9 The Hunt for Disability

The New Eugenics and the Normalization of School Children¹

Bernadette Baker

Thoughtful students . . . of the psychology of adolescence will refuse to believe that the American public intends to have its children sorted before their teats into clerks, watchmakers, lithographers, telegraph operators, mausons, teamsters, farm laborers, and so forth, and treated differently in their schools according to the prophecies of their appropriate life careers. Who are to make these prophecies?

(Charles Elliot (1985: 330–331; original emphasis))

There has been, I think, a noticeable increase in the identification of students with disabilities and we’re really trying to understand why that is.

(Director of Department of Educational Services, Fairfield School District 2000)

Charles Elliot’s Fundamental Assumptions in the Report of the Committee of Ten was published one year after G. Stanley Hall’s two volume work on adolescence and had as its implicit target child-study enthusiasts of the new psychology. Part of Elliot’s concern was to protect the place of classical curricula content, such as Latin and Greek, in public schools rather than have curricula revolve around judgments of ‘child nature’ All children, in his view, should be exposed to the subject matter that prepared the way for university entrance, of which there was more than one kind.¹ In debunking the child-study orientations to curricula, Elliot turned to the available discourse of democracy to sanction what others have described as his patrician preferences (Kliether 1986). In Elliot’s logic, if all public school children are exposed equally to ‘high culture’ in one of four forms, then it seemingly is not the school that makes a judgment about appropriate life careers. Rather, it is the child’s effort in interacting with the subject matter that shapes their future. Under this line of reasoning, the issue of different life careers could be cast back onto students themselves and the singularity of certain kinds of cultural knowledge left unchallenged as the pinnacle of educated ones.

In 2000, the director of the Department of Educational Services in Fairfield school district (a pseudonym) does not have the luxury of masking or encoding schoolings sorting function. Students are labeled, and special and different services are provided. Children are treated differently in their schools, and educators and allied professionals do make the decisions or prophecies. What separates the
positions available to Eliot and the director of educational services is not, however, any clear shift from right to left, or from a desire for homogeneity to a celebration of difference, but a reworked discourse of democracy – for Eliot, democracy meant equality-in-sameness, the same access to the same curriculum tracks for all public school children who cannot buy their way out of the system. For the director, it is an unspoken vision of democracy as equality-in-difference – children are different from each other, and therefore a variety of special services are required to educate a variety of children, ironically, in line with the same statewide standards.

This chapter is an attempt to reconsider issues of sameness, difference, equality, and democracy in present public school systems. I focus in particular on the question of (dis)ability and the implications of (dis)ability as an ontological issue before its inscription as an educational one concerning the politics of inclusion. I am especially interested in this analysis in what symbolically links the positions available to Eliot and the director rather than what separates them. That is, I am concerned with understanding and rethinking the everyday dividing, sorting, and classifying practices of schooling through an analysis of old and new discourses of eugenics as ‘quality control’ of national populations.

The chapter has three sections. First, I examine the vexed question of what the term eugenics refers to. Rather than seeing eugenics as a movement that rose in popularity in the late 19th century and fell after the revelations of the Holocaust, I suggest that eugenics was a complicated and heterogeneous series of discourses that have transmogrified into a variety of assumptions and practices, including educational ones in the present. The second section of the chapter examines some of those assumptions and practices, especially the debates that have arisen around the classic history of eugenics for identifying disability, both outside and within schooling. In the often well-intended hunt for disability, I will suggest that disability becomes reinscribed as an ‘Outlaw ontology’ (Wrigley 1996), reinventing eugenic discourse in a new language that maintains an ‘albist normativity’ (Campbell 2000).

Third, I will consider where such an analysis leaves institutions of formal education, including universities, and the very difficult question of trying to imagine alternatives to sending the posse out in schools.

Eugenics Old . . . Historiographical Debates

Eugenics is a problematic, contentious, and emotive term. To some extent there is disagreement in the historical literature as to how to define or recognize something as eugenic. It is only to some extent because there are certain things that do seem generally agreed on in regard to eugenics, primarily that it refers to the broadest level to a belief in the necessity of ‘racial’ or ‘national’ improvement through the control of population reproduction. This is understood within the historical and sociological literature on eugenics as a code for promoting, through scientific, medical, psychological, educational, and welfare discourses of the late 19th century, a belief in a hierarchy of human races/nations and characteristics, with the pinnacle of racial/national evolution at that time being the presumed qualities of Anglo-Saxon or Teutonic groups primarily of northern and western Europe and North America. There is general agreement as to the timing of the term’s emergence, coined in 1883 by Francis Galton, and also a common recognition of certain practices as eugenic, most notably those associated with the Holocaust and the earlier sterilization campaigns that targeted ‘physical and mental defectives,’ often broadly conceived to include any minority group thought to be contributing to ‘national degeneration.’

Within this general understanding of eugenics as constructing and privileging certain kinds of whiteness over certain kinds of color, certain kinds of masculinity over certain kinds of femininity, certain kinds of ability over certain kinds of corporeality as the organizing body-minds, and tolerating only narrow versions of heteronormativity and religious devotion, eugenics becomes somewhat swapped. It is difficult to find any discourse circulating in the late 19th century that did not draw on such binaries or that did not argue for some kind of racial/national improvement. What, then, was unique to eugenics? Much debate has arisen around this question as to which programs, theories, or moments can be identified as ‘truly’ eugenicist or not. The debate has emerged in the context of trying to sort out the extent of the legacy of eugenics, that is, how ‘it’ has affected ‘ideas in action and action in ideas’ in the present (Garton 2000). The recent historical and sociological literature has pointed to the previous silence on such legacies due to a naive belief that, after the Holocaust, eugenics simply went away (Kaplan 2000). Such literature also sometimes engages in a forecasting of what may result with continued silence, particularly under the advent of new genetic technologies (Campbell 2000).

The debates arise, then, within an atmosphere that is critical and suspicious of such silence along the effects of eugenics and eugenics as an effect. Despite agreement as to the most easily recognizable aspects of practice, such as sterilization, disagreement can be found in how to approach the study of eugenics in historical perspective. For example, one historian may describe a certain practice as part of eugenic philosophy or see it as a family member, whereas another will label the same practice as a separate philosophical position altogether.

Such debate over labeling and attribution has emerged especially within historical accounts of eugenics in Australia, continental Europe and Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Some historians of eugenics within these contexts, for instance, have portrayed it as a late-19th-century form of scientific racism that eventually gave fascism and Hitler the discursive grounds for propaganda and structured the WWII genocide of persons practicing Judaism, persons defined as having physical or mental disabilities, and persons defined as practicing homosexuality – none of whom Nazi policy saw fully as persons. In Ludmerer’s (1972), Pickens’s (1968), and Searle’s (1971) accounts, for example, eugenics is portrayed as a movement, with its end being attributed to a late 1940s horror at the Holocaust that resulted in a loss of popularity for what had been initially perceived in many quarters as a respectable scientific theory and populist platform.

Other historians contest the portrayal of eugenics as a discrete movement and argue instead that eugenics needs to be understood as a series of discourses (Gould 1981). Some claim that eugenics in the strict sense was a variety of forms of hereditarianism (Garton 2000), whereas others claim that eugenics had intersecting
hereditary and environmentalist elements (Lowe 2000). What is more agreed on in the scholarship that contests eugenics as a discrete movement is that there was a combination of elements and points of view that inhere in the late 19th-century emergence of eugenics as a term and in the formation of eugenic societies and associations. Such histories suggest that a variety of philosophical positions contributed to eugenics' key message – a belief in the necessity of racial or national improvement via quality control of population reproduction – and that these philosophical orientations have mutated into a variety of practices, programs, and policies that have lasted beyond the demise of formal eugenic associations. Michael Roe argues, for instance, that there has been a new surge of interest in genetic technologies and that this interest is fed by dangerously unexamined assumptions that bear vestiges of old-style eugenics. The promotion of genetic technologies, for example, contains an unexamined implicit and explicit belief that such developments are for humanity's benefit, even its perfection – physical, psychological, and behavioral. That was the prospect which lured earlier eugenacists, and of course the enchantment remains (Roe 2000: 6). Writing the history of eugenics in light of the advent of new genetic technologies means to Roe that eugenics does not end in 1945 with the death of Hitler. Gesela Kaplan further reorients how one would write the history of eugenics by putting it into global perspective. She argues that the speed with which ideas travel now means that more so than ever before close scrutiny and vigilance is merited in asking what it is that is being globalized. Kaplan suggests that new versions of eugenics are part of globalization and that this is not surprising given that eugenics was one of the first globalized and globalizing discourses. She rewrites where eugenics begins, seeing the most significant aspect in the emergence of race and culture, the modern slave trade, transatlantic commerce, and colonialism as being laid by the fall of Constantinople in the 15th century. This incited a search for new trade routes to the East and opened up the voyages that resulted in the invasion of the Americas and the establishment of slave 'trading posts' on the West African coast. It was the experience of slavery in particular that lent eugenics the fears and desires it was to eventually attempt to regulate through social policy centuries later after the drawn-out abolition of slavery post–Civil War in the United States. That is, the idea of mixed blood that the early eugenacists were so concerned about was a direct expression of one of slavery's consequences.

In satirical mode, Kaplan suggests that the spread of eugenic ideas, even in modified or less official forms, was a 'requirement', for European scholars and bureaucrats had to identify new themes and justify European social and political practice outside Europe. Whereas in the United States, eugenics was applied to the 'problem': the end of slavery. Kaplan argues further that if the idea of 'surprise' that the Holocaust could take place in 'civilized' Europe was expressed, it indicates an underestimation of the effect of more than a century of debates foregrounding explicit attitudes on issues of race as something inclusive of but far more than just 'color'. That these debates happened in the center of 'civilized' Europe required, however, that the practice of eugenics was perceived not as barbaric but as rational, not as criminal but as courageous and progressive. Kaplan asks 'How else could eugenics become palatable?' arguing that there are parallels today that make eugenic reasonings 'palatable' and seemingly progressive, coached as they are in languages of 'proactive racism' and 'quality citizenship'.

Finally, in his paper 'Writing Eugenics: A History of Classifying Practices,' Stephen Garton has problematized the slide into using the term eugenics as a catchall, as if its meaning had already been settled. Garton asks the question 'What do we take as the key signifier of eugenics?' is a long and complicated one. Eugenics, he argues, might refer to a fundamental belief in hereditary deficiency as the basis for many social problems, and arising from this eugenicists might be seen as those committed to policies preventing the breeding of the unfit and promoting that of the 'racially fit.' It might also refer to support for sterilization programs. But Garton argues that there were many who accepted a hereditary basis to 'social inefficiency' and who were more cautious about sterilization, preferring permanent segregation as a means of preventing the propagation of the racially unfit. Many of those, he suggests, were also open to explanations that invoked appeal to the environment as causal of social problems as well. Thus, in Garton's view, if 'both camps' (hereditary and environmental) are to be accepted, it opens eugenics to the prospect that it was far from a singular ideology or set of policies and practices and that it was imbibed in wider class, race, religion, gender, and ability constructions and worked sometimes in contradictory ways with diverse strands of thought to shape social policies (Garton 2000: 11).

In addition, he cautions against using eugenics to refer simply to any form of population management or intervention. For example, the pronatalism of the early 20th century cannot be conflated with eugenics. Pronatalist stances are fundamentally concerned with an increase in the quantity of population (e.g., population–per–birth policies), whereas, for eugenics, quantity is a positive danger if it increases 'tainted stock.' What Garton sees as uniquely eugenic in terms of population management is that a concern for the quality of population is the key issue.

In Garton's view, then, the orientation to eugenics as a complicated series of hereditary discourses intersecting with other discourses brings to light how the most favored plans of the early eugenicists both failed and succeeded in terms of their own agenda and influence. The failure that Garton speaks of in regard to eugenics is that the campaign for particular policies that the early eugenicists actively promoted were not taken up everywhere that they were campaigned for and did not last long when they did. Although this is a controversial position on failure insofar as one might argue that any uptake and any form of policy implementation, such as sterilization centers, represented 'success' for eugenics, Garton's point is about seeing the 'disagreement' that scientists and policy makers had regarding such recommendations for policy and their underlying rationales. In short, eugenic arguments that linked social problems to heredity and solutions to the control of reproduction were not monolithically supported. Even where such arguments reached the level of policy formation, they were sometimes vetoed, such as in the United Kingdom in the 1930s. Where such policies were implemented, the number of people confined and segregated always fell far short of what their promoters requested.

What this lack of unanimity suggests to Garton is that at a 'practical' level, the most stringent aspect of eugenics platforms and its most favored programs were
not necessarily so widespread that there was no contestation arising and were not long-lasting in historical terms, even where they were implemented. This has led Garton to conclude that a eugenics program for racial/national improvement, defined as measures for population control targeted at hereditary 'defects', was on the one hand unsuccessful in spreading the actuality of its most revered recommendations yet highly influential at a different level - the way in which professionals, scientists, educators, and politicians thought about human life and their right to control that of others. What seemed to differ across time was not the belief in that right but the strategies for implementing it. Garton suggests that this has left a difficult legacy for historians, namely to disentangle how eugenics was both far less and far more influential than accounts of it as a discrete movement that rose and fell might suggest.

From Naming the Problem to the Problem of Naming: Reworked Imaginaries

At one level, the historiographical debate summarized above may seem pointless. Whether a practice, judged intention, or policy is called social Darwinistic, eugenic, scientific racism, or population theory it seems that the abiding commonality was what Michel Foucault (1989) has called in a different context 'superiority effects'. The 'top' of the chain of being was inscribed similarly across such nomenclatures and only some were positioned as having the right to modify others. The debates over whether eugenics refers to this or to that phenomenon, period, or program may seem pedantic on that ground, but it is not. Nor are the historiographical debates about trying to minimize the atrocities commonly associated with eugenics. Rather, the nuances that Garton and others have pointed to help explain how on the one hand we might recognize that there has been change without difference in regard to 'superiority effects' across the 20th century - on the surface, a similar image of the ideal citizen still seems to circulate. On the other hand, it helps to explain how some practices have not been sustainable and why others emerge in their place. That is, one can perhaps identify vestiges of the old eugenics as 'quality centred directed at hereditary deficiency' in new moments because of the multiple positions spawned around the 'problem' of population governance and the variety of discourses that merge, separate, and transmogrify in responding to new events.

As Lucinda Aberdeen (2000) has noted, though, this does not mean that, all of a sudden, the late 20th century has developed better scholarship to understand eugenics, the past, and its effects. Aberdeen studied how at first phenotypical features, then blood type, then genetic mapping were all strategies used across the 20th century to 'put race down and create an 'index' by which peoples could be confirmed as belonging to certain racial categories. New strategies were developed when the old ones failed to deliver the accuracy desired, such as when serological studies of the 1920s and 1930s came to the conclusion that indigenous peoples of Australia by blood type were closer to the 'western European type' than the English. Such blood studies quickly fell out of favor as a scientific tool. Elazar Barkan (1992) has also demonstrated how concepts of race changed in Britain and the

The Impact of the Old Eugenics on Education

Imagining the world otherwise because racial/national imaginaries have been contested is what has opened eugenics and its impact on education to critique. It is also what enables an arbitrary distinction between old and new eugenics. In respect of old and new eugenic discourses in education, the work of Roy Lowe is particularly instructive. Lowe (1997) argues that eugenics discourse has had a massive impact on education and that this has been downplayed by the linkage of eugenics with sterilization policy. He contends that from the outset eugenics had direct things to say to schools and that this aspect of eugenic thought has proved to be more pervasive and more enduring than the more spectacular arguments around sterilization. Lowe suggests that the impact on schools can be traced even through those historical periods in which one might think 'social conditions were most inimical to the expression of eugenics'. That is, in the aftermath of the horror of the Holocaust. In England, for instance, eugenicsists were called on to give evidence to the Royal Commission on Population in 1949, arguing that 'the different branches of the human race were unequally equipped with the inborn characters that produce and sustain highly organised civilizations'. Despite having to make the expression of ideas more circumspect in the aftermath of the Holocaust, associations such as the Eugenics Society also continued to function. The society found a new focus after WWII, genetics, and in particular the study of 'defective' chromosomes. Further, public pronouncements were made that gave renewed vitality to old ideas about sterilization, couched in now welfare reasoning about the underprivileged. In the United States in the 1950s, Julian Huxley and Frederick Osborne both argued for the use of contraception to limit the fertility of minority groups, particularly African Americans, while in England, Francis Galton advocated a licensing scheme that might limit the number of children borne by 'genetically unfavorable' parents. Other post-WWII approaches tried to preserve the 'best' genes; during the 1970s the Repository for Germlinal Choice was established in California to collect and store sperm from Nobel Prize winners.

Thus, Lowe argues that these examples, plus the many more that he documents, provide considerable evidence of the survival and even popularity of eugenic ideas in the closing decades of the 20th century. His historical documentation indicates an arbitrary distinction between old and new eugenic discourses within a variety of institutions. He suggests that in education, specifically, there was no privileged immunity to these wider mutations and recombobulated discourses. Lowe...
Bernadette Baker identifies five areas of educational policy and practice that were deeply influenced by eugenic ideas for much of the 20th century:

1. Testing - The 'problem' of national degeneration central to eugenics led directly to the search for methods to test the population so as to ascertain its 'ability levels.'

2. Differential Treatment - The explicit and implicit suggestion that at the heart of any understanding of mankind or womankind lay differences and contrasts between races led to the belief that individuals from different ethnic backgrounds had differing educational potential and should be treated differently.

3. Quality of Home Life and Mothering - The concern for national degeneration led to a questioning of both hereditary influences and environment. The quality of home life became a focus and separate schooling tracks for girls and boys were established to have girls become more efficient mothers.

4. Transmission of Opinions Through Children's Books and School Texts - To the extent that school books were and remain racialized they have reflected in part the influence of eugenic thinking. Steven Salzstein's (1999) analysis of American textbooks makes the same point.

5. The Planning of Educational Buildings - Although more oblique, the planning of education buildings was influenced in part by eugenic thinking insofar as there was support for and implementation of the view that the 'future leaders of society' should receive their education both at school and university in institutions whose architecture was a constant reminder of a Greco-Roman and Gothic racial and intellectual heritage of which they considered themselves a part.

Other historians have documented less well-known aspects of eugenics' direct effect on education. Grant Rodwell has indicated how less well-publicized recommendations for 'medical interventions' emerged even in contexts where sterilization may not have been officially sanctioned. Rodwell (2000) demonstrates how the kindergartens' movement in Australia became a site for addressing the threat that 'precocious masturbators,' four- and five-year-old children, seemed to represent to national morality. In eugenic terms, precocious masturbators in the kindergartens had to be saved from a tragic future and the country from racial suicide. Accordingly, at a conference on sex hygiene in 1916 at the University of Sydney, Zoll Benjamin, a lecturer at the Sydney Kindergarten Training College, proposed circumcision for boys and clitoridectomy for girls who were identified as precocious masturbators in the kindergartens.

Rodwell and Lowe elaborate how specific sites within education have been indebted to eugenic thinking. Others such as Garton see the most significant effect of eugenics in the uptake of widespread classifying practices that have permeated educational and other institutions. Garton argues that although old-style eugenics might not have achieved a hegemonic status in the full Gramscian sense because it never secured the consent of the dominated and it never secured the full allegiance of the broad middle class, it did become a key moment and a key approach in the development of what Foucault (1979) has called 'dividing practices.' These practices of categorization and classification assumed a divisibility to being and became important to social government between the world wars and well after.

Eugenics might not have been the only impetus for dividing practices, but it was, in Garton's (2000: 16) view, 'a central and very significant impetus to the development of a raft of tests, categories and administrative arrangements - IQ tests, psychological tests, personality tests, clinicians, visiting medical services, observation wards and the like that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to deal with the crisis of problem populations.'

The 'problem populations' were produced through such classifying practices, new ones being created all the time - the 'feeble-minded, the degenerate, the numerous gradations of 'mixed race' peoples, the juvenile delinquent, the sexually deviant girl, the moral imbecile, the psychopath, the sex psychopath, the transsexual, the homosexual the pervert, the neuropath and so on (Garton 2000: 16). These were not just new words - they were ways of enforcing others into the subjectivities assumed associated with the words. Garton asserts that each of these new subjectivities had its own unique mix of what was considered heredity, social, racial, psychological, and familial factors in their origins.

It is important to note that in listing such factors of origins (e.g., the heredity, social, racial, psychological, and familial) Garton could just as easily be talking about how children's behavior is analyzed in public schooling today. The production of and hunt for different forms of disability, unredressable, at-risk-icity, and the explanations for developmental delay that circulate at the turn of the 21st century often pay homage to similar lists of factors. Garton argues of the emergence of eugenics at the turn of the 20th century that it led to a proliferation of problem populations to be analysed and remedied. This is not unique to the early 20th century. To that end, I focus below on the intersection of new eugenics discourse and Eugenics New: (Dis)ability and Education

One particularly instructive site in which racial-national imaginaries have been reworked is in regard to notions of (dis)ability. Fiona Campbell (2000) makes a claim for understanding 20th-century discourse on disability as that which has shifted from the old eugenics to the new. Campbell argues that the pre-1945 old eugenics is characterized as a negative type, often controlled by government bureaucracies and initiated by way of transparent and coercive practices. Crucial to the negative eugenics of the Holocaust's Nazi Aktion T4 program (1939-1941), for instance, where approximately 275,000 people assigned disability labels were murdered, were two particular assumptions: an understanding of the (real) citizen as informed by a contributory or performance ethic and a logic of the strategy of euthanasia as primarily economic, where 'euthanasia was defended as a means of cost cutting, or ridding society, of "useless eaters." In contrast to the old eugenics,
yet not in the form of complete rupture, Campbell (2000: 308) argues that the ‘eugenic imperative in late modernity’ has been transmogrified into a variety of ‘positive eugenic’ practices ‘which seek to eliminate the birthing of bodies marked as “disabled” or, in the event of their/our post-natal “existence” to engage in “perfecting” technologies that morph ableism and enshrine a particular understanding of ableist normativity and (real) human subjectivity’ Put another way, Campbell is arguing that if ‘bodies marked as “disabled”’ are born at all, slipping through the net, so to speak, then the activity of the posse switches to trying to ‘perfect that defective’ body-mind to make it more “normal”, leaving the reference point unquestioned and inscribing as a genuine effect a human subjectivity that defers to this order of things.

In regard to the body-mind marked as “disabled,” Campbell further suggests that eugenic practices are presently more covert and insidious and that what they have in common is that at root they concern ontological matters, ‘largely unexamined and unspoken conceptions about who should and should not inherit the world’. In the new eugenics, according to Campbell, the State governs disability more indirectly and the individual has a key role in this governance through a process of responsibilization, which directs individuals’ conduct and relations in a direction that is desired and desirable.

The state plays a less direct and de-centred role in the governing of “disability.” Under the mantle of political liberalism boldly proclaiming rampant individualism and freedom of choice, the individual acts as her own overseer, whereas techniques of self-production are not imposed but actively sought. Such technologies of responsibilization ensure the shaping of conduct (relations of self to self and to others), mobilised in a desired direction.

Although Campbell’s implicit reference here seems to be to adults as their own overseers, in public school systems where (some) students are compelled by law to attend and are subjected to the processes that comprise the institution, the overseeing is initially performed by others. Campbell’s further argument is that, under the guise of “laissez-faire eugenics,” the onus is on personal decision making within an overarching framework of “risk assessment,” and “positive eugenics” seeks, then, to restrain particularly to the adult-directed activities of schooling where risk assessment is now considered a “normal” practice and teachers, special educators, psychological and medical experts, and parents are drawn into assessing children’s behavior to make decisions about any potential problem. Disability talk is often conducted in terms of a “problem,” a conundrum, or you like, a headache that simply won’t go away” (Campbell 2000: 309).

The conundrum, Campbell suggests, is not a deep fear of the unknown or an apprehensiveness toward the foreign or strange, but rather it is a deep-seated despair of unevenness, asymmetry, or imbalance that places bodies/minds labeled as disabled at the edge of the abyss, pushing the limits of human subjectivity, and creating an outlaw ontology. An outlaw ontology refers to a way of being or existing that is thought outside the normal and as such to need chasing down, like the unacceptable rogue outlaws of old Western films. Quoting Judith Butler, Campbell points out how it is not enough to say that human subjects are constructed, for the construction of a human is a differential operation that produces the more and the less human, the inhuman, the humlessly unthinkable. These excluded sites come to bound the “human” as its constitutive outside, and to haunt those boundaries. Thus Campbell argues that in the new eugenics, ontological matters are inextricably bound up with the politics of inclusion (Campbell 2000: 309).

Christine Crowe (2000) argues for caution, however, in interpreting the shift from eugenics to genetics discourse. The terms of her caution reinforce Campbell’s conclusions, though, by illustrating how “quality control” issues and technologies of responsibilization are still at the heart of “disability wars,” including those within schools. Crowe sees eugenics as a discrete movement and argues that the terms of genetics discourse, especially those proposals that seek out defects by prenatal screening, turning motherhood into decisions about what kinds of “bodies” to give birth to, are somewhat different from old-style eugenics. Although both eugenics and genetics are concerned with quality control, the manner of the interventions available is now suggestive of new formulations of “the problem” in particular, prenatal screening is a formulation of risk and responsibility that relates to a different kind of “governmentality” (Foucault 1991) relative to the past.

Genetics is also oriented towards the quality of offspring, but, unlike the dominant eugenic discourse, conceptualizes the relationship between risk and responsibility in significantly different ways. Whilst the eugenics movement may be conceptualized in terms of an attempt at state control of reproductive practices, focused on the prevention of reproduction by the negation of fertility, reproductive technologies are operationalised by appeals to individual responsibility for the health of future offspring. The site of intervention in this case is not the prevention of fertility, but the management of fertility, of conception, such that “viable” embryos of choice, will be implanted in a woman’s body. In other words, one of the significant differences between eugenics and genetic practices is that whereas eugenics aimed at the prevention of fertility of the inbreeding, genetic practices are oriented toward not the prevention of fertility, but the management of conception.

(Crowe 2000: 176)

Although Crowe’s focus is reproductive technologies, one can see a similar shift in debates around inclusive schooling and mainstreaming. Rather than telling a child they simply cannot attend a “regular” school, the point of prohibition is related to a child perceived as having ‘disabilities’ of a certain kind which can now be problematized, marginalized, and ‘managed’ within the mainstream institution (Slee 1997) – the alterity is brought back to the center to reinforce it. As Campbell notes, the new eugenics, if not effective in preventing certain kinds of conceptions, turns its attention to ‘perfecting technologies’ that are at base indebted to a perhaps well-intended but nonetheless controlling logic of ableism that hopes to turn
everyone into the one kind of being at least at some level. The debates over whether mainstreaming is inclusion or assimilation (Slee 1997), whether it genuinely meets the needs of students categorized as disabled more than before (Resevelho 2000), can thus be understood differently as debates that question in one way or another whether the hunt for disability is really about preventing the 'detractors' from limiting the 'progress' of the 'normal.' The use of perfecting technologies, whether it be within mainstreamed classrooms or separate ones, are an instance of what Troy Duster (1990) has called the 'backdoor' to eugenics discourse in the present. The new eugenics might be provocatively understood, then, as a modified form of the 'quality control' issue that attracted the old eugenics to lifetime careers of attempting to prove the inferiority of others (Aberdeen 2000). Although not always overtly or directly focused on fertility and reproductive processes, the new eugenics is concerned with perfecting technologies to secure quality citizenship through the homogenization of racial/national populations at some level.

It might be argued, however, that all forms of schooling teleologically seek to govern, discipline, and engineer students' being toward some named ideal. There is no authentic, natural or romantic state to be returned to in the rearing of humans and in caring for each other. The question then becomes whether one agrees with the ideal(s) so named as the goals of education. New eugenic discourses disallow within their own premises a questioning of these ideals, however. They incite the engineering of students par excellence in the name of seemingly generic terms like citizen, democracy, economic healthiness, and unity. They are linked across sites and frequently establish some people as pollutants or detractors. Even where such classifications are thought to be for the benefit of the recipient, they cannot be disarticulated from population governance strategies that concern image management, especially at a racial/national level. For Campbell, the modifications in discourse that mark the new eugenics have taken three forms: the practices of prenatal screening, disability dispersal policies, and the compulsion towards perfecting and morphing technologies of normalization. It is the latter two strategies in particular, disability dispersal policies and perfecting technologies, that pertain more directly to schooling and that announce the importance of studying the wider implications of the hunt for disability in public education.

Dispersal, Proliferation, and Swarming: The Hunt for Disability

Across the last few decades of the 20th century and into the 21st, there has been a proliferation of categories of educational disability used to mark students as outside norms of child development or at-risk of school failure. This proliferation has not emerged out of a more sinister mean-mindedness but out of the very pragmatic realization that failure at school and the failure of schools have direct consequences for how much one can earn, the quality of life, the earning of respect from others, or all three, linked as these are. In fact, in their survey of literature on post-schooling opportunities for students labeled via special education, titled...
The terminology of learning disability shifts the frame of reference for detecting deficit from theological/moral considerations, however, to specie notions of skill, retention, perception, or literacy, especially under pressure from the latest rhetoric of competition in a global economy. LD was formally rendered an educational category in 1969. In July of that year, the Education Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor held hearings on the Children with Learning Disabilities Act. Introduced as an amendment to Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the legislation provided federal support for research on the causes and treatments of learning disabilities. Learning disability was thereby bestowed with official recognition, becoming what was called a 'state designated handicapping condition.' There is much dispute over the details of the genesis of the category and its definition (Skeeter 1987). What is more certain is that the availability of a category called learning disability as a 'state designated handicapping condition' saw a consistent growth in the number of children classified as LD since its inception in educational policy. One million children were labeled LD within a year of its inception (Kidd-Ashey, Deni, and Anderton 2000).

In addition, there have been, more recently, noticeable increases in the use of such categories. In the public school district of Fairfield presently, for instance, the topics of learning disability and special education more generally are receiving much attention. On May 19, 2000, a local newspaper focused its educational segment on special education. In an article entitled 'Heading Toward a Crisis?' District Grapples with Rising Special Education Costs' reporter Gia Weier noted how the number of students in the district who require special education had risen substantially in recent years, from 3,153 in 1994 to 4,142 as of Dec 1, 1999 (Weier 2000). Children designated LD represent the largest group, at 1,755. Part of the increase has been attributed by local school principals to changes in the identification process. Although in the past a child had to be identified as two years behind his or her peers, the definition has now changed so that it is one year behind. In addition, principals have argued that schools assess students more often, which allows teachers and administrators to assign disability labels at an earlier age than in the past, contributing to the increase. Some principals believed that the increase was circular — once a district is known for providing good services, it draws parents who relocate specifically for those services, increasing the total number of labeled students. The director of the district's Department of Educational Services, quoted in the opening to this chapter, seemed less certain of the mechanisms at play in the increase, however.

The uncertainty as to the mechanisms at play in recent identification increases and the attention paid to special education is not unique to Fairfield, nor is it a trend exclusive to the United States. The question of why a certain kind of educational labeling has become increasingly popular is one that policy analysts, sociologists, and historians have been asking in other nations, including Australia, Canada, England, France, and New Zealand (Albrecht 1981; Birkenbach 1993; Skea 1997; Tomlinson 1984). Henri-Jaques Stiker, in his A History of Disability (1999: 5), for instance, asks what incites the fever for classification and what he calls 'the passion for sameness.' Isn't the first question, the one that misfortune itself causes us to forget, this one: why is disability called disability? Why are those who are born or who become different [sic] referred to by all these various names? Why so many categories? Why even such dramatics in the face of what happens, so often, and which can happen to any of us? ... Where does this huge exercise in naming come from, that labeling that circumscribes one kind of reality ... and makes us feel it all the more and be afraid of it?

It seems that in education there has been what Foucault (1979) in a different context has referred to as a 'swarming effect.' In this case, it is around the hunt for and diagnosis of disability as a negative ontology that schools actively seek to name, and, as the following section discusses, remedy with the best of intentions.

Perfecting Technologies: Morphing Ableism

Several strategies have accompanied the dispersal, proliferation, and swarming around educational disability. These include federal-level policy moralizations, local mainstreaming strategies, reinforcement of public schooling's segregation function, medicalization of students, and cultural conflation and homogenization techniques. One split-off from, or perhaps more accurately antecedent, to the swarming around disability identification has been policy proposals and reform. The identification of and hunt for disability has been tied, for instance, to a discourse that privileges international comparison of test scores as signs of quality citizenship and economic prosperity. Extensive problematizations of teachers, teaching, public schools, and students occurred when it was announced through the publication of results from TIMSS, The Third International Mathematics and Science Survey, that Japanese and German students had outperformed American ones on some of the standardized exams. The problematizations were reminiscent of those embodied in earlier publications that had catastrophized mentalities, including A Nation At Risk and the National Education Goals 2000, which stipulated the criteria via which children ought to be judged as 'ready to learn,' thereby producing the category of the deficient; the delayed, the unready, and the broken who were poised as jeopardizing 'the nation,' its reputation, and its economic future, as well as their own personal one.

Besides the federal-level moralizations that have accompanied the naming of 'the detractors' in international comparisons, there have been reformulations of local special educational policies in approximately the last 10 years, a trend known as mainstreaming or inclusive schooling. Mainstreaming generally involves placing students who are perceived as having primarily mild to moderate disabilities in regular or mainstream classrooms, rather than having the students sent to separate
or special schools for the entirety of their educational program. It is not clear whether the reforms have eventuated from purely pragmatic concerns for downsizing and merging facilities, from trends in educational research, from parental activism, or a combination of these (Skrtic 1995). In the midst of the swarm to figure out why mainstreaming has eventuated and why now, however, the very basis of public schooling's existence is glossed over. Because public schools have historically not been populated by children labeled as severely intellectually disabled, the attention of public school policy has been turned to children who are perceived as 'educable' but outside the norms for child development—students once referred to as 'high grade defective' (Tomlinson 1984). What lends public schooling its distinctiveness as an institution historically and still now is that it is not and has never been a place for every child.

That is, local mainstreaming policies highlight the previous segregation function of public schooling amid the availability of other institutions. The educational policies of more bureaucratically centralized Western nations, as well as individual states within the United States, have been primarily concerned in the recent past with what is now referred to as mild intellectual or physical disability, and that on these categories that debates over labeling and special services have most focused. The very existence of schooling as something that is separate from persons who seemingly cannot agitatively enter into such domains, such as those classified as having 'rare' syndromes, is taken for granted as the backdrop to formal public education. What is perceived as severe intellectual disability, especially, has historically been placed in the 'too hard' basket and to such an extent that scholars such as Kliwer and Biddlen (2001) have had to argue overtly for new lenses for seeing the 'educability' and 'literacy' of students labeled as 'severely mentally retarded,' reminding the reader of the ethics involved: "The person perceived as defective and the person perceived as competent are both social constructions. People in whom resides the power to define the capacities of other human beings are making moral decisions. On what basis should such decisions be made?" (Kliwer and Biddlen 2001: 11). Like recent Hollywood films that make fun of the Amish under the presumption that the Amish are not likely to be in the audience and to protect their representation as either lanky or interest groups might if they were the targets of comic relief, the belief that agency, resistance, and contestation has to come from the spoken words or actions of an individual or group guarantees that schools are now only places for certain kinds of children. The form of socialization for persons labeled as severely intellectually disabled, for example, has been considered medical rather than educational and brings to light what is often most submerged about public schooling—that is, its segregation function.

A mind-body dichotomy seemingly gives the school the purview to somehow work on the intellectual progress of the majority. This in turn is seen as distinct from 'purely' medical kinds of socialization or care associated with perceptions of severe intellectual disabilities. In some locales the distinctions are defended, with parents wanting separate specialized medical services for their children. On other occasions, parents argue for inclusion of their children within public school classrooms because they do not want them segregated from the rest of the school-going population. One outcome of these debates has been that the distinctiveness between medicine and education has been drawn into question and not just for children labeled as having severe intellectual disabilities. The current medicalization programs for many public school students labeled as behavior disordered or hyperactive undermines the solidity of the distinction between medicine and education as discrete practices for securing social order. In the absence of corporal punishment that might leave a mark on the skin, an array of internally corporal medicalizations have emerged whose marks are more difficult to photograph and therefore to contest.

In addition to federal-level policy pronouncements, mainstreaming, segregation, and medicalization, a further kind of well-intended perfecting technology has been engaged that acts to conflate certain kinds of racial, ethnic and linguistic heritages with educational disadvantage. In England and parts of the United States, there is an overrepresentation of children from cultural minorities and working classes in perceived categories of mild disability relative to population percentages. On the basis of social structures and trends that appear to extend beyond individual nations, the intransigence of classifications such as learning disability and emotionally disturbed has been drawn into question. In the United States, for example, many studies across the 1980s noted the overrepresentation of working-class children, minority children, or both, in I.D. classifications (Arguelles 1985; Bronson 1983; Carrier 1986; Sleet 1987; Tucker 1980; Wright and Santa Cruz 1983), while in England Sally Tomlinson's (1984) study of 'educational subnormality' categories similarly documented the overrepresentation of children of immigrants from the Caribbean.

In light of such overrepresentations, a finite number of explanations for this conflation have been proposed, ranging from genetic determinism to historically and sociologically critical accounts of the effects of establishing singular standards. The former seem more well known. Recent arguments, such as the genetic determinism espoused in The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life, have reinvoked biophysiology as the cause of the overrepresentation. Although such arguments have been debunked many times over, sometimes the critiques still play on the same field as that which is being critiqued, submitting themselves on the same grounds for argument as that which Herrnstein and Murray used (e.g., appealing to further test scores) to disprove Herrnstein and Murray's interpretation of test scores. Such critiques are useful, but they do not destabilize the very faith in the phenomenon of testing on which genetic deterministic arguments regarding intelligence are predicated in the first place.

Therefore, in consonance with other critical approaches to genetically based arguments, another form of 'explanation' for the overrepresentation of 'certain kinds' of children in 'certain categories' of disability have emerged. In England, Gary Thomas and Georgina Glenny (2000) have argued that emotional and behavioral difficulties are 'bogus needs in a false category' especially because there is within special education little critical examination of what is being proposed as a need: "There are taken-for-granted assumptions of "help" in the "meeting need" mantra of contemporary special education protocols, and these 'needs' have been
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However, white educators that I have met fail to acknowledge that these skills are based on a white frame of reference, and fail to question the consequences of this form of gatekeeping.

(McSorley 2000: 30–31)

Like Thomas and Glenney in England, McSorley argues that the cultural bias appears not just in who is slotted into a category or labeled as having special or extra needs, but earlier, in the very formulation and definition of skills, needs, and readiness themselves. Others have pointed to how, even where seemingly stable definitions of an educational disability appear, this is no guarantee of any further kind of coherence in the actions pursued. That is, the formulation and definition of skills, needs, and readiness, even if appearing as consistent across espoused educational policies, does not open onto the use of consistent and agreed on strategies. Thus, the cultural conflation and homogenization techniques that help support the hunt for disability to be understood for the ‘wiggle room’ they provide in terms of actual implementation. For example, Kiddie-Aslley, Denz, and Anderton (2000) have analyzed the lack of agreement historically and in the present over what LD is and whether it is neurophysiologically based or not. In their paper ‘Learning Disabilities Eligibility in the 1990s: An Analysis of State Practices’, Kiddie-Aslley et al. surveyed the criteria for identifying and labeling a student as ‘having a learning disability across 40 states. They concluded that:

Despite the improved agreement regarding the category label (now SLD!), there continues to be notable variability from state to state in how SLD eligibil-
ity is determined. Although there is nearly unanimous agreement across states that SLD is manifested in a discrepancy between the individual’s actual aca-
demic achievement and potential for achievement, the states differ dramatically in how this discrepancy is to be documented (Kiddie-Aslley et al 2000: 68).

How ‘potential for achievement’ is ever decided, prophesied, or determined is not discussed, but the authors take hypothetical samples of actual achievement, such as IQ scores, and apply different state definitions to each of the imagined cases. Even with the same ‘test scores’, being labeled LD as a student would depend on which state a child lived in. The argument for LD as universally, incontrovert-
ibly, historically, and acurately ‘biomedical’ rests on thin ice if it is such that
one’s address determines the classification. The implementation of perfecting tech-
nologies around diagnoses of disability presently requires, then, the possibility for conflating other ‘differences’, such as address or perceived forms of cultural embodiment with educational disability, posed in the objectifying language of bio-
medicine, psychology, and welfare, and submerges as a homogenizing technique. Tomlinson (1984) found a similar trend regarding such arbitrariness in her empirical study in England, concluding that ESN (educational subnormality, as it was called at that time) was a label resulting more likely from personality clashes between a teacher and a student and that there was no agreement about the one child who was examined, let alone in identifications across schools. The point for

normative references that value, among other things, order and compliance to ‘white’ rules and dominant codes of power. The perception that readiness for mainstreaming and inclusion is dependent on the learning of appropriate social skills and values is very prevalent among special and regular educators.
Tomlinson was thus that the determination of educational or academic disability was culturally biased and not necessarily biomedical or neuropsychological at base. As noted above, children of families who had emigrated from the Caribbean were markedly overrepresented in the labeling process initiated by white teachers, leading Tomlinson to conclude that what was being labeled was not simply a child but a culture.

The disagreements and debates that such studies document suggests that there may be additional and wider historico-cultural forces at play that act to comport the definition of disability and ability in a particular way at a particular time and that underwrite the processes of identification that perpetuate belief in the perspicacity of the categories. Such studies have been important in raising awareness of the value systems that interpenetrate actions within schools and the consequences of disremembering them. But what such studies sometimes neglect to emphasize is how critiques of cultural bias in special education can inadvertently reinvigorate the forbidden relationship between disability and desire, that is, how disability whether it is analyzed as 'biomedical' or 'socially constituted through relationships' must not be denied, how it is used as nomenclature for a negative ontology and posed as a way of being that at all cost ought to be avoided. Where a critique of labeling or overrepresentation turns on the view that 'normal' students are really being mislabeled and made closer on a scale to 'genuinely' disabled students, then it does not undermine the presumption that it's better to be dead than disabled.

If, as Campbell (2000: 307) has argued, the construction/governing of disability and the compulsion toward an ahistorical normativity are in fact achieved by the continual reiteration of technologies as 'taboo signifiers' holding out the promise of 'able-bodiedness', then both the hunt to identify disability and in some versions of its critique, leave unproblematized this promise.

The above analysis has indicated, then, how the persistent figuring of disability as a negative ontology involves the constant rewriting of disability within educational practices of care/welfare and sometimes within the very debates that critique those practices. This rewriting is characteristic of new eugenics discourse, including disability dispersal policies and morphing and perfecting technologies, which appear interwoven through the everyday activities taken for granted as signs of democracy in schooling. In the proliferation and swarming around categories of educational disablement, and in the technologies of policy writing, mainstreaming, segregation, medicalization, and movements between cultural differentiation and homogenization discussed above, disability becomes understandable as the politics of (dis)ability. A preferred style or way of living only becomes a learning disability, for example, in light of the impatience and structure of an institution that presents things in a limited number of ways with rigid expectations for what counts as a timely performance. Similarly to allocate some children and not others as emotionally disturbed really raises the question of what counts as an emotion and what constitutes a disturbance and to whom. If the degree of surveillance that is directed at children who are so labeled were to be turned on the adults in the school, then perhaps there would emerge many teachers, administrators, and psychologists whose observed behavior might be thought of as disturbing and emotional. And finally, if these forms of critique or subversion are left to play on a field where distance from 'really' disabled persons is the key to greater inclusion elsewhere, then disability, whether understood as formed through social relations or as biomedical or 'both', ultimately remains within this logic 'not optimal, not to be desired, even if perceived as temporarily or occasionally advantageous'. Does this recognition of (dis)ability as discursively constituted, and of disability as a form of negative ontology within schools, thus mean that no efforts at identification, diagnosis, and treatment of children who appear to be 'falling behind' should be engaged with? Does this mean that there are no such things as 'bad behavior' or 'dyslexia'? The following section considers how the resort to service-provision models presumes what perhaps it should explain and examines some of the complexities inherent to disability-positive and disability-negative accounts of ontology.

'Quality Control' and Service-Provision Models

LD, BD, ED, or EBD seem 'easy' examples to draw ambiguity around in discussing the politics of (dis)ability. For example, how you move your body in the classroom may not be how I like to move mine; to call one series of movements a sign of behavior disorder and another self-control is surely imbued with culturally loaded expectations for bodily expressions; and so on - one can imagine this line of argument continuing and taking seriously the point that there is 'wriggle room' around the edges as to what constitutes a disorder, disturbance, or delay, and so on.

It may seem that there are other conditions; however, those that require the use of wheelchairs, blindness, or deafness, for instance, that seem more difficult to dispute in terms of labeling. This line of argument would suggest that at the very heart of humanity there are some biological or physiological 'defects' that cannot be denied. The presumed obviousness of such conditions is therefore taken circularly as proof of disability's universal fixity. The question is then taken to arise under this logic: Is there not labeling and the provision of special educational services on the basis of such obvious conditions, which, within the context of schooling, constitute a disadvantage?

The conflation between identification, labeling, and provision is important to note in the above kinds of questions that have been constructed around the provocative issue of (dis)ability and schooling. Important, too, is the presumed nature of that which constitutes the reference point for such 'obvious' questions: labeling does not just lend its effects to the overtly labeled but elevates those who appear outside 'the problem'. As Linda Ware (2000a: 108) asks in problematizing the innateness of an ability/disability binary in educational work, 'What have we done to ourselves by doing these things to them'? If left as an unquestioned technology directed incessantly at children entrapped in compulsory institutions, labeling can itself leave unquestioned the nature of institutions or scenarios in which certain ways of existing are produced and made to 'pop up' as though natural.

Moreover, the line of reasoning which sees some 'conditions' as indispensably biomedical, negative, and 'inside' the person, and others, such as LD or ED, as
more sociological, kind of fuzzy, and open to abuse, fails to recognize how such distinctions rest at base an empiricist and objectivist medical model that can obscure alternative ways of understanding the multiplicity of effects of labeling something or someone. Within the disability studies literature, for example, the term disability is highly contested and is not always seen as a simply negative or repressive term. Disability becomes instead disability-positive, the grounds for the formation of new transnational minority groups (Wigley 1996), a term that refers to something that can be productive of new alliances, experiences, and subjectivities, a term that can be locally liberating, or open to strategies of reclamation, humour, irony, inversion, subversion, and satire (Linton 1998). Terms such as 'crip culture', 'gimps', and 'Deaf' have thus been reappropriated and disavowed as to their use, just as the use of genetic technologies and genetic counseling has become a site for disagreement (Sands 2001). In some of the literature (e.g., Davis 1997), to presume that disability can only ever be 'real' as disability-negative, or as an outdated ontology rather than a preferred one, is to reenact through a paternalizing sympathy or an impossible form of empathy the very problem being critiqued.

Under the weight of these kinds of debates, the invocation of service-provision models, which are often predicated on the presumption of disability-negative inscriptions of a 'condition', become both part of the problem and an avenue for reframing subjectivity. The recognition that the way that things are can generate pain and suffering for students, which are experienced as disabilities, is central to the appearance of service models as sensitive and caring. The logic of provision presently seems to go hand in hand, though, with the logic of assimilation, homogenization, or both. It is steeped in old-world visions of democracy as a right to modify others for citizenship; if those perceived as suffering are to be alleviated, then 'they' need to be identified, categorized, and rescued from themselves through condition-specific programs, while the rest of the group need to be protected from possible 'contaminating' effects. In the process, new discrete groups of 'problem populations' are made available for consumption, and the creativity, ingenuity, and uniqueness that have already emerged as responses to labeling disability as a negative ontological state remain submerged. Or as Campbell (2000:39) puts it,

It is not surprising then, that people with 'disabilities' become caught up in the vortex of a vertiginous dread of the tragic wish to emulate and 'normalize' their/our bodies in conformity with the virtues underpinning ableist normativity. Suffering a perpetual desire for some kind of perfectibility produces internalized ableism – an attitude of heart that engages in self-hatred, often rendering us incapable of re-seeing our selves simultaneously as the font of containment and creativity/ingenuity.

Given the complexities that seem inherent to acknowledging both the current structure of schooling, and its allied reference points of 'being able-to' as the increasing rate of passage between grades or stages, then, disability rights activists and scholars in the disability studies field rarely argue against the provision of services or the development of new technologies in cases where such things can be dearticulated from presuppositions of a negative ontology. As Campbell (2000) notes, though, there is a fine line between 'the provision of services' that minimize pain and suffering and being judged as having an outlaw ontology that is seen negatively for getting 'special' treatment, only to find that the manner of the treatment is often premised on morphing the recipient into accepting uncritically the subjectivities of ableist normativity.

There is, therefore, no agreement in the disability studies field on whether educational labeling and service-provision models in any form are unilaterally 'good' or 'bad'. Rather, the questions and criticisms raised revolve around deeper epistemological and ontological issues that preexist debates about services for all children. The questions raised take the complexity of things as their starting point. They assume that pain, suffering, and creativity are real, that privilege is palpable, and that experiences and so-called conditions or deficiencies are constituted through current social relations and institutional structures and are not objectively 'existing in' persons. The questions, and the critique they imply, thus try to consider how the observation of such complexity became possible. Why are norms taken for granted as objective? What restricted image of 'the ideal citizen' do norms for development embody? How might this devalue those excluded from such images? Toward what broader purposes are the construction of norms and deviations directed? And why, in the end, and at the beginning, do others need to be convinced that what I am dealing with is real, without seeing it as being 'in' me or as me 'having it'? As Kenneth Hultqvist (in press) notes in a different context, many present-day questions turn on a familiar quandary: how can issues of multiculturalism and pluralism be considered when operating within a framework of universal norms?

These questions are in a way questions about who or what can be included as fully human in discussions on the 'politics of inclusion' in schools. They are questions about inclusion and quality control before the terms of debates about inclusive schooling are set. They are questions about difference, sameness, and equality that precede the arguments about who can have access to what number of teaching assistants or sides in a school setting and for how long.

This leads to a further series of questions that incite a consideration of the wider orientations underwriting the structure of service-provision models and rhetoric – for example, What power relations inherethe production of categories such as normal and abnormal? Are these relations worthy of perpetuation? And finally, whether intended or not, is labeling a way of morphing 'disability' into the assumptions of an ableist normativity, with all its racial-cultural overtones, rather than questioning certain privileged ontologies and epistemologies to begin with?

It is easy to ask questions and propose no alternatives. It is also easy to be multilayered as if caught between a rock and a hard place after reviewing multiple debates that have opened in regard to (dis)ability and education. On the one hand, the pragmatic realization discussed earlier that 'without' certain 'skills' the 'least' with which one can engage in everyday activities can become privileged, with the experience of suffering and pain produced and exacerbated, overriding any concomitant recognition of ingenuity and creativity, compels something to be done to make
schools more humane and wider-visioned places. On the other, how can such Utopias come to fruition without reinvoking the very hierarchies that help perpetuate a belief in disability as a negative ontology and a 'conundrum'? How could any 'alternative' avoid recirculating the salvific and redemptive efforts being problematized and not recognize that any desire to want to shift social relations, is a kind of nostalgic romance: a conflicted, possibly ruinous place to start?" (Meiners 1999: 350). The final section of this chapter is therefore an admittedly raw attempt to rethink how I am part of the problem rather than its solution and to make an effort at understanding why it is so difficult to imagine genuine alternatives that would not end up being just a better camouflaged pose.

The Question of Special Education and Alternatives: A Headache That Won't Go Away?

One present reality in the United States is that categories of disability are part of policy language, and public schools are compelled to engage in identification and counting if they wish to receive funding. Beyond that bureaucratic imperative, however, to label or not to label a child is currently a provocative and unsettled question in public schools and families, even in school districts that have followed federal and state mandates and guidelines for special education provision (Edgerton 1986). In the case of the Fairfield School District's Department of Public Instruction, the use of educational labeling is described as making free and public education (FAPE) available to all children. Hence being classified as LD, for example, opens up access to extra assistance in activities, such as reading, or gives more time to complete an examination. In the disability rights movement, this is considered recognition and recompense for the way that institutions are structured. That is, if schools are built on the assumption of a model student, then special services are indeed required for children who are pushed outside of that model for such students to interact in and benefit from the institution. It is considered romantic, naïve, and dangerous not to recognize that the school deck is already stacked and therefore, under this view, special provisions for interacting within that stacked system should be provided.

Disability studies literature so often contests the liberal lines of reasoning that are often encapsulated in policy documents, however, by suggesting that the persistent identification/labelling of disability as 'in someone leaves undisturbed the motion of normalcy by failing to challenge professionals' beliefs in a 'legitimate social order' (Brandtlinger 1997; Danforth and Rhodes 1997; Skrtic 1995; Tomlinson 1984). Further, such practices are seen as reducing the totality of someone's humanity to a so-called trait (ability/disability), leaving in place an essentializing lens for viewing someone in the singular (Hesse-Biber 1995), while at the same time negating or submerging how those very practices are implicated in the construction and experience of 'problems' that they seek to address (Allan 1996; War 2008b). Danforth and Rhodes (1997) explain the inherent contradiction in much inclusive schooling literature that attempts to honor the reality of difficulties at school and at the same time fail to contest the grounds on which reality is constructed.

As the national proponents of inclusion have created the foremost progressive edge of disability advocacy, their writings have contributed to the common assumption that specific conditions... or deficiency exist in identified students. Assertions that certain students 'have' handicaps or are 'with' disabilities have been stated in the midst of arguments trying to convince educators to accept such students into general education settings. By failing to question and contest the disability construct as universally true and real, inclusion advocates have unintentionally worked against their own integrationist and civil rights purposes, supporting the devaluation and stigmatization of students with disabilities while decrying the same. (1997: 357)

Such disability studies literature on special education therefore takes its cue from the diversity of interpretations that are now available. The analyses are generally predicated on an historical understanding of shifts in defining normalcy and disability that have moved the locus of reality for those definitions from morality to medicine to culture (Longmore and Unamanyi 2001; Sikker 1999). They are also predicated on an anthropological understanding that not every group of humans believes in the existence of such things as a discrete 'mind' or 'body' to which inscriptions of disability-as-objective and 'universal' have been tied in the North (Gabel, Vras, Patel, and Patel 2001; Ingstad and Reynolds Whyte 1993). In drawing on these historico-anthropological understandings, and the sociological and critical legal scholarship discussed previously, such disability studies analyses reframe the pressure put on parents to consent, or not consent, to the labeling of a child and quite possibly their medicalization, pressures that analyses such as those by Joy-Ruth Mickelson (2000) have documented. It is the difficulties associated with institutional structures, present practices, and the pressures that they bring to bear especially on parents and other educators who are confronted with making decisions about children's welfare that the final section of this paper addresses.

The End of Formal Education as We (Do Not) Know It

to complete any study of educational deficiency in special schools, it becomes essential... to make a comparative survey of children presumably normal. Only by comparison with 'normals' can we state what characteristics differentiate the backward or defective.

Cyril Burt (quoted in Lowe 2000: 213)

What is a parent to do? What is a parent to do when they are a public schoolteacher and a parent? On the one hand, it seems obvious that parents do not want
their children to suffer and are interested in and want ‘good things’ for their children from schooling. Parents do not want their children to be disadvantaged just because of judgments, interactions, or resources unavailable in an institution that their children are forced to attend. On the other hand, it is presently difficult to determine what constitutes the greater form of suffering. Some parents have been forthright, for example, about the anguish that schooling provokes in making decisions about their children.\textsuperscript{14, 15} \textsuperscript{14, 15} Mickelson (2000) has documented the diversity of parental experiences and orientations to having sons labeled behavior disordered and how the orientations of the same parent shifted over time. Further, one does not have to travel far in most school districts to gain a sense of the complexities of labeling and the politics of inclusion/exclusion. Sometimes a child does not wish to be labeled for special services to save face among peers. At other times, parents actively want a child to be labeled whom teachers do not perceive as having a disability at all because labeling provides access to services that parents could not obtain otherwise. On other occasions, there is parental consent to labeling but not to the recommended medication. In still other instances, teachers wish to have a child labeled, but parents refuse to consent to a description of their child as, for example, emotionally disturbed. Then suspicion arises as to whether that child whose parents ‘hold out’ is the subject of retribution, over surveillance, or in contrast being ignored or left out, with the charges flying back and forth.

Moreover, teachers can feel (and are) forced to confront, handle, or respond to situations perceived as violent, difficult, and dangerous in the immensity of the school grounds, while other times parents are forced to educate teachers about the positive things their child brings to the room, reestablish vision and thereby attempting to undo the inscription of disability-as-conundrum, problem, or extra work. These are not minute events in the lives of any of those involved in schooling and the determination of disability, nor are they easily, if ever, resolved. The positions taken up away between the poles that Danforth and Rhodes (1997) note, moving from the assumption that disability is objectively ‘set a child to the view that what is labeled as and experienced as disability is socially constituted and produced between bodies-minds in human relationships. The intense personal feelings such tensions and interactions generate in public schools should not just be dismissed as bad form or ‘tick-ed, tak-ed’ by those removed from such daily situations. How classifications came to be and continue to be such a focal point of what brings parents and other educational professionals together is not a natural or inevitable event, however.

Classifying and dividing practices are, though, difficult to address because they are caught in the loop that enables them—very much the loop that Cyril Burt articulated in 1920: it is only possible to develop a differentiating typology based on an a priori species-specific functioning baseline. This baseline asserts the ‘essential non-mediating boundary. The species-typical benchmark body-mind in turn produces the figuring of disease and disability (Campbell 2000). These figurations, though well-intended, evidence the new ‘logics of normalcy’ (Fox Keller 1992) and the effort to normalize school children toward an敝ur normativity that fails to question its privilege and results in the kinds of anguish that parents, teachers, and children often experience and express. As Campbell (2000) has already noted, the illusion of choice in the present, whether to label or not, whether to submit to more perfecting technologies or not, is used to mask the egocentric spectator and when combined with the juridipcentric authority of law, expressions and decisions about (dis)ability become much more than simply someone’s opinion, much more than she said, he said’ at the local school. They have real effects and real consequences for real children’s human subjectivity and for those adult subjectivities that assert who or what a (better) human is.

It is, therefore, remarkably ironic that an Oxbridge/Ivy League curricula argument of Charles Eliot at the turn of 20th century can now challenge in a romantic and indirect way the practices of sorting, discipline, and punishment that all formal education engages in. Who are to make the prophecies and what kind of quality control toward proper citizenship are such prophecies engaged in? What is the whole range of effects that the hunt for disability produces and perpetuates?

I have found a common argument put forth within schools and in conversations with psychological or medical experts is that it is the examination results broadly conceived that determine prophecies and decisions, but this merely begs the question. Results refer back to further results that refer back to further results that prevents any questioning of the very institution of examinations as a source of objectification, discipline, and punishment. As noted above, IQ tests are in many states the baseline for determining LD (Kiddie-Ashley, Deni, and Anderson 2000). The results seem to tell of ‘a gap between actual’ and expected achievement, although where the standards for expected achievement comes from is often not articulate, especially in regard to the classroom observations that precede entrance into further rounds of formal testing, such as IQ. What constitutes a ‘third-grade reading level’ as opposed to a ‘fourth-grade reading level’; for instance, can usually be defined by educational professionals at the elementary level, but where such standards have emerged from is rarely part of professional wisdom. At most the standards for determining third-grade and fourth-grade reading levels are guesstimated to be from ‘the research’ or ‘experience’ or to be set by the publishers of the reader series being used, verified earlier somewhere in some survey of data that no one can name. Yet such implicit standards are incredibly powerful organizers of perception that make some students appear as problems and confer on others a star status.

This historical forgetting is not surprising, nor should teachers be blamed for conveying it. Schooling and the selective filtering toward tertiary study to which it is articulated fundamentally rely for existence on that which is seemingly impossible to question—the propensities to classify, divide, withhold, and promote on the basis of various forms of evaluation that mask their indebtedness to matters ontological. Argues Foucault (1979) on this point:

the marks that once indicated status, privilege and affiliation were increasingly replaced— or at least supplemented— by a whole range of degrees of normality indicating membership of a homeogenous social body (e.g. citizenship), but also playing a part in classification, hierarchization and the distribution
of rank. In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity: but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fit specialties and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. It is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences.

Perhaps a cynical way of understanding the hunt for disability, then, is that it has become so convenient in a system of formal ([theoretical] equality), so proliferating, so amenable to swarming because institutions can make judgments about further categories such as race, class, sexuality, and gender by calling them 'individual differences' or something else ('intelligence') and refer for security's sake to the exam results. Yet, as Stephen Jay Gould argued 20 years ago, test results do not represent a solid anything. In foreshadowing the arguments to come in The Mismeasure of Man, Gould (1981: 24)! argued that the abstraction of intelligence as a single entity, the presumption of 'its location within the brain, its quantification as one number for each individual, and the use of these numbers to rank people in a series of worthiness invariably led to the assertion that oppressed and disadvantaged groups - races, classes, and sexes - are innately inferior and deserve their status.' Gould's historical excavation of reification (how the concept of intelligence became converted into an entity) and of ranking challenges such forms of justification and practices on which the hunt for disability is predicated.

If the previous reading of the hunt is to be labeled as cynical, though, then there is another way of looking at things. Gould's historical analysis of intelligence as a revered concept opens to view how the new eugenics operates through examinations and observations in more insidious if unintentional ways. The analyses of exam results that point to which population groups fail or succeed at what do not simply tell us of the existence of racism or sexism or classism or ableism. Exams are already the vectors of such -isms, sites for the recirculation of power, a form of discipline and punishment that assume ontologies can be segregated, graded, and differentially valued before any body-mind even enters the examination room. Rather than a direct confrontation in which the teacher, administrator, medical personnel, or researcher stands at the door and says, 'No, you cannot go there because I said so,' there is an indirect mechanism at work - the difficult interpersonal confrontation that gatekeeping makes inevitable is supposedly bypassed by the authorizing function of the examination.

The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gate, a surveillance that makes its possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized... At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected.

(Foucault 1979: 184-185)

This authorizing function is of course prevalent throughout formal education. Teachers/professors in all institutional tiers use tests, grade papers, give permission, establish or participate in gatekeeping structures by conferring credentials, and so on. It is not as if any educator is immune from the filtering implications of these activities and can claim a pure or non-contradictory position on the matter. Is formal education therefore doomed to nonexistence under the weight of critiques such as Campbell's? Should schools just admit openly at the point of enrollment that only some of the children will be suited to what goes on in them? The vanishing point toward which such questions are headed appear mired in a binary of alternatives, one based on disappearance (i.e., 'just get rid of the whole system'), the other on greater transparency (i.e., 'just admit from the outset that the current system is an irreparable and ongoing problem that maintains ontological hierarchies').

The difficulty of imagining society without schools as they currently are with their baby-sitting and sorting functions or of drawing Utopian pictures of how they might be without presumptions of an ableist normativity is the difficulty of having been normalized as a schoolchild, of having a subjectivity colonized by a concern to 'be able to do something, of having been constantly examined to prove that one can get the point, make the point, or draw the picture of the alternative.' The fact that I cannot answer my own wish for an alternative, that I cannot draw that picture, that I 'fail to conceptualize within my perceptual processer's solid vision of something better' after laying out a range of problems and debates, may tell me something after all - the 'inability' in an apparently satisfying way of proposing something 'better' is itself an entrapment in the very limits of discourse on ability and betterness that is being rethought.

But this seemingly stylifying embeddedness in the very thing being criticized is nothing new to note. In the 1930s and long before Foucault, Carter C. Woodson's Afrocentric critique The Mis-education of the Negro so incisively noted that you do not need to slam the door in someone's face if you get him to slam it in his own. Forty years later in Discipline and Punish, we can see the reworking, where Foucault described at length the shift from overt torture to the gentle way in punishment, the production of 'docile bodies,' and the ramifications of panopticon-style surveillance, where technologies of self-monitoring are internalized under the presumption that someone is always watching and recording anyway.

This watching is not always innocuous or positive. It is not akin to making sure that your child doesn't drown while playing near water. In schools and universities, this is a systematized watching and form of classification that tells people who they are and ought to be based on a narrow range of cultural values. There is no form of observation outside power relations, no assertion of knowledge without power effects, and no exercise of power without knowledge effects. The mutually
constitutive dynamics of power-knowledge and their subjectivity and internalization effects inhere in the well-intended evaluation efforts and classificatory practices of major social institutions, including schools and universities, and in the very efforts to rethink and reshape them.

Thus, if my alternative was to assert that it is normal for there to be a 'range' of human body-minds, this assertion does not do away with the concept of normativity but reinvents it in different form. As an alternative slotted into the current format of schooling, it would come dangerously close to a Spencian social Darwinism of 'leave as you find' - the top of the tree would remain undisturbed and the real difficulties of actually getting around, through, and by in schools for many of the people forced to attend them could be glossed over as 'late'. Similarly, if another alternative was to argue that disability is a reality, a fact of life, of every life, and ought not be taken as a negative ontology that must be made to disappear paradoxically by hunting it down to assimilate it, then this too does not break the circle of normalization that allows whatever is thought of as an ability to fly by uncontested. Whatever an institution seems not set up to 'handle' and throws back onto the recipient as a disability would remain unquestioned.

In both alternatives, the perfecting technologies that sought to morph the 'patient' into an image of the norm through a passion for sameness could be resecured through an ironic commitment to an undefined democracy. Or as Roe (2000) puts it, the 'enchanted' for corporeal perfection would continue, obscured in this case by the nomenclature of 'free and public education' and the provision of services. In the effort toward democratic education in the form of inclusive schooling, nationwide institutions simply have not, will not, do not want to, or know how to give up the act of classifying, sorting, and hierarchizing human beings, reduced in the end to ability levels or test scores. The theories of child development that undergird the postulation of abilities by age or stage remain wedded to the structures of schooling. The challenge as I see it then is not how to tinker with the school, the university, examinations, or substituted portfolios but whether it is even possible to imagine the world otherwise. Is the situation such that, as Derida argues, there is no philosophy, but everything is normative? If so, then, is it simply a matter of which norms you happen to agree with? Or is there a genuine possibility for not requiring such things as examinations in negative ways as indicators of 'social order'? And if social order is merely a euphemism for what might more accurately be called the colonization of privilege, then it becomes clear how I am part of the problem rather than the solution, for the very employment of someone within a school or university is dependent on the assertion of (dis)abilities that such institutions both produce and govern.

Is the big picture so desperate, though? Can nothing at all be done without merely camouflaging the pose in more intricate form? If as Foucault (1979) further asserts, disciplinary practices organize analytical space, then the question that those who organize education are left with, after the divergent function of the examination and the normalizing function of schooling is exposed, is whether it is ever OK to think of some humans as normal and some humans as not, some humans as positively able and some as disabled in a negative way. Reversals are again instructive. If those who set the minimum wage, for example, were compelled to live on it for the rest of their lives, no escape possible, then what might that wage be? In a similar vein, if the answer to the above question is yes, that it is OK to assert some humans as normal and some as not, some as on target and some as delayed, some as able to organize their 'perceptual processes' and some not, then what orientation to human life might result if those who answered yes were forced to bear the repressive brunt of policies asserting negative ontologies? Although disability-positive such as that argued for by persons who self-identify as Deaf Culturalists is one thing, disability-negative, the construction of disability as a headache that won't go away and that is the object of the hunt within the specific site of schooling, is quite another. What would happen if, before infringing them on others thought less human, less valuable, less educable, less everything that matters within a school, the whole range of effects of educational policies regarding disability had to hit home through everyone's sense of self as an outlawed ontology? Perhaps if the negative othering effects were applied to forms of corporeality that were initially thought of as positive, clear, stable, and unproblematic, there would be time and space for reconsidering a wider range of the implications of the new eugenics, ablest normativity, and disciplining technologies before sending the pose out in schools.

In a final series of reversals, then, it seems important to consider just what skills are actually thought necessary or as 'needs' that define who the educationally problematic are and what 'quality citizenship' is. In a reversal of a medical logic that tests for disease by a presence of something, the 'disease' of the schoolchild who is labeled as disabled in one form or another is identified by an absence - the thing, the knowledge-as-commodity, skill-as-commodity, or self-control-as-commodity that is supposed to be carried inside as one might carry lunch in a backpack is considered missing or not timely enough. In the end, this means that the appropriate speed or action is considered absent as well, and that in a subaged eugenic reasoning this 'defect' is presumed to infect and create problems for more 'normal' others in the vicinity if left undiagnosed or addressed. But let's pretend that public schooling is not concerned purely with literacy, math, and that nebulous thing called academic achievement and that its arbitrary focus is in fact physical education. Let's extend the reversal and imagine that PE is the thing, the knowledge-performance that matters to how I judge you, who you can be, and what you can have. How fast can you run, move, slide, or roll? If I beat you, does that make you a problem? Or is the problem the notion of beating, of winning and losing, of faster and slower, of normal and abnormal in the face of rhetoric claiming respect for human diversity?

Notes

1. I have drawn this title from a subtitle in Fiona Campbell's (2000) paper on disability and eugenics that plays on the analogy of the hunt and the pose. Although Campbell's paper lies within the realm of critical legal thought and does not reflect on education, it has been an important source of inspiration in thinking through the issues I discuss here. Her work appears in a volume on the history and sociology of eugenics in
8 Kaplan explains the extent of genetic campaigning’s success by highlighting the cultural context in which eugenics emerged and took hold. Racism, imperialism, and eugenics are not necessarily the same in view, indicating how the prevailing imperialism of European nations and the prevailing courier and racism of Canada and the United States differentially undermined the social reception of eugenics in such places. Overall, however, the range that eugenic associations emerged within the most economically industrial and industrializing western European countries and gained footholds in those countries that had colonized other parts of the world, spreading rapidly to other places that had direct experiences of slavery or reservation systems at home, such as New Zealand and Australia. It became a globalizing discourse in that it attempted to redefine how everyone was to see themselves as part of a hierarchical world system that eugenic discourse now professed as scientific. Not surprisingly, then, in Kaplan’s view, the campaigns for sterilization were translated into surgery in a variety of contexts including many U.S. states (Pomrik, 1996), Scandinavia (Roesand and Soll-Iglesias, 1990), and Australia (McGregor, 2001).

9 The terminology that is now deployed in the historical and sociological critiques of eugenics attempts to capture the complexities of 20th century shifting ‘negative’ or ‘hard’ genotypes and ‘positive’ or ‘soft’ eugenics, as well as old and new eugenics. The use of quotation marks in some of the couples is key in that such descriptors suggest the difficulty of studying eugenic programs in the past and indicate further the political site that the interpretation of their effects on the present have become. Negative or hard genetics refers to events such as the Holocaust and sterilization programs. Positive or soft eugenics are seen in having the same values that lie at the back of negative or hard genetics but to some extent masking them through modified strategies. This has become controversial because it has problematic methods such as the Montessori, which were previously seen as child-centred and now seen as eugenic because the pedagogical methods were directed toward controlling racial/national improvement by problematizing some human as lower races while leaving unacknowledged the false sense of superiority attributed to others. To that end, the difference between negative and positive or hard and soft eugenics has been made in terms of the methods promulgated rather than as a distinction in philosophical orientation – both are about ‘quality control’.

10 Public schools were preceded in North America, for instance, by the equivalent of orphans, private schools, and orphans. The fact that in the late 1800s and throughout the 1900s, not all children were forced, or allowed, to go to a public school indicates how the availability of other institutions limited public education domains. Public schools were never designed for every child, especially those designated ‘insane’ or ‘feebleminded’, and they still are not attended by every child.

11 Ingarn Moore and John Law (2001) argue that what needs to be rethought are terms such as agency, voice, and resistance: talk of “talking of giving voices” is to take the risk of limiting articulation to what is verbal, textual, or linguistic. But this, at least in the context of disability is to prejudice the fact that voices that happen to be non-verbal are simply not recognized, or disqualified. Which is yet another reason why we prefer to talk of articulation.

12 Douglas Barstein (2001) has documented this line of argument historically in the United States, for example, in campaigns for the right to vote by white women and by men and women of specific racial minorities. The right to vote was predicated in part on distancing one’s group from inscriptions of disability as a negative ontology.

13 Ridding of further historicization is any confusion between ‘quality control’ discourse in the old eugenics and quality of life discourse in newer eugenics goals of schooling.

14 Although intrinsically related, I am not discussing here the forms of pedagogy in special or exceptional education that target concepts of giftedness and talent.

15 It is stating the obvious to note that most parents are not employed as public school teachers and therefore interact with teachers as though they are a distinct and some times foreign group.
References


