bodiedness,' *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 3 (2003): 77–89; Kirsty Liddiard, *The Intimate Lives of Disabled People* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), 1–14.

[31] Liddiard, *The Intimate Lives of Disabled People*, 1, 5.

[32] See Tobin Siebers, 'Sex, Shame, and Disability Identity With Reference to Mark O'Brien,' in *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 157–75.

[33] Kafer, 'Compulsory Bodies,' 85.

[34] Bieito, 'Ein Gebirge aus Angst und Scham,' 4–5.

[35] See Liddiard, *The Intimate Lives of Disabled People*, 2; Paul Cambridge and Bryan Mellan, 'Reconstructing the Sexuality of Men with Learning Disabilities: Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Interpretations of Need,' *Disability & Society* 15, no. 2 (2000): 293–311.

[36] See Leigh Dale, *Responses to Self Harm: An Historical Analysis of Medical, Religious, Military and Psychological Perspectives* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2015), 79–80.

paradoxically, the radical reinterpretation of the protagonist's disability in Bieito's production negates certain stereotypes altogether.

Disability Stereotypes Unsettled

Despite Alviano's clearly implied paedophilic desires, the sense of moral ambiguity attached to the protagonist in the opera's libretto is underscored, if not heightened, by his distancing from the implicitly degenerate 'eight'. Throughout the production, the protagonist is set apart from Tamare and the other noblemen both physically (on stage) and by his refusal to participate in their deeply troubling activities on the island. In the first scene, the bruised face of a young girl is projected in conjunction with Guidobald's accusation 'what you created you shun!' (figure 5.2). This moment partially exonerates Alviano, since, as in the original libretto, Guidobald's words refer to the protagonist's condemnation of the noblemen's misuse of Elysium for sexually predatory ends. Here, it was revealed that, although Alviano's urges are clear, he does not act upon them. Bieito explains that 'Alviano is stuck in a cycle and wants to break out of it'.[37] This cycle is denoted by the use of circular symbols throughout the production. Images of a spinning Ferris wheel and the entrance of a rollercoaster ride shaped like the rounded, open mouth of a dragon are embedded in videos projected across the walls of the set. This imagery is materialised on stage in Act Three, when Elysium itself is revealed to be a kind of theme park. Through it, a train carrying the noblemen's child victims rotates repeatedly across the stage. Up until the moment in which Elysium is revealed, however, there is a relative lack of action on stage. In an interview with Barbara Beyer, Bieito said that '[t]he stage establishes the context in which I convey something. I do not like decorations; my stages are more like installations […] I also try to highlight political and philosophical aspects of the works, to move closer, as it were, to the essence of human existence'.[38] All superfluous action is evacuated from this production, and instead, focus is placed on the subconscious minds of Schreker's *gezeichnete* characters.

The stark set (designed by Rebecca Ringst) is used as a canvas for Sarah Derendinger's video projections, which can be understood as psychoanalytic projections of the minds of the abusers. Moreover, in conjunction with the contents of Schreker's libretto, the projections serve as a means through which to displace certain disability stereotypes. In the first scene, the faces of dishevelled girls and boys provide a backdrop for the noblemen's boastful dialogue

[37] Bieito, 'Ein Gebirge aus Angst und Scham,' 6.
[38] Calixto Bieito, quoted in Barbara Beyer, Gundula Kreuzer and Paul Chaikin, 'Interviews with Contemporary Opera Directors, Selected from Barbara Beyer's Warum Oper? Gespräche Mit Opernregisseuren (2005),' *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2011): 317.

about their illicit actions on the island. Here, their expressions of admiration for Elysium – where '[a]ll fairy-tales come to life!' and '[w]hat no one admits, and each of them longs for suddenly becomes a reality!' – take on a profoundly sinister new significance.

Figure 5.2. *Die Gezeichneten,* Komische Oper Berlin. Photograph by Holger Jacobs. © kultur24.berlin/Holger Jacobs.

At the beginning of Act Two, the children's faces are replaced by those of the noblemen themselves. Some bare-chested, others with sweat beading their brow, they stare directly into the camera as they thrust back and forth, enacting physical domination over their victims, who, it is implied, are the children featured in the previous projections. The images of both the perpetrators and the victims are mobile but have been slowed down so as to prolong every grimace, magnify every tear or drop of sweat and intensify every leer. The stereotype of hypersexuality that is frequently attached to disabled people is, in this moment, relocated onto the able-bodied noblemen, whose sexual desires are revealed to be not only dangerous, but also acted upon. Here, an ominous sense of envelopment is created by the extension of the projections onto the ceiling and outer panels of the set and, moreover, the distortion of the images by the edges of the walls create the impression that the noblemen themselves are facially disfigured (figure 5.3). As such, they, rather than Alviano, are aesthetically brought into line with the conventions of the 'monstrous' disabled villain.

Figure 5.3. *Die Gezeichneten,* Komische Oper Berlin. Photograph by Holger Jacobs. © kultur24.berlin/Holger Jacobs.

The noblemen's role in the abuse of the children on the island is further emphasised at the beginning of Act Three. As the action of the drama centres on Elysium itself (the site of the sexual abuse ring), the video projections of the noblemen are colourised and their violent and overtly sexual facial expressions are now arresting in their intensity.

Notions of sexuality, abuse and psychological distress are also suggested by the depiction of Carlotta, who is symbolically linked with the young boy who served as the object of Alviano's paedophilic desires. During the opera's prelude, the on-stage positioning of Carlotta and the boy provides a visual representation of the parallels between them. At the beginning of Act Two, Carlotta reappears dressed in oversized clothes, perhaps a take on an artist's overall. During this scene, her 'portrait' of Alviano consists of her hacking at and carving a hole into the panelled wall, onto which the symbolically loaded image of the Ferris wheel is projected. At the climax of this scene, as she and Alviano declare their love for one another, she removes her overall to reveal a child's school uniform identical to that of the dishevelled boy. In a dramatisation of the protagonist's 'violent desperate passion', as described in Schreker's stage directions, she and Alviano punch and kick the wall until the hole is large enough for them to see through. This moment also serves as a novel take on Carlotta's portrait, in which Alviano is offered an optimistic, symbolic vision of a life free from the cycle of destruction and abuse on the island. Indeed, by destroying the wall and distorting the image of the wheel, Carlotta's artistic creation symbolises the destruction of artistic and psychological boundaries, thereby further distancing Alviano from the moral ills of the noblemen and of stereotypical disability representation.

The protagonist's moral ambiguity is further emphasised in this production as a result of certain alterations to the opera's plot. In Chapter Three, I outlined the ways in which Alviano's murderous actions towards the end of the opera constitute an example of the

stereotypical 'violent loss of self-control' that fortifies the conceptual relationship between disability and danger.[39] In the Berlin production, however, it is not Alviano who kills Tamare, but Carlotta, who strangles him in a vengeful rage. With the colourful lights replaced by stark, white strobes and the smoke dissipated, the sinister magic of Elysium is stripped bare. Carlotta's 'revenge' is a particularly pertinent moment, for which the production is deserving of the praise of one critic who described Bieito's setting as 'a mature and deeply effective piece of theatre'.[40] Moreover, this moment facilitates Alviano's circumvention of another disability stereotype – that of the 'spread effect' – and instead, emphasises his moral ambiguity.

Identification and Alienation

In Chapter Three, I referred to Alexandra Wilson's suggestion that the transplantation of a work's dramatic action from one era to another can facilitate engagement with and even critical commentary on the respectively updated historical setting.[41] All three of the productions featured in Chapters Three and Four transplant the dramatic action of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* into deliberately ambiguous historical and geographic settings, at the same time constructing visual and cultural references to the era in which the works were composed. These productions serve as interesting examples of what Christopher Morris has described as the tendency of contemporary opera productions to

> …consciously alienate opera from its own imagined past, not only by destabilizing its traditional features (for example, the Aristotelian order and unity of drama) but by thematicizing history itself (for example, by juxtaposing multiple histories within the supposedly unified historical setting of a given text).[42]

In Graz, Lisbon and Munich, rather than acting as a form of reception of a particular era, the transplantation of the operas' narratives into what might be described as a timeless realm underscores the continuing appeal of the works' central themes of outsider identity. By contrast, the productions at Oper Köln and the Komische Oper Berlin bring *Die Gezeichneten* quite unambiguously into the present, and therefore serve as more pertinent examples of the capacity for reception described by Wilson.

In Kinmonth's production, the scrapyard backdrop – coupled with the inclusion of yellow police tape, a modern vehicle and contemporary costumes – suggests an historical

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[39] Longmore, 'Screening Stereotypes,' 33.
[40] 'What Lies Beyond: Die Gezeichneten at the Komische Oper, Berlin,' operatraveller, 2018, available at: https://operatraveller.com/2018/01/21/what-lies-beyond-die-gezeichneten-at-the-komische-oper-berlin/ (accessed 22.01.2018).
[41] Alexandra Wilson, 'Golden-Age Thinking: Updated Stagings of "Gianni Schicchi" and the Popular Historical Imagination,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 25, no. 2 (2013): 189.
[42] Christopher Morris, *Modernism and the Cult of Mountains: Music, Opera, Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2012), 38–39.

immediacy that is also reflected spatially by the lack of distance between the stalls and the stage, thus incorporating the spectators into the 'here and now' of the opera's events. The director explains his desire to keep parts of the action in sixteenth-century Genoa, as the libretto suggests, but rationalises the decision to 'create this world inside [Alviano's] head' as an attempt to give the story a 'deeper dramatic tension'.[43] The amalgamation of the Renaissance setting with aspects of contemporary psychological crime drama, do not, however, translate smoothly to the stage. In Act Two, Tamare and Adorno enter the stage wearing their Renaissance 'dream world' costumes, despite the topic of their conversation (and the remainder of the scene) being grounded in reality. In Act Three, any effort to merge the narrative strands seems to have been abandoned altogether, as the arrival of the Genoese public complicates the production's dramaturgy beyond reconciliation. Here, the altered narrative of the opera demands the collision of Alviano's fantasies with reality, but given the deviation from the original text, this is contradicted by the words of the public, who react to the enigmatic beauty of Elysium (as in Schreker's libretto).

It is useful to turn here to Nicholas Lehnhoff's production of *Die Gezeichneten* for the 2005 Salzburg Festival, and specifically Peter Franklin's assessment of that production.[44] Lehnhoff reimagined the events of the opera through the recharacterisation of the protagonist as a cross-dresser and the amplification of the illicit activities of Elysium into paedophilia and homicide. Franklin's evaluation is interesting in that he does not condemn Lehnhoff's production for its lack of fidelity to Schreker's original text in terms of its anachronism or inauthentic set and costume design.[45] Rather, he opposes the substantial cuts to the score which actually resulted in a reconfiguration of the opera's central themes, thereby constituting what he describes as 'a kind of murder' of Schreker's original.[46] Franklin suggests that Lehnhoff's take on the opera might be described as 'more a "version" than a "production"', thereby implying that the Salzburg *Die Gezeichneten* failed to fulfil the intended creative vision of the composer.[47] As an example, Franklin points to Lehnhoff's deletion of the opening section of Act Three, where the composer uses Elysium to articulate his commentary on 'art as cultural capital, viewed very much against the aesthetic grain by the very citizens of Genoa to whom Alviano has donated it'.[48] Despite resisting such cuts, Kinmonth's production at Oper Köln shares certain similarities with Lehnhoff's 2005 *Die Gezeichneten*, not least in the fact that it plays upon stock character tropes at the expense of some of the opera's complexities of

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[43] Valerie Barber Public Relations, 'Creative Direction'.
[44] Peter Franklin, 'Die Gezeichneten (Review),' *The Opera Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2007): 486–95.
[45] Ibid., 487–89.
[46] Ibid., 487.
[47] Ibid., 487–88.
[48] Ibid., 490.

theme, character and plot. Franklin sees the condensed focus on the love-triangle between Carlotta, Alviano and Tamare in Lehnhoff's production as a means through which the director could advertise the opera's 'modernity' (referring here to *Die Gezeichneten*'s appeal to a contemporary audience).

Inspired by the hyperbole of the horror genre, Kinmonth's directorial vision similarly promotes a sensational reading of the opera in order to pique the interests of contemporary spectators. According to the director, one of the aims of the Oper Köln production is for 'audiences to understand exactly what is happening onstage and why it is happening and this comes from a deep analysis of the text'.[49] The comprehensive textual analysis required of a 'strong' reading according to Levin is implicit in Kinmonth's statement, yet, if the production is informed by a deep engagement with Schreker's opera text and its various subtexts, this is not apparent in the production. For example, Michael Davidson observes that, with regards to literature, 'modernist writers tended to treat mental disability as pathological counterpart to cultural decay'.[50] In this light, the fact that Kinmonth's protagonist finds his home in a junkyard – a site of disorder and decay – perhaps speaks to the connection drawn between mental illness and social disorder in many modernist narratives. If this is the director's intention, however, this is discernible neither on stage nor in the production's programme. Elsewhere, the production's reading of the protagonist's disability as psychopathy presented an opportunity to engage with contemporary misconceptions of mental illness.[51] This opportunity is missed, however, as significantly, Kinmonth's engagement with mental illness and its accompanying stereotypes does not extend beyond perpetuation and into critical reflection. By contrast, in the Bayerische Staatsoper production of the opera, the visual tropes of the early horror genre are used to suggest the ambiguities of Alviano's character as well as the reception of his impairment within the world of the drama and by the opera's audience. Alviano's character is read and represented within the context of the long-standing cinematic enfreakment of physical disability, and 'represented' is a crucial term here, as in-depth critical engagement with this framework is clearly reflected on the stage and in the production's programme. This raises an interesting point. Although the production's creative team includes the company's resident dramaturg, neither the performance nor its accompanying materials bear much evidence of dramaturgical engagement with the opera text.

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[49] Valerie Barber Public Relations, 'Creative Direction'.
[50] Michael Davidson, 'Paralyzed Modernities and Biofutures: Bodies and Minds in Modern Literature,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Disability*, ed. Clare Barker and Stuart Murray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 77.
[51] David J Levin, 'Reading a Staging/Staging a Reading,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9, no. 1 (1997): 69.

Director Michael Hampe discusses the reinterpretation of opera for the contemporary stage in his practical handbook *The Crafty Art of Opera*:

> Given such a dizzying number of perspectives it is natural that a broad spectrum of interpretations will be possible. The decisive criterion is whether the result makes sense – and whether that sense is properly communicated and comprehensible. […] Without it, the audience can't 'participate' in the events on stage. For an audience has two fundamental possibilities: identification or alienation.[52]

Arguably, the two 'fundamental principles' to which Hampe refers are respectively represented at the Komische Oper Berlin and Oper Köln. As such, these productions can be said to exemplify the opportunities and obstacles of operatic *Regietheater*. With regards to the Cologne production, is difficult to reconcile the production's interpretative potential with the director's convoluted retelling of the opera. Given the substantial re-characterisation of the central protagonist and the associated alterations to aspects of the opera's narrative, this production constitutes something of a retelling of Schreker's original tale, and perhaps even comprises another 'murdered' version of the opera.

Bieito's production at the Komische Oper Berlin might also be considered to fall into this category. The director is noted for his radical interpretations of canonical works, which often delve into the darkest recesses of sexual taboos.[53] His sadomasochistic take on Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, for example, has been given particular attention for its uncurbed sexual violence and what some critics view as its needless bloodiness.[54] This production of *Die Gezeichneten* is no exception to the director's oeuvre, particularly given its uneasy grappling with what, for Bieito, might be described as the last taboo of erotic desire. Here, Elysium is transformed into a dark underworld of corruption, and the references to child sexual abuse are palpably represented by aspects of mise-en-scène. Whereas some critics might condemn the director's provocative interpretation of works not necessarily acknowledged for their 'dark' or otherwise controversial subject matter, for others, this is part of his appeal. Sarah Wright, for example, praises the fact that Bieito is concerned with 'troubling or disquieting those works which canonisation over time has ossified'.[55] Schreker's fall to obscurity under allegations of 'degeneracy' arguably stood in the way of the canonisation and associated stagnation of *Die Gezeichneten*, and moreover, in terms of its content, the libretto already treads a decidedly

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[52] Michael Hampe, *The Crafty Art of Opera: For Those Who Make It, Love It Or Hate It* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2016), 112–13.
[53] See Delgado, 'Calixto Bieito'.
[54] See Heather Mac Donald, 'The Abduction of Opera,' City Journal, 2007, available at: https://www.city-journal.org/html/abduction-opera-13034.html (accessed 22.02.2018); Michael P Steinberg, 'A Season in Berlin, Or, Operatic Responsibility,' *New German Critique*, no. 95 (2005): 60–61.
[55] Wright, 'Consuming Passions,' 333.

difficult path. Despite the director's comments featured in the programme, where he asserts 'I have not changed anything', in this production, the opera is subjected to Bieito's procedural unsettling.[56]

Unsurprisingly, Bieito's production divides critical opinion. The director's provocative reading is called into question by one reviewer who suggests that the director has taken the libretto 'too literally' by interpreting the kidnapped daughters of Genoa as young children.[57] A particularly interesting strand of criticism emerges in a number of reviews that imply that Bieito has taken liberties with Schreker's work. One reviewer reports emerging from the performance 'not sure how well Schreker comes out of it all', and another cites the production's 'willingness to introduce extra layers of moral ambiguity', placing it 'at odds with Schreker's dramatic design'.[58] Yet, the director has insisted that he has 'never tried to horrify or shock', stressing, instead, his efforts to preserve the original intentions of composers and librettists.[59] If, as Áine Sheil has suggested, '21st-century opera directors are as likely as ever to trace their authority to the intentions of dead composers', then Bieito is certainly no exception.[60] In an interview for *The Independent* regarding his production of Verdi's *The Force of Destiny* for the English National Opera in 2015, he said: 'I feel privileged to express myself with the music of a fantastic composer and with the text of a wonderful writer'.[61] His words reveal the extent to which he views opera production as a platform for self-expression, despite frequently maintaining that his interpretations are loyal to the visions of composers. In his take on *Die Gezeichneten*, Bieito's new focus certainly complicates aspects of Schreker's already elusive action, in some instances completely overhauling the characterisation of the central protagonists. Nevertheless, it is difficult to overlook the fact that Schreker's work is saturated with ambiguities, and in many ways, this production succeeds in untangling some of the complex themes at the heart of the opera.

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[56] Bieito, 'Ein Gebirge aus Angst und Scham,' 4.
[57] 'Berlin, Komische Oper: DIE GEZEICHNETEN, 21.01.2018,' *Opera Aktuell*, 2018, available at: https://www.oper-aktuell.info/kritiken/details/artikel/berlin-komische-oper-die-gezeichneten-21012018.html (accessed 25.02.2018).
[58] Hugo Shirley, 'Toy Story: Calixto Bieito Stages Die Gezeichneten at the Komische Oper,' *Bachtrack*, 2018, available at: https://bachtrack.com/review-schreker-gezeichneten-bieito-hoare-stundyte-komische-oper-berlin-january-2018 (accessed 24.02.2018); Jesse Simon, 'The Secret Shame,' 2018, available at: https://www.mundoclasico.com/articulo/30566/The-Secret-Shame (accessed 25.02.2018).
[59] Jessica Duchen, 'Calixto Bieito Interview: Opera Director on the Inspiration behind His Bloody New Take on Verdi's "The Force of Destiny"' *Independent*, 8 November, 2015, available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/classical/features/calixto-bieito-opera-director-on-the-inspiration-behind-his-bloody-new-take-on-verdis-the-force-of-a6726426.html (accessed 19.02.2018).
[60] Áine Sheil, 'The Opera Director's Voice: DVD "Extras" and the Question of Authority,' in *Opera and Video : Technology and Spectatorship*, ed. Héctor J. Pérez (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), 130.
[61] Duchen, 'Calixto Bieito Interview'.

Derendinger's videography points to the illicit actions taking place on Alviano's Elysium and also serves as a window into the subconscious minds of Schreker's characters. In Bieito's understanding of the opera, '[t]he characters are all damaged; the whole society, from the duke to the nobility to the citizens, is imbued with double standards'.[62] The double standards to which Bieito refers are bound up in each character's connection to the abuse ring on Elysium, and nowhere are they more evident than in the representation of Carlotta. Upon entering with the Podestà in Act One, her characterisation is in keeping with that of the stereotypical *femme fatale*. Dressed in a black dress with high-heeled boots and a pink fur jacket, she approaches each of the noblemen in turn, caressing their faces and gazing into their eyes while making unusual thrusting movements with her face and body. When she reaches Tamare, she stands directly behind him, wrapping his tie around his neck and pulling his arm tightly behind his back to restrain him. As he struggles to escape, Carlotta kisses his neck, forcing her hand into his trousers in order to sexually stimulate him before pushing him aside. The *femme fatale* trope is played out to the point of near caricature in the final act. Here, Carlotta returns to the stage wearing a black negligée and a long red wig, and, in a particularly camp moment, she simulates sex with a giant green teddy bear. However, it is also implied that Carlotta, too, is a victim of sexual abuse. As previously noted, she is symbolically linked throughout the production with the young boy who serves as the object of Alviano's paedophilic desires, and during the opera's prelude, the on-stage placement of her and the boy provides a visual representation of the parallels between them. Following Having been confronted with child abuse in Act One, the presentation of the abusive and incestuous relationship between Carlotta and her father, the Podestà, suggests the ubiquity of sexual violence and abuse and their entrenchment in society. In Act Two, Carlotta approaches the Podestà, who grabs and strokes her head before pulling her into a passionate kiss. He then pushes her to the ground, where she desperately grasps at his thighs and crotch from a kneeling position at his feet, before being dragged from the stage.

Bieito briefly alludes to the pervasiveness of organised child abuse in both families and larger organisations in his comments for the programme, and despite insisting that his production was in no way politicised, the implication of a degenerate society is writ large on both page and stage.[63] The use of popular cultural references in Act Three serves as a stark reminder of the reality of child abuse in contemporary society. Here, as the white panelling gives way, Alviano's paradise garden is revealed to be a theme park. The inclusion of life-sized figurines of popular children's characters, such as Batman, serve as a metaphor 'to help people

[62] Bieito, 'Ein Gebirge aus Angst und Scham,' 7.
[63] Ibid., 5.

to understand what is at stake'.[64] On the remaining walls, phrases not found in the libretto, such as '*Ich musste mich hinknien*' ('I had to kneel down') and '*Ich fühle nichts*' ('I feel nothing') are projected onto images of the children's faces (figure 5.4.) The baleful immediacy of Bieito's setting is also suggested by the costumes of the plutocratic noblemen, which comprise contemporary suits and military uniforms.

Figure 5.4. *Die Gezeichneten,* Komische Oper Berlin. Photograph by Holger Jacobs. © kultur24.berlin/Holger Jacobs.

With Alviano's physical appearance at odds with the constructions of aesthetic convention, the island of Elysium can be interpreted in the original libretto as a projection of his desire to possess (or make prey of) aesthetic beauty and a loaded attempt to fulfil his yearning. In this production, the island functions as a lure for the noblemen's young victims and an elaborate representation of the protagonist's Peter-Pan complex.[65] Nevertheless, the protagonist is established as a damaged but morally ambiguous figure in an unambiguously iniquitous world

[64] Ibid., 6.
[65] Interestingly, several reviewers drew a comparison with Michael Jackson's 'Neverland Ranch'. See Volker Blech, "'Tatort Kinderspielplatz'" *Berliner Morgenpost*, 22 January, 2018, available at: https://www.morgenpost.de/kultur/article213193651/Tatort-Kinderspielplatz.html (accessed 25.02.2018); Peter Jungblut, 'Kritik – Schrekers "Die Gezeichneten" in Berlin: Teuflischer Garten Der Lüste,' 22 January, 2018, available at: https://www.br-klassik.de/aktuell/news-kritik/franz-schreker-die-gezeichneten-calixto-bieito-michael-nagy-komische-oper-berlin-kritik-100.html (accessed 25.02.2018).

of corruption and vice: placing this version of Alviano alongside the morally reprehensible noblemen garners understanding, if not sympathy, for Bieito's Peter-Pan protagonist.

Where the opera in its original form can be read as an ironic commentary on fin-de-siècle Vienna, Bieito's interpretation plays out as a diagnosis of individual degeneracy.[66] At the same time, however, certain associations are established between individual and societal neurosis, as the production seemingly updates Schreker's allusion to a 'degenerate' society for a contemporary audience. Hans-Thies Lehmann and Patrick Primavesi write that, in the Regietheater tradition, 'it has been an important task of the dramaturg to raise the political consciousness of the production team as well as of the spectators'.[67] Like that of the Munich production, the Cologne programme booklet exemplifies the assemblage of 'valuable explanatory and background material' that German audiences have come to expect.[68] In his essay, the production's dramaturg, Simon Berger outlines the social, political and economic vicissitudes that characterised Schreker's Vienna.[69] At this time, despite demands for the management of prostitution in the city, the average prostitute was between fourteen and sixteen years of age, and many clients opted for even younger girls as a precaution against rampant syphilis infections.[70] 'In this way', he writes, 'the Vienna of those decades became a thriving center for violating norms – from cultivated affairs to international girl trafficking'.[71] Here, the work of the dramaturg clearly ties the opera's historical, cultural backdrop to the interpretative context of the production. By contrast, despite evidencing a degree of awareness of the opera's literary and cultural origins through the inclusion of extracts from Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* and Schreker's correspondence with Paul Bekker, Oper Köln's considerably less substantial programme booklet contained no clear contribution from the production's dramaturg. The politicisation of Bieito's production indicates its success in terms of its dramaturgical engagement with the socio-historical and political contexts of the work. More importantly, the *communication* of this critical engagement with the production's audience enables the outcome of the production to be one of identification as opposed to alienation.

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[66] See Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 65–66.
[67] Hans-Thies Lehmann and Patrick Primavesi, 'Dramaturgy on Shifting Grounds,' *Performance Research* 14, no.3 (2009), 5.
[68] Martin Esslin, 'The Role of the Dramaturg in the European Theater', in *What Is Dramaturgy?*, ed. Bert Cardullo (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 46.
[69] Simon Berger, 'Der Stoff, aus dem die Träume sind Der Komponist Franz Schreker in Anbruch der Moderne', in production programme, *Die Gezeichneten*, Komische Oper Berlin, 2018, 10-21.
[70] Ibid., 11.
[71] Ibid.

Conclusion

I concluded Chapter Four by arguing that the attempts to physically 'perform' disability in the Bayerische Staatsoper, TNSC and Oper Graz productions of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* destabilises the roles of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's protagonists as emblems of outsider identity. Nuanced interpretation is evidenced in these productions not by the use of disability mimicry, but in moments which demonstrate critical awareness by using disability tropes analytically and self-referentially. It may follow, then, that *Die Gezeichneten* has much to gain from radical interpretations that altogether remove disability from the opera's narrative. Schreker's opera has undertaken a series of transformations in the contemporary productions discussed in this thesis, nowhere more so than in the stagings of Kinmonth and Bieito. The interpretative liberties taken by both directors in their respective productions results in two particularly pertinent examples of contemporary *Regietheater*. In 'sidestepping' Alviano's physical impairment, these productions take the composer's metaphorisation of disability at face value, avoiding any attempt to convey disability on stage, but nevertheless maintaining the narrative symbolism of the impaired other. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, the narrative readjustments made by Bieito and Kinmonth have critically different outcomes. I stressed in the introduction to this thesis that the content of an opera production often reflects the highly subjective interpretative vision of a director, and whilst Levin's approach in *Unsettling Opera* begins to offer a useful methodology from which to unpick such an interpretative framework, he stresses that 'reading a staging' is an equally subjective process.[72] Perhaps the most crucial guidance that Levin bestows upon his readers is that both reading and staging should illuminate critical engagement with the dramaturgy of the text.[73]

Even in light of contemporary cultural and textural theory, however, Kinmonth's production bears little evidence of such engagement. Instead, the overlapping narrative threads of the 'dream' world and the 'real' world contradict one another and generate confusion throughout, arguably dispossessing the opera of much of its nuance. This lack of nuance is also evident in the interpretation of the protagonist's impairment. Where Bieito's production draws upon common stereotypes regarding disability and sexuality, Kinmonth's *Die Gezeichneten* sees the familiar conflation of disability and moral depravity. Here, the director fortifies negative disability stereotypes by interpreting the physically impaired Alviano as a tired 'psycho-killer' caricature. From the perspectives of both film and disability studies, Kinmonth's incorporation of such tropes does little more than provide Schreker's opera text with a sensational 'up-to-

[72] Introduction 42–47.
[73] Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 32–33, 35.

date' surface layer. In this sense, the production typifies what Barbara Beyer has described as 'contemporaneous sensibility', which 'has often (and by preference) been limited to a rather superficial updating'.[74]

By contrast, Bieito's interpretation only enhances the work's original role as a form of social commentary. With traces of our own society to be found in the costume and set design (in the form of modern military uniforms and life-sized pop culture figurines), the production bears the familiar hallmarks of a society where the sexual abuse of victims of all ages goes unnoticed and, often unpunished, when crimes are committed by those in the higher echelons of society. The director himself has stated that '[i]t is not our responsibility to stage these works as the authors originally intended […] Our job is to ask specific, important questions in such a way that they stimulate discussion'.[75] In this production, he comes close to achieving both. Of course, the production is not without its flaws: Bieito's relocation of this subtext does not negate the potentially damaging nature of disability stereotypes, but nevertheless, his contextual reconfiguration of both the opera's narrative and the disability stereotypes embedded therein only supports the production's position as an updated cultural commentary.

[74] Beyer, Kreuzer and Chaikin, 'Interviews with Contemporary Opera Directors,' 307–08.
[75] Ibid., 310.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have traced the colliding narratives of disability and degeneracy in Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* and Alexander Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* from source to stage. More specifically, my research has been concerned with the use and function of disabled bodies in these operas in light of the cultural preoccupation with the notion of degeneracy at the time in which they were composed. Not only did *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* emerge from a cultural context that saw the cultivation and celebration of aesthetic (bodily and artistic) norms, they are each emblematic of the way in which the concept of bodily degeneracy became entwined with perceptions of social sickness and ideas about 'unhealthy' cultural productions in the early-twentieth century. Communicated principally through the bodies of Alviano and the Dwarf, the historical discourse of degeneracy holds sway over the aesthetic and formal properties of music, theme and language in these operas, as well as the contemporary theatrical spaces they occupy. My research reveals the important role of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg,* not just in considering opera from a disability studies perspective, but as primary sources for both opera and disability studies and twentieth-century cultural studies. These operas reflect and have shaped a prevalent modernist fascination with the anomalous bodily form, and I have sought to foreground this body on alternative terms, showing how Alviano's and the Dwarf's physical 'abnormality' bridges and demarcates the space between the textual and embodied forms of disability, or, between source and stage.

Building on extant scholarship, I first charted the materialisation of discourses of degeneration around 1890 alongside the foundations of musical modernism. At this time, supposedly 'degenerate' characteristics were considered by some to be prevalent within artworks, literature and music which represented the antithesis of 'healthy' culture. For Max Nordau (himself a vital figure in the development of 'degeneration' as a critical discourse) the crucible of musical degeneracy was exemplified by the work of Richard Wagner (with whose musical and dramatic style Schreker and Zemlinsky were later associated). In his *Entartung*, Nordau charged Wagner's music with a degree of sickness and infectiousness, but in actual fact, it was this very rhetoric that appears to have been catching. The medical colouring of much cultural criticism between 1890 and 1940 can be attributed to the development of ideals regarding physical health and normality in degenerationist works that followed Nordau's and, as the tenets of degeneration theory filtered into German music criticism, many conservative critics relied increasingly upon metaphors of disease and disability to condemn works that failed to meet (invariably traditionalist) standards of musical 'health'.

In Chapters One and Two, I outlined the effect of this critical sea-change on the reception of Schreker and Zemlinsky, who faced condemnation not only as allegedly dangerous exponents of modernity, but as inheritors and imitators of degeneracy in light of early considerations of Wagner's work as a prototype of musical ill-health. Despite Wagner's later and somewhat contradictory veneration as a representative of cultural health, the post-Wagnerian musical and dramatic qualities of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's works would not stand them in good stead in certain corners of the early-twentieth-century critical landscape. Indeed, despite what scholars have now recognised as these composers' ambiguous relationship with modernism, *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* are bound up with the ideas and practices of the movement. Moreover, the very uncertainty of Schreker's and Zemlinsky's place in the new musical aesthetic of the early-twentieth century rendered them enduringly susceptible to condemnation as degenerate, despite the changing targets of degeneracy as a critical framework.

It is as a result of this vulnerability that *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* comprise aspects of cultural critique. The medical lexis of degeneration theory led to the development of a corporeal aesthetic in which the visual rhetoric of diseased and deformed bodies came to reflect the symptoms of degenerate society across the narrative arts. In light of the way in which bodies and artworks became interwoven within the cultural discourse of the time, in Chapter Two, I proposed the significance of the fact that much of what can be considered 'degenerate' in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* is associated with images of the degenerate body. Indeed, the emphasis on health and beauty at this time resulted in the emergence of new representational trends in the arts and, in opera, depictions of visible disability were increasingly favoured over the 'hidden' impairments that dominated stages throughout the previous centuries. Alviano and the Dwarf occupy a place in the visual index of modernism's complex relationship with the body as, alongside their superficially normative counterparts (the Infanta, Tamare and Carlotta), the disabled bodies of these protagonists reflect the tension between the abject bodies that appear in this period and the healthy and whole somatic forms that emerge in parallel.

As the ultimate manifestation of social decay, the disabled body was increasingly used in this manner, and a central thread throughout the arguments posed in this thesis has been that *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* exemplify the disabled body's endurance as the dramatic nexus of modernist engagements with the theme of outsider identity, operating as a symbolic site of uncertainty, anxiety and vulnerability. In reading the operas in question as forms of cultural commentary, I have also acknowledged the existence of what Tobin Siebers refers to as 'disability aesthetics', which took a more celebratory approach to depicting bodily difference

and saw the increasing displacement of intransigent notions of the 'norm' at the time in which the operas were composed. The use and function of disability in the narratives of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* reflects both affirmative and existentialist patterns of disability representation, revealing and underwriting the pluralistic cultural environment of the early-twentieth-century German-speaking realm. Schreker's penchant for erotic themes coincides with the composer's broader engagement with quintessentially decadent modernist subjects, which arguably comes to a head in *Die Gezeichneten* as the composer both engages with and critiques the notion of degeneracy, couching his self-reflective commentary in the words, deeds and physical form of the 'hunchbacked' Alviano. So too can the disabled body of Zemlinsky's Dwarf be understood as a symbolic foil to the opera's largely biographical narrative of ignorance, anagnorisis and the oppositional forces of normality and abnormality. My reading of these works is supported by both primary source material, such as Schreker's and Klaren's respective reflections on the creation of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, and by disability studies scholarship, where cultural representations of the anomalous bodily form have long been documented as symptoms of the tendency towards narrative prosthesis in the arts.

This process frequently sees the use of disability as a metaphor for personal upheaval. Therefore, in serving as symbolic substitutions for individual struggle against hegemonic socio-cultural norms, the significance of Alviano and the Dwarf is reduced to that of representational scapegoats. The allegorisation of disability in this way has shaped the development of a catalogue of disability stereotypes, and the various figurative positions assumed by disability in literature, the visual arts and theatre have informed much of the theoretical underpinning of this thesis. Further examining the role and function of the disabled protagonists in the operas' narratives through a disability studies lens has revealed that these operas incorporate archetypal models of disability representation and shore up negative stereotypes of disability identity. In Chapter Two, I assessed the extent to which the presentation of Alviano and the Dwarf in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* adheres to such models, considering the representation of the protagonists' sexuality as either tragically lacking or dangerously excessive, their stock characterisation within the narrow confines of victimhood/villainy and the mobilisation of the formulaic 'kill or cure' paradigm of narrative resolution.

Although partly in keeping with depictive paradigms that have been recognised in literature and the broader narrative arts, the ways in which the operas' narratives unsettle or disrupt certain stereotypes only bolsters their capacity for cultural critique. Alviano, for example, possesses distinctive traits of villainy and monstrosity, but whether or not his physical form serves as a token for inner malevolence (a representational trend with striking endurance) is open to interpretation. Instead, the notable ambiguity of Schreker's protagonist disrupts

understandings of the abject bodily form as a harbourer of depravity which were popularised alongside early-twentieth-century discourses of degeneracy and continue to hold sway over cultural representations of disability today. In *Der Zwerg*, a degree of aesthetic dissonance is established between the normal body of the Infanta and the abnormal body of the Dwarf, but rather than serving as a signpost for symptoms of moral decrepitude, the protagonist's form obscures his goodness, whereas the beauty of the Infanta conceals her wickedness. Both the use and circumvention of stereotypical representation is part and parcel of these operas' socio-cultural critique and, furthermore, the presence of disability stereotypes in both works can be attributed to the cultural context in which they were conceived.

Chapters One and Two of this thesis, I hope, demonstrated the importance of literary and cultural context in undertaking analyses of such culturally-bound works as *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*. Production reviews, composer commentaries and the cultural discourse of degeneracy were of vital significance to the formation of my central argument here. However, it is of no small significance that, in turn, the operas' labyrinthine subtexts are reflected, revealed and refracted in contemporary production. The use of costume, set design, blocking and gesture in the productions of *Der Zwerg* at Oper Graz and the TNSC in Lisbon nod to the opera's creative genesis in 'The Birthday of the Infanta' and Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, along with Georg Klaren's Weiningerian adaptation of Wilde's fairy tale for Zemlinsky. Schreker's biography, as well as the broader history of anti-Semitic cultural barbarism in Germany, is undoubtedly at stake in the Bayerische Staatsoper's production of *Die Gezeichneten*, which, with its kaleidoscopic conceptual framework of historical and popular cultural references, presents itself at once as historical document, artwork and curatorial exercise. In Chapter Three, I analysed the layers of subtext incorporated into each of these productions, each of which serves as a pertinent example of the way in which contemporary stagings can refer to cultural and textual theory in order to shed light on less prevalent strata of meaning, thus enabling them to contribute to existing readings and accounts of a given work. The productions in Graz, Lisbon and Munich similarly operate as windows into the cultural and historical contexts of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, gesturing also to the enduring relevance of disability as a metaphor for outsider identity into the present day. Consequentially, the performance of disability in these three productions raises pertinent questions about why and by what means the disabled body is mobilised on the operatic stage, highlighting, moreover, disability's tendency to indicate meaning in registers beyond the body.

When considering the performance of disability, disability studies and performance studies challenge and complement one another, their imbrication revealing a host of representational conundrums. In Chapter Four, I sought to unpick some of the complex issues

surrounding the performance of disability on the operatic stage, outlining the problematic practice of disability mimicry in contemporary production and its implications in light of issues of embodiment and authenticity. Siebers' understanding of disability mimicry in film and television as a kind of 'masquerade' is informed by the view that, when the physical attributes of a disability are assumed by an able-bodied actor, disability is both exhibited in and erased from the sphere of the performance. The simultaneous exaggeration and disappearance of disability in instances of disability mimicry is only made more tangible in live performance where, often, as the productions of *Der Zwerg* in Graz and Lisbon exemplify, attempts to embody disability's physicality are sensationalised and unconvincing at their best. In theatre and performance studies, questions of ephemerality and disappearance have repeatedly arisen in long-standing debates about the ontological nature of 'liveness'. The purist view, led by scholars such as Erica Fischer-Lichte and Peggy Phelan, opts to engage with performance based on its supposedly exclusive existence in the here and now. This tendency to view the theatrical event in terms of its visibility and subsequent disappearance is problematised in the context of disability in performance, as it further establishes the boundary of the stage as a way in which to contain and eventually erase disability. In fact, live theatre only further perpetuates the notion of disability as a 'problem' of a particularly temporary nature due to the removal of certain signholders (props such as wheelchairs and crutches) alongside performers' transitions into their natural, able-bodied state during curtain call.

But disability can be and is portrayed in myriad ways. Disability studies scholars such as Siebers problematise disability mimicry on the grounds that it engenders modes of perceiving disability from a voyeuristic perspective, but in fact, the productions in Graz, Lisbon and Munich draw upon processes of enfreakment and the non-disabled stare to present disability, theatrically, through the use of costume, set design, video projection and even programming. To an extent, these aspects of mise-en-scène shore up the disability stereotypes that can be found in Schreker's and Zemlinsky's opera texts, simply transplanting them from source to stage. However, the parts of the contemporary productions which illustrate disability without relying on disability mimicry actually succeed in creating nuanced explorations of Alviano and the Dwarf as metaphorical embodiments of the social and political Other. Depicted largely through looming screen projections of 'disabled monsters', the representation of disability in Munich, for example, draws upon the historical discourse of degeneracy alongside the horror genre's penchant for disfigured villains. The further characterisation of Schreker's protagonist as a Lynchian 'Elephant Man' facilitates the production's engagement with the enfreakment of

disability and the associated subjugation of the visibly disabled body as the 'voyeuristic property' of the non-disabled stare.[76]

Ideas about disability and performativity are similarly incorporated into the production of *Der Zwerg* in Lisbon. Here, the use of curtains emphasises the hyperbolic exhibition of the Dwarf's disability, meanwhile, the unveiling of a large mirror prompts the audience's transplantation into the world of the drama. I read this displacement as a form of experimentation with what Fischer-Lichte calls the 'feedback loop', in that it recasts the spectators as active participants (as opposed to passive observers) in the treatment and fate of Zemlinsky's 'ugly man'. Through my analyses of these productions, I have turned to the possibility that, although many attempts to portray physical disability on stage shore up prevalent socio-cultural issues regarding attitudes towards and the treatment of disabled people, this may not always indicate the failure of a production to engage critically with broader ideas about disability and society. These dramatisations render the productions observations, even commentaries, on the treatment of disabled people in the historical context of the operas and in contemporary society. As such, in the context of opera production (and live theatre more broadly), Carrie Sandahl's proposed move away from challenging the use of negative modes of disability representation towards embracing them as a tool for deriving a deeper understanding of the performance of disability is closely associated with a move away from the body and towards broader aspects of production design.[77]

Given the figurative function of disability in *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* alongside the problematic nature of disability in performance, it may follow that these works have much to gain from radical interpretation that altogether releases disability from its emblematic role in the operas' narratives. The fundamental components of Schreker's narrative structure are not contingent upon Alviano's impairment; rather, the disabled protagonist emblematises more general notions of estrangement from social and cultural norms in order to articulate the opera's central themes. In two very different renderings of *Die Gezeichneten*, the productions at Oper Köln and the Komische Oper Berlin cling to disability's figurative significance despite eliminating the visual and embodied aspects of disability from the sphere of performance. In Chapter Five, I considered these productions as more and less successful examples of the radical (re)interpretation that often takes place in contemporary *Regietheater* (a tradition with which all of the productions I have assessed are associated). In Patrick Kinmonth's production for Oper Köln, Alviano's characterisation as a Hitchcockian 'psycho-killer' does little more

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[76] David Hevey, *The Creatures Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 72–73.

[77] Carrie Sandahl, 'Using Our Words: Exploring Representational Conundrums in Disability Drama and Performance,' *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 12, no. 2 (2018): 133–34.

than generate a superficial contemporary façade, with the production's convoluted subtextual framework eluding clear presentation on stage. In Berlin, director Calixto Bieito embraces the moral and sexual ambiguities suggested by Schreker's dramatic vision, with the protagonist's paedophilic desires calling to mind familiar perceptions of disabled peoples' sexuality as sinister or unnatural. However, Alviano is rendered incompatible with these stereotypes within the conceptual milieu of the production on the basis of his simultaneous adherence to the Jungian archetype of the 'eternal child'. Instead, the use of stage technology manipulates the noblemen both visually and in terms of their characterisation into the category of the 'disabled villain'. By endowing Alviano with a greater degree of moral ambiguity but making the moral degeneracy of the noblemen and the society in which they function so plain, the director intensifies and modernises the work's aspects of cultural critique, undertaking political, cultural and ethical reflection through modes of aesthetic choice.

These five contemporary retellings of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* continuously return to the contextual, conceptual and practical concerns of my research. In tracing the representation of disability and degeneracy from source to stage, this thesis offers a novel perspective on the way in which disability is represented in Schreker's and Zemlinsky's operas and contributes to existing scholarship on *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* by considering them as both opera texts and performance texts. My research, however, is by no means exhaustive. Due to the restricted availability of primary sources, one omission in this project has been the consideration of historical performance practices. Further questions remain about how disability has been depicted in historical productions of the operas: How have staging and costuming practices developed since these works premiered? More broadly, do changes in costuming in light of the offensive nature of practices such as 'blackface' find a parallel where disability is depicted on stage? Indeed, how far have we really come in terms of disability representation on the operatic stage? Answers to these questions may, in fact, lie beyond the bounds of this thesis. However, whilst my interpretation of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* as works that allegorise the disabled body in order to formulate cultural commentary formed the subject-focus of this study, its overall objective lay partly in a wider attempt to highlight significant omissions in recent discourses of music and disability studies.

When establishing the contexts and perspectives of my research at the start of this thesis, I demonstrated the extent to which disability stereotypes emerge throughout the trajectory of the operatic canon. By combining the insights of disability theory with those of opera studies, it is possible to unpick the diverse contexts and implications of disability's presence, depiction and function on the opera stage. In modernist opera alone, a wealth of works deal with various forms of disability, from physical impairment and disfigurement (as

depicted in Dmitri Shostakovich's, *Nos* [*The Nose*, 1928], Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* [*The Woman Without a Shado*w, 1919] and Leoš Janáček's *Jenůfa*, 1903) to visual and other sensory impairments (found in Erich Korngold's *Das Wunder der Heliane* [*The Miracle of Heliane*, 1926] and Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, 1932). In light of the historical and cultural specificity of my reading of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg*, questions are raised about the applicability of my methodology to the wider operatic canon. However, just as considerations of race, gender and class have commonly sought to identify, explain and challenge perceptions of difference by considering the cultural construction of bodies, histories of disability illustrate the fact that attitudes towards bodily difference are (and have long been) complex and multifaceted. Implications of impairment and chronic ill-health have been associated with circumstantial factors from poverty, poor nutrition and childhood disease to military service, old age and heredity. Furthermore, disability itself has carried a myriad of connotations, and people with disabilities have been regarded 'as omens or prodigies, visitations of sin, freaks and curiosities, as inducing mockery, embarrassment or compassion and as the subjects of disciplining, institutionalisation or charitable provision'.[78]

In the introduction to this thesis, I briefly mentioned the apparent trend towards representations of disability as a 'feigned' or 'temporary' condition in the operatic canon. A future project might delve further into these phenomena (which do not appear to be documented in cultural disability studies scholarship), perhaps considering their historical and cultural significance alongside the new meanings they take on in live performance, particularly in light of disability's tendency to be 'fleeting' where it is presented on stage. As I argued in Chapter Four, the oversimplification of disability in performance, typically by way of its stereotypical 'distancing' from reality/normality, results in a problematic cycle of representation. Representations of disability in the narrative arts are not only reflective, but also affective: they influence and contribute to society's attitudes towards disability. In opera narratives, the amalgamation of disability and moral corruption, for example, is reflected in the use of visible disability as dramatic shorthand for internal ills. In opera production, the sustained and often sensationalised use of this trope (as in Cologne) reflects the cultural climate in which a work was composed and perpetuates the notion of disability as a 'problem' in need of a solution. As such, even though the particularities of my reading of *Die Gezeichneten* and *Der Zwerg* are specific to modernist opera, the rudiments of my interpretative process yield a wider reach, potentially bearing relevance to depictions of disability throughout the canon.

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[78] David M. Turner and Kevin Stagg, *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity: Bodies, Images and Experiences* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 1.

Furthermore, in light of the varied connotations disability can take on in its texted and performed presentation, the prospects for further study appear to be vast.

One reason for the relative paucity of engagement with opera and disability studies is perhaps that this area of research is highly subjective, and answers to the question of representation will never satisfy universally. Disability is contextually defined and constantly in flux, and as such, shifting ideas about what disability *is* further complicates the question of representation. The field of disability studies offers a wealth of approaches which can inform discussions about disability, and theoretical insights from the field of performance studies certainly offer further perspectives from which to consider the function and representation of disability on the operatic stage. But these perspectives can only take us so far. Further to the void in hermeneutic considerations of disability in opera, quantitative, ethnographic research is also needed in order to establish the current state of play in today's opera industry. This thesis raises questions about casting, performance practice and the real-world impact of opera's preoccupation with disability stereotypes on performers and audiences with disability. How can opera companies, for example, remove barriers to participation for disabled singers? And how can they ensure that casting procedures do not habitually force performers to battle, as Sandahl has summarised, 'to be cast in roles that resemble their own identities and to be cast in roles that do not'?[79] Regarding the 'performance' of disability by non-disabled performers, should more care be taken to ensure appropriate stage direction and costuming of disabled characters? Given that *Der Zwerg* came from a historical context in which disability was bound up with metaphorical significance, should attempts to 'perform' disability in productions of the work be avoided altogether? Finally, if opera companies do start casting disabled performers in disabled roles, how can we ensure that productions do not continue to perpetuate negative disability stereotypes without engaging with them critically? In order to begin to answer such questions, there is a need to engage in dialogues with and acknowledge the voices of those with real-world lived experience of both disability and operatic performance. Only the insights and experiences of such stakeholders can offer plausible solutions to the 'problems' encountered when attempting to perform disability. Considering the experiences of those who have direct experience of the often-gruelling casting procedures for opera, we might be able to begin forming more nuanced arguments about disabled mimicry and authentic casting, as well as the representational conundrums that they pose.

Responding to the calls of opera and performance studies scholars to locate and implement new modes of reading both opera and disability, this thesis constitutes the first

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[79] Carrie Sandahl, 'Why Disability Identity Matters: From Dramaturgy to Casting in John Belluso's *Pyretown*,' *Text and Performance Quarterly* 28, no. 1–2 (2008): 237.

extended study on the representation of disability in opera (in both text and performance), thereby illuminating the critical potential of disability studies as a perspective from which to study opera. Although my work marks a point of departure for considering opera from a disability studies perspective, there is potential for this area of study to become a vital discipline.

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