An Inquiry on Post-linguistic Subjects in Twin Peaks: The Return

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Dougie Jones Twin Peaks: The Return entelechy neurodiversity post-linguistic subjects

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In the long-awaited third season of Twin Peaks (ABC, 1990-1991; Showtime, 2017), the audience was introduced to Dougie Jones, a tulpa of FBI Agent Dale Cooper, the series' main character. In the series, a tulpa is a fictional entity created through somebody's wishful thinking and meditation. The audience and critics interpreted Dougie Jones as a clumsy, unintentional, a-rhetorical character, incapable of solving the investigation cases like Cooper. In this article, I discuss Dougie's post-linguistic subjectivity to contest the notion of intentionality which relies on linguistic traits and normative behaviours. Dougie Jones' character disturbs the normative understanding of intentionality, which fails to embrace subjectivities that do not always express consent through linguistic constraints. To discuss these matters, I draw on Neurodiversity Studies (Yergeau 2018) and Critical Disability Studies (Clark 2013).

Introduction

First, I will introduce Dougie Jones' role in the drama and supernatural mystery TV series *Twin Peaks* (ABC, 1990–1991), created by Mark Frost and David Lynch. Dougie Jones expresses themselves by repeating short words and non-linguistic signs of intention. I posit the question of linguistic intentionality because it is used to categorise individuals as rhetorical beings. I draw on the scholarship of Neurodiversity Studies researcher Melanie Yergeau to challenge spoken and written language as the sole modalities of expressing intention. I analyse Dougie Jones' scenes from the third season of Twin Peaks through their

lense*s*. Briefly, I also mention how people in the spectrum of neurodiversity are represented in North American TV shows.

Dougie Jones never expressed himself through complex phrasal constructs. That does not mean their intentionality is not expressed. Non-linguistic intentionality and post-linguistic consent modalities are often read as dangerous features. They receive the label of 'creepy' or 'weird.' Neurodiversity Studies' growing body of literature discusses the narrow-mindedness of the common understandings of rhetoric and intentionality.

Neurodiversity, as a term, was coined by the activist Judy Singer. She defines *neurodiversity* as a subset of earthly biodiversity. Humans colonised almost all earthly ecosystems (Singer 2019). Therefore, neurodiversity is present in the entire world, and it "refers specifically to the limitless variability of human cognition and the uniqueness of each human mind" (Singer 2019). Neurodiversity, in this conceptualisation, does not distinguish between able and disabled human bodies. Instead, in Singer's vision (2019), everybody is neurodiverse, as there is a wide range of cognitive variability and modes of expression and communication. The neurodiverse movement and the neurodiverse paradigm focused on the subjectivities who are not neurologically typical, especially the ones in the spectrum of autism. While the discussion regarding the limits of neurodiversity and its different connotations is far from being finished, some bodies who do not adhere to the normative/standard modes of being and communication suffer from the lack of proper recognition of their onto-epistemological views.

Neurodiversity Studies (Rosqvist, Chown & Stenning 2020) is an emerging research field that focuses on the non-neurotypical modalities of perception. It emerged from within Critical Disability Studies in the 2010s. It aims to craft anti-ableist onto-epistemologies and dislodge able-bodiedness as the centre of the human and non-human experience. The concept of a post-linguistic subject was borrowed from the Literary Theory Scholar Antony Ballas (2019).

Of Tulpas and Doppelgangers

Twin Peaks: The Return (2017) is the third instalment of *the Twin Peaks* TV series. The Twin Peaks franchise's main plot revolves around the investigation of Laura Palmer's (Sheryl Lee) death in the North American town of Twin Peaks, Washington. She was murdered under mysterious circumstances, and her body was found wrapped in plastic near the shore. While

Laura was portrayed as the archetype of the innocent white and virgin girl, her lifestyle embraced substance abuse and sexual misconduct that could bother a small conservative town's inhabitants. In this series, Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan) was presented as a skilled FBI agent sent to Twin Peaks to investigate Laura's death. Cooper's character is compassionate and possesses a vast knowledge of occultism and Tibetan Buddhism – one of Lynch's primary influences (Bishop, 1992). This attunement to the occult otherness fed Cooper's intuition and helped him solve the mystery. Laura was murdered by a ghostly entity that has inhabited Twin Peaks for decades – Bob (Frank Silva). Bob had incorporated into Laura's father body, Leland (Ray Wise), and killed her during an orgy in the city's hotel, as shown in the films *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992) and *Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces* (2014), directed by David Lynch.

The second season of *Twin Peaks* ended with Agent Cooper stuck in another dimension: The Waiting Room. Cooper crushes his head into a mirror in its last scene and laughs with his face covered in blood. Cooper had travelled to the lodge to rescue his girlfriend, Annie (Heather Graham), kidnapped by one of his nemeses and former FBI agent Windom Earle (Kenneth Welsh), as a lure to capture him and get revenge. The Waiting Room is an interdimensional portal that mediates communication between our universe and the others. Its scenery includes red curtains and kitsch furniture lying on a zig-zagged stylised ground. In *Twin Peaks*, the other dimensions, layers of the actual fictional world, including the Black and the White Lodges. The former is the home of evil beings, including Bob and the Man from Another Place (Michael J. Anderson).

The White Lodge scenario was designed through computer-generated imagery, and it is presented as a fortress lying in a purple sea. It hosts peaceful entities and spirits, like 'The Giant,' later named 'The Fireman' (Carel Struycken). He wants to restore the balance between the good and evil forces through interference into Earth's world. In Part 8 of *Twin Peaks: The Return*, it is implied that he sent Laura Palmer to Earth to restore the balance after the first human-made nuclear explosion opened a dimensional schism that allowed creatures of the Black Lodge to populate Earth. This mechanism later brought Dougie Jones to Earth.

While the first two iterations of *Twin Peaks* revolve around Dale Cooper and his catchy phrases, Cooper is absent from the first sixteen episodes, or at least a talkative and self-presentational version of the FBI agent. It knowingly contests the earlier show's core of audience identification with Agent Dale Cooper" (Hills 2017, 08). During the six first parts of

Twin Peaks: The Return, most of the usual scenarios of Twin Peaks' town were absent, and as well the characters of its sheriff's department (Hills 2017, 4), breaking the continuity of the series' spatiality. During the beginning of the season, Cooper had journeyed through the thresholds of another dimension, while in the 'real world' scenario, his tulpa was thriving to survive. To make the absence of Agent Cooper in the 'real world', unnoticed, Mr C – an evil doppelgänger of Dale Cooper, under the control of Bob – forged two copies of Cooper's body and sent them to Earth. In the third part of *Twin Peaks: The Return*, the audience was presented to Douglas Jones and their daily life. Douglas worked in an insurance company, Lucky 7 Insurance. Douglas was portrayed as fatter than Cooper, and he used colourful and tacky clothing in contrast with the always well-adjusted black coat of the FBI agent. Dougie Jones was created to mimic FBI Agent Dale Cooper, as the main character was stuck in another dimension since the end of the second season.

Tulpas and tulpamancy – the practice of crafting tulpas – grew in popularity in online communities like Reddit in this decade. There, users gather to discuss techniques to craft these imaginary companions. Many of David Lynch's aesthetic and narrative choices are inspired by Tibetan Buddhism. It is supposed that tulpamancy emerged in meditative practices in which it is believed that an entity would be created according to the intentionality of the person who crafted it. Tulpas, as explored in many online communities, like Reddit, are conceived of as entities that share mental space with the host (Martin, Thompson & Lancaster, 2020). In *Twin Peaks*, tulpas were not only portrayed as creatures of thought; they also emerge physically, outside the body of their creators. After being crafted in somebody's mind, the tulpa may develop its own desires (Martin, Thompson & Lancaster, 2020).

> [A Tulpa] equates to 'thoughtform,' both as the idea of a form conjured from thought as if out of nothing, but also specifically in Tibetan Buddhism, Tibet having been very important to Cooper prior to going into the Lodge. Note that a Tulpa in the *Twin Peaks* mythos is not the same as a doppelgänger, which is an inversion of the original; the Tulpa seems to be an extension of the original. This Tulpa was named Dougie Jones, and had a weakness for gambling and prostitutes, yet somehow married and produced a child. Being an extension of the evil Cooper, he has wants (greed and lust) that may or may not reflect the original Cooper. (Piercy 2018 as quoted in Tembo, 2020, p. 192)

In *Twin Peaks*: *The Return*, the tulpas are framed as entities without intentionality. They are proxies built to perform actions and mimic other individuals. The show implied that Douglas Jones is a tulpa of Dale Cooper sent to this world twenty-five years before the show's third season timeline. Douglas lived in Las Vegas. In a rendezvous with a prostitute, Douglas's body embodied Dougie. Dale Cooper was sent back to Earth, travelling across the electricity network during that moment. Cooper, however, was transferred to Douglas' body, which was already inhabited for decades. As two different things cannot be in the same place without having their physical integrity affected, they merged into a distinct entity, Dougie Jones. He is neither Douglas nor Cooper, but Douglas and Cooper, a mesh of Douglas Jones and Dale Cooper's subjectivities.

David Lynch's oeuvre is marked by the presence of doppelgängers, physically similar or identical to the body they mimic – and therefore interpreted by the same actors, but generally embodying a different sense of morality. Frequently, the characters meet their analogue or digital doppelgängers, delivering them into uncomfortable and uncanny situations (Jarvis, 2020). In *Lost Highway* (1997), the main character can transform herself into unknown doubles. In *Twin Peaks: The Return*, several copies of Dale Cooper appear. These copies are not doppelgängers, as the latter oppose or mirror the 'original ones.' They are, instead, empty shells that have an individual autonomy to become something different.

Another character portrayed as a tulpa in the third season of *Twin Peaks* is Diane (Laura Dern). She has been present since the first episode of *Twin Peaks*. Agent Cooper kept a diary in his cassette recorder, and Diane was his interlocutor. "Diane, 7:30 am February twenty-fourth. Entering the town of Twin Peaks. Five miles south of the Canadian border, twelve miles west of the state line. Never seen so many trees in my life. As WC Fields would say, I'd rather be here than Philadelphia" (*Twin Peaks*, Pilot). Only in the third season, her face and background history were narratively explored. In the series, Diane used to be an FBI agent briefly romantically engaged with Cooper. In the third season, she was recruited by FBI Deputy Director Gordon Cole (David Lynch) to help him find Cooper, who was out of the radar since 1991. While being interrogated by Cole and his partner Albert (Miguel Ferrer), Diane realised that she was not the 'original' Diane but a tulpa sent by the entities of the Black Lodge (Video 1).

Video 1. Diane Scene Twin Peaks Season 3 Part 16. Source: https://youtu.be/5FT1t3Da7MM.

The observation of non-typical behaviour is key to identifying tulpas who aim to pass as another person. After being debunked and sent back to the interdimensional waiting room, Diane-tulpa met MIKE (Al Strobel), a mischievous entity that uttered the phrase: "Someone manufactured you. For a purpose!". She was transformed into a pearl-shaped seed.

Image 1. Douglas Jones and Diane's tulpa returning to the seed state after fulfilling their entelechies.

Tulpas often detour their 'entelechy', defying their 'planned' purpose. Entelechy is the idea that the initial stage of a being contains the recipe that will define its entire existence. The autistic scholar Melanie Yergeau explains entelechy "as a finality or cause that is intention possessed within and unto itself. Aristotle's primary example of entelechy was that of the seed: a seed's potential and eventual plantness is encoded within that very seed". As I mentioned, after the phrase 'Someone manufactured you for a purpose, which now has been fulfilled' was uttered in the series, the bodies of the tulpas precisely returned to the shape of a seed, as if their entelechies were fully reached, except for Dougie Jones' character, briefly analysed in the next section of this article.

Dougie Jones' Post-linguistic Subjectivity

To discuss the state of Dougie Jones' narrative role expressing intentionality beyond the linguistic signification, I break down the device of intentionality into three elements. They are the linguistic – or post-linguistic – rhetoric, linguistic – or post-linguistic – consent and the primacy of humanly-performed behaviour. I analyse a few passages where Dougie enacts their post-linguistic subjectivity. Dougie was repeatedly questioned and interdicted because of their 'strange' acts.

Dougie Jones acted 'strangely' – he rarely spoke or used complex phrases in his societal interactions. In other academic publications, he was described as a 'trance-like stupor' version of Agent Cooper (Grønstad 2020, 124). I discuss Dougie's narrative role to exemplify how bodies that are not neurologically typical are devalued by neurotypical society. Dougie Jones's tulpa cannot be classified as a neurodiverse body in the narrow sense of the term. However, Dougie's tulpa performs behaviours that do not reproduce typically structured methods of social and work-related performance.

The empty vessel[1] schema mirrors a common trope regarding people in the neurodiverse spectrum. As Melanie Yergeau (2018, 73) says, concerning the Autism Speaks co-founder Suzanne Wright, "in other words, Wright suggests, autistic people are mere husks, fleshy orbs who breathe and dwell and exist, but whose presence is not accurately termed living." Dougie's interests do not rely on fulfilling the typical standardised patterns of communication. The media and film scholar Matt Hills (2017, 7) defined Dougie Jones as "a 'shell' of false identity: He is depicted as unable to speak, beyond repeating the ends of others' sentences, and is unable to recall his own identity and history". From now on, when referring to Dougie Jones, I point to the tulpa that inhabited Dougie's body.

Image 2. Dougie Jones thrives on black coffee.

Despite not behaving like her husband's previous iteration, Janey-Y sent Dougie to their job, a big insurance company in Los Angeles (*Twin Peaks: The Return*, Part 5). When arriving in the complex where the company is located, Dougie started to explore the environment. Dougie did not walk in straight lines or with a clear purpose in the eyes of their employers. Dougie bumped into an insurance company assistant (Video 2), who was carrying a pile of coffee cups straight from the coffeeshop.

Video 2. Dougie Elevator Scene.

Dougie's body was captured by the gravity of the strong smell of coffee and moved their head towards their lids. The assistant mentioned that Dougie was late for a meeting, but his attention remains on the coffee cups. He walks towards the elevators, and Dougie follows – the coffee, not the person. Dougie enters the elevator, and their face looks to the back of the elevator, not into the other passengers' faces. This gesture caused some discomfort on these individuals who were not used to non-typical socialites that detour face-to-face conversations. Suddenly, Dougie's head was propelled in a different direction while he utters one of the few words he learned after being manufactured as a tulpa: "C-O-F-F-E-E." The assistant said, "I am sorry, Dougie, I didn't get one for you." However, Dougie does not respond to linguistic modalities of consent. Instead, he followed his appetites, and his arms reach toward a cup of coffee, disregarding the names written on the coffee cups. When the coffee finally touches Dougie's mouth, an orgasmic sound echoes. He drank a large cup of coffee in one sip, impressing the other passengers in the elevator and repeating the phrase said by his assistant: "A DAMN GOOD JOE." Dougie communicated and expressed his desires by repeating the exact phrases and bodily movements that his peers did not understand. Repetition is discarded from the typically ableist understanding of intentionality, or a post-linguistic subject, as Ballas (2019) asserted:

> Dougie (Dale Cooper's 'tulpa') is a post-linguistic subject who has no memory of language, and must relearn simple tasks like eating, drinking and social cues. However, Dougie's amnesia does not result in a lack of agency, but rather enhances his abilities—as though he has pure, unmediated access to reality, is able to divine the truth, and ultimately access knowledge of the real beyond the subjective frame. (Ballas, 2019, 123)

Image 3. Dougie in the elevator.

Other interpretations of Dougie's performance diminish his mode of being: "Dougie's blank intoning of linguistic tropes from the original show, always slightly off-key, gestures tantalisingly toward something that is and *will remain absent*" (Jones, 2020, p. 10; our remark) or medicalise his existence, by affirming that Dougie represents Lynch's "fantastical connotations of dementia" (Hills, 2017, p. 01). The previous phrase may express the common understanding of intentionality. As there is no clear objective in linguistic or bodily language easily readable by neurotypicals, one assumes a lack of it. It is absent. Eventually, 'non-normal behaviour is pathologised, deemed dangerous and unpredictable, as it does not fit onto the grid of controlled expectations of a control society (Deleuze, 1990), where a network of devices survey deviant behaviours.

I highlight the ending credits of *Twin Peaks: The Return,* Part 5 (Video 3). Dougie stares at a statue located in the parking lot/entrance of the insurance company that employs him. His fixed gaze towards the statue lasts for a long time, while Dougie slowly explores the monument's toes by gently touching them. That simple gesture, without a clear intention, was enough to activate the hyper-policialised society's alarm, as a guard of the company arrives and tries to inform Dougie that he is not allowed to stay there after the working hours. The credits start rolling over Dougie's apparent stuckness, and Johnny Jewel's *Windswept* plays in the background while the last lights of the complex of buildings are turned off. The artist-researcher Jaime del Val connects this constant personal and interpersonal vigilance to the bodily postures and non-linguistic rhetorical signs of human bodies to a fixed model of vision that emerged during the Renaissance. According to him, "this model, that is still grounding

our cameras and screen-based interfaces in digital culture, allows to reduce movement to segments that can be codified, first in strict behavioural patterns and architectures" (Del Val 2020, 315).

Video 3. Ending credits of *Twin Peaks: The Return,* Part 5.

On a broader level, agency, as a concept, is understood by new materialist epistemologies as a distributed phenomenon that happens through intra-actions (Barad, 2003). Therefore, agency is not restricted to the intentionality of a singular individual. Nevertheless, it is still essential to understanding the nuances of the empty vessel schema. There are bodies read as empty vessels incapable of societal interaction, like Dougie. In that understanding, intentionality is only read as expressing clear linguistic order words in English. As I wrote (Kuipers & Trento, 2018), Dougie Jones' non-normativity disrupts daily life's behavioural and normative constraints. when Dougie intends to do something, "it's not through linguistic and social techniques. (…) There's not "I want," not at least as a voice that passes through their throat, but as a movement-moving, their body tending towards a piece of pie or a black cup of joe". (Kuipers & Trento, 2018).

Intent and non-typical rhetoricities in post-linguistic subjects

In this article, I draw on Neurodiversity Studies as they offer a robust framework for deconstructing the normative understandings of rhetoric that Dougie did not fulfil. The following paragraphs illustrate the current growing body of literature on neurodiversity and my experience as a person on the spectrum of neurodiversity. While there are several

definitions regarding the neurodiverse spectrum range, I advocate for a broader understanding of it. It encompasses not only those diagnosed or identified with the spectrum of autism but also the body-minds with ADHD and non-typical ways of focusing, and those who suffer from anxiety and depression disorders. In general, one could say that any non-normative mode of behaviour could be assigned to the spectrum of neurodiversity. Importantly, though, is to reaffirm that each condition/mode of being has its particularities/necessities that shall not be ignored.

Melanie Yergeau's (2018) book *Authoring Autism: On Neurological Queerness* explores how neuroqueer perception is often discursively de-rhetorised. Moreover, in its most normative sense, rhetoric embraces a distinct sense of perception of intentionality. One mechanism that aims to exclude neurodiverse bodies from the rhetorical realm is the affirmation that they cannot express intentionality. Intentionality is understood as a solely linguistic feature tuned to a particularly normative mode of sociality, which diminishes the agential potential of the non-human relationalities. The intent is only evaluated when it is clearly spoken, and when it is "offered in conjunction with the neuroqueer, it becomes illegible: we only know what intent is when that intent is read via pro-social measures" (Yergeau, 2018, 37). Nowadays, many practisers of ABA (Applied Behavioural Analysis), the most recognised therapy for neurodiverse persons in the Americas, still see neurodiverse bodies as lacking intentionality. In sum, Yergeau systematises intentionality as a linguistic or non-linguistic system expressions of inference:

> If we were to define intentionality rather simply, we might cast it as that toward which we turn as well as the action of turning-toward unto itself. Intentionality encompasses both the process of inference and the physical action of communicating or making that inference known. It is determined by both cause and effect, the latter of which is made recognisable on the body—through speech, through gesture, through gaze, through paralinguistic cues such as throat clearing, or feet shuffling, or kiss blowing. (Yergeau 2018, p. 37)

The issue lies in intentionality being only read in the typically spoken language or in gestural codes that rely on a neurotypical causality [i.e., I smile *because* I am happy]. Also, in "neuronormative Western cultures, on the other hand, are more likely to demand eye contact as a sign of respect or attention, demand' quiet hands' as a sign of being ready to learn (Bascom 2011) and prioritise speech over other forms of communication." (Hillary 2020, 97).

The compulsory withdrawal of the intent from the neurodiverse perception dehumanises people on the spectrum, posing them as non-subjects. If intent cannot be detected in somebody's speaking, it is deemed non-existent. Melanie Yergeau explains that intent "isn't empirically visible in the way that flapping fingers are; nor is meaning as neutrally descriptive as fingers moving back and forth, or fingers thumbing the air, or fingers fluttering over the eyes of an autistic interlocutor" (Yergeau 2018, 145). While these non-typical demonstrations of intent are hardly noticed in many social situations, they suffer several attempts of categorisation by the standardised state apparatuses. However, "what finger motions mean cannot be contained in a graph, plotted as an average, or intuited by means of physical observation. However, finger motions can be contained, extinguished, reinforced, prompted, faded, shaped, or otherwise brought into compliance" (Yergeau 2018, 145).

In her dissertation, the Critical Disability Studies scholar Emily Clark (2013) analysed the representation of deafness in the literature of the 1980s. Clark problematises the compulsory implicit and collective understanding that the expression of an internal feeling can be only made through a linguistic utterance. Instead of categorising individuals by their ability to perform language normatively, which may solidify the ableist divide between the able and non-able bodies, Clark (2013, 12) proposes alternative categories:

- Bodies with language (specifically English), and without languae (mute, unintelligible).
- Bodies with "correct" language (grammatically-correct, understandable, "appropriate"), and with "incorrect" language (cursing, screaming, "sloppy" grammar).
- Bodies that communicate verbally; bodies that communicate non-verbally.
- Literate bodies; barely literate bodies; illiterate bodies.
- Bodies that chose to read, and those that chose not to read.

The notion of post-linguistic subjectivity converges with the post-linguistic turn in the social sciences and humanities during the 1980s. It vouched to overcome the structuralist paradigm, which posited the discursivities as societal construction's leading agents. In a structuralist framework, "where there is reason, there is a subject" has been replaced by "where there is language, there is a subject" (Wolfe 2003, 129, as quoted by Clark 2013, 68). In the TV series, Dougie Jones' post-linguistic subjectivity oscillates between 'bodies with incorrect language' and 'bodies that communicate non-verbally.' However, "language in the form of

representation, including literary representation specifically and evocatively, is a mechanism that has the capacity to humanise as well as to dehumanise" (Clark 2013, 68). Dougie has a lot to say in terms of non-linguistic modalities of intent. Let's take one of the scenes in which Dougie is attracted by the smell of a 'damn' cup of black coffee – a desire that emerged from the bodily memory of Agent Dale Cooper. His body moves towards the cups propelled by his obsessive appetite for that drink is an example to help the reader understand how the normative device of neurotypicality funnels all experience and expression. Both Dougie's stillness and his constant desire for more coffee and pie were pathologised. These are glitches that may disturb the 'correct' organisation of societal behaviour through neurotypical eyes. In cinema and TV, non-typical behaviour and post-linguistic subjects are mostly praised when they fulfil a goal of success, in terms of a successful career or the 'overcoming' of difficulties, as I will briefly discuss in the next section.

In the series, Dougie Jones had obsessions. Dougie frequently expressed his constant desire to eat cake, pies and drink large amounts of black coffee. Despite not being fully understood by his colleagues, his obsessions facilitated his working life. Dougie received messages from the lodge's entities through visions of them pointing to random points of his sight. In the first part of *Twin Peaks: The Return*, the entities are shown in the scenario of a casino, where they pointed the right directions to help Dougie win a large sum of money in the slot machines. With a pencil, Dougie drew a series of lines over the insurance company's spreadsheets back at the insurance company. The drawing helped his boss unveil a fraudulent internal schema of corruption and the workers responsible for the non-appropriate behaviour were purged. When the owner of the insurance company, Bushnell Williams, invited Dougie into his room, he promptly understood what Dougie's drawings meant without requiring the utterance of complex spoken phrases. This gesture embodies not only acceptance but engagement with post-linguistic modalities of communication, acknowledging that "there are bodies who will never speak, or at least, will never speak in recognisable human language" (Clark 2013, 15). As I have written, "perhaps revealing in typicality, but the lines are just lines as much as red is just red. To draw just a line means not to parse all of the abstractions into its act or to rely on pure habit. It is just a line in the drawing of the event, while simultaneously its ingression" (Kuipers & Trento, 2018).
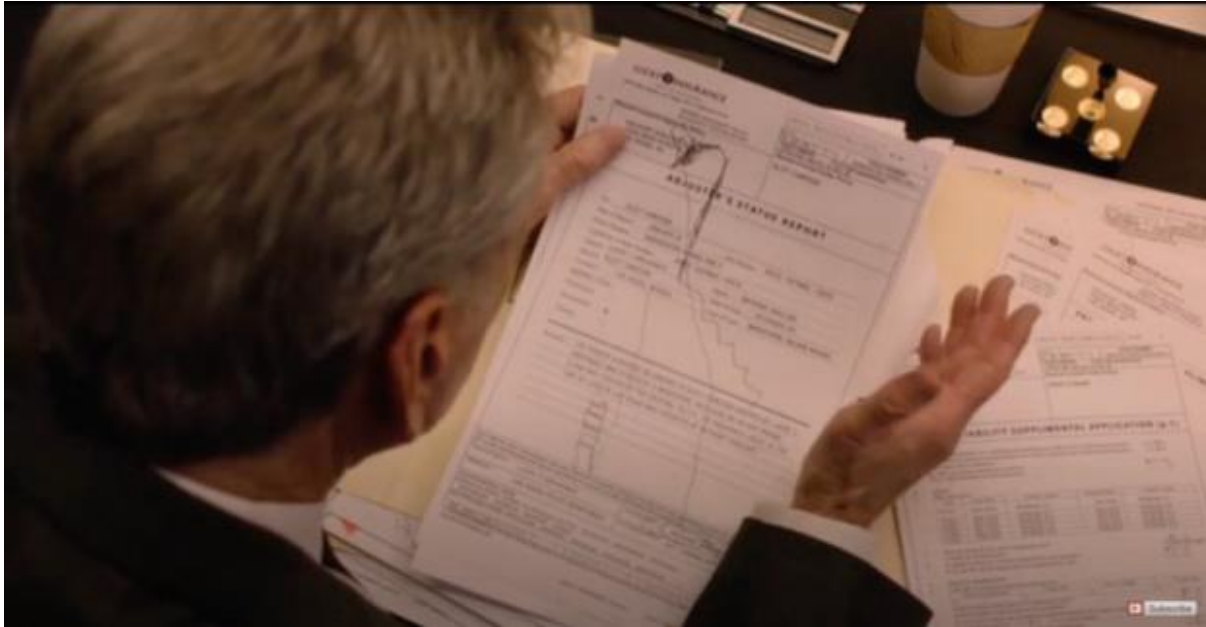
Image 4. Dougie's drawings.

On another occasion – *Twin Peaks: The Return*, Part 13 – Dougie Jones was summoned by Anthony Sinclair (interpreted by Tom Sizemore) for a coffee date in the insurance company's café. Sinclair aimed to kill Dougie Jones by poisoning his coffee, as Dougie's drawings revealed the latter was involved in a corruption scheme. The character walked towards a display filled with several apple pies in the scene. Dougie's eyes immediately focused on the pies. When asked by the attendant, he could not speak out his intentions of eating the pie. When the attendant said he could sit down and have a coffee while waiting for the pie at the table, Dougie promptly changed his direction towards the table as if some keywords activated his movement. In the following scene, Dougie promptly takes the cup of coffee not destinated to him and puts his hands on Sinclair's neck, changing his mind. Later, Sinclair decided to confess his involvement in the corruption scandal.

Dougie defied the expected entelechy for a character manufactured for a purpose, a body with "incorrect" language (cursing, screaming, "sloppy" grammar)", according to Clark's (2013, 12) previously-mentioned categorisation. An excellent concept to describe Dougie's entelechy always-in-becoming is the Dogon egg, as it was conceptualised by the French Post-Structuralist philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. For them, the construction of one's self and subjectivity mirrors the development of an egg yet-to-be-hatched: "the egg is the milieu of pure intensity, spatium not extension, Zero intensity as principle of production" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 164). While the egg contains the genetic information, which will determine most of an individual's phenotypical features, they are present in intensity, as they are subject to several contingencies. The egg "always designates this intensive reality, which

is not undifferentiated, but is where things and organs are distinguished solely by gradients, migrations, zones of proximity" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 164). When post-linguistic subjects are stigmatised, their entelechy refers to a life with precarious agency and not much room for deviations from a master plan. Dougie was created to be easily manipulated, but the intensities present in his subjectivity helped dismantle the goals from the entities of the Black Lodge.

Dougie's representation on screen brought discomfort to some spectators. One may argue that Dougie's character carries the perspective of comic relief. However, his persistence in the series, to the detriment of the appearance of the real Cooper – who 'appeared' only during the last two episodes-, emphasises David Lynch's interest in the post-linguistic modalities of rhetoric present in his most recent short films. A segment of the audience as well as some of the characters in the third instalment did not fully grasp the non-linguistic rhetorical potential of the tulpas and post-linguistic subjects. However, post-linguistic subjects take part in the social realm. They need better inclusion frameworks that rely less on their ridiculing and more on recognising their modes of being as valid onto-epistemological systems of belief. Neurodiversity and post-linguistic subjects are not simultaneous or the same. However, they may eventually overlap, as the oppressions of the shared collectivity of non-able bodies also overlap. In the next section, I briefly turn to the representation of some non-typical traits in contemporary television and film.

It is happening again – estigmatising atypical rhetoricities on screen

Repetition is one of the most well-known traits of neurodiversity and other non-typical modes of being. It may refer to some gestures repeatedly enacted or known as stimming. It is often framed as 'obsessive behaviour.' Obsession is also often connected to 'hyperfocus' (Ashinoff & Abu-Akel 2019, p. 09): "(1) hyperfocus is induced by task engagement; (2) hyperfocus is characterised by an intense state of sustained or selective attention; (3) During a hyperfocus state, there is a diminished perception of non-task relevant stimuli; and (4) During a hyperfocus state, task performance improves". In this article, I am not particularly interested in the possible biological causality that results in hyper-focusing. I am interested in societal responses to a mode of being that embraces hyper-focusing and often fails into including

them into the work and social life. In the cinema, hyper-focus is often represented as a 'superpower,' while there is also a trend of framing it as an advantage at work.

As Malcolm Matthews (2019) has written in the article 'Why Sheldon Cooper can't be black', neurodiverse subjects are often represented as white-male and heterosexual savants who hold extensive knowledge in mathematics, physics, coding and the hard sciences in general. They are portrayed as lacking the desire to interact with other humans—especially sexually. This prominent representation excludes an incredibly diverse pool of identities that may fit into the neurodiverse spectrum, who's neurodiversity is never considered due to the significant tendency of assuming that the autism spectrum only includes white male individuals. That is the case of the protagonist of *The Big Bang Theory* (CBS, 2007-2019) TV show, where Sheldon Cooper (Jim Parsons) is on the spectrum of autism (Rourke & McGloin 2019). Sheldon is portrayed as a genius who obtained his PhD in theoretical physics as a teenager and disliked social agglomerations and sexual contact. This tendency grows on an old trope from the Applied Behavioural Analysis that fashions autism as an extreme-male disorder, while psychosis would be a female mental characteristic (Yergeau 2018).

Like Netflix's *Atypical* (2018), and in other shows, generally well-received by the neurodiverse community, the main character Sam is an 18-year-old teenager who seeks to engage in a romantic heterosexual relationship with a colleague. In the American medical drama *The Good Doctor* (ABC, 2017-), the representation of autistic savantism and the inability to read social and bodily cues reappears, as the main character "Shawn Murphy is a young, genius surgical resident characterised as being inappropriate with patients, but able to decipher medical complications other surgeons cannot solve because of his autism." (Audley 2020, 5).

These non-typical characters still successfully express intentionality by 'passing', performing as neurotypical, despite the emotional distress it can cause. In other words, they reach towards their entelechy of success. There is a particular common understanding of what 'reaching towards' (Manning 2007) means that needs to be deconstructed. Dougie's touching expresses intentionality and cannot be only read through terms of uncertainty or dangerousness, as the danger of a 'strange' being that touches other people without pre-agreed linguistic consent. Linguistic consent must not be the measure of all intentionality, as it excludes beings who communicate and perceive differently than the norm. These modes of being are often represented in the mainstream audio-visual field as dangerous and creepy. I

advocate for the creepy to become the crip, as in Crip Theory (Puar 2017). This academic field aims to foreground the non-abled ontologies and analyse how societal devices and discursivities mould the normative modes of being. There is nothing wrong or lacking in being crip, as queer activism reassigned the term 'queer'. There is a need for more intersectionality in portraying and analysing fictional and non-fictional characters in audio-visual media.

An example of post-linguistic subjectivity's portrayal refers to Samira Makhmalbaf's protagonists in *Sib* (Iran, 1998): two sisters raised in an enclosed environment without being introduced to language. In the film, the camera follows their 'release' into the society after and portrays their communication with Tehran's inhabitants without the utterance of fully formed words. There is a growing body of literature in academia that recognised the importance of this intersectionality. It interweaves between Deaf Studies and Neurodiversity Studies to modalities of communication "beyond the category of languages in general – and this is perhaps where autistic scholars and researchers attending to stimming (practices such as flapping arms, humming, spinning, playing with a rubber band, knitting, doodling, and tapping a foot" (Friedner and Block 2017, 287).

Conclusion: some considerations

In this article, I aimed to test some notions emerging in Neurodiversity Studies and Critical Disability Studies in film and television research. The concept of tulpa, and its portrayal in the series, helped examine the understanding of intentionality that stigmatises post-linguistic subjects. In *Twin Peaks: The Return*, Dougie's portrayal as deviant from his purpose and utilitarian entelechy – "someone manufactured you, for a purpose, which now has been fulfilled" – and the unpreparedness of his peers to understand his more-than-linguistic modes of communication mirror the failure of societal organisations on dealing with the traits of neurodiversity.

While *at any moment, Dougie Jones' journey was recognised as a narrative of neurodiversity*, the analysed scenes express that it is essential to posit and vouch for a broader understanding of the spectrum of neurodiversity in film and television fictional portrayals. In this sense, revisiting the concept of neurodiversity, as Judy Singer crafted, may help broaden the inclusivity and embrace individuals who communicate differently from standards of normalcy. As I mentioned (Trento 2020), Robert Chapman's approach (2020) to

neurodiversity is pragmatically valuable for those who identify with the spectrum. The author connects neurodiversity and autism, in particular, to a serial collective. This collectivity is not attached to an identitarian paradigm. It is a shared experience of oppression that can be transitory or permanent. The serial collective, as a notion, was created by the political theorist Iris Marion Young: "serial collectives are defined in light of shared external material factors that mutually affect each member of the collective, regardless of whether they identify or not" (Chapman 2020, 12).

Film and Television Studies lack discussing neuroqueer minorities and post-linguistic subjects. Dougie Jones' problematisation around the empty vessel model is a prolific point of entry into the debate on the representation of post-linguistic subjects' intentionality in film and TV studies. The concept of "post-linguistic subjectivity" (Ballas 2019) needs further development, but it aligns with the post-linguistic turn in the Humanities. It also requires more audio-visual production that expresses neurodiverse subjects' neurodiverse perception. One could argue that Dougie Jones's character was developed as comic relief and therefore ridiculed. However, as I have exemplified here, post-linguistic subjectivities are represented through success and *overcoming* stories that tend to reproduce the mantra of 'keep failing until you succeed,' excluding the bodies who cannot attain dominant behavioural standards.

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Notes

[1] A tulpa's body is a vessel. A vessel, or a repository, is a common trope in several Western and Non-Western belief systems. The vessel does not possess any utility quality, as its function is *carrying* and *delivering* a message or fulfilling a purpose. In Christianity, "the metaphor of a liturgical leader as an empty vessel signifies openness and receptivity to divine authority and to act on behalf of Jesus Christ" (Slater 2020, 1) – "Jesus called Paul 'a chosen vessel of Mine to bear my name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel' (Ac 9:15)" (Slater, 2020, 1).