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Foucault, Governmentality, and Critical Disability Theory

An Introduction

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Twenty years after Michel Foucault died of complications from AIDS, the scope of his intellectual endeavors and the tremendous impetus to social change which that body of work offers are only beginning to be appreciated. Across the disciplines, including history, philosophy, the social sciences, medicine, semiotics, and psychology, Foucault's work has provoked scholars to question what had previously been considered self-evident, timeless, unchanging, and necessary. In various writings, lectures, and public statements, Foucault urged critical reflections on the current situation, and on the historical conditions that led to these formations and how they might be differently perceived. To assist people in finding new ways to conceive of their relationships to themselves and with each other, and their imbrication in relations of power, he provided the analytical tools of archaeology and genealogy; and he elaborated groundbreaking analyses of punishment, psychiatry, and sexuality to show how these tools could be employed.

The essays in this book variously demonstrate and assess the potential that Foucault's approach has to expand and enrich understanding of the phenomena surrounding the state of affairs called "disability." This book is an invitation to think differently about disability, and is intended for readers of Foucault as well as for people who engage with critical disability theory; it is also intended for those unacquainted with either body of work. The aim of this introduction, therefore, is to highlight certain concepts, themes, and arguments in Foucault's work and disability theory pertinent to a conversation between these areas of critical inquiry.

Beginning in the Great Depression, and over the last thirty years in particular, people classified as "handicapped" or "disabled" have developed

sociopolitical conceptions of disability in order to counter medicalized approaches. These politicized conceptions of disability and the increasing consolidation and visibility of the social movement that spawned them have precipitated significant social change, including the deinstitutionalization of thousands of people incarcerated in nursing homes and hospitals worldwide; the passing into law of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990; the retrofitting of government offices and public facilities to make them more physically accessible; the redesign of urban landscapes; closed captioning on late-model televisions; and the growing recognition that disabled people constitute a marginalized and disenfranchised constituency.

The disabled people's movement has also had an impact on academia, where the interdisciplinary (and counterdisciplinary) field of disability studies has begun to emerge strongly. Courses in disability studies (or related fields of study) are now offered at universities and colleges throughout North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe, as well as in some regions of South America, Central America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Academics who conduct their work under the rubric of disability studies have begun to problematize the foundational assumptions of many disciplines and fields of inquiry, as well as the methodologies that they employ, the criteria of evaluation to which they appeal, and the epistemological and social positioning of the researchers and theorists invested in them. From within both autonomous programs and home disciplines, disability theorists and researchers have engaged in a diversity of investigative and critical pursuits. For example, they have shown the cultural and historical specificity of dominant Euro-American notions of corporeal attractiveness; they have analyzed how disability colluded with race in the formation of the modern nation-state, have plotted histories of disabled people's resistance, traced genealogies of eugenic policies that culminate in contemporary reproductive technologies, critiqued representations of disabled people in the media and literature, and considered the intersection between disability and queer sexualities.

Though some theoretical work in disability studies has used Foucault's ideas in interesting and creative ways, attempts to articulate a Foucauldian stance on disability have, overall, been largely rudimentary. *Foucault and the Government of Disability* seeks to deepen Foucault's relevance and applicability to work on disability. The collection is a response to Foucault's call to question what has been regarded as natural, inevitable, ethical, and liberating; hence, contributions to this collection draw on Foucault in order to scrutinize a range of widely endorsed practices and ideas sur-

rounding disability, including rehabilitation, community care, impairment, normality and abnormality, inclusion, prevention, genetic counseling, accommodation, and special education. Although some commentators on Foucault have claimed that Anglo-American writers tend to reproduce "stereotypical" understandings of his texts, the work included in the collection ought not to be characterized in that way. To the contrary, the work of the authors included in this collection (many of whom write from within Anglo-American contexts) suggests that established understandings of Foucault's analyses, as well as the uses to which those analyses have thus far been put, may well have been circumscribed in accordance with some of the very assumptions that critical work on disability aims to subvert.

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From 1971 until his death in 1984, Foucault held the Chair in the History of Systems of Thought at the Collège de France, where, during lectures and seminars held weekly between January and June, he reported on original research that he was pursuing (Ewald and Fontana 2003). In the introduction to the first volume of his three-volume edition of Foucault's writing, Paul Rabinow remarks that Foucault began his 1975–76 course "with a despondent, almost despairing apology for what he characterized as his thinking's directionless drift" (Rabinow 1997, xv). As Rabinow explains it, Foucault had intended in these lectures to bring the work of recent years to completion that year, but was at a loss on how to do so. In that first lecture Foucault lamented, "[T]hough these researches were very closely related to each other, they have failed to develop into any continuous or coherent whole. They are fragmentary researches, none of which in the last analysis can be said to have proved definitive, nor even to have led anywhere" (1980a, 78; cf. Foucault 2003a). Rabinow suggests that this confession seems harsh, given that Foucault published *Discipline and Punish* in 1975 and *The History of Sexuality, Volume I,* in 1976. In fact, by the end of the course, Foucault had introduced a conception of power that he claimed had been overlooked in political philosophy. This form of power, crystallized in the final chapter of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality,* he called "bio-power" or "bio-politics." Before going further, I must pinpoint this form of power, this bio-power, for it is vital to any Foucauldian analysis of disability.

From Aristotle to Locke and Rousseau, and on to Rawls, political philosophy has concerned itself with questions about legitimation and sovereignty: What are the foundations of legitimate rule? What is the nature of sovereignty? What is the most just form of government? On what grounds can rights be based? Although Foucault did not reject outright the

significance of these questions for political thinking, he did refuse the idea of primal, or natural, rights that is presupposed by the juridical conceptions of political power from which these questions arise. In the terms of juridical conceptions, the individual possesses power (as one would possess a commodity) in the form of inherent, inalienable rights, the transfer or surrender of which (through a juridical act or a contract) constitutes a sovereignty. In his lecture of 7 January 1976, Foucault argued to the contrary that power is not something that is exchanged, given, or taken back, but rather is *exercised* and exists only in action. In addition, Foucault disputed the assumption of many juridical conceptions that posits that power is fundamentally repressive. Though consensus and violence are the instruments or results of power, he remarked, they do not amount to its essential nature (2003a, 13). As he put it, "The exercise of power can produce as much acceptance as may be wished for: it can pile up the dead and shelter itself behind whatever threats it can imagine. In itself the exercise of power is not violence; nor is it a consent, which, implicitly, is renewable" (Foucault 1982, 220). For Foucault, the question that political philosophy should ask about power is this: *How*, that is, *by what means*, is it exercised? (217). Indeed, one of the most original features of Foucault's analysis is the idea that power functions best when it is exercised through productive constraints, that is, when it *enables* subjects to act *in order* to constrain them (Tremain 2001; 2002). He argued further that the continued preoccupation with juridical conceptions of power in modern political philosophy has obscured the productive capacity and subtle machinations of a form of power that began to coalesce at the end of the eighteenth century: namely, bio-power (see Allen, 1998).

This new technology of power—this bio-power—that emerges in the second half of the eighteenth century takes as its object life itself, the life of the human qua living being, that is, the life of the human insofar as it is a living being. In his lecture of 17 March 1976, Foucault remarked that this new technology of power, this bio-power, this bio-politics that begins to establish itself in the late eighteenth century, involves a set of measurements such as the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, and the fertility of a population. These processes, together with a whole set of related economic and political problems, become bio-politics' first objects of knowledge and the targets that it seeks to control. It is in this historical moment, Foucault noted, that the first demographers begin to measure these phenomena in statistical terms (2003b, 238–63).

As these phenomena began to be taken into account, a new type of medicine developed, whose main function was public hygiene, and whose institutions centralized the power of the new medicine, normalized its knowledge, and

coordinated the care that is distributed under its auspices. There were campaigns to educate the public and medicalize the population. In order to deal with accidents, illnesses, and various anomalies, bio-politics established charitable institutions and economically rational mechanisms such as insurance, individual and collective savings, and safety measures. Since the phenomena with which this bio-politics (this bio-power) was concerned became pertinent only on a mass level, constants that pertained to the collective had to be established. In this regard, bio-politics involves the introduction of mechanisms whose functions include forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures, and whose purpose is to intervene at the level of generality of these phenomena. Regulatory mechanisms are put into place that prescribe norms, adjust to an equilibrium, maintain an average, and compensate for variations within the "general population" (a group of living human beings whose constitution *as* a "population"[1] is in large part due to this form of power, and especially to the surveillance of "sex" that it requires). In addition, security mechanisms partition the random element of populations from the collective at large in order to maximize the conditions conducive to life (Foucault 2003, 238–63).

In *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, Foucault explained the rationale behind bio-power's normalizing strategies:

> [A] power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms. . . . Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendor; it does not have to draw the line that separates the enemies of the sovereign from his obedient subjects; . . . it effects distributions around the norm. . . . [T]he law operates more and more as a norm, and . . . the juridical institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on) whose functions are for the most part regulatory. A normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centered on life. (1978, 144)

The importance of critical work on bio-power (bio-politics) to analyses of disability cannot be overstated. For during the past two centuries, in particular, a vast apparatus, erected to secure the well-being of the general population, has caused the contemporary disabled subject to emerge into discourse and social existence. Among the items that have comprised this expansive apparatus are asylums, income support programs, quality of life assessments, workers' compensation benefits, special education programs, regimes of rehabilitation, parallel transit systems, prostheses, home care services, telethons, sheltered workshops, poster child campaigns, and prenatal diagnosis. These (and a host of other) practices, procedures, and poli-

cies have created, classified, codified, managed, and controlled social
anomalies through which some people have been divided from others and
objectivized as (for instance) physically impaired, insane, handicapped,
mentally ill, retarded, and deaf. Foucault argued that, in recent times, prac-
tices of division, classification, and ordering around a norm have become
the primary means by which to individualize people, who come to be
understood scientifically, and who even come to understand themselves in
this mode. Indeed, the power of the modern state to produce an
ever-expanding and increasingly totalizing web of social control is inextri-
cably intertwined with, and dependent upon, its capacity to generate an
increasing specification of individuality in this way. As John Rajchman
(1991) explains it, the "great complex idea of normality" has become the
means through which to identify subjects and to make them identify them-
selves in order to make them governable.

An understanding of bio-power's capacity to objectivize people in this
way illuminates Foucault's remarks about the dual meanings of the term *sub-
ject* as they pertain to the circumstances surrounding disabled subjects. For
Foucault, to be a subject is, in one sense, to be subject to someone else by
control and dependence and, in another sense, to be tied to one's own iden-
tity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both senses of the term imply a form
of power that subjugates and makes subject to (Foucault 1982). Because he
refused to conceive relations of power in strictly juridical terms, further-
more, Foucault maintained that analyses of power should not aim to identify
some overarching or distant font of subjecting power, but rather "should try
to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects."
Hence, work on bio-power and the dual nature of the subject can help us to
"discover how it is" that disabled subjects "are gradually, progressively,
really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces,
energies, desires, thoughts, [and so on]" (Foucault 1980a, 97).

In 1982, Foucault remarked that the goal of his work over the previous
twenty years had not been to analyze power, but rather to write a history of
the different modes through which human beings are transformed into sub-
jects (Foucault 1982). In another, earlier context, Foucault had remarked
that in his work he had been trying to render evident the "constant articu-
lation of power on knowledge and of knowledge on power," especially
with respect to the subject. Power—that is, its exercise—he argued, per-
petually creates knowledge and knowledge constantly induces effects of
power (Foucault 1975). Foucault was in particular interested in the knowl-
edges with respect to the subject that comprise the disciplines that have
come to be called "the human sciences": disciplines such as criminology,

sociology, psychiatry, and psychology. He was concerned to show how closely the emergence of these knowledges over the last two centuries has been enmeshed in the problems and practices of (bio-)power and the social management of individuals (Gordon 2000). In addition, he suggested that analyses of power should take as their starting point a new kind of counter-politics (what he called "strategic reversibility") that these knowledges have inadvertently spawned. For individuals and *juridically constituted* groups of individuals have responded to subjecting practices, which are directed in increasingly intimate and immediate ways to "life," by formulating needs and imperatives of that same "life" as the basis for political counterdemands, that is, by turning them around into focuses of resistance (Gordon 1991). That Foucault's political activities and scholarship were in large part directed at issues raised by prisoners' rights groups, ex-inmates of psychiatric institutions, refugees, and gay men's alliances is well known.

Philosopher and historian of science Ian Hacking has extended Foucault's work on the relation of power/knowledge with regard to the subject. In a number of compelling discussions designed to show how medical, juridical, and psychiatric classifications, statistics, and other social scientific information create and cause to emerge new "kinds" into which people can be sorted, Hacking has used the term *human kinds* to refer to the social groups whose initial composition can be attributed to knowledges that the human sciences have engendered. In these discussions, Hacking argues that the "human kinds" that are supplied by "human" sciences such as psychology, psychiatry, and sociology differ from the "natural kinds" that physics, astronomy, and other "natural" sciences claim to discover insofar as, in many cases, the people who are classified as members of a kind come to have knowledge of the relevant kind, which changes their self-perceptions and behavior, motivates them to forge group identities, and often forces changes to the classifications and knowledge about them (he calls this phenomenon "the looping effects" of human kinds). Hacking has developed these arguments in order to critically examine the categories of (among others) autism, madness, and multiple personality disorder (see, for instance, Hacking 1999, 2002).

In addition to the notion of bio-power, other elements of Foucault's ideas are indispensable for a Foucauldian analysis of disability, and none more so than the notion of the subject. These elements, bio-power and the subject, are inextricable from Foucault's notions of government and liberalism.

In Foucault's lectures of 1978–79, he linked his claims about bio-power with his approach to the theme of government. Power, he argued, is more a question of *government,* that is, the direction of conduct, than it is a ques-

tion of confrontation between adversaries. The term *government*, he remarked in 1982, should be understood in its sixteenth-century sense to refer to any form of activity that aims to shape, guide, or affect the conduct of some person or persons; furthermore, he proposed that the term be defined, in general, to mean "the conduct of conduct." As an *activity,* government can concern one's relation to oneself, interpersonal relations that involve some form of control or guidance, and relations within social institutions and communities, as well as relations concerned with the exercise of political sovereignty (Gordon 1991). Indeed, Foucault adopted this earlier, broad meaning of *government* because it encompasses not only legitimately constituted forms of political and economic subjection, but any mode of action, more or less considered and calculated, that is bound to structure the field of possible action of oneself or others (Foucault 1982). In other words, when relations of power are construed as government, that is, the direction of conduct, governmental practices should be understood to include not only state-generated prohibitions and punishments, and global networks of social, economic, and political stratification (the deleterious effects of which congeal disproportionately along disabling, racialized, and gendered lines), but also normalizing technologies that facilitate the systematic objectivization of subjects as deaf, criminal, mad, and so on, and techniques of self-improvement and self-transformation such as weight-loss programs and fitness regimes, assertiveness training, botox injections, breast implants, psychotherapy, and rehabilitation. For despite the fact that power appears to be merely repressive, the most effective exercise of power, according to Foucault, consists in guiding the possibilities of conduct and putting in order the possible outcomes. The concealment of these practices, these *limits* of possible conduct, allows the discursive formation in which they circulate to be naturalized and legitimized. That is to say, the production of these seeming acts of choice (these *limits* of possible conduct) on the everyday level of the subject makes possible the consolidation of more hegemonic structures. In his most succinct articulation of power as government, Foucault wrote:

> [W]hat defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future. . . . The exercise of power . . . is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting

upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. (1982, 220)

This conception of power as government ("the conduct of conduct") is in stark contrast to the "juridico-discursive" (to use Foucault's term) conceptions of power that much disability theory takes for granted. Recall that in the terms of juridical conceptions, power is construed as a fundamentally repressive thing, which is possessed by centralized external authority such as a particular social group, a class, an institution, or the state, and which reigns over, and down upon, others. The "social model of disability," which has been predominant in the disabled people's movement in the United Kingdom since the late 1970s, and which has more recently received attention internationally, is a paradigmatic example of the juridical conception of power that has prevailed in disability studies.

The "social model" is the formalized articulation of a set of "principles" that a group of U.K. activists advanced in 1976 in order to counter "individual" or "medical" conceptions of disability (see Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation 1976). Proponents of the social model contend that because medicalized conceptions of disability represent that state of affairs as the detrimental consequences of an intrinsic deficit or personal flaw, they fail to distinguish between *impairment* and *disability* (Oliver 1990). Indeed, this distinction—the distinction between impairment and disability—motivates the social model of disability. For while the social model defines *impairment* as the lack of a limb or part thereof or a defect of a limb, organ or mechanism of the body, it defines *disability* as a form of disadvantage which is *imposed on top of* one's impairment, that is, the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization that takes little or no account of people with impairments and which therefore excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities (Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation 1976, in Oliver 1996, 22). In the terms of the social model, furthermore, impairment and disability are claimed to be conceptually distinct categories, between which there is no causal relation (Shakespeare 1992; Priestley 2003). Impairment neither equals disability nor causes it. To paraphrase Michael Oliver (one of the first proponents of the model): although disablement is nothing to do with the body, impairment is nothing less than a description of the body (1996). In other words, proponents of the model explicitly argue (1) disablement is not a necessary consequence of impairment; and (2) impairment is not a sufficient condition for disability. Nevertheless, an implicit premise of the model is (3) impairment is a necessary condition for

disability, because proponents of the social model do not argue that people who are excluded or discriminated against on the basis of (say) skin color are by virtue of that fact disabled, nor do they argue that racism is a form of disability. Equally, intersexed people who are socially stigmatized, and who may have been surgically "corrected" in infancy or childhood, do not seem to count as "disabled." On the contrary, in the terms of the social model, only people who *have* or are presumed to *have* an "impairment" get to count as "disabled." Thus, the strict separation of the categories of impairment and disability that this model of disability is claimed to institute would seem to be a chimera (Tremain 2001, 2002).

By combining the elements of bio-power, the subject, and government from this incomplete cluster of ideas, we can identify how a Foucauldian analysis of disabling power would differ from the juridical conception of disability commonly employed in the social model (and a great deal of other disability theory).

Recall, first of all, the productive capacity of bio-power to mold human beings into subjects through dividing practices and other means. Recall, furthermore, that although modern power appears to regulate political life in purely negative (repressive) terms by prohibiting and controlling sub-jects, it actually governs them by guiding, influencing, and limiting their conduct in ways that accord with the exercise of their freedom. By virtue of their subjection to these limits of conduct, subjects are in effect formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of them. Notice that if the foundational (i.e., necessary) premise of the social model—impairment—is combined with the preceding claims according to which modern governmental practices produce—that is, *form* and *define*—the subjects whom they subsequently come to represent by putting in place the limits of their possible conduct, then it becomes more evident that subjects are produced who "have" impairments because this identity meets certain requirements of contemporary social and political arrange-ments. Indeed, it would seem that the identity of the subject of the social model ("people with impairments") is actually formed in large measure by the political arrangements that the model was designed to contest. Con-sider, then, that if the identity of the subject of the social model ("people with impairments") is actually produced in accordance with these political arrangements, then a social movement that grounds its claims to entitle-ment in that identity will inadvertentl*y extend* those arrangements (Tremain 2001, 2002).

A Foucauldian analysis of disability would show that the juridical con-ception of disability that is assumed within the terms of the social model and

most existing disability theory obscures the productive constraints of modern (bio-)power. A Foucauldian approach to disability would hold that the governmental practices into which the subject is inducted and divided from others produce the *illusion* that they have a prediscursive, or natural, antecedent (impairment), which in turn provides the justification for the multiplication and expansion of the regulatory effects of these practices. That the discursive object called "impairment" is claimed to be the embodiment of a natural deficit or lack, furthermore, conceals the fact that the constitutive power relations that define and circumscribe "impairment" have already put in place broad outlines of the forms in which that discursive object will be materialized (Tremain 2001). In short, an argument about disability that takes Foucault's approach would be concerned to show that there is indeed a causal relation between impairment and disability, and it is precisely this: the category of impairment emerged and, in many respects, persists in order to legitimize the governmental practices that generated it in the first place.

Foucault was concerned with philosophical questions that surround rationalities of government, that is, systems of thinking about the nature of the practice of government. A rationality of government, as Foucault explained it, is a system of thinking about the practice of government that has the capacity to *rationalize* some form of that activity to those who practice it and to those upon whom it is practiced, where this capacity entails to render thinkable *and* to render applicable or acceptable. Foucault coined the term *governmentalities* to refer to these governmental rationalities, and he used this term almost interchangeably with the phrase *arts of government*. In his important 1979 lecture entitled "The Birth of Biopolitics," Foucault (1997) remarked that the phenomena that from the eighteenth century onward begin to appear as problems that require management cannot be dissociated from the framework of liberal governmentality within which they emerged *as* problems and developed their urgency.

Foucault believed that this emergence of liberal governmentality evinced a transformation not only from the political and economic thinking that had conditioned earlier Cameralist and mercantilist rationalities, but also a transformation in the nature of the relationship between knowledge and government. While these earlier rationalities of government had sought to rationalize a growing governmentality and its regulation through the existence and strength of the state itself, liberalism, Foucault asserted, ushered in the principle "One always governs too much," or one must always suspect that one governs too much (Foucault 1997; Gordon 1991). To be sure, any rationalization of state government aims to maximize its

effects and diminish (to the greatest extent possible) its political and economic cost; Foucault (1997) argued that liberal rationalization is innovative, however, insofar as it starts from the assumption that government cannot be its own end. Foucault's perspective with respect to liberalism in this regard is distinctive, for he was concerned to understand liberalism not simply as a doctrine, or set of doctrines of political and economic theory, but rather as a style of thinking that is quintessentially concerned with the art of governing (Gordon 1991).

While not a libertarian, Foucault was, nevertheless, intrigued by liberalism, especially because of what he regarded as its "polymorphism," that is, its capacity to continually refashion itself in a practice of autocritique. In fact, Foucault viewed liberalism as a form of critical reflection on governmental practice itself. Liberalism, he asserted, can be found simultaneously, but in different forms, as both the regulative scheme of governmental practice and the theme of a (sometimes) "radical" opposition. As he explained it, liberalism constitutes a tool for the criticism of reality, that is, for the criticism of (1) a previous governmentality that one tries to shed; (2) a current governmentality that one attempts to reform and rationalize; and (3) a governmentality that one opposes and whose abuses one tries to limit (1997, 75). In addition, he suggested that insofar as the counterdiscourses that bio-power inadvertently generates initially emerged within liberal governmentality, the counterdemands that are advanced under the auspices of these discourses are also historical effects of liberalism's polymorphic character. Indeed, insofar as the arguments and claims to entitlement that disability theorists and the disabled people's movement advance are responses to the subjecting governmental practices of bio-power, a Foucauldian stance on the current state of disability politics would hold that these political calls themselves are salient effects of liberalism.

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Foucault and the Government of Disability is divided into four parts whose themes reflect broad areas of thought on which Foucault's work concentrated. Although the sixteen chapters included in the parts are relatively autonomous, they have been written, edited, and arranged in a fashion that (for the most part) limits the repetition within the collection of certain concepts, claims, and arguments that should be instructive for an analysis of disability that follows from Foucault's approach. In other words, some of the later chapters presuppose an understanding of certain arguments and concepts that are explained or considered in earlier chapters. Thus, readers of this book who are unfamiliar with Foucault's work, or with disability

theory, or with both, might find that they can derive the most benefit from the book if they read its chapters according to the sequence in which they have been arranged.

Though a goal of this book is to provide a sociopolitical analysis of disability, no one model, doctrine, or vocabulary with respect to disability governs the essays that comprise it. Indeed, in this historical moment, an edited collection of theoretical writing on disability that includes contributions by authors working from within various cultural, geographical, and national contexts and traditions must necessarily be an eclectic product. For understandings of and responses to disability are grounded in (among other things) the disparate histories of local, regional, and national movements; juridical and administrative policies that, at this point in time, vary considerably from one jurisdiction to another; and theoretical, political, and professional allegiances that may be entrenched within some geopolitical spheres of the global discussion about disability.

As black lesbian-feminist novelist and poet Dionne Brand notes, no language is neutral. The pretensions of a certain philosophical tradition notwithstanding, any discursive act is embedded, located, and interested; that is, if one speaks, signs, or writes, one always speaks, signs, or writes from somewhere, some social position, and does so with some set of political, social, and ethical values and beliefs. Language constitutes domains of objects, discourses, and descriptions under which humans act, and is itself always constituted in accordance with an array of political, social, ontological, epistemological, and ethical commitments, assumptions, and prescriptions. Thus, even the imposition on the writing included in this volume of a particular nomenclature with respect to the objects of disablement would, in effect, have universalized (and rendered ahistorical) a certain understanding of disability that is actually culturally and historically situated.

The chapters in "Epistemologies and Ontologies," the first part of the book, variously take up Foucault's concerns with the mutually constitutive and reinforcing relation between power and knowledge, the ontological status of the objects studied in the human sciences, the emergence of certain human phenomena as problems for power/knowledge, and the constitution of subjects by and through medical, juridical, and administrative practices.

Practices of subjectification are central to Martin Sullivan's contribution to the collection. Sullivan's ethnographic research was conducted with former residents of the Otara Spinal Unit (Aotearoa New Zealand), a rehabilitation facility for people who have sustained spinal-cord injuries. By draw-

ing on Foucault's notions of bio-power, normalization, and the carceral network, Sullivan demonstrates how the institutional and therapeutic techniques of rehabilitation, as well as the medicalized technology of the self in which residents of the unit become invested, work in concert to produce them as "paraplegic body-subjects." Remarks that the residents of the unit make show how the technologies of normalization that work to subjectify them are administered and facilitated by physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, and other medical staff who tend to perceive them merely as prototypes of a certain medical diagnosis. Through appropriation of notions that emerged in Foucault's later work, Sullivan provides a powerful testament to the ways in which various residents of the unit defy and resist this objectivization.

Nirmala Erevelles's essay uses Foucault's account of the Rivière parricide in nineteenth-century France to argue that the crisis of the humanist subject, which manifested in Pierre Rivière's murder trial, also conditions twentieth-century debates about facilitated communication, an augmentative communication technique developed especially for people labeled with autism. As Erevelles explains it, both Rivière's murder trial and the debates surrounding facilitated communication have raised questions with respect to the coherence of reason and the unity of the subject. In the case of Rivière, the questions that arose amounted to this: how could the "village idiot" present as lucid and articulate a memoir as Rivière's? In the case of the users of facilitated communication, the questions amount to this: to what extent are the users *themselves* the "authors" of the texts that they produce? Erevelles argues that in both the nineteenth-century context of Rivière's trial and the recent context of debates about facilitated communication these questions with regard to "authenticity of authorship" have collaborated with class politics. For Erevelles, the way in which class politics are implicated in both of these historical contexts suggests that Foucault's stance on the "identity" of the author ought to be reconsidered.

Scott Yates continues the discussion of subjectification by examining how certain behaviors and practices become problematized as "learning difficulties." Foucault argued that the acts, behaviors, and practices that emerge as "problematizations" within certain networks of knowledge are dynamically linked to forms of power that turn individuals into subjects by tying them to identities. Yates asserts that Foucault's remarks with respect to these "games of truth" are suggestive of new ways for us to think about learning difficulties. In order to conduct this analysis of "the subject of learning difficulties," Yates employs the three domains from which, Foucault argued, this sort of inquiry ought to be oriented, that is, the three

domains within which a "critical ontology of ourselves" ought to be engaged: (1) the *domain of truth* through which people are constituted as subjects of specific forms of knowledge; (2) the *domain of power* through which people are constituted as subjects who act upon others and whom others act upon in particular regulated ways; and (3) the *domain of ethics* through which people constitute themselves as moral agents. By drawing upon these three domains of "critical ontology," Yates examines how the relations of power that operate in community care services are imbricated in certain regimes of truth, how these relations of power take hold of some individuals, subjectifying them as "people with learning difficulties," and how these subjects resist that power.

In "What Can a Foucauldian Analysis Contribute to Disability Theory?," Bill Hughes argues that the usefulness of Foucault's work for disability studies is limited. Hughes notes that as disability studies in the United Kingdom attempts to embrace frames of analysis that derive from cultural studies and sociology of the body, Foucault's work (along with other post-Cartesian traditions such as phenomenology) has become more attractive to disability theorists and researchers. While the incorporation of Foucault's analyses into disability studies will expand the theoretical menu of the discipline, as well as its "intellectual arsenal," Hughes contends that in the long run Foucault's work will provide few resources that could improve the lives of disabled people. Furthermore, any important insights that Foucault might offer disability studies could be arrived at without him. For Hughes, this claim is significant, for he contends that Foucault's assumptions are actually counterproductive for disability theorists. In particular, the essayist is critical of what he regards as the shortcomings of Foucault's notions of agency and the body. In order to argue in this way, Hughes draws upon the writing of Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenologists.

In some respects, Barry Allen's chapter could be regarded as a rejoinder to Hughes, for Allen argues that a number of criticisms that are frequently directed at Foucault ought not to be accepted. Foucault's nominalism is the central focus of Allen's chapter, however. For Allen wants to show that the nominalist stance evident in Foucault's "implantation of perversions" thesis can be extended to produce a nominalist analysis of the "implantation of impairment." As Allen explains it, the argument according to which impairment is implanted undercuts the assumption that impairment is a physiological condition distinct from disability. Impairment (like perversion) is not something missing, he writes, but rather is something added by disciplinary knowledge and power. In other words, the implantation of impairment thesis denaturalizes this "supplement" of power/knowledge.

As Allen sees it, Foucault's assumptions about epistemology are the aspects of his work to which criticisms should be directed. Thus, Allen suggests, for instance, that subjects in marginalized and disenfranchised social locations ought not to characterize their claims about their experiences as claims about "subjugated *knowledge*."

Fiona Kumari Campbell points out that matters of ontology are seldom a paramount concern in sociological and legal discussions about disability subjectification, which tend to locate "the problem" of disability at the level of cultural bias and discriminatory attitudes. In "Legislating Disability: Negative Ontologies and the Government of Legal Identities," Campbell aims to redress this imbalance by showing how disability as "negative ontology" is inflected in the practices and effects of law. As Campbell observes, disability activists have put great faith in the legal system to deliver freedoms in the form of equality rights and protections against discrimination. While Campbell allows that these equalization initiatives have provided some form of legal remedy for the injustices that people with disabilities confront, she contends that the assumptions on which these initiatives rely—that is, assumptions about disability as negative ontology—remain unchallenged. In order to motivate her argument, Campbell critically assesses the work of several feminist legal and political theorists. For instance, Campbell agrees with Wendy Brown that when marginalized constituencies appeal to an "injured identity" in order to justify their claims upon the state, they recuperate the values and beliefs that cast that identity in a demeaned social location in the first place. Throughout Campbell's chapter, she illustrates her theoretical claims with examples drawn from Australian and American disability case law and public policy.

Foucault argued that a "history of the present" would enable an understanding of the human subject's current circumstance, that is, would facilitate a historical awareness of its current situation. For Foucault, a historical awareness of the contemporary subject's circumstance is not to be achieved by "finding" evidence in the past that would demonstrate that people's current identities, conceptualizations, and so on have some transhistorical quality. Rather, for Foucault, a historical awareness of the present requires archaeological and genealogical analysis of the conditions in the past that have made the subject who it is in the present, and how. The chapters in the second part of the book, "Histories," draw attention to the importance of historical analyses for critical disability theory.

As Licia Carlson notes in her essay "Docile Bodies, Docile Minds: Foucauldian Reflections on Mental Retardation," philosophical discourse about mental retardation has focused on moral questions about (for instance)

what constitutes justice for people labeled as "mentally retarded" and whether definitions of personhood encompass these people, as well as bioethical questions about (for example) forced sterilization and prenatal testing. Carlson allows that these questions are philosophically and politically important; she points out, however, that philosophers have had little to say about the historical development and status of mental retardation *as a classification*. Most contemporary philosophical discourse, Carlson explains, presumes the self-evidence of the category of mental retardation, a category that, she contends, is both "complex and problematic." Carlson demonstrates the complex and problematic character of the category of "mental retardation" by engaging in an archaeological analysis of the ways in which that category has been constituted in institutional and professional discourses. These discourses, Carlson writes, have enabled the historical emergence of the "mentally retarded" individual as a new *kind* of person. The emergence of this new kind of individual, Carlson points out, has had effects on the very definitions and practices that became associated with the category.

In "Uncommon Schools: Institutionalizing Deafness in Early-Nineteenth-Century America," Jane Berger uses a historical approach in order to examine the meanings that accrued to deafness and deaf people in nineteenth-century institutions for the deaf. In particular, Berger shows how the institutional founders and educators, as well as other people who supported the schools, assigned meanings to deafness that were influenced by intellectual, cultural, and religious trends of their time, as well as by the spread of capitalism and an emerging discourse of state sovereignty and liberal individualism. Foucault argued that the division and compartmentalization of space can be an instrument of disciplining power. Following Foucault, Berger shows that these disciplinary effects were produced by the messages that institutional organization conveyed to deaf students about what it meant for them to be deaf. To be sure, Berger recognizes that many scholars and members of the Deaf community regard the antebellum period as "the golden age" in the history of deaf education. With Wrigley and Valentine, Berger contends, however, that this sort of "idealizing" about the past leads to "inaccurate history" and might obscure the power relations (some of which continue to be influential) that were generated within the institutions.

In a detailed historical account, Diana Snigurowicz documents how various local and regional statutes in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Paris governed which individuals with anomalous appearances could be displayed, or could display themselves, how these performances could

be engaged in, and where. For most of the nineteenth century, Snigurowicz writes, *phénomènes* such as giants, dwarfs, bearded women, people without limbs, and a host of "human-animal" combinations were a common sight on Parisian streets and in venues of popular entertainment. While the new science of teratology provided evidence that these individuals were to be considered biological variants, that is, "different types of human beings" (not omens, devil spawn, Nature's jokes, or the products of bestiality as had once been believed), the emergence of new knowledges such as anthropometry, eugenics, and social Darwinism led to the association of corporeal anomaly with social and criminal deviancy, an association that entailed the increased surveillance and policing of the individuals. As Snigurowicz explains, despite teratological evidence to the contrary, humans with "congenital anomalies" were rendered "less than human," by virtue of this surveillance and policing that identified them as "deviant" and "abnormal," and that restricted, or even eliminated, their livelihoods *as* performers. Snigurowicz's essay extends the groundbreaking work on "freakery" of disability theorists such as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson.

The contributors to "Governmentalities," the third part of the book, use Foucault's analytical tools in order to interrogate various concrete manifestations of disabling government. Recall that for Foucault government can concern any activity that affects one's own conduct or the conduct of others. A rationality of government—a govern(-)mentality—renders some form of that practice of government conceivable and applicable to those who govern and to those who are governed.

As pointed out above, Foucault was concerned to show the centrality of the "norm" to modern forms of governmentality, and to bio-power in particular. Anne Waldschmidt uses the example of genetic diagnostics and counseling in order to explain how normalizing strategies have become part and parcel of a new form of self-regime. Waldschmidt recognizes that strategies of normalization are operative in a host of areas of contemporary human existence; she maintains, however, that the apparatuses of normalization that are applied in human genetic diagnostics and counseling highlight in a special way the impact that "normality" has already had on our day-to-day lives. Foucault underscored the importance to his concepts of governmentality and bio-power of a *statistical conception* of normality. By drawing upon the work of German literary scholar Jürgen Link (who follows Foucault), Waldschmidt distinguishes between various conceptions of normality, normativity, and normalism in order to show how contemporary normalization strategies, in general, and a statistical conception of normality, in particular, are implicated in neoliberal regimes. In turn, Wald-

schmidt applies these insights to genetic counseling discourse and diagnostics in order to show how normalization functions in the contexts of these practices to guide and limit responses to pregnancy.

In their essay "Inclusive Education for Exclusive Pupils: A Critical Analysis of the Government of the Exceptional," Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein aim to show that the discourse on inclusion in education, in particular, and society, in general, should be understood in terms of governmentality. Indeed, Simons and Masschelein contend that the discourse on inclusive schooling is an integral element in modern forms of governmentality. Foucault regarded the tendency toward a form of political sovereignty that is a government "of all and of each"—a government whose concerns are to totalize and to individualize—as a characteristic and troubling property of the development of the practice of government in Western societies (Gordon 1991). Simons and Masschelein maintain that discourses on inclusive schooling and inclusive society are intertwined with the history of this "double bond" that characterizes the modern nation-state. These authors do not wish to defend some notion of exclusion; instead, they want thinking about education (in particular) and society (in general) to go beyond the terms of exclusion and inclusion, as well as beyond the conception of "community" with which these notions are entwined. For they contend that the impetus that drives discourses on inclusion is an *impulse for homogeneity*.

Like Simons and Masschelein, Chris Drinkwater thinks that the power relations that condition practices of inclusion ought to be more critically examined. In "Supported Living and the Production of Individuals," Drinkwater is concerned to show that the transition from the segregation and institutionalization of people with learning disabilities to their inclusion "in the community" does not exemplify humanitarian reform, but rather a "new dispersal of power" that strives to achieve greater efficiency (institutional, disciplinary, and so on). Drinkwater points out, for example, that although community living has been hailed as a "more humane" living arrangement than institutionalized living, the former arrangement operates with its own set of disciplinary techniques. Foucault argued that the governmentality that gave rise to Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon (a prison designed to ensure maximum and continuous surveillance of inmates with only minimal institutional effort) has permeated modern western European societies. Drinkwater uses the motif of the Panopticon in order to show how "perpetual visibility" and other mechanisms that govern community living are intended to mold the residents of these arrangements into "docile subjects."

Carolyn Anne Anderson's essay considers the government of space and

the meanings that are embedded in this mode of power. By examining the history, design, and construction of stadiums and sports arenas in the United States, as well as the litigation that has recently been brought against some of these venues, Anderson argues that the geographies of these facilities mobilize the discipline and government of disabled bodies. While the tiered seating arrangements in stadiums and sports arenas facilitate effective and efficient crowd control through the use of camera surveillance and the strategic positioning of entrances and exits, the architectural design of tiered seating also governs certain disabled bodies by excluding them from these venues, or by ensuring that their physical presence within them results in subjectifying, if not humiliating, experiences. Anderson argues, furthermore, that if disability activists and scholars aim to change exclusionary environments through litigation, modification, and enforcement, then they must deconstruct the meanings embedded in these exclusionary contexts and the discourses that enable them to persist. For as Anderson explains it, extant classifications of what is normal and what is deviant are "built into" spatial planning. Foucault argued that the organization of "cells," "places," and "ranks" creates complex spaces, spaces that are at once architectural, functional, and hierarchical. Anderson aims to show how the built environment, exemplified in the structure of stadiums and sports arenas in the United States, becomes a monument to what is normal and what is deviant, where "disabled" subjects are the products of these discursive articulations.

The government of space also figures in Gerard Goggin and Christopher Newell's "Foucault on the Phone: Disability and the Mobility of Government." In the essay, Goggin and Newell demonstrate how Foucault's work on governmentality can be used to scrutinize the interrelatedness of emerging forms of telecommunications, disability, and government. In particular, these authors wish to show that Foucault's insights on contemporary governmentality provide an especially valuable lens through which to examine how new developments in telecommunications produce disability; in addition, these authors think that Foucault's work enables consideration of the ways in which the configuration of that developing technology might be reframed and contested. In order to argue in this way, Goggin and Newell draw attention to the ways that the Australian state and other jurisdictions, in collaboration with the manufacturers of mobile telephones, have attempted to assuage consumers who complain that the current design of the technology prevents hearing-aid users from availing themselves of it. That hearing-aid users cannot access this technology, these authors point

out, drastically limits their opportunities to communicate in an increasingly technologized world.

Foucault rejected the idea that an academic discourse should be used as a means with which to direct practice; in addition, he maintained that the notion that practical political choices can be determined within the space of a theoretical text trivializes the act of moral decision-making to the level of mere aesthetic preference (Gordon 1991, 6). Entitled "Ethics and Politics," the part that concludes this collection comprises two chapters that variously put into relief the inextricable relation between ethics and politics.

Julie Allan remarks that theorists in disability studies have neglected Foucault's later work on ethics, which, she asserts, can be instructive for the project of inclusive education. The work of inclusion, Allan asserts, invariably requires work on the self that is central to Foucault's ethics. As Allan notes, some authors have claimed that Foucault's work (attention to which has focused largely on his archaeological and genealogical phases) is pessimistic, offering little prospect for social change and little room for resistance. She argues, however, that the elaboration of Foucault's ethics in relation to inclusion goes some distance toward refuting these accusations of pessimism insofar as his ethics would entail the specification of each individual's responsibilities to remove exclusionary pressures. In order to show how Foucault's ethics can assist in the project of inclusive education, Allan first explains the four dimensions of ethical practice that Foucault identifies: (1) determination of the ethical substance; (2) the mode of subjection; (3) self-practice or ethical work; and (4) the telos. Then she suggests how these dimensions of ethical practice could be applied to the project of inclusion in education.

In "Gender Police," Kathryn Pauly Morgan uses Foucault's theoretical frame to render recognizable and intelligible the political and ethical investments of gender regimes in normatively gender-dimorphic societies. In order to demonstrate the innumerable forms through which normative gender is exercised within these societies, Morgan depicts Gender DiMorph Utopia (GDU)—a "utopia" that seems hauntingly real—where practices that constitute gender dimorphism govern all manner of social and personal life. In Gender DiMorph Utopia and other secular heteronormative societies, Morgan explains, an "apparatus of gender" operates. Foucault defined the "elements of an apparatus" as "a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions" (1980b, 194). Morgan

shows how, in GDU, as well as in other heteronormative cultures, this "apparatus of gender" *naturalizes* gender dimorphism. In addition, Morgan demonstrates how, in GDU and other heteronormative societies, mechanisms internal to the "apparatus of gender" ensure that subjects whose respective identifications, corporeal performances, and anatomical structures threaten to betray the naturalized status of gender dimorphism are disciplined and punished through an array of sociodiscursive, administrative, psychiatric, pharmaceutical, cultural, medical, and surgical forms of *gender policing*.

The contributions to *Foucault and the Government of Disability* ought not to be regarded as definitive treatments of theoretical work on disability and Foucault; rather, they should be regarded as posing a series of challenges. This collection challenges readers of Foucault to consider new ways to understand his insights; specialists on Foucault to expand the uses to which they currently put his work, particularly with respect to considerations of disability; theorists and researchers of disability to think beyond accepted dogmas and outside of available frameworks of analysis; and disability activists to acknowledge that insurrection takes place, and must take place, through a diversity of modes, in varying intensities, and across a spectrum of social, political, cultural, economic, educational, and personal contexts.

NOTE

1. In the section of *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, entitled "The Repressive Hypothesis," Foucault writes that the idea of "population" emerged in large part as a mechanism with which to police sex.

> One of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of "population" as an economic and political problem: population as wealth, population as manpower or labor capacity, population balanced between its own growth and the resources it commanded. Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a "people," but with a "population," with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habituation. . . . At the heart of this economic and political problem of population was sex: it was necessary to analyze the birthrates, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the effects of unmarried life or of the prohibitions, the impact of contraceptive practices—of those notorious "deadly secrets" which demographers on the eve of the Revolution knew were already familiar to the inhabitants of the countryside.
> Of course, it had long been asserted that a country had to be populated if it

hoped to be rich and powerful; but this was the first time that a society had affirmed, in a constant way, that its future and its fortune were tied not only to the number and uprightness of its citizens, to their marriage rules and family organization, but to the manner in which each individual made use of his sex. . . . It was essential that the state know what was happening with its citizens' sex, and the use they made of it, but also that each individual be capable of controlling the use he made of it. Between the state and the individual, sex became an issue, and a public issue no less; a whole web of discourses, special knowledges, analyses, and injunctions settled upon it. (1978, 25–26)

For the full explanation of how "population" became linked to the administration and management of sex, including the very urgent surveillance of the sexuality of children and adolescents, see "The Repressive Hypothesis," part 2 of Foucault 1978, 15–49.

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