

Becoming Aware of One's Own Biased Attitude: The Observer's Encounter with Disability in  
Chris Ware's *Acme Novelty Library no. 18*

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**Abstract:** This art historical treatment of the graphic novel *Acme Novelty Library no. 18* investigates the particular manner of its representation of disability. With reference to theory of body and also theory of images, this study shows that the reading observer is confronted with his/her social and cultural imprint in the process of examining the graphic novel.

**Key Words:** contemporary art, comics, aesthetics of reception

### Introduction

*Acme Novelty Library* (abbreviated as *ANL*) *no. 18*<sup>1</sup> (2007) by comic artist Chris Ware tells the story of a young woman with an artificial leg, a story about solitude and the search for a meaningful relationship. Ware broaches the issue of the protagonist's disability in the hybrid medium of text and image only in short passages within the narration where he takes the artificial limb of his figure for granted and illustrates it as self-evident.<sup>2</sup> Also the reason for the physical disability of the protagonist – an accident as a child – is only mentioned in passing and almost at the end of the story. An interpretation of the protagonist's amputation as a reason for her isolation – and in this respect as a stereotype of disability and deviation from the norm – is therefore to a high extent dependent on the perception of the reading observer.<sup>3</sup> Focusing on aesthetics of reception as well as contextualizing the comic with other works of art in which physical disability is addressed in a similar way, this essay aims to examine the particular way of representing disability in *ANL no. 18*, by referring both to theory of body and to theory of images. The aim is to show that in this comic, the observer's socio-cultural imprint is picked out as a central theme. This imprint becomes apparent in how we look at others and judge deviations from the norm.

INSERT FIGURE 1

### Turning and Rotating

“I just want to fall asleep and never wake up again” – this sentence is to be found in the centre of the first double page in *ANL no. 18* (fig. 1). The diagrammatic structure of this opening introduces the reading observer to the nameless protagonist's intellectual and emotional world. Quite literally, her thoughts revolve around anxieties about the future, social isolation, as well as insecurity and result in suicidal considerations. Not only thoughts rotate in this opening; the reading observer is forced to move and turn with the illustration in order to dive into the depths of the protagonist's interior world. Immediately when opening the book, the reader-observer is given an emotional introduction that is intensified by the intellectually demanding and complicated presentation.

INSERT FIGURE 2

The visualization of the main character's depressing world inevitably addresses the question of why she is thinking of killing herself. There are no answers to these questions on the next pages. For example, on the next double page (fig. 2), which has a rather rigid structure of 79 panels, the observer is confronted with the female character's everyday activities: getting up, showering, dressing, and shopping in the supermarket. Her physical disability – she is wearing a prosthesis on her shortened left leg – is only hinted at on the first pages: when showering, she stabilizes with the help of the handle on the stool in the bath tub, and outside her flat she uses a cane. A sequence of four panels (fig. 3, detail), showing the first paths down the staircase after she locks the door, points at her disability, because she stops on every step with both feet. Only after several pages is the protagonist shown lying on her bed without her artificial leg, which confirms earlier suspicions. Ware uses the diagrammatic structure in the beginning as exposition the way it is used in drama in preparation to the plot. This exposition provides an emotionally intensive, as well as intellectually demanding, insight into the world of the character. The diagrammatic structure has a relevant consequence on the following pages; it depicts rituals of everyday life in a sad shade full of isolation and loneliness. The protagonist's physical disability does not obviously play an important role in this, since it is neither mentioned nor shown in the diagrammatic structure or the introduction of the protagonist's everyday life.

INSERT FIGURE 3

#### Only In Conjunction with Others

Within the story, the protagonist's disability is only associated with human relations. When she is working as a nanny in a foreign family, the father of Jeff – her fosterling – explains the reasons for her employment: “Well, we just hoped that in your case, you know, he might not... get so, uh... attached...”<sup>4</sup> In this context “attached” has to be interpreted in two senses: physically, as the boy begins to discover his sexuality, but also emotionally, as he is more intensively tied to her than to his mother. The father assumes that the protagonist's physical disability would prevent Jeff tying himself too much to the nanny. When this happens, nevertheless she is fired. The protagonist is confronted with prejudices such as sexual unattractiveness, which may be seen as negative associations with disability. Within the story, physical disability is addressed and identified as a deviation from the norm by other characters, not by the protagonist herself. The judging of disability through others has a substantial similarity in the relation of the reader-observer to the protagonist: the interpretation of her disability is also left to others - that is to say to the reading observer. On the perception level, a connection between the protagonist's despair and her physical appearance seems likely when her shortened leg is interpreted as limitation by Jeff's father. In the way of arranging the story in the hybrid medium comic, Ware doesn't force this interpretation on the observer – at least no more than the opposite interpretation that physical disability does not play a dominant role at all. The construction of meaning is left to the reading observer.

Ware brings across this frankness and ambiguity using images. Images cannot offhand be subjected to preconceived schemata as they possess their own surplus value that cannot be translated into or expressed by language (Imdahl, 1980, 93; Siebers, 2009, 76–77; Boehm, 2007, 34–35). This leads to an ambiguity of images and, in principle, to a never ending process of perception: images have no beginning and no decided ending. A new examination of an image

can lead to the discovery of new aspects. Given the example of the diagrammatical structure, this means that reading and observing don't end once all parts of the image and text are perceived. They have to relate to the entire diagrammatical structure and its details. Simultaneous (conceiving the entire image) and gradual (focusing on separate details) effects are irresolvably and mutually linked when an image is observed (Imdahl, 1994, 310). This nature of images turns the process of perception into a highly complex operation. Literature and disability studies scholar Tobin Siebers (2009, 87) adds a physical dimension to these reflections based on image theory. According to him, human beings relate their actions and interactions to their physical condition. Moreover, the socially constructed norm of an ideal body is connected to its physical condition. Splitting the body in two-part opposites (like normal/abnormal, perfect/imperfect) puts the body into context with those of others and ultimately into context with a preconceived notion of an ideal body (Davis, 1997, 53–54). Creating categories of binary opposites governs everyday perceptions, be it of a more attractive man or woman on the way to work or when looking at ads; the body is always in a state of comparison with others. In Ware's comic, these mechanisms of body classification also work on a subconscious level.

### Completing Mentally

#### INSERT FIGURE 4

Artist Marc Quinn also uses this fundamental human disposition of comparison and rating in interactions with others and perception of self and others. In his series of sculptures *The Complete Marbles*, he is explicitly analyzing the norms originating from cultural and social contexts. The sculpture *Stuart Penn* (2000, fig. 4) is made of marble, a traditional material of fine arts associated with nobility, beauty and heroism. The sculpture shows a male figure standing on its left foot. Its right leg is lifted into the air in a powerful stretch; its head turns in the direction of the lifted leg, and its trunk stretches diagonally. The sculpture is performing a movement known from various martial arts. Although typical features of this movement, i.e. the painfully stretched foot and leg, are shown only as a shortened limb, an observer may complete the alleged “missing” parts and imagine the movement performed by a standardized or even idealized body.

How does this work? The answer is to be found in the cultural background of the observer concerning the representation of idealized human bodies in sculptures such as those of classical antiquity – e.g. the *Venus de Milo* (c. 100 BC). Typically classical sculptures survive as torsos, i.e. without limbs. Disability studies scholar Lennard J. Davis (1997, 56–57) points out that contemporary art historians especially are not able to conceive the constitution of a sculpture with missing limbs and that they want to add the missing parts. With psychoanalyst Darian Leader (2000, 16) I want to bring forward the argument that adding missing limbs is part of our socio-cultural imprint, regardless of whether one has a profound knowledge of art history or not. The title *The Complete Marbles* shows clearly that Quinn is aware of this fact: by using the adjective “complete,” his marble sculptures are compared to classical “incomplete” ones. At close sight the observer can see that the sculptures are elaborated to the last detail. The artist deliberately uses this perfectionist elaboration in order to challenge the first impression of an incomplete sculpture and to point out the observer's own bias. This is supported by the choice of titles for the individual sculptures in the series. The sculpted figures refer to the human model by using their first and family name, as a means of relating to its contemporary reference. The

*Venus de Milo*, the goddess of love, instead lays claim to a more objective presentation of transcendence and Deity.

#### INSERT FIGURE 5

Another sculpture that can be associated with the series is *Alison Lapper Pregnant*. The temporary installation of the sculpture (fig. 5) in 2005 on the Fourth Plinth<sup>5</sup> of Trafalgar Square, one of the most busy locations in London, offered Quinn the possibility to make “stereotypes of and assumptions about disability visible and open for public debate” (Millett-Gallant, 2000, 53). The larger-than-life-size sculpture shows eight-months-pregnant artist Alison Lapper, who was born with short legs and without arms. The installation of the sculpture in a highly frequented location fuels an ongoing controversy concerning observers’ socio-cultural notions of disability. On the one hand, Alison Lapper is stylized into a heroine among the heroes of Trafalgar Square; on the other hand and to the same extent, Quinn is accused by critics in public debates of displaying a lack of taste and of exploiting a disabled person for the shock factor (Quinn, 2006, articles and comments by Members of the Public, n. p.; Millett-Gallant, 2000, 61–62, 67–68). Art historian and cinema studies scholar Julie Joy Clarke (2008, p. 1) argues that although contemporary artists and film makers contribute to the improvement of the image of disabled female figures by representing them in works of art, these females are still portrayed both as abnormal and monstrous. Clarke describes *Alison Lapper Pregnant* on the Fourth Plinth as “monstrous-gigantic” (2008, p. 7) because of her size. This statement is only valid when ignoring the dimensions of the square as well as the size of the Fourth Plinth in comparison to human dimensions. Had the sculpture been presented in real-life proportions like it has been shown since 2000 in exhibitions at galleries and museums, the installation would never have had the attention and resulting controversy about the representation of disability in a highly frequented location. Quinn proportionally adjusts the size of *Alison Lapper Pregnant* to the size of the Fourth Plinth, which makes the pregnant woman equal to the rest of the sculptures on Trafalgar Square. This change of scale triggers questions of gender, sex, disability and heroism.

These works of art demonstrate that in a social and public context, disability is still struggling with negative connotations. Social sciences and disability studies scholars Tanya Titchkosky and Rod Michalko (2012, p. 127) call this fact the “disability-as-problem frame.” The basis of the phenomenological approach of Titchkosky and Michalko is the assumption that we perceive the world from our own point of view with certain expectations and valuations. Social sciences and disability studies scholar Markus Dederich (2007, p. 80) points out that in this context, bodies express meaning. With regard to disability, this implies that deviations from the norm, i.e. physical otherness, may result in uneasiness, and lead to prejudice. This disregard is a symptom of the “frames,” the social and cultural conditions that provide a reference system for human interaction, described by Titchkovsky and Michalko (2012, p. 129), which are not in the open and not discernible in everyday life, but have to be disclosed by self-reflection and critical examination. Works of art can help to reflect the mechanisms of bias, as I have shown with the two aforementioned examples of Quinn’s sculptures. The observer puts Quinn’s sculptures into context with classical statues, thereby adding the “missing” limbs in his/her imagination and reflecting on this biased attitude. Ware uses a similar strategy in *ANL no. 18*; the reading observer is confronted with the biased attitude of other characters within the story with respect to the protagonist’s disability and therefore has to think about his/her own interpretation:

whether the observer (subconsciously) holds the protagonist's disability responsible for her loneliness and death wish or not. Thus the observer becomes aware of his/her own socio-cultural imprint. He/she is forced to challenge his/her biased position caused by restrictions of society. These examples reveal that a thorough confrontation with works of art helps to make the recipient aware of his or her own bias.

### Connotation of Prosthesis

#### INSERT FIGURE 6

An important element in *ANL no. 18* that confronts the reading observer once and again with his/her own prejudice is the protagonist's various prostheses. When shaving her legs in the bath tub, the main character remembers a situation on the train (fig. 6): a young woman opposite had called her partner's attention to the prosthesis. Sitting in her bath tub, the protagonist is not pleased about such incidents: "What do they really mean, anyway: 'my' leg? Of course it's mine... just the same way those were 'her' shoes or 'her' purse or 'her' stupid boyfriend with his stupid pointy sideburns." And two panels further: "Anyway, I've had six legs now total... people don't realize it, but when your body changes, the prosthesis have to change, too..." In nearly every panel in this bath tub episode, the prosthesis is addressed in the protagonist's thought bubbles. Consequently, the reading observer on the one hand gets to know the frustration about the staring and the ill-considered statement. On the other hand, he/she is confronted straightforwardly with information not previously considered ("people don't realize it"). On the visual level the reading observer experiences two different ways of observing. The observer is deliberately denied a glimpse of the protagonist's face, as she visually withdraws herself from the observer's gaze, whereas she allows a deep look into her inner world, her frustration, on the textual level. In the third panel, the reading observer assumes the protagonist's point of view and is confronted with the staring looks of the people sitting opposite. On the visual level this refers to the considerations and statements that follow. Increasing exposure to and the denial of the gaze as well as staring on this page reveal a fundamental problem, which very often defines the relationship between individuals with and without disability.

According to women's and disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (2000, p. 335), the staring of non-disabled individuals initiates very often mechanisms of power and control towards disabled people, as disability is being characterized by the piercing look as deviation from the standard norm and as otherness. The process of staring is in fact not unilateral, as the stared-at person is by her reaction contributing to this "complex process of social choreography between two individuals" (Garland-Thomson, 2006, p. 180). The bathroom situation illustrates quite clearly Garland-Thomson's reflections: the reading observer, who can quite radically exercise power by choosing the speed of turning pages, is not able to totally control the protagonist with his/her stare when she is shaving her legs. Although her short leg has a prominent position in some panels, her face is not even shown once on the whole page. As the face is an extremely important element in immediate intellectual and emotional communication, the observing reader has to overcome his/her frustration at being prevented from direct access.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, there is the panel where the reading observer assumes the protagonist's perspective and is instead exposed to the staring eyes of the young couple. Thus the reading observer experiences both sides of the interaction of staring. To the protagonist, her prosthesis is

much like her clothing or accessories and therefore a natural element of appearance in everyday and public life. To her, the prosthesis has a deeper meaning than the prejudiced view from outside (“That’s not really her leg”) suggests.

Prostheses are also of importance in some scenes in Matthew Barney’s film *Cremaster 3*<sup>7</sup> (2002). Aimee Mullins, a professional athlete and model whose legs were both amputated, plays several roles in that film, for example the character “Oonagh” who is part of a mythical story, as well as the role of a female character who is able to cut potatoes with blades under her shoes. The following refers to a small part of the film, the interlude *The Order*, to emphasize Barney’s special interest in Mullins’s prostheses. *The Order* is a sort of game show set in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York where the male protagonist “Entered Apprentice,” played by Barney himself, has to succeed on five levels – similar to the initiation ritual of the Freemasons.<sup>8</sup> On the third level the “Entered Apprentice” faces the female figure, here called the “Entered Novitiate,”<sup>9</sup> who is wearing a white apron, long gloves and white headdress. She is also wearing transparent prostheses with high heels. The special shape and the transparent material of the prostheses draw attention to their sculptural qualities. Moreover, they open a perspective on the two leg stumps ending right under her knees. The female figure moves to and fro on a line with a slightly unstable gait until she faces the “Entered Apprentice.” As they walk towards each other, the protagonist is suddenly wearing the same outfit as the female figure, with a white apron and high heels. When they meet in the middle, they virtually merge into one another before the female figure bites into the male’s shoulder. Thereafter the female figure transforms into a hybrid creature with the limbs of a cheetah and the upper body of a woman.<sup>10</sup> A violent struggle between the protagonist and the creature begins. The half-human creature chases the protagonist until he brutally kills it. This short act of fusion, and the fight that follows, point to the protagonist’s fight with his lower ego, which he has to kill in a Masonic ritual in order to refine his self (Wruck, 2014, 96). The “Entered Novitiate” and the “Entered Apprentice” are two parts of the same figure which, for a short moment, is reflected by the two characters wearing the same outfit, even the transparent shoes with heels.

In contrast to “Entered Novitiate,” the transition between leg and prosthesis of the creature-woman is hidden by the cheetah-spots and by the form of the cheetah-legs. The “Entered Novitiate” transforms entirely into a hybrid creature with strangely formed legs. Both figures are biographically and thematically related to the actress Mullins. Her way of walking as “Entered Novitiate,” with striking prostheses, can be linked to her career as a model on catwalks.<sup>11</sup> As the cheetah-woman, she is wearing prostheses that are more related to her sporting career. Prostheses for athletes with amputated legs are made of carbon fiber and imitate the leg form of cheetahs. It seems like an ironic exaggeration that the professional sportswoman is being transformed into the animal, which was the inspiration of such costly prostheses for professional athletes. Clarke also examines this example from *The Order* concerning the representation of female monstrosity. She emphasizes the relation of the two figures, the woman in white apron and the cheetah woman, to the actress Mullins when writing: “Images of Mullins in *Cremaster* [sic] tend to feminize her in extremely stereotypical ways – woman as monstrous cyborg, woman as *femme fatale*, woman as cat-like creature. Her deviant body appears to reflect her polymorphous sexuality” (Clarke, 2008, 9). Clarke’s argument is nearly exclusively focused on the actress. I want to offer a different interpretation that is more interested in the narrative context. The stereotypical interpretation put forward by Clarke is qualified by the scene of the

two figures becoming one before the fight with the lower ego: man and woman are identified as two sides of the same figure that belong together but are fighting each other at the same time. This is not a matter of questioning the erotic aspect of Mullins's figures Clarke mentions in the cited phrase. But in my opinion Clarke's argument about the exposition of female disability and the therewith related transformation into monstrosity should be put into perspective: in fact, the actress Mullins gives Barney the chance to visualize processes of transformation.<sup>12</sup> The decisive factor in *The Order* is not Mullins's negatively connoted disability, but the potential of her ability to transform and the versatility in the use of prostheses, which have immense sculptural qualities. The leg prosthesis is presented positively as means of sculptural design and – from the cinematographic point of view – as an increase in possibilities to visualize processes of transformation. This exposing of the potentiality of prostheses in *The Order* requires an understanding of the relationship between wearer and to-be-worn, similar to *ANL no. 18*, in which the protagonist puts it consistently in the mind of the reading observer: the prosthesis as a natural and self-evident element of appearance.

### Stripping Off the Body

#### INSERT FIGURE 7

Some pages after the scene in the bath tub, we see a diagrammatical structure (fig. 7) on the right side. In the centre of this page there is a full-body illustration of the protagonist wearing a red cardigan and a blue skirt. A clear distinguishing line between her prosthesis and her leg is visible. Two physical handicaps are related to each other on this page: on the one hand, the obviously short leg, and on the other hand, a heart disease that had a strong effect on her athletic activities even before her leg amputation. According to the summary given on the page, this amputation caused only minimal changes in her everyday life and the interests she pursued. On the next right page the protagonist is presented naked and without the prosthesis (fig. 8). Only her parents, her “one and only boyfriend,” and “various doctors” have ever seen her like this. The following right page depicts her skeleton with muscles and organs (fig. 9).

#### INSERT FIGURE 8

This sequence of diagrammatical structures takes up the basic concept of a popular-medical manual or an anatomic pop-up image. On the first of the three following pages the stripping of the female body is already prepared: in the left bottom corner of the illustration the young girl opens an encyclopedia in a flashback with a chapter about the human body. The human body is illustrated on several transparent pages, one on top of the other, which by turning lay bare muscles and the skeleton. On the following pages, the protagonist herself is taking the part of object of medical study. However, unlike the examples in a medical textbook, this is not a standardized body. This becomes obvious on the second page, which shows the naked female figure. Although since the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, illustrations of disabled or deformed bodies were printed more and more frequently in medical textbooks, they were not intended to inform as much as entertain by showing bodies as curiosities of physical abnormality (Klotz, Lutz, Nürnberg, & Walther, 2001, 188–189). The protagonist is also exposed to this medical/pathological view, which she endures patiently with closed eyes, twisted eyebrows and the corners of her mouth turning downward. But the three consecutive illustrations invite another

connection beside the pathological one: the connection between body and soul. Illustrating the protagonist's body and her beating, and for a moment almost arresting heart, a connection is established to her sexuality – when discovering her body as a young girl, in intimate exchange with her boyfriend, and in masturbating. In the illustration of the skeleton, the heartbeat is transformed into a black hole, a symbol for the emptiness of her heart that was caused by the abrupt and disgusting end of the relationship with her ex-boyfriend. The heart in this anatomical illustration represents the intense emotions of its owner: “It's as if I had a hole in me that I desperately wanted to fill.” Ware uses the diagrammatical structure of his work in connection with anatomical illustrations to draw attention to a complex field of associations of disability and emotional pain. What begins as an anatomical study of a body ends in a highly emotional, as well as challenging confrontation with the protagonist's mental state.

INSERT FIGURE 9

### Conclusion

In *ANL no. 18*, Ware confronts the reading observer with his/her own prejudices by virtue of various strategies. A highly complex diagrammatical structure – which does not focus on the protagonist's disability – serves as introduction to the story. Only later, in subsequent panels, her short leg is illustrated as a natural part of her body. Only in relation to other figures, her prosthesis and short leg are associated with stereotypes of “disability as problem.” Likewise her body is exposed to the medical – or more precisely pathological – view of the reading observer as a subject of physical abnormality. Socio-cultural background plays an essential part in the perception of this work of art: it is the reading observer who decides to a high extent if the physical disability is the main reason for the protagonist's loneliness and isolation – or not. By developing an awareness of the possibilities of interpretation and of the own frame of mind in relation to the illustration of disability, socially constructed limitations become evident to the reading observer.

In its hybrid constellation of text and image, the comic medium offers outstanding possibilities for the analysis of individual socio-cultural background. The ambiguity of the image and of the not completely describable surplus value of images invites the reading observer to think about him/herself. Likewise, the text in panels can mainly offer the horizon of allusions, as seen in the example of the bath tub scene. These art theoretical implications are also connected with a body-dimension, as the recipient is usually subconsciously establishing relations between his/her own and other bodies and/or the social construction of an ideal body. Marc Quinn uses this prejudice of the observer concerning bodies for his marble sculptures. Quinn's sculptures demonstrate how the observer's own socio-cultural background plays a role in completing the “missing” body parts of sculptures mentally. For Matthew Barney, prosthesis and physical disability bear positive connotations when emphasizing the potential of transformation processes and the sculptural qualities of prostheses. In contrast to Chris Ware, these two artists place strong emphasis on the body and his physicality in their works of art. Ware's approach to confront the reading observer with his/her own prejudices is more subtle and subliminal.

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#### Image Credits

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- Fig. 2. Next double page in *ANL no. 18*. n.p. © 2014 C. Ware
- Fig. 3. Detail of the double page in fig. 2 (right page, n.p.). © 2014 C. Ware
- Fig. 4. Marc Quinn. *Stuart Penn*, 2000. Marble, 160h x 98w x 54d cms, courtesy: Marc Quinn studio
- Fig. 5. Marc Quinn. *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, 2005. Marble, 355h x 180.5w x 260d cms, Trafalgar Square, London. Photo: Marc Quinn studio
- Fig. 6. Left page in *ANL no. 18*. n.p. © 2014 C. Ware
- Fig. 7. Right page in *ANL no. 18*. n.p. © 2014 C. Ware
- Fig. 8. Next right page in *ANL no. 18*. n.p. © 2014 C. Ware
- Fig. 9. Next right page in *ANL no. 18*. n.p. © 2014 C. Ware

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *ANL no. 18* is part of a series that was begun by Ware in 1993 and up to now consists of 20 numbers. In a slightly modified form the volume is part of the voluminous project *Building Stories* which was published by Ware in autumn 2012 at Pantheon.

<sup>2</sup> Also Margret Fink Berman (2010) is arriving at that conclusion in an article, in which she developed her cultural scientific and disability theoretical thoughts and conclusions on the basis of a comic strip series with the same protagonist. I pursue the same assumption but with a different approach. My art historical method is based on phenomenological issues that are evolved from a detailed analysis of the specific works of art. With this approach I am pursuing the goal to emphasize the particular potentials of experience that can only be gained in preoccupation with works of art.

<sup>3</sup> The expression “reading observer” is used in order to describe more precisely the recipient and mechanisms of reception: when opening a comic book, the recipient is first an observer as he/she perceives the entire double page and then the single page in its visual structure. Only after that he/she turns successively to the single panels, an action that is interrupted and expanded by the simultaneous observation of a single or double page.

<sup>4</sup> Emphasis in original. This also applies to all following citations from *ANL no. 18*.

<sup>5</sup> In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Fourth Plinth was part of the rearrangement of Trafalgar Square and was intended as the pedestal body for a second equestrian statue. This statue was never installed, so the pedestal body stayed empty. Since 1999 the Fourth Plinth has served as the pedestal body for various installations which are chosen by a committee.

<sup>6</sup> “We stare with and at faces to know each other and the world. Faces mark our distinctiveness and particularity, highlight our appearance and look, indicate emotion and character, and display our dignity and prestige.” Garland-Thomson, 2006, 175.

<sup>7</sup> The *Cremaster Cycle* consists of five films by Barney (1994–2002). For a detailed discussion of the whole cycle and *Cremaster 3* I recommend Eva Wruck’s dissertation, Wruck, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed examination of motives and relations in *The Order* see Wruck, 2014, 93–97.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Barney. *Cremaster 3, Mahabyn*, 2002. 1 of 3 C-Prints. For a reproduced image see Spector, 2002, 309.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Barney. *Cremaster 3, The Third Degree*, 2002. 1 of 2 C-Prints. For a reproduced image see Spector, 2002, 308.

<sup>11</sup> “One was to portray her as a model, and for that character we cast a pair of clear legs, and for the other we developed a pair of feline legs for her, which gave that character a kind of a cheetah physicality. I was interested in how Amy as an athlete would be running on carbon fibre-glass legs that were designed to give her advantage of the three jointed hind leg of an animal, or the cat.” Matthew Barney as cited in Wruck, 2013a, 133.

<sup>12</sup> In many respects Barney deals in his films of the *Cremaster Cycle* with transformational processes and sculptural qualities in most different connections, see Wruck, 2013b, & Spector, 2002.