

**INTERACTION IN THE RADIO NEWS INTERVIEW: A  
CASE STUDY OF BBC RADIO 4'S THE TODAY  
PROGRAMME AND THE HUMAN FERTILISATION  
AND EMBRYOLOGY ACT 2008**

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## Abstract

News interviews are core within current practices of journalism. They point to the existence of a mediated public space and bolster the concept of democratic accountability. This research investigates what impact these concepts have on the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme (BBC Radio 4) and how interaction within them invoked the public. The programme has a responsibility to uphold the democratic life of the UK, making it a compelling focus of research. The case study examined in this thesis is the broadcast of news interviews concerning the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 (HFEA 2008) and how they shaped representations of the biomedical techniques contained within the legislation. In particular, research investigated what the news interviews reveal about the biological citizen: a specific configuration of citizenship increasingly important in the twenty first century.

The research method is Conversation Analysis and the news interviews as broadcast are the empirical data on which findings are based. The study contributes to the understanding of the method through the investigation of the structural organisation of the news interviews and how this affected interaction.

Findings suggest that the news interviews on the *Today* programme highlights the political dimensions of the HFEA 2008, that interviewees were predominantly MPs or public figures and that the gender ratio is skewed towards male voices. It points to the fact that the programme prefers news interviews that contain two interviewees, as this promotes adversarial encounters within interaction. Research also establishes how interviewers have at their disposal a range of devices, such as third party citations, which they use within questions in order to achieve a neutral posture. A further set of findings uncovers the need of interviewees to maintain a positive image of themselves, employing politeness strategies in order to co-operate when answering a question.

## List of Abbreviations

CA	- Conversation Analysis
CQ	- Carolyn Quinn
ED	- Evan Davis
ES	- Edward Stourton
ESRC	- Economic and Social Research Council
HFEA	- Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority
HFEA 1990	- Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990
HFEA 2008	- Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008
IVF	- In vitro fertilisation
JH	- John Humphrys
JN	- James Naughtie
MP	- Member of Parliament
MRC	- Medical Research Council
PiGD	- Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis
PSB	- Public Service Broadcasting
SCNT	- Somatic cell nuclear transfer
SM	- Sarah Montague
SMC	- Science Media Centre

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction: The News Interview on the *Today* Programme

In 1997 Jeremy Paxman, presenter on BBC TV's flagship current affairs programme *Newsnight* (1989-2014), interviewed a former British Home Secretary and high ranking politician, Michael Howard. The focus of Paxman's questioning was whether Howard had put pressure on the head of Her Majesty's Prison Service to sack one of the service's prison governors. In the interview, Paxman repeated the same question to Howard a total of fourteen times: 'Did you threaten to overrule him?' This question, and what was seen to be Howard's evasion of the answer, caused the interaction in the interview to overshadow the original news story and become a news event in its own right. Michael Howard was left struggling to recover his political standing after the interview. For Jeremy Paxman, the encounter led to celebrity status and the accolade 'Interviewer of the Year' from the Royal Television Society. The interview became so significant in the arena of political communication within the UK that when Paxman left *Newsnight* in 2014, Howard had a comic cameo in Paxman's final programme re-enacting the episode.

A contemporary of Paxman, John Humphrys, has a similar reputation for the aggressive questioning of politicians. Humphrys is one of the presenters of the BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme and it is this kind of reputation, of 'attack journalism' (Sabato 2000, p. 41), along with the programme's focus on democratic accountability, which makes *Today* of "significant reputational importance to the BBC's impartial and independent scrutiny of UK politics" (BBC Trust 2011b, pp. 62-63). *Today* occupies the peak breakfast-time slot on Radio 4: a radio station whose remit from the BBC includes "in-depth news and current affairs" (BBC Trust 2015). The programme has a national audience reach of more than seven million listeners a week (BBC 2015) and is known for its "hard-hitting news reporting and interviewing with a political focus" (Wahl-Jorgensen et al. 2013, p. 78). One of the reasons for this is the daily interviews with cabinet ministers, politicians and other government representatives within the programme.

In this introductory chapter, I present a rationale as to why the news interview is a suitable subject for research and analysis. The news interview is a media product and therefore worthy of study in its own right, but it becomes even more significant when part of the programming output of one of the UK's foremost public sector broadcasters, the BBC. Here questions of how the news interview invokes the public

and fulfils the BBC's responsibility towards democracy and citizenship become central. Not only that, but the fact that the news interview is a routine device within the *Today* programme, the flagship programme of one of the BBC's most important radio stations, makes the question of the suitability of research even more central.

The research has a further distinction in that I chose to use the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 (hereafter abbreviated to HFEA 2008) as a case study. The HFEA 2008 was highly controversial and sought to legalise techniques used in assisted reproduction technologies, such as the 'hybrid embryo' and 'saviour sibling'. The legalisation of biomedical techniques, and the public's responses to them, were thought to be one of the most "esoteric" issues of the early twenty first century (Hargreaves et al. 2003, p. 11). This chapter goes on to present the context to this Act and the specific features that make it ideal to use as a case study. After that, I outline the research method and key questions and present the structure of the thesis.

### ***1.1 Rationale for analysis of the news interview***

Interviews are at the heart of all forms of journalism and, in particular, the routines of news production. Practitioners of journalism, such as Jim Beaman (2000, p. 12), advise students that quotations or sound bites gathered from sources during interviews help illustrate stories in ways that appeal to audiences. This is because the inclusion of voices, other than that of the journalist, promotes ideas of democracy through: *representation; authority; credibility; bias* and *neutrality* (Keeble 2001, pp. 43-44). The use of sources within interviews upholds the notion of *representation*, as views articulated are heard as being representative of the interests or preferences of a cross-section of people. *Representation* is linked to *authority* and *credibility*. Because sources articulate the views of the body or institution they represent, they have the *authority* to speak. The more people they speak on behalf of, the more *authority* they are perceived to have. Sources also understand the subject they are talking about, either through personal experience or expertise and are therefore, *credible* witnesses too. Sources help journalists navigate notions of *bias* and *neutrality*, as the articulations of others enables the journalist to distance themselves from what is being said.

Journalists condense, contextualise and frame the words of sources. However, because radio is an aural medium, it means that those being interviewed get the opportunity to articulate their points *directly* to the audience. Interviews are

broadcast either live or as live and this factor is a powerful attraction, as it gives participants the opportunity to potentially steer the ongoing discussions towards their particular viewpoints. As a journalistic device, the interview has become an essential part of radio broadcasting. Beaman (2000, p. 6) suggests that this is because the interview “offers the opportunity to hear the interviewee’s own words, their tone of voice and characteristics of delivery”. When included as a regular feature of news and current affairs programming, the interview is usually referred to as a *news interview* and it is this term that is used throughout the thesis.

As a format, the news interview is popular with programme production teams because it is cheap to produce and embodies the “qualities of “spontaneity” and “liveliness” that audience members are believed to like” (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 2). It contains an *interviewer* and at least one *interviewee* and these roles routinely observe a clearly defined set of social conventions. Because of the unscripted nature of the news interview, meaning is created through interaction on a moment-by-moment basis. This is not to suggest that participants do not have agendas they wish to pursue, but the capacity for either interviewer or interviewee to realise those agendas is “thoroughly contingent on the conduct of the other party” (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 6). This provides a rationale for why the news interview is worthy of study. Not just because of the fact that the news interview is a media product, but because it contains tacit understandings and the existence of distinct identities involved in its transmission. This makes the news interview an institutional practice, as well as a cultural practice. However, it is another purpose: that of the engagement of the public in democratic deliberation where a further justification arises. It is this purpose and its relationship to public sector broadcasting that is addressed in the next rationale.

### **1.1.2 Rationale for the analysis of BBC programming**

Steven Clayman and John Heritage (2002, p. 2) claim that the news interview is a “significant component in the contemporary public sphere” and a forum which provides for the “immediate scrutiny of citizens”. Such a position implies that the news interview is instrumental in equipping citizens with the necessary tools to participate in public democratic life. All democratic theories start from the assumption that, in order for a democracy to function adequately, citizens must contribute to decision-making within society. To fulfil this obligation, citizens need awareness and knowledge of the complexities surrounding issues. Understanding what options they have in relation to those issues comes from rational debate.

People can only “choose wisely” once they have been introduced to unfamiliar “arguments they won’t necessarily have come across” (Hendy 2013, p. 22) and it is crucial that such debate takes place in public. Therefore media, through its ability to gain access to the homes of private citizens, has become the prerequisite of public citizenship.

As a public sector broadcaster, this prerequisite is even more vital for the BBC. Founded on the Enlightenment project of the “cultivation of a reasoning, deliberative approach to human affairs”, it is for these public purposes that the BBC was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1927 (Hendy 2013, p. 8). The direct vestige of that Enlightenment project endows the BBC in 2015 with the responsibility of being one of the “bearers of democracy’s political communication beyond face-to-face settings” (Dahlgren 2009, p. 2). In respect of this responsibility, the BBC claims that ‘sustaining citizenship and civil society’ is the highest of its public purposes (BBC Trust 2011b, p. 60). Michael Kaye (2014), who was a former Producer, Programme Editor and Head of Service at the BBC says that, when he attended his first BBC training course, he was left in no doubt that one of the primary aims of broadcasting was to further the knowledge of the listener and that his approach to broadcasting should be on the basis that “the listener was intelligent enough to wish to acquire the necessary knowledge to be a well-informed and active citizen”.

Public service broadcasters, such as the BBC, can play a key role in shaping citizens’ understandings of issues that affect society. Such issues would include information regarding the biomedical techniques contained within the HFEA 2008. This understanding has further implications when seen through the prism of scientific citizenship and the Public Understanding of Science. Recently the scientific establishment, in conjunction with successive governments, have stressed the importance for citizens to understand science. This knowledge, they argue, would make citizens better functioning employees in the workplace, would enable people to make better decisions regarding consumer technology products and be able to make informed decisions regarding the uptake of new technologies and how they affect society. This scientific knowledge is seen as vital to the economy and prosperity of the UK.

In 1985, a report produced by the Royal Society on the public’s understanding of science, concluded that the public lacked factual knowledge of scientific matters and this perceived ignorance was thought to impede public acceptance of scientific and technological innovation. According to the report, part of the problem lay in the

communication of science. In order to put this right, the media were considered to be key in facilitating the communication of scientific endeavour. It was argued that communication with the public would create better-informed citizens and, as a consequence, the public would have a greater commitment to scientific pursuit.

Since the Royal Society's report, the media have come under much scrutiny over the reporting of science, the misrepresentation of scientific fact and the influence this misrepresentation has on public opinion. Although the BBC's overall coverage of science was described by Professor Steven Jones as "exemplary" in his review of the impartiality and accuracy of the BBC's coverage of science (BBC Trust 2011a, p. 70), the BBC was not immune from criticism regarding its reporting of some issues, such as the MMR story. In particular, Jones highlighted how attempts to report both sides of an argument gave too much airtime to "marginal opinions" (BBC Trust 2011a, p. 16). In his view, this meant that unscientific views were distorted in value and given equal weight to empirical scientific fact. This was thought to have a consequential negative effect on the public's understanding of the matter.

Hargreaves and his colleagues (Hargreaves et al. 2003, p. 4) conducted a survey on the public understanding of scientific issues and found that 68% of respondents felt that they were ill-informed about "genetic medical research". Whilst most respondents could link cloning to stem cell research and to the curing of diseases (as opposed to the producing of a human clone), they were confused about public policy in the area. Thus the question of whether the public understood the issues surrounding the HFEA 2008 is a crucial one. The survey also reported that people found trends in genetic research worrying. These results raise questions about the quality of information that people are given about new reproductive, genetic and biomedical technologies. The fact that people do not feel adequately informed about scientific research in these areas and lack understanding of public policy, is particularly problematic for the BBC, who exist to serve the public interest.

In *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy* (1998), James Fallows claims that programmes which are supposed to aid the public understanding of such issues, may in fact actually reduce understanding (Fallows, 1998, p. 20). This is largely due to trends in programming content and formats, including the news interview, which foreground partisan squabbling. Rather than emphasising a structure that facilitates citizens being able to "deal with worrisome collective problems" (Fallows, 1998, p. 31), producers instead promote conflict;

encouraging participants to disagree. Thus, participants in news interviews are confined to becoming adversaries in what amounts to a sporting contest.

According to John Lloyd (2004, p. 112) abrasive interviewing styles, practised by presenters such as John Humphrys on the *Today* programme, exacerbate this conflict, as news interviews often “draw heat, but shed no light”. Fallows calls this trend “hyper-adversarialism” (Fallows 1998, p.165) and argues that such contests are out of touch with how people experience life (Fallows 1998, p. 264). Even more troubling, however, is the argument that ‘hyper-adversarialism’ is having a negative impact on democratic life, as encounters invite the audience to judge the performance of participants, rather than to encourage rational debate of the issue at hand (Lloyd, 2004, p. 142). Because of the ability to talk directly to the audience, the news interview is important to public figures and politicians. However, the reliance on ‘hyper-adversarialism’ means that the public is potentially deprived of the opportunity to hear public figures discuss their ideas and policies. Instead, in order to equip themselves for the contest, interviewees have “acquired shields” (Lloyd 2004, p. 14).

These come in the shape of media training designed to make them bland, or guarded, or able to change the subject, and/or in the person of media handlers, who seek to minimize damage and choice. Both sides assume bad faith: the interviewer assumes evasion, at worst deceit; the interviewee assumes concentration on sore points, at worst a fight from which the interviewer would normally emerge the winner. The irony here is increasingly obvious: a technique to elicit information and increase clarity produces the smoke of battle and the fog of war (Lloyd 2004, p. 14).

The claim by Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 2) that the news interview is a “significant component in the contemporary public sphere” allowing citizens to participate in public debate provided this study with an initial rationale for inquiry. This factor is particularly relevant considering the notions of citizenship and democratic deliberation that underpin the public purposes of the BBC. However, ideas concerning ‘hyper-adversarialism’ and the promotion of conflict within programming content, gives the rationale more of an imperative. Of further significance is the context of the public understanding of scientific issues, along with the Royal Society’s desire for citizens to be better informed: any emphasis on conflict within the news interviews would imply that this potentially was lacking where the HFEA 2008 was concerned. It is with these concepts in mind that the next section focuses on the reputation of *Today* programme itself and why it is worthy of study.

### **1.1.3 Rationale for the analysis of the *Today* programme**

Another reason for my interest in conducting this research is the fact that, for seventeen years, I worked for *BBC World Service* as a Studio Manager and Studio Producer. During this time, I recorded news interviews on a regular basis, but never reflected on my participation within the routines of journalism or radio production. Although I wasn't employed directly to work on the production team of the *Today* programme, I often edited and recorded its content and was very aware of its status as the flagship programme of *BBC Radio News* output.

The breakfast programme is the most important for any radio station, because it usually has the highest listening figures. It is also thought to establish the station's identity (Fleming 2002: 46). Around two-thirds of Radio 4's audience listens to *Today* and the programme is thought to be "vital in driving listeners to Radio 4" (BBC Trust 2011b, p. 62). It is for this reason the *Today* programme sets the agenda for Radio 4 (BBC 2009). The programme has a team of presenters with distinct on-air personalities. At the time of the HFEA 2008, this included: John Humphrys; James Naughtie; Sarah Montague and Edward Stourton. Evan Davis (a former BBC Economics Editor, who left *Today* in 2014 and went on to succeed Jeremy Paxman on *Newsnight*) replaced Edward Stourton during 2008 and Carolyn Quinn (who presents other daytime BBC Radio 4 news and current affairs programmes) was an additional presenter over the Easter break.

The news interview is a normative device within the transmission of the programme. Interaction, resulting from question and answer sequences, renders the encounter potentially unpredictable and volatile and the production team believe that this unpredictability, along with any disagreement resulting from it, makes for a more entertaining programme for the audience (Jucker 1986, p. 61). In what appears to corroborate Fallows' claims regarding the trend towards "hyper-adversarialism" (1998, p. 165), Andreas Jucker (1986, p. 61) cites evidence of the fact that most of the complaints levelled at the *Today* programme concern overly aggressive questioning. Indeed, in a recent review of Radio 4, the BBC Trust pointed to a similar finding as a result of public consultation. It claimed that the majority of complaints regarding aggressive questioning concerned the *Today* programme. However, although the BBC Trust acknowledges the public's concerns, in response they found no "compelling evidence" to suggest that this was the case (BBC Trust 2011b, p. 64).

The production team's potential encouragement of aggressive questioning may, in part, relate to the types of people who participate in the news interviews on the programme. Most are public figures: whether politicians; leaders of industry or the executive officers of organisations and institutions. Questioning public figures about their decisions, policies and how they affect society is thought to hold them accountable. As part of the programming output of a public sector broadcaster, and more importantly for the programme, is the fact that listeners hear these public figures being held to account. It is for this reason that the news interview is interconnected with political communication and the notion of democratic accountability. Through its reliance on the news interview as a dominant format, the *Today* programme is able to uphold the "prominent responsibility" to provide insight into the democratic life of the nation (BBC Trust 2011b, p. 62).

Outside of the *BBC*, Members of Parliament (MP's) also believe it to be the most influential broadcaster at setting political agendas and getting messages across to voters (BBC 2005). This suggests that MPs believe that there is a strong connection between what is contained within the *Today* programme and the constitutional and political processes of Parliament. This close association with political processes and the programmes' responsibility to the democratic life of the nation make the programme a compelling focus of research. The fact that the programme has added responsibilities as part of public sector broadcasting in the UK, and is required to promote citizenship within its public purposes, provides further rationale for the analysis of how the programme covers parliamentary stories. As the programme is dependent on the news interview as a format, it must invoke the public within them.

Further justification for the research into the news interviews on the *Today* programme is the broadcast medium itself. Andrew Tolson (2006: 3) describes radio as the "forgotten" medium and in particular research into news interviews within this medium is a much-neglected area of academic study. It is unclear as to why this is the case. Perhaps it is partly due to the complex nature and time consideration needed in the gathering of data for analysis, against the relative ease of accessing content from other media. I would argue that radio is an immensely rich medium in terms of the amount of analysable data regarding the public nature of broadcasting. It is for these reasons: the medium itself; the fact that *Today* is the flagship programme of a radio network considered to be a "major force" in news and current affairs (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 47) and its reputation of holding public figures to account makes the *Today* programme worthy of study.

#### **1.1.4 Rationale for the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008**

The final rationale for this research focuses on the case study of the HFEA 2008. Because the *Today* programme is broadcast six mornings a week, throughout the year, I had to establish parameters in order to produce a representative sample for analysis. The news interviews broadcast by the programme on the HFEA 2008 provided these parameters. As the news interviews were conducted specifically on the HFEA 2008, the sample and subsequent analysis encompassed the reporting of a complete story. Secondly, the news interviews tracked the passage of the Bill through Parliament and, therefore, provided the analysis with an example of the programme's treatment of one specific story or topical domain over a period of time. Not only that, but Hargreaves et al. (Hargreaves et al. 2003) claimed that, where science related stories were concerned, the *Today* programme often attempted to "tackle difficult issues avoided by the newspapers and television". Thus the news interviews broadcast by the programme on the HFEA 2008 provided this research with the rationale to use them as a case study.

The HFEA 2008 updated the existing 1990 Act and the Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985. In addition, the Act also replaced the Human Reproductive Cloning Act 2001. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill contained reference to the following:

1. ensuring that the creation and use of all human embryos outside the body – whatever the process used in their creation – are subject to regulation;
2. a ban on selecting the sex of offspring for non-medical reasons;
3. retention of a duty to take account of "the welfare of the child" when providing fertility treatment, but removal of the reference to "the need for a father";
4. provisions to recognise same-sex couples as legal parents of children conceived through the use of donated sperm, eggs or embryos;
5. provisions clarifying the scope of legitimate embryo research activities, including regulation of "human admixed embryos"<sup>1</sup> (embryos combining human and animal material) (White 2008, pp. 2-3).

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<sup>1</sup> The initial Bill contained the term "inter-species embryos" instead of "human admixed embryos", but this was changed whilst the Bill was in the House of Lords.

The statute was introduced by the government to ensure that assisted reproduction techniques kept up-to-date with scientific practice and as recognition of the fact that attitudes towards single and same sex parenting had changed since 1990. The Bill entered the House of Lords on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007, the House of Commons on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and received Royal Assent on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

It was the second reading of the Bill, which started on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008, which provided the headlines of the different elements of the HFEA 2008 into: 'hybrid embryos', 'saviour siblings', 'a child's need for a father' and 'abortion' and it is these that will be referred throughout this thesis. Voting took place at the end of the second reading on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May and the tabled motions to allow the creation of 'hybrid embryos' for research purposes and 'saviour siblings', along with the amendment of a child's 'need for a father' were passed. Debate on the upper time limit for abortion was not included in the initial Bill, but Conservative MP Nadine Dorries tabled an amendment to include this as part of the HFEA 2008. MPs did debate the upper time limit, but the legislation retained the status quo, as the original 1990 Act had already amended the Abortion Act 1967 and set the time limit to twenty four weeks.

Before the Bill was introduced into Parliament, discarded human embryos from the results of in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) techniques were used in biomedical research in order to produce stem cells. Cultured embryonic stem cells are 'undifferentiated', which means they have the capacity to divide into almost any kind of cell contained within the human body. This pluripotency make stem cells a highly valued resource for scientists and the hope of a cure became a "crucial commodity" in the hybrid embryo debate (Kitzinger and Williams, 2005, p.738). However human embryos, for use in research, were not easy to obtain. In order to overcome this shortage, it was proposed to legalise the creation of hybrid or human-animal admixed embryos for research purposes: animal embryos being more readily available within biomedical research. Although the manufacture of hybrid embryo varies, they are generally made from combining animal embryos with human cells, thus allowing scientists to use human embryos more effectively.

Stem cell technologies are highly controversial and raise existential questions regarding personhood, life/death and human/animal boundaries. There is increasing concern about how these boundaries are being negotiated and constructed (Kaufman and Morgan 2005, p. 318), as biomedicine increasingly draw on these marginal forms as sources of therapeutic procedures associated with disease and/or

ageing. The news interview on the HFEA 2008 came at the end of a period of intense media focus on biomedical stories, such as 'Dolly the Sheep' and the completion of the Human Genome Project. This media focus leads Evelyn Fox Keller (2000, p. 5) to claim that:

Today, the prominence of genes in both the general media and the scientific press suggests that in this new science of genomics, twentieth-century genetics has achieved its apotheosis.

In a climate where intense reporting of new reproductive and genetic technologies was taking place, it is not difficult to see why the production team of the *Today* programme would want to tackle the issues contained within the HFEA 2008 and it is for these reasons that the news interviews are used as the basis of a case study.

### ***1.2 Strong reflexivity: My interest in the study***

At this point, it is important to situate myself as the subject of knowledge. This involves recognising the extent to which my personal perspective, thoughts and actions are implicated in the decision to choose the HFEA 2008 as a case study. Sandra Harding (1993, p. 244) encourages that "the subject of knowledge be placed on the same critical, causal plane as 'the objects of knowledge'" and that "strong reflexivity" should be considered as part of the design process of any research study. Reflexivity has become increasingly important in social research (Etherington 2004, p. 30). This is because, in recent years, feminist and post-modern research methodologies have legitimised the position of self within research. The notion that our conceptual and interpretive frames for understanding the world are socially constructed has challenged positivist or foundational definitions of truth and reality. This has invited researchers to explore "how we know what we know" (Etherington 2004, p. 20). I understand reflexivity to mean positioning myself within this text and to include my story within the research. In doing so, I allow others to see my biases and how my life experiences have led to my interest in the topic. Kim Etherington (2004, p. 15) argues that reflexivity is particularly important for researchers whose focus is within medicine and related disciplines, such as disability studies. Although the focus of my research is not situated within either of these two disciplines per se, it does touch on the similar issues contained within them. Disability, and our relationship to it, is a complex one.

It was whilst listening to the *Today* programme's coverage of the progression of the Bill through Parliament, that prior experience made me consider how the coverage

of the HFEA 2008 by the programme could be the basis of my research. The creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes was cited as having the potential to cure conditions such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and diabetes. This argument had a personal bearing on me, as my teenage and early adult years were dominated by the fact that my father was diagnosed as having early onset vascular dementia or Alzheimer's (he eventually died from the consequences of this condition at the age of 59). On the one hand, scientific and medical research aimed at the curing of disease is to be commended. I have no doubt about that. However, on the other hand, I honestly believe that the experience of living with a father who had vascular dementia has made me the person I am today. I agree with Jessica Evans (1999, p. 275) when she says that: "It is as if having a physical or mental impairment is the defining feature of a person". There were sad times towards the end of his life, but the fact that my father had to give up work early, due to ill-health, meant that I got to spend more time with him at this stage in my life. During this period, there was lots of laughter and I have fond memories of this time. Therefore, to find a cure for such a condition, in some way, negates my father's life and the person that I have become. In *The Importance of Disappointment*, Ian Craib (1994, p. VII) states that:

there is much about our modern world that increases disappointment and at the same time encourages us to hide from it: to act as if what is good in life does not entail the bad ... that we can grow without pain and loss, and in the end that we can grow without dying.

I have complicated and complex feelings about the legalisation of hybrid embryos for research purposes and how these relate to my father's vascular dementia, disability and the potential of science to cure this condition. It was in exploration of these feelings that I began to reflect on the hybrid embryo debate and how the *Today* programme covered the issue within the news interview. It is this 'messiness' that continues to underpin my research interest in the field.

### ***1.3 Research method***

Cross-disciplinary in its approach, this research is situated within the academic fields of: journalism, media and communication studies. Because of the emphasis on public sector broadcasting and the functioning of modern democracy in the UK, the research also has links to the study of political communication. The chosen method for the research is Conversation Analysis (CA). This comes from the fact that CA has an established approach to the study of spoken discourse and is,

therefore, ideally suited to the kind of moment-by-moment interaction found within news interviews on the *Today* programme. CA has set criteria for the analyst to follow, in relation to the sample, collection and transcription of data and subsequent analysis. This makes it highly empirical, rigorous and replicable. As a method, CA places responsibility on the analyst to ground analysis in the micro level understandings and orientations of the participants of interactions themselves and this gives CA a unique perspective, as analysis of the news interviews can account for the interactions that take place between interviewer and interviewee. However, CA is also flexible enough to be able to account for the fact that interaction within the news interviews takes place in a formal workplace setting and institutional environment, thus providing the research with a bridge with which to examine broader socio-political influences.

### **1.4 Research questions**

The main research aim of this thesis is to investigate the interaction that takes place within the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008. However, in relation to this investigation, there is a set of interconnected and analogous lines of enquiry:

1. In terms of the interaction, how do the news interviews on the *Today* programme invoke the public?
2. What core democratic functions do the news interviews perform?
3. What do the news interviews tell us about the HFEA 2008?

### **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

With these questions in mind, Chapters 2 and 3 focus on existing literature and research within these areas. Chapter 2 - A Review of the Literature on the Relationship between the Media and the Public considers the development of the modern democratic political system in the UK, how concepts of the public and citizenship rights have been integrated into the workings of PSB. It investigates the notion of the public sphere and how the media are thought to mediate between the state and the public. Chapter 3 - A Review of the Literature Regarding the Impact of Biomedical Science on Citizenship focuses on the ethical, legal and social implications of the HFEA 2008 and reviews the literature surrounding the development of new reproductive technologies since the 1970s. Here the emphasis

is on how certain discourses, regarding the individual's responsibility for their biological future, have emerged within new configurations of "biological citizenship" (Rose 2006, p. 131).

The next two chapters focus on the method used in this research: that of Conversation Analysis. First of all, Chapter 4 – Method and Approach to Analysing the News Interviews outlines the method. It traces the origins of the method within ethnomethodology, outlines the rigorous nature of the method and also provides a critique of the tensions that arise between CA and other approaches to the study of discourse. The subsequent chapter, Chapter 5 - Data collection, Transcription and Analysis, summarises how the analysis was applied to the sample of news interviews on the *Today* programme. It also outlines how the data was collected and the transcription system used in the analysis. The chapter ends by reviewing issues of reliability, validity and the representative nature of the data.

Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 present the substantive findings of the research. Chapter 6 – Overview and Contextualisation of the News Interviews begins by presenting the findings regarding the broadcasting timeline of the news interviews on the *Today* programme and demonstrates the existence of specific reporting timeframes that closely follow the debates and voting phases of the HFEA 2008 within the House of Commons. This signifies a close relationship between the news values on the programme and the political processes of Parliament. This chapter discusses what impact this had on the reporting of the HFEA 2008 within the news interviews. The chapter also identifies the interviewees who participated in the news interviews and discusses issues surrounding the gender ratio, political allegiances and religious affiliations of the interviewees. Chapter 7 – The Openings and Closings of the News Interviews starts by outlining the tasks accomplished by the openings to the news interviews and the specific structural features found within them. It then presents evidence on the different categories of news interviews found within the sample and how these categories can affect the ensuing interaction and, in particular, the lines of questioning adopted by the interviewer. For instance, the interviewees participating in the *advocacy* and *accountability* interviews face more antagonistic and adversarial questioning than do interviewees in other categories. The chapter finishes by presenting findings on the closings of the news interviews and how the management of these is a joint construction between the interviewer and the interviewees. Chapter 8 – Interviewer's Questions and the Management of Neutralism focuses on question design and how these help in the management of

what Clayman (1992, p. 194) describes as “neutralism”. The findings in this chapter demonstrate how the responsibility to achieve and maintain a neutral posture creates, in effect, an inferential framework within the news interviews. This framework includes shifts in “footing” (Goffman 1981, pp. 144-151) and the formulation of third party opinions. Furthermore, analysis of these formulations demonstrates how the interviewer invokes public opinion through the use of these practices. The last findings chapter, Chapter 9 – Interviewee’s Answers and Politeness Strategies places emphasis on the practices that interviewees employ, in order to accomplish the task of answering a question. Findings in this chapter uncover the strategies used by interviewees amounting to an inferential framework equivalent to that of the management of neutralism by interviewers. The chapter contains examples of how interviewees work to maintain “face” and that of the other participants within the news interviews (Goffman 1967, p. 5). In addition, the chapter contains examples of where interviewees deliberately chose to adopt aggressive strategies and the consequences this had on interaction.

The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 10 - Discussion and Conclusion, draws together the key themes of this research. It discusses how findings contribute to the ideas contained within existing literature. In particular, how the news interviews on the *Today* programme invoke the public within interaction, what democratic functions they fulfil and what implications this has for public sector broadcasting. It also considers what the news interviews reveal about the HFEA 2008 and its relationship to biological citizenship. The chapter finishes by reflecting on how the research was conducted and the limitations of CA as a method of analysis. It also focuses on the significance of this research within journalism and media studies and how the method of analysis could be further used to underpin future research into, for instance, the impact of gender on the interaction of the news interviews and reception analysis of the *Today* programme listeners.

## **Chapter 2 - A Review of the Literature on the Relationship between the Media and the Public**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

The public are central to the activity of the media, politicians and other institutions. However, Jürgen Habermas (1989, p. 1) claims that the word public “betrays a multiplicity of concurrent meanings”. This chapter seeks to explore some of these meanings within existing academic literature. In particular, how the term ‘public’ relates to the development of modern democracy in the UK, the right of citizens to involve themselves in the issues facing society and the right to have their opinions heard in any decision-making process. In order to arrive at consensual agreement about these decisions, citizens require the adequate transmission of information and, in the twenty first century, the communication of this information has largely become the responsibility of the media. In the case of the news interviews on the *Today* programme, this inevitably relates to ideas concerning public sector broadcasting and the BBC’s responsibility to inform citizens about the workings of Parliament.

With these ideas in mind, this chapter examines how the media have come to be considered as occupying a crucial space between the state and private individuals and how the media invoke the public within their content. It begins with a brief historical examination of the ideas surrounding the public and how, through the development of democratic rights and citizenship, new configurations of the public have come into being. Further discussion will outline the position of the media within the concept of the public sphere, as devised by Habermas, and how this theoretical device serves as a useful tool with which to examine, in particular, modern conceptions of PSB. The chapter finishes by focusing on what the application of democratic theory to media content can tell us about the inclusion of the public within programming and what effect this has on the quality of public discourse.

### ***2.2 Imagining the public***

Appeals to the public within political communication have increased since the move towards universal suffrage began in the late nineteenth century. Prior to this, those in power were openly ambivalent about the democratic rights of citizens. For instance, Members of Parliament (MPs) objected to the “verbatim report of the

proceedings of Parliament”, seeing no reason to disclose “things done and spoken” within either of the Houses (Coleman and Ross 2010, p. 26). One of the effects of the move towards universal suffrage has been the requirement of Parliament to make its workings both visible and transparent to its citizens. These emerging democratic rights also had an effect on the new media technologies that were developing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with citizenship rights finally underpinning the formation of the BBC by the end of the 1920s. As a consequence, the public and its opinion on matters of government policy became a crucial dimension to the fulfilment of democratic rights.

The public invoked by politicians and the media is not a single embodied entity, but a product created through mediated representation. In *The Media and the Public* (2010), Stephen Coleman and Karen Ross argue that before the media and politicians could address the public, it had to be invented. Historically, the public has occupied two distinct positions. These are: the public as social actor and the public as social space. As social actors, the public becomes the mob with the potential to be “united by unarticulated emotions” and are feared by those in power (Coleman and Ross 2010, p. 11). Thus, the maintenance of social order has always been crucially important for those in power, whether achieved through suppression or the use of legislation to curtail public gatherings. With the arrival of universal suffrage, the public gained the right to have their views taken seriously and to have those views acknowledged by those in power. This meant that, where the management of controversial issues was concerned, politicians had to find new ways to measure public attitudes towards government policy through the development of scientific sampling techniques. According to Coleman and Ross (2010, pp. 14-15), the effect of this transformation was that the public began to be imagined as an amorphous mass with one collective voice.

In *Media and Modernity* (1995), John Thompson adopts a similar position to that of Coleman and Ross. He describes how, with the arrival of liberal democracy, power had to be transformed from a spectacle seen by a relatively small amount of co-present individuals into a visible act performed before a witnessing public. The increasing number of enfranchised citizens over the last century has meant that not everyone can meet in the same locale and witness these events. Thompson (1995, pp. 82-84) claims that “mediated quasi-interaction” has become the solution to the problem of the “co-presence” required of participants in face-to-face interaction.

Thus, mediated quasi-interaction has enabled the public to witness political events, allowing citizens to participate unbounded by spatial or temporal constraints.

Thompson (1995, p. 116) argues that mediated quasi-interaction has in fact existed for some time; first emerging within print media and the publication of news stories that reported on public events. Because this type of interaction required the public to be literate in order to participate, it had limited applicability until the late nineteenth century. The arrival of radio (and later television) expanded the availability of mediated quasi-interaction to all citizens. Thus, by participating as the audience of these new forms of media, increasingly the public heard (and then saw) politicians responding to public concerns. According to Thompson (1995, p. 116) this:

introduced a new and fundamentally important element into social and political life. By providing individuals with images of, and information about, events that take place in locales beyond their immediate social milieu, the media may stimulate or intensify forms of collective action which may be difficult to control with the established mechanisms of power.

### ***2.2.1 The public as 'social space'***

The idea of mediated quasi-interaction providing a conduit through which those in power could talk to and be heard by the public, connects to a second position outlined by Coleman and Ross (2010, p. 21): that of the "public as social space". The first position occupied by the public, that of "public as social actor", refers to a distinct and ontological presence where the public assembled and reacted to events that affected them. This second position describes the public in terms of a conceptual space with no existence outside of mediated representation.

Coleman and Ross (2010, p. 22) describe this space in terms of three defining characteristics: accessibility; universality and visibility. For a space to be public, it has to be accessible to everyone. Universality refers to the fact that everyone has to agree what issues are considered to be of public concern. In terms of visibility, the workings of government must be available for scrutiny. As a result of this process, the government is made accountable for its policies and decisions. This leads Coleman and Ross (2010, p. 5) to conclude that "[t]he public is the space in which witnessing can take place" and is where:

ideas, issues, and dilemmas relevant to anyone and everyone can circulate over time. This conception of communication as a circulatory process - a series of interactions over time between claims and attention

- is helpful in understanding the notion of universalistic public space (Coleman and Ross 2010, p. 25).

It is this idea of a social space, existing between the public and the government, which lies at the heart of PSB and has implications for the *Today* programme and their reporting of the HFEA 2008. It suggests that news interviews are a space in which mediated representation of the public takes place and that the public is invoked dynamically within interaction. With this in mind, the next section of this chapter unpacks further the complexities of this idea of the public as social space and how the media have become implicated in this concept. Specifically, it will look at Habermas (1974) and his theoretical framework surrounding the formation of the bourgeois public sphere, before moving on to discuss this notion in terms of the “communicative ethos of public service broadcasting” (Scannell 1989, p. 152).

### **2.3 Habermas and the concept of the public sphere**

By ‘public sphere’, Habermas (1974, p. 49) means a communicative sphere that mediates between society and state and in which “something approaching public opinion can be formed”. In his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Habermas outlines the emergence of the public sphere and its development over the centuries. He claims that the public sphere has its basis in the form of government as practiced by the Ancient Greeks. In the Greek city-state, the private life of the individual was separated from public life, but, as a citizen, the private individual was expected to participate in public life. This public life took place in the market place or *agora*, where Greek citizens were invited to attend meetings throughout the year, in order to deliberate upon issues affecting the day-to-day running of the state. Through open and public dialogue, citizens would come to a mutual consensus and enact legislation or decisions accordingly. Habermas’ concept of the *bourgeois public sphere* is built on a similar premise to that of the Athenian *agora*, but it additionally accounts for a set of specific transformations that happen around the time of the Renaissance.

#### **2.3.1 History of the bourgeois public sphere**

The advent of the public sphere came about as a result of the new economic and social orders that contributed to the demise of medieval feudalism and transformed Europe between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. Around this time, a fledgling form of capitalism began to emerge, emphasising trade and commerce.

According to Coleman and Ross (2010, p. 30), the rise of market forces and the subsequent promotion of interests based on this new economic formation “opened a creative chasm between state power and private life”. As a consequence of increasing wealth and property ownership, the new mercantile middle class struggled to break free from absolutist rule. Part of this struggle involved the generation of a new social space between the state and the individual where opinions, derived from the discussion of ideas, could be seen to influence political decisions and to shape state policies in favour of the interests of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, the arrival of the printing press and introduction of journals, pamphlets and newspapers, enabled the exchange of ideas and faster distribution of information. This was further enhanced in the late seventeenth century with the emergence of coffee houses, salons and other such settings, where the bourgeoisie would congregate; becoming active agents in the political processes of society.

Thus, in its original concept, the public sphere allows *private* people to come together in *public* and engage in *critical reason* (Dahlgren 1993, p. 3). It is within this space where views, which cannot withstand critical scrutiny, are discredited. Those that can withstand critical scrutiny are assured legitimacy (Fraser 2008, p. 76). Habermas (1989, p. 57) claims that, although variants of the public sphere emerged in Germany and France, the “ideal” public sphere existed in Britain by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. However, this ideal public sphere was limited in terms of who could participate, as literacy was a pre-requisite. Therefore, the great majority of contributions to the public sphere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came from the “world of letters” (Habermas 1989, p. 51).

Habermas (1989) argues that, from the nineteenth century onwards, a further set of economic, political and social transformations began to constrain the proper functioning of the ideal public sphere. First of all, there was an increase in print media, both as a result of population growth and the development of education and literacy. Thus by the end of the nineteenth century newspapers, which were supposed to be unencumbered by private interests in the Habermasian public sphere, had become big business and began to treat news as a commodity to be sold to the newly literate public. At the same time, universal suffrage increased the number of people who were defined as citizens, meaning that there were potentially more people who could contribute to the public sphere. With the emergence of the welfare state in the twentieth century, successive governments become more interventionist in the private lives of the individual and this blurred the distinction

between what was considered part of the public domain and what was considered part of the private domain. This, coupled with the fact that large groups and organisations became increasingly active in state affairs, begins to displace the role of the citizen. It is for these reasons that Habermas (1989, p. 4) states that since the mid nineteenth century signs of the “collapse of the public sphere are unmistakable” and that “its function has become progressively insignificant”.

### ***2.3.2 The public sphere: A theoretical device***

Unfortunately, Habermas’ insistence on the decline of the public sphere bestows a sense of “dead-end” about his study (Dahlgren 1991, p.5). If, as Habermas suggests, the public sphere has become insignificant, then how can the concept be relevant to any present investigation into the media and its function within political communication? In terms of the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme concerning the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008, Habermas’ concept of the public sphere provides a theoretical device or ‘ideal type’ with which to focus on what Garnham (1993, p. 360) calls “the indissoluble link between institutions and practices of mass public communication and the institutions and practices of democratic politics”. Thus, the notion of the public sphere is a useful theoretical approach, as it provides a conceptual framework that can be used as a tool to analyse the extent to which the programme provided a space for the rational deliberation of the HFEA in 2008. Within this framework, such considerations might focus on: how the programme enabled the visibility of the workings of Parliament to the public; presented citizens with information concerning the HFEA 2008 and whether there is any evidence of the formation of public opinion as an outcome of that deliberation?

### ***2.3.3 The public sphere: A critique***

Although Dahlgren (1993, p. 1) describes Habermas’ conception of the public sphere as “undeniably pathbreaking”, the concept of the public sphere is not without criticism. Dahlgren (1993, p. 5) argues that Habermas has a blind spot where history is concerned and that his “pervasive pessimism” is the result of “romanticism verging on nostalgia”. Dahlgren makes these remarks because of Habermas’ insistence that the ideal public sphere existed in the early nineteenth century, arguing that Habermas clings to an ideal that fails to recognise the fact that many parts of society were essentially excluded from it. Dahlgren, therefore, questions how exactly this public sphere could have been ideal. On the one hand, Habermas

accounts for the class-based nature of the public sphere, claiming it to be made up of middle class, propertied citizens from the world of letters. On the other hand, he fails to notice the patriarchal nature of the public sphere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To Paul Beaud and Laurence Kaufman (2001, p. 59), this means a “public sphere of enlightened men”, as up until the twentieth century women were excluded from participation in the public domain.

Historically, public–private dichotomies have not favoured women. The bourgeois public sphere was almost entirely occupied by men, whilst women were relegated to the private sphere of the home. Nancy Fraser (1993: 113) points to the fact that, even after the French Revolution in 1789 and the possibility of women becoming more involved in democratic society, the “women-friendly salon culture” style of deliberation was stigmatised as effeminate with the consequence that a style deemed more manly, rational and virtuous was preferred. And whilst the patriarchal nature of society might have been a historical fact at the time, Habermas appears to accept this uncritically. Thus, Habermas’s emphasis on reason and citizenship in such a public space works as a force of exclusion and results in the subordination of women (Calhoun 1993; Fraser 1993; Peters 1995).

A second set of related criticisms emerge from the fact that Habermas “constructs the public as a homogenous entity” (Coleman and Ross 2010, p. 29) and, therefore, negates the existence of plebeian, popular or “subaltern” public spheres (Fraser 1993, p. 113). In the preface to *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Habermas does briefly describe a *plebeian* public sphere consisting of uneducated people emerging in France following the Revolution, and then recurring in movements such as the Chartists and the “anarchist traditions of the workers” movements on the continent (Habermas 1989, p. VII). However, he describes these as operating only as variants of the public sphere and, therefore, their formation is defined solely in terms of the dominant *bourgeois* public sphere. It is this that Craig Calhoun (1993, p. 36) criticises Habermas for his general lack of the recognition of any groups other than those who conform to the interests of the secularised bourgeoisie, arguing that social movements, such as trades unions, and formalised religion have crucially influenced both “public discourse and democratic politics” (Calhoun 1993, p. 36).

### ***2.3.4 The public sphere and 'deliberative democracy'***

It is another criticism of Habermas that provides a link to the media and the potential diversification of the democratic function of the public sphere Calhoun promotes. By concentrating on a model of deliberative democracy, Thompson (1995, p. 258) imagines the media helping to:

disperse power outwards and downwards, creating multiple centres of power and diversified networks of communication and information flow. It would help to draw ordinary individuals into processes of deliberation and thereby deepen their democratic stake in social and political life, ...

Thompson has his own ideas concerning the importance of media and the formation of public opinion within a public space separate from the state. Indeed, he develops these ideas as part of a critique of Habermas. Agreeing with Habermas about the development of the public sphere, Thompson claims that Habermas has fundamentally misunderstood the role that print media played in its formation and that this misunderstanding is at the basis of Habermas' insistence on the decline of the public sphere and his negative attitude towards the media in the late twentieth century.

According to Thompson (1995, p. 31), Habermas places too much emphasis on "a model of communication based on the spoken word". Although Habermas believed that print media shaped the development of the public sphere, Thompson suggests that Habermas misses the point about the content of print media that existed at the time of the ideal public sphere, in as much as printed matter simply re-presented arguments that had taken place in face-to-face conversations within the salons and coffee houses of the eighteenth century. Thompson (1995, p. 131) insists that it is Habermas' dependence on the results of this "dialogic exchange" which leads him to become pessimistic about the future of the public sphere and the role of media within it. Instead of being fixated on the classical Greek conception of dialogue in a shared locale, Thompson (1995, p. 256) claims that Habermas should abandon his ideas surrounding "participatory democracy" and think about mediated quasi-interaction as the basis for what he terms "deliberative democracy". Thompson argues that deliberation does not necessitate citizens being in the same spatial setting in order to express their views and to listen to the views of others. Thus, through the provision of knowledge and information through mediated quasi-interaction, the media can provide access to the type of deliberation found in face-to-face dialogue.

Viewed from this perspective, we can see that media institutions have a particularly important role to play in the development of a deliberative democracy. For they are the principal means by which individuals acquire information and encounter different points of view on matters about which they may be expected to form reasoned judgements (Thompson 1995: 257).

In writings subsequent to Thompson's critique, Habermas (1974) revises his thoughts on the decline of the public sphere and, in particular, focuses on the importance of PSB as the cornerstone of the twenty-first century public sphere. When the concept was first formulated, Habermas thought that the pinnacle of the bourgeois public sphere was reached by the mid-nineteenth century and depicted the decline of the public sphere in the modern welfare state through a "peculiar weakening of its central critical function" (Habermas 1974, p. 55). It led him to conclude that the "world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only" (Habermas 1989, p. 30). At the same time as this decline, came the growth of what Graham Murdock (1994, p. 29) calls "information and cultural rights", which enable the provision of comprehensive information on the activities of government and it is these rights that Habermas (2009, p. 133) points to when he talks about the survival of the public sphere through PSB:

Radio and television audiences are not only consumers, that is, market participants, but also citizens who have a right to partake in culture, to follow political events, and to be involved in the formation of political opinions.

This provides a crucial relevance to the theoretical concept of the public sphere, to the BBC as a public service broadcaster and its public purposes of 'sustaining citizenship and civil society' (BBC 2010a). Thus, with the founding of BBC, Paddy Scannell (2005, p. 24) claims that:

A new kind of 'public sphere' was formed, independent of church and state, claiming the right to criticize both and committed to the establishment of public life, grounded in rational discussion, in which all members of society might participate.

#### ***2.4 Public service broadcasting: The new organ of the public sphere?***

Public sector broadcasting developed at the same time as universal suffrage and was initially greeted as an antidote to the commercial excesses of the powerful press barons, who were seen to control access to the public sphere. Even though Thompson and Habermas point to the increasing inclusion of citizens in public life

through print media, Scannell (1989, p. 139) questions the extent to which this inclusion occurred before the arrival of PSB, noting that only particular parts of the public, namely the literate, enjoyed access to a public sphere concentrated within the world of print media. The incorporation of the BBC opened up public life in different ways:

placing political, religious, civic, cultural events and entertainments in a common domain, public life was equalised in a way that had never before been possible (Scannell 1989, p. 140).

David Hendy (2013, p. 7) claims that the values of PSB can be traced back to an idea contained within the Enlightenment that “inequality and avoidable ignorance could be banished if rationality could prevail”. In this respect, PSB, as enshrined by the BBC advocated the view that, in a democracy, everyone should have an opinion and be able to voice that opinion. According to Scannell (2005, p. 24), John Reith, the BBC’s first Director General, had a vision of PSB as the “new organ of public opinion and as an instrument of democratic enlightenment”.

It was the BBC’s distinctive attitude towards its audience that underlined its role as a public service broadcaster. The BBC’s constitution was based on the premise of an “educative strategy” which placed the public firmly in a state of “tutelage” (Coleman and Ross 2010, p. 29). This leads Coleman and Ross (2010, p. 33) to claim that, although the BBC didn’t invent the public sphere, it certainly “altered the terms of engagement of public discourse”. From the beginning, the BBC’s task was to provide the public with what it needed to know, what it ought to know within a functioning democracy, and, at the same time, it “asserted the public’s right to know” (Scannell 2005, p. 25). According to Hendy (2013, p. 28), this assertion is a crucial factor in the process of empowerment, whereby the BBC nurtured an “active audience” to think for themselves.

The BBC’s founding values as facilitator of a functioning democracy provided it with an “unprecedented opportunity to address a mass audience as a single subject” (Coleman and Ross 2010, p. 32). This presented a problem regarding radio’s mode of address. Although millions may be listening to a broadcast, each individual experiences the broadcast in personal terms. Thompson (1995, p. 84) describes the communicative nature of radio as “monologic” in character, as there is no direct dialogue with either the public or the individual, but rather than addressing the audience as a mass collective, the BBC had to find ways of speaking to people as

individuals. This entailed a movement towards constructing, what Coleman and Ross (2010, p. 34) term, “mediated sociability” through a personal mode of address.

#### ***2.4.1 The public as the social construction of interaction***

To counter the fact that the recipients of dialogue are not physically present in the studio, broadcasters have to speak to them either *directly* via the microphone or *indirectly* through journalistic practices such as the news interview. Whilst news interviews retain essentially the same monologic characteristic as the medium in which they are being broadcast, through face-to-face interaction in the same spatial setting, interviewees and interviewers are heard to engage in dialogue. Therefore, the participants of the news interview know that they are addressing their remarks *indirectly* to invisible recipients and it is through “indirect recipient address” that the perception of dialogue is fostered (Thompson 1995, p. 102).

As a consequence of this form of address, Coleman and Ross (2010, p. 18) point to another phenomenon: the notion that the public are constructed through this form of interaction and, therefore, only exists within the broadcasting environment. Each invocation of the public is also an entirely different invocation to the one that preceded it. Thus, programme makers configure and re-configure the public repeatedly in a process of constant renewal. Through this notion, Coleman and Ross (2010, p. 18) point to the idea of the public as social construction, which “comes into being dynamically” through interaction. It is this concept, the idea of mediation, construction and re-configuration, which enables researchers to think about how the media sustain the idea of the public and what sorts of messages are directed towards it. This notion has implications for the *Today* programme, as it suggests that any invocations of the public within the news interviews are dynamically constructed in ways that are specific to this kind of journalistic format. Thus analysis of the news interview would have to take into account how the public was constructed through dialogue.

There is no doubt that, as a theoretical device, the concept of the public sphere remains a useful tool by which researchers can examine the ways in which the media provide a communicative space between the government and society, which is said to sustain democratic life. Furthermore, through the added examination of the role of PSB, further evidence can be gathered as to how specifically the public is invoked within programming output. According to Scannell (Scannell 1989, p. 136), there is no doubt that PSB has enhanced public representation and has lead to the

democratisation of everyday life. This has been done, firstly, by extending the range of what can be talked about in the public domain via programme content and, secondly, through the ways in which PSB holds those in power accountable for their decisions. Scannell (2005, p. 24) also claims that the question in the end is whose interests are being served by PSB: “the state or the people?”. Murdock (1994, p. 28) concurs with this kind of interrogation, arguing that the de facto creation of a diversity of social experiences and viewpoints, along with the appearance of dialogue and debate, is not enough. He urges that any analysis also needs to ask:

who orchestrates these representations? Who is licensed to talk about other people’s experiences? Who is empowered to ventriloquise other people’s opinions? Who is mandated to picture other people’s lives? Who chooses who will be heard and who will be consigned to silence, who will be seen and who will remain invisible? Who decides which viewpoints will be taken seriously and how conflicts between positions will be resolved? Who proposes explanations and analyses and who is subject to them?

Whilst theories of the public sphere concentrate on the processes of public communication and how the public is invoked in democratic life, it does not focus on *who* participates in the decision-making processes of government. This is an important distinction and one that is crucial to any examination of the of the news interviews on the *Today* programme surrounding the HFEA 2008. As legislation, one of the ways the HFEA 2008 entered into the public domain was via the *Today* programme and in that respect the news interviews surrounding the legislation can be said to be a process in which mediation between the public, in the form of listeners, and Parliament took place. Also, accounting for democratic theory in any analysis of the news interviews would provide a better understanding of who participated in them and was in the position of being able to influence any dialogue concerning the legislation. Democratic theory allows the analyst to have the ability to focus on the specific nature of the dialogue and style in which it was conducted.

## ***2.5 The public sphere and democratic theory***

In the book *Shaping Abortion Discourse* (2002), Myra Ferree and her colleagues conducted an analysis of the media discourse surrounding abortion in both Germany and the United States since the late 1960s. They examined: who participated in the discourse, the content and style of discourse in terms of civility and dialogue and the outcome of the discourse. Such an approach was used to assess the quality of discourse found in both countries. Their methodology was to

assess newspaper articles against four normative theories of democracy, which they labelled: representative liberal democracy; participatory liberal democracy; discursive democracy; and constructionist democracy.

According to Ferree et al. (2002, p. 206), “representative liberal theory” encourages elite dominance of the public sphere and, in particular, fears “participation of the rabble”. This essentially means that elites speak on behalf of citizens. Writers within this tradition argue that if the public sphere is working correctly and journalists are doing their job properly, by providing adequate information, citizens do not need to participate in the public sphere. Indeed, wide participation is actively discouraged. In terms of the quality of debate, dialogue should be civil, dispassionate and detached and the media should encourage this debate by providing reliable information to its citizens in order to ensure transparency.

The second normative theory they describe is “participatory liberal theory” (Ferree et al. 2002, p. 210). In many respects, this is similar to representative liberal theory, but writers in this tradition argue that participation should not be based on elite dominance, but should include minority voices too. However, they believe that some form of delegation is necessary and that all citizens should not expect to participate. Participation, in particular, should come from organisations with active members and a leader who can articulate the views of those members. In terms of the public sphere, the goal for journalists is to optimise a diversity of viewpoints. This tradition encourages a variety of discursive styles, including non-civil and emotive styles, but that “media content should encourage empowerment” by engaging citizens (Ferree et al. 2002, p. 213).

The third democratic theory is directly influenced by the writings of Habermas himself and is described as “discursive theory” (Ferree et al. 2002, p. 210). As with participatory liberal theory, discursive theory encourages wider participation from the periphery. Ideas are vital to this theoretical standpoint and, therefore, the emphasis of the media should be on the dissemination of ideas rather than on who is making the argument. In terms of discursive style, as with representative liberal theory, civility is emphasised, along with deliberation and the demonstration of the mutual respect of ideas. Thus, the media should facilitate deliberation by making ideas understandable to the public.

The last democratic theory Ferree et al. (Ferree et al. 2002, p. 222) describe is “constructionist theory”. Writers in this tradition have been influenced by Michel

Foucault and are pessimistic about whether power can be separated from dialogue within the media. Thus, they encourage participation from the periphery *exclusively* and *in preference* to participation from the centre. Indeed, this tradition would privilege the marginalised, in order to base dialogue around empowerment. In terms of discursive style, civility and deliberation are thought to be elite concepts, therefore, the focus of the media should be to emphasise personal narrative and legitimate the “language of the lifeworld” (Ferree et al. 2002, p. 228), in order to draw on the experiential rather than the expert.

When these four democratic theories were analysed against the media discourse surrounding abortion in newspaper articles since the late 1960s, Ferree et al. found that, overall, German media discourse tended towards the European tradition of representative liberal theory, whereas the United States tended towards the other traditions (Ferree et al. 2002, pp. 251-254). State and political party actors dominated German media discourse, along with experts and, where the views of social movements were reported, they were overwhelmingly represented by the Catholic Church. In terms of discourse style, they found that dialogue was carried out with civility and that readers of articles concerning abortion were very well informed. However, much of the coverage concerned specific legislation and further reporting ended once a law was passed.

In terms of the United States, media discourse on abortion came closer to meeting the criteria as outlined by participatory liberal theory, but Ferree et al. detected elements of discursive and constructionist theory. For instance, media discourse in the United States had a wider variety of participants than in Germany. They also found that there was less reliance on political party actors and more participation from social movements. Stories also demonstrated evidence of encouraging the “language of the lifeworld” with a focus on personal narrative (Ferree et al. 2002, p. 228). Additionally, rather than focusing on specific legislation and what was contained within it, articles contained in the newspapers in the United States were more likely to continue to underline the personal consequences of legal restrictions after laws had been passed.

With their analysis of media discourse surrounding abortion, Ferree et al. demonstrates how reference to democratic theory can provide a yardstick against which to measure the quality of media discourse, not just in terms of who participates, but also what kinds of viewpoints are expressed and what kinds of dialogue can be shown to have taken place. Although their research focused on the

coverage of abortion within newspaper stories, their reference to normative theories of democracy provide a useful tool which can be used a guide to measure the quality of the talk on the *Today* programme concerning the HFEA 2008.

## ***2.6 The news interview and the 'public as social space': Research implications***

This chapter has focused on some of the key ideas and theoretical approaches to conceptions of the public and how the media have become implicated in a crucial space between the state and the individual. Part of this focus has been to trace the relationship of the public as social space to the development of modern democracy in the UK. Another factor is the idea that, with the arrival of new media such as radio, the witnessing of events in public declined. The consequence of this meant that the required co-presence of citizens within political debate has been replaced by the quasi-mediated interaction of the media. Now rather than attending public events, citizens hear the deliberations of issues that are considered to be important to society by listening to programmes such as *Today*. Writers within democratic theory also argue that it is important to acknowledge who participates in these debates and how the deliberation is conducted. The news interview is a significant feature of deliberation within the modern public sphere, because of the inclusion of public figures who are heard to, not only engage in dialogue with others, but be held to account for their views and decisions. This has lead Clayman and Heritage (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 2) to claim that the news interview is now an arena in which journalists perform a core democratic function through the practices of questioning and interrogation.

It is these ideas surrounding the notion of the public as social space and how the media provide a link between the state and the public that demonstrate why such a concept is an appropriate tool for the analysis of the news interviews on the *Today* programme concerning the HFEA Act 2008. This is because, firstly, by being debated in Parliament, the legislation was clearly situated within the public domain and, secondly, by reporting on the debates surrounding the legislation, the programme can be said to have mediated between the public and the government.

The idea of public as social space takes on further significance with Habermas' concept of the public sphere. Here the emphasis is on the existence of a space, free from government and commercial interests, where individuals gather and have a reasoned debate about issues affecting society. Implied in this concept is that,

through debate, public opinion can be formed and fed back to the state and it is this function of the public sphere that Martin Bauer (2002, p. 2) claims plays an increasingly vital role in whether or not the public accepts new technologies, such as those contained within the HFEA 2008. Although Habermas initially asserted that his ideal public sphere existed two hundred years ago, in more recent writings he has revised his opinion of this; claiming that the public sphere is now enshrined in public sector broadcasting. With this in mind, this chapter also investigated the development of PSB, how it developed from principles of Enlightenment and how it has become implicated in the formation of a new kind of public: one that comes into being dynamically through the process of interaction. Thus any analysis of the democratic function of the news interviews surrounding the HFEA 2008 would have to take into account the strategies used to invoke the public.

Some of the issues concerning the public sphere are revisited in the next chapter, as it examines how the HFEA 2008 came to be thought of as a topic for discussion within the public sphere and explores the ethical, legal and social issues surrounding the techniques that underpin the new reproductive technologies enabled by the HFEA 2008. It also examines how another project, like that of public sector broadcasting, emerged from ideas contained within the Enlightenment. This project influenced the formation of a different kind of citizenship: the biological citizen, which focuses on the well being of the individual and the citizen's responsibility to ensure his or her own biological destiny. It is this new form of citizenship and the repercussions of its development that the next chapter seeks to investigate.

## Chapter 3 - A Review of the Literature Regarding the HFEA 2008 and Biological Citizenship

### 3.1 Introduction

In the introduction, I provided a rationale as to why the Human Fertilisation Embryology Act 2008 is an ideal case study with which to investigate the interaction that takes place within the news interviews on the *Today* programme. One of the reasons for choosing this case study was that developments in biomedical and genetic techniques were cited as being one of the most important scientific issues of the twenty first century and that respondents to a survey on this issue felt that they were not adequately informed about such developments (Hargreaves et al. 2003: 4). Another reason was the fact that the *Today* programme was singled out as being one that attempted to tackle difficult scientific issues such as these (Hargreaves et al. 2003: 11).

With these issues in mind, this chapter examines the developments in biomedical and genetic techniques which are at the basis of the elements contained within the HFEA 2008: 'hybrid embryos'; 'saviour siblings'; 'the child's need for a father' and 'abortion'. These techniques involve the manipulation of human embryos and are associated with IVF and tissue culture technologies. Such techniques are seen as questioning the existential boundaries of life and death and of what it is to be human. For this investigation, the chapter references ideas within existing academic literature concerning the questions surrounding these techniques. It does so primarily through the concept of "biological citizenship" (Rose 2006, p. 131): a specific configuration that has emerged alongside other forms of citizenship, but which became increasingly significant in the late twentieth century. It is within this notion of biological citizenship that over the past four decades, issues surrounding assisted reproduction have become crucial arenas for discussion in public.

The previous chapter discussed the notion that 'public' is a term used to denote a social space important for the functioning of democracy. It recognised that the media have come to exist in this space, mediating between the public and the state. It also addressed how PSB has become implicated in such a process via the Enlightenment ideal of the rational deliberation of citizens regarding the political decisions of government. However, what the chapter did not address was the reason why the essentially 'private' issue of reproduction contained within the HFEA

2008 became part of the public domain of the *Today* programme and, therefore, of concern to citizens.

The HFEA 2008 was brought into the public domain by the fact that it was a legislative act of Parliament, but the issues contained within the legislation, those of assisted reproduction, have generally been considered to be a private matter. Unlike private matters, issues that exist in the public domain must be universal, in that they affect everyone. This suggests that the elements contained within the HFEA 2008 were thought to affect all citizens. The boundary between private and public has traditionally been rather fluid. However, in the late twentieth century the public domain has increasingly encroached into what might be considered private (Coleman and Ross 2010, p. 25). It is within such a contradiction that the HFEA 2008 became a site of contestation, straddling both the private realm and public domain. This contradiction is also addressed in this chapter.

### ***3.2 Bio-power, biopolitics and biological citizenship***

In *The Politics of Life Itself* (2006), Nikolas Rose presents a compelling account of the ways in which issues surrounding reproduction entered the public domain in the late twentieth century through a new configuration of problematisation and rationalisation. According to Rose (2006, p. 131), this development is a continuation of a form of citizenship he calls “biological citizenship”, which emerged in tandem with political citizenship in the late eighteenth century. Although this specific form of citizenship has its basis in the biological “destiny of the nation” (Rose 2006, p. 3), in the late twentieth century it has developed an individualising tendency whereby it has become the individual’s responsibility to “exercise biological prudence, for their own sake, that of their families, that of their own lineage, and that of their nation as a whole” (Rose 2006, p. 24).

Rose developed his ideas concerning biological citizenship from those of Foucault and the emergence of a discourse surrounding the health and welfare of the population as the essential objective of political power. In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973), Foucault describes the emerging field of medicine from the late eighteenth century onwards. He traces how the sick body became the object of the “medical gaze” and how a series of configurations developed around it (Foucault 1973, p. 33). These configurations included: institutional spaces, hospitals and clinics, in which to treat patients; the development of professionals who could attend to the sick; the requisite teaching facilities needed to train professionals; technologies,

such as microscopes, to look inside the body; medicines with which to treat and cure the sick; and medical statistics that could record the existence of sick bodies and the specific diseases from which they suffered.

The access of the medical gaze into the sick body was not the continuation of a movement of approach that had been developing in a more or less regular fashion since the day when the first doctor cast his somewhat unskilled gaze from afar on the body of the first patient; it was the result of a recasting at the level of epistemic knowledge (*savoir*) itself, and not at the level of accumulated, refined, deepened, adjusted knowledge (*connaissances*) (Foucault 1973, pp. 168-169).

The ideas contained in *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) focus on the process of subjectification through the development of discourses and specific ways of seeing. However, in the *History of Sexuality* (1976-1984), Foucault concentrates on technologies of the self and how “the practices by which individuals were led to focus their attention on themselves” occurred (Foucault 1984, p. 5). He describes the emergence of two technologies, which aimed at the eradication of disease and the improvement of birth rates and longevity. The first technology centred on the anatomical body as a machine and describes disciplinary procedures towards:

the optimisation of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls (Foucault 1976, p. 139).

A second technology focuses on the species body as a whole:

a body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary (Foucault 1976, p. 139).

By the end of the nineteenth century, Foucault claims that these two technologies had merged to produce bio-power. At this point we see that the knowledges and institutions contained in the processes of life become “a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through” (Foucault 1976, p. 139). With bio-power, Foucault talks of the transition from the right of the sovereign to determine the life and death of his subjects to the state’s obligation to provide for its citizens the ‘right’ to life and associated rights to health. According to Foucault (1976, p. 141), bio-power was originally an “indispensable element in the development of capitalism”, in order to create a healthy workforce. However, Rose (2006, p. 6) insists that by the late twentieth century, the state had largely left the arena of bio-power. This was mainly due to developments since

World War Two in health care management, which meant that individuals increasingly became obliged to monitor and manage their own health:

every citizen must now become an active partner in the drive for health, accepting their responsibility for securing their own well-being.

### **3.2.1 New configurations of biological citizenship**

One arena where these new configurations of knowledge, power and subjectivity have emerged is in the realm of new reproductive technologies. Since the 1970s, reproduction has become the primary object of knowledge with regards to bio-power with the focus on infertility and hereditary diseases as treatable illnesses. Thus the “genomic management of the population, designer babies, engineered futures, the ‘sorting society’ and the like” have become the “biopolitical space par excellence” (Rabinow and Rose 2006, p. 211 and 208).

However, if the biological focus of the twentieth century centred on the gene as the fundamental of life, it has now been supplanted by a “molecular gaze” that sees the vital attributes of human life as existing at the molecular level (Rose 2006, p. 12). This new configuration of Foucault’s medical gaze opens up the possibility that, through molecular intervention, any “undesirable anomalies” might be removed, in order to “enhance desirable outcomes” (Rose 2006, p. 83).

Rose outlines five interdependent processes that have contributed to this new form of citizenship. Firstly, he uses the term *molecularisation* to describe contemporary biomedicine’s preoccupation with life at the molecular level and the mechanisms by which it attempts to “control, manage, engineer, reshape and modulate the very vital capacities of human beings as living creatures” (Rose 2006, p. 3). His second process depicts the aim of *optimisation*, whereby techniques of biotechnology are used to reconfigure or enhance molecular entities, in order to maximise their performance. Next is *subjectification*, the process whereby citizens become increasingly reconfigured as:

“somatic” individuals, that is to say, as beings whose individuality is, in part at least, grounded within our fleshly, corporeal existence, and who experience, articulate, judge, and act upon ourselves in part in the language of biomedicine (Rose 2006, p. 26).

In tandem with the process of subjectification comes the rise of *somatic expertise* in the form of, not only experts of biomedicine, but also organisations, patient groups and medical companies who are equipped to deal with the new biomedical subject:

From the stem cell experts to the molecular gerontologists, from the neuroscientists to the technologists of cloning, new specialists of the soma have emerged, each with their own apparatus of associations, meetings, journals, esoteric languages, star performers, and myths. Each of these is surrounded by, augmented by, a flock of popularisers, science writers, and journalists (Rose 2006, p. 29).

Lastly, biological citizenship demands the formation of the *economies of vitality* with the capitalisation of biomedicine, in the form of private laboratories and fertility clinics, along with the creation of new biomedical products by biomedical corporations (Rose 2006, p. 5). Within this arena, cells extracted from individuals, both living and dead, are redeployed as commodities bought and sold on the trading floors of stock markets.

It is through these new configurations that genetics has transformed new reproductive technologies into a discipline where biopolitics addresses human existence at the molecular level and where biological identity generates biological responsibility. According to Rose (2006, p. 54):

Biopower is more a perspective than a concept: it brings into view a whole range of more or less rationalised attempts by different authorities to intervene upon the vital characteristics of human existence – human beings, individually and collectively, as living creatures who are born, mature, inhabit a body that can be trained and augmented, and then sicken and die.

The arrival of the human genome signalled a new regime of biopower. Here the well-being of the individual becomes paramount, along with the “right to life, to one’s body, to health and happiness” (Foucault 1976, p. 145). And it is this emerging form of biological citizenship: a citizen’s right to life, health and freedom from disease that has particular significance to my thesis and how the Today programme reported on the HFEA 2008.

The question is: how does the HFEA 2008 fit into the framework of this new biological citizenship? Developments in new reproductive technologies over the past three decades, such as the fertilisation of embryos outside of the womb (so-called ‘test-tube babies’) have resulted in the increase of clinics that offer infertility treatments through intervention into the procreative processes. It is these practices

that have enabled scientific establishments to pursue research into, not only infertility, but the existence of defective genes and molecules, which potentially cause inherited disease and disability. All of the divisions contained within the HFEA 2008 revolved around notions of the responsibility of citizens to ensure their family's biological destiny. The HFEA 2008 either legalised or redefined practices that intervened directly into procreation and mostly at the molecular level. Three specific elements contained within the legislation surrounded the practices of IVF techniques found within infertility treatments and research, and can be considered to constitute elements of what Jean Rothschild (Rothschild 2005, p. 13) describes as the "discourse of the perfectibility of Man".

### ***3.3 The perfectly beautiful and beautifully perfect***

In *The Dream of the Perfect Child* (2005), Rothschild conducts a genealogical analysis of the aesthetic ideal of the perfect child and traces its origin to the same point in time as the origin of Rose's biological citizenship. Indeed, both works have a lot of common threads running through them, including a reliance on Foucault within their respective methodologies. However, Rothschild's analysis places greater emphasis on how the notion of the perfect child has influenced reproductive medicine since the late eighteenth century and infuses today's new reproductive technologies with a "postmodern expression" of the "technological dream of perfected beings" (Rothschild 2005, p. 9).

According to Rothschild (2005, p. 16), the perfectibility of Man surfaced as a masculine construct in the age of scientific reason and that attitudes of medical professionals today are a direct reflection of the rational desire to control the birth of abnormal and imperfect babies. She claims that the dream of the perfect child wields enormous "seductive power" where women are concerned, through the promise of new reproductive technologies to spare them the "tragedy" of an imperfect child. A defective baby suggests that the mothers are defective too, thus the discourse of the perfect child plays on the fears of women and contributes to the foetus becoming the focus of medical attention, eclipsing the mother as "primary patient" (Rothschild 2005, p. 214). However, Rothschild (2005, p. 105) argues that since World War Two, research within the field of human genetics and inherited disease has led to the development of a number of scientific and technological tools becoming available to prospective parents as a form of preventative action. Thus, the birth of a baby with a genetic defect becomes a disaster that must be "avoided by every means that science and technology can muster".

Today, the most routine forms of testing are contained within prenatal diagnosis, which is offered to women during pregnancy. Prenatal screening, including ultrasound scans and serum marker blood tests, can detect a wide range of birth defects present in the foetus early on in pregnancy. For instance, Down's syndrome or neural tube defects, such as Spina Bifida. Further tests might include amniocentesis and genetic testing of the foetus, if there are concerns that there may be a high risk of birth defects. According to Rothschild (2005, p. 96), these tools have become inscribed in the discourse of the perfect child and the number of conditions that now can be diagnosed since the invention of screening techniques has grown almost exponentially, meaning that every foetus is potentially defective and "every pregnancy suspect". Therefore, disability comes to be thought of as almost an "inevitable disaster" (Steinberg 1997b, p. 43).

Rothschild (2005, p. 125) claims that perfectibility discourse has significantly shaped the development of genetic counselling and the availability of IVF techniques as tests for hereditary disease, particularly if there is known to be a defective gene present within the family. Whilst prenatal diagnosis can detect abnormalities once the foetus is conceived, the availability of pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PiGD) has meant a shift in focus to the prevention of an imperfect embryo being fertilised or implanted into the womb. And, as scientific research finds more conditions that can be detected through testing, Rothschild (2005, p. 125) points to a worrying increase in the unwillingness of parents to tolerate any defects, even though some of these cannot be considered defects at all. For instance, she highlights the tendency to think of the "wrong" sex as a defect to be aborted if found. Therefore, the decision of whether to have an imperfect baby becomes akin to consumerist tendencies where, if the product is not "perfectly packaged and defect-free, the manufacturer should take it back in exchange" (Rothschild 2005, p. 110).

### ***3.3.1 Discourse of the perfect child: The 'new' eugenics***

It is within this context of the discourse of the perfect child and the perfectibility of Man that some of the elements of the HFEA 2008 can be located. For instance, the vote on the upper time limit for late abortion (although the status quo was retained) can be seen as part of the effort to prevent faulty embryos and fetuses from being born. The decision to allow the screening and selection of embryos, in order to create a 'saviour sibling', can be seen as an attempt to 'mend' those who have escaped detection from the prenatal screening regime. And the decision to allow the creation of 'hybrid embryos' for research purposes is an attempt to provide the

necessary resources towards research into faulty genes and molecules, so that future faults may be avoided from being born and those who currently have pre-symptomatic, and indeed symptomatic faults, may, in time, find corrective cures. Evans (1999, p. 286) argues that:

This fantasy of eradication, a continuation from the eugenic discourse of the Social Darwinists, is based on a denial of the fact that there will always be disabled people.

For commentators such as Evans, the aim to eradicate disability from the human condition raises the spectre of eugenics, which, according to Rose (Rose 2006, p. 59), is one of the potent strategies of biological citizenship. However, the new eugenics of the twenty-first century is not the same eugenics movement that emerged out of late nineteenth century fears and concerns regarding human degeneracy and which resulted in various legislative strategies by governments of different countries to use reproduction as a means of securing their nation's future welfare. The ideals of the eugenic movement largely dissipated after the excesses of the Nazi regime were revealed at the end of World War Two, but Dorothy Nelkin and Susan Lindee (2007, p. 34) claim that the "language of eugenics" still persists within two academic fields: that of infertility research and the science of human genetics.

Continued research in both these areas lead to the development of new technologies involved in diagnostic screening, which sought to reduce the risk of inherited disease. But if the eugenics movement of the early twentieth century was the main responsibility of national government, then these new techniques place the responsibility of genetic heritage firmly in the hands of the individual. It is the present development of such techniques, along with the need of government to regulate them, that appear in the HFEA 2008. It is these techniques that Rose (2006, p. 50) sees as enshrined within bio-power and biological citizenship. He speaks of the arrival of individualised eugenics, driven by the consumerist desires of parents for the perfect child and argues that this tendency is "eugenics by the back door".

### ***3.3.2 New reproductive technologies: The privileging of family and kinship***

Deborah Lynn Steinberg (1997b, p. 33) argues that IVF technologies used as treatments within fertility clinics are underpinned by a notion of reproductive fitness that equates to the "logic of social engineering". This notion of reproductive fitness

can be detected within the decisions of practitioners and who they allow to become parents. In a survey of IVF practitioners, Steinberg (1997b, p. 45) found evidence to suggest that decisions, over whether to allow IVF treatments or not, conformed to “dominant discourses of the family”. It was also often the case that these decisions were based on shared professional notions of who was fit to be a parent and that these decisions inevitably reproduced ableist, classist, heterosexist and racist commonsense notions of family and kinship. Steinberg (1997b, p. 42) points to the predominance of white, middle class women from heterosexual marriage undergoing IVF treatments; highlighting the fact that:

media portrayals of IVF "birthday parties" in Britain since the birth of Louise Brown have shown a striking predominance of White patients, children, and practitioners.

However, it was within one area of IVF practice, that of the child’s ‘need for a father’ (originally legalised by the HFEA 1990) that Parliament appeared to provide a potential democratising update with the advisory that IVF practitioners only needed to take account of the ‘welfare of the child’. Commentators such as Steinberg (1997a, p. 183), had pointed to the consequences of the original phrase on women’s reproductive rights and the inflation of male reproductive rights through “false equivalence”, whereby men were given equal status to women in IVF treatments regarding the fertilisation of an embryo. This equivalence does not exist in natural reproduction, where it is solely a woman’s decision whether to get pregnant or not and whether to continue with a pregnancy. In IVF treatment, men and women have legal ownership of their own gametes. Under the old legislation women needed the support of men, in order to access fertility treatment. It also privileged the notion that, in order to be a family, there had to be a mother and a father, which discriminated against same sex partnerships and single women.

Of course, even after the HFEA 2008 was passed, consent to the use of gametes still exists within IVF treatment, but the change in the duty of practitioners to only take into account the welfare of the child, has allowed for the potential to alter cultural notions of the family. Even so, Steinberg (1997a, p. 45) still questions the extent to which such legislation can democratise and widen access to IVF treatments, because of the ideological social divisions that exist within these practices. To do so, she argues, would require the separation of new reproductive technologies from the historical discourses of the family and would have to take into account more fundamental questions concerning the role of medical professionals in the regulation of reproduction.

In her analysis of the HFEA 1990, Sarah Franklin points to a contradiction. On the one hand, she sees the HFEA 1990 as legalising the “formal, public negotiation of kinship” with potential implications for future debates (Franklin 1999, p. 127), but on the other hand, the ability to produce embryos outside of the body creates, according to Franklin (1999, p. 160), the possibility of “new kinship boundaries”. Franklin (1999, p. 161) plays down the boundaries between different families or cultures arguing that, with the aid of new reproductive technologies, these new kinship boundaries could be interspecies: what she terms “species endogamy”. And it was the division concerning the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes, within the HFEA 2008, which, it could be argued, publicly and formally legalised interspecies kinship.

### ***3.4 Human and inhuman vitality: The hybrid embryo debate***

Nik Brown (2009, p. 153) points to the fact that at the time of the earlier HFEA 1990, the idea of mixing human and non-human gametes to create a human-animal embryo was unconscionable.

The ‘hybrid embryo’ was morally equivalent to human reproductive cloning, the creation of artificial gametes, germ line human genetic engineering, eugenics and other such horrors.

The HFEA 1990 banned the creation of hybrid embryos, but allowed IVF practitioners to conduct a viability test, the so-called Hamster test, using human sperm and hamster eggs (ova). The test was based on the fact that if the sperm had potency, it would fertilise the hamster egg. However, the resultant hybrid embryo had to be destroyed before the two cell stage (Brown 2009, p. 153). By formally legalising the Hamster test, the HFEA 1990 created a contradiction, both allowing the creation of a hybrid embryo for a fertility test, but not allowing the creation of a hybrid embryo for use within scientific research. This contradiction centred on the assumption that a human-hamster embryo created was ‘non-viable’ and did not have the capacity to develop, because of incompatibility between the species. Brown (2009, p. 154) argues that this ‘non-viability’ argument triumphed in the end, as there was little justification not to allow the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes. Thus, the HFEA 2008 allowed for the creation of human-animal (hybrid) embryos, but prohibited their implantation into a women’s uterus.

The division regarding the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate was probably the most controversial part of the HFEA 2008 for a number of reasons. As the HFEA 1990

had banned its creation, the decision to now allow the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes was seen as evidence of the existence of a slippery slope that would eventually transform “practices, expectations, values and morality associated with human reproduction” (Mulkay 1997, p. 154). Living at the end of this slope were the monstrous possibilities that the integration of human and animal biological material for reproductive ends might spawn, upholding fears about interspecies miscegenation (Bonnicksen 2009, p. 131).

According to John Turney (1998, p. 12), applications produced by modern day biology threaten the boundaries between a set of categories:

Show me someone with a heart pacemaker, and I have no real difficulty in seeing which part is human, which is machine. Show me a ewe whose genes have been altered so that it secretes a human protein in its milk, and it is much less clear which part is human, which sheep.

He argues that Darwinian evolution, along with the development of cell theory and thermodynamics, instilled the notion that it was only a question of *when* biologists would create life, rather than *if* (Turney 1998, pp. 64-65) and the idea that babies would eventually be born in laboratories was never far away (Turney 1998, p. 167). By the start of the 1970s, cloning, test-tube babies and genetic engineering was a real possibility and in the years after the birth of Louise Brown, “molecular biology moved from science to technology at a high speed” (Turney 1998, p. 187). At the same time as Patrick Steptoe and Robert Edwards were delivering their first baby using IVF techniques, recombinant DNA was also producing successful results. New techniques made genetic engineering a possibility through the splicing and recombining of DNA molecules, even from different species. Recombinant DNA was widely described as “life creation” (Turney 1998, p. 196) and quotes Arthur Lubrow, writing in *New Times*:

Everyone knows that animals from different species can't mate ... But in biological laboratories, modern Dr Frankenstein's have found a way to create new forms of life.

Turney (1998, pp. 213-214) suggests that governments, policy-makers, ethical advisers and technology foresight panels were “caught napping by clones” over the birth of Dolly the Sheep and that her birth was a signal that human cloning was a possibility. The creation of hybrid embryos, therefore, was a metaphor that demonstrated societal fear about out-of-control scientists creating new life.

### ***3.5 The 'pre-embryo' and the turn towards the molecular gaze***

If the hybrid embryo is the creation of a modern form of new life, then it was the definition of the 'pre-embryo' in 1985 that allowed this creation. This important landmark is arguably the quintessential moment in the formation of a new biological citizenship based upon the molecular gaze. As a concept, the pre-embryo enabled the arrival of the HFEA 1990, the legalisation that permitted research into human embryos. It also played a significant part in the subsequent amendment, contained in the HFEA 2008, to allow the mixture of animal and human cells to create hybrid embryos.

In *The Salutary Tale of the Pre-Embryo* (1996), Pat Spallone conducted a sociological and historical analysis of the definition of the term 'pre-embryo' and demonstrates how it is both a work of science and a work of fiction. She argues that the term emerged at the height of public unease about the arrival of IVF techniques and embryo research (Spallone 1996, p. 207). At the time, Enoch Powell's Unborn Children (Protection) Bill had won a majority after its second reading in the House of Commons and was seen as an explicit threat to scientific research. Spallone (1996, p. 213) argues that the then president of the Royal Society Sir Andrew Huxley believed that non-scientific or lay people felt repugnance towards embryo research, because they were under the misapprehension that an embryo was already a homunculus or "tiny fully formed human being", rather than simply a clump of cells. The term 'pre-embryo' came to define the development of cells until the existence of the 'primitive streak' in the embryo at around fourteen days: the point before which human life was not thought to exist. According to Spallone (1996, pp. 214-217), the emergence of this extra definition to the embryo was "an astute conscious political move" that was "wholly manufactured" and, as a consequence, moved the point of origin of human personhood to a later date.

Personhood is not a physical property, but is immersed in social rituals and cultural attributes. Anthropologists have long been interested in how personhood is recognised at the start of life. Sharon Kaufman and Lyn Morgan (2005, p. 321) point out that in many cultures, newborns are considered as "not fully human" and that the delaying of personhood may "justify abortion, infanticide, or infant neglect". If this argument is applied to the creation of the term 'pre-embryo', then simply by shifting the date of the origin of personhood to a later stage, the 'pre-embryo' allows for both the 'old' embryo and the 'new' embryo to exist as a double identity and embodies the 'pre-embryo' as the 'other' and the embryo as the 'self' (Spallone 1996, p. 224).

Thereby, this shift allowed the 'embryo' to remain at the centre of human procreation and kinship, whilst the 'pre-embryo' allowed the scientists to have an object on which to experiment (Spallone 1996, p. 218).

### ***3.5.1 Liminal beings and reproductive immortality***

According to Kaufman and Morgan (2005, p. 318), there is increasing concern with how the boundaries of life and death are being negotiated and constructed within biomedical techniques. They argue that such techniques are creating and sustaining "growing numbers of liminal beings who hover in an ambiguous zone" of "inbetweenness": of not being dead, but not being alive (Kaufman and Morgan 2005, pp. 324-330). In *Liminal Lives* (2004), Susan Squier argues that the tissue culture underpinning stem cell research has been instrumental in re-negotiating these boundaries. She cites the work of Dr Honor Fell at the Strangeways Laboratory in Cambridge in the late 1930s. Dr Fell told students attending a lecture that she could grow tissue in vitro that had been taken from a body a week after death, or longer if it had been kept in cold storage. According to Dr. Fell (cited in Squier 2004, p. 65), "when a doctor pronounces a patient 'dead' he is only using the word 'death' in a restricted sense".

Tissue culture then, raises questions about the boundaries of life and death and the re-negotiation of the moment of 'death' has interesting repercussions on the hybrid embryo within research and cell culture. When discarded after fourteen days, is the hybrid embryo dead (in any commonsense understanding of the word) and could it be said to have been alive in the first place? Waldby and Squier (2003, p. 35) argue that the creation of a stem cell line derived from embryos clearly involves the death of an embryo, but what actually dies is debatable. The embryo's tissues are not destroyed in the process, but are transferred from one form of organism into another. Waldby and Squier (2003, p. 35) argued that stem cell lines are almost certainly alive as "cell-line technology involves the de-activation of apoptosis, or programmed cell death". Thus, stem cell lines can be frozen, stored, thawed, re-grown and frozen in a continuous cycle.

In order to create cell lines, stem cell technologies use embryos that are defined as the 'waste' products of IVF techniques and, because of this status, there is little social objection to their use in research. Squier (2004, p. 4) argues that these waste products are marginal (temporally and taxonomically) to the human being and that stem cells are both like and not like a human being in that they are "histologically

human". This means that, under a microscope, cells appear to be human, but their morphology bears no relationship to the human organism (Waldby and Squier 2003, p. 43). As an example, they use 'HeLa': the first human cell line to be established in the 1950s. This was created from the cervical cells of Henrietta Lacks (without her consent) who, at the time, was receiving treatment for cervical cancer. Henrietta Lacks died from the disease in 1951, but the line derived from her cells has faithfully reproduced for over fifty years. 'HeLa' is now used in laboratories all over the world, and is over four hundred times the original body mass of Henrietta Lacks when she was alive (Waldby and Squier 2003, p. 35).

More astounding is the fact that 'HeLa' has contaminated 106 out of 360 cell lines in laboratories around the world. Since the earliest days of attempts at cell culture, scientists have been aware that they should keep cell cultures free from bacterial and viral contamination, but scientists discovered that 'HeLa' cells could float through the air independently. They can attach themselves to dust particles, to the coats and shoes of laboratory workers and escape through ventilation systems. If just one cell landed in a culture dish, it would contaminate everything (Skloot 2010, p. 176). The cell line has even been recognised as a species in its own right: *Helacyton gartleri* ('cyton' being Greek for cell and 'gartleri' after the scientist who first noticed the contamination process) (Skloot 2010, p. 176). Possibly more significant is the finding that Henrietta Lacks' cancerous cervical cells have been shown to have the power of eternal reproduction. If properly maintained, cell lines are self-perpetuating and literally immortal and it is this that gives them, what Waldby and Squier term, "inhuman vitality" (2003, p. 35).

It is clear that stem cell technologies and hybrid embryos have profound repercussions on what it is to be human. Not only do questions arise concerning the nature of personhood, but as seen in Waldby and Squier (2003, p. 35), questions also surface over whether liminal beings that are being created by such techniques can be considered to be "alive" or "dead". Furthermore, it is these technologies that are the new focus of the molecular gaze and which underpin the HFEA 2008. According to Rose (2006, p. 83), these techniques are questioning:

Our very understanding of who we are, of the *life-forms* we are and the *forms of life* we inhabit, have 'folded *bios* back into *zōe*' (italics in original).

Through his use of the terms *bios* and *zōe*, Rose points to the fact that the Ancient Greeks had more than one word for *life*. *Bios* was used to signify the life of Man and

encompassed the social, spiritual and cultural arenas of his citizenship. It forms the root of the word *biology*, whereas *zōe* related to animal life and is the basis of the word *zoology* (Braidotti 2008, p. 177). Since Antiquity, *zōe* has been the poor relation of the two, as *bios* indicated the presence of civility and separated Man from animals. However, according to Giorgio Agamben (1998, p. 6), *zōe* also refers to reproductive life as the lowest form of “bare life” and it is in this sense that *zōe*, as bare life of the citizen, has been placed at the centre of the biopolitical realm of the modern state. The molecular gaze has broken down the old distinction between *bios* and *zōe* and, today, the goal of new reproductive technologies is to mine, harvest and extract the vital essences of bare life. It is these goals that are altering our understandings of what it is to be human.

### **3.6 The biological citizen, the political citizen and the HFEA 2008**

This chapter has explored the concept of biological citizenship and how its configuration generated new spaces of contestation. The chapter traced the history of the term, which emerged as an indispensable element in the development of capitalism. However, the late twentieth century saw a move away from intervention in this arena by the state to an emphasis on the individual management of reproductive health. The chapter also focused on the ‘molecular gaze’ and how biomedical techniques, such as stem cell technologies are increasingly being implicated in the creation of new forms of life that challenge the boundaries between life and death, human and animal.

The political citizen of the previous chapter developed rights to information regarding the decisions of government. This included the right to have their opinions heard in public and the right to be involved in issues that affected society. Such developments in the UK encouraged the growth of mediated spaces of “deliberative democracy” to hold those in power to account (Thompson 1995, pp. 255-257). This idea asserts that the media, through the broadcasting of a range of diverse viewpoints, can help in the formation of public opinion. It is the prevalence of these mediated spaces that leads Sonia Livingstone (2005, p. 26) to claim that now the public cannot be constituted, participate or express itself “without the mediation of various forms of mass communication”. The next section will discuss the implications of this notion in terms of the HFEA 2008, how the public was constituted within the media and how public opinion was expressed.

In his work on scientific citizenship, Alan Irwin (2006, p. 300) discusses the fact that, in response to a “legitimation crisis”, public consultation became desirable and seen as an important democratic function in the development of new technologies. Since the 1960s, there has been a perception that trust in science has decreased and that the public are not always “at ease” with scientific results (Gregory and Miller, 2000, p. 99). Those who championed the Public Understanding of Science felt that public consultation would increase the understanding of scientific enterprise and facilitate the acceptance of technical change (Irwin, 2006, p. 300). However, Irwin (2006, p. 300) notes that within this consultation process: “public opinion is both elusive and open to multiple constructions, including claims and counter-claims about what the public ‘really’ thinks and what the ‘real public’ might be”.

In her research on newspaper reports of the public consultation process leading up to the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate, Joan Haran (2013) found similar conclusions to Irwin, in terms of the existence of more than one public: a ‘public’ who supported the creation of the ‘hybrid embryo’ and a ‘counterpublic’ who opposed it. This division had an effect on the framing of arguments within news coverage, particularly for the opposition, who were framed as “unrepresentative” because of their strong views (Haran, 2013, p. 577). Whilst the public in favour of hybrid embryo research was framed as “rational, autonomous, deliberative, national citizens” (Haran et al, 2008, p. 146), the counterpublic was framed as “luddite, religious or moralist members of pressure groups” (Haran, 2013, p. 586). Haran (2013, p. 576) also found that those who responded to public consultation were considered to be the “wrong kind of public(s)” either because they were thought to be self-selecting and held strong opinions or because they lacked the knowledge to understand the science behind hybrid embryo research.

This latter approach is described by Irwin (2006, p. 302) as the “deficit model” and is based on the notion that if the public were properly instructed and educated in science and scientific fact, it would reduce or eliminate dissent. However, scientists themselves do not agree on what constitutes scientific knowledge in any given specific context, making the assumption of scientific knowledge highly problematic (Wynne, 1991, p. 112). Indeed in their research on the *Public Perceptions of Agricultural Biotechnologies in Europe*, Claire Marris and her colleagues (2001, p. 9) conclude that public ‘ignorance’ of scientific fact is the primary “myth” in stakeholder views about public responses to science and technology. In *Avoiding Politics: How American produce apathy in everyday life* (1998), Nina Eliasoph comes to a similar

conclusion. She argues that there are many reasons why citizens oppose scientific projects above and beyond the lack of knowledge (Eliasoph, 1998, p. 190):

Sometimes citizens oppose something on moral principle, no matter how scientifically safe or unsafe it is, like pro-choice or anti-abortion activists, who will never be convinced by scientific arguments about when life really begins" or when a fetus - or egg or sperm or cell - could be cultivated to become a viable human. Sometimes citizens object to something because they are bigoted, like whites who do not want blacks swimming in public pools. Sometimes citizens object because they have access to a body of knowledge that differs from officially accepted information, like people who said cigarettes caused cancer even when tobacco corporations claimed otherwise. Sometimes citizens have publicly minded objections, because of the political context, and will not be convinced by facts

However, it is another conclusion of Haran (2013, p. 586): that of the "asymmetry" of respective weight given to scientific opinion in the newspaper reports of the consultation process of the HFEA 2008, which has potential consequences on the ability of the public to express their opinion through the media. This is mainly due to the fact that asymmetry suggests the existence of bias in the reporting of science and also, the presence of what Anders Hansen calls a "symbiotic" relationship between science and journalism (1994, p. 121).

There are many aspects to the relationship between science and journalism. Whilst some are specific to the HFEA 2008, others are a direct consequence of the development of science since the 1960s. As with other institutions, science has undergone a transformation. For one thing the state funding of science has been severely curtailed, meaning that most science now takes place in institutions that are funded, or part-funded, by private corporations and multi-national companies. Scientists now find themselves conducting research within corporate frameworks. Furthermore, scientific projects have become linked to industrial innovation and subject to the imposition of monetary value in terms of national economic wealth creation, meaning that scientists have to justify the grants they receive and produce measurable results. This has also led to the requirement that scientists, particularly within the remit of the Public Understanding of Science, should consider it their duty to communicate these justifications and outputs to the public (Gregory and Lock, 2008, p. 1254). According to Bauer and Gregory (2008, p. 44), this new mode of communication is Public Understanding of Science Incorporated or "PUS Inc."

However, the professionalisation of science has come at the cost of the increasing focus on corporate-styled communication strategies, in the form of a greater reliance on public relations, media training and the management of media events. Whilst

conducting research for her book, Eliasoph attended public meetings about the expansion of a local petrochemical plant. She describes these meetings as “numbingly, exclusively technical” (Eliasoph, 1998, p. 195). At these meetings, company spokespeople would give presentations focusing just on factual information, without allowing the audience to ask questions. Eliasoph argues that “little by little, the whole official public sphere was filled to the brim with exchanges of unanalyzed facts” (Eliasoph, 1998, p. 196) and because of the specific focus on technical matters, citizens were unable to engage in debate. In addition, pamphlets produced by the industry and distributed at these meetings dealt with misconceptions about the petrochemical production purely in factual terms. According to Eliasoph (1998, p. 195), the message was clear: “if citizens just had information, they would agree with the chemical industries”.

A similar stage management of events was witnessed in the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate too. A corporate-styled PR campaign was “launched pre-emptively” by those in favour of the research (Haran, 2013 p. 583). This campaign was co-ordinated by the Science Media Centre or SMC and, according to Andy Williams and Slavko Gajevic (2013, p. 511-512), the “overriding motivation” of this campaign was to “convince the public and policy makers that hybrid embryo research should not be banned”. The campaign included key scientists involved in hybrid embryo research, whose work would be severely impacted if Parliament moved to impose a ban. The SMC proactively managed the relationship between these scientists and science journalists, through a series of regular press briefings. As a result, Williams and Gajevic (2013, p. 213) claim that more “pro-hybrid sources” were found in news coverage than the opponents of hybrid embryo research (Williams and Gajevic, 2013, p. 507).

The growth of such a science communication sector over the last twenty years has lead to the “power to influence what, and how, such news is reported” (Williams and Gajevic, 2013, p. 507). For most people the reality of science is what they learn from the media (Conrad, 1999, p. 285). However, this influence exists at a time in which, according to Nick Davies (2008, p. 53):

any meaningful independent journalistic activity by the press is the exception rather than the rule. We are not talking about investigative journalism here, but the everyday practices of news judgement, fact-checking, balance, criticising and interrogating sources, etc. that are, in theory, central to routine, day-to-day journalism.

And this lack of independent journalistic activity is associated with science journalism too. Hansen (1994, p. 111) argues that the key to understanding how science journalism works is to recognise that the routines of science journalists are no different to the routines used by other journalists: they are journalists first and specialists second. Much of science journalism adheres to the same criteria as news journalism. Stories are published on the basis of newsworthiness: controversy; breakthroughs, celebrity scientists and “implications for the individual” (Hansen, 1994, p. 166). However, because science is a specialist area and science journalists will never have the same expertise as the scientist, science journalists become “uniquely dependent on the co-operation of their sources” and work to cultivate a relationship of trust (Hansen 1994, p. 121). Such co-operation was witnessed during the media coverage of the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate. One of the ways the SMC managed the dissemination of messages was to connect “media-friendly scientists” to science journalists (Williams and Gajevic, 2013, p.512).

This over-dependency on scientific sources results in a journalism that lacks critical engagement, meaning that science journalists are reduced to being the mere conduits of science; simply reproducing scientific messages. Williams and Gajevic (2013, p. 514) argue that, in the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate, these messages often came in the form of press releases put together by the SMC in an attempt to “manage news coverage”. These press releases were composed of direct quotations from scientists, saving journalists time and effort when writing stories, in that it allowed them to “cut and paste” the key elements of the message (Williams and Gajevic, 2013, p. 514). However, this aspect of “churnalism” (Harcup, 2004, p. 3), where journalists simply reproduce the content of press releases in their stories, has a negative effect on truth. Davies (2008, p. 159) argues that whilst the art of PR “does not involve outright falsehood”, at the very least it involves the “skilful manipulation of reporters” in an attempt to switch the focus of a story to a chosen angle.

This pursuit of particular angles is also part of the commercial pressures that journalists face everyday; encouraging them to focus on issues and themes that are “likely to be familiar and relevant” to their audience (Anderson et al., 2005, p. 193). Where scientific stories are concerned, this means that the result of scientific research is usually presented in terms of the potential to provide a cure or treatment for a disorder or disease. According to Eliasoph (1998, p. 253-260), this approach leads to the promotion of a “self-interested individual” who is encouraged to act in a

self-interested way, rather than to connect personal problems to political issues. In *Legitimising hope and calming fears in the embryo stem cell debate*, Jenny Kitzinger and Clare Williams (2005) found this to be the case in the reporting of embryo stem cell research. They argue that the emphasis on the hope of a cure in news stories performed specific “rhetorical purposes” in advancing the potential of such research. Therefore, hope became a “crucial commodity in the debate” (Kitzinger and Williams, 2005, p. 738).

However, if science journalism is able to influence public opinion, science is “by and large, unaffected by public debate” or opinion polls (Murcott, 2009, p.103). Toby Murcott (2009, p. 96), a science journalist who also worked at the BBC as a science producer and was himself a former scientist, discusses how the scientific method and peer review system within science eliminates, indeed actively discourages, the need for outside critique. This is because, throughout the process of scientific research, scientists are scrutinised by colleagues and peers. This entails the discussion of errors in “experimental design” and the prospect of further improvement (Murcott, 2009, p. 97). This review cycle takes place right up until publication in peer-reviewed journals. Thus, by the time scientific research enters the public sphere, it has already been scrutinised several times over by scientific experts. Science journalists, therefore, feel that any further cross-checking of facts is superfluous. Because of this, Murcott claims that “the majority of science journalism is conducted at the point of publication” (2009, p.97) and it is at this point that the routines of journalism surface in the form of: the emphasis on the human angle of a story; the inclusion of PR messages and the over-reliance of close scientific sources.

At the end of the chapter, Murcott (2009, p.106) gives advice regarding the future of science journalism; appealing to science journalists to stop treating science as a deity and to find ways in which to interrogate science:

If it is treated as a deity, as something delicate needing careful preservation and belief, then it risks going the way of deities and being displaced by other, more appealing beliefs. Instead, if it is discussed, challenged and scrutinised like every other aspect of human activity, it reveals itself as it really is: simply a formalised version of human curiosity, something as integral to our species as sex, hunger and dispute. The ethics of science journalism are simple: show it to be human.

Murcott argues that the only way forward is for science to learn to be more open and account for the public funding it receives through discussion of the processes of

research and what benefits society will gain from their experiments (Murcott, 2009, p.105). However, this openness should not come at the price of corporate media strategies and PR managed media events.

### ***3.7 Science communication and the HFEA 2008: Research implications***

It is clear from the authors outlined in the previous section that changes both in journalism and science over the last few decades have had an impact on the way that science is reported. Such changes have included the corporatisation of science and changes in the day-to-day routines of journalism. The increased commercial pressures on journalists also apply to science journalists. This has led to stories based solely on the human aspect, an over-dependency on science sources and the decline in fact checking. At the same time, scientists have come under increasing pressure to communicate their work to the public and this has led, for instance, to an over-reliance on PR controlled media strategies. Analyses conducted on how specific media strategies were used in media coverage of the HFEA 2008, in particular Haran (2013) and Williams and Gajevic (2013), point to an effective PR campaign by the SMC. This campaign was underpinned by the deliberate intention to influence the dissemination of messages in favour of hybrid embryo research within the media. It also included the management of communication between science journalists and scientists. This has led Williams and Gajevic (2013, p. 507) to conclude that coverage of the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate demonstrates “concerns about media independence”. This is a worrying trend, not just in terms of the democratic function of the media, but also for the public’s understanding of science.

The research conducted by both Haran (2013) and Williams and Gajevic (2013) analysed the content of the press coverage of the events leading up to the HFEA 2008 and, in Williams and Gajevic’s case, interviews were conducted with some of the protagonists, in order to determine background events and campaign details. However, the specific aim of my research is to investigate the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008. This entails analysis, not so much on the content of the news interviews per se, but more specifically how the practices and strategies of the participants within the interaction invoked the public. Thus, the research conducted by Haran (2013) and Williams and Gajevic (2013) on press coverage of the HFEA 2008 has more contextual implications, rather than a direct influence. This is not to lessen the impact their work in any way. Indeed, comments from journalists such as Toby Murcott and Waseem Zakir, who coined the term “churnalism” (Harcup, 2004, p. 3), suggest that the BBC has not been

immune from similar influences on its journalism. Therefore where appropriate, additional commentary and context gained will be cited within findings.

A second strand of research cited in the previous section highlighted concerns about the Public Understanding of Science and scientific citizenship. Some of the research discussed here does have direct implications on my research. In particular, research by Haran (2013) and Irwin (2006) on the constitution of publics and counterpublics within consultation processes, along with the misconceptions that exist of these publics by scientists, is very relevant to the interaction contained within the news interviews on the *Today* programme. Part of the focus of my research is to explore how the public was constituted, specifically through interaction. And a related aim is to explore whether there is any evidence of the formation of public opinion or at least opinion that is formed on behalf of the public.

Another implication from research on the public understanding of science is what counts as knowledge within scientific reporting and what types of information are presented to the public. In particular, Irwin's (2006, p. 302) concept of the "deficit model" is important. Also, findings by Eliasoph (1998) regarding how information is presented to the public are crucial here too. This means that, in terms of the news interviews on the *Today* programme, questions revolve around what types of knowledge the public (or audience) was assumed to have, whether the *Today* programme conveyed adequate information to citizens regarding the HFEA 2008 and whether the news interviews allowed for sufficient discussion of the existential questions at the heart of the new configuration of biological citizenship. And it is within the relationship between the presentation of information and the gaining of knowledge about the HFEA 2008 that this research agrees with Sonia Livingstone's (2005, p. 26) assertion that the public is constituted, participates and expresses itself through the media.

## **Chapter 4 – Method and Approach to Analysing the News Interviews on the *Today* Programme**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

This chapter focuses on the chosen method for the analysis of the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008. Conversation Analysis (CA) is a method for the analysis of spoken discourse and concentrates on what actions people accomplish through interaction. CA has a distinctive epistemic approach that is particularly relevant to a research project with an emphasis on interaction within radio programmes. The chapter begins by addressing the question of why it is important to study the interaction contained within news interviews and what CA contributes to this study. It then provides a short history of the origins of CA and how the research method emerged out of these origins. After that, CA's distinctive approach to data is summarised, along with its emphasis on analysis that is strongly data-driven, empirical and replicable. This is followed by an explanation of the specific methods used by conversation analysts: the detailed and very specific transcription of conversation; a focus on the turn-taking system within interaction; and attention to how interaction conducted within institutions affect the formation of participants' identities. Lastly, the chapter finishes with a critique of CA, mainly by those from a more critical perspective, where tensions over the question of what counts as 'context' within interaction have arisen.

### ***4.2 Why study interaction?***

It has been established already that the news interview is commonly used within broadcasting. This makes it a significant subject of analysis in any project investigating the practices of journalism. It has also been established that the format of the *Today* programme is predominantly organised around news interviews and this is one of the reasons why the programme makes an interesting case study. However, this does not address the question of why it is important to study the interaction that takes place within the news interviews, as opposed to, for instance, an approach where the primary focus is on the topical content of news interviews or on sourcing routines and who gets access to the programme.

Previous research conducted using CA techniques indicates that interaction is not predictable or predetermined, but contains identifiable patterns that accomplish

certain actions. This implies that the news interviews on the *Today* programme contain patterns within the interaction and that analysis using CA techniques would identify the underlying structures that impact on the course of this interaction. Moreover, investigations into institutional interaction emphasise the fact that institutions are brought into being through interaction: that interaction has particular goal orientations, inferential frameworks and identities associated with specific institutions (Heritage and Clayman 2010, p. 34). This has implications for the practices contained within the news interviews and their connection to the accomplishment of institutional tasks. A further point also emerges in relation to these patterns and the role that interaction has in the construction of the institutional identities of interviewer and interviewee, because via interaction “people construct, establish, reproduce, and negotiate their identities, roles, and relationships” (Drew 2005, p. 74). Thus analysis using CA techniques can, for instance, enable identification of the practices that interviewers use in the raising of specific issues within questions and how interviewees use particular strategies in order to answer these questions.

Scannell (1991, p. 7) claims that, as broadcasting is an institution, all talk on radio is institutional talk. A set of further implications emerge from this in terms of the interaction contained within the news interviews on the HFEA 2008 and how this interaction has links to other significant institutions: those of public sector broadcasting; Parliament; journalism and political communication. For instance, CA techniques could identify what practices the public sector broadcaster uses in the realisation of the necessity to maintain a non-partisan approach to the reporting of news. Such techniques could also help recognise how the *Today* programme is implicated in the BBC’s duty to encourage conversation and debate about topical issues that affect society and provide citizens with a greater understanding of parliamentary processes and political institutions. Therefore, uncovering patterns contained within interaction is central to the analysis of how the news interviews enabled the public, as listeners of the programme, to hear a debate concerning the HFEA 2008 and how this facilitated greater understanding of the political processes involved.

This research seeks to investigate the features contained within the news interviews and how these might potentially affect the public’s understanding of the HFEA 2008. More specifically it aims to understand: how the interaction invoked ‘the public’; what democratic functions were performed by the interaction; and what this reveals about

the relationship between the news interviews on the *Today* programme and the HFEA 2008. Such an analysis requires the use of a research method that can uncover, not only the patterns contained within interaction, but also identify the practices of institutional roles. It is for these reasons that CA is the ideal method for analysis of the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008. The remainder of this chapter explores CA techniques in more detail, beginning with the origins of CA and how these underpin its method of analysis.

### **4.3 Methodological orientations**

Robin Wooffitt (2011) traces the origins of CA and provides details of how it developed from the 1960s onwards, as part of the dissatisfaction with existing attitudes and methods within the social sciences. CA as a method emerged from what were seen as analytical weaknesses in the approach to linguistically oriented research. At the time, although researchers within the social sciences often used verbal data as a resource within research projects, language as the primary focus of study was not thought to be important. The dominant view was that talk-in-interaction reflected external sociological systems, such as the family, gender and class etc. However, disagreement began to surface over whether people's descriptive accounts were simply "neutral representations of an objective social reality" (Wooffitt 2005, p. 19). Another criticism levelled at social scientific research methods was the attitude of the analyst towards linguistic data. It was felt that the data collected was "too often made subservient to contexts not of its participants making, but of its analysts' insistence" (Schegloff 1998, p. 183). In other words, that analysts were far too eager to inflict their own theories and ideas on to their data, rather than taking participants' understandings of context into account.

Wooffitt argues that in classic texts, such as Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966) the idea surfaced that participants make sense of the social and physical world through talk and that "customs, habits, practices and knowledge" are the products of social interaction (Wooffitt 2005, p. 97). Talk-in-interaction then becomes a "constructive and constitutive medium" that "brings the world into being" (Wooffitt 2005, p. 97). Or in the words of Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 54) "through language an entire world can be actualised at any moment". This means that not only do participants construct reality through language, but that through interaction, a dynamic and ever-changing environment exists: one that is constantly being created and re-created by the participants themselves.

Thus, CA is underpinned by the idea that people socially construct the world through interaction on a moment-by-moment basis and it becomes incumbent on the researcher to focus on how participants use language within the context of their situation and how they jointly co-construct particular understandings of the world. According to John Heritage (1984, p. 242), interaction is both *context-shaped* and *context-renewing*. *Context-shaped* in as much as a participants' contribution can only be understood within the context of the situation in which they are speaking and *context-renewing* because any interaction taking place contributes to the context of the next section of interaction. Heritage and Clayman (2010, p. 21) provide a useful analogy of this situation, comparing it to the yellow brick road sequence in the Beatles' Movie *Yellow Submarine*:

In this image the Beatles are walking along, and as they step forward a yellow brick road (like the one in *The Wizard of Oz*) materialises and forms under their feet. Their walking feet form the road. Their actions build the route they are travelling on.

CA inherited its methodological footprint from initial work carried out by sociologists Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel. Goffman was the first social scientist to propose that talk-in-interaction could be studied and analysed in its own right. He argued that complex interactional rights and obligations were far more important to talk-in-interaction than were social institutions at the macro level of society. However, although Goffman's fundamental achievement was to establish talk-in-interaction as a research topic, he was less interested in how participants within interaction understood one another and collaborated to make sense of interaction. This was left to Garfinkel and his radical challenge to conventional sociology through *ethnomethodology*, or the study of "how socially shared methods of practical reasoning are used to analyse, understand, and act in the commonsense world of everyday life" (Heritage and Clayman 2010, p. 10). Through a series of experiments, Garfinkel demonstrated the existence of shared understandings and unwritten rules within social life; rules in which participants jointly collaborated, in order to produce shared meanings. These skills were described as 'tacit' and 'practical', because they were not conscious rules that could be articulated by participants (Wooffitt 2005, p. 73). Instead, they were invisible and, at the same time, implicit to the participants involved in social interaction.

It became apparent to Harvey Sacks, who was Garfinkel's colleague and Goffman's student, that conversation was the main method people used to achieve understanding within social life. CA emerged in the late 1960s, as a method for the

analysis of conversation. This was initially through the work of Sacks, but latterly in tandem with Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. CA is influenced by Goffman and his idea that talk-in-interaction is a domain of research in its own right, but from Garfinkel it develops the notion that shared practices are at the basis of conversation and that participants routinely use these practices in a normatively organised way. Thus, conversation is regarded as the “primordial scene of social life” (Schegloff 1996, p. 4). Analysis of conversation enables the researcher to understand how participants conduct themselves, to recognise the sense-making practices and devices they use in conversation and how the use of these help participants arrive at shared understandings.

#### ***4.4 Conversation Analysis: method and approach to data***

The great advantage of using CA is that it already has a robust methodological framework that can be readily applied to research. Not only is this approach highly *empirical* and *rigorous*, but it also has well-established protocols for the analysis of talk. CA was developed to analyse talk as the joint enterprise of participants, as opposed to the speeches or monologues spoken by an individual. Therefore, the term ‘talk-in-interaction’ describes the idea of naturally occurring talk and the interactive nature of that talk. As the fundamental concern of a CA project is to investigate the “communicative competencies” of participants within interaction and to identify the patterns that are found therein (Drew 2005, p. 75), the researcher conducts analysis on data that has been collected from talk-in-interaction. This point is crucial to CA, as its insistence on using naturally occurring talk as an empirical basis, provides CA with *prima facie* validity which means that other researchers can check any claims being made about the data. Such empirical data is normally obtained through audio (or sometimes video) recordings and analysts are advised to gain a thorough understanding of the data through repeated listening.

Analysts then transcribe the data collected from the recording of naturally occurring talk into a written format, so that the researcher can use the transcription as an aide-memoire during analysis. This consideration is an important one and Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008, p. 70) advise analysts not to think of the transcript as being part of the data *per se*, but as a “convenient referential tool” only. For this reason, transcripts should be considered as a way of enabling the researcher to carry out the subsequent analysis with more ease.

#### **4.4.1 Transcription**

Transcription is a complex procedure. This is because it has to be sophisticated enough to capture the intricacies contained within conversation. It also plays a crucial role in the claim by CA to be an empirical discipline. Use of an accurate transcription system ensures that idiosyncratic transcripts are not produced and that they can be publicly verified. Also of significance is the fact that details within conversation are not necessarily apparent at the start of the transcription process. This is because meanings contained within data only become evident once analysis is underway, meaning that analysts of conversation have to ensure that data is transcribed as accurately and authentically as possible.

There are different transcription systems in use and some are more detailed than others; all transcription systems are based on “standard orthography” (Drew 2005, p. 78). The particular system that an individual researcher uses is often tailored to the type of research being conducted and is dependent upon the elements of conversation being examined. According to Norman Fairclough (1993, p. 229), no transcription system could conceivably encompass everything and the transcription system a researcher uses is inevitably a question of judgement. Analysts need to choose a system that, at the very least, can account for the details of turn-taking by the participants, along with the recording of how the speech was delivered. Most systems contain similar basic elements and use symbols to indicate, for example, turns at talk and overlapping speech, emphasis, intakes of breath, laughs, gaps and pauses. These systems are usually adequate for most research purposes. However, transcriptions needing a more fine-grained analysis of talk might also contain symbols for pitch, amplitude, the rising or lowering of intonation and the prolongation of syllables, etc., in particular sentences, phrases or words. One of the early pioneers of CA, Gail Jefferson, devised a system of transcription that uses symbols available on the ordinary keyboard of a computer and her system has become the most influential transcription system used by CA researchers<sup>2</sup>.

Once transcription of the data has been completed, the analyst can then carry out the ‘conversation analysis’ that the method is named after. The emphasis of this analysis is qualitative rather than quantitative as, although certain components are repeated within conversations, these repetitions often have different significance in

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<sup>2</sup> The complete glossary of transcription symbols that Jefferson developed can be found in: Jefferson, G. (2004) ‘Glossary of Transcript Symbols with an Introduction’ In Lerner, G. (ed.) *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company

terms of their interactional context and cannot be easily coded. Therefore, any analysis of the structures found within conversation necessitates a rich and deep investigation of the patterns contained within talk, along with an exploration of the practices of the participants involved. Conversation analysis centres on how participants accomplish social interaction and what resources they use. The analysis is initially structured around how interaction is accomplished through *turns*. This then leads to an investigation of the *turn-taking* system and *turn design*. Further analysis also looks at the *sequential organisation* of those turns and how participants accomplish particular *social actions*.

#### **4.4.2 Turns and the turn-taking system**

Fundamental to any analysis of naturally occurring talk is the notion that one speaker has a turn at speaking and then the next speaker takes their turn. Essentially, this is the *turn-taking system* and, according to this system, the normative regulation is: “one speaker at a time” (Sidnell 2010, p. 52). However, there is a considerable amount of variation in this notion. For instance, speakers may talk at different lengths and durations or there may be a difference in the order of turns (this is particularly relevant in multiparty conversations). Drew (2005, p. 79) claims that the overwhelming “power of the model” devised by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, is that it can accommodate any type of variation that occurs within each unique environment.

Jack Sidnell claims that participants’ innate orientations to the turn-taking system can be particularly identified at points within interaction where the speakers either interrupt or overlap each other. He argues that, far from invalidating the turn-taking system, departures from the one-at-a-time rule prove its existence (Sidnell 2010, p. 52). Over the entire length of a conversation, the one-at-a-time rule is more likely to be preserved than not. It is also the case that overlaps and interruptions tend to occur at a “highly restricted set of places in conversation” often at the junction of speaker turns (Sidnell 2010, p. 52). This pattern of overlapping speech, and interruptions in specific places, suggests that participants recognise the turn-taking system as normative.

Another occurrence, that of errors and repairs, provides further evidence of participants’ orientations to the rules of the underlying turn-taking system. In naturally occurring talk, people often encounter problems of “hearing, speaking or understanding” (Sidnell 2010, p. 110). These problems can happen for a number of

reasons. When they occur in speech, participants normatively attempt to repair the problem using observable, standardised repair mechanisms. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson make the distinction between the actual source of the trouble and the repair itself. They outline four varieties of repair sequence: the *self-initiated repair* (where the repair is initiated and completed by the speaker); the *other-initiated repair* (where the repair is initiated by the other participant and completed by the speaker); the *self-initiated other-repair* (where the repair is initiated by the self and completed by the other participant) and the *other-initiated other-repair* (where the repair is initiated and completed by the other participant) (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008, p. 60). The identification of errors by participants, and their attempts to repair them, reveals that participants understand when problems go wrong in the turn-taking system. It also highlights the fact that a speaker's turn is constructed in such a way that it fits into, not only the ongoing production of the conversation, but also the turns of the other participants.

*Turns* are made up of *turn construction units*. These units are constructed from: single words; phrases; clauses; sentences and often a combination of all of these. A speaker has to orient their current turn to past, present and future turns within any conversation. Thus, the organisational features of turns:

display gross organizational features that reflect their occurrence in a series. They regularly have a three-part structure: one which addresses the relation of a turn to a prior, one involved with what is occupying the turn, and one which addresses the relation of the turn to a succeeding one (Sacks et al. 1973, p. 722).

Another aspect of the turn-taking system is how participants are able to recognise when one turn is complete and another can begin. At the end of each turn there is a "transition relevance place" (Wooffitt 2005, p. 27). At these points, a set of rules based on "current-selects-next" operate and these rules allow for participants to either: continue their turn; for the next speaker to begin their turn; or, in a multi-party conversation, to allocate which of the next speakers will take their turn (Sidnell 2010, p. 36). Thus, speakers constantly monitor current turns, in order to anticipate possible completion points before they occur. On this basis, turns are allocated in an ordered manner. Wooffitt (2005, p. 27) argues that:

speakers overwhelmingly try to initiate their turns at, or in close proximity to, transition relevance places. This demonstrates that we operate with a tacit understanding that initiating turn-transfer at these places is normatively appropriate. A second property of turn construction units is that once they are underway, we can anticipate when they will end.

Being able to project a forthcoming transition relevance place means that next speakers are able to time their turn initiations with some precision.

The turn-taking system that Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson found to exist at the heart of conversation demonstrates a locally-managed and collaboratively organised activity that is the product of the interaction between speakers. Turn-taking takes place within a constantly changing environment and is, therefore, regarded as a continuous achievement that speakers accomplish on a turn-by-turn basis.

#### **4.4.3 Turn design, sequence organisation and the production of action**

With each turn, the participant chooses what goes into its construction and what action it is designed to accomplish. Turns are oriented to their intended recipients by not only taking into account prior turns, but by anticipating subsequent turns within the conversation and encouraging mutual understanding of what actions intend to be accomplished with the turn. All of these elements are referred to by Drew (2013, p. 133) as *turn design* and he describes it as an “immense and complex” topic for researchers to analyse. Within turn design, speakers have at their disposal a variety of resources (linguistic and otherwise), including:

lexis (or words), phonetic and prosodic resources, syntactic, morphological and other grammatical forms, timing (e.g. very slightly delaying a response), laughter and aspiration, gesture and other bodily movements and positions (including eye gaze) (Drew 2013, p. 132).

One of the essential elements that analysts look for in turn design is the question of what *action* is being accomplished in a turn, *who* it addresses and *how* the hearer(s) of that turn makes sense of the action that the speaker is performing. It has already been noted that the turn-taking system works on the basis that turns follow the one-at-a-time rule. However, turns are not just *serially* ordered in this manner, but each turn is linked in a *sequential* order too. This means that, with each turn, participants “actively analyse the ongoing production of talk in order to negotiate their own situated participation in it” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008, p. 41). Hence turns are designed to accomplish something in the sense that they perform actions, manage activities and make sense of the world.

Turns also act as “vehicles for actions - complaints, requests, offers, warnings and so on” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008, p. 42) and a significant amount of this action happens within what are termed *paired action sequences* or *adjacency pairs*

(Wooffitt 2005, p. 32). Examples of adjacency pairs are: questions and answers; greetings and their returns; invitations and acceptance/rejection. Adjacency pairs are separated into two parts: *first pair part* in the form of a question or invitation for example, and *second pair part*: the answer, acceptance or rejection, etc. Through the utterance of the first pair part, the expectation is that the recipient will respond with a second pair part that is recognisable as completing the action. In the case of news interviews, a question from the interviewer would demand a second pair part in the form of answer from the interviewee. Not only that, but the second pair part would have to be recognisable as performing an 'answer'.

This process can be complicated by the fact that first pair parts often provide an alternative set of options in terms of second pair parts. For instance, an invitation can be accepted, declined or evaded. These alternatives relate to what Hutchby and Wooffitt term "preference organisation" (2008, p. 46). Clearly, an invitation is extended on the basis that it is accepted and to accept an invitation is the *preferred response*. However, to decline, hesitate or evade acceptance is a *dispreferred response* (Heritage 1984, p. 267).

Preference organisation is significant to the news interview, as interviewees have alternative options when answering a question. In performing the second pair part the interviewee can either choose to *agree* with sentiment of the question or choose to *disagree* with it. However, the interviewee must provide an answer, as they would face the prospect of being sanctioned for what is perceived to be an evasion of the question or non-answer (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 239). Analysis of the beginnings of second part pairs and how quickly recipients respond to questions, and invitations, etc. give the analyst an indication of whether the recipient is about to issue the *preferred* or *dispreferred response*. *Preferred responses* happen without delay, whereas *dispreferred responses* are often delayed, hedged and justified with further explanations (Davidson 1984, p. 103).

This section has focused on CA and its distinctive approach to naturally occurring talk, the collection of data, transcription and methods of analysis. It has provided a brief overview of the basic elements that researchers might analyse: *turns, turn-taking, turn design; social action* and *sequence organisation* (Drew 2005, p. 79). Drew claims that these are "first order concepts" and that, through the analysis of these concepts, a picture of the structural organisation and practices of conversation begins to accumulate for the analyst (2005, p. 79).

#### **4.5 Conversation Analysis and institutional interaction**

The earliest research concerning talk-in-interaction focused on conversations, such as telephone calls, and research output from these early projects developed most of the first order concepts discussed in the previous section. In the late 1970s, researchers began to turn their attention to more specialised forms of talk contained within what became known as *institutional interaction*. This has many of the same properties of naturally occurring talk. Drew (2005, p. 74) argues that other forms of interaction are simply “transformations of ordinary conversation” and derive much of their form from conversation. Institutional talk also relies on the same principles of turn-taking. What makes institutional talk unique is that it takes place in a more restricted environment in which:

the goals of the participants are more limited and institution-specific, there are often restrictions on the nature of interactional contributions, and talk is understood in terms of institution - and activity-specific inferential frameworks (Heritage and Clayman 2010, p. 15).

News interviews are not conversations, although they are produced to be relatively spontaneous and conversation-like. So how is the CA methodology relevant to the analysis of news interviews? As with conversation, news interviews contain many of the same patterns and structures, but what principally makes a news interview empirically distinct from a conversation is that the participants in a news interview “observe an elaborate set of social conventions associated with the roles of interviewer and interviewee” (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 6). These conventions are very powerful and have real effects and consequences on the interaction that takes place; they are as tacit and as normative as the practices contained within conversation. It is for these reasons that Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 6) claim that the news interview can be seen as an “organised social institution in its own right”. In the case of the news interviews conducted on the HFEA 2008, they are additionally situated within the institution of the BBC and public sector broadcasting. They also are broadcast within a specific institutional context of the *Today* programme. Therefore, this research approaches the news interviews on the programme as institutional talk and it is because of the institutional pressures and normative frameworks involved in the broadcast of the news interviews that their analysis has been located within the methodology of CA.

Research into institutional talk builds on the findings of CA but, at the same time, specifically focuses on how interaction: “instantiates” the institution (Heritage and

Clayman 2010, p. 32); the orientations that are tied to the institution and how that affects the environment of talk; the influence of the institution on the identity of the participants; and the unique constraints and inferential frameworks that are found within the production of institutional talk. For these reasons, institutional interaction is studied as a distinctive field within CA. Although institutional talk embodies the same analytical focus that the basic CA approach employs, the objectives of research into institutional interaction have a slightly different emphasis. In terms of research conducted on news interviews, these objectives centre on questions such as the following: what precisely is institutional about the news interviews? What kinds of institutional practices, viewpoints and identities are summoned within the interaction of news interviews? And what connections can be detected between the actions that are being enacted by participants' turns and the institutional environment beyond the news interviews? These research objectives have an impact on the "first order concepts" that Drew proposed (Drew 2005, p. 79).

#### ***4.5.1 Institutional talk: the turn-taking system, roles and identities***

The institutional emphasis of the news interview means that participants are more restricted in their opportunity to initiate action with their turns. One of the reasons for this is that the institutional role of interviewer has overall control of who says what and when. Turns are "pre-allocated" by the interviewer (Heritage and Clayman 2010, p. 37) and this not only restricts the interviewee to answering a question, but also limits the availability of the interviewee to be able to speak. Interviewees have to wait until they are asked a question and then they have to deliver an utterance that is recognisable as an answer. Any departure from this institutional turn-taking system, for instance a request to speak out of turn, mean that the interviewer may sanction the interviewee for failing to adhere to the system. Breaches and corresponding sanctions, therefore, demonstrate that the turn-taking system is a normative framework and one that is tacitly understood by the participants.

If the system confines the interviewee, then it also places certain restrictions on the interviewer too, in that utterances have to be recognisable as questions. This prevents interviewers from explicitly making personal statements, giving opinions or evaluating the responses of interviewees. The consequence of this restriction is to enforce the existence of a "neutralistic posture" on the interviewer, as they are effectively prevented from editorialising answers given by the interviewee and restricted to asking questions (Clayman 1992, p. 168). Heritage and Clayman (2010, p. 40) claim that this institutionally-specific "specialised turn-taking system

profoundly structures the frameworks of activity, opportunity, and interpretation that emerge within them”.

#### **4.5.2 For the benefit of the ‘overhearing’ audience**

The institutional turn-taking system found at the heart of the news interview imposes a tight stricture on what can be said, by whom and when. One of the ways this is maintained is through the imposition of turns that confine participants to the adjacency pairings of question and answer. Heritage and Clayman (2010, p. 38) argue that this type of restriction is often found when talk is overheard by a large number of non-addressed others who are accepted as being “co-present” within the interaction. Thus, the role of the interviewer becomes institutionally defined as restricted to asking the questions that people who are co-present want to hear and adherence to this question and answer sequence prevents accusations of bias. According to Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 130), the justification claimed by the interviewer in such a circumstance would be: “I’m just asking you a question. I’m not expressing my personal views”.

David Greatbatch (1988, pp. 401-402) provides a more detailed account of these adjacency pairs, in order to examine and account for participants’ motives in these sequences. He details how the question and answer format of the news interview has undergone a transformation from the practice found in ordinary interaction. In conversation, questions and answers normatively contain a third part: that of the “third turn receipt” (Heritage 1985, p. 96). This third turn receipt indicates that the adjacency pair has been accomplished. Thus, the participant who originally asked the question normally responds to the answer in order to acknowledge that they have received the information. For instance, receipt tokens, such as ‘oh’, ‘I see’, ‘okay’, ‘of course’, ‘really’, etc. can indicate a range of acknowledgements: surprise, support, agreement, disappointment or disagreement. However, Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 125) contend that “interviewers and interviewees produce relatively large blocks of talk without any form of acknowledgement from the other”. Heritage (1985, p. 98) argues that the reason why interviewers (and interviewees) avoid the use of these receipts, is to bolster the appearance of formality within the news interview. This is because news receipts reveal a commitment to the validity of the information just given, whilst continuers, such as ‘right’, ‘mm hm’, ‘mm’, etc. have the effect of showing interest in what the speaker is saying and, therefore, act as an encouragement to speakers to continue talking (Schegloff 1982, p.87).

In mundane conversation, receipts and continuers are routinely used to address the primary recipients of talk. However, the primary recipient of a news interview is the listener at home, so the use of these types of responses would be inappropriate within the environment of the news interview and would signal the existence of more informal talk: that of a conversation between friends (Heritage 1985, pp. 99-100). Since the sole task of the interviewer is to “elicit information but not to judge its adequacy” (Heritage, 1985: 99), the avoidance of news receipts in question and answer sequences can be seen as a further device used in the achievement of a neutralistic posture. What is more, the fact that interviewees routinely avoid news receipts as well, demonstrates that this is a jointly constructed achievement in which both parties collaborate.

The adjacency pairing sequence of question-followed-by-answer is fundamental to the news interview and indicates that the news interview is a derivative form of naturally occurring talk. It also demonstrates that the constraints placed on both the interviewer and the interviewee by such sequence organisation makes the news interview a distinctive practice of institutional interaction. Analysis of question and answer sequences by Heritage (1985, p. 100) reveals that it is designed to be heard by an “overhearing” audience.

### ***4.5.3 Structural organisation***

The institutionally-specific turn-taking system of the news interview demonstrates that it is not a “disorganised free-for-all”, but a structured speech event (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 6). Indeed, Greatbatch (1988, p. 404) highlights five strict controls that are imposed by the turn-taking system on the participants of news interviews: controls that are recognised and enforced by both interviewer and interviewee. He notes that interviews must be opened and closed by the interviewer and that the interviewer must manage the turn allocations. Furthermore, interviewers and interviewees must restrict themselves to the production of turns that can be “minimally recognisable as questions and answers”. This means that the interviewer does not need to ask a question as such; but they do have to produce a statement that is recognisable by both the interviewee and the listener as being a question. Lastly, interviewers must withhold a range of responses that normally occur in everyday conversation. Greatbatch (1988, p. 402) claims that this turn-taking system has developed over time because of the historic constraints placed on the news interview, both in terms of the interviewer having to address the audience, but also the legal restrictions within broadcast journalism that the interviewer

remains neutral. This demonstrates that the development of the turn-taking system of the news interview, along with the devices found within the sequential organisation of turns, represent a set of institutionalised conventions that have arisen out of the context of broadcast journalism and the necessity for an institution to be heard to be neutral by its overhearing audience.

#### ***4.6 Conversation Analysis: tensions and antagonisms***

Most of the criticisms aimed at CA emerge from the approach it takes to the relationship between the researcher, the data and the findings produced. It has already been established in section 4.2, that CA is based on the ethnomethodological principle that participants construct their own social reality through interaction and that the role of the researcher is to uncover the meanings and orientations that participants produce on a moment-by-moment basis. This is what Wooffitt (2005, p. 155) calls a “bottom-up approach”. As a consequence, CA practitioners criticise research that is carried out where the researcher applies a “top-down approach” (2005, p. 155). According to Schegloff (1997, p. 166), this applies to most of the research conducted within the social sciences. Here findings are amassed on the basis of positivist “observations about the world” and that researchers apply the terms and theory that preoccupy their minds at that moment, in order to describe, explain and critique the phenomena under investigation. He calls this approach “theoretical imperialism” (Schegloff 1997, p. 167), claiming that:

What is needed is not readings in critical theory, but observations – noticings – about people’s conduct in the world and the practices by which they are engendered and understood (Schegloff 1998, p. 414).

This means that, no matter how well intentioned the project, if researchers come from certain standpoints they are unlikely to notice the intersubjective meanings achieved by their research subjects. Thus, tensions and antagonisms emerge from the dispute over the site of where the ‘social’ happens. As previously stated, researchers working in the CA tradition think of talk-in-interaction as “the primordial site of social life” (Schegloff 1996, p. 4), whereas more critical approaches to spoken discourse encourage the analyst to investigate the wider effects of discourse and how it shapes “social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief” (Fairclough 1993, p. 12).

Fairclough argues that CA is based on the avoidance of any social theory that discusses the influence of class, power and ideology on the participants of

interaction (Fairclough 1993, p. 17). Whilst he insists that a micro analysis of participant meanings has a definite place in the research method that he advocates, Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis, he criticises CA for a position that views all participants as equals within interaction. He argues that, because of the emphasis on the micro analysis of talk, CA cannot account for the discourses that exist at the level of society and which participants draw on within interaction. Thus, CA ignores:

judgements about the nature of the social event, the social relationship between [participants], and the discourse type. This implies a view of discourse processes and interpretation which is more complex than that generally assumed in CA – a view that can accommodate, for example, producers and interpreters negotiating their way within repertoires of discourse types (Fairclough 1993, p. 19).

For this reason, Fairclough advocates a combination of the *micro* analysis of endogenous interaction with a *macro* analysis of the exogenous influences found within interaction. With this approach, Fairclough encourages a ‘critical’ analysis of interaction (often referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA). However, this approach is generally underpinned by either Marxist or realist positions where research is motivated by the need to uncover underlying structures, the social inequalities they produce and how these inequalities are reproduced through language and discourse. Therefore, researchers working within CDA, take an explicit political stance over how elites sustain and legitimate social inequalities.

A range of less critical approaches, but nevertheless still critical, are those working under the collective description of Discourse Analysis. This includes projects directly influenced by Foucault and also Discursive Psychology. These approaches range from those that are explicitly political, to others where there is a broad commitment to exploring social and political implications<sup>3</sup>. These approaches place more emphasis on postmodern and post-structuralist perspectives and, although they largely support CA’s epistemological belief in the social construction of reality, they assume similar criticisms of CA to those of critical discourse analysis. Like Fairclough, Margaret Wetherell (1998, p. 378) claims that CA research cannot even offer an adequate answer to its own fundamental question of “why this utterance here?”, because it only gives a limited explanation of the sense-making activities involved in interaction. Wetherell argues that social realities are constructed at both

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<sup>3</sup> Some researchers, such as Wetherell (2001) and Wooffitt (2011), have produced volumes detailing Discourse Analysis as a research method and these include chapters on CA.

the micro and the macro levels, meaning that individuals, social institutions and social structures are configured in complex ways. This is because:

social agents have real or true identities (as members of the proletariat, for example) and real or true interests which go with those social identities which they may misperceive, simply not recognise or which can be obscured and invisible (Wetherell 1998, p. 387).

Therefore, Wetherell (1998, p. 378) argues that it makes “no sense to separate the discursive from the extra-discursive” and argues for an integrated approach that encompasses post-structuralist, ethnomethodological and CA methods, in order to unmask the wider social injustices, inequalities and asymmetries in power that can be found in interaction. To her, such an integrated method would develop more effective democratic projects. It would appear, therefore, that the criticisms levelled at CA centre on the question of what constitutes *relevant social context*.

CA practitioners see context as existing at the *micro* level of interaction and, for them, it is important that research demonstrates participants’ own orientations and meanings. This is an entirely valid point. Research with explicitly political motivations to uncover, for instance, the dominance of class, race or gender runs the risk of imposing a predominant interpretation on an individual’s identity that might not be relevant to them. However, Celia Kitzinger (2008, p. 198) addresses the question of what counts as relevant to participants’ orientations and what counts as researcher interpretations, following the rebuttal of previous research where she advocated using CA to investigate feminist concerns regarding gender, sexuality, power and oppression. Kitzinger (2008, p. 199) argues that analysts are unlikely to find explicit reference to these kinds of issues within interaction, but that participants’ orientations to them are likely to be found in the “relevancies of the interaction”. Kitzinger adequately demonstrates connections to these issues within the data from her own research and encourages the continued use of CA to advance scholarship within the field. However, she claims that the ‘feminist’ label should be applied “*post-analytic*” so that critics can discard the label at will (Kitzinger 2008, p. 203; italics in original).

As Steinberg (1997a, pp. 15-16) argues, it is important for researchers to move away from “universalising the experiences of particular groups” and, instead, to refer specifically to individual’s own lived reality of oppression or privilege. This is a position that CA supports and encourages analysts to adopt. It is certainly the case that participants of interaction may feel oppressed and/or dominated and may orient

to this within interaction, but, as Schegloff (1997, p. 180) points out, this needs to be “*shown*” in the data (italics in original).

Research conducted within institutional interaction can provide a connection from the context of participants within locally produced micro interaction to a context based on the meso environment of institutional activity (Drew and Heritage 1992, p. 18). As a research focus, institutional interaction deals with some of the issues raised by the critical approaches mentioned above and shares the theoretical underpinnings of both CA and Discourse Analysis in terms of a commitment to the construction of social reality via interaction on a moment-by-moment basis. It acknowledges that institutional interaction, and the institutional practices found within it, are historically contingent.

Clayman and Heritage’s (Clayman and Heritage 2002, pp. 189-191) research demonstrates how news interviews have radically changed over the course of the twentieth century. They refer to an interview from 1951 with the British Prime Minister Clement Atlee, in order to demonstrate the deferential attitude of interviewers at that time. Any comparative analysis of the interaction of news interviews since the 1950s onwards would demonstrate how the institutional practices of news interviews have changed; deference has been replaced by adversarialness. Thus, Heritage (2005, p. 105) claims that findings of research into institution interaction:

tend to be less permanent: They are historically contingent and subject to processes of social change under the impact of culture, social ideology, power, economic forces, intellectual innovation, and other factors impacting change in society.

This line of argument suggests that research into institutional interaction is closer to the critical approaches of Discourse Analysis than CA researchers would like to admit. Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 21) recognise that the research they conducted into news interviews is “multidimensional” and is situated at both the micro and the macro levels and involves “the encompassing system of speech exchange to the broader institutional and socio-political environment”. Within the analysis of institutional interaction it is acceptable to incorporate research into, for instance, analysis of scripted elements where producers and interviewers steer the direction of the news interviews or focus on certain interviewer and interviewee practices which allow for the construction of inferential networks and normative frameworks linked to the institution. Alternatively, analysis can provide an indication

of the power structures and access routinely given to certain groups through an investigation of the sources used as interviewees in the news interviews.

There is nothing within the CA methodology that precludes a critical approach at a later stage. Once the initial analysis has been undertaken surrounding participants' motivations and understandings, the analyst can start to think about a critical approach and what social or political issues they should go on to address. There is evidence in the transcripts of my data to suggest that a macro analysis of the news interviews conducted on the HFEA 2008 could be carried out as part of a next step analysis. Although the purpose of this project is to detail the institutional interaction and the practices involved in the news interviews at the *micro* level, Appendix 2 demonstrates the types of observable discourses on which a *macro* analysis might be based. A chapter I have published, entitled *The Monstrous Hybrid as Object of Scientific Experiment* (2013) was written as part of the analysis of the news interviews broadcast on the *Today* programme during the passage of the HFEA 2008, but explores the cultural implications of the word 'Frankenstein' heard within two of the news interviews in particular. These implications have been drawn from meanings specifically oriented to by the interviewees and, therefore, would be in keeping with the goals of CA research.

Although CA is committed to an "uncritical" view of the social world (Kitzinger 2000, p. 167), critical approaches often think of CA as too narrowly focused on the minutiae of breaths and hesitations and as ignoring the social world external to interaction. The chapter contained in Appendix 2 demonstrates that this need not be the case. There is no doubt that macro analyses of interaction will produce differing results, depending on the indices of analysis used and the theoretical underpinnings of the individual researcher. A research project based on CA principles, has endogenously-produced empirical data at its foundation and this means, importantly, that any analysis is built around participants' orientations. This is key to understanding how participants within the news interviews construct meaning on a moment-by-moment basis and how the structural organisation of the news interviews has a crucial part to play in the construction of institutional interaction. This extra dimension to institutional interaction is able to account for the asymmetries of power, in terms of institutional roles and identities.

## **4.7 Summary**

This chapter established the value of CA as a research method where the study of interaction is concerned and why it is an appropriate method for the analysis of the news interviews on the *Today* programme surrounding the HFEA 2008. It started by outlining the historical orientations of CA and the ethnomethodological focus of how participants in interaction make sense of the world; how they routinely use shared practices and tacit rules within conversation to collaboratively arrive at shared understandings. The chapter then went on to provide a summary of the specific features found within CA and its distinctive epistemological approach to data. CA has well-established protocols for researchers of interaction to follow. This makes CA both empirical and rigorous. Some of these protocols were outlined in the chapter, namely: the gathering of data; what transcription systems are available to the researcher; how analysis concentrates on turn-taking within interaction and how action is accomplished through the sequential organisation of elements, such as questions and answers. Another section was dedicated to how interaction is also affected by roles and identities of the participants within institutional interaction and how this applies to the interviewers and interviewees of the news interviews on the *Today* programme. The chapter concluded with a review of some of the debates within, and critiques of CA. Here the emphasis surrounded the tensions and antagonisms that emerge from the approach CA takes to the relationship between the researcher and the data.

Having outlined the methodological principles behind CA, the following chapter describes how I used CA as a method to analyse the news interviews on the *Today* programme. The chapter begins by explaining how the raw data, in the form of the news interviews, was collected and how the sample was then compiled. The chapter also details the transcription system used and how the subsequent analysis of the news interviews was conducted. Lastly, it addresses issues of reliability, validity and the representativeness of the sample.

## Chapter 5 - Data Collection, Transcription and Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter moves on from the general principles of CA outlined in the previous chapter, in order to give a more detailed account of the methodological choices made for this thesis. The chapter begins by outlining issues concerning data collection and transcription, before moving on to introduce the details of the analysis itself. Here the focus is on the structural organisation of the news interviews into *openings*, *questions*, *answers* and *closings* and what is contained in the analysis of each of these respective parts. It describes the way I categorised the news interviews into *advocacy*, *accountability*, *affiliated*, *expert* and *experiential* and discusses how these categories affect the line of questioning adopted by the interviewer, along with the level of adversarialness directed towards the interviewee. The chapter closes by addressing questions of reliability, validity and the representative nature of the sample, before briefly outlining the details that can be found contained within the findings chapters.

### 5.2 Data collection and sample

The news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008 are the *prima facie* data used in the analysis. The programme has a 'listen again' facility of past programmes<sup>4</sup> and a search was conducted on the archive during the period November 2007 to November 2008. This time frame encompassed the complete passage of the HFEA 2008 through both Houses of Parliament: the House of Lords and the House of Commons and included all the readings, committee stages and reporting stages of the Bill<sup>5</sup>. A list was then collated of any news interviews conducted on the programme that *directly* referred to the HFEA 2008 in the topical domain of the opening to the news interview. Once this list was collated, all the news interviews were recorded from the listen again facility using Audio Hijack Pro. The recording began from the moment that the presenter started to mention the

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<sup>4</sup> Today audio before 02/06/2008 available:  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/listenagain\\_archive.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/listenagain_archive.shtml)  
Today audio after 02/06/2008 available:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid\\_7392000/7392367.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_7392000/7392367.stm)

<sup>5</sup> The Bill was debated in the House of Lords between the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and debated in the House of Commons between the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008. Consideration of the Bill between both Houses took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008

topical domain of the upcoming news interview (in other words, from the start of the *cue*) until the beginning of the next topic. The total number of *direct* interviews on the HFEA 2008 is twenty and it is these that make up the sample.

After the recordings were completed, all the news interviews were listened to on a number of occasions before analysis began. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008, p. 71) advise that this is done, so that the analyst gains an “intimate acquaintance with the recording at the necessary level of detail”. At this point notes were made of anything thought to be significant to the analysis. For instance, notes were made on the dates of the broadcast of the news interviews and from this, specific reporting timeframes closely aligned to the passage of the HFEA 2008 through Parliament were detected. These timeframes were:

1. A primary reporting phase during the lead up to the voting by MPs in the week beginning Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The *Today* programme broadcast news interviews on the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008.
2. A secondary reporting phase occurred around the dates 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> March 2008.
3. The *Today* programme also covered the ‘Third reading stage’ of the Bill in the House of Commons. This took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008.

Other notes concerned quantitative features and included questions such as: How many interviewees were there in each news interview? Who were the interviewees? Who were the interviewers? What gender was the interviewers/interviewees? Other significant notes concerned irregular elements of speech, in terms of the evidence of argumentative phases of talk, evidence of stumbling and being put under pressure, etc.

### ***5.3 The transcription system***

After this, a pilot transcription of three of the news interviews was conducted, in order to establish what depth of transcription was needed. I carried out the transcription of the sample using *Transcriva* transcription software. This software is designed specifically for transcription purposes. *Transcriva* enables the user to import the audio into the software and to separate the voices of interviewer and interviewee(s) into different segments. The transcription can then be exported as a text document into word processing software. The transcription system used was based on that of Gail Jefferson, not only because she was one of the founders of

the field of CA, but also because her system is one of the most influential on other researchers in the field. This is due to the fact that her system is flexible enough to provide researchers with the ability to adapt notation symbols to the individual requirements of analysts and the specific needs they want to address.

### ***5.3.1 'Why put all that stuff in? Well, as they say, because it's there'***

The transcription system used on the sample heeds the advice given by Jefferson (2004, p. 13): "Transcribing is just something one does to prepare materials for analysis, theorizing, etc. Do the best you can". With this advice in mind, the natural flows found within the interaction of the news interviews have been maintained within the transcriptions. This means in practice:

- Elisions are included when used by the participants; e.g. 'don't' instead of 'do not', etc.
- Punctuation was not included in the transcriptions, on the basis that people don't insert punctuation marks when they talk: they simply breath.
- There is no use of capital letters to signify the start of sentences, as again, these are not part of natural speech. Capitals have been used for the names of people and also institutions; e.g. Cardinal Keith O'Brien and British Medical Association.
- Fairclough (1995, p. 230) advises that the analyst should look for "moments of crisis" within speech. Therefore I noted any stumbles, along with self-repairs, hesitations and delays; so called 'ums' and 'ers'. This is because such elements reveal interaction that is potentially problematic in some way: either a controversial statement or compromising situation for the participants involved. This also applies to any silence or pause (time interval) that might elapse within the normal course of an utterance, particularly at the start of answers. Again, this could indicate potential problematic aspect regarding the contents of the interview.
- In order to distinguish a breath from a silence, breaths were indicated separately.
- Emphasis was indicated where participants placed a particular stress on words and phrases. This emphasis potentially highlights the importance of

certain words or phrases in the structure of arguments and may give some indication of the ideas and issues that are significant to the interaction between the interviewees and interviewers.

- The occurrence of laughter was also coded in the transcripts. There are many reasons why a participant in a news interview would laugh. As well as being a common signal of amusement, laughter can be used as a device to overcome a personal attack, to cover embarrassment or, as a way of managing tension in adversarial sparring (Partington 2006, p. 81).
- There are some points in the news interviews where part of the talk is inaudible. This is generally due to places of overlapping speech or participants stumbling over words. There are one or two instances where words are simply inaudible. Where this happens, it is noted within the transcripts. However, notes about the meaning of some of the stumbles have been made and these are contained at the end of the specific transcript where such a problem occurs.
- In terms of the ease of the subsequent analysis, the transcript includes the delineation of talk into numbered lines. This has been done in order to be able to identify easily when different speakers commence and finish their talk and to be able to easily identify when specific phrases and words occur.
- There has been clear demarcation of overlapping speech. This is in order to highlight interruptions either by the interviewer or interviewee.

### **5.3.2 Transcription symbols**

Below is the definitive list of the symbols used in the transcription of the news interviews on the *Today* programme:

[ ]	= indicates overlap
—	= underscoring indicates emphasis
.hh	= indicates an audible intake of breath
hhh	= a laugh
=	= indicates no gap or breath

(.) = indicates a brief interval of less than a tenth of a second

(0.1) = indicates timed intervals of more than a tenth of a second

As advised by Hutchby and Wooffiitt (2008, p. 87), the collated transcripts are contained in Appendix 1. This is so that they can be accessed and publicly examined for accuracy.

#### ***5.4 Analysis of the Today news interviews***

As discussed in the preceding chapter, CA has a well-established set of “first order concepts” (Drew 2005, p. 79) providing researchers with a rigorous method with which to carry out the analysis of empirical data. These methods underpin all CA research and focus on: the construction of *turns*; the *turn-taking* system; *turn design*; *social action* and *sequence organisation*. Any analysis of the news interviews on the *Today* programme would have to incorporate all aspects of these concepts. However, as the empirical data of this research is institutional interaction, the overriding design of this analysis was formed around the distinctive characteristics of this kind of interaction and how it instantiates the news interviews on the programme. Essentially, these characteristics centre on what inferential practices can be said to determine the ‘institutional’ aspect of the news interviews, what identities the institution constructs, and how the institutional context of the news interviews shapes the practices contained within the interaction. Drew and Heritage (1992, p. 26) claim that each institution has a “unique fingerprint” of practices that differentiates it from other institutional forms of interaction.

The news interviews on the *Today* programme exist within a formal setting and a special turn-taking system has been developed, which restricts interviewers to asking questions and interviewees to answering them. In this system, turns are ‘pre-allocated’ and departures from the system are likely to be sanctioned. Participants also have to orient themselves to the fact that an overhearing audience listens to the interaction. Therefore elements normally found within mundane talk, such as third turn receipts, assessments and continuers, should be absent from news interviews. Part of the analysis investigated whether this was the case and examined how interviewers and interviewees oriented their interaction towards the audience.

Significant research has already been undertaken on the identification of the formal turn-taking system within the news interviews<sup>6</sup> and the existing research points to the fact that the turn-taking system affects the conduct of its participants. In terms of the interviewer, these are linked to the enforcement of a “neutralistic posture” (Clayman 1992, p. 168). However, the interviewer is also expected to be adversarial and to counteract the opinions of the interviewee. With this in mind, the analysis identified what inferential frameworks and practices, specific to the context of the *Today* programme, were at play within the news interviews broadcast on the HFEA 2008. Furthermore, it analysed how interviewers oriented the design of their questions to the institutional constraint of being heard to remain neutral, but at the same time, to put across a range of different viewpoints.

If the ‘pre-allocated’ turn-taking system has implications on the practices of the interviewer, it also has implications for the interviewee and how they accomplish an answer. The emphasis here is on sequence organisation, the completion of paired actions and how interviewees completed the second pair parts of adjacency pairs. In particular, how interviewees negotiated dis/agreements of interviewers’ questions and what practices could be detected in terms of preferred and dispreferred responses. With that in mind, my analysis concentrated on how both interviewers and interviewees oriented to the normative framework of questions and answers and what effect their construction had on the turn-taking system.

#### ***5.4.1 The structural organisation of the news interviews***

One of the main differences between the basic CA method and the method used to analyse institutional interaction, is the additional emphasis on the overall structural organisation of the interaction. Most institutional forms of talk have phases of interaction where particular actions take place. Drew and Heritage (1992, p. 43) described these as “task-related” phases. Through the identification of the underlying structural organisation of the news interviews, the analysis aimed to investigate what phases were present with the news interviews on the *Today* programme, what specific goals and tasks were enacted within these phases and what roles participants played in this process.

In *The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air* (2002), Clayman and Heritage employed the methods of CA, in order to focus on the prototypical

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, see: Clayman, 1992, 1993; Greatbatch, 1988; Heritage, 2002; Heritage, 1985; Heritage and Clayman, 2010; Hutchby, 2006; Montgomery, 2007 and Tolson 2006

news interview. They provide a framework for the structural organisation of news interviews into: *openings*; *closings*; *questions* and *answers*; and suggest that any subsequent analyses pay particular attention to the “anomalous” cases that appear to deviate from “expected patterns” (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 20). The remainder of this section describes each of these structural features and how they were applied to the sample.

### **5.4.2 Openings**

Clayman and Heritage (2002, pp. 57-65) argue that certain initial tasks of the news interview are accomplished within the opening sequence. They give these tasks the terms: *headline*, *background* and *lead-in*. The *headline* is simply a statement of the topic to be discussed in the news interview. Although within the *headline* prominent people and institutions other than those contained in the interview may also be mentioned, inclusion in the headline is usually due to the fact that they are central to the story. Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 62) suggest that there is an assumption by producers that ‘big names’ early on will entice the audience and make them more likely to keep listening.

Details within the *background* section of the opening vary in length and style. The main purpose of this segment is to provide the relevant and necessary background information that the audience needs in order to understand the story or issue. However, this can be done in a variety of ways. For instance, the *background* section often includes various forms of actuality that has been recorded at a different location and time, reports from other journalists, etc. (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 62).

### **5.4.3 Voices heard**

During the *lead-in*, the presenter introduces the interviewees, what their credentials are and their purpose for being included in the news interview. According to Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 64), this segment is designed to help the audience recognise why the person is being interviewed and why they are deemed qualified to comment on the story. Although it is not the purpose of my research to conduct an in-depth analysis of the sourcing patterns used by journalists on the *Today* programme, identification of interviewees within the *lead-in* provided an opportunity to examine the types of people that were interviewed in respect of the HFEA 2008 and whose views were being represented. Accounting for the interviewees used

within the news interviews during the passage of the HFEA 2008 means that a composite picture builds over time as to the identities of the interviewees, in terms of the people, groups and institutions they represented. Thus, I conducted a brief analysis into the institutional identities of interviewees and what effect this identification had on the framing of the HFEA 2008.

In the *Breadth of Opinion Review* (2013), Karin Wahl-Jorgensen et al. investigated the distribution of sources on the *Today* programme across 2007 and 2012. As the broadcast period of the sample has an initial overlap with this study, this research uses the same categories to analyse the interviewees. However, because the HFEA 2008 was a fixed topic and a small sample, fewer categories were needed for the interviewees participating within the news interviews than were used in the *Breadth of Opinion Review*. Thus, I categorised interviewees according to the identification given to them by the interviewers into:

- *Politician* – interviewees were put into this category if they described as MPs, former MPs or Members of the House of Lords (Peers);
- *Religious Leader* – interviewees were put into this category if they were described as senior members of a religious group;
- *Activist, NGO or Pressure group* – interviewees were put into this category if they were described as belonging to a group also mentioned in the description;
- *Academic* – interviewees were put into this category if they were described in terms of conducting research on behalf of an educational institution or if they were described in terms of their academic title: Professor, etc.;
- *Scientist/Medical* – interviewees were put into this category if they were described in terms of their medical qualifications or simply described as a ‘scientist’;
- *Judicial* – interviewees were put into this category if they were described as ‘lawyers’;
- *Media/Journalist* – interviewees were put into this category if they were described as journalists, correspondents or reporters;

- *Members of the Public* – interviewees were put into this category if they were classified as being lay people.

This investigation is not a quantitative census of the voices heard on the *Today* programme as such. It is, however, a brief investigation into the voices heard within the news interviews broadcast on the HFEA 2008 and is situated within the appeal by Bob Franklin and Matt Carlson (Franklin and Carlson 2010, p. 5) to investigate how voices found within news discourse might “shape public understandings about the world”.

#### **5.4.4 Categories of news interviews**

Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 68) argue that “openings also foreshadow the *form* that the discussion will take”. The opening imposes an institutional identity on the interviewee and, based on how an interviewee is introduced, signals to the audience what type of interview is about to take place. According to Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 65), the interviewees used in a news interview have the authority to speak on the subject being considered, but their authority varies, depending on why the interviewee has been asked to be part of the interview process. Thus, the opening portrays differences in perspective regarding the audience and the way that the interviewees are treated (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 68). Clayman and Heritage (2002, pp. 68-72) suggest that three different types of interview emerge from the positioning of the interviewee in terms of their authority.

Firstly, they identify the *newsmaker* interview (Clayman and Heritage 2002, pp. 68-70). Here, the interviewee is a participant in the event being discussed in the interview. These are normally leading politicians and other political candidates. The second interview is the *background* interview (Clayman and Heritage 2002, pp. 70-71), where the interviewee is being interviewed as an expert on the background to and/or the circumstances of the event that is taking place and being discussed. These interviewees are certified as having specialist knowledge, which authorises them to be able to comment on the event or story. The interviewee’s specific expertise is highlighted in the *lead-in* via affiliated organisations, the mention of published material and other credentials. The last type of news interview is the *debate* interview (Clayman and Heritage 2002, pp. 71-72). Here, the interviewee acts as an advocate for a particular opinion in a story where there is controversy. What the advocate’s views are and where they stand on an issue is apparent from

the *lead-in*. In order to represent opposing views, questions within interview will be geared around provoking reactions to opposing views.

Whilst intuitively, it is easy to see how Clayman and Heritage's categorisation of news interviews might work in theory, Martin Montgomery describes a different set of categories, which, although contains some overlaps, also demonstrates additional categories not found in Clayman and Heritage. The reason for this is due to the fact that Clayman and Heritage' analysis of news interviews is conducted on data that contains public figures only and therefore, provide a narrower range of interviewee identities than those found within the news interviews broadcast on the *Today* programme. Montgomery's categories (2007, p. 146) are: the *accountability interview*, the *experiential interview*, the *expert interview* and the *affiliated interview*.

Montgomery's *accountability interview* (2007, pp. 148-155) is conducted with a public figure, where the design of the questioning is to hold the interviewee accountable for a decision, event, deed, etc. in which they have been involved. This category has considerable overlap with Clayman and Heritage's *newsmaker* interview. The *expert* interview (Montgomery 2007, pp. 170-176), like that of Clayman and Heritage's *background* interview is designed to elicit the interviewee's expertise of a given topic or event. However, the last of Montgomery's categories: that of *experiential interview* and *affiliated interview* (2007, pp. 155-170) are additional categories to those of Clayman and Heritage. The *experiential interview* is conducted with an interviewee whose institutional identity is considered to be that of:

the role of an observer, victim or survivor rather than as an active agent in relation to the news and is interviewed not to answer for the event but to answer about it – to give a viewpoint privileged by some kind of closeness to proceedings (Montgomery 2007, pp. 155-156) .

Montgomery (2007, p. 1557) claims that the experiences of the interviewees in this category, and which identifies them as an authority to speak on the subject, will be described in the lead-in to the interview. Montgomery's last category, that of *affiliated interview* is a "live two-way interview between a representative of the broadcast institution in the field" and the interviewer in the studio (Montgomery 2007, p. 117). He points to the increasing use of the *affiliated interview* in broadcasting, along with what he calls the intrusion of "authorial stance", where the reporters being interviewed introduce personal evaluation of events they are reporting (2007, p. 122). Wahl-Jorgensen et al (2013, p. 7) reinforce this observation by asserting that the *Today* programme "relies heavily on BBC journalists to express

professional judgements and views". For these reasons, I included the frequency of these interview categories in the analysis.

#### **5.4.5 More than one interviewee**

The types of news interviews described above contain one interviewee only. However, in the last chapter of their book, Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 299) introduce an additional category: that of the *panel* interview. They claim that this particular category of news interview is a contemporary form of the more classic version. The main difference is that it contains more than one interviewee; usually two ideologically opposed interviewees. They also suggest that this variation contains a different calibre of interviewee. Whilst single participant news interviews normally account for high profile interviewees, the panel interview is reserved for the less distinguished: that of "legislators, certified experts of various stripes, and representatives of advocacy groups" (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 299). The advantage of this format to the interviewer is that it is the interviewees who introduce differing opinions into the interaction (as opposed to the interviewer). Therefore, the use of panel interviews in order to provoke debate provides a solution to the problem of interviewers being accused of bias (Greatbatch, 1992, p. 272). Indeed, Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 300) suggest that the increasing use of *panel* interviews has had a profound consequence on the institutional role of interviewer in that two interviewees (or more) help to bolster the perception of interviewer neutrality. Thus, the *panel* interview:

creates a division of labour that reconciles the divergent ideals of neutralism and adversarialism. With partisan interviewees playing the role of adversary vis-à-vis one another, the interviewer is removed from the heat of battle and is free to act as an impartial moderator and catalyst.

Clayman and Heritage highlight a variation of the *panel* interview: the so-called *serial* interview (2002, p. 303). As with the *panel* interview, there is more than one interviewee in this formation. However, unlike the *panel* interview where one question is asked to one interviewee and then the next question is asked to the other interviewee, in a serial arrangement the interviewees are interviewed one at a time. The idea behind the serial arrangement is that they are asked roughly the same questions, but that the interviewees are kept at a distance from each other, therefore creating a structure that is less antagonistic in nature. Although the

interviewer can encourage conflict by making each of the interviewees directly respond to the other interviewee's answers.

Taking into consideration the different categories of news interviews advocated by Clayman and Heritage and Montgomery, the analysis combined the categories into: the *accountability interview*; the *expert interview*; the *experiential interview* and the *affiliated interview*. However, the analysis introduced a further category: that of the *advocacy* or *panel interview*, because neither Clayman and Heritage nor Montgomery were able to give an adequate account of the frequency, practice and usage of this type of news interview. Thus, my analysis sought to determine which of the categories of *accountability*, *advocacy*, *affiliated*, *experiential* and *expert* were more frequently used within the news interviews broadcast by *Today* programme and what effects the different categories had on the question design and answer sequences.

#### **5.4.6 Questions**

Clayman and Heritage spend a considerable amount of their analysis examining how interviewers design questions and what affect they have on the organisation of news interviews. Patterns of questioning, and the tasks accomplished by the interviewer through these, are fundamental to sense-making activities. This is not altogether unsurprising, as the interviewer sets the agenda for the interview and steers its direction. This makes analysis of questioning vital. However, an inherent contradiction exists at the heart of question design. On the one hand, interviewers are expected to interrogate the interviewees, exerting pressure on them to answer contentious issues. On the other hand, they are expected to remain neutral and objective and adversarial questioning can expose the interviewer to the charge of personal bias; threatening their neutrality. The notions of impartiality and neutrality are particularly significant with regards to the *Today* programme. As a public sector broadcaster, it has a legal obligation to remain neutral. Therefore, question design revolves around the necessity to balance this contradiction effectively. If the interviewer gets the balance wrong, they (the interviewer, the programme and the BBC) can be left open to criticism and be put into the position of having to defend themselves.

Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 234) argue that, although interviewers engage in an activity based around the journalistic notion of neutralism, the news interview is anything but neutral. This is because the agenda of the interview is pre-determined

by the interviewer and production team. They advise that questions “unavoidably encode attitudes and points of view” and that through these attitudes the interviewer assumes an adversarial stance. Therefore, my analysis examined what practices are available to the interviewer in the construction of neutralism, how institutional practices and strategies enabled the incorporation of opinions and what effect these had on the news interviews. I also investigated whether any examples existed within the news interviews where the neutrality of the interviewer was called into question and what affect this had on the interview.

#### **5.4.7 Answers**

Interviewees play their own distinctive role in news interviews too: that of answering the questions put to them by the interviewer. Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 243) claim that, unlike questions, there is “no strict criteria” for the analysis of answers within interviews. When investigating the task of answering a question, they suggest that the analyst concentrates on the strategies and practices used by interviewees, in order to determine *how* answering is accomplished; maintaining, at the same time, the “*participants’ perspective*” (italics in original) as the primary focus of the analysis (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 241). Just as questioning provides dilemmas for interviewers, the construction of an answer is problematic for interviewees. It has already been established that answers are the second pair part of an adjacency pair and, as demonstrated by Heritage (1984, p. 267), agreeing with the sentiment of the question is the preferred response. Therefore, a dispreferred response, in the form of a disagreement or evasion, will be problematic for the interviewee to produce. However, attempting to resist or evade a question can also provoke negative sanctions and stimulate hostile questioning from the interviewer.

Analysing the transition between the end of a question and the start of answer indicates whether the interviewee intends to agree, disagree or circumvent the question. In the case of disagreement, analysis can further detect the strategies used by interviewees (delay, hesitation and mitigation) to lessen the impact of a dispreferred response. Thus, my analysis of the sample concentrated on how interviewees accomplished their answers and what strategies were detected. This included the investigation of preferred and dispreferred responses, along with the overt and covert ways of shifting the agenda away from the one contained within the question.

### **5.4.8 Closings**

There are many news items and regular slots within the running order of the *Today* programme. Because of this, a time constraint is placed on individual news interviews by the production team, who understand the timings involved. Although interviewees are likely to be told beforehand by the production team how much time has been allocated to the interview, it is not the task of the interviewee to keep an eye on the clock and to finish on time. As a member of the production team with knowledge of the timing of items within the programme, it is the interviewer who manages the closing process. However, Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 74) state that even though the interviewer is in charge of the closing, the interview is not over until all participants recognise it as such and demonstrate that recognition. This implies that some closings are contested. According to Clayman and Heritage (2002, pp. 90-93), contested closings are more likely to happen in the *debate interview*, where the adversarial nature of the discussion may compel participants to struggle to get the last word. Although they describe these contested closings as “exceptions to the rule”. Therefore, my analysis identified: the closings within each of the news interview; evidence of incidents where contested closings occurred; whether or not these incidents occurred within specific categories of the news interview; and the reason why the contested closing happened at that point in the interaction.

### **5.5 Reliability, validity and representativeness**

CA is well-established and has clearly defined methods of analysis which are applied to empirically verifiable data. This makes it highly replicable. Both CA and the investigation of institutional interaction have an impressive array of significant findings from research already conducted by reputable academics within the field (Atkinson, Clayman, Drew, Greatbatch, Heritage, Hutchby, Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff). Essentially, this means that others can download the same data from the *Today* programme’s website, transcribe and analyse it according to the criteria covered in sections 5.2 to 5.4. The full transcripts of the news interviews are contained in Appendix 1 and are available for public scrutiny. Therefore, the methods of data collection and analysis are reliable. However, the data collection was heavily reliant on BBC Web content and this research has assumed that this too is both accurate and reliable.

The news interviews are not the product of research, but are collected from naturally occurring talk that was “endogenous” in nature (Schegloff 1997, p. 166). This means that the data was collected as broadcast and is not the product of researcher interpretations. Therefore, in this respect the data has *prima facie* validity. However, whilst the data is an accurate reflection of the verbal interaction between the participants, it does not record every detail of participant involvement. For instance, the interviewers and interviewees who sat in the *Today* studio will have been party to nonverbal communication including: body posture; facial expression; gaze; hand gesticulations; and so forth. Because the data was downloaded from the programme’s listen again facility, this research is not able to account for instances of non-verbal interaction. However, Drew (2005, p. 78) argues that:

it’s probably true to say that none of the practices, devices, or patterns identified in CA research are shaped or altered in any significant ways by accompanying nonverbal conduct.

In terms of the representative nature of the sample, twenty news interviews is not significant, particularly when compared to larger scale projects, such as Clayman and Heritage (2002), who analysed two hundred and fifty news interviews as part of their research project. However, the sample size does reflect the complete output of the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008, which amounted to just under two hours of data transcripts. Whilst the sample may not be significant when compared to the complete output of a programme over the course of a year, for instance, it is a ‘snapshot’ of the typical output broadcast between 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008 along with the devices and practices found within it. The data and analysis also has the additional focus of how the programme treated a specific topic. Therefore, my research should be considered a rich, detailed and comprehensive analysis of the news interviews as broadcast on the *Today* programme and how it contributed to the reporting of the HFEA 2008.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter has provided a detailed account of the gathering of the sample and subsequent analysis of the data for this thesis. It began by outlining how the news interviews were collected from the *Today* programme’s listen again facility. I then gave an explanation for the choice of transcription system, which elements within the interaction were to be coded and how the transcription system was applied. Description of the actual process of analysis followed. The research was heavily influenced by Clayman and Heritage’s guidance that the structural organisation of

the news interviews should be identified before analysis begins. With this advice in mind, the news interviews were divided into: *openings*; *questions*; *answers* and *closings*. The chapter also made reference to the fact that that *openings* contained other components used within analysis. These were: the *headline*, *background* and *lead-in*. Analysis of the *headline* enabled identification of the news angles highlighted by the *Today* production team for each of the news interviews, whilst the *lead-in* enabled analysis of the referential descriptions allotted to interviewee(s) and the institutional roles they assume within the news interview.

The findings from the analysis of the news interviews are contained in the following.

- Chapter 6 - Overview and Contextualisation of the News Interviews presents the findings regarding the reporting timeframes of the news interviews and how they closely followed the debates and voting phases of the HFEA 2008 within the House of Commons. This chapter discusses what impact this had on the reporting of the HFEA 2008 within the news interviews. The chapter also identifies the interviewees who participated in the news interviews and discusses these in relation to the gender ratio, political allegiances and religious affiliations of the interviewees.
- Chapter 7 - The Openings and Closings of the News Interviews focuses primarily on findings within the *openings* of the news interviews and the specific structural features that coalesce to form institutional interaction. In this chapter, findings are presented on the news angles of the news interviews and the ways in which the HFEA 2008 was framed as a news story. This chapter also contains findings concerning the frequency of the categories of news interviews heard and what effects these categories had on the interaction between the interviewers and the interviewees. In particular, the identification of the *accountability* and *advocacy* interview and the consequent impact this has on the types of question asked by the interviewer.
- Chapter 8 - Interviewer's Questions and the Management of Neutralism concentrates on question design and how an inferential framework is created through the management of neutralism. The goal of achieving and maintaining a neutralist posture has enormous ramifications on the status and role of the interviewer and the particular direction in which the news interview is steered. The findings in this chapter demonstrate how the responsibility to achieve and maintain a neutral posture creates an inferential framework within the news

interviews. This framework includes shifts in “footing” (Goffman 1981, pp. 144-151) and the formulation of third party opinions. Analysis of these formulations demonstrates how the interviewer invokes public opinion through the use of these practices.

- Chapter 9 - Interviewee’s Answers and Politeness Strategies emphasises the practices that interviewees employ in order to accomplish the task of answering a question. These amount to a similar inferential framework equivalent to that employed by interviewers in the management of neutralism. The chapter contains examples of how interviewees work to maintain “face” and that of other participants (Goffman 1967, p. 5). In addition, the chapter contains examples of where interviewees deliberately chose to adopt aggressive strategies and the consequences this had on interaction.

Within the findings chapters, extracts from the news interviews transcripts are used to provide examples from the analysis. These extracts have been edited to demonstrate the specific sequences of interaction in which they occur. However, the edited extracts maintain the same formatting, title description, line numbers and transcription symbols as those contained in the completed transcripts. If further reference to interaction either side of the edited extract is required, the completed transcripts can be found catalogued in Appendix 1.

## **Chapter 6 - Overview and Contextualisation of the News Interviews**

### ***6.1 Introduction***

This chapter presents an overview of the sample, outlining the reporting timeframes of the news interviews and how stories surrounding the HFEA 2008 were initially framed. It then concentrates on the interviewees in more detail and outlines who participated in the news interviews, what organisations and opinions they represented and the identities that were assigned to them by the *Today* programme. I also present findings concerning the gender ratio of the interviewees and what is revealed about the political or religious allegiances of the interviewees. The findings in this chapter are the result of a conventional basic analysis, and provide an overview of the sample and context for the CA analysis presented in subsequent chapters.

### ***6.2 The news interviews: reporting timeframes***

The news interviews contained in the sample accompanied the HFEA 2008 as it passed through Parliament between 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The first news interview was broadcast on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007, whilst the Bill was in the House of Lords. The last was broadcast on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 at the end of the third reading in the House of Commons, prior to Royal Assent. Within the sample, three intensive reporting phases were found.

The initial reporting phase of the sample was broadcast around Easter and centred mainly on the political aspects of the 'hybrid embryo' debate. The HFEA 2008 had entered the House of Commons on the 5<sup>th</sup> February and, during the first reading of the Bill, MPs demanded a free vote over the creation of hybrid embryos on the grounds of conscience. The debate in Parliament was widely reported by the news media, including the *Today* programme. By Easter Saturday (22<sup>nd</sup> March), Catholic Labour MPs were threatening to rebel against the Government. Pressure was mounting on the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, to relent, following decisions by the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrats to offer of a free vote to their MPs. The Government subsequently compromised over the issue and the programme reported this on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

However by this point, senior Catholic clergy had become involved in the story. One of the interviewees, the Archbishop of Cardiff Peter Smith, claimed that some MPs were facing a moral dilemma over the issue and that he was advising these MPs to vote against the Bill. At the same time, the then head of the Catholic Church in Scotland, Cardinal O'Brien used his Easter Sunday sermon on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March to attack government proposals on hybrid embryos. This was reported by the *Today* programme on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008. The intense nature of the reporting phase around Easter meant that, in total, five news interviews were broadcast between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008. Two of the five were broadcast on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March and two were broadcast on the 24<sup>th</sup> March.

A second and more intensive reporting phase took place during the week in which MPs were voting on the different parts of the bill, specifically: whether to allow the creation of 'hybrid embryos' for research purposes; whether to allow the creation of 'saviour siblings'; on whether to remove the guidance that IVF clinics should take into account of the child's 'need for a father'; and whether to amend the time limit for abortion. During this voting phase, a total of eight news interviews were broadcast. Two news interviews were broadcast on the 19<sup>th</sup> May and two were broadcast on the 21<sup>st</sup> May. Three news interviews were broadcast on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008, the morning after the vote.

The third reporting phase took place during the week of the third reading of the Bill, which was on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008. During this phase, two of the news interviews were broadcast.

Overall, fifteen of the news interviews were broadcast within these three reporting phases. A further two news interviews occurred on 10<sup>th</sup> May and 12<sup>th</sup> May in the lead up to the start of the second reading of the Bill in the House of Commons on 12<sup>th</sup> May and a further two (11<sup>th</sup> March 2008 and 9<sup>th</sup> April 2008) were broadcast during the first reading of the Bill in the House of Commons, when MPs debated embryo selection within IVF and the creation of hybrid embryos for research. Only one news interview was broadcast whilst the Bill was in the House of Lords (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007).

This demonstrates that all the broadcast news interviews contained within the sample were closely aligned to the points in time when the reading stages and debates of the Bill were taking place within Parliament. This is not dissimilar to the findings by Feree et al. (2002, p. 91) in their research of public discourse surrounding the abortion debate in Germany and the U.S. They noted that, in either

country more often than not, newspapers stories were motivated by the initiation of government action. Even more significant is the fact that nineteen of the news interviews from the sample of twenty centred on either the debates or voting phase within the House of Commons. The identification of three distinct timeframes of the increased frequency of news interviews being broadcast by the *Today* programme during the passage of the HFEA 2008 suggests a strong connection to the political processes and procedures that take place within the House of Commons. The increased frequency of news interviews being broadcast at the time of the vote by MPs indicates an even stronger connection to the voting phase of the Bill in the House of Commons. There appears to be less significance, in terms of the news interviews, placed on the passage of the HFEA 2008 through the House of Lords or the committee stages.

Although this is only a small sample, evidence gained from analysis of the news interviews, in terms of the reporting periods and frequency of broadcast, suggests a pattern that broadly conforms to Galtung and Ruge's findings regarding the newsworthiness of a story and its "threshold" (1965, pp. 70-71). That is to say, as the HFEA 2008 got closer to the voting phase, there was an increase in the number of news interviews broadcast. Moreover, the more newsworthy the story became, the more intensely it was reported. Hence the increase in the number of news interviews in the second reporting phase.

### **6.3 Whose voices are heard?**

It is not the specific intention of this research to take a critical approach to the investigation of sources unlike, for instance, research that has found evidence of the mutual dependence of source-journalist relations or investigated access to the media by particular interest groups<sup>7</sup>. This is because CA stresses the importance that analysts orient their research to: the interaction of participants and their perspectives; how they accomplish tasks; and how they create meaning. However,

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<sup>7</sup> For discussions on source-journalist relationships within the practices of news production, see for example: Hall (1978); Fairclough (1995); Cottle (2000); Manning (2001); and Franklin and Carlson (2010). In addition, see Wahl-Jorgensen et al.'s *Breadth of Opinion Review* (2013) for a discussion on findings concerning the diversity of sources within BBC output (and other media outlets).

In terms of sources and science reporting in the media, see Conrad (1999) on the reporting of genetics in the news; Williams et al, (2003) and Kitzinger and Williams (2005) on the stem cell debate; Henderson and Kitzinger (2007) for sources and the reporting of the genome project; Haran (2013), Williams et al. (2009) and Williams and Gajevic (2013) for source strategies in newspaper coverage of the hybrid embryo debate in 2008.

an additional emphasis of institutional interaction provides an opportunity to explore asymmetries of power through the lens of institutional identities. The existence of an overhearing audience has an effect on the cue into the news interviews and the main purpose of the interaction and information contained within it is for their benefit. As part of this necessity, interviewers introduce the interviewees, their names, backgrounds and credentials to speak as part of the interaction of the news interviews. On this basis, a brief analysis was conducted on the voices heard within the news interviews. The aim of this section is to capture a sense of: *who* was routinely heard to give their views concerning the HFEA 2008; *what* types of identities, institutions and interests these viewpoints represented; *what* potential understandings of the HFEA 2008 can be detected via these voices and, finally, *how* these voices influenced the *Today* programme's overall reporting of the HFEA 2008. This is because, over and above a "mere quantitative census" of sources, the range of voices heard in the news interviews and what they have to say potentially have an influential effect on what the public understood about the HFEA 2008 (Franklin and Carlson (2010, p. 5). Analysis conducted on the news interviews found the following:

- There were six interviewers: Evan Davis (ED), John Humphrys (JH), Sarah Montague (SM), James Naughtie (JN), Carolyn Quinn (CQ) and Edward Stourton (ES).
- There were twenty distinct news interviews contained within the sample, some of them contained more than one interviewee. Two of these interviewees appeared twice: David Burrowes and David Jones.
- This means that in terms of the news interviews, thirty-one different interviewees <sup>8</sup> participated, along with six different interviewers: making a total of thirty-seven different voices contained within the sample.

Of course, the total number of voices heard is not of much significance on its own, but further investigation of these voices in terms of *who* they are, *what* institutions they represent and *what* arguments they communicated (and conversely which arguments they did not) is important to the understanding of how the HFEA 2008

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<sup>8</sup> These were: Baroness Masham, Baroness Tonge, Robert Winston, David Jones, Sean Curran, Peter Smith, Tony Benn, Tim Renton, Jim Devine, Colin Blakemore, Clifford Longley, Andrea Williams, James Lawford Davies, Tom Feilden, Evan Harris, Stuart Campbell, David Burrowes, Natalie Gamble, Josephine Quintavalle, Gillian Lockwood, Leszek Borysiewicz, David Field, Iain Duncan Smith, Karen Dugdale, Liz Goddard, Norman Smith, Kevin Barron, Nadine Dorries, Lisa Jardine, Ann Furedi and Baroness Deech.

was reported on the *Today* programme. The following sections present findings from the analysis of the participants of the news interviews on issues such as: the gender of the voices heard; the primary identity of the sources used in the news interviews and the existence of political and religious allegiances.

### **6.3.1 The gender ratio**

Twelve interviewees were female and nineteen were male. With the addition of the interviewers' gender, the ratio widens: fourteen female voices against twenty-three male voices. This means that in terms of the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008, male voices significantly outweighed female voices. Although the sample is small, there is evidence from other research projects that have analysed BBC output which point to the fact that a similar result would be found in a more representative sample. For instance, in the BBC *Breadth of Opinion Review* (2013, p. 93) which included analysis of the contributors to the *Today* programme, Wahl-Jorgensen et al., concluded that the ratio was "heavily skewed in favour of males over females" and that the ratio had remained "largely stable" during the years over which their research was conducted.

Another report, commissioned by the BBC Trust to analyse science coverage, came to a similar conclusion. According to research conducted by Felicity Mellor and her colleagues (2011, p. 83), "science on the BBC is represented by UK-based male scientists". The report analysed science coverage across the Corporation, including the *Today* programme, which was cited as one of three programmes that devoted "the greatest proportion of output to science", along with BBC Two's *Newsnight* and BBC News Channel's *Click* programme (Mellor et al. 2011, p. 15). They go on to present evidence of the fact that women contributors made up less than 25% of that science coverage. When a deeper analysis of contributors with scientific expertise was conducted, this number dropped to 17% (Mellor et al. 2011, p. 53). When instances of scientific expertise from the sample used for this research are taken into account, findings concur with that of Mellor et al. who state that 80% of those contributors described as scientific experts within scientific coverage were men (Mellor et al. 2011, p. 55). Of the five interviewees who could be classified as having scientific credentials, four were men.

This analysis also found gender differences between single participant *accountability* news interviews and multiple participant *advocacy* news interviews, as women fared better when there was more than one interviewee. Men were the

sole interviewees in seven of the nine single participant news interviews. However, out of the eleven *advocacy* interviews, three were all-women in comparison to five all-men. The remaining three *advocacy* interviews had a mixture of both male and female interviewees. Looking specifically at the news interview conducted as a serial arrangement and the *experiential* discussion of late term abortion, both participants were women. This observation concurs with Mellor et al.'s findings that women were more likely to be presented as "lay voices" where scientific coverage was concerned (Mellor et al. 2011, p. 3).

In terms of the different reporting phases of the HFEA 2008, there were no women interviewees heard in the Easter reporting phase. Of the five interviews conducted, all seven interviewees were men. The Easter reporting phase coincided with the debate over whether to allow the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes. Therefore, as far as the sample was concerned, the hybrid embryo debate was a male-only affair.

In the second reporting phase, at the time of voting on the different parts of the HFEA 2008, women had more participation. Of the nine interviews heard during this period, interviewees were split equally between the genders. Thus, of the fourteen participants in the news interviews, seven were men and seven were women. During this reporting phase, MPs were voting on a series of issues or amendments: whether to create 'hybrid embryos' for research purposes; to allow the creation of 'saviour siblings'; to drop the requirement for a child's 'need for a father' in IVF and on whether to amend the upper time limit for late abortions. The one news interview concerning the 'hybrid embryo' debate during this reporting phase maintained the all-men status of the previous phase. However, the four interviews that were conducted on the abortion time limit were equally distributed between the genders: here there were four women and five men. The two interviews concerning the child's 'need for a father' contained two male interviewees and one female interviewee. The one news interview concerning the creation of 'saviour siblings' contained all women interviewees.

The two news interviews that took place within the final reporting phase at the time of the third reading of the Bill appeared to follow a similar pattern to that of the second voting phase. Both of these concerned the possibility of amendments to parts of the Bill that concerned abortion. Of the three participants in the news interviews, two were women.

Whilst again, further investigation would have to be conducted on a representative sample to see whether patterns found could be replicated, it would appear that, in terms of the HFEA 2008, men were more likely to be identified as being in positions of accountability and, therefore, be participants in *accountability* interviews. Women were more likely to be identified as advocates, as speaking on behalf of other groups and group interests, and were, therefore, more likely to appear in *advocacy* interviews. However, apart from the news interview conducted on the voting of the hybrid embryo debate, women participated more frequently in news interviews that reported on the other three votes in the House of Commons and achieved equivalence in parity in terms of the number of interviewees.

### **6.3.2 Identification from lead-in**

As outlined at the start of this section, it is important to understand how interviewees might affect the audience's understanding of the HFEA 2008. Interviewees contribute to this understanding through the argumentation they use in question and answer sequences, but their identification by the interviewer is important too. This is because the description conferred on the interviewees by the interviewer signals the way in which the interviewees fit into the worldview of the *Today* programme. Furthermore, it demonstrates the kinds of voices that the programme relied upon in its framing of the HFEA 2008. In the analysis, identification of the interviewees into specific categories was strictly based on the identification given to the interviewee by the interviewer in the *lead-in* to each of the news interviews and did not take into account any other criteria. For instance whether the interviewees, or the organisations they speak on behalf of, would place themselves into those categories. Therefore, the results below reflect the identities allocated to the interviewees by the presenters of the *Today* programme. These identities were then collated into eight categories based on the source types used by Wahl-Jorgensen et al. (2013, p. 80)<sup>9</sup>. These were: *Politician*; *Religious Leader*; *Activist*; *NGO or*

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<sup>9</sup> Some contributors could be placed in multiple categories. In particular three of the interviewees: Robert Winston, Colin Blakemore and Leszek Borysiewicz, were difficult to categorise from the descriptions given to them by the interviewer. The most difficult was Robert Winston. He could be placed into the category *Politician* as a Labour peer, into the category *Academic* or into the category *Media/Journalist* because of his media profile. On the basis that he is described by John Humphrys as 'probably the country's best known fertility expert' (Interview: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008, line 6), he was placed into the category of *Scientist/Medical*. Leszek Borysiewicz could also be placed into the category of *Scientist/Medical*. However, as he is described by John Humphrys as 'the new Chief Executive of the Medical Research Council' (interview: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0810, line 12), he is placed into the category *Academic*. Colin Blakemore was described by Carolyn Quinn as 'Professor of neuroscience at Oxford' AND 'former head of the Medical Research Council'

*Pressure Group; Academic; Scientist/Medical; Judicial; Media/Journalist; Members of the Public* (see section 5.5.2 for more details regarding these categories).

In the sample, it was found that:

In the sample, it was found that:

- The largest category is *Politician*, accounting for twelve of the thirty-one interviewees.
- The second largest category is *Academic* with five interviewees.
- The categories *Scientist/Medical*, *Media/Journalist* and *Activist, NGO or Pressure Group* all have four interviewees each.
- There are two interviewees each in the categories *Judicial* and *Member of the Public*.
- The category with the least number of interviewees is *Religious Leader* with one interviewee.

In terms of timeframes, the second reporting phase around the time of voting on the HFEA 2008 in the House of Commons had the most diverse range of categories. During this phase, interviewees came from six of the eight categories, although the category *Politician* had the most voices with four of the twelve interviewees contained in this category. In the reporting phase around Easter, three of the eight voices were in the category *Politician* and in the third reporting phase around the time of the third reading of the Bill, one of the three voices was placed in the category *Politician*. However, all reporting phases were dominated by the category *Politician*.

Clearly then, the voices of politicians dominated the reporting of the HFEA 2008 within the news interviews on the *Today* programme. This is not altogether unsurprising as the news interviews in all phases largely centred either on parliamentary procedures or the voting preferences of politicians and the likelihood of certain amendments being passed or amended. However, the fact that the

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(interview: 25th March 2008, lines 53-54). Both of these descriptions place him into the *Academic* category. However, he could be categorised as *Scientist/Medical*.

category *Politician* contained the most interviewees demonstrates the fact that the programme relied heavily on a political framing of the HFEA 2008. This finding concurs with that of Wahl-Jorgensen et al. (2013, p. 14) who state that “Westminster sources are the most prominent voices heard in BBC coverage”.

### **6.3.3 Political allegiances**

Of the thirty-one interviewees in the news interviews, six were standing MPs. Three of these had been MPs but were now peers in the House of Lords and three were peers who had not previously been an MP. This suggests that the House of Commons was the primary source of political voices contained within the news interviews, although voices were present from the House of Lords.

In terms of political allegiances, according to the *Breadth of Opinion Review* (2013, p. 83), the “balance of power in Westminster roughly is reflected in sourcing patterns”. However, this was not the case in the news interviews concerning the HFEA 2008, where no difference was detected in terms of the number of interviewees appearing on behalf of either of the two main parties: Labour and Conservative. Each of these parties had four politicians representing their views. Of the remaining four voices, one was a Liberal Democrat MP, one was Liberal Democrat peer and the other two were crossbench peers.

Phil Cowley and Mark Stuart (2010, p. 175) argue that whilst the HFEA 2008 was largely a cross party issue, each vote saw ‘the majority of the MPs in the Labour party in one lobby facing the majority of Conservative MPs in the other’; most Conservative MPs voted in favour of restrictions and most Labour MPs voted against restrictions. It appears that the MPs used as interviewees in the news interviews specifically concerning two parts of the Bill: whether to change the upper limit for late abortions and whether to amend the clause concerning the child’s ‘need for a father’, largely framed the news interviews in terms of the beliefs of the Conservative party. Firstly, as far as ‘the need for a father’ was concerned, the Conservative MPs David Burrowes and Iain Duncan Smith participated in the news interviews, as both were instrumental in bringing about the proposed amendment not to change the wording contained in the original HFEA 1990 (or to amend to include the need for a mother AND a father). Secondly, when it came to the voting on whether to amend the upper time limit for late abortions, the vote was framed in terms of a ‘numbers game’ where the main parties were becoming more polarised. Indeed, the news interviews with Labour MP Kevin Barron and Conservative MP

Nadine Dorries, which took place the morning after the vote, played on the fact that the Conservatives had a good chance of winning any subsequent vote after the next general election and their expected return to power.

### **Extract 6.1: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

39 ES: .hh it was quite a relatively tight vote um seventy one majority  
40 I think was the was the figure .hh and it's noticeable that a  
41 number of senior Conservatives .hh lined up in favour of  
42 change including the leader of the party .hh everyone seems  
43 to accept that it's unlikely that anything will change within this  
44 Parliament but come an election and the possibility of more  
45 Conservative MP's .hh er in Parliament things could look  
46 rather different couldn't they

### **Extract 6.2: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at 0810**

69 ES: [.hh ] to what extent do you think this has become not quite a  
70 party political issue but one .hh on which people tend to fall  
71 down er on one side or the other according to party lines=I'm  
72 thinking particularly the fact for example that your party leader  
73 .hh voted in favour of a cut in the time limit and the Prime  
74 Minister voted .hh for the status quo

(some lines omitted)

88 ES: in terms of your (.) thought that things might be different in a  
89 new Parliament you would presumably hope with (.) more  
90 Conservative MP's more people would think your way

As can be observed in extracts 6.1 and 6.2, party composition of the House of Commons, and a fixation on numbers, became a crucial factor in the news interviews. Therefore, voting over whether to amend the upper time limit for late abortions became framed in terms of a battle line drawn between the two main parties and this factor, along with the news interviews with David Burrowes and Iain Duncan Smith, contributed to the added prevalence of voices from the Conservative party.

However, whatever the reason for the balance in the number of voices of the two main parties, the number of political voices within the news interviews on the *Today* programme concerning the HFEA 2008 concurs with Wahl-Jorgensen et al. (2013, p. 17) and the position that:

What is clear is that individuals from the world of formal politics, and especially from Westminster, dominate public debate.

### **6.3.4 Religious affiliation**

The category *Religious Leader* was the least populated category with only one interviewee placed into this category. This initially appears to be surprising, particularly given the fact that the Easter reporting phase was primarily framed as being a clash between the Catholic Church and the government over the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes (see extracts 7.4, 7.5 in chapter 7 for further details of this). Peter Smith was the only official religious voice to be heard as an interviewee in the sample, although the interviewers additionally attributed David Jones, Clifford Longley and Jim Devine as being Catholic and Andrea Williams as Christian within the news interviews.

Apart from the aforementioned, none of the other interviewees were identified by faith of any description, even though Iain Duncan Smith is a practising Catholic (Brown 2011) and David Burrowes founded the Conservative Christian Fellowship in 1990 (Christian Conservatives, undated). It is unclear from the interaction in the news interviews exactly why the additional religious attribution was given to David Jones, Jim Devine, Clifford Longley and Andrea Williams, apart from the fact that the news interviews were broadcast during the Easter reporting timeframe. Indeed, Williams et al. (2009, p. 27) found a similar use of the device in newspaper coverage of the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate, where sources opposed to the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes were often identified by religious convictions. Although this anti-hybrid coalition, which comprised of religious and non-religious figures, ethicists and parliamentarians, engaged in a “vocal campaign” throughout 2007-8, the period around Easter saw “strong interventions” from the Catholic Church and it is possible that the intervention caused the media to focus specifically on the religious in the “role of antagonist” (Williams et al., 2009, p. 13).

However, the debate surrounding the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes was not just a Catholic issue. There were people of faith other than Catholic, other than Christian or indeed people of no faith at all who were concerned about the ethics of the creation of hybrid embryos. However, only one cue within the sample of news interviews indicated that this might be the case and this is contained in Extract 6.3 below. An arrow → appears in the margin of the extract where the interviewer James Naughtie makes reference to this.

#### **Extract 6.3: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at 0855**

15 JN: Times the other day with some people on this=now you begin

- 16 → .hh er obviously from (0.4) um (.) a Catholic (.) position .hh but  
 17 → what you seem to be doing is to try (.) to find common ground  
 18 → on ethical questions which others .hh er (1.0) may share  
 19 → although they don't come from exactly the same starting  
 20 → point=from your perspective what's important about what

It is apparent that if interviewees were identified by religious affiliation, they were mostly identified as being Catholic. It was noticed that this identification was mainly attributed to the interviewees who spoke in opposition to the hybrid embryo debate during the Easter reporting phase. Apart from David Jones' second appearance in the third reporting phase, religious identification only took place within the Easter reporting phase, even though other advocates with religious convictions appeared as interviewees throughout the passage of the HFEA 2008. This leads to the conclusion that identification of interviewees by their religious affiliation was a consequence of the fact that the Easter reporting phase was framed by the *Today* programme as being a clash between the government and Catholic Church, although only one of the interviewees actually came from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church itself.

#### **6.4 Summary**

This chapter has outlined the findings that were gathered as part of a conventional analysis into the openings to the news interviews. These relate to the reporting timeframes of the news interviews and the voices that were heard to contribute to the arguments and debates surrounding the HFEA 2008. Three reporting timeframes were found to exist. The news interviews within the first timeframe reported the political manoeuvrings during the first reading of the Bill over the right of MPs to have a free vote on the more controversial elements of HFEA 2008. These were broadcast in the period around Easter and made reference to MP demands. They also reference a story that arose at the same time, of a clash between the Catholic Church and the Government over the 'hybrid embryo' debate and issues concerning the sanctity of life. The next reporting timeframe centred on the second reading and voting phase of the HFEA 2008 in the middle of May. Here the news interviews concentrated solely on the aspects of the Bill being debated and voted on at that time, including *accountability* interviews with MPs the morning after the vote and how they voted. At this point, a 'numbers' theme emerges regarding the majority vote to retain the status quo concerning the time limit for late term abortion and how this might dwindle after the general election in 2010. The

remaining timeframe centred on the third reading of the Bill and the further tabled amendments concerning the time limit for late term abortion.

Findings from the second part of the analysis were gathered from the openings to the news interviews. These contain information about the types of voices that were heard within the interaction. More specifically, that analysis of the interviewees who participated in the news interviews shows that the ratio between male and female voices was heavily skewed towards male interviewees. The 'hybrid embryo' debate contained no women's voices at all. Robyn Rowland (1992, p. 28) argues that men dominate reproductive technologies, in terms of their involvement in science, medicine and legal frameworks. These findings demonstrate that men dominated the HFEA 2008 too, as interviewees and voices discussing issues concerning reproduction and motherhood within the news interviews on the *Today* programme. This also corresponds to claims by Janet Holmes (2008, p. 310) that the public model of interaction is geared towards men. A further implication of this gender imbalance, in terms of the effect this may have had on interaction within the news interviews, is discussed in Chapter 10 - Discussion and Conclusion.

Other results obtained from analysis of the descriptions ascribed to the interviewees by the interviewer within the openings, demonstrate a dominance of MP voices in the sample. This suggests a dependence on Westminster politicians by the *Today* programme. Political allegiances were evenly split between the two main political parties, although there were no interviewees from any of the minority parties. Other results found that, during the first reporting timeframe, around the time of the 'hybrid embryo' debate, interviewees were additionally identified as 'Catholic'. However, this practice was not replicated in any of the other reporting timeframes and little identification of any religious positions took place elsewhere.

The findings described in this chapter were gained from a conventional analysis of the openings to the news interviews and provide important background and contextualisation of the sample. The remaining findings chapters present the results of the application of conversation analysis. Chapter 7 – The Openings and Closings of the News Interviews presents findings on the identification of news angles within the openings to the news interviews and how these affected the subsequent interaction. The chapter also discusses the different categories of news interviews found within the sample, the impact these categories had on question design and the likelihood of adversarial encounters within the interaction. The chapter finishes with findings on how the interviewers managed to close the news interviews.

Chapter 8 – Interviewer’s Questions and the Management of Neutrality focuses on the interviewer and the devices and strategies they use in order to maintain the perception of neutral arbiter. These amount to the constitution of a normative framework with consequences on how the interviewer asks questions. Findings presented in this chapter demonstrate how interviewers use third party citations to legitimise contentious opinions and use devices such as “tribune of the people” (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 171) to invoke public opinion. Chapter 9 – Interviewee’s Answers and Politeness Strategies concentrates on how interviewees accomplish answers and the strategies they use in order to defend themselves from adversarial lines of questioning. These turn out to be akin to the normative framework relied upon by the interviewer when asking questions. Findings in this chapter centre on how interviewees strive to maintain a positive image and use politeness strategies to avoid disagreement with the interviewer and co-interviewees. The chapter also discusses what happens when interviewees chose to disregard politeness strategies and the affect this has on interaction.

## Chapter 7 – The Openings and Closings of the News Interviews

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings on how constraints placed on the news interviews by the *Today* programme combine to produce institutional interaction. More specifically, these relate to the structural organisation of the openings and closings to the news interviews and demonstrate how certain tasks are accomplished within these. The opening to a news interview has a crucial bearing on the direction of the subsequent interaction. They also assign institutional identities on the interviewees too. The chapter begins by outlining how each of the different parts of the HFEA 2008 (the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate, the creation of ‘saviour siblings’, the child’s need for a father and the abortion time limit) were treated differently in terms of their news angles and discusses the implications of these on the representation of the stories.

After that, findings are presented on the different types of news interviews found within the sample, namely those of: *advocacy*; *accountability*; *expert*; *experiential*; and *affiliated*. Some of these categories are contingent on how many interviewees participate in the news interview, but other categories are constructed around the descriptions given to the interviewees by the interviewers. It is important to determine these categories, as lines of argumentation and questioning are dependent on what roles are given to the interviewee. Findings from this part of the analysis indicate that the *Today* programme relies heavily on the *advocacy* interview and the reasons why this might be the case are examined more closely.

The chapter finishes by outlining how the interviewer terminates the news interview and the various strategies he or she uses. It also presents findings which suggest that interviewees are complicit in these closings and that, to some extent, they are jointly constructed.

### 7.2 Openings or ‘cue’

The opening or ‘cue’ is for the benefit of the overhearing audience and is the only scripted part of the news interview. It contains no interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and this makes it an excellent place to find traces of the institution and its practices. The cue is integral to the news interview, as it contains information regarding the topical content and the angle of the news interview. In

addition, it establishes what lines of argumentation the interviewer is likely to take. This is because the interviewer introduces the interviewee in particular ways and how they are referenced indicates the primary identity given to them. This section presents findings concerning how the *Today* programme defined the angle of the news interviews on the HFEA 2008 through the *headline*. Where appropriate, edited extracts are used to demonstrate points being made. For the purpose of highlighting specific parts of the interaction within the edited extracts, an arrow → appears in the margins.

### **7.2.1 Headline**

The first task of the analysis was to identify the *headline* or news kernel, as identification of this would indicate what the *Today* programme (through the interviewer) considered to be the most important angle of the story.

#### **Extract 7.1: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007 at 0845**

1 SM:           The House of Lords will be continuing their debate on the  
2                   abortion and fertility lords laws today .hh it was adjourned last

#### **Extract 7.2: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0845**

1 ED:           .hh it's the second reading of Human Fertilisation and  
2                   Embryology Bill today and one of the proposed changes in the  
3                   Bill applies to those aiming to have a child through IVF or  
4                   artificial insemination .hh at the moment the clinic offering the

#### **Extract 7.3: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at 0855**

1 JN:           Another flurry of amendments on abortion has been  
2                   attached or have been attached to the Embryology Bill .hh  
3                   which is back in the Commons this week =for example a

Extracts 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 demonstrate how the interviewer in each of the news interviews identifies the story as being about the HFEA 2008 and what is taking place in the story. There is also an indication of the angle of the story, in terms of which part of the legislation is being covered: abortion in extracts 7.1 and 7.3, and proposed changes to IVF in extract 7.2.

Examination of the *headlines* reveals differences in the focus of the news kernel depending on the reporting phase. For instance, the *headlines* contained in the cues

of the news interviews conducted during the Easter reporting phase, emphasised the adversarial nature of the debate.

**Extract 7.4: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 at 0830**

1 ES: the clash between the Roman Catholic Church and the  
2 government over the human fertilisation and embryology  
3 bill which is on its way through Parliament .hh is turning very  
4 serious (.) the Archbishop of e of Edinburgh Cardinal Keith

**Extract 7.5: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0850**

1 JH: the row over the .hh embryology bill seems to be escalating  
2 by the day=one senior .hh Catholic figure after another

Although the *headlines* contained in extracts 7.4, and 7.5 contain references to the HFEA 2008, they also contain references to ‘the clash’ (Extract 7.4, line 1) and ‘the ‘row’ (and Extract 7.5, line 1). Thus the *headlines* in the Easter reporting phase framed the news kernel in terms of there being a conflict between the government and the Catholic Church.

However, in the reporting phrase that encompassed MPs voting on the Bill, the *headlines* within the cues were more likely to mention the underlying points of legislation within each of the different parts of the HFEA 2008. This is demonstrated in extracts 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8.

**Extract 7.6: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0830**

1 JH: the debate on abortion is with us again=it seldom goes away  
2 entirely=but it's in the headlines now because Parliament's  
3 debating whether the time limit should be changed .hh at the

**Extract 7.7: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

1 ES: Much of the debate in the Commons today is likely to revolve  
2 around the question of whether a baby born before twenty  
3 four weeks has a chance .hh of surviving

**Extract 7.8: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0712**

1 SM: MP's will also be voting on whether to change the current  
2 requirement that IVF clinics have to consider a potential child's  
3 need for a father .hh the government wants to replace that

These extracts demonstrate that, by focusing on the specifics of legislation, the process of debate and vote is presented as civilised and not the ‘clash’ of political and religious ideologies presented in the Easter reporting phase. Thus, the *headlines* demonstrate an overwhelming emphasis on Parliamentary debates and, in particular, focus specifically on procedures within the House of Commons.

### **7.2.2 Background**

The next segment after the *headline* is the *background* (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 62). Here, further details and aspects regarding the news kernel are developed. The *background* is also used as a transition between the *headline* and the *lead-in* where the interviewees are introduced.

#### **Extract 7.9: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at 0830**

1 JN:           one (.) Christian campaign group is raising a court challenge  
2                   to the decisions .hh by the Human Fertilisation and  
3                   Embryology authority to grant licenses for research .hh using  
4           → animal human hybrid embryos .hh the Christian Legal Centre  
5           → which says it speaks for .hh “bible believing Christians”  
6           → .hh wants a judicial review of the decision=Andrea Williams

Extract 7.9 demonstrates the *background* and how it works in tandem with the *headline*. On lines 1-4, James Naughtie (JN) outlines the *headline* that a Christian campaign group (unnamed at this point) is challenging the issue of licenses by the HFEA. Lines 4-6 contain further information, including the name of the group on whose behalf it speaks.

### **7.2.3 Inverting the headline and background**

Of the twenty news interviews analysed in the sample, most conformed to *headline* followed by *background*. However, some appeared to invert the structure. This provided an opportunity to analyse the reasons why such changes occurred and the circumstances in which they were changed.

#### **Extract 7.10: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008 0810**

1 JH:           without stem cells we wouldn't be what we are literally as long  
2                   ago as the 1960s scientists managed to separate stem cells  
3                   from embryos raising hopes that could create replacement  
4                   cells .hh for people with all sorts of fatal diseases .hh they can  
5                   be turned into everything from nerves and muscles to blood  
6                   and skin and used to repair vital organs .hh but we are still

7            waiting for some of those amazing possibilities (.) to become a  
 8            reality .hh one of the problems for researchers has been  
 9            → getting enough stem cells that's what MPs will vote on  
 10           → today=whether to allow so called .hh hybrid embryos to b  
 11           → (stumbles) to be created specifically so that scientists can use  
 12           the stem cells for research .hh there are profound religious  
 13           objections=many MPs are uneasy .hh one of them is David

In extract 7.10, the *headline*, containing the fact that MPs will be voting that day on whether to allow the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes, appears on lines 9-11. However, on lines 1-9, John Humphrys (JH) begins with the *background*, giving a brief synopsis of stem cells, what they do and in what circumstances they might be used. Importantly, Humphrys stresses that stem cells raise the prospect of a cure for people with ‘fatal diseases’ (line 4). However, and more importantly, he blames the fact that ‘we are still waiting for some of those amazing possibilities’ (lines 7-8) on the fact that scientists find it difficult to get hold of stem cells. The implication of this is that the creation of hybrid embryos will provide scientists with the stem cells required to further the research into cures for disease.

The question here is why the *background* information gained precedence over the *headline*? It appears that the reference to people with fatal diseases on line 4 might be the reason, as this suggests the focus is on human tragedy. In terms of news requirements, the human angle of a story is an essential component and such a focus might explain the inversion of *headline* and *background*. However, what is more important about this inversion is the fact that more time is spent foregrounding the scientific argumentation in favour of the creation of hybrid embryos.

In their analysis of the newspaper coverage of the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate, Williams et al. (2009, pp. 28-29) identified that almost seventy five per cent of stories cited the medical benefits of research into hybrid embryos, whereas stories that emphasised potential risks were insignificant. A substantial amount of stories emphasised the fact that a shortage of eggs was to blame for the lack of available stem cells for research into the cures for disease. Thus, the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes was proffered as providing a solution to the problem.

The coupling of scientific research and potential cures within news stories is a recognised practice. Kitzinger and Williams (2005, p. 738) argue that the hope of a cure for disease is a “crucial commodity” in stem cell debate and that, although treatments resulting from embryo research have not been forthcoming, scientists often cite potential results in order to encourage continued funding. The shortage of

embryos appears to be what Kitzinger and Williams describe as an “escape clause” for scientists to use for the lack of progression towards potential cures and treatments (Kitzinger and Williams 2005, p. 738). In the coverage of the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate, Williams et al. (2009, p. 30) found that journalists consistently accepted such scientific arguments as scientific fact and ignored the possibility that these were based on opinion. As a consequence journalists began to, not only rely on scientific arguments within their stories, but also systematically reproduce the argumentation. They conclude that:

it became acceptable for reporters to reproduce these discursive formulations without flagging them up as normative or value-laden arguments in favour of one side in the debate.

Thus, as journalists were more likely to reproduce scientific arguments without questioning the motivation behind such opinions, they inadvertently bolstered the arguments of those who were in favour of the legalisation: the “pro-hybrid camp” (Williams et al. 2009, p. 30). It is certainly the case that extract 7.10 demonstrates the inclusion of scientific argumentation that appears to favour the creation of hybrid embryos, whereas those opposing the creation of hybrid embryos are described as having ‘profound religious objections’ (lines 12-13) or non-specific ethical concerns.

Extract 7.11 demonstrates a similar inversion of the *headline* and *background* and, again, foregrounds a scientific explanation over the news kernel. However in this instance, the ethical questioning of the procedure is more substantial.

**Extract 7.11: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008 0710**

1 JH: science has developed to such a stage that parents can now  
 2 save the life of a very sick child by using the blood from the  
 3 umbilical cord of a sibling=it's become known as .hh a 'saviour (.)  
 4 sibling' .hh but it means (.) choosing one embryo and  
 5 discarding others and that raises profound moral questions for  
 6 → (.) many people (.) Parliament will vote today .hh on whether  
 7 → to allow it amongst other things .hh with the (sneeze)

In extract 7.11, the *headline*: that MPs were to vote that day, does not appear until lines 6 and 7. Before this point, John Humphrys briefly explains what happens when a ‘saviour sibling’ is created (lines 1-6). However, he emphasises the fact that the creation of a saviour sibling enables parents to ‘save the life of a very sick child’ (line 2). The issue is described as raising ‘profound moral questions for many people’ (line 5-6) because the act of creating a saviour sibling means the discarding of embryos.

Both of these extracts are taken from news interviews that occurred within the same programme. It may be the case that, in the week in which voting was taking place, another story emphasising the vote was deemed to be repetitive and, therefore, the news kernel was varied by altering the angle towards the human element of each part of the HFEA 2008. However, the consequence of the inversion in both extracts is to foreground the science involved in the procedure, along with an emphasis on science finding cures if scientific procedures were legalised. This emphasis was given greater credence than, for instance, a discussion of the ethical dimensions. Although there is not enough evidence to suggest that the *Today* programme fell into the same trap as that identified by Williams et al. regarding the over-reliance of journalists on scientific argumentation, the *background* information contained in extracts 7.10 and 7.11 suggest that the promotion of scientific procedures and their potential to cure had the effect of bolstering scientific interests in these news interviews.

### **7.3 The categories of news interviews heard on the *Today* programme**

The cue also establishes the form of each news interview. This has an important bearing on the institutional role given to the interviewee. Implicit in this identification is the issue of whether the interviewer applies a different technique of questioning based on the judgement of what type of news interview is being conducted, as the categorisation of news interviews has the potential to impact the design of questions and how adversarial a line of questioning might become. The analysis sought to determine whether any of the categories of news interviews, namely: *accountability*; *advocacy*; *affiliated*; *experiential* or *expert* were more frequently used within the news interviews broadcast by *Today* programme. Findings regarding these categories and the frequency of their use are outlined in the sections below.

#### **7.3.1 The *advocacy* interview**

The *advocacy* interview is the predominant form on the *Today* programme. In this category, the interviewer aligns the two interviewees as being on opposite sides of an argument. Eleven of the news interviews in the sample are *advocacy* interviews. Strictly speaking, one of these demonstrates a less antagonistic version in that the two interviewees participate in a 'serial' arrangement, being interviewed sequentially (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 303). The decision to conduct this news interview using the serial arrangement was probably due to the fact that the interviewees were deemed to be members of the public who were being interviewed about sensitive

and personal experiences (further discussion of this news interview is found below in section 7.3.5).

Extract 7.12 is a cue into an *advocacy* interview. Whilst the two interviewees are clearly positioned as having certain identities and views, the interviewer leaves it up to the audience to decide whether the interviewees' opinions are mutual or not. Thus on lines 10-12, David Burrowes is described as being a Conservative MP who wants the reinstatement of the requirement by IVF clinics to consider a child's need for a father. On lines 12-15, Natalie Gamble is described as being a specialist in fertility law who has a same-sex partner and two donor-conceived children. The implication of these two positions is that they are in opposition. However, nowhere in the cue does Evan Davis describe either David Burrowes or Natalie Gamble as having 'opposing views'.

**Extract 7.12: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0845**

1 ED: .hh it's the second reading of Human Fertilisation and  
2 Embryology Bill today and one of the proposed changes in the  
3 Bill applies to those aiming to have a child through IVF or  
4 artificial insemination .hh at the moment the clinic offering the  
5 treatment is obliged to consider the child's need for a father  
6 .hh that will change under the Bill to the less specific need .hh  
7 for (.) supportive parenting .hh some MP's are already  
8 planning to table amendment .hh which would reinstate the  
9 requirement that the co clinics consider a child's need for a  
10 → father .hh one of the MP's who will add his name to the  
11 → amendment is David Burrowes=who speaks for the  
12 → Conservative party on matters of justice .hh Natalie Gamble is  
13 → a leading specialist in fertility law (.) also herself a mother of  
14 → two .hh donor conceived children .hh with her same sex  
15 → .hh partner=good morning to you both

The fact that the majority of the news interviews in the sample were *advocacy* interviews implies that there was a dependence on this type of news interview by the *Today* programme for their coverage of the HFEA 2008. Further investigation of the news interviews broadcast on other topic domains and/or within different time periods may give an indication as to whether this pattern is replicable. If this were the case, it would suggest an overall reliance on *advocacy* interviews by the programme and would constitute a specific institutional practice by which debate and argumentation is presented. Within the context of the news interviews on the HFEA 2008, the use of *advocacy* interviews enabled the presentation of oppositional viewpoints and allowed the interviewer to profit from the airing of differences between the panellists. Thus whilst the *advocacy* interview enables and encourages

an adversarial environment, at the same time, the interviewer is able to maintain a position of neutrality.

### **7.3.2 The accountability interview**

Of the nine single participant news interviews, seven fall into the bracket of the *accountability* interview. Montgomery (2007, p. 148) suggests that *accountability* interviews are used to hold public figures to account for events and decisions in which they are involved. Four of the *accountability* interviews were conducted with MPs (Jim Devine, Ian Duncan Smith, Kevin Barron and Nadine Dorries) and were focused on how they voted or intended to vote on the various parts of the Bill. According to Montgomery (2007, p. 148), *accountability* interviews can be identified in the cue by the reference to the interviewee's name and the position they hold. Lines 1 - 2 of extract 7.13 demonstrate that, in terms of the cue, the interview with Kevin Barron clearly demarcates him as being in the category of the *accountability* interview.

#### **Example 7.13: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

24 ES: → Mike Penning well the Labour MP Kevin Barron chairs the  
25 → Commons Health Select Committee and he's in our  
26 Westminster studio=those who .hh take your view Kevin  
27 Barron won last night but do you have a sense that the .hh tide  
28 of opinion in terms of a long term (0.3) trend .hh is running  
29 against you

A further two of the accountability interviews were conducted with public figures (Peter Smith and Lisa Jardine) and again the inclusion of their names and positions in the cues of extracts 7.14 and 7.15 demonstrate that they both fell into this category.

#### **Extract 7.14: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 at 0830**

31 ES: → voting intention .hh we are however joined by the Most  
32 → Reverend Peter Smith the Archbishop .hh of Cardiff=Catholic  
33 → Archbishop of Cardiff of course good morning

#### **Example 7.15: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008 at 0830**

6 ED: → week for lawmakers=but the body responsible for overseeing  
7 → these matters is the HFEA the human fertilisation and  
8 → embryology authority .hh and the chair of the authority is  
9 → Professor Lisa Jardine who is with me now good morning

### 7.3.3 Accountability interviews and the promotion of disagreement

It is significant that in three of the four single participant *accountability* interviews (Peter Smith, Kevin Barron and Nadine Dorries), extra elements in the form of audio actuality are inserted into the cue. These are used to present contrary opinions to the interviewee and, therefore, have the effect of promoting disagreement even before the interview properly begins. The findings suggest that such practices helped to bolster the notion of interviewer neutralism, as it is other voices who put forward opposing opinions and not the interviewer. It is also worth noting that, in all three cases, the opposing voices are recognisable identities in the form of MPs and/or members of the government.

#### Extract 7.16: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 at 0830

- 1 ES: the clash between the Roman Catholic Church and the  
2 government over the human fertilisation and embryology  
3 bill=which is on its way through Parliament .hh is turning very  
4 serious (.) the Archbishop of e of Edinburgh Cardinal Keith  
5 O'Brien .hh yesterday called the bill a monstrous attack on  
6 human rights and that provoked a pretty tart response from the  
7 health minister Ben Bradshaw .hh on Any Questions last  
8 night=Mr. Bradshaw was discussing the issue of whether  
9 .hh there should be a free vote on the bill  
10 BB: → I think if it was about the things the Cardinal referred to  
11 → .hh creating babies for spare parts or raiding dead people's (.)  
12 → tissue .hh then there would be justification for a free vote=it is  
13 → not about those things .hh he was wrong in fact and I thought  
14 → rather intemperate and emotive .hh in the way he criticised this  
15 → legislation .hh this is about using .hh er pre-embryonic (.) cells  
16 → .hh to do research that has the potential .hh to ease the  
17 → suffering of millions of people in this country .hh the  
18 → government has taken a view that this is a good thing we have  
19 → free votes on (.) issues of conscience like abortion like  
20 → the death penalty .hh or where the government does not take  
21 → a view=the government has taken a view so I think in this case  
22 → .hh the government's absolutely right .hh to try to push this  
23 → through .hh to the potential benefit .hh of many many people in  
24 → this country

(some lines omitted)

- 31 ES: voting intention .hh we are however joined by the Most  
32 Reverend Peter Smith the Archbishop .hh of Cardiff=Catholic  
33 Archbishop of Cardiff of course good morning

On lines 10-24 of extract 7.16, the voice of Ben Bradshaw is heard and a comment taken from his appearance on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Any Questions?* The comment establishes Bradshaw's opinion against the notion of allowing MPs a free

vote, before Peter Smith is even introduced or interviewed. Thus the comment sets the tone of the upcoming interview as being adversarial.

In the interview with the Labour MP Kevin Barron on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at 0710, two comments from Conservative MPs are inserted into the cue.

### Extract 7.17: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at 0710

1 ES: the Commons vote to reject a lowering of the time limit for  
2 abortions came after a debate which saw some powerful  
3 interventions .hh on the other side of the argument the Tory  
4 MP Mark Pritchard held up a photograph .hh of sixteen week  
5 old foetus  
6 MKP: → that picture (0.4) and indeed er that which is shown on my (.)  
7 → website is not a tissue blob (0.6) or unrecognisable collection  
8 → of cells (0.8) it is a living (0.4) small (.) human being and even  
9 → some botched abortions between sixteen and twenty weeks  
10 → gestation reveal the extent of their humanity  
11 ES: .hh and the Tory health spokesman Mike Penning told this  
12 story .hh from a hospital consultant  
13 MEP:→ the consultant (0.5) emailed one of my colleagues this evening  
14 → and said (1.2) 'in one room at my (2.0) hospital where I work  
15 → (0.7) we are successfully (1.8) looking  
16 → babies (0.8) of twenty three twenty four weeks and they are  
17 → going on to live normal lives (1.1) no (0.7) in the next room  
18 → (1.3) my colleagues (.) are terminating (0.6) babies of the  
19 → same age (0.7) that is morally unexpect ceptable no (1.6) no  
20 → (0.5) that is morally unacceptable this consultant said 'please  
21 → vote for twenty (.) weeks' that is what I will do this evening  
22 → thank you so much  
23 XXXXX  
24 ES: Mike Penning well the Labour MP Kevin Barron chairs the  
25 Commons Health Select Committee and he's in our  
26 Westminster studio=those who .hh take your view Kevin  
27 Barron won last night but do you have a sense that the .hh tide  
28 of opinion in terms of a long term (0.3) trend .hh is running  
29 against you

In extract 7.17, on lines 6-10 and then again on lines 13-23, actuality of two Conservative MPs set up what will become counter arguments to that of Labour MP Kevin Barron. Furthermore, it is significant that an hour later on the same day in an interview with Conservative MP Nadine Dorries, a similar strategy is used.

### Example 7.18: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at 0810

1 ACT: the Ayes to the right 233 the No's to the left 304 (XXXX)  
2 ES: Well that was the closest those who wanted to lower the  
3 abortion time limit got to success .hh after a series of votes  
4 that kept the Commons sitting until (.) almost midnight .hh the  
5 limit of twenty four weeks remains unchanged (.) the health

6 minister Dawn Primarolo argued there was no evidence that a  
7 change was needed .hh she warned that any lowering of the  
8 limit .hh would have a significant impact on a small number of  
9 women  
10 DP: → they would travel abroad=they would seek abortions from  
11 → elsewhere .hh and wouldn't it be appalling .hh if we drove  
12 → women back .hh to where they were .hh before the 1967 Act  
13 ES: .hh we're joined now by Conservative MP Nadine Dorries=a  
14 former nurse who's been .hh a leading figure in the campaign  
15 to reduce the time (.) limit .hh I don't know whether you heard  
16 → Nadine Dorries (.) Kevin Barron talking on the programme (.)  
17 → the chairman of the health select committee .hh an hour ago  
18 → (.) he concluded that what made the difference last night was  
19 → science and specifically the lack of evidence .hh that the rates  
20 → at which (.) babies can survive after (.) twenty four weeks the  
21 → lack of evidence .hh erm that er that that had come forward (.)  
22 → do you [accept] that analysis of what happened

This time the voice of Labour MP Dawn Primarolo is heard on lines 10-12 of extract 7.18. She is positioned in opposition to Nadine Dorries. Edward Stourton also makes a reference to Kevin Barron's argument from his interview in the previous hour on lines 14-21. Thus, extracts 7.16, 7.17 and 7.18 demonstrate how, before the *accountability* interview has even begun, opposing opinions are used to set up the notion of conflict and adversarialness. This tactic was not observed in any of the other of the types of interview categories.

### **7.3.4 The expert interview**

Of the twenty news interviews in the sample, only one interview could be clearly placed into the category of the *expert* interview (Montgomery 2007, p. 148). This was a news interview conducted with Professor David Field regarding the survival rates of foetuses born before twenty four weeks gestation.

#### **Extract 6.19: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

1 ES: Much of the debate in the Commons today is likely to revolve  
2 around the question of whether a baby born before twenty four  
3 → weeks has a chance .hh of surviving .hh Professor David Field  
4 → of Leicester University has recently published a study .hh  
5 → which found that that chance hasn't improved over the passed  
6 → (.) twelve years=he's on the line now good morning

Extract 7.19 demonstrates that David Field's main identification comes from the fact that he 'recently published a study' (lines 3-6). Therefore, through the mention of this research, David Field is positioned as an expert. However, it should be emphasised that David Field was not the only 'expert' to appear as an interviewee within the

sample. Other experts were used as interviewees, but these were interviewees in either the *advocacy* and/or *accountability* interviews. This factor is worth noting, as it has already been established that interviewees have varying identities depending on the type of news interview in which they participate. Thus, whilst David Field was identified by the programme as an 'expert' in an *expert* interview and was expected to give answers based on this expertise others, namely: Colin Blakemore, Leszek Borysiewicz, Ann Furedi, Natalie Gamble, David Jones, James Lawford Davies, Gillian Lockwood, Clifford Longley, Josephine Quintavalle and Robert Winston, were used within the *advocacy* interview category and, therefore, identified by the programme as 'advocates' of a particular argument, as opposed to giving expert guidance or advice.

This point has a bearing on the findings of Wahl-Jorgensen, et al. (2013). They argue that the *Today* programme was more likely to use experts and academics as prominent sources than the other media outlets they examined, in order to contextualise stories (Wahl-Jorgensen et al. 2013, p. 82). However, evidence gained from the sample of news interviews suggests that there might be a more complex reading of this use. Whilst the programme may rely on experts more frequently, their primary identification within news interviews broadcast on the HFEA 2008 was not necessarily as an expert. In all but one case, their primary identification was as an advocate of a particular line of argument. This is due to the fact that the experts participated in *advocacy* interviews, which include more than one interviewee. It would appear that the decision to participate in an *advocacy* interview forces experts into the situation of advocating and defending a particular position. Findings from the *advocacy* interviews, which contain interaction between experts, appear in Chapter 8 - Interviewer's Questions and the Management of Neutralism and Chapter 9 - Interviewee's Answers and Politeness Strategies. However, further research on a more representative sample may indicate what effect this positioning within *advocacy* interviews has on interaction and, therefore, the identity of the expert.

### **7.3.5 The experiential interview**

There were no news interviews with single interviewees that fell into the category of the *experiential* interview. However, there were instances of interviewees who were interviewed because of their experiences. The first of these has already been mentioned under the category of the *advocacy* in section 7.3.1. The decision to conduct one of the news interviews as a serial arrangement was probably due to the fact that two of the interviewees, Karen Dugdale and Liz Goddard, were deemed to

be 'members of the public' and it was probably felt by the production team that the more adversarial form of the panel interview was inappropriate due to their potential lack of prior participation within news interviews. However, the reason why they were interviewed was because both had experiences concerning the potential amendment of the upper time limit for late abortions: Karen Dugdale was interviewed in order to relate her experiences of a late abortion on the grounds of the lack of foetal viability and Liz Goddard was interviewed in order to relate her experience of spontaneous labour at twenty-two weeks and the premature birth of her son.

### **Extract 7.20: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0810**

1 SM: .hh if a baby born at twenty two weeks can survive .hh is it  
2 right that you can have an abortion up until twenty four weeks  
3 .hh that was the limit set in 1990 because it was the point at  
4 which a foetus was considered viable .hh MP's will vote today  
5 on whether to change that .hh two hundred thousand women  
6 have an abortion in Britain every year .hh the overwhelming  
7 majority of those are before twelve weeks .hh only a tiny  
8 percentage .hh one and a half per cent .hh take place after  
9 → twenty weeks .hh Karen Dugdale is one of those and .hh she  
10 → had an abortion at twenty one weeks .hh and Karen tell us  
11 → what happened to you

Extract 7.20 contains the cue into the serial interview. After the *headline* and *background information*, Sarah Montague introduces Karen Dugdale. Unlike the introductions of the interviewees in the categories of *accountability* interview and *expert* interview, Karen Dugdale is only identified in terms of her experience and not identified by job description, status or position. Not only that, but the first question which comes on lines 10-11, is clearly designed in order to get her to convey her experience.

### **Extract 7.21: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0810**

69 SM: .hh Karen Dugdale thank you very much  
70 → .hh Liz Goddard gave birth twenty two weeks into her  
71 → pregnancy her son is now ten good morning  
72 LG: (0.4) good morning  
73 SM: → what happened to you

Extract 7.21 demonstrates the transition from the end of the interview with Karen Dugdale into the next part of the serial interview with Liz Goddard. The original cue in extract 7.20 still relates to this interview and, therefore, Sarah Montague simply

says thank you to Karen Dugdale before moving on to introduce Liz Goddard. However, as with Karen Dugdale, Liz Goddard is introduced in terms of her experience and is asked exactly the same first question, on line 73, which again is designed to relay that experience.

### **Extract 7.22: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0810**

146 SM: Liz Goddard thank you very much well Norman Smith our  
147 political correspondent is on the line .hh Norman when MP's  
148 → vote on this what options do they have before them today

Extract 7.22 demonstrates the completion of the serial arrangement with a further interview. This time the BBC political correspondent Norman Smith is heard to give an evaluative assessment of the news kernel contained in the original cue (extract 7.20). However, rather than repeating the information, Sarah Montague uses the word 'this' on line 148 to stand in for the original *headline* within the cue.

One other interviewee in the sample is introduced in terms of an *experiential* interview. This interviewee is Tony Benn and although he is clearly introduced in terms of his experience, he actually participates in an *advocacy* interview.

### **Extract 7.23 24<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0810**

1 ES: the row over the embryo research bill shows no sign of  
2 diminishing (.) as we've heard the Labour peer Lord Winston  
3 has accused Scotland's most senior Catholic Cardinal Keith  
4 O'Brien .hh of lying .hh the row has raised the question of  
5 whether there should be more free votes in Parliament on  
6 → conscious ques conscience questions .hh Tony Benn once put  
7 → down an early day motions arguing there should be=he joins  
8 → us .hh as does the former Conservative Chief Whip Lord  
9 Renton Tim Wen Renton as he once was uh just for the record  
10 on this particular question where do you both stand=Tony  
11 Benn do you think this should be a .hh a free vote

On hearing this cue for the first time, the fact that on lines 6-8 Tony Benn is accorded no recognition of any of his former government roles, either as an MP or cabinet minister, appeared to be perplexing, particularly as Tim Renton's former roles are mentioned on lines 8-9. However, extract 7.23 demonstrates that Tony Benn is being identified in terms of his experience of parliamentary processes and his belief that there should be more 'early day motions' as described on line 7. On the other hand, Tim Renton's identification is based on his former position as a government chief whip.

### 7.3.6 The affiliated interview

The last category of news interviews within the findings is that of the *affiliated* interview. This type of interview contains in-house correspondents being interviewed about aspects of the news kernel and are often conducted whilst the correspondent is in a location relevant to the news kernel. Wahl-Jorgensen et al. (2013, p. 7) claim that the *Today* programme “relies heavily on BBC journalists to express professional judgements and views”. Within the sample, three BBC correspondents participated in the news interviews. Only one of the interviews, conducted with BBC political correspondent Sean Curran, could be said to conform to the category of the *affiliated* interview.

#### Extract 7.24: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 0710

1 JN:            what's the government going to do (.) about (.) embryo (.)  
2                research .hh er it is trying to find a way out of the (.) difficulty  
3                of a vote which has disturbed some of its own MPs but it's  
4                proving a struggle for the government .hh our political  
5                correspondent this morning is .hh Sean Curran erm as we  
6                heard in the news the health minister Ben Bradshaw on  
7                Any Questions? last night Sean saying that this isn't a matter  
8                .hh of conscience=it doesn't fall in that bracket=a lot of Labour  
9                MPs just don't buy that do they

Extract 7.24, is the cue to an interview with Sean Curran as a single interviewee on the problems befalling the government during the Easter reporting phase. In this interview, Sean Curran is asked to comment on the call made by, primarily Labour MPs, to be allowed a free vote on the grounds of conscience on certain aspects of the Bill, most notably the vote on whether to allow the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes and the possible amendment to the upper time limit for late abortions. In the news interview, Sean Curran goes through what options the then Labour government had in terms of preventing a rebellion by some of its MPs.

The two remaining interviews with BBC correspondents both took place during the second reporting phase around the time of voting on whether to amend the upper time limit for late abortions. However, these two interviews showed variations in their use and were incorporated into other interview sequences. The first of these was with Tom Feilden, described as ‘our science correspondent’ (lines 7-8), and concerned the different time limits set for late abortions in other countries around Europe.

### Example 7.25: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0830

1 JH: the debate on abortion is with us again=it seldom goes away  
2 entirely=but it's in the headlines now because Parliament's  
3 debating whether the time limit should be changed .hh at the  
4 moment it's more difficult to get an abortion after twenty four  
5 weeks .hh many people believe that should be cut to twenty  
6 weeks=how do our laws compare with those in other  
7 → European countries .hh erm Tom Feilden our science  
8 → correspondent what's (.) how (.) how do we stack up

(some lines omitted)

65 JH: thank you Tom=well with me in the studio Doctor Evan Harris  
66 who's the Liberal Democrat science spokesman and  
67 Professor Stuart Campbell=obstetrician at London's Create  
68 Health Clinic=he's a (.) .hh (.) a pioneer of those three-D  
69 → images of babies in the womb erm (.) listening to Tom there  
70 → Professor Campbell  
71 SC: → [(clears throat)]  
72 JH: → [there ] doesn't seem to be .hh evidence su supporting  
73 → (.) erm (.) the (.) idea that (.) we are we we should reduce from  
74 → twenty four to twenty weeks

As can be seen on lines 69-74, the claims and facts presented in the interview with Tom Feilden form the basis of the first question into the subsequent *advocacy* interview between Stuart Campbell and Evan Harris.

The remaining interview with a BBC correspondent was with Norman Smith who was described as the 'our political correspondent' (extract 7.22, lines 146-7). This instance has already been discussed in section 7.3.5, as it was part of a serial arrangement.

### **7.3.7 The categories of news interviews: summary**

Varied categories of news interviews exist within the sample from the *Today* programme. These are: *accountability*; *advocacy*; *affiliated*; and *expert*. Each of these interview categories enforces a particular identity on the interviewees and what role the interviewee is expected to perform is identifiable within the openings. It is also clear that these categories are ideal types, rather than clear-cut categories and each instance has to be examined in terms of context and the role that the interviewee is expected to perform. When it comes to the *advocacy* interviews, interviewees are introduced in a variety of ways according to what is expected of them.

As the majority of the news interviews are *advocacy* interviews, findings suggest that, where the reporting of the HFEA 2008 was concerned, the *Today* programme had a preference for this type of interviewing strategy. However, a much larger investigation covering different topical domains and timeframes would be necessary in order to determine whether this preference is one that can be detected as an overarching preference. It appears that this preference exists because *advocacy* interviews allow interviewers to take full advantage of the airing of the differences and the viewpoints of the panellists appearing within the news interviews, whilst maintaining a position of neutrality. The notion of neutrality and the implications this has on question design is discussed in Chapter 8 – Interviewer’s Questions and the Management of Neutralism.

### **7.4 Closings**

If the opening signals the start of a news interview, the closing signals the finish and, just as the interviewer is in charge of the opening, so too are they in charge of closing the news interview. Even though the interviewer manages the closing, the news interview is not over until all participants recognise it as such and demonstrate that recognition to each other (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 74). With this in mind, this section demonstrates some of the devices used by interviewers to close the news interviews.

#### **Extract 7.26: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at 0855**

97 DJ:           (.) it shouldn't be about abortion  
98 JN:           David Jones thank you

Most of the time, interviewers on the *Today* programme managed to close the news interviews in a straightforward manner. Extract 7.26 is an example of such a closing. On line 98, at the end of David Jones’ point, James Naughtie closes the interview with a name check and thanks.

#### **Extract 7.27: 09<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at 0830**

95 JLD:           .hh university for example there are researchers using adult  
96                   stem cells embryonic stem cells and .hh IPS cells induced  
97                   pluri-potent stem cells .hh and all should be should be used  
98                   um in an effort to find (.) treatments for disease  
99 JN:           well we shall see what happens when that er appeal for a  
100                  judicial review .hh by the Christian Legal Centre is heard  
101                  .hh er Andrea Williams and James Lawford Davies thank you  
102                  both very much

Extract 7.27 is another example of a simple closing and starts on line 99 after James Lawford Davies comes to a natural end of the point he was making. However, this time Naughtie makes a comment about the issue at the centre of the interview ‘well we shall see what happens’, beginning with what Deborah Schiffrin (1987, p. 102) calls the ‘pre-closing device’ ‘well’. Naughtie then continues to close the news interview with a name check and thanks on line 101-2. However, Sometimes, a “winding down” element or prompt was heard in the news interviews (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 76). In extract 7.28, Sarah Montague begins to wind down the news interview on line 119.

**Extract 7.28 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 at 0750**

118 RD: it's got to be done separately .hh and in fact this sort of pu[sh]  
 119 SM: → [La]  
 120 RD: to modernising wasn't was not apparent a year ago [.hh ]  
 121 SM: → [Lady]  
 122 RD: it's a bit of an afterthought as well  
 123 SM: Lady Deech Ann Furedi thank you both

Montague uses part of Ruth Deech’s formal title as a device to interrupt her in order to signal to the interviewees that she intends to close the news interview. She interrupts again on line 121, before finally closing with a name check and thanks.

**Extract 7.29: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007 at 0845**

86 [anyone who's had a baby would know]=  
 87 SM: → [final brief ]=final brief thought  
 88 Lady Masham  
 89 BM: .hh I would I just hope .hh that the disability equality measure  
 90 .hh will be considered  
 91 SM: → Lady Masham Lady Tonge thank you both

This closing contains evidence of a similar winding down process to that in extract 7.28. However, this time Sarah Montague gives Baroness Masham a warning with the preface ‘final brief thought’ on line 87 to draw the interview to a close. Montague gives Baroness Masham the chance to answer; but asks her to be brief. The close comes on line 70 with a name check and thanks.

**Extract 7.30: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

131 JH: → [alright ]  
 132 JQ: .hh parents there with sick children .hh have immediate  
 133 access to cures .hh it takes a long time to design a baby  
 134 .hh and you may not even get through

135 [pregnancies successfully]  
 136 JH: → [just one alright one ] because she's raised=just one very  
 137 → quick thought on that Doctor Lockwood=we have run out of  
 138 → time but just quick thought on what they're doing in Italy=why  
 139 → can't we do it here  
 140 GL: .hh well I think perhaps a more important issue  
 141 [is to remember that fifty per cent of all babies yes ]  
 142 JH: → [well deal with that would you please deal deal with the Italy point]  
 143 GL: ok .hh well (1.0) certainly worldwide there has been a big  
 144 development in storing  
 145 cord blood but it's not .hh (0.4) going to be the answer for  
 146 everybody .hh and it's certainly isn't here available and what  
 147 I'm concerned with .hh is sick children who need treatment at  
 148 the moment .hh  
 149 JH: → .hh alright have to end it there I'm afraid=thank you both very  
 150 much indeed=Doctor Gillian Lockwood and Josephine  
 151 Quintavalle

Extract 7.30 demonstrates a more complex version of the winding down process. John Humphrys first interrupts Josephine Quintavalle on line 131 with the phrase 'alright' which acts as a pre-closing device. However, Josephine Quintavalle continues to the end of the point she is making. On line 136, Humphrys interrupts again with 'just one alright one because she's raised' in order to justify his decision to pursue another answer on the basis that Gillian Lockwood needs to respond to the point made by Josephine Quintavalle. Lines 137 -139 contain the time warning 'we have run out of time but just one very quick thought' and a request for Gillian Lockwood to answer the specific point: 'what they're doing in Italy why can't we do it here'.

On line 140, Gillian Lockwood attempts to shift the agenda to make a different point: one that she considers to be more important. Humphrys prevents this from occurring, interrupting Gillian Lockwood on line 142 and insisting that she deals with the 'Italy point'. This point concerns an argument put forward by Josephine Quintavalle and the storage of cord blood in Italy. Gillian Lockwood replies on line 143 and goes on to say that 'worldwide' there has been a 'big development' in the storage of cord blood, but that it is not the 'answer for everybody' and is not available 'here'. Humphrys finally closes the interview on lines 149, using the pre-closing device 'alright', followed by a name check and thanks.

Eighteen of the twenty news interviews within the sample were closed using either a simple name check and thanks, or some form of pre-closing preface or time warning. Of the two remaining closings, one of them, that of the *advocacy* interview between David Burrowes and Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, contains evidence of the

interviewer taking sides with an interviewee and, because of this specific issue, is contained in Chapter 8 – Interviewer’s Questions and the Management of Neutralism, extract 8.26. The other closing, that of the *advocacy* interview between Colin Blakemore and Clifford Longley, contains evidence of the closing being resisted by one of the interviewees. This is outlined in extract 9.12, Chapter 9 – Interviewee’s Answers and Politeness Strategies.

## **7.5 Summary**

This chapter outlined the institutional management of the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme, through my analysis of underlying structural features. Findings demonstrate the management of the different parts of the news interviews by the interviewer, particularly in terms of the *openings* and *closings* and what is achieved with each of these sections, in terms of institutional tasks.

From the analysis of the *headlines*, it was found that the *Today* programme represented the HFEA 2008 solely in terms of political events and parliamentary procedures. The news angle contained within the headlines of each of the news interview emphasised particular phases of the Bill. Within the first reporting timeframe around Easter, there was an additional framing of the story and representation of the ‘hybrid embryo’ debate as a clash between the government and the Catholic Church. There was little identification of other religious positions in opposition to the creation of hybrid embryos and opposing arguments were discussed purely in terms of religion and not in terms of other ethical dimensions. Therefore, where the passage of the HFEA 2008 was concerned, findings suggest that the programme acted out the role of Fourth Estate, consistently reporting the political struggle at the heart of the three estates of Parliament: the Lords Temporal; the Lords Spiritual and the Commons. However, it is also the case that the programme focused more heavily on political events and procedures within the House of Commons, suggesting that it thereby gave priority to its public legitimacy and legislative authority.

From my analysis of the *lead-in* within the cue, findings were presented on the categorisation of the news interviews and how this affected the identity of the interviewees. All but two of the news interviews on *Today* programme fell into the categories of *advocacy* and *accountability*. This further bolstered the notion that the programme acted as the Fourth Estate where the reporting of the HFEA 2008 was concerned. Within these categories, there was a high incidence of MPs being held

to account for their voting intentions or being asked to justify their positions on different parts of the Bill. It was also found that the addition of audio actuality within the cues was used as a device to promote conflict and adversarialness and can be seen as an institutional practice of providing differing viewpoints.

The composition of news interviews into openings, questions, answers and closings demonstrate that it is a highly institutionalised form of interaction and that specific tasks are accomplished at particular points. The chapter did not present findings concerning question and answer sequences, although these further affect the institutional roles and identities of the interviewer and the interviewee within the news interview. Questions and answers are fundamental to the news interview and findings on these are contained in the following two chapters, where the emphasis is on the highlighting of normative frameworks. Chapter 8 – Interviewer's Questions and the Management of Neutrality focuses on the interviewer and the devices and strategies they invoke in order to construct the identity of neutral observer, whilst Chapter 9 – Interviewee's Answers and Politeness Strategies concentrates on how interviewees accomplish answers and the strategies they use in order to defend themselves from adversarial lines of questioning.

## Chapter 8 – Interviewer’s Questions and the Management of Neutralism

### 8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine findings regarding how the interviewers on the *Today* programme managed the relationship between adversarial or aggressive questioning, along with the need to maintain the appearance of neutrality. Such a focus on how the interviewer manages this relationship is important, as a contradiction exists at the heart of the news interview. On the one hand, interviewers are expected to put pressure on their interviewees to answer potentially contentious questions. On the other hand, they are expected to articulate a diverse range of views and to remain neutral at all times. Getting this balance wrong can threaten to undermine the position of the interviewer and expose them to a charge of personal bias. In such situations, interviewers may be left open to criticism by the interviewee. Potentially, an even more serious problem would be to be exposed to criticism by the listeners. Therefore, adversarial questions need to be asked in such a way as to suggest that any viewpoints expressed are those of a third party. Through the citation of these third parties, interviewers are able to deflect responsibility for potentially controversial viewpoints expressed. The framing of questions, therefore, is crucial within the news interview process and question design centres around being able to effectively balance the citation of different viewpoints with the necessity of getting interviewees to answer probing questions.

Clayman (1992, p. 194) describes a range of mechanisms and devices interviewers have at their disposal in order to balance this contradiction. His research focuses on how these are used by interviewers within interaction in order to achieve “neutrality”. Neutrality is not an innate characteristic that interviewers happen to possess, nor are they neutral conduits without opinions of their own. Rather, ‘neutrality’ is a locally managed and jointly produced construction between the interviewer and the interviewee, in order to preserve the professional status of the interviewer within the news interview environment. Therefore, devices used to foster neutrality within the news interview are akin to the “ritualistic procedures” that Tuchman (1972, p. 661) claims are invoked in order to defend their objectivity. This chapter points to a range of devices used by the *Today* programme interviewers to: deflect controversial statements onto third parties; gain credibility from the views

expressed; and achieve legitimacy in pursuance of contentious lines of questioning. It also presents an instance of where the neutralism of the interviewer is put in jeopardy and how they then have to defend themselves and their lines of questioning.

## **8.2 The management of neutralism: shifts in 'footing'**

The easiest way for an interviewer to express controversial or contrary views is to deflect responsibility for the viewpoint onto a third party; either in the form of another interviewee or some other person or organisation external to the news interview. This enables the interviewer to place distance between themselves and the views they are articulating. Goffman (1981, pp. 144-151) terms this strategy a shift in "footing"; whereby speakers are able to take up different positions with respect to what is being said in an utterance. Goffman distinguishes between: the "animator" or person who utters what is being said; the "author" or person whose words are being uttered; and the "principal" or person whose viewpoint is being expressed. According to Clayman (1992, pp. 165-167), interviewers shift footing with some regularity and the device is particularly tied to the routines of the news interview.

Taken from the sample of news interviews on the Today programme, extract 8.1, is an excellent demonstration of the occurrence of a shift in footing. The news interview concerned a proposed amendment put forward whilst the HFEA 2008 was in the House of Lords. The aim of the amendment was to remove the right to abortion on the grounds of foetal disability after twenty-four weeks gestation. The amendment had been proposed by one of the interviewees, Baroness Masham (BM), and had caused a debate to ensue in the House of Lords over whether any amendments to the laws on abortion should be considered as part of the Bill.

### **Extract 8.1: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007 at 0845**

50 SM: → [but should            but as we've been told] she's been  
51        → (.) checked with the clerks and they found it acceptable it's not  
52        → as if there's much opportunity .hh one can understand why  
53        → people are putting amendments because it's not a law that  
54        → comes up for discussion very often

On line 50, Sarah Montague (SM) begins her question to Baroness Tonge. It begins as a formulation of the previous answer from Baroness Masham, who had stated that she had received permission from the clerks in Parliament to put forward the amendment. Montague is heard to say 'as we've been told' (line 50). However, her

framing of the question potentially puts her neutralism into question, as use of the collective pronoun 'we' suggests an affiliation to Baroness Masham's point of view. She appears to be aware of the problematic nature of what has just been said and repairs the start of her question to include the more neutral third party position 'she's been' (line 50), i.e. that Baroness Masham has been told this. With the repair, Montague shifts footing in order to maintain her neutralism as interviewer. Montague then continues in this mode with the utterance of such phrases as 'they found it acceptable' (line 51) and 'one can understand why people' (lines 52-3). In both of these phrases, she uses third party formations. Thus, the shift in footing allowed Sarah Montague to use Baroness Masham's prior point in an adversarial way and enable disagreement.

### **8.3 A joint construction**

The goal of neutralism enables interviewers to ventriloquise the views of others without being interrogated about the veracity of those views. Therefore neutralism must be a joint construction on the basis that interviewees accept the views being expressed by the interviewer as the opinion of someone else. Thus interviewees are complicit in the interviewers' use of this device: that occurrences are achieved jointly as part of the organisation of their interaction (Clayman 1992, p. 194).

#### **Extract 8.2: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007 at 0845**

55 BT: → no .hh but there are other even more contentious issues  
56 around abortion .hh that a lot of people have  
57 (. ) been trying to table and tag  
58 [onto this bill um the trouble is that once you start]

Extract 8.2 shows that Baroness Tonge (BT), at the start of her answer on line 55, accepts the views put forward by Sarah Montague (that discussions on the abortion law do not arise very often) before going on to articulate her own assessment of the situation. At no point does Baroness Tonge question Montague's neutralism in this respect. She accepts the views put forward as being valid ones. However, neither does Baroness Tonge bypass the interviewer in order to argue the viewpoint directly with Baroness Masham, the other interviewee. This type of turn-taking sequence and the management of viewpoints through the interviewer, demonstrates that interviewees understand the rules of engagement within a news interview: that interviewers ask the questions and that interviewees are expected to answer them. By adhering to this question and answer format, interviewees produce answers

without acknowledging one another. As is the case with interviewers, interviewees refer to co-interviewees in the third person. The existence of these shifts in footing highlights the fact that the primary recipients of news interviews are, therefore, the overhearing audience rather than the participants themselves.

#### **8.4 Formulations: introduction**

Whilst extract 8.1 demonstrates how Sarah Montague manages to shift footing in the maintenance of her neutralistic posture, the example additionally demonstrates how interviewers can use and recycle opinions contained within the answers of interviewees, in order to incorporate them into subsequent questions. Use of this device is known as a “formulation” (Heritage 1985, p. 104) and this device enables the interviewer to selectively target specific aspects of the previous answer, in order to actively shape future directions of the debate by shifting focus or changing the agenda of a news interview. Through the use of formulations, interviewers are also able to deflect direct responsibility for the opinions being aired.

##### **8.4.1 Formulations in accountability news interviews**

In *accountability* news interviews where there is only one interviewee, interviewers are potentially at a greater risk of jeopardising their neutralistic posture. This is because the interviewer has to play devil’s advocate and oppose the arguments put forward by interviewees. Aggressive questioning could be heard as expressing personal beliefs or grievances. Being able to utilise opinions made by the interviewee, through the use of a formulation, is a useful tool in the armoury of neutralism. The following examples were found in the *Today* news interviews.

##### **8.4.2 The ‘prompt’**

Extract 8.3 is taken from the news interview between Edward Stourton (ES) and Kevin Barron (KB) after the vote on whether to amend the upper time limit for abortions. On lines 62-9, Kevin Barron argues that any decision over whether to change the time limit should be ‘driven by science’. The question by Stourton on lines 70-1 demonstrates a formulation described by Heritage (1985, pp. 104-106) as the “prompt”. Here, the interviewer picks up on an inference made by the interviewee in their answer and then uses the inference in order to reconfirm the point and get them to expand on their remarks. In this case, Stourton asks Kevin Barron to confirm that he believed scientific evidence and argumentation was the

decisive fact in the vote. On lines 72-5, Kevin Barron reconfirms the point but expands on it at the same time.

### **Extract 8.3: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

63 KB: well er nor should it be settled for good er i i it seems to me  
64 that the obvious situation is if medical science was telling us  
65 that we ought to reduce the er .hh er the the er limit of weeks  
66 that we have then then maybe that something we should do  
67 but er .hh you know we should be driven by science and not  
68 driven by by some of the er er .hh debate that we heard last  
69 night=  
70 ES: → =and and you believe that science was the decisive fact do  
71 → you in the vote in the end  
72 KB: I think you know Parliament=in my time in Parliament has  
73 moved from twenty eight weeks to twenty four=if there was  
74 good reason to move .hh er lower then that I think Parliament  
75 would have done it .hh I mean the report=one of the

### **8.4.3 The 'co-operative recycle'**

Extract 8.4 contains a formulation that Heritage (1985, pp. 106-108) calls a “co-operative recycle”. The interviewer uses this formulation in order to make further specific inferences about an argument, based on a point that has already been made by the interviewee. However, the interviewer does this in a ‘co-operative’ way, by consolidating the interviewee’s position over a three-turn sequence of statement, reformulation and elaborated confirmation (Heritage 1985, p. 18).

### **Extract 8.4: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 at 0855**

81 DJ: absolutely and I think again you've conf you'll find a consensus  
82 which says .hh this is a very high number=how do we find  
83 ways=practical ways .hh to to find alternatives .hh to find er a l  
84 egislation which will be .hh er er discouraging but not too  
85 restrictive where the where the country is at the moment=  
86 JN: → =so fundamentally what you're saying is that if people are  
87 → trying to use erm this Embryology Bill on Wednesday .hh to  
88 → get in really quite fundamental changes to the abortion law  
89 → .hh and that the ones that you may dislike most are on the  
90 → liberal side of the agenda .hh that shouldn't happen and this  
91 → needs to be dealt with in a different way  
92 DJ: a absolutely so absolutely so there are there are issues in this

The extract is taken from a news interview with David Jones (DJ) regarding another potential round of amendments at the time of the third reading of the HFEA 2008.

David Jones had written a letter to *The Times* (along with others) in which he outlined a series of concerns regarding the inclusion of abortion as part of the Bill. At this point in the news interview, on lines 81-5, David Jones makes a point about what he regards as the ‘very high number’ (line 2) of abortions taking place in England and Wales each year. He then goes on to suggest that alternative legislation needs to be brought forward regarding the right to abortion. This he says should be ‘discouraging but not too restrictive’ (lines 84-5). He also implies that ‘the country’ is in favour of such tighter restrictions (line 85). On lines 86-91, James Naughtie (JN) goes on to infer from David Jones’ answer that he (David Jones) would be against ‘people’ (line 86) who are on the ‘liberal side of the agenda’ being allowed to table amendments to the Bill (line 90) in order to change existing abortion law. This inference is executed in a co-operative way and, therefore, David Jones agrees with the inference ‘absolutely’ on line 92.

#### **8.4.4 The ‘inferentially elaborate probe’**

Extract 8.5 contains an instance of the “inferentially elaborate probe” (Heritage, 1985: 108-10). This device is similar to the ‘co-operative recycle’ contained in extract 8.4 above. The interviewer uses the formulation, in order to take the interviewee’s argument to a logical conclusion or inference, but is considered uncooperative. It does not receive confirmation from the interviewee in response, as this is an aggressive tactic designed to test the intentions or attitudes of the interviewee revealed in their previous answer.

#### **Extract 8.5: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 at 0830**

53 PS: .hh well he's like all our Catholic MPs and others they er  
54 chiefly if they're on the government's side .hh they have a  
55 really serious dilemma about this .hh er they (.) they're worried  
56 about the effects of this bill .hh and yet many of them are  
57 government ministers (.) what do they do .hh now that is a  
58 decision only they can make=it's not for me to say how they  
59 should vote .hh it's my duty to have a pastoral care for them  
60 and .hh to discuss with them the teaching on the Church to  
61 clarify their own consciences .hh and then they must act  
62 accordingly  
62 ES: → .hh well you say it's not for you to advise them how to vote but  
63 → it sounds (.) pretty much as if you're effectively saying you  
64 → ought to rebel against this bill or you ought to vote against this  
65 → bill  
66 PS: .hh well all I can say that Ed is those MPs who've approached  
67 me over recent weeks have said look .hh er I don't think this is  
68 right .hh er I accept the teaching of the Church .hh yet I'm a  
69 government minister or I'm on a Labour MP er can I discuss

Extract 8.5 comes from the news interview between Edward Stourton (ES) and Peter Smith (PS). On lines 53-61, Peter Smith is making the point that some MPs, particular those of faith, are in the position of having serious dilemmas regarding the effects of the HFEA 2008. He states that whilst he has a duty of 'pastoral care' (line 58) to these MPs and government ministers, it is up the individual's conscience how they decide to vote. On lines 62-5, Stourton counters this answer by saying that, although Peter Smith suggests it is not for him to advise how MPs might vote, he is 'effectively' (line 63) telling them to rebel against the government and to vote against the Bill. Unlike the vociferous 'absolutely' in reply to the co-operative recycle in the previous extract, Peter Smith gives a more considered approach in his answer to what might be seen as a contentious issue: that of the Church telling MPs how to vote. He re-iterates the fact that it is not a question for the Church to tell MPs how to vote and that they have to make their own decisions on the matter.

#### ***8.4.5 Formulations in advocacy news interviews***

The types of formulations found in the single participant news interviews: the prompt, the co-operative recycle and the inferentially elaborate probe, are devices that were also used by interviewers within *advocacy* news interviews. However, analysis of the *advocacy* news interviews suggests that neutralism is easier to manage when there is more than one interviewee, as the interviewers within these news interviews have the additional benefit of being able to use the viewpoints of both interviewees to promote argumentation. More importantly, having more than one interviewee enables the interviewer to deflect any contentious views onto the interviewee expressing the point. Interviewers did this in particular through the formulation of the prior answer of one interviewee, which is then included into the next question to the other interviewee.

#### **Extract 8.6: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007 at 0845**

35 SM: Lady Masham

In the *Today* sample, six of the eleven *advocacy* news interviews contained at least one instance of the example contained in the extract 8.6 and demonstrates the fact that interviewers often used the next interviewee's name, along with a rising intonation, in place of a question. This device is a formulation of the prior answer and requests that the interviewee answers the point made by the previous interviewee.

### **Extract 8.7: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0750**

83 CQ: .hh well Professor Blakemore would you like to respond to  
84 those (.) concerns first of all

Extract 8.7 displays another instance of this type of device. As in the previous example, the name of the next interviewee is contained within the question and a formulation of the previous interviewee's point is heard in the words 'those concerns' on line 84. However, both extracts 8.6 and 8.7 demonstrate little in the way of antagonism, as they merely invite sequential interviewees to present their views. All of the *advocacy* news interviews from the sample contained instances of either extract 8.6 or extract 8.7 or both.

### **Extract 8.8: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

73 JH: =is that right Doctor Lockwood

Extract 8.8 demonstrates an increasing level of antagonism, as the next interviewee is being encouraged to openly disagree with the previous interviewee. Therefore, this device promotes disagreement. However, the question still is a formulation of the prior answer. Here the word 'that' (in 'is that right' on line 73) stands in for the previous interviewee's point.

### **Extract 8.9: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0830**

169 JH: [so ] you're aiding life Professor Jones  
170 rather than .hh erm discarding life

As with the previous example, extract 8.9 invites the next interviewee to openly disagree with the previous interviewee's point through denial. Only this time two polar arguments 'you're aiding life' (line 169) as opposed to 'discarding life' (line 170) are used in the formulation.

Most of the time, formulations enable the interviewer to distance themselves from what is being said, so that they do not display any affiliation towards the interviewees. However, extract 8.10 demonstrates that this is not always the case and can potentially be dangerous when used aggressively.

**Extract 8.10: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0845**

20 DB: .hh well because when we're at the point where adults  
21 intentionally set out to create new life er through IVF treatment  
22 .hh they should do so within the framework of understanding  
23 the child needs a mother .hh and a father .hh er we need to  
24 ensure that we're .hh acting in the best interests of children  
25 and it's not in their best interests I believe to deliberately write  
26 .hh biological fathers permanently out of their lives  
27 ED: → so Natalie Gamble who (0.6) is a lesbian parent with (0.5)  
28 → donor conceived children .hh should not have children  
29 DB: .hh no there's not not it's not at all the case the .hh present er  
30 law and guidelines er .hh gives a presumption in favour of  
31 treatment unless they .hh children would face a risk of serious  
32 harm and er .hh we see an increase in numbers single women  
33 and er .hh same sex couples er .hh erm able to access IVF  
34 treatment .hh I mean this er [clause ]  
35 ED: → [so you like the]  
36 → flexibility that the current law allows and that people like  
37 → Natalie cannot have children through clinics themselves  
38 DB: .hh that's right the clause is a recommendation=it's a principle  
39 to follow not an absolute obligation  
40 [and surely the principle should be in favour of fatherhood]  
41 ED: → [so why don't you follow the princ why don't you follow ]  
42 → why don't you follow your own argument through to the  
43 → logical conclusion say (0.3) people like Natalie shouldn't have  
44 → children  
45 DB: .hh well no I mean I mean we need to (0.3) recognise that er  
46 there are alternative relationships=but we need to .hh in  
47 legislation .hh ensure that er .hh in terms of the best interests  
48 of the children .hh are secured by allowing .hh and ensuring  
49 that those er .hh treatment providers give proper .hh credence  
50 and proper recognition to giving account of the need for a  
51 father

The extract is taken from the *advocacy* news interview between David Burrowes (DB) and Natalie Gamble. David Burrowes (along with Iain Duncan Smith) wanted to stop an amendment to the wording of the guidance given to people entering IVF clinics for treatment, in order to retain the phrase the 'need for a father'. On lines 20-6, David Burrowes argues that adults who are about to undergo IVF treatment should do so within the framework of the child's need for 'a mother and a father' (line 24) and that it is not in the child's best interests to have their biological father deliberately written out of their lives. On lines 27-8, Evan Davis (ED) uses an inferentially elaborate probe in order to suggest that David Burrowes believes that the other interviewee, Natalie Gamble, should not have been allowed to have children because, as a 'lesbian parent' (line 27), she has managed to circumvent the guidance on the child's need for a father with the birth of her 'donor conceived

children' (line 28). On lines 29-34, David Burrowes denies the inference, suggesting that the present law allows for treatment to go ahead unless a child was at risk of 'serious harm' (line 31-2).

Evan Davis then uses a co-operative recycle of David Burrowes' point, in order to get him to agree to the fact that he likes the flexibility of the current law in that it can be used to prevent 'people like Natalie Gamble' (lines 36-7) from accessing IVF treatment in clinics. David Burrowes agrees to this suggestion on lines 38-40. However, Davis is not satisfied with this answer and uses another inferentially elaborate probe in order to get David Burrowes to take his argument to a 'logical conclusion (line 43) that Natalie Gamble should not be allowed to have children via donor conception. David Burrowes yet again denies the inference on line 45.

This aggressive tactic was a risky strategy for Davis to employ, as David Burrowes, if not the audience, could accuse him of affiliating with Natalie Gamble over the matter. However, Davis got away with the highly uncooperative nature of this sequence with the use of David Burrowes' own argument.

### ***8.5 Third party citations: credibility and legitimacy***

Section 8.3 demonstrates how interviewers on the *Today* programme used different types of formulations, in order to reconstruct the opinions of interviewees into next questions, whilst at the same time, achieve a neutralistic posture. Another way for interviewers to achieve a shift in footing, is to deflect the opinions they are expressing onto third parties external to the news interview environment. Interviewers do this by attributing certain beliefs, statements or opinions to particular people or groups of people. The citation of third parties is a device used by interviewers, not only to foster disagreement, but also to encourage a diversity of opinions. A further added benefit of this device is that the citation of a third party has the effect of reinforcing the opinion being expressed by the interviewer, as it is not just the interviewer who has that opinion: the third party agrees with the position too. Therefore, the citation of third parties contributes to the credibility of a particular line of questioning. The more recognisable the third party is to the audience, the greater the credibility gained by the interviewer. This section contains examples that demonstrate the different kinds of third party citations that were expressed by the interviewers on the programme within the sample.

### **Extract 8.11: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0712**

53 SM: → [it has been seen as that though it's seen as  
55 anti-gay argument dressed up as a .hh]

Interviewers often attributed viewpoints to unspecified sources. Extract 8.11 is taken from an *accountability* news interview with Iain Duncan Smith. Sarah Montague (SM) is pursuing a line of enquiry that amendments being proposed by him are 'anti-gay'. Rather than directly calling his proposals anti-gay, which could be considered as a personal attack on Iain Duncan Smith, Montague summons third party views. This deflects personal responsibility for the view and, at the same time, lends credibility to her line of questioning. The phrases 'it has been seen' and 'it's seen as' on line 53 articulate a view that, whilst not attributed to a specific person or group, nevertheless makes reference to other opinions.

### **Extract 8.12: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0830**

72 JH: → [there ] doesn't seem to be .hh evidence su supporting  
73 (. ) erm (. ) the (. ) idea that (. ) we are we we should reduce from  
74 twenty four to twenty weeks

Extract 8.12 is taken from the *advocacy* news interview between Evan Harris and Stuart Campbell and is the first question John Humphrys (JH) puts to Stuart Campbell. The topical domain of the news interview concentrated on whether there should be a reduction in the upper time limit for abortions. During the opening to the news interview, a study (the EPICure study) was cited as providing evidence to support the argument that the upper time limit for abortions should remain unchanged. By referring to the existence of this third party 'evidence' on line 72, Humphrys demonstrates his awareness of the contentious nature of the issue. As with the previous example, articulating the opinion of a third party allows Humphrys to interrogate Stuart Campbell's line of argument (that the upper time limit should be changed) without the accusation of resorting to personal beliefs.

Extract 8.13 demonstrates a similar use of this device. As with the previous examples, citations are not attributed to specific people or organisations. Instead, the interviewer relies on a third party pronoun, in order to endorse or reinforce particular statements.

**Extract 8.13: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0830**

83 JH: [well they want to eliminate] it don't they if possible

The extract is taken from an *advocacy* news interview between Robert Winston and David Jones. One of the concerns of the interview is that of Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PiGD) and the reasons why it is carried out. In his answer prior to this example, David Jones is heard to sympathise with the fact that people want to minimise the possibility of inherited genetic conditions. John Humphrys (JH) then emphasises the fact that 'they' want to eliminate the possibility. His use of the third party pronoun does not give us any indication of who 'they' are: families, doctors or a combination of both of these and more. However, by referring to third parties, Humphrys deflects responsibility for this belief and, at the same time, assigns it as being a credible line of questioning.

**Extract 8.14: 21<sup>st</sup> March 2008 at 0710**

42 ES: → change including the leader of the party .hh everyone seems  
43 to accept that it's unlikely that anything will change within this  
44 Parliament but come an election and the possibility of more

Extract 8.14 demonstrates another instance of the use of a third party pronoun. This time the indefinite pronoun 'everyone' is used as an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986, p. 228), to legitimate the position expressed within the question. The extract comes from the *accountability* interview with Kevin Barron the morning after the vote in the House of Commons on whether to reduce the upper time limit for abortions. Here Edward Stourton (ES) invokes the existence of universal agreement with 'everyone', in order to suggest that the law is unlikely to change within the lifetime of the current Parliament.

**Extract 8.15: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 at 0750**

92 SM: [but you're ] raising lots of things that might not even go  
93 → through because there are plenty of MP's who think very  
94 differently from you and would vote against all those ideas

Extract 8.15 demonstrates an instance of the fact that interviewers often refer to distinct groupings of people, but stop short of specifically attributing a named person or organisation. The citation of identifiable people, in this case MPs, adds further credibility to the opinions being expressed and this type of citation is used in

circumstances where the line of questioning is becoming more hostile. This extract is taken from the *advocacy* interview between Baroness Deech and Ann Furedi. The topical domain of the news interview concerns the fact that the government has shelved consideration of any further amendments to existing abortion provision with the HFEA 2008. In the answer prior to this extract, Ann Furedi lists numerous ‘work around’ solutions to various anomalies contained within the Abortion Act 1967 (and HFEA 1990) and is heard to state that the government cannot be trusted to sort out the legislation. It is clear that Ann Furedi is becoming increasingly frustrated with the parliamentary process when she utters ‘I’m really sick of being told that the law doesn’t need to be changed’. In response to this exclamation Sarah Montague (SM) indicates that, if MPs were given a vote, the anomalies may not be ratified as ‘there are plenty of MP’s who think very differently from you’ (lines 93-4). With this citation, Montague is able to counter the interviewee’s argument; adding weight to a different account of the situation through the citation of a collection of MPs.

### **8.5.1 Named persons**

In the final use of third party citations, interviewers attribute points to specific organisations and people. Here, the specific citation of identifiable and recognisable people adds further weight to the credible nature of the opinions being expressed by the interviewer.

#### **Extract 8.16: 24th March 2008 at 0850**

16 JH: → er Lord Winston is er as you'll know has said that the Church  
17 is destroying its probity with over blown statements=do you  
18 agree with that

This instance is taken from the accountability interview with Jim Devine concerning the row over Cardinal Keith O’Brien’s sermon on Easter Sunday where he attacked the aim to legalise hybrid embryos for research purposes as a “monstrous attack on human rights, human dignity and human life” (BBC 2008a). Jim Devine appeared on the Today programme to give his analysis of the situation as a Catholic MP. The purpose of the question is to interrogate the Church’s position (and more specifically the Catholic Church’s position). To do so would potentially jeopardise John Humphrys’ (JH) neutralism on the matter. Thus, the citation enables him to raise objections on behalf of a third party. Even so, the citation contains a highly contentious statement. However, the fact that it is attributed to Robert Winston (Lord Winston), whom Humphrys described in a previous news interview as ‘the country’s

best known fertility expert' (see appendix 1: today\_11\_03\_08\_0830, lines 7-8), adds authority and reasoning for the airing of the statement. This is because the credibility of the opinion is enhanced when the citation has a specific name and one that is easily recognised by the audience as being an authority. Other instances of well-known third party citations contained attributions to those within the government or Parliament.

**Extract 8.17: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 at 0750**

48 SM: → and Lady Deech that is why MP's like Evan Harris say this is a  
49 disgraceful move that they had it erm they allowed  
50 amendments=they went through all the committee  
51 stages and it's only now .hh that they are effectively blocking  
52 debate and in fact he put (stumbles) many people have  
53 pointed to the .hh possible unintended consequences of what  
54 the Lords might do

Extract 8.17 is taken from the *advocacy* interview between Baroness Deech and Ann Furedi. Line 48 contains a reference by Sarah Montague (SM) to the MP Evan Harris (who was also one of interviewees interviewed during the second reporting phase over the debate concerning the time limit for late abortions and whether it should be changed). The citation of Evan Harris enables Montague to put forward the contentious argument that blocking any further amendments to abortion legislation by the government was a 'disgraceful move' (line 49).

**Extract 8.18: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 at 0710**

31 JN: → .hh (0.5) But the Prime Minister has said that he (0.2) wanted  
32 every member of the Commons be able to exercise (0.3) their  
33 → conscience .hh er and yet Downing Street (0.3) says its  
34 decision to of a free vote will be taken in due course=now how

Extract 8.18 is taken from an *affiliated* news interview with Sean Curran. In this example, James Naughtie (JN) cites 'the Prime Minister' (line 31) and 'Downing Street' (line 33) in order to highlight two potentially conflicting statements surrounding the decision whether to allow MPs a free vote in the hybrid embryo debate on the grounds of conscience.

### 8.5.2 The initiation of topics

In the sample, the naming of specific third party persons was also used by interviewers in order to either set an initial question within a news interview or to shift the agenda of questions within a news interview.

#### Extract 8.19: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 at 0830

35 ES: Mr. Bradshaw did not sound in a mood to compromise there  
36 did he?

This extract was taken from this *accountability* news interview with Peter Smith. It was broadcast during the first reporting phase, at the time of the row between the Catholic Church and the government over the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes. Cardinal Keith O'Brien's Easter Sunday sermon had been made public the day before and Ben Bradshaw commented on the content of the sermon on the BBC programme *Any Questions*. Within the opening of the news interview, actuality of Ben Bradshaw speaking on *Any Questions* was broadcast. This inclusion of Ben Bradshaw in the opening allowed Edward Stourton (ES) to use the third party source as a springboard into the news interview.

#### Extract 8.20: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0750

100 CQ: .hh might achieve. now you've heard very strong views  
101 → against it not just from Clifford (.) Longley but also from Indarjit  
102 → Singh there saying it's an unfortunate attack on the building  
103 blocks of human life

Extract 8.20 was taken from the *advocacy* interview with Clifford Longley and Colin Blakemore and concerns the debate over whether to allow the creation of hybrid embryos. The citation of 'very strong views' (line 100) was used to change the direction of the questioning of Colin Blakemore. The agenda of the questioning, up to this point, had concerned the language used by Cardinal Keith O'Brien in his Easter Sunday sermon. However, with this question and citation, Carolyn Quinn (CQ) is able to shift the focus of the news interview onto the question of the nature of the hybrid embryo and whether it was an attack on the fundamental principles of human life.

Quinn cites two different people within this question as holding the same opinion: Clifford Longley and Indarjit Singh. Both of these people would be well known to the

*Today* programme audience at that time as being regular contributors to *Thought for the Day*. Each belonged to a different faith organisation: Clifford Longley is a Catholic and Indarjit Singh is a Sikh. Their combined expertise and different organisations they belong to reinforces the notion that their opinions are representative of a significant amount of people. This extract therefore demonstrates that the credibility of an opinion can be bolstered even further if the interviewer cites more than one well-known expert and/or organisation holding the same view.

In the sample, third party citations mentioned links to parliament, parliamentary groupings, specific individuals from both houses, government ministers and the Prime Minister. This pattern of findings is not dissimilar to those found by Wahl-Jorgensen et al. (2013, p. 11). Although their study was conducted on a much larger sample, one of their conclusions was that the voices heard in reports were often those of politicians and that this contributed to the “official framing, contestations and interpretations of ongoing news stories”. It is clear from the pattern of findings that the news interviews often emphasised issues surrounding official pronouncements, procedures and the processes of parliament, rather than to any wider debates between various groups within society.

### **8.5.3 Tribune of the people**

Allied to the practices of footing, another form of third party citation enables the interviewer to speak on behalf of the public and to articulate the concerns of citizens. Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 171) describe this device as “tribune of the people”. It enables interviewers to acquire a populist stance, thereby aligning themselves to the broader population contained within the audience. Use of the device suggests a highly adversarial environment where aggressive probing is being conducted and controversial or sensitive topics are being discussed. In these situations, interviewers resort to invoking public opinion in order to make their line of questioning defensible and, also, hard to ignore by the interviewee. The device is commonly used on elites, in particular politicians, to hold them accountable for their decisions and views.

Acting as a tribune of the people functions to legitimise the views being advocated by the interviewer, as speaking on behalf of the public has notions of “deliberative democracy” and the pursuit of PSB, as discussed in chapter 2 (Thompson 1995, pp. 255-257). This notion is especially significant where the *Today* programme is

concerned, as Wahl-Jorgensen et al. found that, of all of the broadcasters they investigated, the *Today* programme featured the most inferences about public opinions (Wahl-Jorgensen et al. 2013, p. 75). With this in mind, this section concentrates on the instances of the use of this device and, in particular, in what circumstances it was used. The examples below were taken from the sample and demonstrate where the interviewer acted as tribune of the people.

Extracts 8.21 and 8.22 below demonstrate a basic use of this device. The words 'many people' are used in order to describe the existence of contrary opinions and cast doubt over the veracity of certain viewpoints. Although the amount of people who disagree is not quantified, 'many' suggests a significant amount. Similarly, the word 'people' is not attributed to any specific group and neither is there any sense of who these people are. However, inclusion of the phrase bolsters the interviewer's claim that if 'many people' are questioning the viewpoint, it is a legitimate line of questioning. This deflects any notion of bias away from the interviewer and gives credence to the contrary view.

**Extract 8.21: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0830**

188 SC: [yeh] hh can I go back to the study .hh it's sixteen neo-  
189 natal units in the Trent region .hh (0.8) quite clearly of different  
190 er degrees of excellence um .hh  
191 JH: → well that study has been questioned by many people=queried  
192 → and doubted [by ] many peo[ple]

In extract 8.21, the phrase is used twice on lines 191-2 in order to cast doubt on a study mentioned in the opening of the news interview by BBC Science Correspondent Tom Feilden: that of the EPICure study. The extract is taken from the *advocacy* news interview between Stuart Campbell (SC) and Evan Harris where the topical domain concerns the question of the viability of foetuses born between twenty and twenty four weeks gestation and whether there was any scientific evidence to suggest that survival rates had increased since the HFEA 1990 set the time limit for late abortion. The question of viability was an important issue in the debate over whether to, once more, amend the time limit. Some MPs argued that it should be reduced to twenty weeks on the basis of the increase in the survival rates of foetuses born after this period of gestation.

The right to abortion (and discussions over whether to reduce the existing time limits for the procedure) is a controversial issue, one that touches on fundamental moral and ethical questions about the sanctity of life. Therefore, the controversial nature of

the topic makes it more likely that the use of the device will occur. Stuart Campbell's request for permission to 'go back to the study' on line 188 triggers the use of the device by John Humphrys (JH). It appears to be invoked in order to legitimise the interviewee's questioning of the study. However, the fact that an expert, in the form of Stuart Campbell, has questioned the veracity of the study provides Humphrys not only with credibility but also with legitimacy for his line of questioning. At the same time, Humphrys defends Stuart Campbell right to raise the issue because 'many people' agree with him.

**Extract 8.22: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

82 JH: → that it does seem that that is a better way for many people of  
83 going than .hh er deliberately setting out (.) to (.) to create  
84 embryos that will be destroyed

Extract 8.22 demonstrates a similar use of the tribune of the people device in another *advocacy* news interview. The topical domain of the news interview is a discussion on the vote in Parliament that day over whether to allow the creation of 'saviour siblings' to act as tissue-matched donors in order to potentially save the lives of sick siblings. One of the interviewees, Josephine Quintavalle, has raised the issue of the discarding of embryos during the process of creating a 'saviour sibling'. This process is conducted via IVF technologies and any fertilised embryos that do not match the sibling's tissue types are destroyed. The process is therefore controversial both on religious and ethical grounds. Josephine Quintavalle proposes an alternative to this process: that of the existence of an umbilical cord blood bank. She claims that this alternative process provides the same access to tissue matching and bone marrow donations that the sick siblings need, but without resorting to the discarding of embryos.

John Humphrys (JH) puts this alternative to the second interviewee, Gillian Lockwood, describing the alternative as a 'better way for many people' on line 82. The issue is rendered even more controversial by his insistence that the creation of a 'saviour sibling' is a process whereby those involved 'deliberately' set out to create embryos for destruction on line 83. The word 'deliberately' suggests intentional and conscious decision-making. As with the previous example, 'many people' is not quantified nor is there any attribution to a specific group. However, the device allows for the possibility that a substantial amount of people disagree with the discarding of embryos and that an umbilical cord blood bank must be a legitimate alternative.

Humphrys uses Josephine Quintavalle's argument as the basis for his next question to Gillian Lockwood. This is an antagonistic manoeuvre, in the sense that it promotes disagreement between the two interviewees. However, Humphrys benefits from the formulation of Josephine Quintavalle's argument. Firstly, it lends legitimacy to his line of questioning and, secondly, puts Gillian Lockwood under pressure to justify her position and counter the beliefs of 'many people' that an umbilical cord blood bank is an effective and more desirable alternative.

**Extract 8.23: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0830**

- 94 JH: the study wi with Evan Harris because what um .hh (.)  
95 → Professor Campbell says there will resonate with a lot of  
96 → people Dr. Harris the idea that you have (.) the this unborn  
97 baby=using that word instead of foetus=sitting in in in the  
98 womb .hh smiling=crying whatever it happens to be reacting to  
99 to a needle prick and then you drag them out of the womb and  
100 → kill them .hh that's the that's the kinds of language people  
101 → understand  
102 EH: (.) .hh yes but I think when the (.) limit was set in 1990 it was  
103 based on viability=that is the point at which babies have a

In extract 8.23 two instances of tribune of the people appear within one question. The example has been taken from the same *advocacy* interview as in extract 8.21. The device was used more than once in this interview, demonstrating that the topical domain of the news interview, that of the reduction in the upper time limit for abortion, was highly sensitive and contentious. This time however, the device is used within a question put to the other interviewee, Evan Harris (EH). This is the first time Evan Harris is heard to speak. Thus the device is used at the point at which a new interviewee joins into the discussion. As with extracts 8.21 and 8.22, John Humphrys (JH) uses the device in order to formulate the prior interviewee's point. On line 94, Humphrys signposts this fact by making reference to what Stuart Campbell has just said. He then goes on to use the first instance of the tribune of the people device in this example, by describing how Campbell's point will 'resonate with a lot of people' (line 95-6). Again, there is no quantification of how many is contained in a 'lot of people' nor are we given any indication of whom these people might be.

After the use of the device, Humphrys insists on using the highly emotive word 'baby' rather than 'foetus' on line 97, before going on to describe the scenario of a baby being dragged out of the womb and killed. In this provocative account, Humphrys is using his own words to describe the medical procedure of a

termination of pregnancy or abortion. Through this account, Humphrys is expressing what Rosalind Petchesky (2000, p. 172) describes as 'foetal personhood', whereby the foetus is seen to exist independently of the woman and is considered to be a person in its own right. Not only do such descriptions blur the boundaries between foetus and baby, they also constitute the foetus as helpless and victimised. Therefore, without the use of this device, the ideas expressed on lines 97-100 would potentially leave Humphrys open to the criticism of bias through the utterance of personal beliefs. The question is then finished with another tribune of the people device 'that's the kind of language people understand' on line 100-1 to suggest that the audience understand the description he has just given: that of babies being killed (as opposed to descriptions of medical procedures being carried out).

It is not unsurprising that two tribune of the people devices were sandwiched around such a provocative description. Both instances invoke public opinion concerning abortion and the right to life of a foetus. At the same time, the devices provide Humphrys with the legitimacy to foster a highly emotive and aggressive stance. This can be detected in Evan Harris' answer. As he begins his answer, Evan Harris displays no indication that he thinks the question is unjustified in any way. Indeed, his first word 'yes' on line 102 suggests that he accepts the description being used. This example clearly demonstrates that tribune of the people is used when the line of questioning within a news interview is becoming potentially highly controversial or provocative.

#### **Extract 8.24: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0712**

33 SM: → but many people would listen to what you're say  
 34 [and ] entirely agree with  
 35 IDS: [(clears throat)]  
 36 SM: you but say that what you're proposing in this particular  
 37 legislation .hh it it doesn't address that=that what you're talking  
 38 about is a problem .hh that predominantly is going to be in  
 39 heterosexual naturally conceived er children .hh rather than  
 40 this tend t they want the  
 41 [specific case where people who go for IVF .hh]

(some lines omitted)

50 I would er argue doesn't necessarily happen .hh er and this is  
 51 not (.) aimed by the way at anything to do with gay or lesbian  
 52 couples because [they are well I'm sure  
 53 SM: → [it has been seen as that though it's seen as  
 54 IDS: i well well it's t's ]  
 55 SM: anti-gay argument dressed up as a .hh]  
 56 IDS: sort of been around for a while and I don't think it is because

57 .hh the reality is the vast vast majority of people .hh who seek  
58 this treatment .hh are in the heterosexual community .hh and  
59 it's really a very important guidance .hh er for them=and I  
60 make the point it is a guidance it's asking them .hh to consider

Extract 8.24 demonstrates another example of the tribune of the people device, but this time the device has a complex use. Similar to the previous examples, Sarah Montague (SM) uses the device to pursue further questioning of Iain Duncan Smith (IDS) and his beliefs. Iain Duncan Smith is participating in the *accountability* news interview in order to discuss an amendment to the Bill proposed by him (and other MPs) to retain a phrase contained within guidance for IVF clinics, to consider the child's 'need for a father'. Just prior to this extract, he cites research conducted by the Centre for Social Justice (a think-tank that he established) and the consequences of absent fathers on children's lives and more generally on society. He lists these consequences as being quality of life issues: namely, failure at school, drug addiction and alcohol dependency. The device is then used by Montague at the start of her next question to him, in order to state that many of the public would agree with his views regarding the problem of absent fathers, but that his amendment does not address the issues he has raised. This is because the problem of absent fathers is one that mainly appertains to 'heterosexual naturally conceived children' (lines 39), rather than with those who seek IVF treatment.

The underlying reason for the use of the device is seen from line 50 onwards but is raised by Iain Duncan Smith himself rather than Montague. The reason why she needed to resort to the tribune of the people is to pursue the point that his amendment was an 'anti-gay argument' (line 55), in order to prevent gay and lesbian couples from accessing IVF. This is potentially a provocative issue and the invocation of public opinion on the matter is a legitimate way to tackle the issue. However, before Montague has the chance to pursue this line of enquiry, Iain Duncan Smith brings up the issue himself: 'this is not aimed by the way at anything to do with gay or lesbian couples' (lines 50-2). Thus, he gives Montague the opportunity to speak on the subject. This example demonstrates that the device is not necessarily used at the point of most provocation, but it can be used by interviewers to signpost the pursuance of more provocative lines of enquiry.

#### **Extract 8.25: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0810**

34 JH: → .hh but the the crucial bit for many people anyway .hh is (. )  
35 how much of the animal (.) is in the cell that is finally harvested

36 if that's the right verb to use

37 LB: .hh that's correct and under the provisions of this er proposed  
38 legislation there are four different types of so-called admixed  
39 embryos .hh there are those where we just put a little piece of  
40 DNA in=so for example to produce or to mimic .hh something  
41 like Alzheimer's disease in a test tube so we can study it in  
42 more detail and test drugs against it .hh secondly there are (.)  
43 areas where as you described you remove all of the nucleus  
44 .hh and here you're trying to look to see the interactions  
45 between the mitochondrial DNA and different cell .hh types  
46 how that will actually move forward that's the full replacement  
47 .hh thirdly there is where you may well produce a mixed  
48 chimeric embryo that is where you take some whole cells

49 JH: → [ah right ]

50 LB: [and mix] them with human cells .hh to see how different cell  
51 types moves=so this will teach us a lot more about for  
52 example congenital heart disease .hh where we have  
53 defects of cell mobility in embryos. .hh and last but not least  
54 are those that er where you take the two gametes one gamete  
55 from er or a sperm or and egg from one .hh species and mix it  
56 with .hh a gamete from another .hh getting a true fifty fifty  
57 .hh er mix=

58 JH: → =well now when you=  
59 =and that works for infertility and other disorders of i-imprinting  
60 → but when you (.) speak that kind of language you do worry an  
61 → awful lot of [people because]  
62 LB: [of course ]

63 JH: → they say ah there we are we're going to have a chimera .hh  
64 → we're going to have a half man half animal=  
65 LB: =well that's precisely why this legislation is  
66 [so important ]

67 JH: [sorry half human half animal]

68 LB: .hh because what this legislation does is to bring all of this re-  
69 search under the control .hh er of erm major provisions er  
70 that are part of the legislation so that firstly .hh you get  
71 permission (.) from an agency to be able to carry out the  
72 work=so the work itself is scrutinised in detail secondly .hh that  
73 er you're not allowed to implant these er eggs .hh in any shape  
74 or form in any species .hh which means that you absolutely  
75 [restrict]

76 JH: [they ] never leave the [laboratory]

77 LB: [so ] they never leave the  
78 laboratory and they can never be implanted to produce these  
79 → .hh so-called Frankensteins that people have er er have  
80 labelled them as .hh and last but not least at 14 days even in  
81 the test tube .hh er those embryos are are then er curtailed so  
82 that they are not allowed to develop any [further ]

83 JH: [killed off]

84 LB: .hh so they're killed off and they're not allowed to de[velop]

85 JH: [hh ]

86 LB: any further so that should .hh act as three major constraints er  
87 why people should be er feel .hh more relieved why the  
88 provisions of this particular legis[lation ]

Extract 8.25 is taken from the *advocacy* interview with Leszek Borysiewicz (LB), and David Burrowes. The topical domain of the news interview concerned the debate about whether hybrid embryos should be created for research purposes. It contains the clearest example of an interviewer speaking on behalf of the public. John Humphrys (JH) is heard to directly report speech that is attributed to the public. This can be heard in the phrase ‘they say’ at the start of ‘they say ah there we are we’re going to have a chimera .hh we’re going to have a half man half animal’ on lines 63-4. The trigger for the use of this device appears to be centred on the potential reproduction of interspecies cells and can be seen as early as line 34 at the beginning of an explanation of the different types of hybrid embryos.

On line 34, JH utters his first tribune of the people device with the phrase ‘the crucial bit for many people’, in order to put forward the point that ‘people’ want to know ‘how much of the animal’ is contained in hybrid embryos (line 35). Leszek Borysiewicz then begins to explain that there are four different types of ‘so-called admixed embryos’ (lines 38-9) and what they are used for in research. The first type he describes as ‘where we just put a little piece of DNA in’ (lines 40). He then goes on to explain that this process helps to ‘mimic’ diseases such as ‘Alzheimer’s disease in a test tube’ (lines 41). Leszek Borysiewicz says that the second type is where all the nucleus is removed ‘that’s a full replacement’ (line 46) and claims that this helps assess the interaction of mitochondrial DNA. The third admixed embryo he calls a ‘mixed chimeric embryo’ (line 48) where ‘whole cells’ (line 48) are mixed with ‘human cells’ (line 50). This prompts the response ‘ah right’ from John Humphrys on line 49. As Borysiewicz has described two other admixed embryos without any response, the addition of the word ‘chimeric’ appears to be the reason for Humphrys’ exclamation. However, Borysiewicz does not recognise this “news receipt” (Heritage, 1985: 96-99) and, instead, continues to describe how this admixed embryo is used for research into: ‘congenital heart disease’ (line 52) and ‘defects of cell mobility’ (line 53).

On line 53, the final hybrid ‘last but not least’ is described as the creation of a ‘true fifty-fifty mix’ (lines 56) and contains a gamete (sperm or egg) from one species and a gamete (sperm or egg) from another species. This prompts another interruption by Humphrys on line 58 ‘well now when you’, but again, Borysiewicz does not recognise this interruption as the start of a question and continues to explain that fifty-fifty admixed embryos are used for problems of ‘infertility’ and ‘disorders of imprinting’ (lines 59). At the end of this explanation, Humphrys invokes the public

again with the phrase 'but when you speak that kind of language you do worry an awful lot of people' on line 60-1.

This sequence is complex. First of all, the assertion is that using the word 'chimeric' (or chimera) is troubling language that worries 'an awful lot of people'. Borysiewicz interrupts after this statement on line 62 with the news receipt 'of course' (Heritage, 2005: 124), which demonstrates that Borysiewicz is aware of the underlying concerns and potentially problematic nature of his description of the chimeric embryo. Therefore, the news receipt gives recognition to the fact that 'people' are right to be worried about the process. Humphrys then ventriloquises the public's response to the mixing of animal and human cells with the direct attribution: 'they say ah there we are we're going to have a chimera we're going to have a half man half animal'. At this point, he conflates the notion of a chimeric or fifty-fifty embryo to get an entity that is 'half man half animal' (line 63-4).

On line 65, Leszek Borysiewicz uses the concern expressed to emphasise the reason why legislation is important 'well that's precisely why this legislation is so important'. At the same time as this explanation, Humphrys overlaps with an apology and repair to his former statement 'sorry half human half animal' on line 67. Presumably, the use of the word 'man' in the original phrase is a gendered description, whereas use of the word 'human' in the corrected version is a species description. Leszek Borysiewicz ignores this correction and continues to explain that legislation is necessary to bring the control of all of these different types of research under one agency, which would scrutinise the work in detail.

Leszek Borysiewicz then goes on to explain that legislation (and licensing) means that it would be illegal to implant these eggs 'in any shape or form in any species' (line 73-4); the extreme case formulation 'any' here being used as a double emphasis in defence of the safety of such procedures (Pomerantz 1986, p. 219). Humphrys interrupts on line 76 with the phrase 'they never leave the laboratory' to emphasise the point. Leszek Borysiewicz repeats this emphasis 'so they never leave the laboratory and can never be implanted' on line 77-8. At the end of this answer, Leszek Borysiewicz utters the phrase 'to produce these so-called Frankensteins that people have labelled them as' (lines 79). Here, Borysiewicz himself summons a third party anonymous collection of 'people', to emphasise the fact that others label hybrid or chimeric embryos as 'Frankensteins'. The attribution of the use of Frankenstein to an unspecified third party negates his responsibility for using the word.

In his research of the parliamentary debates concerning the HFEA 1990, Mike Mulkey (1997, pp. 123-126) argued that the use of 'Frankenstein' clearly offered a rhetorical resource, but that the word was often used by proponents of embryo research, in order to claim that opponents were unduly influenced by the narrative and prevented them from seeing the real potential and possible outcomes of such technologies. Therefore, the reference to 'so-called Frankensteins' by Borysiewicz here can be seen within the context of Mulkey's finding. The use of the device not only has the effect of summoning the idea of Frankenstein where none had existed within the news interview, but it additionally attributes the label to others as opposed to him.

On lines 80-2, Leszek Borysiewicz then proceeds to explain that these embryos will not be allowed to develop beyond the pre-embryonic stage and that after fourteen days they will be 'curtailed'. Leszek Borysiewicz appears to be choosing his words carefully here, because Humphrys interrupts at this point on line 83 with the blunt phrase 'killed off'. On line 84, Leszek Borysiewicz repeats and confirms Humphrys' statement 'so they're killed off' and additionally emphasises the fact that this action, along with the granting of licences and the restriction on implantation, provides three major constraints so that 'people should feel more relieved'.

It is clear from the examples above that the tribune of the people device was used in news interviews where sensitive and controversial issues existed. Furthermore, public opinion on these issues was invoked in order to claim legitimacy over the pursuance of particular lines of questioning. The findings contained within this section are closely allied with those claimed by Clayman (2007, p. 224) that, as a device used by interviewers, tribune of the people only occurs within "a limited range of interactional environments". In the sample of news interviews concerning the HFEA 2008, all of the instances of tribune of the people were used in news interviews that were adversarial in character. the invocation of public opinion had the purpose of encouraging interviewees to answer highly aggressive questions, as all interviewees straightforwardly answered the questions in which the device was employed. All of the news interviews where the device was used contained public figures: MPs or scientists within the field of fertility, where justification of particular viewpoints or accountability of certain procedures was vital to the questioning.

## 8.6 The management of neutralism: taking sides?

The previous sections demonstrated devices that the interviewer uses to manage neutralism and prevent them from being accused of taking sides. The remainder of the chapter deals with instances where this was called into question and where interviewers were put in a position of either having to defend themselves or being potentially accused of taking sides. Extract 8.26 is taken from an *advocacy* interview conducted by John Humphrys. It contains clear evidence of how laughter is used in a “disaffiliative” way in order to position one of the participants, David Burrowes (DB), as part of an ‘out-group’ (Partington 2006, p. 92). The laughter demonstrates that the other two participants, John Humphrys (JH) and Leszek Borysiewicz (LB), are members of an ‘in-group’ (Partington 2006, p. 93).

### Extract 8.26: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0810

174 JH: er still not persuaded Mr Burrowes  
175 DB: .hh still not persuaded because er (.) my my concern is that er  
176 we're going down .hh a route in terms of cloned animal human  
177 embryos=it's not: just a case of  
178 [whether we go for .hh ]  
179 JH: [but but there's no cloning involved here is there?]  
180 LB: [(inaudible) at all ]  
181 DB: well uh the reality is that er .hh this this area is (.) in terms of  
182 trying to get eggs for cloned human animal .hh embryos  
183 that is [the concern ]  
184 JH: → [but where are you] where are you getting the cloning bit  
185 → from e-e-even I as a non-scientist hhh am puzzled by that n n  
186 → and Sir Leszek is shaking his head at that wh wh.hh wh hhh  
187 → where does cloning come in  
188 DB: .hh because that is the area that we're talking about in terms  
189 of these hybrids .hh they're cloned animal human embryos  
190 .hh and the concern is they contain a genetic flaw (.) and that  
191 genetic flaw .hh would only increase in terms of trying to .hh  
192 mix it with .hh a human animal .hh um entity and what we're  
193 then one would lead to is a mismatch between the relevant  
194 human and animal .hh material .hh and so the fundamental  
195 flaws rather than those alternatives .hh which are already  
196 producing clinical results .hh and good science matched with  
197 good ethics  
198 JH: .hh well er Sir Leszek is shaking his head at that as I say but  
199 sadly we've run out of time I'd like to pursue it longer but there  
200 we are the debate (.) will (.) be held in great detail in the  
201 House of Commons today David Burrowes and Sir Leszek  
202 Borysiewicz thank you both very much

Just prior to the extract, the interview had focused on the pursuit of two different avenues within stem cell research: that of using adult stem cells and cord blood

versus the use of embryonic stem cells. David Burrowes argued that scientists should concentrate on using adult stem cells in research, because it is a less controversial method and, at the time, had been more productive in terms of scientific results. However, Leszek Borysiewicz argued that both avenues should be pursued simultaneously.

On line 174, John Humphrys goes on to ask the question 'still not persuaded Mr Burrowes'. David Burrowes explains that his concern is that 'we're going down a route in terms of cloned animal human embryos' (line 176-7). David Burrowes' reference to 'route' here can be seen in the context of Mulkay's (1993, pp. 728-729) "slippery slope". He suggests that, through the use of the notion of a slippery slope, opponents of embryo research were able to convey a climate of fear about the fact that it was not possible to predict how scientific advances might be used in the future. David Burrowes' mention of the phrase 'cloned animal human embryos' sparks overlapping interruptions by John Humphrys and Leszek Borysiewicz and a breach in the turn-taking system on lines 178-180.

On line 179, Humphrys questions whether any cloning is involved in the process of creating hybrid embryos. However, it is not clear to whom the question is directed and both Leszek Borysiewicz and David Burrowes begin to answer. David Burrowes attempts to explain what he means by 'cloning' on line 181, but is interrupted again by Humphrys on line 186 who exclaims 'but where are you getting the cloning bit from even I as a non-scientist (laughs) am puzzled by that and Sir Leszek is shaking his head at that (laughs)'. However, this utterance appears to be disingenuous or, at the very least, misleading, as many of the processes involved in stem cell research include techniques of cloning. In cell culture, for instance, cell division of a single cell (mitosis) is often used to produce singular cell lines (Landecker 2007, pp. 143-152) and cloning techniques can also be used in order to procure embryonic stem cells which genetically match the intended recipient of these cells: the so-called technique of therapeutic cloning (Bonnicksen 2009, p. 77). As a scientist, Leszek Borysiewicz would understand these types of techniques and how they are applied. Humphrys, on the other hand, may have misunderstood the comment to mean the somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) techniques from reproductive cloning used, for instance, in the creation of Dolly the Sheep (and, by inference, potentially a cloned human).

The audience is not be able to see Leszek Borysiewicz shaking his head in disagreement and therefore, has to accept Humphrys' interpretation of the action.

However, the fact that Humphrys describes this action has the consequence of effectively affiliating himself to Leszek Borysiewicz. Therefore, both men are put in opposition to David Burrowes at this point. This is further exacerbated by the fact that the comment from Humphrys on lines 184-7 contains two incidences of laughter. The bursts of laughter give the impression that David Burrowes is being laughed at by the two men. Thus, the laughter has the added effect of positioning Humphrys and Leszek Borysiewicz as being part of an 'in-group' and, at the same time, positions Burrowes to be part of an 'out-group' (Partington 2006, p. 85). Partington (2006, pp. 81-91) claims that participants often use laughter within talk as a means of gaining the upper hand in an argument, particularly by those where the adoption of the persona of expert or the role of authority is a strategic advantage.

At the end of his question on line 187, Humphrys once again asks David Burrowes to explain 'where the cloning comes in'. This David Burrowes does, although the explanation he gives is not a very good one. On line 198, Humphrys moves to close the interview, re-iterating that Leszek Borysiewicz is shaking his head. The inclusion of the bursts of laughter and the description of Borysiewicz as shaking his head gives the impression that Humphrys has taken sides in the adversarial grouping and demonstrates a lack of neutralism. However, Humphrys is not held to account for this breach. Not only that, but it is also the case that the second reference to Leszek Borysiewicz shaking his head in disagreement on line 198 alters the balance of the interview at the point of its closing. The description effectively means that Leszek Borysiewicz' voice is the last one of the interviewees that the audience hears and the opinion they are more likely to remember.

### ***8.7 Defence against criticism***

There was only one instance within the sample where the neutralism of the interviewer was potentially put in jeopardy. This suggests that Clayman (1992, p. 187) is correct in saying that, for the most part, interviewees do not treat adversarial questioning as the personal opinions of the interviewers and, thus, collude in a journalistic device designed to preserve the interviewer's neutralistic posture. Extract 8.27 is taken from the *accountability* news interview between Edward Stourton (ES) and Kevin Barron (KB) and was conducted the morning after the vote in the House of Commons over whether to amend the time limit for late abortions.

**Extract 8.27: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

39 ES: .hh it was quite a relatively tight vote um seventy one majority  
40 I think was the was the figure .hh and it's noticeable that a  
41 number of senior Conservatives .hh lined up in favour of  
42 → change including the leader of the party .hh everyone seems  
43 to accept that it's unlikely that anything will change within this  
44 Parliament but come an election and the possibility of more  
45 Conservative MP's .hh er in Parliament things could look  
46 rather different couldn't they  
47 KB: well (.) they may look different in that respect but you know the  
48 → reason I took the decision that I took indeed in 1990 and now  
49 → is because of what medical science is telling us and I think that  
50 → that's important and we can't just sort of let the .hh issue of er  
51 → you know party politics=  
52 ES: =sure=  
53 KB: → =that's what you're suggesting and [er ] you know there were  
54 ES: [hh]  
55 KB: some Conservative members of Parliament voted in the same  
56 lobby as me and many others throughout the night=as  
57 [indeed] they'd done the day before  
58 ES: [hh ]  
59 → no I I wasn't I was really merely suggesting that it it looks quite  
60 possible that the .hh Parliamentary arithmetic will change in  
61 the not too (0.3) distant future=that this matter is not  
62 .hh settled for good  
63 KB: well er nor should it be settled for good er i i it seems to me

The extract indicates that a problem has occurred within the interaction and that Stourton's neutralism is potentially being put under threat by the reference to 'you' in 'that's what you're suggesting' on line 53. At this point, Kevin Barron is countering Stourton's suggestion that the vote came down to 'party politics' (line 51) and was the result of 'parliamentary arithmetic' (line 60).

It appears that a problem begins to occur in the initial question from Stourton between lines 39-46. Although he cites a third party in the form of the extreme case formulation 'everyone' on line 42 (Pomerantz 1986, p. 228), the citation is used to bolster the view that no changes to abortion legislation are likely to occur within the lifetime of the current Parliament. The question itself on lines 44-6 does not contain an explicit citation to a third party opinion on the matter (although arguably there is an implied citation from the original 'everyone' on line 42). It becomes apparent in Kevin Barron's answer between lines 47-51 that his decision to vote in favour of the status quo was on the basis of 'what medical science is telling us' (line 49) and that party politics was not important to his decision.

However, the inference that Kevin Barron's decision was based on party politics appears to cause some trouble and Stourton attempts to reconcile this potential conflict with the news receipt 'sure' on line 52, the use of which has the effect of expressing affiliation to Kevin Barron's position: that his decision was made on the basis of scientific evidence (Heritage 1985, pp. 96-99). However, the attempt appears to come too late and Kevin Barron goes on to use the personal pronoun 'you' rather than a third party citation in 'that's what you're suggesting' on line 53. Stourton is then put in the position of having to counter the damage caused firstly through the denial by 'no I wasn't' on line 59, which is then closely followed by the repair 'I was really merely suggesting'. It is clear from his reaction on line 59 that Stourton felt he had been put in a position of having to initiate a repair sequence and that, therefore, he was aware of the potential breach to his neutralistic posture.

### **8.8 Summary**

It is evident that through the use of shifts in footing, formulations and third party attributions, interviewers are able to question interviewees without compromising the notion of neutralism and that neutralism is partly accomplished through the co-operation of interviewees. Apart from the gaining of neutralism, some attributions have the added benefit of enhancing the credibility of lines of argumentation and, when the interviewer summons the public through use of *tribune of the people*, they also add legitimacy to the interviewers' line of questioning. Apart from one, all examples contained within this chapter come from points within either *accountability* or *advocacy* interviews where aggressive lines of questioning and counter arguments are being presented. This suggests that these devices are used to manage the adversarial questioning specifically required in these types of news interviews and that, depending on the contentious nature of the question or the sensitivity of the subject being initiated, interviewers have a range of different devices at their disposal. Whilst formulations are used for questioning perceived to have a low level of antagonism, the citation of recognisable third parties is left for questioning that is deemed to be more antagonistic. It is also noticeable that third party citations were often the opinions of those within Parliament or senior members of faith organisations. Lastly, the use of *tribune of the people* is used on occasions where questioning is deemed to be the most contentious. Use of this device applies the most pressure on an interviewee to answer the question and to make them accountable to the public for their opinions or decisions.

If it is the role of the interviewer to ask questions, then it is the role of the interviewee to answer those questions. Not only that, but interviewees have to answer the questions put to them in a manner which is perceived as fulfilling the question and not as an evasion. With this in mind, the next chapter presents findings on how answering questions is achieved by interviewees. In particular, it concentrates on the idea that, in asking a question, the interviewer potentially threatens the public image of the interviewee. The chapter also focuses on findings that demonstrate strategies used by interviewees within their answers to show themselves in a good light.

## Chapter 9 – Interviewee’s Answers and Politeness Strategies

### 9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with how the interviewer accomplished *a question*. This chapter presents findings on the various ways in which interviewees accomplish *an answer*. Clayman and Heritage (2002, p. 238) claim there is “widespread perception” that interviewees evade answering questions. Findings from the analysis suggest that, in order to accomplish an answer, interviewees have issues of politeness to manage and this may account for the reason why interviewees are perceived as producing evasive answers. How interviewees answer a question reveals more about their underlying motives and intentions. Thus, the findings in this chapter demonstrate how interviewees in the news interviews on the *Today* programme accomplished answering questions. This includes what happens when interviewees cannot agree with the interviewer’s question and, in the case of *advocacy* interviews, the tactics used by interviewees to avoid direct confrontation with co-participants in adversarial encounters. It then goes on to outline the findings concerning the different politeness strategies used by interviewees to maintain a positive image, not just of themselves, but also often of their opponents too. The chapter finishes with examples of when interviewees chose to deliberately undermine politeness strategies and the consequences this had for interaction.

### 9.2 The concept of face

One of the reasons an interviewee might fail to answer a question is embarrassment and the concept of face can be used to explain this scenario. Face describes the desire by every person within social interaction to be approved of or liked. Goffman (1967, p. 5) defines the concept as:

the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing of himself.

Alan Partington (2006, p. 102) suggests that all questions asked by an interviewer threaten the face of interviewees and consequently they answer questions in a way that is conducive to showing themselves in a good light. The idea behind this concept

is that we all attempt to maintain face within social interaction and that our co-participants within interaction support and encourage us in this attempt. In return for their support, we participate in activities that encourage the maintenance of their face too. Such co-operation is seen as mutually beneficial, as all participants are in the position of being vulnerable to losing face. Partington (2006, p. 87) claims that:

we pay vast amounts of attention to protecting and enhancing our own face and in ensuring that we do not threaten or even seem to threaten that of others.

In their seminal book *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (1987), Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson take Goffman's notion of face a step further. They provide a more in-depth schema for the concept, linking it to working strategies carried out by participants within interaction. They describe two faces, which they term "negative face" and "positive face" (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 62). Positive face centres on a person's self-esteem and social image and includes the "desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired" (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 62). Negative face refers to "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 62).

According to Jucker (1986, p. 73), the notion of negative face is of little significance within the news interview environment. All questions attack negative face, because they infringe upon the right of the interviewee to act unimpeded. Therefore, in agreeing to participate in the news interview, interviewees relinquish their normal rights to uphold negative face. However, the notion of positive face is highly significant, as interviewees want to make sure that their positive image is maintained. Positive face also has consequences on an interviewee's professional status: as a scientist, religious leader or MP, etc. It is imperative that, not only are individuals seen in a good light, but that their professional associations are presented in a positive way too.

### **9.2.1 Face and face-threatening acts**

Interviewees have to work to maintain their face, but certain activities and actions undermine this effort. An act that threatens face is called a "face-threatening act" (Brown and Levinson 1987, pp. 25-27). Technically, these threaten either positive or negative face. However, as Jucker has discounted the notion of negative face within the news interview, this analysis specifically concentrates on the maintenance of positive face only.

Verbal face-threatening acts are perpetrated by the speaker and cause harm to the hearer. A speaker can also inflict a face-threatening act upon himself or herself. In terms of the news interview environment, this would be where an interviewee makes a mistake of some kind, potentially showing himself or herself to be incompetent. Speakers can also commit face-threatening acts that cause harm to the audience or at least certain parts of the audience. Particular viewpoints (or the negation of particular viewpoints) can cause offence and show the speaker in a bad light. This might have an effect on the professional standing of the perpetrator and bring his or her profession into disrepute. If this happens, those involved will “lose face” and will have to undertake remedial action in order to restore or “save face” (Goffman 1967, p. 9).

### **9.3 Face-work: introduction**

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 13) argue that the existence of face within interaction is universal, although the strategies we use to maintain the face of others and ourselves are culturally specific. Goffman (1967, p. 12) uses the term “face-work” to describe these strategies:

By *face-work* I mean to designate the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face. Face-work serves to counteract “incidents” – that is, events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face (*italics in original*).

The news interviews on the *Today* programme exist within the culture of institutional talk. Therefore, the strategies of face-work used by interviewees to maintain face within this environment will be culturally specific to that context. However, in terms of face-work, the news interview appears to contain a conflict of interests between the interviewer and the interviewee, as *all* questions asked by the interviewer threaten face and potentially undermine the interviewee’s need to be shown in a good light. This situation is contrary to the ideal of the mutual support and encouragement expected within the face-work of interaction, as outlined by Goffman (1967) and Brown and Levinson (1987). For instance, participants involved in *advocacy* or *accountability* news interviews in particular, are placed in an adversarial encounter, where scoring points against your opponent may be the primary aim. This would be seen as highly threatening behaviour and a risky strategy to adopt, as the interviewer or other interviewee may turn the tables on you. In this scenario, the interviewee would put themselves into the position of having their face potentially threatened and, in such a contest, it would be easy to lose.

### ***9.3.1 Maintaining positive face***

Extract 9.1 is an example of a face-saving device. It is taken from the *advocacy* news interview with Colin Blakemore (CB) and Clifford Longley. This is the first time that Colin Blakemore is heard to speak in the interview, after being asked a question by Carolyn Quinn (CQ).

#### **Extract 8.1: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0750**

83 CQ: .hh well Professor Blakemore would you like to respond to  
84 those (.) concerns first of all  
85 CB: → (1.7) ah we I w (stumbles) I don't want to put myself in the i i i  
86 → in the pretending position of being er the kind of expert on this  
87 → er research who can .hh give the sort of detail that I need I  
88 → think is needed to inform this debate properly

Although Quinn asks Colin Blakemore to respond to Clifford Longley's remarks, he defers this until line 89; instead commencing his answer on lines 85-88 with a face-saving device. He disputes the fact that he is an 'expert' (line 86) in the area of hybrid embryo research and therefore cannot give the detail needed to 'inform this debate properly' (line 88). The use of this device protects Colin Blakemore's reputation and allows for the possibility that if he introduces incorrect or misleading facts, he can say that he was not an expert and did not pretend to be one. Blakemore may have felt the compunction to use the device because Quinn described him as a 'Professor of neuroscience' in the opening of the news interview on line 53 and he may feel that his authority to speak on the subject of hybrid embryos is therefore put into question.

### ***9.3.2 Defending the positive face of your opponent***

Extract 9.2 is taken from an *advocacy* news interview with David Burrowes (DB) and Natalie Gamble. The extract has been discussed previously in section 8.3.5, as an example of how neutralism was managed by the interviewer through the formulation of a prior viewpoint by an interviewee. However, the extract also demonstrates how face-work was used to protect the face of an opponent in the adversarial environment where there is more than one interviewee.

#### **Extract 8.2: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0845**

27 ED: → so Natalie Gamble who (0.6) is a a lesbian parent with (0.5)  
28 → donor conceived children .hh should not have children  
29 DB: → .hh no there's not not it's not at all the case the .hh present er  
30 law and guidelines er .hh gives a presumption in favour of of

31 treatment unless they .hh children would face a risk of serious  
32 harm and er .hh we see an increase in numbers single women  
33 and er .hh same sex couples er .hh erm able to access IVF  
34 treatment .hh I mean this er [clause ]

(some lines omitted)

41 ED: → [so why don't you follow the princ why don't you follow ]  
42 → why don't you follow your own argument through to the  
43 → logical conclusion say (0.3) people like Natalie shouldn't have  
44 → children  
45 DB: → .hh well no I mean I mean we need to (0.3) recognise that er  
46 there are alternative relationships=but we need to .hh in  
47 legislation .hh ensure that er .hh in terms of the best interests  
48 of the children .hh are secured by allowing .hh and ensuring  
49 that those er .hh treatment providers give proper .hh credence  
50 and proper recognition to giving account of the need for a  
51 father

David Burrowes was being interviewed regarding the debate in the House of Commons over whether to retain the phrase 'need for a father'. David Burrowes is a Conservative MP who speaks on matters of family policy (Houses of Parliament, undated). The other interviewee, Natalie Gamble, was described in the opening to the news interviews as a mother of two donor conceived children with her same sex partner. She is also a lawyer who provides legal advice on surrogacy, donor conception, and gay and lesbian parenting (Natalie Gamble Associates). These factors align the two interviewees as diametrically opposed.

Just prior to the extract, on lines 20-6, David Burrowes had argued that it was not in the child's best interests to have their biological father deliberately written out of their lives. On lines 27-8, Evan Davis (ED) formulates this point to suggest that, according to David Burrowes, Natalie Gamble should not have been allowed to have children because, as a 'lesbian parent' (line 27), she has managed to circumvent the child's need for a father with the birth of her 'donor conceived children' (line 28). In order to agree to such a proposition, effectively saying that same sex partners should not be allowed to have children, David Burrowes would have to threaten Natalie Gamble's face. To comment directly on a co-interviewee's personal status would be a very serious face-threatening act. The consequences of this would be to put David Burrowes in a position of being potentially at threat of losing his own face in any subsequent comments by Natalie Gamble, as it would be seen as a highly adversarial move. Therefore, on lines 29-34, David Burrowes denies the inference in order to protect the face of Natalie Gamble and protect his own face at the same time. Instead,

he suggests that the present law allows for treatment to go ahead unless a child was at risk of 'serious harm' (lines 31-2).

It appears that Evan Davis is not happy with this answer and applies further pressure on David Burrowes to agree to the fact that he likes the flexibility of the current law in that it can be used to prevent same sex parents and single women from accessing IVF treatment in clinics. Although this point still somewhat threatens Natalie Gamble's face, it is seen as less threatening, because of the inclusion of the phrase 'people like Natalie Gamble' (lines 36-7). David Burrowes agrees to this suggestion 'that's right' on lines 38-40, but Davis is still not satisfied with this answer and attempts to get David Burrowes to take his argument to the 'logical conclusion' (line 43) that Natalie Gamble should not be allowed to have children via donor conception. David Burrowes yet again backs down from a deliberate and direct face-threatening act on line 45. This time David Burrowes finds it difficult to answer the question. There follows a series of hesitations and a delay before he eventually claims that, although alternative relationships need to be recognised, there should be proper recognition of the need for fathers. The awkward delivery of his answer demonstrates that David Burrowes face has been threatened by Davis' questioning. The extract establishes that where there are two interviewees, face-threatening acts are a double threat. Not only is an interviewee in the position of a potential attack by the interviewer, but they also have to negotiate positive face with their co-participant and, at the same time, give mutual consideration.

### ***9.3.3 Applying remedial action through laughter***

Extract 9.3 is taken from the *accountability* interview with Peter Smith (PS) and is part of the "winding down" process of the interview (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 76). It clearly demonstrates how laughter is used by Peter Smith to, firstly, manage his sense of embarrassment of being asked a particular question by Edward Stourton (ES) and, secondly, to cover a mistake that he subsequently makes. Partington (2006, p. 85) conducted research into the incidence of laughter between journalists and politicians who were attending press briefings and noticed how laughter was used in these sessions to manage embarrassment and to help negotiate or cover mistakes. Laughter then becomes used as a face-saving device, in order to remedy the situation and restore face.

### Extract 9.3: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 at 0830

99 ES: .hh quick final thought I don't suppose you've (.) conceived of  
100 the idea of .hh seeking help from your prominent recent  
101 convert on this matter Mr. Tony Blair?  
102 PS: → hhh well he's not a Member of Parliament is he hhh this is a  
103 [matter (inaudible) this is]  
104 ES: → [Well I think he is actually hhh ]  
107 PS: oh he is sorry I beg your pardon of course he still is but he's not  
108 around really very much in in the House .hh I think this is a

The extract begins on line 99 with a time warning 'final quick thought' by Stourton. However, although he asks for this final answer to be brief, he changes direction with his questioning and introduces a new angle: that of Tony Blair's recent conversion to Catholicism and whether he might be able to help in the matter of a free vote. Peter Smith evades a direct answer to this question for the remainder of the interview. The mention of Tony Blair as a 'prominent and recent convert' on lines 100-1 obviously causes Peter Smith some embarrassment. He attempts to deflect it with two face-saving laughs on line 102.

If Peter Smith initially laughed to cover his embarrassment at being asked the question, he makes matters worse by inflicting a face-threatening act on himself, stating wrongly that Tony Blair is not an MP anymore on line 102. If Tony Blair were no longer an MP, further questioning would be avoided and Peter Smith would have managed the embarrassment. However, his statement is incorrect and Stourton points this out on line 104 'well I think he is actually'. His utterance ends with a laugh directed at Peter Smith's mistake, thus triggering a further face-threatening act. Peter Smith, therefore, has to apply another remedial action on line 107, in order to apologise for and repair the mistake he has just made. This time he uses the news receipt 'oh' in response to an unanticipated answer (Heritage 2005, pp. 124-126). After an apology 'sorry I beg your pardon' and the booster 'of course he still is' (Holmes 1990, p. 190), Peter Smith gives a face-saving mitigation for his incorrect statement.

This extract clearly demonstrates how a laugh was used as a repair after Peter Smith was asked a question that caused him to be embarrassed. The extract also demonstrates how an apology and mitigation was used to cover or repair a mistake made by the interviewee himself. Mistakes of any description have the potential to damage the professional prestige of the person who utters it and, remedial action in the form of an apology, signals the speaker's awareness of his or her own mistake and acknowledges the shortcoming.

### 9.3.4 Deflecting responsibility for decisions

Extract 9.4 comes from the *serial* interview conducted by Sarah Montague (SM), in which she interviews Karen Dugdale (KD) about her experience of having a late term abortion and the reasons behind her decision.

#### Extract 9.4: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0810

- 11 SM: what happened to you  
12 KD: → (1.1) .hh er good morning=I went for my twenty week  
13 scan=which was an anomaly scan erm thinking everything  
14 → was perfectly fine with the baby .hh and we told at that  
15 particular scan that there were a range of abnormalities um  
16 → affecting our baby .hh erm and we were then kind of given the  
17 option of terminating the pregnancy or continuing the  
18 pregnancy  
19 SM: and you decided to terminate  
20 KD: → (1.1) .hh yes we did er myself and my husband made the  
21 → decision er with had the support of our family=but ultimately it  
22 → was our choice and our decision .hh and we felt at that point in  
23 → our lives and (.) with our own personal circumstances .hh we  
24 → weren't able to continue with that pregnancy

On line 11, Montague starts by asking Karen Dugdale 'what happened to you'. This type of question, termed by Labov (1973, p. 254) as a 'b-event', requests the description of experiences that are unique to the interviewee. Karen Dugdale begins her answer by describing how she went for an ultrasound scan at twenty weeks into her pregnancy. At this point, she is using the first person singular pronoun 'I went for my twenty week scan' to describe the event (line 12-3). She then goes on to relate the fact that, at this appointment, she was told that the foetus had a 'range of abnormalities' (line 15). Karen Dugdale does not expand on what these abnormalities were, how they affected the foetus or the consequences on the life chances of the foetus. However, what is noticeable is that on line 16, she switches from the first person singular pronoun 'I' to the collective pronoun 'we' and possessive determiner 'our' for the remainder of the sequence highlighted in the extract. Now 'the baby' in line 14 becomes 'our baby' (line 16), along with the fact that 'we were given' (line 16) the option of either 'terminating the pregnancy' (line 17) or 'continuing the pregnancy' (line 17-8).

Montague's next question on line 19 requests confirmation of the decision 'and you decided to terminate'. Initially, Karen Dugdale answers 'yes' to this request, but additionally uses the phrase 'we did', thus deflecting sole responsibility for the decision

from her alone. She goes on to explain how this decision was taken in consultation firstly with her husband and then with the support of her family, before finally emphasising the fact that it was 'our choice' and 'our decision' on line 22. Karen Dugdale uses 'we' or 'our' eight times within her answer on lines 20 – 24. Such a high use of this pronoun within such a small sequence signals the fact that Karen Dugdale feels uncomfortable and defensive about the fact that she had a late termination. It is obvious that admitting to having undergone this procedure is a threat to her face, which could potentially undermine her approval by the audience and show her in a bad light. Her acknowledgement of the support of others in the decision contributes to the defence of her actions and the use of 'we' deflects responsibility away from her (Clayman 1992, p. 165).

The high usage of the collective pronoun 'we', and possessive determiner 'our', does not occur in the following news interview in the sequence, where the interviewee, Liz Goddard, gave birth to a baby at twenty-two weeks. It is clear from this sequence that undergoing a late abortion is troublesome and suggests that there is some form of moral questioning taking place, i.e. that having a late abortion reflects badly on the person undergoing the procedure. As there is only one news interview where such an occurrence takes place, it is not possible to determine whether this questioning relates, in some way, to the personal reflections of Karen Dugdale about her own actions or whether the questioning is a reflection of the existence of abortion as a contested issue within society.

### ***9.3.5 Deflecting responsibility and institutional identity***

Sacks (1992, pp. 713-715) observed that when people speak as the representative of an institution, they often refer to themselves as 'we' and not 'I'. The use of the pronoun 'we' by an interviewee also has the effect of invoking an institutional identity within the news interview, as opposed to a personal identity. Extracts 9.5 and 9.6 both demonstrate the use of 'we' by interviewees within answers in order to invoke those institutional identities. Both additionally demonstrate that the use of 'we' has a similar effect to that contained in extract 9.4 above in that both interviewees use the pronoun in order to deflect potential criticism and/or responsibility away from themselves.

#### **Extract 9.5: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008 at 0830**

12 ED: .hh Let's talk about that decision on fathers (.) first (.) did the  
13 (.) HFEA have a view and take a role in the framing of the

14 legislation on that  
 15 LJ: → well that's quite simple no we didn't and no we don't .hh um we  
 16 → are the regulator and we our our job is (.) to (.) implement  
 17 legislation .hh and to make fine decisions where legislation  
 18 allows of to possible .hh erm [outcomes]  
 19 ED: [bu ] but the practice had  
 20 de uh the old law said (.) the clinics had to take account  
 21 of the need of for a father .hh er but practice had apparently  
 22 deviated quite a long way from that in (.) over the years=I  
 23 wondered whether you had (.) decided or taken a decision not  
 24 to enforce or to try [and impose the rule that a father should]  
 25 LJ: → [ .hh we absolutely ]  
 26 → I I I just would reiterate it's not within our remit to make  
 27 → decisions about not to enforce=we have to enforce=however

Extract 9.5 is from the news interview with Lisa Jardine (LJ). In 2008, she was the Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). Evan Davis (ED) is the interviewer. Lines 12-13 contain his first question to Lisa Jardine and here he uses the noun 'the HFEA', rather than the personal pronoun 'you', in order to ascertain whether the institution had any role in the framing of the HFEA 2008 with respect to the legislation covering IVF clinics and the amendment of 'need for a father'. The use of 'the HFEA' is possibly the initial prompt for Lisa Jardine to use the pronoun 'we' on line 15. By line 16, however, her use of 'we' becomes clumsy within the interaction 'we are the regulator' and difficult to maintain, as she begins to stumble.

Davis' next question, on lines 19-25, is antagonistic in that it suggests that her organisation, the HFEA, circumvented the law and had not been enforcing the previous guidance of taking into account the child's need for a father. Lisa Jardine begins her answer on line 25 quite emphatically, overlapping Davis with 'we absolutely' at the earliest point in the interaction in order to deny the suggestion. However, she quickly moves from 'we' to 'I would just reiterate'. The use of 'I' is in some ways contrary to the notion of institutional identity and suggests that the question was heard as a personal attack on the HFEA under her leadership and that she felt obliged to deal with the attack on a personal basis. Nevertheless, the institutional identity returns fairly swiftly on lines 26-7 with 'it's not within our remit to make decisions about not to enforce we have to enforce', leaving no doubt that it is the institution's responsibility to uphold the law.

**Extract 9.6: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0710**

59 ES: .hh wh what do you think that your (0.5) results .hh tell us (.) in  
 60 (.) a way that's (.) useful to today's debate then  
 61 DF: .hh from from my perspective and I have to emphasise I'm a

- 62 → neotologist I'm (.) I work at a unit where (.) our our sole aim is  
 63 → to try and get healthy live babies at the end of the process  
 64 → (.) .hh er despite our best efforts we are not making er  
 65 → improvements at twenty two and twenty three weeks=we're  
 66 → gonna .hh keep trying clearly along with ev everyone else in  
 67 → the country who works in that in that field .hh=

Extract 9.6 is taken from the *expert* interview between David Field (DF) and Edward Stourton (ES). At the start of the news interview, David Field is introduced as the publisher of a study which examined the survival rates of foetuses born before twenty-four weeks gestation and whether their chances of survival had increased since the HFEA 1990. The question of viability had become central to the debate over whether to reduce the upper time limit for abortions. In the extract on line 59, Stourton asks David Field how his study is useful to the debate on abortion taking place in Parliament that day.

On lines 61-2, David field begins his answer with the pronoun 'I' and stresses that he is answering from his perspective as a 'neotologist'. When he begins to mention the unit where he works, David Field then switches to an institutional identity, using the possessive pronoun 'our sole aim' (line 62) and personal pronoun 'we are not making improvements' (line 65). Drew and Heritage (1992, p. 31) claim that the switching of pronouns from 'I' to 'we' by medical personnel is a common phenomenon used within institutional interaction. They suggest it is an avoidance of "personal responsibility for clinical error". David Field obviously feels compelled to protect his positive face by reiterating the fact that, not just him and his unit, but 'everyone else in the country who works in that in that field' (lines 66-7) 'are trying' (line 64) to increase the survival rates of premature neo-natal babies, but that 'despite our best efforts we are not making improvements at twenty two and twenty three weeks' (lines 64-5). The use of 'everyone' on line 66 is an extreme case formulation used by speakers to indicate that they are not personally "responsible for the state of affairs in question" (Pomerantz 1986, p. 228).

#### **9.4 Politeness strategies: Introduction**

The extracts in the previous section on face-work demonstrated how the maintenance of positive face, along with the maintenance of a professional image, was of pressing concern to interviewees. Not only did they work to maintain their own faces, but, in the case of *advocacy* news interviews, interviewees also work to maintain the positive face of their opponent. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 70-71), showing

respect for the feelings of your opponent in this manner is a practice that comes under the approach they call *positive politeness* and is used in order to minimise the potential damage of a face-threatening act. The application of positive politeness can thus be seen in terms of ritualistic or “pre-patterned behaviour” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 43). This section presents findings of how positive politeness was used in the news interviews on the *Today* programme and the types of devices and strategies that were applied. These can be seen as ‘rituals’ that interviewees have at their disposal in order to answer questions. The section will begin by concentrating on *how* interviewees answer questions put to them.

#### **9.4.1 Preferred/dispreferred responses**

The concept of positive politeness is important to *how* interviewees answer questions. This is because all questions asked in the news interview context threaten the face of an interviewee. Positive face necessitates, firstly, that interviewees produce an utterance recognisable as an answer and, secondly, that an interviewee shows consideration to the interviewer’s positive face too. Heritage (1984, p. 268) claims that the issue of face is “closely associated” with the need to maintain social solidarity through the observation of certain preferred formats. One of the ways that the interviewee can achieve this is to provide a *preferred response* to the interviewer’s question. In reality, this means that, not only should the interviewee answer the interviewer’s question, but they should also agree with the framing or content of the question, as to not answer a question or to disagree with its sentiment would threaten the face of the interviewer (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 38).

Extract 9.7 provides evidence of the fact that when an interviewee is able to provide an answer that agrees with the interviewer’s question, they do so straightforwardly and without delay. The extract is taken from the *accountability* news interview with Lisa Jardine (LJ) who was, at the time, Chair of the HFEA. She was being interviewed at the end of the week of voting in the House of Commons on the HFEA 2008 and Evan Davis (ED) wanted to know whether she was happy with the outcome.

#### **Extract 9.7: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008 at 0830**

67 ED: But you're satisfied at the end of this=  
68 LJ: =I'm delighted with the process

The transition between the question and answer on lines 67-8 shows that Lisa Jardine’s answer was immediate. She had no trouble completing the task of answering

the question and had no trouble agreeing with the point contained within it. This demonstrates that *preferred responses* are performed directly and without delay. More often than not, interviewees do not agree with the content of the interviewer's question. This is because interviewees bring their own agenda to the news interview, along with their own analysis of events. This provides an interviewee with a problem. To disagree with the interviewer, not only shows the interviewee in a bad light, but is also a face-threatening act. To disagree, therefore, is harder to negotiate. Such *dispreferred responses* often contain a delay between the interviewer's and the interviewee's turn and delays, hesitations or indirect responses within the answer itself. Extract 9.8 is taken from the *accountability* news interview between John Humphrys (JH) and MP Jim Devine (JD). The interview concerned the issue over whether MPs should be allowed a free vote on the grounds of conscience over the creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes.

**Extract 9.8: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0850**

55 JH: but surely it ought to be a free vote  
 56 JD: .hh I er well I'm not I'm (.) relatively new MP and when I've (.)  
 57 not sh long after I came down .hh I was appointed a PPS and  
 58 .hh had to (inaudible) on the renewal of Trident .hh and it was  
 59 made very clear to me and and one of my arguments was was  
 60 an issue of conscience and could I not abstain or whatever  
 61 .hh and it was made very clear to me that this was  
 62 → government policy .hh I'm not convinced that there is an  
 63 → argument for a free vote and if I have to say

On line 55, Humphrys states emphatically that MPs should be allowed a free vote. He uses the word 'surely' as an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986: 219), in order to strongly challenge the legitimacy of any potential decision by the government or Prime Minister not to allow a free vote. Jim Devine is unable to agree with this statement, although whether this is down to belief or whether he is simply 'towing the party line' is unclear. What is clear, however, is that he finds the reality of disagreeing with Humphrys' question difficult to accomplish. His actual disagreement (and answer) to the question does not come until line 62-63. In the preceding lines, Jim Devine produces talk that not only attempts to lessen the impact of the impending disagreement, but also provides him with an account as to why he is unable, as opposed to unwilling, to answer the question in the preferred manner. At the start of his answer on line 56, he begins with hesitations and the particle 'well', which according to Schiffirin (1986: 102), suggests disagreement will follow. He then goes on to give an account as to why he cannot agree with the statement. Here he describes his

experience as a 'relatively new MP' and his difficulties regarding a vote on the Trident system. With this account, Jim Devine deflects responsibility for the upcoming disagreement. Thus, it is not *his* decision whether to allow a free vote, but some anonymous person 'who made it very clear to me' from his previous experience that it was 'government policy' whether to allow free votes or not (lines 61-62).

The two extracts above demonstrate that consideration of positive face appears to determine *how* interviewees accomplish the dis/preferred turn format when answering questions. Whilst producing a *preferred response* is a straightforward procedure for an interviewee, to disagree is a *dispreferred response* and one that is problematic. Not only does disagreement threaten the face of the interviewee, disagreement threatens the face of the interviewer and is considered a face-threatening act. In *accountability* news interviews, such as in the examples above, the interviewee only has to worry about the face of the interviewer. However, there is an added dimension in *advocacy* news interviews, as there is another interviewee with which to contend. Therefore, the next section deals with politeness strategies adopted by interviewees, and the ways in which they try to avoid face-threatening acts on fellow interviewees.

#### **9.4.2 Redressive action: claim common ground**

Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 68-69) outline numerous examples of the types of politeness strategies used by speakers in order to maintain, first of all, their own face and, secondly, the face of other participants within interaction. Employing a politeness strategy is seen as "redressive action", enacted by the speaker for the benefit of the hearer. Some redressive strategies were found within the sample and this section presents those that fall within one of the broader mechanisms that Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 103-124) describe as "claim common ground". Through the adoption of these strategies, interviewees adopt positive politeness, enabling both interviewees to maintain positive face.

#### **9.4.3 Redressive action: express sympathy**

Extract 9.9 is taken from the news interview with David Jones and Robert Winston (RW). The interviewer was John Humphrys (JH). The start of the interview surrounds the issue of Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PiGD). Just prior to the extract, David Jones had pointed out the fact that he had a problem with PiGD because it allows the discarding of an embryo on the basis that it contains a genetic flaw and, if allowed to

develop, might be born with a disability. David Jones believes that the discarding of embryos on the grounds of potential disability is wrong.

**Extract 9.9: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0830**

143 JH: [Lord Winston] throwing away an [embryo]  
144 RW: [well ] this is Professor  
145 Jones's assertion I do I do=  
146 JH: =well it happens  
147 RW: → .hh well I do er s I do sympathise with his view because of  
148 course .hh you know the Catholic Church actually doesn't  
149 approve of IVF at all .hh and so he has a problem here they  
150 don't even approve of contraception these are both methods of  
151 .hh both technologies which are widely used in our general  
152 population .hh and broadly accepted by people

On line 143, Humphrys asks Robert Winston to respond to the issue raised by David Jones. Robert Winston's answer demonstrates the use of face-work, some of which falls into Brown and Levinson's (1987, p. 104) strategy 2: where sympathy is used to claim common ground. On line 144, Robert Winston initially begins his answer by attacking David Jones face with the comment 'well this is Professor Jones's assertion', but Humphrys interrupts on line 145, in order to defend the attack on David Jones. Here, he points out that the discarding of embryos in the selection process does take place 'well it happens'. Robert Winston then seeks to maintain his own face by presenting himself as someone who is supportive of David Jones' position 'well I do sympathise with his view' (line 147). The use of the booster 'of course' on line 148 acts to bolster this strategy, which has the effect of exaggerating the claim (Holmes 1990, p. 190).

In his answer, Robert Winston then goes on to argue that, as a Catholic, David Jones' views are against a general consensus that is 'broadly accepted by people' (line 151). In order to justify and defend his assessment of the situation, he uses the extreme case formulation 'all' in 'the Catholic Church actually doesn't approve of IVF at all' on lines 148-9 (Edwards 2010, p. 347) before further enhancing his own position with the utterance 'they don't even approve of contraception' (line 150-1). This extract demonstrates that, although Robert Winston takes a different position to David Jones and ultimately disagrees with that position, his use of a positive politeness strategy through the claiming of common ground with David Jones, enables him to maintain his own face as well as that of David Jones.

#### 9.4.4 The avoidance of disagreement

Extract 9.10 is taken from the *advocacy* news interview between Baroness Masham (BM) and Baroness Tonge (BT). Baroness Masham had proposed an amendment that, if successful, would change existing laws. The HFEA 1990 amended the Abortion Act of 1967, reducing the time limit for late abortions from twenty eight weeks to twenty four. However, the termination of foetuses after twenty four weeks gestation and up until to birth was allowed on the grounds of serious disabilities. Baroness Masham's amendment proposed a change of the phrase 'serious disabilities' to 'potentially life-threatening', thus preventing the termination of a foetus after twenty four weeks gestation on the grounds of disability alone.

This was the first news interview to be analysed. After my initial transcription and first reading of it, I noted in the margin that the news interview 'demonstrates adversarialness and conflict, but lots of hedges, use of discourse markers and empty adjectives that make it all sound very polite'. In every answer they give within the interview, both interviewees demonstrate what Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 113) term strategy 6: avoid disagreement. This is where the desire to appear to agree encourages the interviewees to use mechanisms that demonstrate superficial agreement but in reality disguises the fact that they actually disagree.

#### Extract 9.10: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007 at 0845

- 21 SM: .hh Baroness Tonge do you welcome this (.) potential change  
22 BT: .hh um [clears throat] I think it needs discussion and I think we  
23 need to be very very careful about what we do on these issues  
24 .hh but what I mostly object to is that it should be an  
25 amendment .hh to a bill .hh the embryology and fertilisation  
26 bill=which has hugely contentious issues in it .hh um there are  
27 all sorts of things that we to discuss in that bill .hh and I think  
28 the issue that Baroness Masham raises .hh is too important in  
29 itself to be just tagged onto another bill .hh and likewise I think  
30 the issues in the bill we're discussing at the moment are much  
31 too important and controversial .hh to have yet another  
32 controversial issue tagged onto it .hh so I think we need to  
33 look at the 1967 abortion act .hh um if we need to look at it we  
34 need to look at it separately from any other legislation  
35 SM: Lady Masham  
36 BM: .hh um well this this could be so .hh but I would certainly never  
37 have put um an amendment down hh without the permission  
38 of the clerks .hh they said that it did fit into this bill .hh of  
39 course um there are a lots of different measures .hh and very  
40 important things .hh that will be being discussed in this bill  
41 .hh er I think this is something .hh that could be just accepted  
42 by the government .hh because it does seem .hh what is the

43 point having .hh er disability equality .hh if it doesn't affect um  
44 .hh (.) babies in the womb [I mean they are babies]

(some lines omitted)

75 BM: hh um there are so many people who would like to adopt  
76 babies .hh if there are babies who don't want to .hh you know  
77 who the mothers don't want (.) erm (.) so .hh  
78 BT: but but this is always the excuse given for people who don't  
79 want a woman's right to choose .hh you have to remember  
80 [that before ]  
81 SM: [but it's an entirely fair point isn't it]  
82 BT: ye well it's hhh a fair point but you have to remember that  
83 before you have a baby that can be adopted .hh you have to  
84 be pregnant for nine months

On line 21, Sarah Montague (SM) asks Baroness Tonge whether she welcomes the potential amendment that Baroness Masham has introduced. Baroness Tonge's answer on lines 22-34, essentially disagrees with the proposed change. Instead, she suggests that any discussion concerning the 1967 Abortion Act would be better dealt with separately, rather than being 'tagged onto' the Bill (line 29). However, her answer demonstrates the avoidance of disagreement and the use of devices similar to those in extract 9.9. First of all, there is a hesitation 'um', which Judy Davidson (1984, p. 110) argues is the equivalent of "I'm thinking about how to put this". The device is then followed by the hedge 'I think' (Goffman 1981, p. 284); indeed 'I think' is used four times during her answer and is evidence of someone who is trying to display a certain amount of caution over what they are about to say. On line 23, there is a double use of the adverb 'very' and use of other adverbs, such as 'mostly' on line 24 and 'hugely' on line 26. All of these are hedging devices. There is also the use of the boosting device 'just' on line 29. Janet Holmes (2008, pp. 298-299) argues that hedges and boosters are the sign of a speaker who lacks confidence and anticipates the fact that the person being addressed will remain unconvinced by their argument.

Within the remainder of her answer, Baroness Tonge produces an account that demonstrates she is looking for aspects on which she can produce token agreement. On lines 28-9, Baroness Tonge claims that the 'issue that Baroness Masham raises is too important in itself to be just tagged onto another bill'. This has the effect of implying that Baroness Masham's point is such an important one that Baroness Tonge would be happy to debate the ideas contained within the amendment, if they were introduced in a separate bill.

Baroness Masham uses similar hedging and boosting devices to Baroness Tonge within her answer on lines 36-44. However, she begins with the discourse markers 'well' and 'but', the combination of which is a polite way to construct disagreement. The particle 'well' initially signals the start of the disagreement and 'but' quickly follows to provide the contrasting opinion (Schiffrin 1987, p. 152). The use of the modal verb in 'this could be so' also suggests a somewhat hesitant response or hedging of the point and effectively demonstrates a lack of commitment to the argument (Fairclough 1993, p. 142). After her use of the discourse marker 'but', Baroness Masham goes on to establish the contrasting argument that she had been given permission by the clerks to table the amendment and that 'it did fit into the bill' (line 38). Here the modal verb 'could' is replaced by the more active and decisive 'did'. She then provides a justification of her argument in the remainder of her answer that the government should accept that there are 'lots of different measures' being discussed in the Bill (line 39).

Later in the news interview, there is a breach in the turn-taking system. This usually signals the fact that a highly contentious point has been made. On lines 75-77, Baroness Masham puts forward the point that many people would adopt any babies born to mothers who did not want them. However, this point causes Baroness Tonge to breach the turn construction on line 78 and to bypass Sarah Montague in her role as interviewer. Baroness Tonge counters this point with the highly antagonistic exclamation that 'this is always the excuse given for people who don't want a woman's right to choose', meaning that she is accusing Baroness Masham of not believing in a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. This is a face-threatening act and demonstrates that Baroness Tonge regards Baroness Masham's beliefs as wrong, misguided or unreasonable (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 66). However, Montague interrupts Baroness Tonge's exclamation on line 81 with the remark 'but it's an entirely fair point isn't it' in defence of Baroness Masham. Although Baroness Tonge has performed a highly antagonistic face-threatening act, she backs down from taking the move any further with a politeness strategy to express token agreement 'it's a fair point' on line 82. This sequence demonstrates that, within the *advocacy* interview environment, most interviewees are keen to uphold the positive face of their opponent. This occurs even when a contentious viewpoint is made and the interviewee is unable to agree with the point.

#### **9.4.5 Without redressive action**

The findings in this chapter so far have demonstrated that, for the most part, interviewees work co-operatively to ensure that face-threatening acts do not occur or, if

they do occur, that redressive action is applied in order to lessen the impact. However, in two of the *advocacy* news interviews within the sample, at least one of the interviewees chose to perform a face-threatening act on their fellow interviewee. In both cases, performing the action resulted in a break down of the turn-taking system. So much so that the interviewers struggled to maintain control. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 69) provide some reasons as to why an interviewee would chose not to adhere to the ritualistic behaviour patterns of positive politeness and the avoidance of disagreement. These include: where an interviewee does not fear retribution from either the other interviewee or interviewer; where participants both agree to suspend matters of face or where the speaker committing the face-threatening act is “vastly superior in power” and can “enlist audience support”.

The remainder of this chapter will concentrate on these two examples where the interviewee deliberately chose to perform a face-threatening act “without redressive action” on the other interviewee (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 69). It addresses the possible reasons behind their decision and the consequences of carrying out such an action.

### Extract 9.11: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at 0830

149 JH: =so they were done you're saying for (.) [what ]  
 150 SC: [for social reasons]  
 151 JH: social rea[sons .hh  
 152 EH: → [I don't know what that means social reasons=  
 153 SC: =[yes]  
 154 EH: [.hh ]  
 155 so if if [a woman well if a woman is if a wo yeh  
 156 JH: [well there is a difference clearly between social and]  
 157 life=  
 158 EH: =if a woman's suffering from domestic violence or abuse or  
 159 she's abandoned by .hh the partner who is helping her raise  
 160 her existing four children .hh and can't cope .hh with the  
 161 prospect of raising another child on her own (gulps) or staying  
 162 in that relationship with a child where there's abuse or  
 163 domestic violence .hh that is what (0.5) would come under the  
 164 I think rather trite classification of a  
 165 so[cial reason it's not a social reason ]  
 166 JH: [so we're not talking lifestyle for social reason]=  
 167 EH: → =absolutely [not for these women] I think it's rather .hh  
 168 JH: [right so s]  
 169 EH: → [unfair ] to call .hh this a social reason  
 170 SC: [so why don't we do]  
 171 EH: I [think it undermines the]  
 172 JH: [Professor]  
 173 SC: [so why] don't we do it at twenty six weeks  
 174 then [in other ] words this crisis can happen

175 EH: [hh well be]  
 176 SC: at twenty six weeks [as well as (0.6) twenty two weeks ]  
 177 EH: [I I understand that and the ] reason  
 178 (0.3) I I understand in 1990 that MP's set the time limit to  
 179 twenty four=I think this is generally accepted .hh was they  
 180 felt that viability occurred at twenty four weeks and therefore  
 181 .hh the rights of the foetus at that point=because it is  
 182 [capable of living independently of a woman it com]petes with 183  
 JH: [it overtakes the right of the woman alright so let's ]  
 184 EH: the [rights of a woman]  
 185 JH: [competes alright ] competes with some would say  
 186 overtake obviously but let's le yeh er the viability  
 187 ques[tion] Professor

Extract 9.11 is from the *advocacy* news interview between Evan Harris (EH) and Stuart Campbell (SC). It was broadcast just prior to the vote on whether to reduce the upper time limit for late abortion. On line 152, Evan Harris deliberately interrupts the sequence of questions and answers between Stuart Campbell and John Humphrys (JH). It is apparent from previous talk that Evan Harris intends to vote to retain the status quo. He talks of the 'very distressing circumstances' (line 140-1) and 'life catastrophes' (line 141) that some women face late in their pregnancy, that late abortions amount to 'less than two per cent of abortions' (lines 136-7) and that it is important to 'preserve access' to late abortions for those women (line 143). Stuart Campbell then goes onto query the reasons behind the decision to terminate in these cases, asserting that 'none was done for the mother's life' (line 147). On line 149, Humphrys asks Stuart Campbell why had the abortions been carried out? Stuart Campbell replies that they were done for 'social reasons' (line 150). Humphrys begins to respond to this answer, but Evan Harris interrupts on line 152 questioning what Stuart Campbell means by 'social reasons'. However, Stuart Campbell continues with his answer. Because Humphrys did not intervene on his behalf, on line 155, Evan Harris questions Stuart Campbell directly about his definition of the term and puts forward scenarios that do not come under the 'rather trite classification' (line 164) of social reasons.

To challenge an interviewee about what he or she thinks in such a manner is, according to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 66), a face-threatening act. But perhaps there are some issues that are too important for an interviewee to remain polite. The face-threatening act in this case, indicates that Evan Harris thinks that Stuart Campbell is wrong, misguided or being unreasonable about the issue of what constitutes 'social reasons'; social reasons imply a lifestyle choice as opposed to unexpected and potentially devastating incidents that occur in women's lives. However, the

consequence of performing the face-threatening act is that the turn-taking system breaks down within the news interview; both interviewees breaching and interrupting turn constructions. The remainder of the extract is littered with overlapping talk, making it very difficult for the audience to hear what the two interviewees are saying.

**Extract 9.12: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 0750**

89 .hh what the scientific community is concerned about is not the  
90 spiritual authority of bishops or cardinals .hh it's the factual  
91 → evidence on which they base their assertions=l'm very  
92 → surprised to hear .hh Clifford say that capturing headlines can  
93 → be as it were an excuse for exaggeration particularly when tha  
94 → that exaggeration might be influencing  
95 → [a decision a national decision ]  
96 CL: → [er (inaudible) not quite what I said]  
97 CQ: alright le let's move away from the headlines er because we

(some lines omitted)

105 CB: (1.7) well I I think the progress of medical research in the last  
106 twenty or thirty years is the evidence um that er tech  
107 techniques and the introduction of techniques which are .hh  
108 initially surprising=let's not forget the reaction to organ  
109 transplantation  
110 CL: → [mm]  
111 CB: [re]member the headlines then now now treated as you know  
112 an everyday m m m m medical m m miracle er these are these  
113 are shifting er definitions and the public I think if you look at  
114 → the results of the polls .hh accept that=l think one thing that  
115 → the Cardinals should be asking is .hh wh what advice will they  
116 → be giving to their congregations if and when these techniques  
117 → do generate the cures that we all hope that they will do=that  
118 → they should be avoided because of the techniques that we use  
119 → to produce them  
120 CQ: [inaudible]  
121 CL: → [inaudible] that is that's a difficult question erm and you're right  
122 → to ask it and I also welcome the (.) very sober tone in which  
123 → you're (.) proposing this conversation that  
124 → happened=Incidentally I'm not having the conversation I'm  
125 → if you like commenting on what I thought might happen if you  
126 → did have it  
127 CQ: hhh alright  
128 CL: .hh hhh it does seem to me the case that the Catholics have  
129 got a gen a genuine point that's widely .hh echoed in the  
130 public at large=the opposition to this proposal is by no means  
131 confined to Catholics=there a lot of people on both sides of the  
132 political spectrum who .hh are extremely uneasy about what's  
133 proposed and I think that makes me think the scientists have  
134 not deployed the argument very well so far that doesn't mean  
135 to say they can't and I the idea of dialogue is quite a good one  
136 → .hh can I just make a point to Professor Blakemore .hh it  
137 → seems to me that when he or shall we say someone engaged

138 → in this research .hh looks down a microscope at these cells  
 139 → early embryo cells .hh they see a ball of tissue that's all they  
 140 → see whereas someone .hh coming from the other perspective  
 141 → particularly someone with faith whether they're Catholic or  
 142 → Sikh or whatever .hh looks down that same microscope  
 143 → .hh they see that ball of tissue but they also see a human  
 144 → being .hh and that is a fundamental difference of perspective  
 145 → .hh and I don't see how dialogue is going to bridge that gap=  
 146 CQ: =alright so do you see human life or just a bunch of cells?  
 147 CB: .hh er I think human life is very much more than simply a  
 148 bunch of cells=without a nervous system .hh an individual  
 149 .hh whose brain has grown .hh who's had experiences  
 150 knowledge of the world .hh becomes a human being=for that  
 151 reason I'm afraid I mean I I  
 152 [personally don't ] accept the definition of a  
 153 CL: → [inaudible - but what is it at the start]  
 154 CB: → human being [inaudible fertilisation]  
 155 CL: → [well how by conversation] can we can we close  
 156 → that gap because it seems to me to be a very wide one  
 157 CB: → .hh well the of course what's being proposed in the bill er the  
 158 creation of cybrids .hh it doesn't use human embryos=I mean I  
 159 think so somethings been missed in this discussion is that  
 160 these techniques will actually reduce the demand for human  
 161 eggs .hh and embryos .hh wh what's proposed in the in the  
 162 hybrid cybrid section of the .hh er legislation is the generation  
 163 of embryo like cells from fusing adult nuclei to genetic material  
 164 from (.) human beings .hh with empty animal cells instead of  
 165 using human cells  
 166 CQ: well Professor Colin Blakemore and Clifford Longley we have  
 167 to end it there it's just the start (.) as we know of this  
 168 discussion=  
 169 CB: =of a discussion I hope=  
 170 CQ: =It will [continue]  
 171 CB: [yes ]  
 172 CQ: thanks very much

The next example is taken from the same *advocacy* interview, contained in extract 9.1, between Colin Blakemore (CB) and Clifford Longley (CL). It is the only news interview in the sample, where an interviewee deliberately sets out to use the strategy of attacking the other interviewee's face. The aggressive use of a face-threatening act in this manner demonstrates the participant's refusal to act politely and to attend to the other participant's positive face (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 67). It is linked to the notion of scoring points over your adversary and is a risky strategy to adopt, because if the strategy goes wrong, the aggressor can find himself or herself in the position of losing face. If, on the other hand, the other participating interviewee within the *advocacy* news interview allows the aggressor to get away with the tactic, then the aggressor demonstrates that they are the better adversary.

There is no evidence within the news interview itself as to why Colin Blakemore chose to adopt the strategy of “blatant non-co-operation” in terms of Clifford Longley’s face and the ritual of positive politeness with the news interview environment (Brown and Levinson 1987, pp. 66-67). He obviously does not fear retribution from Clifford Longley. However, there may be another reason why he adopts this risky strategy. Prior to the HFEA 2008 being debated in Parliament, a highly organised “coalition” was formed to convince policy makers and the public of the need for hybrid embryo research (Williams and Gavejic. 2013, p. 511). This coalition included leading scientists from the field, research councils and funding bodies such as the Medical Research Council (MRC). A PR campaign was coordinated for the coalition by the Science Media Centre (SMC) with a planned media strategy in response to the Bill, including fortnightly press briefings and the specific aim of connecting journalists with “media-friendly” scientists (Williams and Gavejic. 2013, p. 512). The strategy also involved media training giving advice to scientists to stop being “obsessed” with trying to impress fellow researchers and to pursue tactics and strategies that maximised messages directed towards the audience (Science Media Centre, undated). It is not possible to determine from the interaction how instrumental Colin Blakemore was in this media strategy or whether indeed he received media training from the SMC, but he was Chief Executive of the MRC when the coalition was formed at the end of 2006 and was also involved in encouraging discussions between scientists and members of the Catholic clergy around the time that the news interview was broadcast (BBC 2008b).

Although Colin Blakemore’s strategy within this *advocacy* interview is to attack Clifford Longley’s face, he commences his participation in the news interview with a face-saving device. This occurs on lines 85-88 and is documented in extract 9.1 of this chapter. However by line 91, it becomes clear why Colin Blakemore used such a tactic. Goffman (1967, p. 25) suggests that the introduction of a favourable fact by a speaker about himself or herself is not an uncommon tactic when it is followed with an unfavourable fact about an adversary. Therefore, this face-saving device is the precursor to the subsequent face-threatening act on Clifford Longley.

On line 91, Colin Blakemore (incorrectly) reformulates Clifford Longley’s prior answer to Carolyn Quinn (CQ), accusing him of welcoming remarks made by Cardinal Keith O’Brien and the fact that the remarks had managed to gain media headlines ‘I’m very surprised to hear Clifford say that capturing headlines can be as it were an excuse for exaggeration particularly when that exaggeration might be influencing a national decision’ (lines 92-5). Colin Blakemore’s comment makes an allusion to the moral

respectability of Clifford Longley and thus, directly threatens his face. Clifford Longley has little choice but to interrupt Colin Blakemore with 'not quite what I said' on line 96, in order to save his own face and dispute the charge. This exclamation from Clifford Longley breaches the turn-taking system in the process.

On line 97, Quinn takes control of the breach, trying to deflect attention away from the news headlines 'let's move the discussion away from the headlines' and towards the specific techniques used in hybrid embryo research and what they might achieve. Colin Blakemore does not directly answer the accusations contained in the question, choosing instead to make the link to a similar public reaction in the late 1960s to the first organ transplants. This he describes as 'evidence' on line 106. At this point, Clifford Longley interrupts Colin Blakemore with the continuer '*mm*' on line 76, which demonstrates the encouragement of speaker continuation (Greatbatch 1988, pp. 97-98).

The presence of this continuer (and another breach in the turn-taking system) should be seen within the context of the aggressive use of face-work in Colin Blakemore's previous answer on lines 91-95. Clifford Longley is using the continuer as a politeness device, in order to overcome Colin Blakemore's previous aggression. The continuer expresses affiliation towards Colin Blakemore and has the effect of claiming common ground between the two men. However, Colin Blakemore ignores the continuer, instead summoning widely held beliefs by the 'public' (line 113) and the 'result of polls' (line 114) to make the point that there has been a shift in the response to the 'everyday medical miracle' of organ transplantation (lines 112).

A further anomaly occurs within his answer on lines 114-119. Colin Blakemore effectively takes over the role of interviewer, putting a question to Clifford Longley about whether 'the Cardinals' (line 115) will tell their congregations to avoid the 'cures' (line 117) generated by the current research. Using the phrase 'we all hope that they will do' (line 117) to emphasise the potential cures of this research. By using the collective pronoun 'we', he summons the notion that this is not just his view, but one that is held by a significant group of people.

The views articulated by Colin Blakemore in this sequence are not uncommon among scientists and medical practitioners. For instance, his reiteration of the fears expressed by opponents of the first organ transplants is an approach recognised by Mulkey (1993). He argues that new scientific achievements are often met with initial disapproval and that this attitude is commonly cited by proponents of medical research

as representing their opponents' failure to "appreciate the good that must eventually follow" (Mulkey 1993, p. 727). Then, in what appears to be the use of an "escape clause", whereby scientists invoke the potential to cure even though they are not able to predict the availability of treatments resulting from research, Colin Blakemore utters the phrases 'if and when' on line 116 (Kitzinger and Williams 2005, p. 738).

Quinn tries to interrupt at this point on line 120. However, at the same time, Clifford Longley overlaps her interruption with his own response to Colin Blakemore's question; further demonstrating that this sequence is a serious breach of the turn-taking system. The news interview has moved into a highly confrontational phase, where interviewees are responding to each other directly, rather than through the interviewer as a third party (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 317). Clifford Longley claims that this is a difficult question to answer, but that he welcomes the conversation that Colin Blakemore is proposing. However, on line 124, he resorts to a similar face-saving device to that used by Colin Blakemore used in his initial answer on line 85. Here Clifford Longley says that he is 'not having the conversation I'm if you like commenting on it' (line 124). In using this device, Clifford Longley deflects responsibility for the views that he is expressing. This is an attempt to suggest that he is not personally involved in the conversation, but is only commenting on the conversation as an expert. Quinn reacts to this face-saving device with a brief laugh followed by an assessment token 'alright' on line 127. Clifford Longley then copies her laugh on line 128. Partington (2006, p. 233) argues that laughter is often used in the management of aggression and tension and can be found when a face-threatening act has occurred. Laughter helps to repair such situations (Partington 2006, p. 92). In this instance, CQ laughs in affiliation with Clifford Longley supporting his attempt to save his face. Clifford Longley's laugh is an awareness of his own delicate position and paves the way for a return to normality. He then attempts to distance himself from personal criticism using a third party phrase 'the Catholics' (line 128) to suggest that there is a genuine point here. He then summons the same widely held views as Colin Blakemore does in his previous answer 'the public at large' (line 130) to argue that there are a lot of people on all sides of the political spectrum who are unhappy with the Bill and the techniques that will be made legal.

After this point, Clifford Longley relies upon the same aggressive face-work that Colin Blakemore used previously on lines 91-5 and 114-9. Having favourably cast himself as a commentator on the conversation, Clifford Longley then attacks Colin Blakemore's face, in order to show him in an unfavourable light. However, Clifford Longley stops short of hijacking the turn-taking system as Colin Blakemore previously did on lines 91-

5. Instead he makes a third party point concerning Colin Blakemore, but expresses it through Quinn. Firstly, he tries to overtly shift the agenda by asking 'can I just make a point to Professor Blakemore' (line 136) before commenting that the fundamental difference between them is that, when Colin Blakemore looks down a microscope, 'he or shall we say someone engaged in this research' (lines 137-8) sees a 'ball of tissue' (line 139), whereas those coming from the 'other perspective' (line 140) looking down the same microscope see a 'human being' (lines 143-4). He then emphasises that this distinction is a fundamental one and that dialogue will not 'bridge the gap' (line 145).

Williams et al. (2003) studied media reporting of embryo research around the time of the Donaldson Report in 2000 and highlighted the ways in which the embryo (or pre-embryo) was used to substitute for human characteristics through the use of visualisation techniques. According to Williams et al. (2003, p. 801), the proponents of embryo research used images of the magnification of 'balls of cells' in their arguments in order to emphasise the "non-personhood of the embryo and its lack of consciousness or feeling". Thus Clifford Longley's comment is an evocation of that found by Williams et al.

On line 146, Quinn reformulates Clifford Longley's point as a question to Colin Blakemore 'do you see human life or just a bunch of cells'. Colin Blakemore hedges the answer by saying that human life is more than 'simply a bunch of cells' (line 147-8). He begins to explain that his definition of a human being suggests a nervous system, a brain and 'experiences knowledge of the world' (line 149-50). However, Clifford Longley turns the table on Colin Blakemore's aggressive face-work and breaches the turn-taking system himself, interrupting Colin Blakemore twice. He asks the question 'but what is it at the start' on line 153. Before Colin Blakemore has the chance to answer, Clifford Longley interrupts again on line 155 asking another question to Colin Blakemore on how gap between the two perspectives can be closed, as it appears to be 'a very wide one' (line 156). As with Colin Blakemore on lines 114-9, Clifford Longley has now taken over the role of interviewer. Once more, the news interview has become very confrontational with the two men arguing between themselves.

However, Colin Blakemore ignores these two last interruptions and continues his point. On line 157 he shifts the agenda, claiming that 'somethings been missed in this discussion' (line 159) and that there has been a misunderstanding in the process of how hybrid embryos are created. He claims that human embryos are not used in the creation of cybrids 'it doesn't use human embryos' (line 158) and that these techniques will reduce the demand for human eggs. He explains that the proposed techniques

generate 'embryo like cells' (line 163) from 'fusing adult nuclei to genetic material from human beings with empty animal cells instead of using human cells' (lines 164-5). Colin Blakemore's description here is of cytoplasmic or admixed embryos; he calls them 'cybrids' on line 158. This is where human cells are mixed with animal embryos. Neither Clifford Longley nor Carolyn Quinn attempts to enter into the discussion at this point. Indeed, Quinn moves to close the news interview on line 166, claiming 'we have to end it there'.

The closing to the news interview demonstrates further resistance by Colin Blakemore. Quinn moves to close the interview with a name check and the pay-off 'it's just the start as we know of this discussion'. However, this appears to encourage two further interruptions by Colin Blakemore on lines 169 and 171, in which he emphasises that he hopes there will be a discussion on the matter. Not only does this demonstrate his resistance to the closing, but it can be seen as a face-saving device to encourage further discussion and to show himself in a good light. Quinn finally manages to terminate the interview on line 172.

Extracts 9.11 and 9.12 demonstrate what happens when one or more of the interviewees use aggressive face-work. Although the face-threatening acts that occurred in each of the examples were for different reasons, the consequences on the structure of the news interview were the same. The face-threatening acts encouraged numerous breaches in the underlying turn-taking system of the news interview. In both cases, the interviewers lose control. In the case of extract 9.11 and John Humphrys, this was for a short section of the news interview and the interruptions by Stuart Campbell and Evan Harris made it difficult for the audience to hear what was going on. In the case of extract 9.12 and Carolyn Quinn, Colin Blakemore and Clifford Longely's breaches on the turn-taking system meant that she effectively lost control for most of the news interview; Colin Blakemore breaching the system up until the end.

### ***9.5 Summary***

The findings in this chapter demonstrate how the management of face is a key consideration to interviewees when answering questions. The desire to maintain a positive public image means that interviewees want to answer the questions put to them by the interviewer. Evidence contained in the examples above demonstrate that, when an interviewee is able to answer a question and agree with the viewpoint contained within it, they answer immediately in a straightforward and direct manner. However, the adversarial nature of most news interviews puts pressure on the

likelihood of interviewees being able to agree with the viewpoints expressed by the interviewer. In such adversarial encounters, answering becomes problematic and the disagreement that ensues has the potential to reflect badly on the positive face of the interviewee. Examples within the chapter also demonstrate that when interviewees are not able to agree with the viewpoints contained within the questions, they have at their disposal a range of strategies and devices that can be used to mitigate the fact that they disagree or cannot answer the question. In these circumstances, it is easy to see how the avoidance of disagreement can make the interviewee sound as though they are evading the question.

Interviewees who appear in *advocacy* news interviews have the added dimension of having to negotiate interaction with other interviewees too. In these news interviews, not only do interviewees have to maintain their own face, but they also are obliged to consider the other interviewee's positive face. Findings in this chapter show how interviewees avoid outright disagreement through the adoption of politeness strategies. These strategies help lessen the impact of any potential disagreement. However, there are interviewees who chose to disregard face and commit face-threatening acts on the other interviewee participating within the news interviews. The findings from the sample suggest that when interviewees perform these acts, for whatever reason, the news interview turn-taking system falls apart quickly and the interviewer struggles to control the situation. Thus demonstrating that the turn-taking system constructed for an overhearing audience, where interviewees direct their answers through the interviewer, only works when interviewees adhere to the rituals of positive politeness.

The need to attend to positive face and enact politeness strategies, in order to lessen the impact of a face-threatening act, highlights how the promotion of conflict and antagonism in *accountability* and *advocacy* news interviews could be viewed as counter productive. Although some interviewees are happy to be adversarial, the majority of interviewees strive to avoid outright disagreement. According to Jucker (1986, p. 61), although it was felt by interviewers that disagreements between them and interviewees produced more interesting and entertaining news interviews, he argues it is difficult to judge how much the audience actually appreciates disagreement. This is because, in the news interviews where the structure quickly breaks down, the audience finds it difficult to distinguish overlapping talk or hear the arguments put forward. Committing face-threatening acts as a strategy simply encourages further point scoring by those involved. Consequently, this will have an impact on the quality of the information provided to the audience.

## Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter begins with a summary from each of my empirical findings chapters, before considering how my work contributes to the scholarship outlined in the earlier literature review chapters. This specifically relates to the relationship between the media and the public, the HFEA 2008 and biological citizenship. After that, I examine some of the limitations of Conversation Analysis as a method. I then finish by offering some practical recommendations based on my findings and then finish this chapter by outlining potential areas for future research.

### ***10.1 Summary of key findings***

Chapter 6 presented findings from the broadcast dates of the news interviews. Results demonstrated three intense reporting periods, signalling a strong connection to the political processes, procedures and voting divisions of the House of Commons. All news interviews focused exclusively on either the mechanics of the Bill or voting itself. This meant that the visibility and the workings of the House of Commons were highlighted.

The chapter also presented findings of the types of voices heard to participate in the news interviews, providing a snapshot of the sources granted access to the programme. Findings point to a dependence on Westminster politicians within the sample, but in terms of political allegiances, there was little difference between the two main parties. However, the minority parties and their viewpoints were not represented within the news interviews on the HFEA 2008.

Another finding highlighted the gendered nature of the news interviews and a skew towards male voices. For instance, none of the news interviews conducted on the 'hybrid embryo' debate contained a female interviewee. Other findings demonstrate that men dominated the single interviewee *accountability* news interviews, thus indicating that men were more likely to be in positions of accountability where the news interviews were concerned. Women fared better in terms of the *advocacy* news interviews, but their participation in these demonstrated that women were more likely to come from activist groups and fertility organisations rather than be in positions of authority.

Chapter 7 presented findings from the analysis of the opening and closing sequences of the news interviews. It was noted that the headlines to each of the

individual elements of the HFEA 2008 demonstrated differences as to how the story was framed. These differences also coincided with the three distinct reporting timeframes. The headlines within the first reporting timeframe around Easter 2008 framed the 'hybrid embryo' debate in terms of a religious context and a 'clash' between the Government and the Catholic Church. In the two remaining timeframes, the headlines mainly centred on the results of voting intentions. However, a further framing was detected on the 'abortion' vote. Here an emphasis was placed on the idea that, subsequent to the 2010 general election, the numbers of MPs who voted against the amendment would potentially be in the majority. Thus, a further political dimension was added to the framing of the debate in terms of future party political allegiances and voting intentions within the House of Commons.

A further set of findings relate to the different categories of news interviews found within the sample. The majority were categorised as *advocacy* interviews, which demonstrated that the *Today* programme had a preference for this type of news interview. The second most popular category was the *accountability* interview. The interviewees who participated in these were predominantly MPs or public figures. Within some of these news interviews, audio actuality of MPs with opposing views had been added into the opening sequences. This actuality was used to promote disagreement within lines of questioning and the inclusion of this actuality provides further evidence that the programme prefers having more than one interviewee to represent opposing arguments, primarily so that the interviewer can bolster their position as neutral arbitrator of the ensuing debate.

The findings in chapter 8 demonstrate that, in order to execute their responsibilities, interviewers on the programme are dependent on a range of devices that constitutes a normative framework. This framework reveals how they manage "neutralism" (Clayman 1992, p. 194). Within *accountability* news interviews, findings demonstrated that interviewers routinely used a device called a "formulation" (Heritage 1985, p. 104) whereby the opinions of interviewees were included in a subsequent follow-up question. In *advocacy* interviews with two interviewees, disagreement was easier to encourage and findings show that interviewers used the same device, but also incorporated the opinions of co-interviewees into next questions, which had the effect of fostering disagreement.

Where contentious issues occurred, interviewers formulated the opinions of third parties too, in order to deflect responsibility for these views. As opinions and issues grew more contentious, interviewers relied more heavily on these opinions. Findings

demonstrate that a 'sliding scale' exists between *who* the interviewers cited and levels of contentiousness. For low levels of controversy, interviewers used pronouns to stand in for a third party. Then came the citation of groups of people and their views. Where highly contentious opinions were being used, a specific individual is cited. The device of citing third parties was found to make the expression of contentious opinions more credible and provide the interviewer with legitimacy for their line of questioning.

Another device was specifically found in the sample concerning the highly contentious issues of 'abortion' and the 'hybrid embryo' debate. This was the device known as "tribune of the people" (Clayman and Heritage 2002, p. 171), where the interviewer invokes the public in order to hold interviewees to account for their viewpoints and decisions. In the majority of cases, it was used on MPs and leading scientists. The device enabled the interviewer to acquire a populist stance and align themselves with the audience. Use of this device suggests a highly adversarial encounter.

The findings in Chapter 9 demonstrate a set of social practices within answers akin to the normative framework found within questions. These centred on the concept of "face" (Goffman 1967, p. 5) and the fact that interviewees needed to maintain a positive image of themselves, as well as the people, groups and organisations they represent. Interviewees had to find ways to manage this situation and findings from the sample demonstrate a range of devices interviewees used in order to, not only maintain their own face, but uphold the face of their opponents too. This includes examples where the use of this device went wrong and where interviewees had to adopt some form of remedial action.

The chapter also contains evidence of strategies used by interviewees to align themselves to a position that could be heard as the sign of an agreement. Findings demonstrate that, for most of the time, interviewees prefer to agree. When they can answer a question straightforwardly, they do so quickly and without delay. Not agreeing is seen as a face threatening act and a dispreferred response. Interviewees had at their disposal a series of politeness strategies in order to accomplish disagreement. In the sample, examples were found of a 'well ... but' construction, along with delays, hedges and mitigations.

Finally, the chapter presented findings on what happens when interviewees chose to disregard positive politeness strategies and the consequences this had on

interaction. These mainly centre on the detrimental effects to the turn-taking system. For instance, interviewees began to direct comments at each other, rather than through the interviewer, meaning that the interviewer effectively lost control of the interaction, either temporarily or for the remainder of the news interview. This often made it extremely hard for the audience to hear what was going on. A further consequence of this point scoring was that it affected the quality of information being broadcast, as interviewees felt it necessary to attack each other's credentials or, conversely, to be put in the position of having to defend themselves.

## **10.2 A review of key concepts**

The purpose of this section is to revisit the concepts that were used to underpin this research and to reflect on how my findings contribute to existing literature. It does this by considering the original aim of the research, which was to investigate the interaction in the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008. However, a further set of questions underpinned the analysis of the news interviews. These were:

- In terms of the features of interaction, how do the news interviews on the *Today* programme invoke the public?
- What core democratic functions do the news interviews perform?
- What do the news interviews reveal about the HFEA 2008?

### **10.2.1 Constructing the public within interaction**

This research contributes to existing literature through the in-depth analysis of the features contained within the interaction of the news interviews on the *Today* programme and how devices found within the interaction invoked the public. The significance of this analysis is in terms of how it contributes to existing theories surrounding the concept of deliberative democracy and whether evidence exists of the public being able to hear the deliberations of a diversity of opinions on the programme. Secondly, it contributes towards the idea that *Today*, as part of the programming output of a public sector broadcaster, is implicated in the survival of the modern public sphere by allowing citizens to be involved in the formation of public opinion on the HFEA 2008.

It is clear that the public is at the heart of the news interviews on the *Today* programme and that, with this public in mind, structural features have been developed over time. However, this 'public' is a social construction only; one that is realised dynamically and dialogically within the moment-by-moment interaction that takes place between the interviewer and the interviewee/s. This means that, on the *Today* programme, the public is the third participant of a tripartite relationship in the form of the "overhearing" audience (Heritage 1985, p. 100) and it is in this sense that all the tasks accomplished within the interaction of the news interviews are done on behalf of the audience through "indirect recipient address" (Thompson 1995, p. 102).

Because of its relationship with the listening public, the news interview has become an institutional practice within the *Today* programme and a specific set of devices and roles have developed out of the necessity to conform to rules derived within PSB. For instance, the fact that the interaction has three distinct segments in the form of an opening, a closing and question and answer sequences demonstrates that it has a structure geared towards keeping the public informed at particular moments during the news interview. In addition, the turn-taking system, the lack of third turn receipts found within normal conversation and the fact that participants refer to themselves and each other in the third person, provides further evidence that the news interview on the *Today* programme is an institutional practice.

If the news interviews construct a social space in which the public is said to exist, then the interviewers or presenters of the programme are the managers of that space, directing the dialogue and outcome of the news interviews towards the listening public. This role derives from institutional requirements, akin to those placed on the interaction within the news interviews. The first of these comes from the routines of journalism itself and the pressures journalists are put under to adhere to notions of balance and fairness, neutrality and objectivity. These notions are also core concerns of PSB and, under this requirement, the *Today* programme would fail to act on behalf of the public unless it provided non-partisan information to its listeners. In order to fulfil these, the news interviews on the programme demonstrate a range of devices and features, controlled by the interviewer, which point to the essential requirement that he or she maintains a neutral posture at all times. For instance, the existence of shifts in footing highlight the fact that the primary recipients of the news interviews are the overhearing public, rather than the participants of the news interviews. The public was also invoked with the use of

other devices. These came in the form of third party citations, where opinions could be attributed to people other than the interviewer and/or interviewee.

Another feature linked to the dissemination of a variety of opinions, came in the form of *advocacy* interviews. The preference for this type of news interview where the broadcasting of the HFEA 2008 was concerned, allowed the interviewer to effectively manage neutrality by acting as a referee in a sparring match. *Advocacy* interviews affected the *Today* interviewers' line of questioning, as they were able to formulate the opinions of the interviewee/s into the design of questions. This also had the effect of promoting a range of opinions too. A similar tactic features in the programme's *accountability* interviews, where opposing voices of MPs were included as actuality within openings; again promoting a difference of opinions. Although all of these devices were used by the interviewers of the news interviews, the fact that the interviewees responded to the opinions contained within them, additionally demonstrates that neutrality on the *Today* programme is a joint construction between the interviewer and the interviewee and is, therefore, an institutional routine of the programme.

This is significant in respect of Thompson's "deliberative democracy" (1995, p. 255) and the importance of media in the dissemination of ideas within a public space. There was evidence within the news interviews of the public being able to hear deliberations, along with some diversity of opinions, even if these were often through the use of institutional devices by the programme. What is more difficult to ascertain is whether these deliberations constituted participation by the public, or any subsequent formation of public opinion, as mandated in the ideas surrounding the survival of the modern public sphere. In terms of the involvement of the public and the formation of opinion, only one of the news interviews had participants that could be classed as 'members of the public' and these were heard to describe their experiences regarding one of the divisions, that of late term abortion. Other than this news interview, public opinion was invoked through the use of the device tribune of the people.

The majority of the use of this device came in news interviews that were highly adversarial in nature: those concerning the 'hybrid embryo' and 'abortion' debates. Here, the device legitimated and made credible certain lines of questioning adopted by the interviewers. It also encouraged the interviewees, on which the device was used, to answer questions being put to them. The device was used on elites, and in particular politicians, to hold them accountable for their decisions and points of view

and was invoked specifically when contentious issues were being discussed. Not only that, but as the issues within the news interviews became more contentious, the interviewer was heard to directly ventriloquise the public's responses to viewpoints. However in all cases, the interviewer invokes the public's response in order to bolster a particular line of argument they are pursuing and to maintain their own neutrality in the discussion and there is no evidence to suggest that the interviewers were really aware of what people thought about the issues contained in the HFEA 2008. This point provides an important insight into the public purposes of the BBC as a public sector broadcaster. Whilst it might encourage conversation and debate within its news and current affairs programming, this research demonstrates that the formation of public opinion, along with the broadcasting of public opinions on the HFEA 2008, did not take place on *Today* programme. This is important omission for a number of reasons. Firstly, because the programme has a particularly influential role on the news agenda and is cited as being instrumental in the broadcasting of science (Hargreaves et al., 2003, p. 7). Secondly, although the programme is one of the highest contributors to science reporting on the BBC (Mellor et al., 2011, p. 15), there are a number of listeners who only listen to the *Today* programme. If this is the case, then the listeners who switch off at the end of the programme will not hear other output on *BBC Radio 4* where scientific issues are discussed, perhaps in more depth (BBC Trust, 2011b, p. 62).

### ***10.2.2 Democratic functions within the news interviews***

The previous section explained how the public is socially constructed within the interaction of the news interviews of the *Today* programme. This construction is partially achieved through the existence of an overhearing audience. Tasks contained within the news interviews and the devices used by participants further help to instantiate the public through interaction. However, this research also contributes to other concepts raised in Chapter 2 – A review of the Literature on the Relationship between the Media and the Public. In particular, how PSB has become implicated in the survival of the public sphere. Modern democracy emphasises the idea that the opinions of every citizen is important within decision-making processes. The programme is implicated in this concept through mediated interaction and the social construction of a listening public. In order to facilitate the formation of public opinion, programme content should encourage the intelligent debate of issues that affect society. With this in mind, this section deals with how the news interviews performed core democratic functions expected of a PSB.

Deliberative democracy requires that the workings of government, and how decisions are arrived at, are made visible within the public arena. This is because it is assumed that visibility makes governments accountable to citizens. Coupled with this is the idea that the public acquires information from the media regarding the deliberations of these decisions. Through this notion, the *Today* programme has the responsibility to provide access to the type of dialogue that would normally be found in face-to-face dialogue and it is this responsibility that is enshrined in the BBC's public purpose of "sustaining citizenship and civil society" (BBC 2010a). In particular, two of the sub-clauses contained within that public purpose. These are:

- Build greater understanding of the parliamentary process and political institutions governing the UK;
- Encourage conversation and debate about news, current affairs and topical issues.

In terms of building a greater understanding of the parliamentary process, there is no doubt that the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008 provided visibility and, to some extent, transparency of the workings of government in that they closely followed the Bill's progress through Parliament. However, it is apparent that the programme concentrated almost exclusively on the voting phases of the Bill in the House of Commons and that the committee stages were largely ignored, along with most of the debate in the House of Lords. Neither was there any information or discussion regarding the committees and consultations that took place prior to the Bill being presented to Parliament. It also assumed that listeners understood the mechanisms of Parliament, how a Bill progressed through to Royal Assent and what happened at each stage.

There is evidence to suggest that, to some extent, the news interviews provided the means by which those in power were made accountable for their decisions concerning the HFEA 2008 and this aids notions of transparency. Although high-ranking politicians within the Government were not participants of the news interviews per se, their opinions were either often referred to or their voices were heard within the interaction. Additionally, the existence of *accountability* interviews as a category of news interview meant that the MPs who did agree to appear within the news interviews, along with the Chair of the regulator of the HFEA 2008, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), were heard as being held accountable by the *Today* programme for the passing of the Bill and the repercussions this potentially had on citizens.

Another factor in the relationship between the media and the public concerns the right of citizens to be involved in the formation of public opinion and political decision-making. The interviewees who participated in the news interviews on the HFEA 2008 were mainly MPs and other elites within society and, therefore, the sample did not demonstrate the multiplicity of views demanded by deliberative democracy and the public purposes of the BBC. There was very little evidence that this democratic function was apparent other than through the implicit use of tribune of the people. It has already been stated that the one of the primary functions of this device is to bolster particular views when interviewers mount contentious lines of questioning and that this device is used to invoke the idea that public opinion exists on controversial issues. In terms of the HFEA 2008 however, this public opinion was always expressed as apprehensiveness and anxiety over biomedical techniques.

The question of whose interests PSB serves: the state's or the public's was another issue raised in chapter 2. Here questions surround what the application of normative theories of democracy to the sample can reveal about the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme. In particular, who participated in them and what styles of discourse they employed within the interaction. The news interviews pointed to the fact that interviewees who participated on the *Today* programme were closest to the normative theory of the representative liberal democratic tradition. According to this tradition, citizen participation in deliberation is not thought to be crucial to the proper functioning of the public sphere. Instead, elites act as conduits on behalf of the public and represent the different interests that exist within society. Where the interviewees participating within the news interviews on the HFEA 2008 were concerned, state officials and party political personnel dominated. Other than that, representatives of established religious groups and experts (in the form of scientists, medical experts, ethicists and legal experts) made up the remainder of the interviewees. This is equivalent to the elite representation found within the liberal democratic tradition.

In terms of the style of discourse contained within the news interview, the application of a normative theory of democracy was at times less certain. The question here revolved around the issue of civility within debate. In representative liberal theory, debates are conducted rationally and civilly; non-civil and emotive ways of speaking are discouraged. Analysis of the news interviews indicates that the debating model contained within the public space of the *Today* programme is

based on an adversarial one. Therefore, where the style of discourse is concerned, again there is equivalence to the representative liberal democratic tradition.

The programme fostered debate through the preference for *advocacy* interviews, where two interviewees were expected to debate issues concerning the HFEA 2008. Although *advocacy* interviews do provide the public with the opportunity to listen to the deliberation of the issues contained within the news interviews, the prevalence of situations where interviewees are actively encouraged to compete with each other has a negative effect on the interactional content of this debate. It means that understanding is only achieved through the interviewee's ability to strongly argue their case. Also, when the turn-taking system broke down, the debate became uncivil and sometimes personal.

Some of the interviewees who participated in this category of news interview demonstrated a reluctance to openly debate with either the interviewer or their fellow interviewees. This is particularly noticeable in the news interviews where women participated as interviewees. This points to the fact that women employ different strategies within interaction, including overt politeness and other potentially gendered ways of talking, indicating that women are more supportive co-participants within interaction and that conflict avoidance is not only considered "feminine" but desirable (Holmes 2006, p. 215). Therefore, the environment created within *advocacy* interviews has the potential to discourage speakers who may lack the confidence to contribute to debates and, at the same time, advantages those who have been trained in the public model of adversarial sparring. Thus, the promotion of adversarialism within the news interviews encourages the domination of those who have more confidence and/or rhetorical skill, indicating that debates within news interviews on the *Today* programme occur on the basis of "receptiveness to the best argument" (Scannell 1989, p. 159). This has implications for the programme concerning the use and efficacy of the *advocacy* interview, along with the practices it also contributes to such discussions. On the basis of who participated in the news interviews and the style of discourse adopted by those participants, this research concludes that deliberation of the HFEA 2008 adhered to the principles of representative liberal democracy. However to some extent the news interviews did fulfil the democratic functions of making visible the workings of government and, at the same time, provided some instances of accountability.

### **10.2.3 What the news interviews reveal about biological citizenship**

My research also contributes to existing literature on new reproductive technologies covered in Chapter 3 – A Review of the Literature Regarding the HFEA 2008 and Biological Citizenship and offers insight into how the news interviews on the *Today* programme reported on the different elements contained in the HFEA 2008. It also contributes to the examination of the concept of biological citizenship and provides a practical example of how this concept is currently configured within one area of the media.

The news interviews tell us that the HFEA 2008 was a statutory mechanism that legalised the individual's responsibility to "exercise biological prudence" in the twenty-first century (Rose 2006, p. 24). However, it was realised through a focus on the pronouncements, procedures and the processes of Parliament. This official framing of the story came at the expense of a wider debate about the issues contained within the Bill. Thus the ethical, legal and social implications surrounding new reproductive technologies, along with the impact these have on biological citizenship, were missing from the news interviews. There is no doubt that the news interviews contributed to the BBC's public purpose of building greater understanding of the parliamentary process, but this political citizenship came at the detriment of biological citizenship. This was due to the fact that, within the news interviews on the *Today* programme, the HFEA was reported chiefly in respect of its political dimensions and that many of the underlying existential questions surrounding new reproductive technologies were absent.

This was particularly evident within the 'hybrid embryo' debate, where the news interviews were framed in terms of either a clash between the Government and the Catholic Church or whether MPs should be allowed the possibility of a free vote on the grounds of conscience. Where ethics and religion were discussed in the news interviews, these were mainly in terms of how MPs with religious convictions were going to vote or centred on the comments made by Cardinal Keith O'Brien. This emphasis on the clash between the Catholic Church and Parliament was at the expense of information regarding the techniques used within the creation of hybrid embryos and this omission raises an important point. Although there was discussion of the fact that hybrid embryos were created from the waste of IVF technologies, and that there was a shortage of embryos for research purposes, there was no adequate definition, for instance, of a 'hybrid embryo' or how it is used in the processes of stem cell technologies. Only one of the news interviews concerning the

hybrid embryo debate discussed the processes involved in its creation. This explanation is heard in the news interview broadcast at the time of the vote on the creation of the hybrid embryo for research purposes in the House of Commons where Leszek Borysiewicz outlines cytoplasmic or admixed embryo (the combining of an animal embryo with human cells) and three other processes which use human embryos: transgenic human embryos; chimeras and true 50/50 hybrids.

This lack of sufficient information concerning what constitutes a hybrid embryo raises questions for the *Today* programme. In order for citizens to make judgements about issues concerning society, adequate information has to be provided. This means that citizens have to be subjected to the broadest possible array of arguments and information. Therefore, the lack of a detailed explanation of the scientific methods and processes involved in the creation of hybrid embryos weakened the listeners' understanding of the issue and put into question the quality of the information provided by *Today*. In this respect, the programme could be taken to task over whether it delivered on its purpose of "[p]roviding in-depth explanation of the most significant issues facing the UK" in order to help audiences "make sense of the world" (BBC 2010b).

The research also demonstrated that the news interviews on the *Today* programme were implicated in the concept of the biological citizen and an individual's right to life, health and freedom from disease and the remainder of this section deals with how the news interviews realised this biological citizenship through the processes of: molecularisation; optimisation; subjectification; somatic expertise and economies of vitality (Rose 2006, p. 5).

Firstly, the news interviews concerning the 'hybrid embryo' debate, 'saviour siblings' and 'the child's need for a father' focused on biomedical techniques that utilise the manipulation of human cells. Therefore, the news interviews were complicit in *molecularisation* or biomedicine's preoccupation with the molecular level and the attempt to isolate, engineer and reshape the foundations of human life. In addition to this, all the elements of the HFEA 2008 that were covered in the broadcasting of the news interviews, contained aspects related to the *optimisation* of human beings. The creation of hybrid embryos for research purposes and 'saviour siblings' were directly implicated in this. The 'abortion' debate was indirectly implicated, in terms of the legalisation of late term abortions on the grounds of foetal disability. Similarly, the 'child's need for a father' was indirectly implicated due to the fact that it related to IVF techniques that seek to optimise reproductive health.

However, there was very little discussion in the news interviews as to whether these elements were desirable. Neither was there any discussion of the existence of positive eugenics within the practice of late term abortion on the grounds of disability or in the creation of 'saviour siblings' in order to repair children with existing conditions. The only voice against this was in the news interview with Baroness Masham and her argument that late term abortion should not be legalised on the basis of disability. David Jones used a similar argument in his news interviews, in relation to abortion and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis and the discarding of embryos. Apart from David Burrowes and Josephine Quintavalle, who argued for biomedical scientists to undertake more research into adult stem cells and cord blood banks, all other news interviews accepted the fact that the elimination of embryos with inherited genetic conditions was to be encouraged.

*Subjectification* was largely understood within the notions of family and human kinship ties. Parents (and parental rights) were invoked within the news interviews, but these were not necessarily expressed in terms of families based on heterosexist notions. For instance, although Conservative MPs were interviewed on the 'child's need for the father' and traditional family values, single sex and same sex parents were foregrounded in discussions of IVF treatments within the news interviews. There was also reference to the creation of chimeric or interspecies embryos and issues concerning human/animal boundaries within the news interviews on the 'hybrid embryo' debate. However, these references generally occurred within devices where the interviewer invoked the public's opinion on the matter and reactions to these developments were heard as a worrying trend. Therefore biological citizenship within the news interviews was defined as being based on human kinship. However, the news interviews did not necessarily reproduce "dominant discourses of the family" (Steinberg 1997b, p. 45).

As far as the 'abortion' debate was concerned, subjectification was centred on the rights of the foetus and foetal viability, as opposed to a woman's 'right to choose'. Neither was there discussion of the implications of IVF technologies on gender. Apart from a brief discussion concerning the fact that embryos came from the waste processes of IVF, the news interviews did not discuss where the embryos used within research came from. Similarly, there was no discussion of the women who act as the source material within these processes or who donate their eggs as recipients of IVF treatments: A phenomenon Donna Dickenson terms "the lady vanishes" (2013:18). Nor was there discussion of the *economies of vitality* (Rose

2006, p. 5) and the “biovalue” placed on these raw materials by biotech companies, who profit from such donations (Waldby 2002, p. 310). Thus, the women involved in new reproductive technologies and IVF procedures lacked corporeal existence within the news interviews, appearing only as “boundary figures” in discussions that focus on the vital attributes of the embryo (Haran 2007, p. 94). Further to this point is the fact that the gender ratio of the news interviews is skewed towards men and, thus, men are heard to talk about a subject that is of concern to women. This is not to essentialise women in terms of their reproductive capacities, but female interviewees who were able to speak about the experiences of women within new reproductive technologies were absent from any discussions within the news interviews. It is within such argumentation that *subjectification* took place.

Rose (2006, p. 29) also points to the rise of *somatic expertise* to attend to the biological citizen. Within the news interviews on the *Today* programme, these somatic experts mostly consisted of MPs or members of the House of Lords, which again emphasises the state’s intervention in biological citizenship. However, one of these politicians was a fertility expert (Robert Winston), another a General Practitioner (Evan Harris) and also former nurse (Nadine Dorries). Other than that, somatic expertise within the news interviews were made up of: science academics; fertility and medical experts; lawyers specialising in reproductive law and members of the Catholic Church. Pressure groups were also represented in the form of: the Medical Research Council, Comment On Reproductive Ethics (CORE) and the British Pregnancy Advisory Service. Two of the interviewees were the former and current Chair of the HFEA, and one of the interviewees was a Catholic Bishop. Rose also states that science writers and journalists often accompany these somatic experts. It is noticeable that, other than the interviewers, three BBC correspondents participated within the news interviews and it is within this context that the *Today* programme became part of the expertise of the soma.

### **10.3 Practical recommendations**

From the discussion of key concepts in relation to the findings contained within the sample, this research suggests the following recommendations:

1. That the *Today* programme should consider its reliance on adversarialism within *advocacy* interviews, as this style of interaction does not foster the adequate deliberation of public issues. Interviewees either adopt politeness strategies in order to avoid attacking their opponents’ face or, where

interviewees adopt a deliberately aggressive stance, interaction can break down as a result of point scoring strategies. This occurs at the expense of the genuine discussion of important issues. However, there is a case to say that adversarialism is appropriate in *accountability* interviews where leading public figures and senior government ministers are being taken to task over policy decision-making.

2. That the *Today* programme should consider adopting interview styles that promote a greater understanding of issues and which allow the audience to connect personal problems to wider political questions concerning the structures and institutions of society. This might include giving interviewees more time to explain in depth the implications of their projects and to provide a better supportive discussion of these by the interviewer. Such styles would also aid those interviewees who are not as well equipped to deal with the model of adversarialism found within the sample.
3. That, where future stories concerning new reproductive technologies are concerned, the *Today* programme should consider the impact of scientific biotechnologies regarding biological citizenship, particularly regarding existential questions, and should seek to address such questions within any news interviews conducted on similar topical issues. Furthermore, the programme should aim to provide more background information of the processes involved in IVF techniques, in order to overcome the potential lack of information concerning new reproductive technologies, genetic and biotechnical research.

Although these recommendations emerge from this research and are specifically aimed at the *Today* programme, they are applicable to all broadcasters, whether PSB or not, who rely on news interviews as the dominant format in the production of news and the deliberation of important issues within society.

#### ***10.4 Methodological reflections***

This research used CA as a method to analyse the institutional interaction contained within the news interviews on the *Today* programme. CA has an established methodology that focuses on what tasks are accomplished within interaction and how participants produce meaning on a moment-by-moment basis. It is highly rigorous, depends on empirical data drawn from naturally occurring talk and

provides the researcher with a recognised transcription system. The method is highly suited to the analysis of the kind of interaction contained within the news interviews and the unique constraints found within the broadcasting environment. It also places a further emphasis on the specific goals and tasks achieved by the participants of news interviews, in order to fulfil institutional obligations. Thus, a specific framework was developed in order to analyse the news interviews in terms of their structural organisation. This divided the news interviews into: openings; questions; answers and closings. However, because of the methodological insistence that researchers focus on participants' construction of the social world, there are limitations to its use. This section focuses on research that does not fit into a CA framework, but that could add further insight into the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008.

CA focuses on how meaning is created at the local level of interaction. This means that the method cannot easily explain how unconscious motives, located within the psychological, discursive or ideological, might influence interaction. Such analysis requires the researcher's interpretations of events (along with possibly genealogical tracing of such concepts), but Schegloff (1997, p. 167) describes research with an overt political purpose as "theoretical imperialism". This means that any influences based on the internalisation of gender, class, ethnicity or the ideological, for instance, can only be accounted for using CA if participants themselves specifically orient interaction towards these issues, thus enabling researchers to point to specific instances within the data where this has occurred.

Researchers within the area of discursive psychology and other critical approaches, such as Critical Discourse Analysis and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, argue against this notion believing that social reality is constructed both within interaction and outside of it. They promote the inclusion of research methods that focus on the effects of power and ideologies on interaction. For instance, Norman Fairclough, Roger Fowler and Teun van Dijk have studied a variety of news and other media texts, in order to determine the influence that social inequality has on discourse. (For instance, see Fairclough 1993; Fairclough 1995; Fowler 1991; van Dijk 1988; 1997). Other research conducted by the Glasgow Media Group, similarly investigated media content for evidence of how language within news stories sought to legitimate elite interests and framed stories specifically to favour these interests. This included how discourses found within the content of television news promoted

business interests over those of trades unions in stories regarding industrial disputes (Philo 2007).

To some extent, research conducted on institutional interaction is able to bridge the gap between the discursive and extra-discursive, as it uncovers institutional practices contained within interaction. It also reveals how the institution influences the overall structural organisation and goals of interaction. Institutional interaction still cannot account for the presence of ideological influences, such as gender and class, unless they are specifically located within the interaction. This is because the distinction between what is considered discursive and what is considered extra-discursive is a crucial limitation. However, research based on the extra-discursive, such as that contained in Appendix 2, is achievable within CA and discourse analysis would be able to pick up on the “enunciative modalities” contained within the news interviews on the HFEA 2008 and how they have configured biological citizenship (Fairclough 1993, p. 38). Thus, it is in this sense that this research concurs with Wetherell’s argument (1998, p. 387) that, indeed, it makes “no sense to separate the discursive from the extra-discursive”.

Because of its focus on interaction produced at the local level, neither can CA account for the external strategies that people, companies and organisations deliberately employ in an attempt to influence the output of news and current affairs programmes, such as *Today*. These strategies are found in the tactics used by public relations (PR) companies to get stories aired and their clients into the news. These types of organisations also wage media campaigns to get the voices heard of those they represent. Williams et al. (2009, p. 43) outline the fact that the Science Media Centre were involved in the training of scientists in the lead-up to the vote on the hybrid embryo debate and this included how to get across key points whilst being interviewed. CA cannot directly account for such strategies and the influence these may have had on the interaction within the news interviews.

Another limitation to research using CA, is that transcription and analysis is a lengthy process and by the time analysis is complete, the sample can become quickly out of date. This is a particular problem when investigating the practice of journalism. It is the nature of journalistic practices that they change over time, making the normative frameworks and strategies found within the news interview potentially less permanent. Therefore, although the research was a rich, deep and comprehensive exploration of the interaction contained within the news interviews and the HFEA 2008, the analysis should be considered historically contingent and

another sample, possibly over a larger period of time or across different topical domains, may present further updates to the findings, in terms of the nature of the forum and the devices and strategies contained within it.

### ***10.5 Areas for Future research: gender and the news interviews***

It was noticed within some of the news interviews that gender may have contributed to how the interaction was conducted. Due to the limitations of the sample size, it was not possible to verify whether certain patterns detected had the potential to be the basis of a larger research project. For instance, it was noted in the news interview between Baroness Tonge and Baroness Masham (see Appendix 1 today\_03\_12\_07\_0845) that the interaction contained much evidence of the use of politeness strategies, modal verbs, hedges and pauses and research conducted by Holmes (2006, p. 39) has demonstrated that these are gendered ways of talking.

Other news interviews demonstrated patterns within interaction that might be considered more masculine in construction. The news interviews between Leszek Borysiewicz and David Burrowes (see Appendix 1: today\_19\_05\_08\_0810) and Evan Harris and Stuart Campbell (see Appendix 1: today\_10\_05\_08\_0830) were particularly antagonistic and contained evidence of the implementation of deliberate tactics surrounding the use of aggression and face attacking strategies often found within adversarial encounters. Similarly, the only news interview where the interviewer lost control of the interaction contained a female interviewer, Carolyn Quinn, and two male interviewees, Colin Blakemore and Clifford Longley (see Appendix 1: today 25\_03\_08\_0750). In this news interview, one of the interviewees in particular, chose to adopt deliberate strategies of face attacking and consistently breached the turn-taking system, even whilst the interviewer attempted to close the news interview. Further research conducted on a larger sample might detect the impact gender had on the news interviews and what it reveals about interaction being used to enact relations of power.

### ***10.6 Areas for future research: reception analysis***

The focus of this research was on how interaction is produced in the studio and, therefore, it was unable to account for how the listeners of the *Today* programme received the broadcasting of the news interviews. However, it is important to study audiences and how they understand what the media produce, as media messages can (but are not absolutely predetermined to) influence the public in terms of social

attitudes towards “what is seen as necessary, possible and desirable in our world” (Philo 2008, p. 542). Therefore, any research conducted on media output is potentially incomplete if it can’t address issues concerning its reception by an audience.

The interaction contained within news interviews is specifically produced for the overhearing audience and invokes the public in its form of address. Nevertheless, this relationship remains a mediated one. Future research in order to investigate this relationship seems a natural progression. Research using reception analysis would explore what the audience understood about the content of the news interviews and whether the devices and strategies used by interviewers and interviewees had any effect on understanding. This could involve the playback of the news interviews to research participants in order to gauge their understanding of the arguments or, indeed, may involve forms of research as outlined by Kitzinger (1999, pp. 5-10) and the link between the audience’s ability to recall stories, the availability of inference and association to other media products and the influence of the existing knowledge of listeners on the subject. Such a reception analysis could also investigate the relationship between the public’s understanding of scientific issues and the media portrayal of these.

### ***10.7 Concluding remarks***

This research has provided an insight into the interaction that took place within the news interviews broadcast by the *Today* programme on the HFEA 2008. Analysis of the sample was completed using Conversation Analysis as the research method and whilst there are some limitations to this method, it was an excellent tool with which to uncover the normative frameworks contained within the news interviews. Findings suggest that these have structural constraints on interaction that equate to the presence of institutional interaction and that the roles of interviewer and interviewee rely on a set of normative frameworks to accomplish questions and answers. These frameworks also enable the interviewer to invoke the public within the broadcasts and, at the same time, manage conceptions of interviewer neutralism and objectivity.

It is clear that the news interviews were a primary mechanism for the debate of new reproductive technologies within the programme. Not only this, but through the broadcast of the news interviews on the HFEA 2008, it became a vital mouthpiece for the workings of Parliament due to its emphasis on parliamentary processes.

Thus, the programme played a key role in the mediation between the Government and the public and it is for this reason that MPs probably consider the *Today* programme to be the most influential in setting political agendas.

This research has also demonstrated the way in which ideas that first emerged within the Age of Reason collided within the broadcast of the news interviews on the HFEA 2008. Specifically, two projects of the Enlightenment: that of the education of citizens, along with the aim of the perfectibility of Man, can still be detected within the news interviews. Firstly, through the existence of PSB, ideas of political citizenship and the public sphere emerge. Secondly, with the focus on the HFEA 2008, the *Today* programme invoked the twenty first century biological citizen. It is this new configuration, based on the molecular gaze and bare life, which has crucial consequences on the notion of citizenship today.



## Appendix 1: Collated News Interview Transcripts

today\_03\_12\_07\_0845

SM – Sarah Montague  
BM – Baroness Masham  
BT – Baroness Tonge

1 SM: the House of Lords will be continuing their debate on the  
2 abortion and fertility lords laws today .hh it was adjourned last  
3 month .hh among the many amendments to the legislation is  
4 one proposed by Baroness Masham she wants to remove  
5 the right to abortion on grounds of foetal abnormality .hh as  
6 things stand you cannot have an abortion after 24 weeks  
7 unless the foetus is disabled .hh in which case it can be  
8 allowed at any time until the baby is born .hh Lady Masham  
9 joins us on the line—the Liberal Democrat peer Baroness  
10 Tonge is here good morning to you both  
11 BM: good morning  
12 SM: .hh and Baroness Masham can I start with you and ask you  
13 about this the the (.) why you think th (.) the change is needed  
14 BM: .hh Well I think it's totally .hh on disability equality measures  
15 .hh er at the moment erm (.) babies can be aborted up to 24  
16 .hh weeks .hh but er they can go full term .hh if er if they have  
17 a disability .hh and this has been being used for very minor  
18 things like clubbed foot or erm cleft palate .hh and um it seems  
19 totally wrong .hh and a lot of people don't understand  
20 .hh that this can happen  
21 SM: .hh Baroness Tonge do you welcome this (.) potential change  
22 BT: .hh um [clears throat] I think it needs discussion and I think we  
23 need to be very very careful about what we do on these issues  
24 .hh but what I mostly object to is that it should be an  
25 amendment .hh to a bill .hh the embryology and fertilisation  
26 bill—which has hugely contentious issues in it .hh um there are  
27 all sorts of things that we to discuss in that bill .hh and I think  
28 the issue that Baroness Masham raises .hh is too important in  
29 itself to be just tagged onto another bill .hh and likewise I think  
30 the issues in the bill we're discussing at the moment are much  
31 too important and controversial .hh to have yet another  
32 controversial issue tagged onto it .hh so I think we need to  
33 look at the 1967 abortion act .hh um if we need to look at it we  
34 need to look at it separately from any other legislation  
35 SM: Lady Masham  
36 BM: .hh um well this this could be so .hh but I would certainly never  
37 have put um an amendment down hh without the permission  
38 of the clerks .hh they said that it did fit into this bill .hh of  
39 course um there are a lots of different measures .hh and very  
40 important things .hh that will be being discussed in this bill  
41 .hh er I think this is something .hh that could be just accepted

42 by the government .hh because it does seem .hh what is the  
43 point having .hh er disability equality .hh if it doesn't affect um  
44 .hh (.) babies in the womb [I mean they are babies]  
45 SM: [bu bu ]  
46 fair enough Ladies Tonge Lady Tonge  
47 BT: .hh well yes and it's a very important issue I just feel that it  
48 needs .hh more discussion  
49 [ and more time spent on it ]  
50 SM: [but should but as we've been told] she's been  
51 (.) checked with the clerks and they found it acceptable it's not  
52 as if there's much opportunity .hh one can understand why  
53 people are putting amendments because it's not a law that  
54 comes up for discussion very often  
55 BT: no no no .hh but there are other even more contentious issues  
56 around abortion .hh that a lot of people have  
57 (.) been trying to table and tag  
58 [onto this bill um the trouble is that once you start]  
59 SM: [.hh what about if if Lady Masham says if]  
60 the government did absorb this piece would you be  
61 happy with that  
62: BT: .hh um I want to look at it very carefully first I'm not quite sure  
63 what what exactly she's proposing and I want to think about it  
64 very hard .hh um I (.) think you see that a child .hh can be just  
65 as disabled if it's born to a mother who doesn't want it .hh and  
66 therefore you have to be very very careful when you look at  
67 the abortion law .hh to remember that it is a woman's right to  
68 choose .hh what happens to her and her body .hh um it's not  
69 for us to say it's a woman's right and I think that .hh although  
70 this looks like a fairly circumscribed issue .hh it opens up a  
71 whole lot of other issues around abortion .hh which we can do  
72 without when we're dealing with .hh a very controversial bill in  
73 itself  
74 SM: Lady Masham  
75 BM: hh um there are so many people who would like to adopt  
76 babies .hh if there are babies who don't want to .hh you know  
77 who the mothers don't want (.) erm (.) so .hh  
78 BT: but but this is always the excuse given for people who don't  
79 want a woman's right to choose .hh you have to remember  
80 [that before ]  
81 SM: [but it's an entirely fair point isn't it]  
82 BT: ye well it's hhh a fair point but you have to remember that  
83 before you have a baby that can be adopted .hh you have to  
84 be pregnant for nine months .hh and that is a life changing and  
85 body changing experience as  
86 [anyone who's had a baby would know]=  
87 SM: [final brief ]=final brief thought  
88 Lady Masham  
89 BM: .hh I would I just hope .hh that the disability equality measure  
90 .hh will be considered  
91 SM: Lady Masham Lady Tonge thank you both

### **Transcription symbols**

[ ] = indicates overlap

— = underscoring indicates emphasis

.hh = indicates an audible intake of breath

hhh = a laugh

= = indicates no gap or breath

(.) = indicates a brief interval of less than a tenth of a second

(0.1) = indicates timed intervals of more than a tenth of a second

today\_11\_03\_08\_0830

JH – John Humphrys  
DJ – Professor David Jones  
RW – Lord Robert Winston

1 JH: the human fertilisation and embryology bill has become one of  
2 the most controversial=one of the most passionately debated  
3 pieces of legislation for a very long time .hh we had a taste of  
4 it on this programme yesterday when a deaf man whose wife  
5 .hh maybe about to undergo IVF argued for the right to choose  
6 .hh a deaf embryo rather than have it screened out .hh Lord  
7 Winston is probably the country's best known fertility  
8 expert=he's with me=David Jones is the Professor of bioethics  
9 at St. Mary's University College=a Catholic college .hh as far  
10 as you're concerned er Lord Winston .hh your reaction to what  
11 that man said on this programme yesterday=e accepting that  
12 there'll be very few cases where this ch choice  
13 [would have to be]  
14 RW: [.hh ]  
15 JH: made  
16 RW: er I think there was a misunderstanding there because it  
17 because I think that no government and certainly not this one  
18 is intending to enforce .hh screening on embryos for particular  
19 individuals=and the implication there was that this .hh person  
20 would have the screening .hh I think that that that there really  
21 is also an another misunderstanding that (.) the screening  
22 process is very complex and quite invasive .hh and may carry  
23 risks and therefore it would not be done for trivial purposes  
24 and the idea of deliberately screening an embryo .hh to ensure  
25 that you had a deaf child .hh is not something which is in  
26 anybody's mind [(inaudible) ]  
27 JH: [but you might] screen an embryo to make  
28 sure you didn't have a deaf child=  
29 RW: =on request of the parents [not mine]  
30 JH: [exactly ]  
31 RW: yes but it would be the parental autonomy would be very  
32 important there  
33 JH: and and and you er Professor Jones are opposed to the idea  
34 of screening full stop  
35 DJ: er well I think that that er I one thing I would welcome in the in  
36 the present bill is the decision not to have screening for sex  
37 selection (.) erm and I think that's it's interesting if we compare  
38 that to the selection of a deaf child or a hearing child .hh er we  
39 say (.) er we do we're in favour of of parental choice and  
40 parental responsibility .hh but a parent shouldn't say  
41 .hh because I want (.) er a girl rather (stumbles) than a boy or  
42 a boy rather than a girl .hh I have selection in the same way  
43 I think .hh if we really think that a deaf child once born is equal  
44 as a citizen .hh we shouldn't say .hh I will select out (.) er a

45 deaf child we shouldn't say I will select for a deaf child .hh will  
46 say .hh I will make the best provision for deaf or hearing  
47 children when they're born  
48 JH: Professor Winston (.) Lord Winston  
49 RW: .hh we live in a pluralistic society and the issue surely must be  
50 that we should try to accommodate that society in the best  
51 way we can and therefore .hh the key thing must be the (.)  
52 autonomy of the people who suffer these diseases and really  
53 .hh I think the argument is being diverted from the real  
54 issues=the real issues are .hh that pre implantation diagnosis  
55 .hh should be used in my view .hh for those diseases which kill  
56 children very early on and that's where they are being used  
57 .hh and on the whole nobody's suggesting seriously clinically  
58 that we should start screening for deafness one way or the  
59 other .hh in fars far as I know that's never been done and  
60 indeed .hh most causes of deafness wouldn't be a suitable  
61 because they're not er they're not [they're not genetic]  
62 JH: [but you are ] saying  
63 that there should be .hh erm screening before implantation to  
64 screen out er [certain (.) conditions]  
65 RW: [only only on request] I mean the the requests  
66 come from families who've already lost a child that's where it  
67 happens=  
68 JH: =indeed  
69 RW: .hh so basically what normally happens .hh and they're pretty  
70 rare there are about 6000 diseases but very few of them are  
71 very common .hh people have lost a child at the age of two  
72 three or four normally .hh they realise that they have a genetic  
73 defect=they don't want to go through that terrible trauma  
74 again and they therefore .hh request to have IVF .hh with a  
75 view to having an embryo randomly selected .hh but which  
76 does not have that specific gene defect  
77 JH: and are you happy with that Professor Jones  
78 DJ: (1.0) erm (0.5) (exhales) I'm I'm I'm not happy with that I mean  
79 clearly .hh people who've who've suffered in this way they they  
80 want to minimise their their chances of of the same thing  
81 happening again and I  
82 I com[pletely understand why ]  
83 JH: [well they want to eliminate] it don't they if possible  
84 DJ: yes I I don't think (.) the elimination of all risk is not something  
85 which is which is possible but I think that the the erm (1.1)  
86 I don't think its actually er I think the HFEA actually recently  
87 made a decision (coughs) about also .hh selecting for later  
88 onset conditions and not only for conditions which are are  
89 there at birth=I think there is an issue of .hh er looking towards  
90 .hh erm the selection of children in in general and and thinking  
91 of of the child as something which is select of the  
92 characteristics of the child which is something selected  
93 .hh and I think there is there is a slope here and obviously  
94 .hh these sort of cases of of a child who dies early this is these  
95 are them they these are the cases which are .hh are are (.)

96 causes the most heartache .hh but I think that that we're still  
 97 on a on a on a continuum which is about .hh exercising control  
 98 .hh over .hh o over a child and by selection by saying there  
 99 are certain embryos we will throw away=  
 100 JH: =but why [shouldn't ]  
 101 DJ: [there are er] certain foetuses we will throw away I  
 102 think that's that's that's the problem I have  
 103JH: but why should there not be that selection .hh erm if the result  
 104 of it is that a child is not born (.) er with some dreadful  
 105 disease? (.) er isn't isn't the .hh (0.5) the future well being  
 106 of (.) the potential child .hh what is paramount here?  
 107 DJ: .hh (1.4) well I think that there's there's a difference between if  
 108 you have an individual how to best make er the future for that  
 109 individual how to .hh improve the health of that individual or  
 110 treat the individual I think that's one sort of thing and I think  
 111 there's a different thing .hh for tech[niques ]  
 112 JH: [in other] words if the child  
 113 has already be born then [clearly you do]  
 114 DJ: [al ] already I would say  
 115 already conceived=  
 116 JH: =already conceived  
 117 DJ: because I think that that there is there is er and here obviously  
 118 there is a difference=there is a plurality of opinion about this  
 119 about how early we will will push it and some people .hh er its  
 120 its when when the child is born=for some people not even  
 121 when the child is born and they will say .hh if it's going to have  
 122 a er if it's going to be disabled then we shouldn't treat new  
 123 born infants who are very seriously [handicapped]=  
 124 JH: [mm ]  
 125 DJ: =.hh we're not there in this society and I'm very happy about  
 126 that .hh some people would say .hh oh as as a as a as a  
 127 foetus .hh er you can have have er erm .hh abortion for reason  
 128 of disability and we have that much later than for other  
 129 abortions and I think that myself I think that's scandalous  
 130 .hh but .hh er I think with all of these technologies even for  
 131 PGD we are [talking about]  
 132 JH: [PGD? ]  
 133 DJ: er for sorry for even for screening embryos .hh we are talking  
 134 about .hh saying this embryo (.) has a has has a flaw .hh we  
 135 will throw it away .hh and that's and (stumbles) that's that's the  
 136 problem I have not that the the it's the it's the it's the notion of  
 137 selection and de-selection=  
 138 RW: =I do sympa=  
 139 DJ: =it's the it's the destroying it's not it's not that that that you  
 140 want to make the best for the ones that are implanted .hh it's  
 141 the one .hh it's the attitude .hh towards .hh what is .hh able to  
 142 be [cast aside ]  
 143 JH: [Lord Winston] throwing away an [embryo]  
 144 RW: [well ] this is Professor

145 Jones's assertion I do I do=  
146 JH: =well it happens  
147 RW: .hh well I do er s I do sympathise with his view because of  
148 course .hh you know the Catholic Church actually doesn't  
149 approve of IVF at all .hh and so he has a problem here they  
150 don't even approve of contraception these are both methods of  
151 .hh both technologies which are widely used in our general  
152 population .hh and broadly accepted by people  
153 JH: there is a difference [between] contraception and throwing  
154 RW: [so ]  
155 JH: away to [use Dr. Jones's Professor Jones's]  
156 RW: [no because IVF wastes ] embryos all the  
157 time as does nature about .hh only about 18% of embryos  
158 normally implant .hh and that's actually what happens in in  
159 vitro fertilisation too .hh and another point that Professor  
160 Jones .hh has omitted to mention .hh is that nature herself  
161 screens most of these so-called defective embryos=  
162 JH: =yeah but that's nature doing it  
163 RW: well the difference about nature helping being helped by  
164 medicine seems to be appropriate what happens with  
165 .hh m many of these genetic disorders if not all of them is  
166 that .hh most of these embryos do not survive implantation  
167 .hh what pre implantation diagnosis does .hh is to help that  
168 process effectively .hh [um]  
169 JH: [so ] you're aiding life Professor Jones  
170 rather than .hh erm discarding life  
171 DJ: (0.5) er well (2.0) .hh (exhales) it is true that nature can be  
172 very cruel and it's true that that the basically the earlier you go  
173 in in life the more vulnerable life is so obviously erm a the new  
174 born (stumbles) children very vu vulnerable obviously er  
175 foetuses are vulnerable to to stillbirth obviously the embryos  
176 .hh are are at their most vulnerable stage .hh many of them  
177 will not survive .hh I don't think that's an argument for saying  
178 .hh because many wouldn't survive .hh we will decide who  
179 survives .hh we will survive decide what doesn't  
180 [survive= on the ba]sis  
181 JH: [somebody has to ]  
182 DJ: of .hh that we think certain sorts of conditions .hh it's better  
183 .hh not to be born with  
184 JH: just a [final] very quick thought Lord Winston sorry  
185 RW: [no ]  
186 JH: [we've run out of time] seems a slippery slope the  
187 RW: [I I I well I'd ]  
188 JH: [point is Professor Jones touched on]  
189 RW: [well I don't it's a ] a slippery  
190 slope with speed limits to it I mean you know you have  
191 arbitrary decisions and of course you have regulation .hh but  
192 I think .hh that there's a nonsense here there's a notion here  
193 that people like myself don't want to see society properly  
194 caring for people .hh who have diseases which are produced  
195 genetically=that's not true .hh but unfortunately Professor  
196

197 Jones has not seen the distress .hh and severe pain that  
198 these families suffer .hh and once you've seen that you begin  
199 to understand that they have decision which is difficult to make  
200 .hh which they're taking largely for ethical reasons .hh that's  
201 the commonest reason why people have PGD .hh pre  
202 implantation diagnoses  
203 JH: .hh Lord Winston Professor Jones thank you both very much

### **Transcription symbols**

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today\_22\_03\_08\_0710

JN – James Naughtie

SC – Sean Curran

1 JN: what's the government going to do (.) about (.) embryo (.)  
2 research .hh er it is trying to find a way out of the (.) difficulty  
3 of a vote which has disturbed some of its own MPs but it's  
4 proving a struggle for the government .hh our political  
5 correspondent this morning is .hh Sean Curran erm as we  
6 heard in the news the health minister Ben Bradshaw on  
7 Any Questions last night Sean saying that this isn't a matter  
8 .hh of conscience=it doesn't fall in that bracket=a lot of Labour  
9 MPs just don't buy that do they  
10 SC: .hh well not just er Labour MPs=lot of MPs right across the  
11 spectrum don't er buy that .hh and the Conservatives have  
12 already said (0.4) that some of their their MPs will have a  
13 .hh free vote on some aspects of this bill and the Liberal  
14 Democrats have followed suit .hh (0.4) the government knew  
15 that they were going to have a troub trouble with this=there  
16 was a very fierce debate when the bill was going through the  
17 House of Lords .hh there was pressure there for Labour peers  
18 to be given a free vote but the bill was whipped which meant  
19 that everybody had to tow .hh the party line .hh and er what  
20 we saw then=that this was (0.4) controversial=its updates the  
21 1990 .hh legislation on human fertilisation and embryology .hh  
22 but it is controversial (0.3) for lots of reasons not just embryo  
23 research=also changes to .hh erm IVF treatment and we had  
24 that row if you remember  
25 JN: .hh  
26 SC: about the need for a father=so it was a very controversial bill  
27 but there were no free votes .hh and er I think (0.5) probably  
28 the government always knew that once it came to the  
29 Commons the issue of the free votes would be reopened with  
30 renewed vigour  
31 JN: .hh (0.5) But the Prime Minister has said that he (0.2) wanted  
32 every member of the Commons be able to exercise (0.3) their  
33 conscience .hh er and yet Downing Street (0.3) says its  
34 decision to of a free vote will be taken in due course=now how  
35 do you reconcile .hh a three line whip .hh with a right to  
36 exercise your conscience  
37 SC: .hh (0.3) Gordon Brown has spoken twice about this now the  
38 first time he said th they would respect MPs consciences and  
39 then last week dur during Prime Minster's Questions he said  
40 .hh erm .hh everybody in this House should have the right to  
41 exercise their conscience .hh we'll come back to the House  
42 with our proposals to take it through later time .hh (0.4) the the  
43 point about this is (0.4) there is no date yet set down for the  
44 second reading=which means there is time for people to  
45 negotiate with Geoff Hoon the Chief Whip in the Commons  
46 about what they want to do .hh the suggestion has been

47 .hh mooted very strongly in Westminster among MPs .hh that  
48 they will have the option of abstaining (.) and ministers and MPs  
49 JN: and keep their jobs  
50 SC: would be able to keep their jobs=they would simply abstain  
51 .hh that might be the way through=the government has argued as  
52 we heard Ben Bradshaw last night on on e Any er Questions  
53 .hh that this is an important bill=its its (.) important to government  
54 business .hh er and so they don't think it er should have a free  
55 vote=the difficulty is that a lot of Catholic MPs .hh don't want to  
56 abstain (0.2) they want to vote against and that is where the  
57 tension lies .hh and that is where the negotiations are going on  
58 .hh can they actually have a free vote .hh and er er erm vote  
59 against the bill .hh if they don't get a free vote and it's whipped  
60 and they vote against then anybody (.) who's a minister (0.4)  
61 will have to resign or be sacked  
62 JN: tch Sean Curran thanks

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today\_22\_03\_08\_0830

ES – Edward Stourton

PS – Peter Smith

BB – Ben Bradshaw

1 ES: the clash between the Roman Catholic Church and the  
2 government over the human fertilisation and embryology  
3 bill=which is on its way through Parliament .hh is turning very  
4 serious (.) the Archbishop of e of Edinburgh Cardinal Keith  
5 O'Brien .hh yesterday called the bill a monstrous attack on  
6 human rights and that provoked a pretty tart response from the  
7 health minister Ben Bradshaw .hh on Any Questions last  
8 night=Mr. Bradshaw was discussing the issue of whether  
9 .hh there should be a free vote on the bill  
10 BB: I think if it was about the things the Cardinal referred to  
11 .hh creating babies for spare parts or raiding dead people's (.)  
12 tissue .hh then there would be justification for a free vote=it is  
13 not about those things .hh he was wrong in fact and I thought  
14 rather intemperate and emotive .hh in the way he criticised this  
15 legislation .hh this is about using .hh er pre-embryonic (.) cells  
16 .hh to do research that has the potential .hh to ease the  
17 suffering of millions of people in this country .hh the  
18 government has taken a view that this is a good thing we have  
19 free votes on (.) issues of conscience like abortion like  
20 the death penalty .hh or where the government does not take  
21 a view=the government has taken a view so I think in this case  
22 .hh the government's absolutely right .hh to try to push this  
23 through .hh to the potential benefit .hh of many many people in  
24 this country  
25 ES: .hh well the Labour MP Joe Benton seems to be acting as a  
26 kind of informal organiser for those .hh potential rebels on the  
27 backbenches=we spoke to him this morning he said he'd  
28 made his concerns .hh to the Chief (.) Whip known a couple of  
29 weeks ago and because he hasn't yet received a response he  
30 doesn't want to speak publicly at this stage .hh about his  
31 voting intention .hh we are however joined by the Most  
32 Reverend Peter Smith the Archbishop .hh of Cardiff=Catholic  
33 Archbishop of Cardiff of course good morning  
34 PS .hh good morning Ed  
35 ES: Mr. Bradshaw did not sound in a mood to compromise there  
36 did he?  
37 PS: no he didn't but he was wrong he he's talking about pre-  
38 embryonic cells .hh that's not what the bill is about=it's about  
39 embryonic cells and .hh allowing by law .hh the creation of  
40 interspecies embryos .hh now that touches obviously  
41 on the very heart of (.) human life .hh and there's doesn't  
42 surprise me that Catholic MPs and indeed (.) MPs who are not  
43 Catholics .hh er of all other faiths and none are very  
44 concerned about this and the tradition is .hh that on  
45 such deep issues er MPs are given a (.) free vote as they were

46 in 1990 on the embryology bill of the day  
47 ES: you I think see a little bit of the Welsh Secretary Paul Murphy  
48 and in fact I read in the Times this morning that he was in your  
49 congregation on Maundy Thursday .hh and he is (.) widely  
50 mentioned as one of the .hh potential (.) rebels (.) within the  
51 government=do you have any idea of how mind is working at  
52 the moment?  
53 PS: .hh well he's like all our Catholic MPs and others they er  
53 chiefly if they're on the government's side .hh they have a  
54 really serious dilemma about this .hh er they (.) they're worried  
55 about the effects of this bill .hh and yet many of them are  
56 government ministers (.) what do they do .hh now that is a  
57 decision only they can make=it's not for me to say how they  
58 should vote .hh it's my duty to have a pastoral care for them  
59 and .hh to discuss with them the teaching on the Church to  
60 clarify their own consciences .hh and then they must act  
61 accordingly  
62 ES: .hh well you say it's not for you to advise them how to vote but  
63 it sounds (.) pretty much as if you're effectively saying you  
64 ought to rebel against this bill or you ought to vote against this  
65 bill  
66 PS: .hh well all I can say that Ed is those MPs who've approached  
67 me over recent weeks have said look .hh er I don't think this is  
68 right .hh er I accept the teaching of the Church .hh yet I'm a  
69 government minister or I'm on a Labour MP er can I discuss  
70 this with you (.) the the moral (stumbles) dilemma I've got=that  
71 we have discussed privately .hh and confidentially .hh but at  
72 the end of the day erm you know they have to make their  
73 decision=it's not a question of the Church imposing=I mean a  
74 Catholic MP is both a Member of Parliament representing his  
75 constituents .hh but he's also a Catholic  
76 ES: [well yes but ]  
77 PS: [who accepts the teaching of the Church and] he says well I  
78 I'm caught on this  
79 ES: you presumably have a view about which way they should  
80 vote and on an issue of kind particularly .hh since you clearly  
81 feel (.) it's so important it seems reasonable to ask you to say  
82 publicly what that view is=do do do you think Catholic MPs should  
83 either abstain from this vote .hh or vote against (.) this (.) bill  
84 er no matter (.) what position they may (.) or may not hold in  
85 the government  
86 PS: yes I've made it very clear and and er the Church in England  
87 the Catholic Church in England and Wales has informed all  
88 the parishes of the m main i ssues in the bill .hh and we've  
89 asked them to write to their MPs asking them all (.) whatever  
90 denomination they are to vote against certain parts of the  
91 bill  
92 ES: so that's been your private advice to ministers who've come  
93 along to you as well  
94 PS: .hh yes it will yes it has I mean they know what my views are  
95 (hhh) I know what (hhh) their views are .hh but we've

96 discussed to say the difficulty that er Catholic MPs and others  
 97 indeed .hh will have if they hold er particularly a ministerial  
 98 position in in the government  
 99 ES: .hh quick final thought I don't suppose you've (.) conceived of  
 100 the idea of .hh seeking help from your prominent recent  
 101 convert on this matter Mr. Tony Blair?  
 102 PS: hhh well he's not a Member of Parliament is he hhh this is a  
 103 [matter (inaudible) this is]  
 104 ES: [Well I think he is actually hhh ]  
 107 PS: oh he is sorry I beg your pardon of course he still is but he's not  
 108 around really very much in in the House .hh I think this is a  
 109 matter which er is going to=it is clearly affecting (.) many MPs=  
 110 mean I've written to the Prime Minister myself .hh asking him  
 111 that in view of these very important issues which touch on the  
 112 .hh er the sacredness of human life its meaning and purpose  
 113 would he please grant .hh a free vote .hh because that is what  
 114 is really required  
 115 ES: Peter Smith many thanks

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today\_24\_03\_08\_0810

ES – Edward Stourton

TB – Tony Benn

TR – Tim Renton

1 ES: the row over the embryo research bill shows no sign of  
2 diminishing (.) as we've heard the Labour peer Lord Winston  
3 has accused Scotland's most senior Catholic Cardinal Keith  
4 O'Brien .hh of lying .hh the row has raised the question of  
5 whether there should be more free votes in Parliament on  
6 conscious ques conscience questions .hh Tony Benn once put  
7 down an early day motions arguing there should be=he joins  
8 us .hh as does the former Conservative Chief Whip Lord  
9 Renton Tim Wen Renton as he once was uh just for the record  
10 on this particular question where do you both stand=Tony  
11 Benn do you think this should be a .hh a free vote  
12 TB: oh yes no question about=I think it's a good bill I have friends  
13 with Parkinsons and it helps them .hh but it's outrageous  
14 .hh that the Prime Minister alone .hh should give instructions  
15 .hh to Members of Parliament on a bill of this character  
16 .hh because when you say free vote what you really mean is  
17 the Prime Minister's decided it .hh the same with Lisbon he  
18 wouldn't let a referendum=wouldn't have a free vote on that  
19 and I think that this d damages Parliament very seriously and  
20 that's something you have to take into account  
21 ES: Tim Renton  
22 TR: .hh yes I wholly agree with what Tony Benn is saying .hh um  
23 way back in 1990 when I was government Chief Whip .hh er  
24 the first er Human Fertilisation and Embryology bill came up  
25 .hh we talked with the other parties .hh we agreed to have a  
26 free vote on it .hh and that's what we did .hh and (.) free votes  
27 (0.8) often given for .hh matters of .hh religion=conscience (.)  
28 this is not .hh a political matter particularly .hh it's a very  
29 important scientific matter .hh and I imagine Gordon Brown will  
30 change his mind and will give a free vote  
31 ES: .hh well Tony Benn you have as I said raised the question of  
32 .hh er (.) what sort of boundaries there should be on whether  
33 or not er a vote is a free one or a political one where would  
34 you draw them  
35 TB: .hh well I mean a Member of Parliament has got three  
36 responsibilities (.) to his constituents (.) or her constituents .hh  
37 let us say you've gotta work for them .hh but also you have an  
38 obligation to tell them what you think .hh secondly you have a  
39 responsibility to your colleagues=cos I know perfectly well that  
40 Tony Benn would never have been elected to Parliament=I  
41 was a member of the Labour party=I've been a member for  
42 sixty six years .hh and I support the party .hh but thirdly to  
43 your convictions (1.0) .hh and if you .hh (0.5) er are told you  
44 cannot vote .hh for what you believe in=I mean I voted quite a

45 number of times  
46 ES: [.hh yeah but but]  
47 TB: [against government policy] and I would write to the Chief  
48 Whip and say I can't vote for this .hh I give my reasons  
49 .hh and er er (.) [I ]  
50 ES: [yes] but but I'm just trying to get a sense of of  
51 where you think the line is crossed between .hh what is a  
52 legitimate (.) whipped vote and a a a free vote  
53 TB: if there's something in a manifesto to which you're collectively  
54 committed you should vote for it .hh but for example I'm  
55 against nuclear weapons .hh (0.6) now (.) you could argue at  
56 least that's a matter of (.) conscience or conviction .hh as  
57 much as er embryology because I say you shouldn't kill people  
58 with nuclear weapons .hh so I would say to the Chief Whip  
59 when we had the defence debate .hh I can't vote for the  
60 government  
61 ES: .hh alright=  
62 TB: =and that does Parliament a bit of good because I think people  
63 do want to know they're not just [voting] for a row of puppets  
64 ES: [Well ]  
65 I think Tony Benn what you're talking about is is is a rebellion  
66 in a way but Lord Renton where do you think that the the  
67 boundaries should be drawn  
68 TR: (1.0) .hh I think I have to look at it from the point of view of  
69 someone who was a government Chief Whip .hh (0.9) er in  
70 1990 when we were in having fairly difficult times=we didn't  
71 have a large majority .hh and you have to remember that the  
72 main job (0.9) of the government Chief Whip is to get .hh (0.7)  
73 government business through .hh in time and to meet the  
74 dates that ministers and the (.) Prime Minister have settled  
75 .hh so I think in the Whip's office you always are balancing that  
76 fact of the pressure on you there's never enough time  
77 .hh you're always balancing that against .hh maybe the Tony  
78 Benn of the world .hh or whatever who come in and say I've  
79 got=this is a very difficult conscientious matter for me .hh I  
80 worry very much about it and therefore .hh I don't want to vote  
81 ES: [and and when they do say that what do you say back]  
82 TR: [(inaudible) ] you  
83 have then to weigh that against the fact .hh that you are there  
84 .hh MPs are there as members of a party .hh committed to  
85 perhaps a philosophy in the programme of their party .hh and  
86 maybe you do try and persuade the colleague .hh uh that it  
87 isn't a matter (0.4) of such serious conscientiousness for him  
88 .hh he should vote for with the government  
89 ES: .hh do you Tony Benn recognise the legitimacy of somebody  
90 who does the job that Lord [Renton did ]  
91 TB: [well of course and I worked]  
92 ES: you've got have somebody doing  
93 TB: well I was a minister too and .hh er I'd be interested to know  
94 whether this decision to have a .hh whipped vote was taken by  
95 the Cabinet or by the Prime Minister=I would guess the Prime

86 Minister himself decided .hh but you see when you say the  
 87 word rebel (.) was does that mean .hh here's a bill .hh you're  
 88 for it or against it .hh now would you say the Prime Minister  
 89 was rebelling against the Arc the Cardinal Archbishop no  
 90 .hh it's a vote you (stumbles) two lobbies yes or no  
 91 [I would vote for]  
 92 ES: [.hh well it's not ]  
 93 quite as simple as that is it there's a there's a government bill  
 94 before [you ]  
 95 TB: [.hh yes] but it's nothing to do with whether it's Labour  
 96 party=nothing to do with the manifesto .hh I mean here is a  
 97 matter that has to be determined .hh why can't the Prime  
 98 Minister .hh accept the majority of the House of  
 99 Commons=remember .hh (0.7) the government's responsible  
 100 to the House of Commons= the House of Commons is not a  
 101 government department=somebody said the other day .hh that  
 102 the government treats the House of Commons as if it was  
 103 another government department under a minister called  
 104 Harriet Harman .hh I mean=  
 105 TR: =yes=  
 106 TB: =democracy means [doesn't it that that]  
 107 ES: [yes L L ] Lord Renton you want  
 108 to come in there  
 109 TR: I I I think that we're .hh um (1.1) Tony Benn on this particular  
 110 issue is absolutely right .hh because I mean what's the  
 111 politics=it isn't a serious political matter it's high difficult  
 112 science (0.7) and I think that frankly .hh er Gordon Brown has  
 113 made a mistake .hh but on the longer the bigger issue of  
 114 when can you when does a whip say yes alright we'll have a  
 115 free vote .hh I mean Tony Benn was Secretary of State for five  
 116 years himself .hh I actually remember his standing (.) on a  
 117 committee that he was .hh chairing and I don't think in that  
 118 time Tony Benn when you were Secretary for .hh Trade and  
 119 then Secretary for (.) Energy .hh I think then you would always  
 120 have gone along with the view that government legislation  
 121 .hh must .hh pr in principle get through=  
 122 ES: =can [(stumbles) ]  
 123 TR: [because that's] what you are there for as an MP  
 124: ES: [quick requ ]  
 125 TR: [.hh and that ] is the other side of the coin  
 126 ES: quick response to that Tony Benn  
 127 TB: well I think if you're talking about a minister it's different .hh  
 128 you see a minister's a member of a government that has .hh  
 129 (.) got a collective decision and when I was a  
 130 minister=sometimes I won in the Cabinet sometimes I lost  
 131 .hh if I lost and I'd say afterwards people say why .hh did that  
 132 happen say well that was the decision of the  
 133 government=other points were put .hh this is what we've  
 134 decided=I'm a member of the government .hh Robin Cook of  
 135 course resigned from the government .hh over the Iraq War  
 136 .hh he did what he thought was right .hh and was that .hh (0.9)

137 a rebel was that a rebellion=  
138 ES: =mouth click=  
139 TB: =or did the Prime Minister rebel against the United Nations  
140 charter  
141 ES: leave that question hanging in the air Lord Renton Tony Benn  
142 thanks both

### Transcription symbols

[ ] = indicates overlap  
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today\_24\_03\_08\_0850

JH – John Humphrys

JD – Jim Devine

1 JH: The row over the .hh embryology bill seems to be escalating  
2 by the day=one senior .hh Catholic figure after another  
3 attacking government ministers and them attacking back and  
4 all the rest of it=well Jim Devine is .hh a Labour MP and a  
5 Catholic=who's getting worried about it and you're hoping=Mr  
6 Devine to .hh bring together .hh erm some of your people in  
7 the Catholic Church and the scientists to talk about it  
8 JD: .hh well what I I I'm a bit concerned about the language=in  
9 particular the Cardinal .hh Keith O'Brien has been using when  
10 he talks about .hh Frankensteinian monsters .hh uh and that  
11 does suggest to me a lack of insight and understanding into  
12 what this .hh actual process is all about and .hh I've written to  
13 him today suggesting .hh that I would be happy to facilitate a  
14 meeting with himself and someone like .hh Steven Minger the  
15 director of stem cell biology labs at Kings College London  
16 JH: er Lord Winston is er as you'll know has said that the Church  
17 is destroying its probity with over blown statements=do you  
18 agree with that  
19 JD: I don't think the language  
20 JH: hhh  
21 JD: er has been very very helpful an an .hh an as a constituency  
22 MP and as you say as a Catholic .hh I've had seven letters on  
23 this issue .hh er two have been from the Church and on on a  
24 mass on Friday .hh when the Cardinal was on the front page  
25 of a national newspaper and three pages .hh inside not one  
26 single parishioner raised this issue with me  
27 JH: (0.5) so (.) overblown in that sense then perhaps  
28 JD: .hh well I think I think it is .hh as I say even over this whole  
29 weekend I've had er .hh I've just checked my emails half an  
30 hour ago=I've had three other emails. hh one is er asking me  
31 to oppose the bill .hh and two others are saying to .hh to  
32 support the bill .hh and I think there's a reason for that  
33 because.hh in particularly in former mining communities  
34 there's a disproportionately high number .hh of young men  
35 with multiple sclerosis .hh and I think people on a daily basis  
36 see these individuals .hh er going about the communities and  
37 the disabling impact that illness is having .hh not just on men  
38 but on their families and on the communities  
39 JH: putting it very crudely if you had to choose (.) when you go to  
40 vote .hh between obeying your Church and obeying your  
41 Whips what would you do  
42 JD: I'm gonna be voting for this bill because I've I've I've a health  
43 service background .hh and I'm fully supportive .hh of the  
44 proposals that the government have got within this bill  
45 JH: (1.0) erps (0.2) sp (.) so not withstanding what your

46 Archbishop says  
 47 JD: erm I do .hh I obviously listen to any group that comes and  
 48 lobbies .hh er but at the end of the day I make up my my  
 49 mind .hh er and I'm very clear that the government is quite  
 50 quite correct and proper in the direction with with this bill  
 51 [.hh and obviously and obv ]  
 52 JH: [but it should be a free vote surely ]  
 53 JD: sorry an obviously at the end of the day .hh individuals have  
 54 the right to .hh re-elect me or not .hh  
 55 JH: but surely it ought to be a free vote  
 56 JD: .hh I er well I'm not I'm (.) relatively new MP and when I've (.)  
 57 not sh long after I came down .hh I was appointed a PPS and  
 58 .hh had to (inaudible) on the renewal of Trident .hh and it was  
 59 made very clear to me and and one of my arguments was was  
 60 an issue of conscience and could I not abstain or whatever  
 61 .hh and it was made very clear to me that this was  
 62 government policy .hh I'm not convinced that there is an  
 63 argument for a free vote and if I have to say  
 64 JH: [right ]  
 65 JD: [because] .hh because of the hypre hybole the bole\* and the  
 66 language that's been used  
 67 JH: tch Jim Devine many thanks

\* I'm assuming that Jim Devine means to say hyperbole; but mispronounces the word.

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today\_25\_03\_08\_0750

CQ - Carolyn Quinn

IS – Indarjit Singh

CL - Clifford Longley

JH – John Humphrys

CB - Colin Blakemore

1 CQ: .hh now er it's (.) coming up to ten to eight=it's time for (.)  
2 Thought for the Day=the speaker here with us in our studio  
3 this morning is Dr. Indarjit Singh=Director of the Network of  
4 Sikh Organisations .hh Good Morning  
5 IS: good morning Caroline .hh strong criticism of the Human  
6 Fertilisation and Embryology Bill .hh by Catholic bishops=has  
7 reinforced a dilemma of conscience .hh felt be some MPs  
8 .hh I served on the BMA medical ethics committee for a  
9 number of years .hh and found discussion on genetic  
10 research unusually complex and taxing .hh it's like walking in  
11 an ethical minefield (.) blindfolded .hh genetic research holds  
12 immense possibilities of conquering .hh long feared ailments  
13 .hh but they can be unforeseen dangers in playing with the  
14 very building blocks of life .hh what is particularly concerning  
15 about the bill's proposals .hh to allow the creation of part  
16 human and part animal embryos .hh is that while it may help in  
17 combatting illnesses like multiple schlerosis .hh or motor  
18 neurone disease .hh it also opens the door for research that  
19 could=particularly if used by the less scrupulous .hh  
20 significantly change what it means to be human .hh there is  
21 also the fear that over the years in (stumble) the interests of  
22 life enhancement .hh we've been inching away from a  
23 previously accepted view of the sanctity of human life .hh if for  
24 example=the research now being contemplated=had been  
25 conducted .hh by Hitler's scientists in the 1940s .hh it would in  
26 all probability have been universally condemned .hh medical  
28 advances over the years .hh have imperceptibly conditioned  
29 us .hh to accepting that the means sometimes justifies the  
30 ends .hh but how far do we want to go in this questionable  
31 direction .hh our different religions give us some guidance on  
32 the importance of human life .hh Sikhs are taught that  
33 it's not how long we live .hh but what we do to help others  
34 that's important .hh and this includes our human duty hh to  
35 help the sick and infirm .hh and as Guru Harkrishan poignantly  
36 reminded us .hh when he lost his life .hh helping smallpox  
37 sufferers in Delhi .hh while it's important to try to eradicate  
38 delibit delibitating disease=we have a parallel responsibility .hh  
39 to ensure that this is not at the cost .hh of demeaning human  
40 life in general .hh looked at in this way=those involved in such  
41 decisions must turn .hh to individual conscience .hh the words  
42 of the poet James Russell Lowell come to mind .hh we owe  
43 allegiance to the state but deeper truer more .hh to the

44 sympathies that God has set.hh within our spirit's core  
45 JH: (1.1) .hh and that was Thought for the Day with Dr. Indarjit  
46 Singh=the time is eight minutes to eight  
47 CQ: .hh and let's pursue some of those arguments now because (.)  
48 we know throughout the Easter weekend .hh there have been  
49 extremely strong feelings expressed on both sides about the  
50 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill .hh yesterday on (.)  
51 this programme both sides in the argument were invited to  
52 come together by the labour MP Jim Devine=and at the same  
53 time Colin Blakemore .hh Professor of neuroscience at Oxford  
54 and a former head of the Medical Research Council .hh has  
55 invited Catholic bishops and leading clergymen who have  
56 concerns about the bill to take .hh part in a discussion about  
57 what exactly .hh it will permit and what the research might  
58 achieve=well .hh Professor Blakemore is with us and on the  
59 line is one of our other Thought for the Day regulars the  
60 Catholic writer Clifford Longley so .hh welcome to you both  
61 erm Clifford Longley (.) if I may ask you we had very strong  
62 words from .hh Cardinal Keith O'Brien erm saying (.) that (.)  
63 these .hh the creation of human animal hybrid embryos would  
64 allow experiments of Frankenstein .hh proportion. .hh is that a  
65 view you share n n why (.) does the creation of these hybrid  
66 embryos worry you?  
67  
68 CL: erm I'm not personally in favour of using that very emotive  
69 language and I noticed that .hh other commentators from the  
70 Catholic side like the Archbishop of Cardiff Peter Smith have  
71 very carefully chosen the words they used .hh and have  
72 certainly not resorted to language like Frankenstein .hh they  
73 have to admit however that the Archbishop of Edinburgh  
74 .hh did capture the headlines and might not have done so if he  
75 hadn't used such language but nevertheless .hh I think the  
76 temperature ought to be kept cool .hh the problem is (.) I think  
77 a the pro (stumble) principle by no means (.) only (.) confined  
78 to Catholics that .hh human life must never be a means to an  
79 end always an end in itself .hh another principle equally not  
80 confined to Catholics .hh good (.) ends never justify .hh bad  
81 means and it seems that both those principles are being  
82 .hh violated by what's proposed  
83 CQ: .hh well Professor Blakemore would you like to respond to  
84 those (.) concerns first of all  
85 CB: (1.7) ah we I w (stumbles) I don't want to put myself in the i i i  
86 in the pretending position of being er the kind of expert on this  
87 er research who can .hh give the sort of detail that I need I  
88 think is needed to inform this debate properly  
89 .hh what the scientific community is concerned about is not the  
90 spiritual authority of bishops or cardinals .hh it's the factual  
91 evidence on which they base their assertions=I'm very  
92 surprised to hear .hh Clifford say that capturing headlines can  
93 be as it were an excuse for exaggeration particularly when tha  
94 that exaggeration might be influencing

95 [a decision a national decision ]  
96 CL: [er (inaudible) not quite what I said]  
97 CQ: alright le let's move away from the headlines er because we  
98 want to use this discussion as you said Professor Blakemore  
99 to .hh to explain what this bill will permit n what the research  
100 .hh might achieve. Now you've heard very strong views  
101 against it not just from Clifford (.) Longley but also from Indarjit  
102 Singh there saying it's an unfortunate attack on the building  
103 blocks of human life n .hh and if you'd had research like this  
104 done (.) by Hitler's scientists it would have been condemned  
105 CB: (1.7) well I I think the progress of medical research in the last  
106 twenty or thirty years is the evidence um that er tech  
107 techniques and the introduction of techniques which are .hh  
108 initially surprising=let's not forget the reaction to organ  
109 transplantation  
110 CL: [mm]  
111 CB: [re]member the headlines then now now treated as you know  
112 an everyday m m m m medical m m miracle er these are these  
113 are shifting er definitions and the public I think if you look at  
114 the results of the polls .hh accept that=I think one thing that  
115 the Cardinals should be asking is .hh wh what advice will they  
116 be giving to their congregations if and when these techniques  
117 do generate the cures that we all hope that they will do=that  
118 they should be avoided because of the techniques that we use  
119 to produce them  
120 CQ: [inaudible]  
121 CL: [inaudible] that is that's a difficult question erm and you're right  
122 to ask it and I also welcome the (.) very sober tone in which  
123 you're (.) proposing this conversation that  
124 happened=Incidentally I'm not having the conversation I'm  
125 if you like commenting on what I thought might happen if you  
126 did have it  
127 CQ: hhh alright  
128 CL: .hh hhh it does seem to me the case that the Catholics have  
129 got a gen a genuine point that's widely .hh echoed in the  
130 public at large=the opposition to this proposal is by no means  
131 confined to Catholics=there a lot of people on both sides of the  
132 political spectrum who .hh are extremely uneasy about what's  
133 proposed and I think that makes me think the scientists have  
134 not deployed the argument very well so far that doesn't mean  
135 to say they can't and I the idea of dialogue is quite a good one  
136 .hh can I just make a point to Professor Blakemore .hh it  
137 seems to me that when he or shall we say someone engaged  
138 in this research .hh looks down a microscope at these cells  
139 early embryo cells .hh they see a ball of tissue that's all they  
140 see whereas someone .hh coming from the other perspective  
141 particularly someone with faith whether they're Catholic or  
142 Sikh or whatever .hh looks down that same microscope  
143 .hh they see that ball of tissue but they also see a human  
144 being .hh and that is a fundamental difference of perspective

145 .hh and I don't see how dialogue is going to bridge that gap=  
 146 CQ: =alright so do you see human life or just a bunch of cells?  
 147 CB: .hh er I think human life is very much more than simply a  
 148 bunch of cells=without a nervous system .hh an individual  
 149 .hh whose brain has grown .hh who's had experiences  
 150 knowledge of the world .hh becomes a human being=for that  
 151 reason I'm afraid I mean I I  
 152 [personally don't ] accept the definition of a  
 153 CL: [inaudible - but what is it at the start]  
 154 CB: human being [inaudible fertilisation]  
 155 CL: [well how by conversation] can we can we close  
 156 that gap because it seems to me to be a very wide one  
 157 CB: .hh well the of course what's being proposed in the bill er the  
 158 creation of cybrids .hh it doesn't use human embryos=I mean I  
 159 think so somethings been missed in this discussion is that  
 160 these techniques will actually reduce the demand for human  
 161 eggs .hh and embryos .hh wh what's proposed in the in the  
 162 hybrid cybrid section of the .hh er legislation is the generation  
 163 of embryo like cells from fusing adult nuclei to genetic material  
 164 from (.) human beings .hh with empty animal cells instead of  
 165 using human cells  
 166 CQ: well Professor Colin Blakemore and Clifford Longley we have  
 167 to end it there it's just the start (.) as we know of this  
 168 discussion=  
 169 CB: =of a discussion I hope=  
 170 CQ: =It will [continue]  
 171 CB: [yes ]  
 172 CQ: thanks very much

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today\_09\_04\_08\_0830

JN – James Naughtie

AW – Andrea Williams

JLD – James Lawford Davies

1 JN: one (.) Christian campaign group is raising a court challenge  
2 to the decisions .hh by the Human Fertilisation and  
3 Embryology authority to grant licenses for research .hh using  
4 animal human hybrid embryos .hh the Christian Legal Centre  
5 which says it speaks for .hh “bible believing Christians”  
6 .hh wants a judicial review of the decisions=Andrea Williams  
7 .hh is director of the centre=we're also joined here in the  
8 studio by James Lawford Davies of the law firm .hh Clifford  
9 Chance who lectures in law and medicine .hh at Newcastle  
10 University .hh what's the essence of your appeal Andrea  
11 Williams against these decisions  
12 AW: .hh well we say that the Human Fertilisation and Embryology  
13 Authority .hh has acted beyond its lawful powers it is act  
14 (stumbles) has acted ultra vires .hh it's quite clear that the  
15 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority .hh granted  
16 these licenses under the act of 1990 .hh if you look back at  
17 parliamentary debates on the act 1990 .hh it's absolutely clear  
18 that what Parliament was concerned about at the time .hh was  
19 human embryos .hh not animal human i embryos  
20 JN: [hh er what's (0.3) um sorry do finish]  
21 AW: [ the idea of (0.7) yes] no the idea of crossing  
22 species boundaries was clearly a step too far unconscionable  
23 for Parliament at that time  
24 JN: .hh right er what's interesting here I mean clearly you've er  
25 arguing from a perspective of hostility to this .hh development  
26 but we're talking here about a legal point that's the issue  
27 AW: .hh no this is actually (.) fundamentally a legal and  
28 [scien]tific challenge we've taken  
29 JN: [mm ]  
30 AW: advice from leading scientists .hh and leading silk .hh over  
31 many months now and followed .hh the processes of the  
32 Human Fertilisation and Embryology [Authority] very clearly  
33 JN: [right ]  
34 AW: .hh under the freedom of information act=we've got all the  
35 relevant information=we've looked at the peer review  
36 .hh reviewers .hh um decisions and how they [came] and  
37 JN: [hh ]  
38 AW: arrived at [those] decisions  
39 JN: [fine ]  
40 ok James Lawford Davies do you think there's a case  
41 JLD: .hh (1.8) [well I ]  
42 JN: [there's] always a case isn't there hhh  
43 JLD: there's always a case um I haven't seen the details of the  
44 claim that that's been made as yet because it hasn't been

45 provided but um .hh my understanding of of of the case that's  
46 been brought leads me to believe that there's a limited  
47 prospect of success for this claim .hh the HFEA is obliged  
48 to consider license applications that are put to it (.) and it's  
49 obliged to do so according to the law as it stands at the time  
50 that those applications are made .hh and if it fails to consider  
51 applications in a timely fashion or according to the law as it  
52 stands then it would be vulnerable to judicial review itself um  
53 by the universities who who'd made the applications  
54 JN: .hh but (.) you don't know of any evidence yourself that those  
55 .hh precautions er weren't taken that duty wasn't fulfilled on  
56 behalf of the HFEA  
57 JLD: well to the contrary we know that they considered the  
58 applications very carefully=there were um a number of public  
59 consultations .hh a review by the science and technology  
60 select committee .hh erm and peer review of of of of the  
61 applications that were made  
62 JN: .hh er doesn't that make it rather difficult Andrea Williams for  
63 you to argue that they acted beyond their powers?  
64 AW: .hh uh absolutely not we've seen all of that material and clearly  
65 what the HFEA also have to do even .hh um if it is considered  
66 that the animal human hybrid is human .hh um they have to  
67 then ask whether or not the research is necessary or desirable  
68 .hh we've seen that the scientific thrust is clearly towards adult  
69 stem cells and bli (stumble) umbilical cord stem cell research  
70 .hh and that this type of research .hh is not er where the thrust  
71 is .hh and the line that ought to be pursued [cert]ainly not  
72 JN: [but ]  
73 AW: necessary or desirable  
74 JN: aren't you there (.) er in a sense trying to read the HFEA's  
75 mind rather than to I mean you're putting an interpretation of  
76 why it's come to a particular decision .hh which (.) isn't  
77 something that would necessarily convince a court  
78 AW: .hh not when you actually look at the thrust of the science and  
79 where there has been success in (.) stem cell research in adult  
80 stem cell research .hh and um umbilical cord stem cell  
81 research .hh furthermore [the HFEA]  
82 JN: [.hh but ]  
83 AW: knew .hh that Parliament was actually going to consider  
84 whether or not to legalise animal or human hybrids before with  
85 the bill that's currently [be]fore Parliament=  
86 JN: [.hh]  
87 =right let me bring James Lawford Davies in on those specific  
88 points  
89 JLD: .hh well it's correct that (.) the researchers have to show that  
90 embryo research is necessary or desirable .hh they don't have  
91 to show that that research is the only option for combating  
92 disease or looking into causes of disease .hh and researchers  
93 in in this field would all say that we should be looking at every  
94 option that's that's available for research and at Newcastle  
95 .hh university for example there are researchers using adult

96 stem cells embryonic stem cells and .hh IPS cells induced  
97 pluri-potent stem cells .hh and all should be should be used  
98 um in an effort to find (.) treatments for disease  
99 JN: well we shall see what happens when that er appeal for a  
100 judicial review .hh by the Christian Legal Centre is heard  
101 .hh er Andrea Williams and James Lawford Davies thank you  
102 both very much

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today\_10\_05\_08\_0830

JH – John Humphrys

TF – Tom Feilden

SC – Stuart Campbell

EH – Evan Harris

1 JH: the debate on abortion is with us again=it seldom goes away  
2 entirely=but it's in the headlines now because Parliament's  
3 debating whether the time limit should be changed .hh at the  
4 moment it's more difficult to get an abortion after twenty four  
5 weeks .hh many people believe that should be cut to twenty  
6 weeks=how do our laws compare with those in other  
7 European countries .hh erm Tom Feilden our science  
8 correspondent what's (.) how (.) how do we stack up  
9 TF: .hh well the limit in in most European countries is actually set  
10 at twelve weeks=that's countries like (.) Austria=Belgium  
11 .hh Denmark=France=Germany=Greece .hh er Hungary=Italy  
12 and Poland .hh but as is the case here it is still possible to get  
13 an abortion after that point .hh if there's a risk posed to the  
14 mother's health or the child is likely to be born with some  
15 serious medical condition or or disability .hh that's the case in  
16 France for instance .hh but there were still more than two  
17 hundred thousand abortions performed there last year  
18 compared with a hundred and ninety three thousand  
19 .hh in England and Wales .hh um the limits are higher in (.)  
20 Switzerland=the Netherlands and Spain where the upper  
21 limit's twenty two weeks .hh but Malta=Ireland and Poland all  
22 have much more [restrictive] regulations=  
23 JH: [ .hh ]  
24 =there've been a number of studies looking at er reducing it to  
25 twenty weeks what do they tell us  
26 TF: .hh (.) well probably the best evidence we have (.) er comes  
27 from something called the EPICure study which was  
28 established in 1995 .hh now it looked at all two hundred and  
29 seventy six neo-natal units in the UK over a ten month period  
30 .hh and it showed the number of premature babies born alive  
31 at twenty two to twenty three weeks .hh who survive to leave  
32 hospital was just one per cent .hh at twenty three to  
33 twenty four weeks it was eleven per cent=and at twenty four to  
34 twenty five weeks .hh twenty six per cent .hh and finally at  
35 twenty five to twenty six (.) er er weeks it was forty four per  
36 cent .hh um now that study was repeated in 2006 .hh and  
37 although the results show a marked improvement for babies  
38 born after the twenty four weeks cut off .hh survival rates for  
39 the most severely premature babies=those born before  
40 twenty three weeks=actually fell slightly=  
41 JH: =mm=  
42 TF: =.hh um and that is a very er er similar finding .hh to the Trent  
43 study which was published this week .hh it found survival rates

44 for babies born at twenty four and twenty five weeks had  
45 improved significantly .hh but the prospects for babies born  
46 before that period before twenty four weeks were poor .hh and  
47 hadn't improved over the last ten years .hh for instance none  
48 of the hundred and fifty babies in the study born at twenty two  
49 weeks survived  
50 JH: and and just a quick thought=what what do we mean by  
51 survive  
52 TF: .hh well we do have to be very clear about that=most of the  
53 studies come to an end when the baby's discharged from  
54 hospital .hh and apart from the EPICure study  
55 .hh which follow er where follow-ups have been done there's  
56 not really that much data on longer term outcomes .hh (.)  
57 clearly any deaths that occur after discharge from hospital  
58 aren't counted in those studies .hh and of course very many  
59 pre (.) premature babies are severely disabled=typically  
60 suffering from cerebral palsy=blindness=deafness and  
61 arrested development .hh so it's a very crude measure er to  
62 just go for survival to discharge from [hospital]  
63 JH: [alright ]  
64 TF: .hh it doesn't take into account these quality of life issues  
65 JH: thank you Tom=well with me in the studio Doctor Evan Harris  
66 who's the Liberal Democrat science spokesman and  
67 Professor Stuart Campbell=obstetrician at London's Create  
68 Health Clinic=he's a (.) .hh (.) a pioneer of those three-D  
69 images of babies in the womb erm (.) listening to Tom there  
70 Professor Campbell  
71 SC: [(clears throat)]  
72 JH: [there ] doesn't seem to be .hh evidence su supporting  
73 (.) erm (.) the (.) idea that (.) we are we we should reduce from  
74 twenty four to twenty weeks  
75 SC: well that's if you just go on foetal viability or neo-natal viability  
76 .hh er and there are many other .hh a (.) aspects we have to  
77 look at=I mean I look at these foetuses in four-D ultrasound  
78 .hh and I can see they're behaving and looking like babies  
79 .hh and they (.) smile and they have (0.3) crying faces and  
80 they suck their thumbs and they open their eyelids and they'll  
81 all respond to .hh a needle prick .hh so (0.5) these are  
82 (0.4) um (1.1) you know (1.3) babies er er=you know in all (.)  
83 in (0.9) you know sort of (1.6) (mouth click) unborn babies and  
84 they look and an therefore to me .hh it's quite offensive to be  
85 dragging these foetuses to be anaesthetising a woman .hh  
86 and dragging these normal foetuses=because .hh there are  
87 two thousand (0.8) babies (.) terminated for social  
88 reasons=two thousand three hundred .hh terminated each  
89 year in the United Kingdom .hh so that's a lot of (.) these  
90 babies being terminated=can I just say something about the  
91 study=  
92 JH: =let me just pick up that point [first if] I may then come back to  
93 SC: [ ok]  
94 JH: the study wi with Evan Harris because what um .hh (.)

95 Professor Campbell says there will resonate with a lot of  
 96 people Dr. Harris the idea that you have (.) the this unborn  
 97 baby=using that word instead of foetus=sitting in in in the  
 98 womb .hh smiling=crying whatever it happens to be reacting to  
 99 to a needle prick and then you drag them out of the womb and  
 100 kill them .hh that's the that's the kinds of language people  
 101 understand  
 102 EH: (.) .hh yes but I think when the (.) limit was set in 1990 it was  
 103 based on viability=that is the point at which babies have a  
 104 decent chance of surviving independently=foetuses have a  
 105 decent chance .hh of surviving independently of the woman  
 106 .hh and therefore have some .hh (.) more rights to be  
 107 balanced with the woman=and what Professor Campbell did in  
 108 his first part of your answer is recognize=I think .hh correctly  
 109 .hh that the science is very clear that the threshold of viability  
 110 .hh has not reduced below twenty four weeks .hh and (gulps)  
 111 there is scientific consensus on that from paediatricians  
 112 .hh who don't have a stake either way in the abortion  
 113 debate=clearly .hh the British Medical Association and the  
 114 Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists .hh so I  
 115 think that's important (.) because it's important that we do  
 116 agree what science can be agreed .hh now Professor  
 117 Campbell's second point .hh is a subjective one=it's not one  
 118 .hh that's ever been (.) generally used by MP's to set time  
 119 limits=cos otherwise you could say well .hh you know (0.3)  
 120 ba (0.4) babies start (.) foetuses start looking like babies at  
 121 twelve weeks=at thirteen weeks=at fourteen=  
 122 JH: =perhaps you should  
 123 EH: (0.8) (gulps) .hh well yes but but again there's two rights to be  
 124 balanced here er I don't think anyone's in doubt .hh that (.) the  
 125 more developed a foetus is the more it looks like a baby (.) ok  
 126 and the Science and Technology Select Committee looked at  
 127 Professor Campbell's work and decided .hh that yes it .hh  
 128 these are very clear images and they do identify=for  
 129 example=foetal abnormalities in much clearer detail .hh than  
 130 ever before=and that helps make decisions about .hh whether  
 131 one should have an abortion on the basis of  
 132 abnormality=because you know .hh much more clearly .hh but  
 133 they judged that it wasn't really relevant to the question (gulps)  
 134 of the upper time limit as far as viability goes and we have to  
 135 remember that most women .hh in fact all the women  
 136 .hh we're talking about=the (0.3) less than two per cent of  
 137 abortions that take place between twenty and twenty four  
 138 weeks .hh aren't undertaking it lightly they know they're  
 139 pregnant .hh they know that they're .hh far  
 140 pregnant (.) and so erm but they've often .hh got very  
 141 distressing circumstances .hh life .hh catastrophes late in the  
 142 pregnancy .hh er and that's why fortunately there are so few of  
 143 them but we need to preserve access to those women  
 144 JH: (0.3) .hh Professor  
 145 SC: (0.5) .hh well of the two thousand three hundred

146 terminations=social terminations .hh er (0.5) from the (0.5)  
147 2006 data none was done for the mother's life but let me go on  
148 to this study=  
149 JH: =so they were done you're saying for (.) [what ]  
150 SC: [for social reasons]  
151 JH: social rea[sons .hh  
152 EH: [I don't know what that means social reasons=  
153 SC: =[yes]  
154 EH: [.hh ]  
155 so if if [a woman well if a woman is if a wo yeh]  
156 JH: [well there is a difference clearly between social and ]  
157 life=  
158 EH: =if a woman's suffering from domestic violence or abuse or  
159 she's abandoned by .hh the partner who is helping her raise  
160 her existing four children .hh and can't cope .hh with the  
161 prospect of raising another child on her own (gulps) or staying  
162 in that relationship with a child where there's abuse or  
163 domestic violence .hh that is what (0.5) would come under the  
164 I think rather trite classification of a  
165 so[cial reason it's not a social reason ]  
166 JH: [so we're not talking lifestyle for social reason]=  
167 EH: =absolutely [not for these women] I think it's rather .hh  
168 JH: [right so s]  
169 EH: [unfair ] to call .hh this a social reason  
170 SC: [so why don't we do]  
171 EH: I [think it undermines the]  
172 JH: [Professor]  
173 SC: [so why] don't we do it at twenty six weeks  
174 then [in other ] words this crisis can happen  
175 EH: [.hh well be]  
176 SC: at twenty six weeks [as well as (0.6) twenty two weeks]  
177 EH: [I I understand that and the ] reason  
178 (0.3) I I understand in 1990 that MP's set the time limit to  
179 twenty four=I think this is generally accepted .hh was they  
180 felt that viability occurred at twenty four weeks and therefore  
181 .hh the rights of the foetus at that point=because it is  
182 [capable of living independently of a woman it com]petes with  
183 JH: [it overtakes the right of the woman alright so let's ]  
184 EH: the [rights of a woman]  
185 JH: [competes alright ] competes with some would say  
186 overtake obviously but let's le yeh er the viability  
187 ques[tion] Professor  
188 SC: [yeh] hh can I go back to the study .hh it's sixteen neo-  
189 natal units in the Trent region .hh (0.8) quite clearly of different  
190 er degrees of excellence um .hh  
191 JH: well that study has been questioned by many people=queried  
192 and doubted [by ] many peo[ple]  
193 SC: [yes] [six] er sixteen st (0.3) er you  
194 know and that's not the kind of data=even though eighteen per  
195 cent is actually quite good actually .hh er that we should be  
196 looking at .hh if we're talking about (1.1) you know (0.7) we

197 have a a foetus about to be terminated and we say=if we say  
 198 stop (.) .hh what's the best chance we could give that foetus  
 199 .hh let's remove it (0.9) and place it in the best neo-  
 200 natal intensive care unit that we can (0.5) provide .hh then you  
 201 would obviously go (.) probably to Sweden or America (gulps)  
 202 .hh but there's a a study here in paediatrics which shows  
 203 .hh a sixty six per cent survival rate at twenty three weeks  
 204 .hh in Sweden (.) forty per cent .hh so it's possible (.) for these  
 205 twenty three weeks (.) foetuses given the very best care to  
 206 survive [.hh and therefore I ] [yeh ]  
 207 EH: [I don't I don't can I can] I just say [that I think]  
 208 you (0.3) (stumble) have to be very careful what we comparing  
 209 here .hh viability is judged as the survival rate=your chance of  
 210 survival .hh if you take one (.) baby that then survives in one  
 211 hospital=that's a hundred per cent survival rate for that child  
 212 .hh but that's not what science understands as a survival rate  
 213 .hh and the the study (0.3) this stu=as Tom Feilden your  
 214 correspondent said earlier=this study .hh looked at the  
 215 whole Trent region=University Hospital=  
 216 JH: =mm=  
 217 EH: =Nottingham .hh in Leices[ter in Sheffield ]  
 218 JH: [so that is accepted that's]  
 219 EH: top neo-natal [units in ] cluded  
 220 JH: [right right]  
 221 EH: in the study and .hh none of these studies have ever shown  
 222 any dis difference .hh between births taking place in one of  
 223 those hospitals (gulps) or in other hospitals=now .hh Professor  
 224 Campbell may say .hh that most of the paediatricians in  
 225 neo-natal units in this country are lousy .hh and there's only  
 226 one that's decent (.) but most pediatricians .hh have not been  
 227 able to find those distinctions .hh and the national EPICure  
 228 study .hh the (.) emerging results of which were released last  
 229 month for the whole country .hh so it wasn't just eighteen units  
 230 it was .hh well over a hundred units .hh showed no increase  
 231 survival .hh compared to when the last time limit was last set  
 232 .hh and that for many MP's .hh is the question .hh has there  
 233 been a difference at that gestation [and there has not ]  
 234 JH: [right that is that is the]  
 235 crucial question final thought on that [Professor]  
 236 SC: [there ]  
 237 there are many top quality units who show .hh survi (.) survival  
 238 rates well above that eighteen percent .hh in fact forty to sixty  
 239 percent .hh and in this where they did long term follow up  
 240 studies .hh fifty percent .hh were without handicaps=so I think  
 241 it's a very depressing scenario .hh for this paper in the BMJ  
 242 .hh to say we've reached the .hh irreducible lower limit  
 243 .hh er because I think it will depress .hh er (.) the the  
 244 prospects of (0.6) very small neo-nates getting top quality  
 245 care .hh if paediatricians just give up on them  
 246 JH: well there I'm afraid we'll have to end it (.) the debate will  
 247 continue obviously=Professor Campbell=Doctor Evan Harris

248          thank you both very much

**Transcription symbols**

[ ] = indicates overlap

— = underscoring indicates emphasis

.hh = indicates an audible intake of breath

hhh = a laugh

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## today\_12\_05\_08\_0845

ED – Evan Davis

DB – David Burrowes

NG – Natalie Gamble

1 ED: .hh it's the second reading of Human Fertilisation and  
2 Embryology Bill today and one of the proposed changes in the  
3 Bill applies to those aiming to have a child through IVF or  
4 artificial insemination .hh at the moment the clinic offering the  
5 treatment is obliged to consider the child's need for a father  
6 .hh that will change under the Bill to the less specific need .hh  
7 for (.) supportive parenting .hh some MP's are already  
8 planning to table amendment .hh which would reinstate the  
9 requirement that the co clinics consider a child's need for a  
10 father .hh one of the MP's who will add his name to the  
11 amendment is David Burrowes=who speaks for the  
12 Conservative party on matters of justice .hh Natalie Gamble is  
13 a leading specialist in fertility law (.) also herself a mother of  
14 two .hh donor conceived children .hh with her same sex  
15 .hh partner=good morning to you both  
16 DB: good morning  
17 NG: good morning  
18 ED: .hh David Burrowes why do you think it's so important that the  
19 father is specifically mentioned in the in in the Bill itself  
20 DB: .hh well because when we're at the point where adults  
21 intentionally set out to create new life er through IVF treatment  
22 .hh they should do so within the framework of understanding  
23 the child needs a mother .hh and a father .hh er we need to  
24 ensure that we're .hh acting in the best interests of children  
25 and it's not in their best interests I believe to deliberately write  
26 .hh biological fathers permanently out of their lives  
27 ED: so Natalie Gamble who (0.6) is a a lesbian parent with (0.5)  
28 donor conceived children .hh should not have children  
29 DB: .hh no there's not not it's not at all the case the .hh present er  
30 law and guidelines er .hh gives a presumption in favour of of  
31 treatment unless they .hh children would face a risk of serious  
32 harm and er .hh we see an increase in numbers single women  
33 and er .hh same sex couples er .hh erm able to access IVF  
34 treatment .hh I mean this er [clause ]  
35 ED: [so you like the]  
36 flexibility that the current law allows and that people like  
37 Natalie cannot have children through clinics themselves  
38 DB: .hh that's right the clause is a recommendation=it's a principle  
39 to follow not an absolute obligation  
40 [and surely the principle should be in favour of fatherhood]  
41 ED: [so why don't you follow the princ why don't you follow ]  
42 why don't you follow you're own argument through to the  
43 logical conclusion say (0.3) people like Natalie shouldn't have  
44 children  
45 DB: .hh well no I mean I mean we need to (0.3) recognise that er

46 there are alternative relationships=but we need to .hh in  
47 legislation .hh ensure that er .hh in terms of the best interests  
48 of the children .hh are secured by allowing .hh and ensuring  
49 that those er .hh treatment providers give proper .hh credence  
50 and proper recognition to giving account of the need for a  
51 father

52 ED: alright Natalie Gamble=why does the law .hh need to change it  
53 says (0.6) must take account of the need for a father at the  
54 moment but it hasn't stopped .hh (0.4) yourself getting er  
55 getting donor conceived children

56 NG: .hh no I mean this is really about updating the law so it  
57 matches the practice that's in place already .hh and just to  
58 explain I mean this this duty of doctors to consider the welfare  
59 of the child including the need of the child for a father was  
60 introduced in 1990 .hh and it was in response to argument at  
61 the time about whether fertility treatment should be restricted  
62 just to heterosexual married couples .hh now obviously society  
63 has changed significantly over the last twenty years .hh erm  
64 we know have same sex couples able to adopt=we have civil  
65 partnership .hh we have the Equality Act which outlaws  
66 discrimination against particular categories of people in  
67 all areas of life (mouth click) .hh and in response to those  
68 developments fertility doctors have adopted a more flexible  
69 approach to the law .hh and basically have now erm feel safe  
70 to disregard that need for a father wording .hh and I think it's  
71 important to realise that that need for a father is just about  
72 discrimination=it was always about  
73 [stopping access to treatment]

74 ED: [discriminating against ] against  
75 who cos it [also says need for] er it's implied

76 NG: [.hh yeh ]

77 ED: really that there's a need for a mother in the in the  
78 [case of (inaudible) ]

79 NG: [well I mean that's what's interesting] it's never said need for a  
80 mother I mean [it was specifically]

81 ED: [well it's obvious ] really isn't it that the  
82 mother's the one who gives birth=I wouldn't have thought that  
83 was necessary to be stated but it it (0.6) the mother's present  
84 really in the .hh in the in the birth in the way that a father may  
85 not be

86 NG: (0.6) yes but erm I mean what this this is specifically targeted  
87 at single women and and lesbian couples .hh erm and as your  
88 other speaker said lesbian couples and single women do  
89 access treatment now .hh but that's really because the law is  
90 is is being regarded as outdated and and and fertility  
91 clinics feel safe to disregard it .hh erm the problem is that if  
92 (mouth click) Parliament makes a positive decision to re-  
93 implement that requirement .hh um rather than updating it  
94 .hh then that may encourage er fertility doctors to re-address  
95 their policy and go back to the days of the early 1990's  
96 .hh where a women had to be in a heterosexual relationship to

97 have any kind of fertility [treatment ]  
 98 ED: [.hh so your] your worry is that if you  
 99 don't (0.4) if you don't change the law .hh (0.7) it will get more  
 100 ferociously enforced than it is at the moment  
 101 NG: (0.4) yes  
 102 DB: (0.3) .hh well I mean that that isn't met out by guidance which  
 103 er .hh shows that er this clause is helpful=enables the clinics  
 104 to .hh consider .hh er to take account of father but also if the  
 105 father .hh is not er there .hh in a relationship to identify  
 106 potential male role model in the wider family .hh who can  
 107 provide that alternative mechanism and .hh to talk about er  
 108 (0.6) fatherhood and taking account of fathers as being  
 109 outdated just flies in the face of evidence that we're seeing  
 110 about how people are recognising the crucial and distinctive  
 111 role .hh fathers play .hh [in family life ]  
 112 ED: [this this is er] this is a bill that has  
 113 caused a lot of argument and will continue to do so=David  
 114 Burrowes Natalie Gamble thank you both

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today\_19\_05\_08\_0710

JH – John Humphrys

JQ – Josephine Quintavalle

GL – Gillian Lockwood

1 JH: science has developed to such a stage that parents can now  
2 save the life of a very sick child by using the blood from the  
3 umbilical cord of a sibling=it's become known as .hh a 'saviour  
4 (.) sibling' .hh but it means (.) choosing one embryo and  
5 discarding others and that raises profound moral questions for  
6 (.) many people (.) Parliament will vote today .hh on whether  
7 to allow it=amongst other things .hh with the (sneeze)  
8 excuse me with me in the studio is er Josephine Quintavalle  
9 from the campaign group Comment on Reproductive Ethics  
10 and on the line Doctor Gillian .hh Lockwood who is the  
11 Medical Director .hh of Midland Fertility Services .hh erm and  
12 your concern Miss Quintavalle is (.) precisely that the  
13 discarding of other embryos=  
14 JQ: =yes I don't think it's desirable ethically and nor do I think it's  
15 necessary=and I think in Parliament today it's going to be a  
16 very close call=I've just seen some polling that indicates  
17 .hh erm er (0.5) growing opposition to this (0.3) to this  
18 proposal=  
19 JH: =but wouldn't they be discarded anyway  
20 JQ: well no I mean the idea is that you set out deliberately to  
21 discard them=because you're creating a number of embryos  
22 and choosing the one the one you want=and if you don't get  
23 the one you want you discard all of them and that has  
24 happened frequently .hh it's already .hh er (.) been approved  
25 by the HFEA=I think this is just (.) Parliament at lot at last  
26 getting round to deciding whether it is desirable or not (0.3)  
27 [and I'd love ] I'd love to get back afterwards to the reason why  
28 I think it's  
29 JH: [Doctor Lock]  
29 JQ: unnecessary [to ]  
30 JH: [alright] d d let's just deal with that first issue  
31 Doctor Lockwood they they're discarded .hh sometimes all of  
32 them  
33 GL: (0.5) .hh occasionally it might be the case that none of the  
34 embryos .hh will provide a perfect tissue match to be able to  
35 save the life of an existing .hh very sick child but the whole  
36 process of IVF .hh has always involved .hh some embryos  
37 being selected .hh and some being .hh either frozen discarded  
38 or .hh donated=even in a natural er .hh pregnancy only about  
39 half of all embryos that get generated naturally actually  
40 ever turn into a baby  
41 .hh [I don't think the IVF process is any]more wasteful  
42 JH: [but we play not part in that do we ]  
43 we play no part in that I mean that is as it were nature taking

44 its course

45 GL: (0.3) .hh ok so let's look at nature taking its course=if purely by

46 chance a couple were to .hh conceive a baby that could by

47 .hh providing some of its .hh um umbilical stem cells .hh be a

48 perfect match to save its elder sibling .hh we'd say isn't that a

49 marvellous chance=it's a .hh one in four or maybe even a one

50 in a hundred chance .hh what can be so wrong about allowing

51 science .hh to make=to stack the odds a little bit more in the

52 favour of the sick child=

53 JH: =and er Miss Quintavalle don't we do that all the time isn't that

54 the whole point of medical intervention

55 JQ: .hh er I think let's clarify what goes on here and what's

56 proposed in the bill=it's not simply umbilical cord blood=we're

57 talking about .hh cord blood .hh bone marrow and other

58 tissue=this child is being .hh selected (0.3) very much as a

59 tissue bank for somebody else .hh er (0.3) it (0.4.) I think in

60 relationship to cord blood it's very it's very interesting .hh that

61 cord blood is (.) very beneficial=there are stem cells in cord

62 blood which are very very exciting indeed=and I've noticed

63 that the Catholic bishops have done a donation of .hh twenty

64 five thousand pounds and that will be directed to a cord blood

65 research centre in the United Kingdom .hh er what is exciting

66 about cord blood is that you don't require the same .hh degree

67 of tissue matching=as you require in bone marrow .hh or or

68 other tissue matches=so .hh what we should be doing (.)

69 which other countries are doing much more successfully than

70 we are in the United Kingdom .hh is saving all the cord blood

71 at the birth of babies .hh then we would have the universal

72 bank that we could dip into without needing to design a baby=

73 JH: =is that right Doctor Lockwood

74 GL: (0.6) .hh well (clears throat) the UK has certainly made great

75 progress is starting to collect cord blood .hh but part of the

76 difficulty is that .hh unless you start of with close family

77 members the chance of getting a match .hh is not very good

78 .hh and often .hh you need far more blood than would be

79 available from one single (.) cord

80 JH: nonetheless it does seem and and and (.) er Joseph

81 Quintavalle=Josephine Quintavalle was shaking her head at

82 that it does seem that that is a better way for many people of

83 going than .hh er deliberately setting out (.) to (.) to create

84 embryos that will be destroyed

85 GL: (0.4) .hh well I think as long as we've got IVF that's going to be

86 the case .hh but what's more im .hh portant here I think is

87 .hh to remember that .hh these children that are going to be

88 born that will .hh inadvertently to be able to help save the lives

89 .hh of their elder siblings .hh are also very much wanted

90 children .hh the idea that they're just .hh a means to an end

91 rather than an end in themselves .hh is simply not the case

92 .hh [what could] possibly be

93 JH: [isn't that ]

94 GL: more natural .hh than that a parent should .hh both want to be

95 able to save the life .hh of an existing sick child .hh and also  
 96 perhaps have another healthy child that won't be affected by  
 97 the same disease .hh that will be able to be a companion  
 98 JH: isn't that a crucial question er Josephine Quintavalle er if (.) a  
 99 parent was having a child .hh purely for the purpose of saving  
 100 another child and then .hh as it were hh metaphorically at any  
 101 rate =discarding that child=that would be one thing if a parent  
 102 wants to have a child=another child anyway .hh and the side  
 103 benefit of that is that it saves the life of an existing child  
 104 .hh surely that can only be a good thing  
 105 JQ: .hh if the if the parents in question wanted to have a child  
 106 anyway=they'd have any child the whole the whole erm  
 107 problem [here is ]  
 108 JH: [not if they] have a choice they wouldn't would they if  
 109 they already have a much loved child=  
 110 JQ: =mm  
 111 JH: =.hh erm and the .hh they have the choice (.) because they  
 112 are going to have another child anyway .hh they have the  
 113 choice of saving the life of the existing child .hh surely every  
 114 parent in the world would say I will do that  
 115 JQ: .hh I can understand the parents who are desperate to find  
 116 cures for their children but what I'm suggesting is that the  
 117 alternative that I've offered .hh of us really getting our backs  
 118 behind storing cord blood [and if ]  
 119 JH: [but we] can do both can't we=  
 120 JQ: [.hh well we wouldn't need to]  
 121 JH: =[we can do both and until ] we've got this great bank of  
 122 stored blood of of of (.) er (.) cord blood .hh surely we should  
 123 do both  
 124 JQ: .hh well I don't think we should do both ever because you  
 125 cannot get passed the principle that that particular child has  
 126 been chosen .hh for a purpose not for its own sake .hh but for  
 127 the benefit of somebody else .hh but I I think er er Gillian  
 128 Lockwood has to really look at the facts a lot more  
 129 .hh intensely=in a country like Italy=which .hh which stores  
 130 four times as much cord blood as the United [Kingdom]  
 131 JH: [alright ]  
 132 JQ: .hh parents there with sick children .hh have immediate  
 133 access to cures .hh it takes a long time to design a baby  
 134 .hh and you may not even get through  
 135 [pregnancies successfully]  
 136 JH: [just one alright one ] because she's raised=just one very  
 137 quick thought on that Doctor Lockwood=we have run out of  
 138 time but just quick thought on what they're doing in Italy=why  
 139 can't we do it here  
 140 GL: .hh well I think perhaps a more important issue  
 141 [is to remember that fifty per cent of all babies yes ]  
 142 JH: [well deal with that would you please deal deal with the Italy point]  
 143 GL: ok .hh well (1.0) certainly worldwide there has been a big  
 144 development in storing  
 145 cord blood but it's not .hh (0.4) going to be the answer for

146 everybody .hh and it's certainly isn't here available and what  
147 I'm concerned with .hh is sick children who need treatment at  
148 the moment .hh  
149 JH: .hh alright have to end it there I'm afraid=thank you both very  
150 much indeed=Doctor Gillian Lockwood and Josephine  
151 Quintavalle

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today\_19\_05\_08\_0810

JH – John Humphrys

LB – Leszek Borysiewicz

DB – David Burrowes

1 JH: without stem cells we wouldn't be what we are literally as long  
2 ago as the 1960s scientists managed to separate stem cells  
3 from embryos raising hopes that could create replacement  
4 cells .hh for people with all sorts of fatal diseases .hh they can  
5 be turned into everything from nerves and muscles to blood  
6 and skin and used to repair vital organs .hh but we are still  
7 waiting for some of those amazing possibilities (.) to become a  
8 reality .hh one of the problems for researchers has been  
9 getting enough stem cells=that's what MPs will vote on  
10 today=whether to allow so called .hh hybrid embryos to b  
11 (stumbles) to be created specifically so that scientists can use  
12 the stem cells for research .hh there are profound religious  
13 objections=many MPs are uneasy .hh one of them is David  
14 Burrowes a Conservative MP who sat on the Parliamentary  
15 committee that scrutinised the bill and he's on the line .hh and  
16 with me is .hh Sir Leszek Borysiewicz the new Chief Executive  
17 of the Medical .hh Research Council .hh er Sir Leszek let let's  
18 just be clear about what it is that happens here you you  
19 might take eggs from say a cow .hh you would .hh (.) burrow  
20 out all the stuff that's inside the egg=use the shell and put a bit  
21 of human DNA into it is that .hh very crudely what goes on  
22 here  
23 LB: .hh well it's a little more complicated than that er=  
24 JH: =I bet but is that the essence of it  
25 LB: in essence we are replacing part of the DNA of the nucleus in  
26 particular=there is also this mitochondrial DNA which I'm sure  
27 we'll come on to but the (.) nuclear DNA is what really  
28 controls all the proteins that are made inside a cell .hh er and  
29 those proteins are really the very (stumbles) er the stuff (.) by  
30 which we will begin to understand how that cell can actually be  
31 converted to different cell types and therefore .hh help to be  
32 able to understand (.) the way in which .hh er these produce  
33 (.) or may provide cures for different disorders  
34 JH: .hh but the the crucial bit for many people anyway .hh is (.)  
35 how much of the animal (.) is in the cell that is finally harvested  
36 if that's the right verb to use  
37 LB: .hh that's correct and under the provisions of this er proposed  
38 legislation there are four different types of so-called admixed  
39 embryos .hh there are those where we just put a little piece of  
40 DNA in=so for example to produce or to mimic .hh something  
41 like Alzheimer's disease in a test tube so we can study it in  
42 more detail and test drugs against it .hh secondly there are (.)  
43 areas where as you described you remove all of the nucleus  
44 .hh and here you're trying to look to see the interactions  
45 between the mitochondrial DNA and different cell .hh types

46 how that will actually move forward that's the full replacement  
47 .hh thirdly there is where you may well produce a mixed  
48 chimeric embryo that is where you take some whole cells  
49 JH: [ah right ]  
50 LB: [and mix] them with human cells .hh to see how different cell  
51 types moves=so this will teach us a lot more about for  
52 example congenital heart disease .hh where we have  
53 defects of cell mobility in embryos. .hh and last but not least  
54 are those that er where you take the two gametes one gamete  
55 from er or a sperm or and egg from one .hh species and mix it  
56 with .hh a gamete from another .hh getting a true fifty fifty  
57 .hh er mix=  
58 JH: =well now when you=  
59 =and that works for infertility and other disorders of i-imprinting  
60 but when you (.) speak that kind of language you do worry an  
61 awful lot of [people because]  
62 LB: [of course ]  
63 JH: they say ah there we are we're going to have a chimera .hh  
64 we're going to have a half man half animal=  
65 LB: =well that's precisely why this legislation is  
66 [so important ]  
67 JH: [sorry half human half animal]  
68 LB: .hh because what this legislation does is to bring all of this re-  
69 search under the control .hh er of erm major provisions er  
70 that are part of the legislation so that firstly .hh you get  
71 permission (.) from an agency to be able to carry out the  
72 work=so the work itself is scrutinised in detail secondly .hh that  
73 er you're not allowed to implant these er eggs .hh in any shape  
74 or form in any species .hh which means that you absolutely  
75 [restrict]  
76 JH: [they ] never leave the [laboratory]  
77 LB: [so ] they never leave the  
78 laboratory and they can never be implanted to produce these  
79 .hh so-called Frankensteins that people have er er have  
80 labelled them as .hh and last but not least at 14 days even in  
81 the test tube .hh er those embryos are are then er curtailed so  
82 that they are not allowed to develop any [further ]  
83 JH: [killed off]  
84 LB: .hh so they're killed off and they're not allowed to de[velop]  
85 JH: [hh ]  
86 LB: any further so that should .hh act as three major constraints er  
87 why people should be er feel .hh more relieved why the  
88 provisions of this particular legis[lation ]  
89 JH: [an and] yet you David  
90 Burrowes are not relieved at that  
91 DB: .hh I'm not relieved and er disappointed because er stem cell  
92 research is very exciting but it's exciting because .hh we're  
93 making ground brea-breaking moves in other areas=ethical  
94 alternatives=adult stem cell research .hh um areas such as  
95 umbilical cord blood which at the moment is .hh ninety percent  
96 ninety eight percent is thrown away .hh if we could er

97 .hh focus more and not get involved in the distraction .hh of er  
 98 .hh human admixed embryos .hh because the scientists have  
 99 said to us well .hh we can't give any clear scientific evidence  
 100 that there's gonna be .hh therapeutic treatments now but let's  
 101 just have its for hope in the future and I .hh think this is  
 102 frankly .hh a blind alley be[cause ]  
 103 JH: [isn't that] how research works  
 104 DB: .hh well the reality is research is (.) is based also on on  
 105 results if one was for example just to .hh to give payment er by  
 106 results and look at er .hh what is has a proven track record  
 107 and has real potential=when we look into the areas where  
 108 there's .hh over eighty therapeutic treatments already and look  
 109 at .hh what is producing clinical trials I think understand over  
 110 three hundred clinical trials .hh and then try .hh and work at  
 111 encouraging that and .hh if one looks at those scientists who  
 112 have previously been going down the route of .hh embryonic  
 113 stem cell research .hh they've said well let's not look so much  
 114 in terms of cloned embryos and certainly not .hh human am  
 115 animal embryos .hh let's look at other areas such as .hh  
 116 [induced]  
 117 JH: [alright ]  
 118 DB: pluripotent cells such as .hh Ian Wilnot\* who .hh er recognises  
 119 that .hh really it's in other areas that we need to go  
 120 JH: alright let's let's look at that then Sir Leszek come back to the  
 121 ethical (.) issue in a moment but .hh why (.) if we can do all  
 122 these other things=all the things that we need to do in other  
 123 ways why do we have to go down this road  
 124 LB: .hh ok first and foremost is is that er induced adult pluripotent  
 125 stem [cells that is ]  
 126 JH: [sorry that that] doesn't make much sense to  
 127 peo[ple could be a bit]  
 128 LB: [what is what is ] important is that (inaudible) stem cells  
 129 derive from us as er adults .hh do have a place .hh for  
 130 example the medical research council about half of our  
 131 funding goes for er adult stem cells as opposed to embryonic  
 132 stem cells .hh the truth of the matter is .hh that at present  
 133 these are two different routes .hh=  
 134 JH: =and what about cord blood?  
 135 LB: .hh and cord blood is something that is under study at the  
 136 presence time but again we it is to get a greater understanding  
 137 of the importance of these cells [so we don't]  
 138 JH: [so in other ]  
 139 LB: know which will actually work best  
 140 JH: ah=  
 141 LB: =.hh and that's why we must pursue all possible avenues at  
 142 this stage  
 143 JH: but surely what you do if you if you have (.) two possible (.)  
 144 roads to go down one of which you've acknowledged yourself  
 145 is highly controversial .hh the other which is not .hh why not  
 146 exhaust the possibilities of the less controversial before you  
 147 [move] into

148 LB: [.hh ]  
 149 JH: the more controversial area you may not need to move there  
 150 at all  
 151 LB: because both of these avenues have to proceed in parallel=  
 152 JH: =[why? ]  
 153 LB: [because] we're learning two different things=from embryonic  
 154 stem cells we have the greater potential to differentiate into a  
 155 whole range of different tissues .hh er this is more restricted in  
 156 the adult induced er stem cells .hh erm if we can understand  
 157 (.) what are the major controls that are there .hh we may be  
 158 able to get even further with the (.) induced pluripotent stem  
 169 cells .hh so it's an importance .hh er that is (stumbles) the  
 170 importance is to be able to pursue both avenues  
 171 simultaneously [and ]  
 172 JH: [alright]  
 173 LB: not just constrain ourselves to one  
 174 JH: er still not persuaded Mr Burrowes  
 175 DB: .hh still not persuaded because er (.) my my concern is that er  
 176 we're going down .hh a route in terms of cloned animal human  
 177 embryos=it's not: just a case of  
 178 [whether we go for .hh ]  
 179 JH: [but but there's no cloning involved here is there?]  
 180 LB: [(inaudible) at all ]  
 181 DB: well uh the reality is that er .hh this this area is (.) in terms of  
 182 trying to get eggs for cloned human animal .hh embryos  
 183 that is [the concern ]  
 184 JH: [but where are you] where are you getting the cloning bit  
 185 from e-e-even I as a non-scientist hhh am puzzled by that n n  
 186 and Sir Leszek is shaking his head at that wh wh.hh wh hhh  
 187 where does cloning come in  
 188 DB: .hh because that is the area that we're talking about in terms  
 189 of these hybrids .hh they're cloned animal human embryos  
 190 .hh and the concern is they contain a genetic flaw (.) and that  
 191 genetic flaw .hh would only increase in terms of trying to .hh  
 192 mix it with .hh a human animal .hh um entity and what we're  
 193 then one would lead to is a mismatch between the relevant  
 194 human and animal .hh material .hh and so the fundamental  
 195 flaws rather than those alternatives .hh which are already  
 196 producing clinical results .hh and good science matched with  
 197 good ethics  
 198 JH: .hh well er Sir Leszek is shaking his head at that as I say but  
 199 sadly we've run out of time I'd like to pursue it longer but there  
 200 we are the debate (.) will (.) be held in great detail in the  
 201 House of Commons today David Burrowes and Sir Leszek  
 202 Borysiewicz thank you both very much

### **Additional Comment -**

\*Line 118 – David Burrowes sounds to say Ian Wilmut. In the context of the interview and the research on induced pluripotent adult stem cells at that time, it is highly likely that this is Ian Wilmut, the scientist who created Dolly the Sheep (see comment below).

### **Transcription symbols**

[ ] = indicates overlap

\_\_\_ = underscoring indicates emphasis

.hh = indicates an audible intake of breath

hhh = a laugh

= = indicates no gap or breath

(.) = indicates a brief interval of less than a tenth of a second

(0.1) = indicates timed intervals of more than a tenth of a second

today\_20\_05\_08\_0710

ES – Edward Stourton

DF – David Field

1 ES: Much of the debate in the Commons today is likely to revolve  
2 around the question of whether a baby born before twenty four  
3 weeks has a chance .hh of surviving .hh Professor David Field  
4 of Leicester University has recently published a study .hh  
5 which found that that chance hasn't improved over the passed  
6 (.) twelve years=he's on the line now good morning  
7 DF: er good morning  
8 ES: .hh what do you think we can say on the basis of your  
9 research=I know you looked at er what had happened in quite  
10 a .hh large number of hospitals but do you think it's (0.5)  
11 .hh what you came up with is strong enough to say that we've  
12 reached as it were the limits of survivability  
13 DF: .hh (1.4) well (exhales) (1.3) our study was quite clear in what  
14 it showed=it showed that at twenty four and twenty five weeks  
15 we are seeing significant improvements over time .hh at  
16 twenty two and twenty three weeks (0.6) we're not seeing  
17 improvements over time .hh erm I think it's important just to  
18 expand a little bit on what you said about the nature of the  
19 study=it's based on a whole population .hh and we included all  
20 the women whose intention was to have a live birth erm .hh at  
21 the time they went into labour or a decision was made to  
22 .hh er [deliver] them .hh so this  
23 ES: [mm ]  
24 DF: is not about individual hospitals it's about this whole population  
25 [and therefore] it's  
26 ES: [.hh ]  
27 DF: probably more precise  
28 ES: if you looked at what had happened in a neo-natal unit which  
29 had .hh the very very highest standards do you think you  
30 would see something different or would the picture be  
31 replicated there  
32 DF: .hh (1.1) er you would see something different but not  
33 necessarily cos they're better or they try harder=that's not the  
34 message=what happens is that those hospitals .hh are tracked  
35 (0.6) .hh er the the best candidates if you like because at  
36 twenty two and twenty three weeks (.) being delivered and  
37 surviving resuscitation .hh is extremely hazardous .hh and a  
38 lot of those babies don't make it so the ones that make it to the  
39 er .hh major intensive care units have already been selected  
40 out as having a better chance and .hh I (0.5) I didn't publish  
41 the er the data for the individual major units (.) in (.) in our  
42 population .hh but they would inevitably be higher .hh but  
43 it's just the way the babies [end up] being distributed=  
44 ES: [.hh ]  
45 =I suppose those who would like to see the time limit on  
46 abortion lowered .hh would say that if any babies at all are

47 surviving within the .hh period we're taking about=between  
 48 twenty and twenty four weeks .hh then that should decide the  
 49 matter=the limit should be lowered  
 50 DF: er well certainly that (.) that's you know a valid argument that  
 51 (.) that there's no doubt that some of these babies (.) er do  
 52 survive .hh er at twenty three you get the (.) odd survivor who  
 53 is er (0.) is in very good condition er at the end of the process  
 54 but (1.1) .hh erm it all depends on your definition of of viability  
 55 ES: (0.9) meaning what  
 56 DF: .hh well (0.5) whether it's just (.) whether the babies survive  
 57 whether it's the quality of the the that survival or something  
 58 more complex I suppose  
 59 ES: .hh wh what do you think that your (0.5) results .hh tell us (.) in  
 60 (.) a way that's (.) useful to today's debate then  
 61 DF: .hh from from my perspective and I have to emphasise I'm a  
 62 neotologist I'm (.) I work at a unit where (.) our our sole aim is  
 63 to try and get healthy live babies at the end of the process  
 64 (.) .hh er despite our best efforts we are not making er  
 65 improvements at twenty two and twenty three weeks=we're  
 66 gonna .hh keep trying clearly along with ev everyone else in  
 67 the country who works in that in that field .hh=  
 68 ES: =but but do d'you think this is the right (.) way to .hh decide the  
 69 question of what abortion limit (.) should be  
 70 DF: (exhales) personally I I think that the link to er viability er er  
 71 which has absolutely dominated the debate this ter time  
 72 .hh seems somewhat strange because of course .hh the  
 73 babies that come to the neo-natal units er come from er er a  
 74 population of (.) women and families where .hh their intention  
 75 is to have a live baby .hh erm the fact that they come at twenty  
 76 two twenty three twenty four weeks is because something has  
 77 gone wrong (0.9) .hh er and then to link that (.) to a  
 78 situation where the decision to end the pregnancy is is for  
 79 completely different reasons and where otherwise that babe  
 80 baby would go to term .hh (0.9) er seems er um (mouth click)  
 81 (1.8) unfortunate if you like that that such a strong link has  
 82 been made to to [setting the limit]  
 83 ES: [ .hh ] (0.5) Professor Field thank  
 84 you very much indeed

### Transcription symbols

[ ] = indicates overlap

— = underscoring indicates emphasis

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today\_20\_05\_08\_0712

SM – Sarah Montague

IDS – Ian Duncan Smith

1 SM: MP's will also be voting on whether to change the current  
2 requirement that IVF clinics have to consider a potential child's  
3 need for a father .hh the government wants to replace that  
4 phrase with need for supportive parenting so that it doesn't  
5 discriminate against single and lesbian women .hh but the  
6 former Conservative leader Ian Duncan Smith=together with a  
7 number of other MP's .hh is tabling an amendment to enshrine  
8 in law the need for a father and a mother he joins us now good  
9 morning  
10 IDS: good morning  
11 SM: .hh why is this needed do you think  
12 IDS: .hh (1.1) well all the research that (exhales) the (clears throat)  
13 Centre for Social Justice carried out last year .hh and  
14 overwhelming evidence=now (.) shows that .hh one of the  
15 biggest problems we have (0.4) in society today .hh is (.) er  
16 absent fathers=fathers who .hh are not facing up either to their  
17 obligations .hh families that suffer=we've seen the .hh er  
18 quality of life for many children plunge once .hh their fathers  
19 are not on the scene=levels of education fall=a child .hh born  
20 to a broken home is seventy per cent more likely to fail at  
21 school .hh more likely to be in drug addiction alcohol=fail at  
22 .hh er er [at work] so .hh what we're saying is there is a  
23 SM: [sure ]  
24 IDS: huge now growing level of evidence that suggests so many of  
25 our .hh problems of social [breakdown] come down to this and  
26 SM: [.hh ]  
27 IDS: it seems to me .hh that running counter to that is this idea that  
28 somehow we simply strip out what is an advisory reference=  
29 SM: =mm [.hh ]  
30 IDS: [to all] families that are about to try and have chil[dren]  
31 SM: [.hh ]  
32 IDS: that the need for a father is there  
33 SM: but many people would listen to what you're say  
34 [and ] entirely agree with  
35 IDS: [(clears throat)]  
36 SM: you but say that what you're proposing in this particular  
37 legislation .hh it it doesn't address that=that what you're talking  
38 about is a problem .hh that predominantly is going to be in  
39 heterosexual naturally conceived er children .hh rather than  
40 this tend t they want the  
41 specific case where people who go for IVF .hh]  
42 IDS: [(coughs) (clears throat) (clears throat)]  
43 SM: child=it's a huge physical and er financial commitment=they've  
44 thought through .hh the importance of role models for their for

45 their child  
 46 IDS: well there's a big difference between thinking through things  
 47 .hh er and actually .hh having things go right .hh er we do all  
 48 think things through like this but whether or not we understand  
 49 fully .hh the nature of what works and what doesn't work .hh er  
 50 I would er argue doesn't necessarily happen .hh er and this is  
 51 not (.) aimed by the way at anything to do with gay or lesbian  
 52 couples because [they are well I'm sure  
 53 SM: [it has been seen as that though it's seen as  
 54 IDS: i well well it's t's ]  
 55 SM: anti-gay argument dressed up as a .hh]  
 56 IDS: sort of been around for a while and I don't think it is because  
 57 .hh the reality is the vast vast majority of people .hh who seek  
 58 this treatment .hh are in the heterosexual community .hh and  
 59 it's really a very important guidance .hh er for them=and I  
 60 make the point it is a guidance it's asking them .hh to consider  
 61 this at the time when they're considering .hh er having a child  
 62 [and] it's seems er only fair to ask them to do that .hh er it doesn't  
 63 SM: [.hh ]  
 64 IDS: stop them having the treatment [it doesn't] block them but  
 65 SM: [so wh ]  
 66 IDS: what it does do it says .hh just remember there is .hh there is  
 67 a need for a father in this=we think that's important for you to  
 68 recognise .hh er but the decisions you make thereafter  
 69 obviously are your own decisions and .hh  
 70 [it just seems to fly yeah]  
 71 SM: [so so can I just so the ]  
 72 way it would work you would like to see it work is that say .hh  
 73 whether it was a lesbian couple or a single woman=go to an  
 74 IVF clinic for fertility treatment .hh they should be told what  
 75 IDS: well it'll be there for everybody in the sense that .hh the need  
 76 for a father is important .hh and er that's what it  
 77 states=consider this .hh er that need for a father=what we've  
 78 added as well in [this is the need for a mother as well ]  
 79 SM: [but but but what I'm what I'm wondering is in]  
 80 practical terms what it means does it just mean they can't have  
 81 .hh er go to a sperm bank for sperm but they have to [.hh (.)]  
 82 IDS: [no ]  
 83 SM: produce a father  
 84 IDS: no no no not at all it's it's an advisory=it's reminding everybody  
 85 .hh the role of fathers .hh er in bringing up a child and in fact  
 86 .hh er this er clause also adds mothers=so it says fathers and  
 87 mothers .hh are important .hh in bringing up a child=it's it's a  
 88 it's a moment when we are er essentially that people ask  
 89 .hh those who are seeking this treatment .hh to pause to think  
 90 about that=to think about the decision they're taking .hh and to  
 91 consider .hh the needs of the child .hh for that balance to  
 92 parenting= [that's all]=if they choose to go ahead  
 93 SM: [lan ]  
 94 IDS: after that .hh then they will under legislation but to lea to cut  
 95 this out as the government has done .hh flies in the face of this



today\_20\_05\_08\_0810

SM – Sarah Montague

KD – Karen Dugdale

LG – Liz Goddard

NS – Norman Smith

1 SM: .hh if a baby born at twenty two weeks can survive .hh is it  
2 right that you can have an abortion up until twenty four weeks  
3 .hh that was the limit set in 1990 because it was the point at  
4 which a foetus was considered viable .hh MP's will vote today  
5 on whether to change that .hh two hundred thousand women  
6 have an abortion in Britain every year .hh the overwhelming  
7 majority of those are before twelve weeks .hh only a tiny  
8 percentage .hh one and a half per cent .hh take place after  
9 twenty weeks .hh Karen Dugdale is one of those and .hh she  
10 had an abortion at twenty one weeks .hh and Karen tell us  
11 what happened to you  
12 KD: (1.1) .hh er good morning=I went for my twenty week  
13 scan=which was an anomaly scan erm thinking everything  
14 was perfectly fine with the baby .hh and we told at that  
15 particular scan that there were a range of abnormalities um  
16 affecting our baby .hh erm and we were then kind of given the  
17 option of terminating the pregnancy or continuing the  
18 pregnancy  
19 SM: and you decided to terminate  
20 KD: (1.1) .hh yes we did er myself and my husband made the  
21 decision er with had the support of our family=but ultimately it  
22 was our choice and our decision .hh and we felt at that point in  
23 our lives and (.) with our own personal circumstances .hh we  
24 weren't able to continue with that pregnancy  
25 SM: how difficult did you find that decision  
26 KD: (1.1) .hh erm it's not an easy decision=you know=abortion is  
27 horrible whether it's at eight weeks .hh or twenty four weeks or  
28 twenty eight weeks .hh erm it's a messy business um but  
29 unfortunately life doesn't always fit into=you know=little  
30 pigeonholes and it's not always perfect .hh so we found the  
31 decision very difficult erm as most women in that situation do  
32 and and not just for abnormalities .hh for a range .hh of  
33 personal and very individual circumstances  
34 SM: .hh but you went for that scan when you were what twenty  
35 weeks pregnant  
36 KD: .hh ye yes  
37 SM: abortions after twenty weeks are allowed when there's  
38 evidence of severe foetal abnormality so (.) would you not  
39 have fallen into that category anyway  
40 KD: (1.1) erm it wasn't an issue I was aware of=I mean you don't  
41 know about late termination=for whatever reason unless  
42 you're faced with having to go through one .hh erm and I think  
43 that's what .hh has been so difficult with this whole debate

44 is that unless you're in a situation where you're facing a late  
45 termination .hh you don't want to get involved in hearing about  
46 it because it is messy=it's horrible=it's not a nice situation  
47 .hh yes I may have been erm included .hh in that small group  
48 of women under er ground e .hh where abnormality allows you  
49 to have late term abortion .hh but there are a whole raft of  
50 reasons why women present late for abortion and and it really  
51 does just affect a very small number of us .hh [and I find]  
52 SM: [but what ]  
53 KD: it's very important (.) sorry  
54 SM: but wh what I'm particularly wondering though if the limit were  
55 changed now to twenty weeks you wouldn't=  
56 KD: =[yes ]  
57 SM: [your] situation wouldn't have wouldn't be affected by that  
58 (0.6) would it  
59 KD: (1.3) .hh well you say it wouldn't but erm they (.) there are kind  
60 of rumours also and and anecdotal evidence that doctors  
61 .hh er are (0.3) er (.) want to kind of .hh (0.3) almost give a tick  
62 list of foetal abnormality=so some would qualify some  
63 wouldn't=I mean you're going down a slippery path here I think  
64 .hh you know (.) every person's reasons for wanting a late  
65 termination .hh is valid to them and their own individual  
66 circumstances .hh and (0.5) I really do think that the the  
67 foetal abnormality issue shouldn't be taken separately from  
68 other women .hh presenting late for termination  
69 SM: .hh Karen Dugdale thank you very much  
70 .hh Liz Goddard gave birth twenty two weeks into her  
71 pregnancy her son is now ten good morning  
72 LG: (0.4) good morning  
73 SM: what happened to you  
74 LG: (0.4) .hh well erm I was having a perfectly normal pregnancy  
75 up until about twenty two weeks when er .hh things went  
76 wrong and erm .hh Will was born er prematurely in hospital at  
77 twenty two weeks  
78 SM: (0.5) and what happened (.) er what did the doctors say  
79 LG: (0.4) .hh well because he was (.) before viability of twenty four  
80 weeks=there was er no offer of treatment=they were (.) very  
81 certain that he was gonna die .hh erm and so he was just left  
82 with me=I was er holding him in the maternity suite .hh  
83 erm .hh and the erm they said that he would be alive for  
84 maybe ten minutes er maybe an hour and then time went on  
85 and time went on .hh and after about seven hours they did  
86 take him into the special care baby unit .hh erm but only to  
87 keep him comfortable=there was no suggestion he would be  
88 treated because he just didn't fit .hh in with that twenty four  
89 week .hh date [.hh erm]  
90 SM: [so you were] expecting him to die  
91 LG: he was expected to die  
92 SM: wh wh what happened  
93 LG: well whe he was about thirty six hours old when he started to  
94 finally show signs of .hh of distress .hh erm and by that time

95 the hospital had er met=they'd got together=they'd discussed  
 96 the case and .hh decided that they would offer him treatment  
 97 because he'd obviously lived for thirty six hours .hh unaided  
 98 and .hh you know=clearly .hh you know=had potential .hh and  
 99 so at that point the hospital offered er to treat him if that's what  
 100 I would've wanted .hh which obviously I did .hh erm and then  
 101 from that point on they treated him like they would have  
 102 treated any other .hh premature baby  
 103 SM: how is he now  
 104 LG: he's absolutely fine=he's er .hh you know he's ten years  
 105 old=he's er you know close to the top of his class at  
 106 school=he's interested in all sorts of things that ten year old  
 107 boys are interested in .hh  
 108 SM: is he in any way affected by the fact that he was born  
 109 prematurely  
 110 LG: er no in no way at all .hh erm early on the first three four years  
 111 .hh erm he did have a few few problems (stumbles) due  
 112 to=you know developing late and that kind of thing .hh by the  
 113 time he started school he was completely caught up  
 114 SM: so when you lo hear the current debate what are your  
 115 thou=what's your thoughts  
 116 LG: .hh I really do believe that the the limit needs to be changed  
 117 .hh erm to below twenty two weeks .hh erm I think that .hh that  
 118 when once a child has potential for for life .hh then they have  
 119 the rights of child need to take precedence over the rights of  
 120 the .hh the mother .hh and if Will could survive then so can  
 121 others .hh the current guidelines actually say that if a  
 122 termination's gonna happen between twenty two and twenty  
 123 four weeks .hh steps have to be taken .hh to ensure that the  
 124 baby is born dead .hh now=you know=why why are they there  
 125 .hh those guidelines are there because (stumbles) at twenty  
 126 two weeks twenty three weeks the babies would be born alive  
 127 .hh and if we were in a situation whe where we were killing  
 128 them after birth .hh there'd be uproar .hh so the gui=so what  
 129 actually happens now is that they are killed first .hh and then  
 130 they're delivered .hh and that's called a late term abortion  
 131 .hh that's for the twenty two to twenty four week abortions  
 132 SM: .hh erm a lot of a lot of the debate you will have heard is  
 133 about defining viability and there's been suggestions that  
 134 .hh er (0.7) that before twenty four weeks babies are no more  
 135 viable than they were a few years ago (1.0) [does that]  
 136 LG: [hh well I ]  
 137 I believe that that's down to statistics=I think that what  
 138 what's=the evidence=cos=there=we're talking con fairly small  
 139 numbers here .hh I think that probably statistically .hh erm the  
 140 evidence isn't significant in terms of the increase in survival  
 141 rates for twenty two and twenty three week old babies  
 142 .hh however they are surviving .hh and to those individuals to  
 143 those babies and their families .hh it's extremely significant  
 144 .hh and I think=you know we have to be careful about statistics

145 in these in these issues  
146 SM: Liz Goddard thank you very much=well Norman Smith our  
147 political correspondent is on the line .hh Norman when MP's  
148 vote on this what options do they have before them today  
149 NS: well they've gotta whole range of options going from twelve  
150 weeks right up to twenty two weeks and .hh the votes'll  
151 probably be taken in ascending orders=so they'll start with the  
152 twelve week option then fourteen=sixteen=eighteen=  
153 =twenty=twenty two .hh um .hh it seems to me that the lower  
154 options are unlikely to gain much support=they've basically  
155 been tabled by=if you like pro-life .hh MP's who are opposed  
156 to abortion per se and are seeking to reduce the term limit  
157 because they disagree with abortion .hh there isn't really a  
158 majority for that and I don't think they'll get that much  
159 support=it may not even come to a vote on those lower  
160 options .hh the real s vote I think .hh are going to be on twenty  
161 weeks twenty two and the status quo  
162 SM: .hh and where do you think it'll fall  
163 NS: .hh (0.5) if you look at previous history then you would have to  
164 say that the status quo will prevail because when there've  
165 been previous votes on this .hh er in the last Parliament then  
166 those in favour of the change were quite easily .hh defeated  
167 erm similarly the fact is it does actually divide very roughly on  
168 party lines this so .hh most Labour MP's=most Liberal  
169 Democrats MP's are opposed to any change=most  
170 Conservative MP's are in favour of a change=it's not exact  
171 but it's rough .hh and on that basis=on party numbers=you'd  
172 have to say well ok the status quo is going to win .hh however  
173 and it's a big however .hh it's not so simple and that is  
174 because of the Parliamentary mechanism being used carry out  
175 this voting .hh because it is a free vote .hh a number of MP's  
176 won't vote=they won't turn up=they'll have other constituency  
177 business=they may choose to abstain=which means if there  
178 are fewer MP's voting the majority you need is less .hh and  
179 those campaigning for twenty weeks=which have had the most  
180 .hh sort of forceful and vociferous campaign claim to have the  
181 support of around two hundred MP's=now normally to win  
182 .hh you'd need over three hundred MP's but if you have fewer  
183 MP's taking part .hh then two hundred does put you in the  
184 ball park=and the other thing to say is those campaigning for  
185 change .hh are much more motivated than those campaigning  
186 for the status quo=understandable if you want change you're  
187 going to be much more determined .hh to vote .hh so  
188 although history would suggest the status quo should prevail  
189 in the particular circumstances here .hh it seems to me it's  
190 gonna be a very close run thing with twenty weeks  
191 SM: Norman Smith thank you

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today\_21\_05\_08\_0710

ES – Edward Stourton  
KB – Kevin Barron  
MKP – Mark Pritchard  
MEP – Mike Penning

1 ES: the Commons vote to reject a lowering of the time limit for  
2 abortions came after a debate which saw some powerful  
3 interventions .hh on the other side of the argument the Tory  
4 MP Mark Pritchard held up a photograph .hh of sixteen week  
5 old foetus  
6 MKP: that picture (0.4) and indeed er that which is shown on my (.)  
7 website is not a tissue blob (0.6) or unrecognisable collection  
8 of cells (0.8) it is a living (0.4) small (.) human being and even  
9 some botched abortions between sixteen and twenty weeks  
10 gestation reveal the extent of their humanity  
11 ES: .hh and the Tory health spokesman Mike Penning told this  
12 story .hh from a hospital consultant  
13 MEP: the consultant (0.5) emailed one of my colleagues this evening  
14 and said (1.2) in one room at my (2.0) hospital where I work  
15 (0.7) we are successfully (1.8) looking after (0.6) premature  
16 babies (0.8) of twenty three twenty four weeks and they are  
17 going on to live normal lives (1.1) no (0.7) in the next room  
18 (1.3) my colleagues (.) are terminating (0.6) babies of the  
19 same age (0.7) that is morally unexpect ceptable no (1.6) no  
20 (0.5) that is morally unacceptable this consultant said please  
21 vote for twenty (.) weeks that is what I will do this evening  
22 thank you so much  
23 XXXXX  
24 ES: Mike Penning well the Labout MP Kevin Barron chairs the  
25 Commons Health Select Committee and he's in our  
26 Westminster studio=those who .hh take your view Kevin  
27 Barron won last night but do you have a sense that the .hh tide  
28 of opinion in terms of a long term (0.3) trend .hh is running  
29 against you  
30 KB: .hh eh no I don't think it is I I think what we saw er last night as  
31 opposed to what we saw in 1990 is that we .hh we use er er  
32 the evidence that's around=the scientific evidence to .hh to  
33 come to a decision about the issue of the .hh er limit of weeks  
34 on abortion and .hh there was no evidence that we should  
35 move from the twenty four weeks that was set in 1990 and  
36 don't for[get before] that of course it was twenty  
37 ES: [.hh ]  
38 KB: eight weeks  
39 ES: .hh it was quite a relatively tight vote um seventy one majority  
40 I think was the was the figure .hh and it's noticeable that a  
41 number of senior Conservatives .hh lined up in favour of  
42 change including the leader of the party .hh everyone seems

43 to accept that it's unlikely that anything will change within this  
 44 Parliament but come an election and the possibility of more  
 45 Conservative MP's .hh er in Parliament things could look  
 46 rather different couldn't they  
 47 KB: well (.) they may look different in that respect but you know the  
 48 reason I took the decision that I took indeed in 1990 and now  
 49 is because of what medical science is telling us and I think that  
 50 that's important and we can't just sort of let the .hh issue of er  
 51 you know party politics=  
 52 ES: =sure=  
 53 KB: =that's what you're suggesting and [er ] you know there were  
 54 ES: [ .hh ]  
 55 KB: some Conservative members of Parliament voted in the same  
 56 lobby as me and many others throughout the night=as  
 57 [indeed] they'd done the day before  
 58 ES: [ .hh ]  
 59 no I I wasn't I was really merely suggesting that it it looks quite  
 60 possible that the .hh Parliamentary arithmetic will change in  
 61 the not too (0.3) distant future=that this matter is not  
 62 .hh settled for good  
 63 KB: well er nor should it be settled for good er i i it seems to me  
 64 that the obvious situation is if medical science was telling us  
 65 that we ought to reduce the er .hh er the the er limit of weeks  
 66 that we have then then maybe that something we should do  
 67 but er .hh you know we should be driven by science and not  
 68 driven by by some of the er er .hh debate that we heard last  
 69 night=  
 70 ES: =and and you believe that science was the decisive fact do  
 71 you in the vote in the end  
 72 KB: I think you know Parliament=in my time in Parliament has  
 73 moved from twenty eight weeks to twenty four=if there was  
 74 good reason to move .hh er lower then that I think Parliament  
 75 would have done it .hh I mean the report=one of the  
 76 (inaudible) report was done in my own area in the Trent region  
 77 and the viability of .hh er er under twenty four weeks is is you  
 78 know=the evidence is very very thin=no matter what was said  
 79 in the debate last night that's the .hh the truth from the er er  
 80 clinicians point of view  
 81 ES: Kevin Barron thank you very much indeed

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today\_21\_05\_08\_0810

ES – Edward Stourton  
ND – Nadine Dorries  
DP – Dawn Primarillo  
ACT – Actuality

1 ACT: the Ayes to the right 233 the No's to the left 304 (XXXX)  
2 ES: well that was the closest those who wanted to lower the  
3 abortion time limit got to success .hh after a series of votes  
4 that kept the Commons sitting until (.) almost midnight .hh the  
5 limit of twenty four weeks remains unchanged (.) the health  
6 minister Dawn Primarolo argued there was no evidence that a  
7 change was needed .hh she warned that any lowering of the  
8 limit .hh would have a significant impact on a small number of  
9 women  
10 DP: they would travel abroad=they would seek abortions from  
11 elsewhere .hh and wouldn't it be appalling .hh if we drove  
12 women back .hh to where they were .hh before the 1967 Act  
13 ES: .hh we're joined now by Conservative MP Nadine Dorries=a  
14 former nurse=who's been .hh a leading figure in the campaign  
15 to reduce the time (.) limit .hh I don't know whether you heard  
16 Nadine Dorries (.) Kevin Barron talking on the programme (.)  
17 the chairman of the health select committee .hh an hour ago  
18 (.) he concluded that what made the difference last night was  
19 science and specifically the lack of evidence .hh that the rates  
20 at which (.) babies can survive after (.) twenty four weeks=the l  
21 ack of evidence .hh erm that er that that had come forward (.)  
22 do you [accept] that analysis of what happened  
23 ND: [sure ]  
24 um er but I accept his analysis unfortunately it's um (0.3) it's (.)  
25 a very difficult analysis .hh you had Professor Field on your  
26 programme yesterday from the Trent study .hh he did really=I  
27 don't think it's fair to um to .hh to look at premature babies  
28 .hh who are born for a reason quite often because the baby is  
29 poorly .hh and look at the outcomes of those babies against  
30 aborted healthy babies .hh we will never know .hh what erm  
31 the outcomes are of a baby if a mother at twenty three weeks  
32 pregnancy .hh with a normal baby is put into spontaneous  
33 labour .hh and see how that baby fairs=that will never  
34 happen=that kind of trial .hh so to actually use the outcomes of  
35 poorly babies against healthy babies is wrong .hh also .hh if  
36 you look at hospitals in the UK which have good neo-natal  
37 units .hh actually there's [the viability figures] are much better  
38 ES: [.hh er ]  
39 whatever your view of the science and the judgements that  
40 were made in the report you're referring to=in terms of the way  
41 that this .hh goes forward .hh you have to recognise do you  
42 not that the chances of you changing the law within this

43 Parliament are pretty much zero  
44 ND: within this Parliament=I would hope if there's a change of  
45 government then things may be slightly different  
46 ES: .hh even though it appears that the scientific evidence  
47 .hh hasn't changed  
48 ND: well there are many reasons to reduce the number of  
49 abortions that we have in the UK .hh you know the science  
50 and viability is one option=if we look at .hh Sweden and other  
51 countries which have dedicated .hh neo-natal transport  
52 services for babies .hh erm in terms of ambulances and we  
53 look at the .hh quality of neo-natal services they have  
54 .hh against what we deliver in the UK .hh then we can see why  
55 the science is much better .hh in other countries than it is in  
56 the UK=but there are so [many other] reasons  
57 ES: [hh ]  
58 ND: .hh we have too many abortions in the UK .hh er to name just  
59 another .hh so we need to get all the reasons why the  
60 numbers need to come down .hh and look at the rights of the  
61 child as well um compared with the rights of the mother  
62 .hh I think at a certain point in pregnancy .hh at around twenty  
63 weeks .hh the rights of that child .hh who may be viable  
64 .hh who may feel pain as part of the abortion process .hh has  
65 a right to live equal to that of the mother  
66 ES: .hh and just to=staying with the politics with it for a moment or  
67 two if we (.) could  
68 ND: [mm]  
69 ES: [hh ] to what extent do you think this has become not quite a  
70 party political issue but one .hh on which people tend to fall  
71 down er on one side or the other according to party lines=I'm  
72 thinking particularly the fact for example that your party leader  
73 .hh voted in favour of a cut in the time limit and the Prime  
74 Minister voted .hh for the status quo  
75 ND: .hh well you know it's it's ever been thus=I've only been an MP  
76 for three years but looking back at the history of this issue  
77 .hh the Labour party has always voted .hh um pro-choice pro-  
78 abortion .hh by and large and the Conservative party by and  
79 large has always pros voted on the pro-life side .hh I'm neither  
80 of those things because I support abortion .hh particularly in  
81 the first trimester .hh it's just late abortion where I have an  
82 issue with=but it's always fallen=last night .hh the Labour MP's  
83 were on a three line whip to attend the chamber .hh when they  
84 arrived in the chamber=cos normally only a third of them even  
85 vote on this issue .hh they were dragooned off into the twenty  
86 four week lobby .hh so that's [how it falls down on] political issues  
87 ES: [hh but but in term ]  
88 ES: in terms of your (.) thought that things might be different in a  
89 new Parliament you would presumably hope with (.) more  
90 Conservative MP's more people would think your way  
91 ND: exactly  
92 ES: Nadine Dorries thank you very much indeed for talking to us

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today\_22\_05\_08\_0830

ED - Evan Davis

LJ - Lisa Jardine

1 ED: it's been an important week for our lawmakers=delving into  
2 issues of .hh hybrid embryos abortion .hh and of course the  
3 family with the decision to drop the requirement .hh that IVF  
4 clinics should take notice of the need of a child for a father  
5 .hh in deciding on whether to offer treatment .hh an important  
6 week for lawmakers=but the body responsible for overseeing  
7 these matters is the HFEA the human fertilisation and  
8 embryology authority .hh and the chair of the authority is  
9 Professor Lisa Jardine who is with me now good morning  
10 to you  
11 LJ: morning Evan  
12 ED: .hh Let's talk about that decision on fathers (.) first (.) did the  
13 (.) HFEA have a view and take a role in the framing of the  
14 legislation on that  
15 LJ: well that's quite simple no we didn't and no we don't .hh um we  
16 are the regulator and we our our job is (.) to (.) implement  
17 legislation .hh and to make fine decisions where legislation  
18 allows of to possible .hh erm [outcomes]  
19 ED: [bu ] but the practice had  
20 de uh the old law said (.) the clinics had to take account  
21 of the need of for a father .hh er but practice had apparently  
22 deviated quite a long way from that in (.) over the years=l  
23 wondered whether you had (.) decided or taken a decision not  
24 to enforce or to try [and impose the rule that a father should]  
25 LJ: [hh we absolutely ]  
26 I I I just would reiterate it's not within our remit to make  
27 decisions about not to enforce=we have to enforce=however  
28 let me just to go .hh to that general question .hh in 1984  
29 Baroness Warnock .hh laid the foundations for this  
30 legislation=it is a really elegant piece of legislation .hh and  
31 Parliamentarians discussed it .hh I thought wonderfully over  
32 two days=l was proud of our Parliamentary democracy .hh um  
33 the the the the stipulation .hh that clinics .hh ought to check  
34 .hh that there was a father present .hh as it were in the in  
35 vitro fertilisation process .hh dates right the way back to 1980  
36 something=now we know how much has changed .hh in  
37 society .hh since that time .hh I'm not offering you my own  
38 view on those changes .hh but we have to .hh accept I think  
39 that those changes have taken place .hh and therefore that  
40 stipulation .hh was increasingly .hh out of line with .hh ordinary  
41 people's views .hh of what constitutes .hh a supportive family  
42 environment and all that has happened .hh is that .hh the  
43 stipulation has been replaced by .hh the need for a supportive  
44 .hh in family environment supportive parenting  
45 ED: taking stock of where we're left at the end of this week=the UK  
46 is a relatively (.) liberal environment for research in embryos

47 .hh (.) for IVF and for all these things isn't it=why do you think  
 48 the UK has become (.) .hh a liberal place on these issues  
 49 LJ: .hh do you know I'm not sure it's liberal we are an evidentially  
 50 based society we are you could stop=and actually people were  
 51 stopped in the street on this er on these items .hh and and  
 52 people were very .hh I thought delightfully straight forward  
 53 about recognising .hh um where the evidence led us at this  
 54 point you know they were quite well informed .hh so first of all  
 55 we're an evidentially based society I think  
 56 [.hh I so yes ]  
 57 ED: [It's not all evidence though it's a matter of principle] as well  
 58 and religious faith and [(inaudible) ]  
 59 LJ: [We are at the] cutting edge of science  
 60 in these areas and I think it is appropriate .hh that the le the  
 61 light touch legislation that we have .hh that has now been  
 62 .hh er is about to be put in place updated on the 1990  
 63 legislation .hh that it should be light touch .hh and that we the  
 64 regulator .hh should do the difficult business of case by case  
 65 .hh deciding .hh on whether the science should be carried out  
 66 .hh and whether new treatments should be allowed  
 67 ED: But you're satisfied at the end of this=  
 68 LJ: =I'm delighted with the process  
 69 ED: Lisa Jardine thank you very much for joining us.

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today\_20\_10\_08\_0855

JN – James Naughtie

DJ – David Jones

1 JN: Another flurry of amendments on abortion has been  
2 attached=or have been attached=to the Embryology Bill  
3 .hh which is back in the Commons this week=for example a  
4 proposal to reduce the requirement for .hh doctors' signatures  
5 for abortions before twenty four weeks .hh a suggestion that  
6 .hh nurses and midwives should be able to carry out  
7 abortions=all kinds of .hh different views coming to play  
8 .hh there is an anxious public debate surrounding changes to  
9 the original 1967 Abortion Act=not least .hh because of the  
10 many scientific advances that have taken place .hh since the  
11 passage of that .hh legislation .hh one of the voices .hh in the  
12 ethics debate is that of David Jones=Professor of Bioethics at  
13 St. Mary's University College .hh Twickenham which is a  
14 Catholic University=and he's with us .hh now and wrote to the  
15 Times the other day with some people on this=now you begin  
16 .hh er obviously from (0.4) um (.) a Catholic (.) position .hh but  
17 what you seem to be doing is to try (.) to find common ground  
18 on ethical questions which others .hh er (1.0) may share  
19 although they don't come from exactly the same starting  
20 point=from your perspective what's important about what  
21 .hh happens to this bill  
22 DJ: (1.1) .hh um well I think that that one one thing I should say  
23 immediately with respect to abortion .hh is that abortion wasn't  
24 in the the original bill as it was drafted and the bill is  
25 already a very big bill .hh er big in two senses=it's important  
26 and it has a lot of stuff in it .hh about fertility treatment  
27 .hh about er embryo research and so on .hh and to to  
28 squeeze abortion in as well .hh I think .hh er is is just too  
29 much=I think that it needs its own debate and one of the  
30 important things between now and Wednesday is is can MP's  
31 find a way .hh to .hh erm have a balanced review .hh and to  
32 have er debate=a serious debate=about abortion but not to try  
33 to squeeze it in on Wednesday on top of this (.) this bill  
34 JN: .hh er in the letter that you (.) signed to the Times (.) er which  
35 was signed by a lot of professionals and academics working in  
36 health care and (.) ethics and (.) law .hh er you suggested that  
37 there were (0.6) er really quite a number of important  
38 questions and one of them .hh was .hh the issue of whether  
39 abortion should be carried out if it results from an observation  
40 about gender race or disability=  
41 DJ: =mm hm=  
42 JN: =now how do you think that should be coped with  
43 DJ: .hh well here here you have a sort of clash of erm modern  
44 sensibilities (.) on the one hand .hh we we're more concerned  
45 about equality (0.4) we're concerned about equality of  
46 gender=we're concerned about equality of disability .hh and on

47 the other hand .hh we're we're interested in in people's  
48 freedom=freedom in a whole range of ways but also with  
49 respect to the termination of pregnancy .hh and when you get  
50 particularly very late (0.4) termination .hh and for reasons of  
51 disability and for particularly for minor disabilities as far as the  
52 public are concerned=  
53 JN: =hm=  
54 DJ: =.hh then this there's a clash here between two different things  
55 and I think that .hh we haven't really worked out how to talk  
56 about [this] seriously=we need to  
57 JN: [.hh]  
58 DJ: talk .hh so that there's that we don't .hh have discriminatory  
59 legislation out there which treats differently .hh er the able  
60 bodied and the and the disabled  
61 JN: .hh and you're saying that that is an issue that simply has to  
62 be faced up to now=I mean it can't be escaped  
63 DJ: .hh I thin I I absolutely think it has to be faced up to=I don't  
64 think that it it there is time to debate it on Wednesday=which is  
65 why I think that we need to have a proper review of these  
66 things=but I think we need to look at .hh how we  
67 .hh deal with all this erm equality legislation and attitude to  
68 disability .hh I mean it's interesting there was an amendment  
69 on this in the Lords which was put forward by a disabled peer  
70 .hh and there were two other peers that supported it at first  
71 and then withdrew their support .hh and one said we need a  
72 more sophisticated debate which we haven't had yet a how  
73 about how we bring these together [so I ] think that we  
74 JN: [hh because]  
75 DJ: do need this debate  
76 JN: because we are dealing=I'm just looking at the most recent  
77 figures=we are dealing with erm .hh (.) two hundred  
78 thousand=roughly speaking=abortions in the course of a year  
79 in England and Wales (0.4) [which] is a very high number  
80 DJ: [abso ]  
81 absolutely and I think again you've conf you'll find a consensus  
82 which says .hh this is a very high number=how do we find  
83 ways=practical ways .hh to to find alternatives .hh to find er a l  
84 egislation which will be .hh er er discouraging but not too  
85 restrictive where the where the country is at the moment=  
86 JN: =so fundamentally what you're saying is that if people are  
87 trying to use erm this Embryology Bill on Wednesday .hh to  
88 get in really quite fundamental changes to the abortion law  
89 .hh and that the ones that you may dislike most are on the  
90 liberal side of the agenda .hh that shouldn't happen and this  
91 needs to be dealt with in a different way  
92 DJ: a absolutely so absolutely so there are there are issues in this  
93 bill .hh complicated (stumbles) issues in the bill about cloning  
94 and about surrogate motherhood and saviour sib=  
95 [all sorts of stuff]  
96 JN: [shouldn't be ] about abortion  
97 DJ: (.) it shouldn't be about abortion

98 JN: David Jones thank you

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today\_22\_10\_08\_0750

SM – Sarah Montague

RD – Ruth Deech

AF – Ann Furedi

1 SM: It's just over forty years since abortion was made legal and in  
2 that time the legislation has been changed only once (.) that  
3 was back in 1990 .hh when the time at which an abortion  
4 could be carried out was reduced from twenty eight to twenty  
5 four weeks .hh many MP's want to update the law again and  
6 have tabled amendments to the Human Fertilisation and  
7 Embryology Bill=which has been going through Parliament  
8 .hh there's been talk of amendments to make abortion eadi  
9 easier (.) to make them harder (.) to allow abortion in  
10 Northern Ireland (.) and many more .hh but none of them will  
11 be heard (.) the government has effectively decided to put off  
12 changing the law .hh Baroness Deech=Ruth Deech is a former  
13 Chairwoman of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology  
14 Authority .hh Ann Furedi is Chief Executive of the British  
15 Pregnancy Advisory Service and .hh they've joined me on the  
16 line good morning to you both

17 AF: \*Hi there

18 RD: \*Good morning

19 SM: Lady Deech why was this the right thing for the government to  
20 do

21 RD: .hh there's a very important bill going through Parliament  
22 which we really must wrap up and finalise .hh reforming  
23 embryo research and IVF treatments .hh the Lords dealt with it  
24 very comprehensively=and I must say by the way that .hh if  
25 you're looking for a really valuable function for the House of  
26 Lords=it was absolutely full of every expert .hh that you could  
27 possibly want on this on this particular topic .hh and it would  
28 be tragic if it were to be hi-jacked .hh by abortion  
29 provisions=which really have nothing to do .hh with the rest of  
30 the bill=it's a completely separate issue and I welcome the fact  
31 .hh that it's going to be dealt with separately

32 SM: Ann Furedi it's a separate issue and should not have been in  
33 the Bill anyway

34 AF: .hh well er like it or not abortion is covered by the Human  
35 Fertilisation and Embryology Act .hh and there was the  
36 opportunity very early on in the discussions for .hh  
37 government er in the drafting of their new bill .hh to have er  
38 put abortion out with it=but actually .hh er they didn't (.) and  
39 the Commons authority selected abortion amendments to be  
40 discussed .hh way back at the er committee stage of the Bill  
41 .hh er and they were happy for votes to take place then on  
42 reducing the time limit=although they weren't carried .hh and it  
43 seems entirely appropriate .hh that (1.0) erm (.) there is a  
44 need to modernise .hh abortion practice and bring it and  
45 .hh sorry to modernise the abortion law .hh and bring it into

46 line with medical practice and [scientific] evidence just as with  
47 SM: [.hh ]  
48 AF: infertility treatment  
48 SM: and Lady Deech that is why MP's like Evan Harris say this is a  
49 disgraceful move that they had it erm they allowed  
50 amendments=they went through all the committee  
51 stages and it's only now .hh that they are effectively blocking  
52 debate and in fact he put (stumbles) many people have  
53 pointed to the .hh possible unintended consequences of what  
54 the Lords might do  
55 RD: .hh well I think (0.8) this shows how right it is to separate it out  
56 because there's a very grave danger  
57 [first of all that the liberalising amendment won't get through]  
58 SM: [but but what I'm wondering the government didn't ]  
59 think it was right to separate out (.) separate it out earlier why  
60 do you think they've done it now  
61 RD: .hh because it didn't seem like such a big issue=when it went  
62 through the Lords there was an abortion amendment=which I  
63 respected about disability .hh but what we're facing now is a  
64 possibility that there'll be so much contention that first of all  
65 .hh the liberalising amendments won't get through and the  
66 whole bill might fall .hh and it seems to me that although rather  
67 unfortunately abortion got in 1990=the opportunity was taken  
68 .hh now is the right moment to separate it out we've got to  
69 get [on with the scientific aspect and ] now is the time to wrap  
70 SM: [Ann Ann]  
71 RD: up that bill=  
72 SM: =Ann Furedi there is talk of a sort of possible deal that within  
73 two years the government will allow time for the debate of a  
74 Private Members' Bill that's solely on abortion=the that would  
75 be the right time of it would that appease you  
76 AF: .hh well it would appease me if it happened but I have to say  
77 that I think that many of us feel that .hh the way that the  
78 debate has gone up until now leads us not being able to trust  
79 government on this .hh I'm really sick of being told that the law  
80 .hh doesn't need to be changed=because it's possible for  
81 those of us who provide services to work around it .hh and we  
82 know that Northern Ireland women .hh work around the  
83 prohibition on abortion there by travelling to England .hh er the  
84 law prohibits nurses from providing procedures with early  
85 medical abortion .hh the only involvement of doctors often is  
86 signing the prescription .hh we know that the law at the  
87 moment requires two doctors to certify .hh that abortion is  
88 legal for a woman and yet those  
89 [doctors] signed forms .hh without even seeing  
90 SM: [you're ]  
91 AF: [the woman we]  
92 SM: [but you're ] raising lots of things that might not even go  
93 through because there are plenty of MP's who think very

94 differently from you and would vote against all those ideas  
 95 RD: [mm]  
 96 AF: [.hh ] well there are some MP's that would vote against but  
 97 there are many that would vote for=and let's just put it in a  
 98 democratic society .hh the discussion needs to be had=and it  
 99 seems bizarre to me .hh that in 1990 it was a male  
 100 Conservative .hh Secretary of State in a very pro-family values  
 101 government .hh that allowed the abortion law to be  
 102 modernised and we are now being effectively blocked and  
 103 disallowed the debate .hh by a Labour government that has  
 104 .hh (0.7) repeatedly said that it supports women's rights  
 105 SM: what do you want to see the government do on this Lady  
 106 Deech cos within two years there's gonna be an election within  
 107 two years do you think the government needs to come up with  
 108 something concrete (0.4) be [fore an election]  
 109 RD: [I have every ] sympathy  
 110 with what (.) Ann is saying and abortion is such an enormous  
 111 issue that it deserves. hh er separate treatment .hh and as  
 112 again as has been pointed out you can never tell which way a  
 113 particular government is going to jump on this one .hh but I'm  
 114 absolutely sure .hh that the great bulk of this bill=the human  
 115 fertilisation side must go through .hh an awful lot of work's  
 116 been done on it abortion er may wreck the whole thing  
 117 .hh I have every sympathy with the moves to modernise it but  
 118 it's got to be done separately .hh and in fact this sort of pu[sh]  
 119 SM: [La]  
 120 RD: to modernising wasn't was not apparent a year ago [.hh ]  
 121 SM: [Lady]  
 122 RD: it's a bit of an afterthought as well  
 123 SM: Lady Deech Ann Furedi thank you both

## Comments

\* From Sarah Montague's introduction and welcome, it is not possible to determine who says which greeting. Listening to the remainder of the interview and listening to the voices of Ann Furedi and Ruth Deech, I am assuming that Ann Furedi says 'hi there' and that Ruth Deech says 'good morning'.

## Transcription symbols

[ ] = indicates overlap

— = underscoring indicates emphasis

.hh = indicates an audible intake of breath

hhh = a laugh

= = indicates no gap or breath

(.) = indicates a brief interval of less than a tenth of a second

(0.1) = indicates timed intervals of more than a tenth of a second

## Appendix 2: The Monstrous Hybrid as Object of Scientific Experiment

Reprinted by permission of the Publishers from 'The monstrous hybrid as object of scientific experiment', in Duffy, C., Howell, P. and Ruddell, C. (eds.) 'Romantic Adaptations: Essays in Mediation and Remediation', Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 141-158. Copyright ©

### Introduction

*Frankenstein* is a familiar storyline that has been embedded within popular consciousness. However, this storyline is largely a mixture of various interpretations of Mary Shelley's original publication, as *Frankenstein* has undergone many revisions since 1818 (including Shelley's own of 1831). The story has been remediated into all formats, including stage plays, radio and television programmes, and films; it is without doubt the most widely and liberally adapted of all romantic texts. One cinematic version in particular, *Frankenstein: the Man who Made a Monster* directed by James Whales in 1931, has had a disproportionate influence. The film contains significant differences from the book and features Boris Karloff's notorious depiction of the monster with metal bolts attached to his neck. Whether we have read Shelley's book or experienced any of the countless interpretations, most of us are aware of the central figure contained within the popular representation of *Frankenstein*: the monomaniacal scientist working in a solitary laboratory, who oversteps the boundaries of human knowledge, and 'plays God' in creating a monster that ultimately leads to his downfall. During the twentieth century, such adaptation of *Frankenstein* became a meme linked to the representation of contemporary science and technology: scientists working in distant laboratories, and conducting experiments without public consultation, which have far-reaching consequences on human life. Such narratives are particularly associated with the techniques situated in the field of cell culture, genetics and biomedicine, as these technologies often question the boundaries between life and death. Indeed Victor

Frankenstein himself remarks during his account of the conception of his creature that '[l]ife and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should break through ...'<sup>1</sup>

In this essay, I would like to explore such adaptations of Shelley's narrative within the context of the creation of the hybrid embryo, specifically focusing on the theme of 'father as creator' through the action of the paternal imagination. Furthermore, an additional theme comes from feminist interpretations of *Frankenstein*, which explore specifically male scientific endeavours bent on controlling female nature. Here the relationship between 'monstrosity' and maternal imagination is crucial. It is within these themes that I intend to situate the popular understanding of the hybrid embryo as a 'Romantic adaptation', and explore both how *Frankenstein* reflects early nineteenth-century debates on the development of the life sciences, and why those debates still have currency in science and technology studies.

### **Hybrid Embryos, Stem Cells and Tissue Culture**

In the UK, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008, as an amendment of the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, allowed for the creation of human-animal admixed or 'hybrid' embryos. In the same act, it was prohibited to implant a hybrid embryo in a woman's uterus. One of the main reasons cited in favour of the creation of hybrid embryos is that animal embryos used in the processes of cell culture are more readily available than human embryos. Embryos are used in stem cell technologies and are the basis of the research into, among other things, disease processes. Stem cells are 'undifferentiated', meaning that they have the capacity to divide into almost any kind of cell contained within the human body. This 'pluripotency' makes stem cells a highly valued resource for scientists and gives stem cells the potential to cure diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's

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<sup>1</sup> M. Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the modern Prometheus*, ed. Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.36

and diabetes. According to Kitzinger and Williams, the hope of a cure for these types of disease is a 'crucial commodity in this debate'.<sup>2</sup>

The debates and subsequent vote on whether to allow the creation of hybrid embryos took place in the House of Commons between March and May of 2008. These were much reported on in the British Press. One of the first issues to surface in the debate was whether to allow Members of Parliament a 'free vote' on the grounds of conscience. The discussion of this in Parliament coincided with the Easter weekend on 23 March 2008, leading the Roman Catholic Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, Cardinal Keith O'Brien, to use his Easter Sunday sermon to attack the government's proposals on hybrid embryos. He argued that such a bill was a 'monstrous attack on human rights, human dignity and human life' and that the government was endorsing potential 'experiments of Frankenstein proportion'.<sup>3</sup> The sermon was widely reported and two days later, on 25 March 2008, Clifford Longley (a regular contributor to 'Thought for the Day' on the BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme) was asked to comment on the Cardinal's remarks. Longley stated that he was not personally in favour of using such 'very emotive language', that others had chosen their words more carefully, and that he would not have 'resorted to language like Frankenstein'.<sup>4</sup>

What is it about the hybrid embryo that the Cardinal finds not only repugnant and 'monstrous', but also draws him to compare it to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*? And what is it that Clifford Longley feels compelled to deny by *not* resorting to that kind of language? I would like to highlight some distinct but connected concepts contained within the sermon and the subsequent comment. Firstly, there is the concept of

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<sup>2</sup> J. Kitzinger and C. Williams, "Forecasting Science Futures: Legitimising Hope and Calming Fears in the Stem Cell Debate", *Social Science and Medicine*, 61 (2005), p.738.

<sup>3</sup> Sermon available: BBC News, 'Cardinal O'Brien's Sermon', (BBC News 2008) <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/7308883.stm>> [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2011]

<sup>4</sup> Interview available: BBC Radio 4, 'Running Order: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008' (BBC 2008) <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/listenagain\\_20080325.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/listenagain_20080325.shtml)> [Accessed 18th November 2009].

'experimentation', carried out by scientists in laboratories, described as a project tending to 'Frankenstein proportion'. A second notion centres on the use of emotive language. The mention of 'Frankenstein' clearly produces an emotional response and an implicit connection to the idea of hordes of monsters, created by today's scientific Frankensteins that achieve gestation and roam the earth, in order to terrorise humans.

John Turney argues that *Frankenstein* clearly testifies to a deep anxiety that society has had since it was written nearly two hundred years ago, concerning the experiments and techniques of the life sciences.<sup>5</sup> Stem cell technologies raise questions about the boundaries of life and death and these have interesting repercussions on the hybrid embryo within research and cell culture. According to Kaufman and Morgan, there is increasing concern with how the boundaries of life and death are being negotiated and constructed.<sup>6</sup> They argue that biomedical techniques are creating and sustaining 'growing numbers of liminal beings who hover in an ambiguous zone of "inbetweenness": of not being dead, but not being alive'.<sup>7</sup> Susan Squier argues that the tissue culture underpinning stem cell research has been instrumental in re-negotiating these boundaries. She cites the work of Dr. Honor Fell at the Strangeways Laboratory in Cambridge in the late 1930s. Dr. Fell told students attending a lecture that she could grow tissue *in vitro* that had been taken from a body a week after death, or longer if it had been kept in cold storage. According to Dr. Fell, 'when a doctor pronounces a patient "dead" he is only using the word "death" in a restricted sense'.<sup>8</sup> The potential to discover the animating principle of life through death is at the centre of Frankenstein's experiment too. He

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<sup>5</sup> J. Turney, *Frankenstein's Footsteps: Science, Genetics and Popular Culture*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> S. Kaufman and L. Morgan, 'The Anthropology of the Beginnings and Ends of Life', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34 (2005), p. 318.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* pp. 324-30.

<sup>8</sup> S. Squier, *Liminal Lives: Imagining the Human at the Frontiers of Biomedicine*, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 65.

believed that the dead were merely 'bodies deprived of life' and that in order to understand life, he needed to access the dead; claiming '[t]o examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death'.<sup>9</sup>

Waldby and Squier argue that the creation of a stem cell line clearly involves the death of an embryo, but what actually dies is debatable. The embryo's tissues are not destroyed in the process, but are transferred from one form of organism into another.<sup>10</sup> To Waldby and Squier, the cell lines derived from hybrid embryos are 'certainly, almost frighteningly alive; cell-line technology involves the de-activation of apoptosis, or programmed cell death'.<sup>11</sup> Thus, stem cell lines can be frozen, stored, thawed, re-grown and frozen in a continuous cycle. They cite the 'HeLa' cell line: the first human cell line to be established in the 1950s. This was created from the cervical cells of Henrietta Lacks (without her consent) who, at the time, was receiving treatment for cervical cancer. Henrietta Lacks died from the disease in 1951, but the cell line has faithfully reproduced for over fifty years. 'HeLa' is now used in laboratories all over the world, and is over four hundred times the original body mass of Henrietta Lacks when she was alive.<sup>12</sup> More astounding is the fact that 'HeLa' has contaminated 106 out of 360 cell lines in laboratories around the world. Since the earliest days of attempts at cell culture, scientists have been aware that they should keep cell cultures free from bacterial and viral contamination, but scientists discovered that 'HeLa' cells could float through the air independently. They can attach themselves to dust particles, to the coats and shoes of laboratory workers and escape through ventilation systems. The 'HeLa' cell line is also very strong. According to Rebecca Skloot, if just one cell landed in a culture dish, it would

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<sup>9</sup> M. Shelley, p.36

<sup>10</sup> C. Waldby and S. Squier, 'Ontogeny, Ontology, and Phylogeny: Embryonic Life and Stem Cell Technologies', *Configurations*, 11 (2003), p.35.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* p. 35

contaminate everything.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the cell line has been recognised as a species in its own right: *Helacyton gartleri* ('*cyton*' being Greek for cell and '*gartleri*' after the scientist who first noticed the contamination process).<sup>14</sup> Possibly more significant is the finding that Henrietta Lacks' cancerous cervical cells have been shown to have the power of eternal reproduction. If properly maintained, cell lines are self-perpetuating and literally immortal. This gives them what Waldby and Squier term 'inhuman vitality'.<sup>15</sup>

Waldby and Squier additionally highlight the phenomenon of 'microchimerism', where cells from one individual can pass through to another individual, usually via the blood stream. Where microchimerism occurs, cells originating from one individual will be present in another genetically distinct individual. Human microchimerism is widespread, the most common example being the transfer or exchange of cells through the placenta between mother and foetus during pregnancy. However, the consequence, and potentially more worrying aspect of recent biomedical experiments using cell culture techniques, has been animal to human microchimerism. Waldby and Squier cite medical research by an American company called 'DiaVcell' on Mexican children with type-1 diabetes (the procedure was carried out in Mexico because the company was unable to get a licence in the United States). The children had 'testicular-derived Sertoli cells from foetal pigs' injected into them to overcome their dependence on insulin.<sup>16</sup> Microchimerism between humans and animals appears to have taken place during this procedure and Waldby and Squier argue that such instances of mutation present us with other life forms to negotiate: phylogenetic life forms that are between-steps in the

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<sup>13</sup> R. Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, (London: Pan, 2010), p. 176.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.* p. 246.

<sup>15</sup> Waldby and Squier, p. 35.,

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.* p. 44.

evolutionary ladder.<sup>17</sup> Biomedicine and biotechnology increasingly draw on these marginal forms as sources of therapeutic procedures associated with disease and/or ageing.<sup>18</sup> Often these forms are 'histologically human' in that under a microscope cells appear to be human, but in their morphology bear no relationship to the human organism.<sup>19</sup> In addition to concerns surrounding liminality and the re-negotiation of life and death, current stem cell research has links to cloning.<sup>20</sup> In particular, the birth of Dolly the sheep in 1996 was taken as a signal that the cloning of humans was a real possibility.<sup>21</sup> Human cloning, according to Sarah Franklin, is shorthand for 'science gone too far'.<sup>22</sup> In the remainder of this essay, I intend to explore the themes contained within *Frankenstein* in relation to our culture's response to current scientific developments within stem cell technology. My aim is to accomplish this via a genealogical approach into monstrosity, the method used by Michel Foucault in works such as *Discipline and Punish*<sup>23</sup>. In tracing back to Classical Antiquity the culture and beliefs surrounding the birth of monsters, I hope to 'identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or, conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that give birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us'<sup>24</sup>. However before conducting a genealogical analysis of monstrosity, I will examine the recent history of the hybrid embryo and how it might be linked to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

### **The origins of the hybrid embryo as the object of experimentation**

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* p. 46.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.* p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> J. Haran and others, *Human Cloning in the Media: From Science Fiction to Science Practice*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 44.

<sup>21</sup> Turney, p. 213.

<sup>22</sup> S. Franklin, "Making Representations: The Parliamentary Debate on the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act", in *Technologies of Procreation: Kinship in the Age of Assisted Conception*, ed. by J. Edwards, et al. (Routledge, 1999), (p. 116).

<sup>23</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (London: Penguin, 1977).

<sup>24</sup> M. Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 (Volume 2 - Aesthetics)*, ed. by P. Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1994), pp. 369-91 (p. 374).

Many academics have identified the creation of the 'pre-embryo' in 1985, as a pivotal moment in the history of *in vitro* fertilisation or IVF technologies. This provides insight into the understanding of the hybrid embryo as the object of scientific experimentation.<sup>25</sup> The term 'pre-embryo' defines the development of cells until the existence of the 'primitive streak' in the embryo at around fourteen days, the point before which human life is not thought to exist. According to Pat Spallone, the term emerged at the height of public unease about the arrival of IVF techniques and embryo research.<sup>26</sup> At the time, Enoch Powell's Unborn Children (Protection) Bill had won a majority, after its second reading in the House of Commons, and was seen as an 'explicit' threat to scientific research.<sup>27</sup> Spallone argues that the then president of the Royal Society, Sir Andrew Huxley, believed that non-scientific or 'lay' people felt repugnance towards embryo research, because they were under the misapprehension that an embryo was a 'tiny fully formed human being', rather than simply a clump of cells.<sup>28</sup> By singling out the existence of the 'primitive streak', it was possible to make a distinction between the 'pre-embryo', as a clump of cells, and the 'embryo' proper. As a consequence, the point of origin of human personhood was moved to a later date. The 'pre-embryo' allowed for both the 'old' embryo and the 'new' embryo to exist together within a double identity and embodies the 'pre-embryo' as the 'other' and the embryo as the 'self'.<sup>29</sup> According to O'Riordan and Haran, the term 'pre-embryo' has since framed the debate on IVF technologies as 'respectable scientific practice'.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Spallone asserts that the emergence

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<sup>25</sup> For further information, see: S. Franklin; M. Mulkay, *The Embryo Research Debate: Science and the Politics of Reproduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); K. O'Riordan and J. Haran, 'From Reproduction to Research: Sourcing Eggs, Ivf and Cloning in the UK', *Feminist Theory*, 10 (2009); S. Parry, 'The Politics of Cloning: Mapping the Rhetorical Convergence of Embryos and Stem Cells in Parliamentary Debates', *New Genetics and Society*, 22 (2003); P. Spallone, 'The Salutory Tale of the Pre-Embryo', in *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs*, ed. by N. Lykke and R. Braidotti (Zed Books Ltd., 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Spallone, p. 207.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p. 212.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* p. 213.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* p. 224.

<sup>30</sup> O'Riordan and Haran, p. 201.

of the 'pre-embryo' was 'an astute conscious political move'<sup>31</sup> and was 'wholly manufactured'.<sup>32</sup> More importantly, according to Spallone, the shift allowed scientists to have an object on which to experiment.<sup>33</sup>

### **Science and the myth of *Frankenstein***

John Turney claims that one word provides our culture's response to science. 'To activate it, all you need is the word: *Frankenstein*'.<sup>34</sup> Mary Shelley's publication conjures the myth of life creation, a myth that has existed in Western culture since antiquity. Turney argues that the myths concerning the possession of knowledge and the power it confers occur in many cultures, a sort of universal morality play.<sup>35</sup> However, *Frankenstein* is the first not to summon deities to help him in his endeavour, achieving his goal of the creation of life through his own scientific efforts.<sup>36</sup> Mary Shelley was familiar with current scientific developments and socialised with many scientists, including the chemist Humphry Davy and the botanist Erasmus Darwin. At the time of the writing of *Frankenstein*, a debate raged concerning the fundamental nature of life itself. This was the 'vitalism debate' and, according to Richard Holmes, it was the first great scientific issue to grip the public imagination.<sup>37</sup>

The question of what distinguished living beings from the dead had been revived in the 1790s following Galvani's experiment with frogs and the re-animation of muscle tissue through the use of a 'voltaic pile'. Further experiments of this nature were conducted by Aldini, who attempted to revive the recently-hanged murderer Thomas

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<sup>31</sup> Spallone, p. 217.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* p. 214.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* p. 218.

<sup>34</sup> Turney, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> R. Holmes, *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science*, (London: Harper Collins, 2008), p. 313.

Forster in 1803, in order to prove that electricity was the principle force of life. Indeed, for most of the nineteenth century, it was believed that electricity provided the 'spark' of life. However, the main thrust of the vitalism debate took place during the 1810s and was articulated through the dispute between John Abernethy and William Lawrence. Abernethy believed that the force of life was an external 'super-added' force (such as electricity), whilst Lawrence advocated the materialist view of life associated with French and German experimental medicine.<sup>38</sup> Mary Shelley was likely to have been well acquainted with this debate, as Lawrence was Percy Shelley's physician at the height of the vitalist debate. Ellen Moers states that during her time in Switzerland writing *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley discussed with Percy Shelley, Byron and Polidori the new sciences of mesmerism, electricity and galvanism.<sup>39</sup> Anne K. Mellor argues that throughout *Frankenstein* there is the assumption of an 'animating principle, call it Nature or Life or God'.<sup>40</sup> Sharon Ruston suggests that there is evidence to view *Frankenstein* as a 'dramatic reworking of the issues raised in the vitality debate'. However, it is possible that the subsequent invention of the strict division between 'science' and 'literature' (or C. P. Snow's 'two cultures') have distorted readings of Shelley's text<sup>41</sup>.

Turney conducts a cultural analysis of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* and suggests that the core of the story has established a life independent of the book, evolving in ways that resonate with tales from folklore and myth. He traces the many retellings of the story since its original publication and argues that the endurance of the story relates to the dissemination of the myth of 'human enterprise out of control' in the effort to create life.<sup>42</sup> Myths maintain their significance if retold and the many adaptations of the Frankenstein story itself and also in works such as H. G.

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* p. 311.

<sup>39</sup> E. Moers, *Literary Women*, (London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd., 1977), p. 94.

<sup>40</sup> A. Mellor, *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*, (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 64.

<sup>41</sup> S. Ruston, *Shelley and Vitality*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 5-6.

<sup>42</sup> Turney, p. 35.

Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, means that the particulars of the story may change 'but the plot remains the same'.<sup>43</sup> A recurrent motif within such cultural texts is the notion of science being 'out of control' and of scientists creating objects for their own, parochial experimental needs. It is within this context that *Frankenstein* is cited by Kurt Back as a framework for the examination of our relationship to the monstrous, and helps us understand the 'fundamental concerns of our society' about life-generating techniques.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, it is through the examination of such stories and their subsequent inclusion in our vocabulary, that their enduring myths give 'concrete pictures to abstract ideas that cannot be easily grasped'.<sup>45</sup> The argument presented in Turney's book is that popular media are important for the reading of 'official deliberations' and that increasing technological developments seem to be the province of fiction. Thus, the boundaries between fact and fiction are being increasingly blurred.<sup>46</sup>

According to Turney, it is easy to see how techniques of cell culture and IVF in experimental biology are situated within the *Frankenstein* tradition: how a 'microscopic blob of cells' is 'imagined as a miniature human being, open to the lights and instruments of the laboratory'.<sup>47</sup> In this scientific story, however, hybrid embryo researchers take the part of Frankenstein and the hybrid embryo itself takes the part of his monster. It is within this context of the relationship between science and fiction that I aim to explore the nature of monstrosity and monstrous progeny within *Frankenstein* and investigate what implications this unconscious relationship may have on the perceptions of the hybrid embryo. Earlier reference to the definition

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* p. 207.

<sup>44</sup> K. Back, "Frankenstein and Brave New World: Two Cautionary Myths on the Boundaries of Science", *History of European Ideas*, 20 (1995), 328.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.* pp. 328-9.

<sup>46</sup> Turney, p. 201.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.* pp. 217-8.

of the 'pre-embryo' demonstrated how the hybrid embryo became configured as an object of experimentation. However, discussion of the link between hybrid embryos and the monstrous has not so far emerged. According to Rosi Braidotti, monsters evoke both 'horror and fascination, aberration and adoration', and these contradictory responses indicate that we have a particular relationship to them.<sup>48</sup> Monsters may take different forms, but monsters keep on emerging.<sup>49</sup>

### **Discourses of the monstrous**

Braidotti conducted a genealogy of the discourses of monsters within the science of teratology. Teratology is the study of physiological defects of the body and was developed by Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire in the early nineteenth century, and named by his son Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire in 1836. Braidotti argues that teratology inhabits the space between the 'high' culture of science and the 'low' culture of the popular, because monsters defy 'rationalistic reductions' by being part supernatural and part earthly.<sup>50</sup> Through her analysis of the discourses about the origins of monsters, their embodied forms, and our relationship to them, Braidotti's work gives us an excellent grounding in the discursive effect of monsters and how they have affected the claims of scientific knowledge. Braidotti's main conclusion is that, through the analysis of the discourse surrounding monsters within the science of teratology, there is no one object, no one monster. They constitute 'many objects'; they shift, change and construct a 'web of interconnected and yet potentially contradictory discourses'.<sup>51</sup>

Braidotti begins by exploring the monster as an object of display:

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<sup>48</sup> R. Braidotti, 'Signs of Wonder and Traces of Doubt: On Teratology and Embodied Difference', in *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs: Feminist Confrontations with Science*, ed. by N. Lykke and R. Braidotti (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1996), (p. 136).

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.* p. 135.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.* p. 150.

Historically, monsters have always been exhibited in public spaces. In the Renaissance, they roamed from royal courts to country fairs. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they moved into pubs and coffee houses and into the collection cabinets of the upper class. In the nineteenth century, side-shows and circuses inaugurated the commercialisation of monstrous bodies, which culminated in the motion-picture industry.<sup>52</sup>

Further, she explores our relationship to monstrous bodies and argues that the monster is a 'signpost ... [which] governs the production of differences here and now'.<sup>53</sup> The monster exists in an in-between zone, a paradox that is both like us and not like us. This paradox is fundamental to our ambivalence about the monster.

Across historical periods, Braidotti argues that monstrous bodies are linked to gender through biological reproduction and either have an 'upward trajectory' to the divine, or a 'downward trajectory' to the animal, the degenerate or the mutant'.<sup>54</sup>

Braidotti states that some bodies, defined as the monstrous, are eminently disposable and have served throughout history as material for experimentation in biomedical practices such as embryology. Because of their monstrous bodies and deviant forms, monsters are useful to science.<sup>55</sup> The nineteenth-century 'freak shows', mentioned above, catered equally for the curiosity of medical doctors as well as the spectators who consumed their sensationalism.<sup>56</sup>

In a reinforcement of Braidotti's thoughts on the nature of monstrosity, Georges Canguilhem argues that the period around the start of the nineteenth century, which institutionalised medicine, crime and madness, also created the object of monstrosity. According to Canguilhem, the monster was placed in the

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid.* p. 135.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.* p. 141.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.* p. 136.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.* p. 139.

'embryologists' jar' to become the 'toy of scholars'.<sup>57</sup> Margrit Shildrick argues that there seems little doubt that in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the history of monstrosity took a 'decidedly normative and positivist turn'.<sup>58</sup> Both Canguilhem and Shildrick are referring here to Foucault's account, in *The Order of Things*<sup>59</sup> and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*<sup>60</sup>, of the epistemic changes that occurred during this period and which led to the birth of the human sciences. According to Foucault, this transition constrained fields of knowledge, established networks of truth, defined modes of being and objects, 'provides man's everyday perception with theoretical powers, and defines the conditions in which he can sustain a discourse about things that is recognised to be true'.<sup>61</sup> Shildrick uses Foucault's account to describe the move from seeing monstrosity as 'marvellous and prodigious', to seeing monstrosity as abnormal and deviant.<sup>62</sup>

In order to have some understanding of why this was the case and how Romanticism might be implicated in such a turn, I would like briefly to outline a history of monstrosity and, in doing so, I would like to utilise Rosi Braidotti's historical categories of the monstrous, as they provide a useful method for the examination of monstrosity. These categories are: classical antiquity, where monsters came from 'climatic and geographical anthropologies'; the pre-scientific Renaissance monsters of 'theological divination'; and the scientific monsters of 'anatomical embryology'.<sup>63</sup> Braidotti cites many examples of discourses about monsters throughout these periods, but is less certain about a fourth period, which

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<sup>57</sup> G. Canguilhem, 'Monstrosity and the Monstrous', *Diogenes*, 40 (1962), 35.

<sup>58</sup> M. Shildrick, *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self*, (London: Sage, 2002), p. 20.

<sup>59</sup> M. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, (London: Routledge, 1970).

<sup>60</sup> M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge, 1969).

<sup>61</sup> Foucault, p. 172.

<sup>62</sup> Shildrick, p. 20.

<sup>63</sup> Braidotti, p. 150.

she calls 'cybernetic teratology'.<sup>64</sup> According to Braidotti, the monsters generated by this period may result from environmental pollution or toxic waste, or even from a 'genetic turning point in the post-nuclear era'.<sup>65</sup> I propose to situate current discourses of the hybrid embryo within this period of 'cybernetic teratology'.<sup>66</sup> However, in order to further establish connections between 'cybernetic teratology' and Romanticism, it will first be necessary to examine the history of 'monstrosity'.

### **The Monster in Classical Antiquity and the Early Modern Period.**

In western culture, important writings on the monstrous date back to Classical Antiquity. The Greek philosopher Aristotle believed that 'like engendered like' and regarded any deviation from the 'male' of the species as a deviation from the norm and a form of monstrosity.<sup>67</sup> The birth of a girl was the most common form of deformity. Therefore, in Aristotelian thought, females were part of the monstrous.<sup>68</sup> Marie-Hélène Huet argues that Aristotle's thoughts on order and disorder within nature mean that the female is destined through childbirth to 'contribute more figures of dissimilarity, if not creatures even more monstrous'.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, Aristotle believed that the female was a passive agent of procreation. It was the male who had the most important contribution to the generation of the foetus, although he accepted that there was some collaboration from the female, through the provision of nourishment.<sup>70</sup> Aristotelian thought underpinned theories on the nature of procreation and embryology throughout the Middle Ages into the Renaissance and, according to Shildrick, his amalgamation of the feminine with the monstrous 'runs as a thread throughout the varied historical accounts and explanations, in more or less

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<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* p. 141.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>67</sup> Canguilhem, p. 27.

<sup>68</sup> Shildrick, p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> M. Huet, *Monstrous Imagination*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.* p. 13.

explicit terms'.<sup>71</sup> However, it is from another writer in Antiquity, the Roman orator Cicero, that a parallel theme on monstrosity emerges, and the Latin root of the word 'monster' - *monstrare* (to show) or *monere* (to warn). In *De Divinatione*, Cicero discusses the role of divination and how the Gods might communicate to man through natural phenomena. He provides a taxonomy of *monstra* (imitations), *ostenta* (manifestations), *portenta* (portents) and *prodigia* (prodigies).<sup>72</sup> Shildrick argues that this list 'firmly marks out the trajectory of the monstrous as a supernatural signifier'.<sup>73</sup>

Both Aristotle and Cicero had a profound influence on medieval thinking about monsters, and their ideas had particular significance for religious dogma and the existence of monstrous births, as it was difficult to account for monsters in a God-given universe. Hence, monsters troubled Church leaders and provided them with dilemmas: were they descended from God? Did they have a soul? And if so, should they be baptised? Ciceronean doctrine confirmed to the theologians that monsters were the sign of God's power, and therefore, the marvellous displays of his will. Canguilhem remarks that the monsters of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance should be viewed as existing within a framework of the 'celebration of the monstrous'; monsters were partly the accumulation of legends and partly bodies constructed in the form of animals.<sup>74</sup> This is because, according to Shildrick, the Aristotelian emphasis on nature gave way to the overriding belief in the Ciceronean divine and supernatural.<sup>75</sup>

John Block Friedman traces the existence of monsters in the art and literature of the Middle Ages, and outlines the writings of the Roman author Pliny the Elder whose

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<sup>71</sup> Shildrick, p. 28.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.* p. 12.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Canguilhem, p. 33.

<sup>75</sup> Shildrick, p. 34.

classification of the 'Plinian' races by their physiological attributes was often redistributed in medieval texts and bestiaries. Friedman argues that:

there appears to have been a psychological need for Plinian peoples. Their appeal to the medieval was based on such factors as fantasy, escapism, delight in the exercise of the imagination, and – very important – fear of the unknown.<sup>76</sup>

Pliny updated extant works of Aristotle and Cicero<sup>77</sup> and, according to Friedman, works deriving from Pliny can be traced through to the science of teratology in the nineteenth century.<sup>78</sup> Some races, such as 'Cyclopes' and 'Gorgades' have roots in earlier mythological creatures, but it is worth examining some of the other monsters or *terrata* that Pliny mentions, and the attributes given to them, in order to trace their continued presence in cultural discourse. *Androgini* have the genitals of both sexes and lived in Africa.<sup>79</sup> *Antipodes* were men who walked upside down.<sup>80</sup> *Ethiopians* were named after the combination of the Greek words *Aith* (burn) and *ops* (face).<sup>81</sup> *Pygmies* were conflated with dwarves, and *Troglodytes* lived in the caves of Ethiopia<sup>82</sup>. Although there are other monstrous Plinian races, these examples have been chosen because they have some form of representation in both our vocabulary and culture today: *Troglodytes* are found in fantasy and science fiction literature, *Pygmies* are located in anthropological documentaries, and the idea of Australian 'Antipodeans' walking upside down is of course familiar to those who live in the northern hemisphere.

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<sup>76</sup> J. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), p. 24.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.* p. 19.

Two of Pliny's other examples, *Androgini* and *Ethiopians*, equate to knowledge claims akin to the kind of 'truths' later witnessed in the writings of European scientists. Feminist scholars of the history of science have scrutinised the discourses that surrounded such scientific discoveries, taxonomies, and the 'Great Chain of Being' in the late eighteenth century.<sup>83</sup> Londa Schiebinger, for example, examines the social consequences of the decision by Linnaeus to name a group of animals 'mammalia', which means 'of the breast'.<sup>84</sup> She argues that the decision to use the term, which consequently connected a group of animals to the short period of lactation in a woman's life, was a gendered political act: 'Linnaeus saw females of all species as tender mothers, a vision he (wittingly or unwittingly) projected onto the European understanding of nature'.<sup>85</sup> Schiebinger concludes that 'Linnaean systematics' infused the 'Great Chain of Being' with scientific sexism.<sup>86</sup> In a similar vein, Nancy Leys Stepan argues that scientists of this period elevated 'unconsciously held analogies into self-conscious theory' which then added the 'weight of empirical reality'.<sup>87</sup> It is within this context of the scrutiny of scientific language that Evelyn Fox Keller suggests that we need to identify 'how "nature" interacts with "culture" in the production of scientific knowledge'.<sup>88</sup> Although the language of science claims to emancipate us from unconscious cultural meanings, it is clear from these studies that it does not. Furthermore, in the context of the examples from the Plinian races, it demonstrates that social and cultural attributes may have found their way into scientific discourse. For as Foucault notes, language

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<sup>83</sup> See E. F. Keller, *Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death: Essays on Language, Gender and Science*, (London: Routledge, 1992); N. Leys Stepan, 'Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science', in *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, ed. by G. Kirkup, et al. (London: The Open University, 2000), pp. 38-49; L. Schiebinger, 'Taxonomy for Human Beings', in *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, ed. by G. Kirkup, et al. (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 11-37.

<sup>84</sup> Schiebinger, p. 11.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.* pp. 24-5.

<sup>87</sup> Leys Stepan, p. 41.

<sup>88</sup> Keller, p. 36.

comes from the 'unspoken habits of thought, of what lies hidden in people's minds'<sup>89</sup>.

### **Monstrosity and Maternal Imagination**

It is from the theories of the divine and supernatural that a more sinister notion begins to emerge during the Middle Ages, a notion which eventually becomes the accepted way of thinking about monstrosity. According to Braidotti, the longest-held beliefs concerning the origin of monsters are connected to the female body through procreation and childbirth and women's power over conception and gestation is fundamental to this issue.<sup>90</sup> 'Maternal imagination' attributed to the mother the capacity and power to deform or kill the child she was carrying via her imagination.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that belief in the power of the imagination during procreation existed in ancient Antiquity and could be attributed to both parents. Aristotle reasoned that '[I]f it is so often the case that the children of human beings do not resemble their parents, the reason is that the latter, at the time of the sexual act, had many other things on their minds instead of thinking only of what they were doing at that moment'.<sup>92</sup>

By the early modern period, the idea of 'maternal imagination' had become the prevailing form of knowledge about the birth of monstrous bodies. Huet states that even though scientific investigations on monstrosity began to appear in the sixteenth century, the fact remains that one of the most enduring 'paradoxes of the so-called age of Reason' would endure well into the eighteenth century.<sup>93</sup> And whilst we might be forgiven for associating the idea of 'maternal imagination' with Classical Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Braidotti cites evidence of it in the twentieth

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<sup>89</sup> M. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, (London: Routledge), p.324

<sup>90</sup> Braidotti, p. 145.

<sup>91</sup> Huet, p. 27.

<sup>92</sup> M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume II: The Use of Pleasure*, (London: Penguin, 1984), p. 124.

<sup>93</sup> Huet, p. 36.

century. During the Second World War such a proposition was used following the landing of Allied Troops in Normandy. The sudden birth of a high proportion of black babies was put down to women being frightened by the sight of the arrival of the first black soldiers they had ever seen.<sup>94</sup> She argues that from the existence of the maternal imagination, we are able to detect the underlying assumption that a child's 'entire morphological destiny is played out during conception and the period of gestation'.<sup>95</sup>

Braidotti demonstrates that the monstrous body has persisted in haunting our imagination, and that through the written accounts of maternal imagination, the monstrous can be traced to the knowledge claims of science. Theories of maternal imagination were at their height between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries and Huet argues that they persisted in spite of scientific discoveries about the generation of human life during the same period.<sup>96</sup> These scientific discoveries became the focus of ensuing debates over 'parental singularity' and the belief that reproduction was the sole responsibility of one parent alone.<sup>97</sup> Although the male contribution was the more important in Aristotelian doctrine, it did allow for some female collaboration. However, through maternal imagination, the female contribution became the more important and the role of the father became devalued. A further series of debates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries surrounding 'pre-formation' (that progeny were pre-formed at conception) would see parental responsibility bounce back and forth from one parent to the other, further excluding collaboration.<sup>98</sup> The discovery of ovaries generated 'ovism', or the idea that the egg contained a pre-formed foetus. This gave parental responsibility to women, but importantly, did not eliminate the possibility of maternal imagination. Likewise the

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<sup>94</sup> Braidotti, p. 145.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.* p. 146.

<sup>96</sup> Huet, p. 36.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.* p. 14.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.* p. 41.

discovery of semen or 'animalcules' produced 'spermism', or the idea that sperm contained a pre-formed homunculus. This gave parental responsibility to men, but again did not negate the idea that a woman could deform her offspring with her imagination. Furthermore, the pre-formation debate was complicated by the argument over whether there was complete formation or 'encasement' or a more simple kind of pre-formation of the foetus at an early stage. Such debates continued to rage for over a century, allowing theories on maternal imagination to 'transcend the dispute'.<sup>99</sup>

Recent feminist re-readings of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* point towards the existence of maternal imagination through the fears and worries in Shelley's life during the writing of the book. In her introduction to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley described her work as 'my hideous progeny', a comment that can be directly linked to theories of maternal imagination. Anne K. Mellor argues that the description is a metaphor for the birth of a monstrous baby and demonstrates anxieties that existed in Shelley's life: the anxiety she had about her capacity to give birth to a healthy child and, additionally, the anxiety she had about her own birth as a female author<sup>100</sup>. According to Moers, *Frankenstein* is a birth myth and one that was lodged in Shelley's own imagination<sup>101</sup>. Mary Shelley was surrounded by birth and death, and the novel can be seen as representing her mixed feelings concerning motherhood.<sup>102</sup> Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, died giving birth to Mary in 1797. Two years prior, Mary herself had lost a child and was pregnant for a third time during the writing of *Frankenstein*. This leads Johnson to interpret the novel as a 'study of post-partum depression'.<sup>103</sup> In writing

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<sup>99</sup> ibid. pp. 41-5.

<sup>100</sup> Mellor, p.52.

<sup>101</sup> Moers, p. 92.

<sup>102</sup> B. Johnson, 'My Monster/My Self', in *Frankenstein: Mary Shelley*, ed. by J. Paul Hunter (New York: W W Norton and Company, 1996), (p. 246).

<sup>103</sup> ibid.

*Frankenstein* not only did Mary Shelley give birth to the book as a metaphor for a baby, she additionally gave birth to herself as an author and it is within the patriarchal literary culture of the early nineteenth century that Mellor sees Shelley's female authorship as an unnatural act.<sup>104</sup> Mellor cites Gilbert and Gubar and their claim that Mary Shelley would have been anxious about finding a public voice within a culture that denied literary production to most women.<sup>105</sup> A voice that, according to Mary Poovey, defied the early nineteenth century conventions of what constituted the feminine propriety of a 'proper lady'.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, Shelley's phrase 'my hideous progeny' implies that, as a female writer, she gave birth to 'a deformed book, a literary abortion or miscarriage'.<sup>107</sup> Huet asserts that Shelley, as creator of *Frankenstein*, is the 'last and perhaps most explicit image of an old myth; a two-thousand-year-old tradition closely tying the birth of monstrous children to their mother's deranged imagination'.<sup>108</sup>

### **Monstrosity and Paternal Imagination**

By the nineteenth century, theories of maternal imagination were giving way to another emergent form of imagination, one based on a type of parthenogenesis. However, instead of the female reproducing asexually without the male, this time the male scientist reproduces asexually without the female. The surfacing of this imagination is not only foretold in the publication of *Frankenstein*, but underpins the Romantic ideas about science and the imagination as well. Here we see the 'idea that imagination could give life and form to passive matter'.<sup>109</sup> According to Squier, it comes as no surprise that literature is able to foretell future scientific developments, since science and literature are an 'ensemble of social relations', rather than

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<sup>104</sup> Mellor, p. 227.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.* p. 52.

<sup>106</sup> M. Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 116.

<sup>107</sup> S. M. Gilbert and S. Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 233.

<sup>108</sup> Huet, p. 162.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.* p. 7.

discrete realms.<sup>110</sup> Seen in this light, Shelley reflects and, at the same time, reproduces the current debates over parental singularity that endow one parent the active role of the power to create their progeny.<sup>111</sup> Thus, *Frankenstein* signals the arrival of the science of teratology (as the science of monsters) and, in particular, reveals the scientist in his laboratory as the 'solitary father whose goal it was to generate life'.<sup>112</sup>

Aristotle's views on reproduction formed the basis of all early modern conceptions of life right up until the nineteenth century, and influenced scientists such as Erasmus Darwin. In 1794, following in the Aristotelian tradition, Darwin attributed all deformities to the female. However, by 1801, Darwin had somewhat changed his ideas about parental contributions, and believed, according to Mellor, that monstrous births could not be simply attributed to 'uterine deficiencies or excesses'.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, he continued to hold the view that it was the male who determined the child's traits through *male imagination* at the point of conception. Mellor claims that Mary Shelley's father, William Godwin, who was particularly influenced by Darwin's thoughts on evolution, introduced her to Darwin and it is within this context that Frankenstein's scientific project 'supports a patriarchal denial of the value of women and female sexuality'.<sup>114</sup>

Darwin's theories have a significant bearing on the reading of *Frankenstein*. In essence, the story of *Frankenstein* is the story of a man who usurps the female role by giving birth himself.<sup>115</sup> According to Moers, birth is a hideous thing in

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<sup>110</sup> Squier, p. 55.

<sup>111</sup> Huet, p. 161.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.* p. 108.

<sup>113</sup> A. Mellor, 'Possessing Nature: The Female in Frankenstein', in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. by A. Mellor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), (p. 98).

<sup>114</sup> Mellor, p. 220.

<sup>115</sup> Johnson, p. 95.

*Frankenstein*.<sup>116</sup> He locks himself into what Gilbert and Gubar term his 'attic womb/room' and withdraws from the social world.<sup>117</sup> In what seems to be a resemblance to Donna Haraway's historical tracing of the 'modest witness', Mellor sees this as a critique by Shelley of masculine science and the notion of the detached scientist using objective thought to produce a monster<sup>118</sup>. In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley creates a scientist who rejects the emotional bonds of friends, family and society, and through an unnatural method of reproduction gives birth to an unnatural being. Mellor argues that Mary Shelley was one of the first to 'comprehend and illustrate the dangers inherent' in the pursuit of modern science and the scientific revolution.<sup>119</sup>

As a Romantic tale of singular procreation, *Frankenstein* precedes the official naming of the science of teratology in 1836 (although the practice of what came to be called 'teratology' was in existence). Yet the experimentation carried out by Frankenstein is, according to Huet, 'at times strikingly similar to those explicitly discussed' in the practice of the science.<sup>120</sup> However, it is Camille Dareste who, in the middle of the nineteenth century through his modification of embryos to produce a monstrosity (or teratogenesis), most resembles Shelley's Victor Frankenstein. According to Huet, Dareste is science's own Romantic failure, through his re-appropriation of the monster as a 'useful object of scientific enquiry'.<sup>121</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

In her account of the monstrous, Braidotti clearly articulates both our ambivalence towards the monster and the need for scientists to have monsters on which to experiment. The historical periods she delineates are useful categories in which to

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<sup>116</sup> Moers, p. 95.

<sup>117</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, p. 235.

<sup>118</sup> D. Haraway, *Modest Witness: Feminism and Technoscience*, (London: Routledge, 1997); Mellor, pp. 89-94.

<sup>119</sup> Mellor, p. 89.

<sup>120</sup> Huet, p. 126.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.* p. 112.

examine the particular social, cultural and political attitudes that existed in each of those phases and as a lens through which monstrosity has been viewed as the object of scientific inquiry. As stated earlier, Braidotti is less forthcoming about the monsters that may appear in her fourth phase, that of 'cybernetic teratology', suggesting that 'it will never be known what the next monster is going to look like; nor will it be possible to guess where it will come from. And because we cannot know, the monster is always going to get us'.<sup>122</sup> However, I would argue that whilst we might possibly not know what the next monster may look like, it may be possible to predict from where it is going to come.

Throughout Classical Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the post-Enlightenment scientific period, the monster has been created within a remarkably stable domain. Aristotelian doctrine provided a constant method of enquiry for science to examine the dis/order of nature, whilst Ciceronean doctrine bestowed a persistent trace of imagination and the supernatural within the discourse of monstrosity. However, what does appear to have been a critical factor is the debate surrounding parental singularity. In parallel with the Romantic ideal of the procreative role of the artist father, we see a move from maternal imagination to paternal imagination. Although women are still capable of producing monstrous bodies, now men employ science to generate monsters in order to correct women's flawed methods of reproduction. Thus, Romantic aesthetics has left both literature and science with the idea of the lone father creating monstrous progeny through male parthenogenesis.

The areas explored in this essay have provided an insight into how discourses surrounding monstrosity operate within Braidotti's 'cybernetic teratology'<sup>123</sup>.

Furthermore, through the exploration of the 'maternal imagination', it would appear

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<sup>122</sup> Braidotti, p. 150.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*

that monstrosity and the monstrous body have become inextricably linked to women through biological reproduction. In complex and contradictory ways, women appear to be both the owners of faulty systems of reproduction, but at the same time, are able to powerfully manipulate the embryos they are carrying. This has further repercussions on the notion of the paternal imagination and male parthenogenesis, in respect of the way in which the nineteenth-century science of teratology, through to the more recent IVF technologies, have sought to 'fix' women's reproductive systems. However, it is through paternal imagination and the male desire to procreate without a mother, that the popular understanding of the hybrid embryo can be seen as a 'Romantic adaptation' within scientific experimentation.

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