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Introduction by Lotte Houwink ten Cate, Columbia University

According to the historian Dagmar Herzog, “One of the most valuable effects of studying the history of sexuality is the way it unhinges conventional expectations about so many matters.”¹ To talk about sex is always also to talk about much else. Herzog brought this to the fore in her landmark *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (2005) which examined the distorted memory of Nazism as sexually repressive, and which reset the clocks of the rigidly periodized German twentieth century.² Herzog’s most recent book engages the “geopoliticization” of sexuality, “as high politics and diplomacy are imbricated with matters of sex as never before and we find ourselves, globally, in a wider backlash against and ambivalence about sexual freedoms” (8). *Unlearning Eugenics: Sexuality, Reproduction and Disability in Post-Nazi Europe* is based on the George L. Mosse Lectures which she delivered in Jerusalem in 2016, and offers us, in the words of the anthropologist Danilyn Rutherford, “the origin story of a paradox.” In three chapters, framed as *thesis/antithesis/alternative antithesis*, Herzog scrutinizes what she calls the “contrapuntal history” of the unexpected alliance of the anti-abortion movement and the disability rights movement. The book is, according to Susanne Klausen, “a bracing exploration of the relatively new, entirely false idea that disability rights and reproductive rights are incompatible.”

The first chapter, “Abortion and Disability,” tells the remarkable story of how persistent negative attitudes toward disability were deployed in the advancement of women’s rights across western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. Arguments denigrating disability—as opposed to arguments for female autonomy—provided a powerful impetus for the struggle to decriminalize abortion, an indication of the inability “to argue straightforwardly for women’s rights to sexual pleasure without reproductive consequences” (16). Arguments for abortion within a Christian framework coalesced with feminist advocacy for abortion based on the “especially awful fate” for a woman to have a disabled child. As Moira Weigel points out, “this chapter tells the story, in other words, of both a *moral failing* and a *strategic error* by feminists and their allies.” Katherine Sorrels remarks that women’s rights and radical disability rights activists got entangled in an “internecine conflict,” in which “their solidarity of cause—the fight for self-determination, women’s and disabled people’s—was overshadowed,” although Sorrels presses for further analysis of the artificiality of this perceived conflict.

The second chapter, “Moral Reasoning in the Wake of Mass Murder,” explains the particular historical contingencies in German discussions of the 1980s-1990s, when the tide shifted back against reproductive freedom and liberated sexuality. The fall of the Wall and subsequent European integration saw the greater impact of “demography-preoccupied, fiercely nationalist, and aggressively sexually conservative versions of Christianity” on the ascendant (5). The pinnacle was the visit of the Australian philosopher Peter Singer to Germany in 1989, where he argued for the euthanizing of disabled infants, claiming an inherent similarity between “killing the late fetus,” and “killing the newborn infant” (58). The “Singer Affair” solidified in the public mind the entanglement of the mass murder of disabled people with the Holocaust (51). It also

¹ Dagmar Herzog. “‘What Incredible Yearnings Human Beings Have.’ Sexuality in Europe in the Twentieth Century,” *Lust und Verwundbarkeit: Zur Zeitgeschichte der Sexualität in Europa und den USA*. (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2018), 88

² Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

provided the most damning possible link in postwar German history and politics, severing any naturalized erstwhile connection between disability rights and abortion rights. Indeed as Herzog shows, “Here again, but differently from before, we find an intricate and dynamic interplay of reverberations between past and present moments—and see as well how, in conflicts that are at once ideological and emotional, *interpretations* matter as much as, or more than, facts” (44).

This contrapuntal relationship continues. In the words of Johanna Schoen, in Germany “a deep suspicion towards technology and the possibility of selection of some human traits over others has limited not only reproductive choices, but also conversations about these choices.” And in the last decade, as Klausen abridges Herzog’s point, “With alarming focus and rapidity, conservative political parties and right-wing non-governmental organizations in Europe as well as the United States have been seeking official support for restricting abortion rights by instrumentalizing recent, positive changes in social attitudes towards disability.” The concept of “fetal personhood” is on the rise, which equates the ending of a pregnancy with murder. Herzog’s diagnosis is especially prescient, as “fetal personhood” is constantly in the news: on 28 May 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to uphold the ban on abortions for reason of disability that then-Governor of Indiana had installed into law in 2016.

The instrumentalization of disability rights in the mission to limit women’s right to self-determination betrays its hollowness by its exclusive focus on life’s beginning, rather than on life itself. The final chapter, “Time Well Wasted” provides a foundation for thinking about lives well lived. Herzog considers new models of care that were first conjured between the 1940s-1960s, based on reciprocal relationships between disabled and nondisabled people. More recently LGBT activism has provided an important impetus for disability rights, “not least with regard to sexual rights for individuals with disabilities, but also more generally with regard to pluralization of ideas about bodies, intimate interdependencies, and familial arrangements” (6). With a focus on cognitive disability, and drawing on work by Félix Guattari (“queer *avant la lettre*”) and Gilles Deleuze, this chapter examines arguments for the notion of “disaggregated personhood” that calls the Enlightenment ideal of an autonomous individual into question, advocating for interconnectivity instead.³ The chapter tracks shifts from thinking about charity to justice, and in transcending justice, to “desiring and becoming,” considering the ideas of the education specialists Duncan and Daniela Merciecas about “becoming disabled” and “Time well wasted.” It is here that unlearning eugenics carries “not solely a minoritizing message but also a potentially universalizing one... a message that could speak to everyone” (98).

In her beautiful reflection on the book, Danilyn Rutherford connects Herzog’s analysis of European debates over abortion to the fundamental paradox of choice: it is a simultaneous rejection. “To make ourselves vulnerable is to sacrifice the selves we might have become in concert with those from whom we are turning away... To whom do we make ourselves vulnerable? How do we decide?... Over much of history, in much of the world, women’s vulnerabilities have been chosen for them.” The erosion of reproductive rights — which disproportionately burdens marginalized women — traps women in “lives in which there are no decisions left to make.” Drawing on ethnography on the Korowai of West Papua, where parents and other relatives decided

³ Herzog’s attention to Guattari, on whom she also wrote in her *Cold War Freud* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), is worthy of note, given that for a long time Guattari was unfairly dismissed as an irrelevant quasi-psychoanalytic fantasist and the lesser figure in a “postmodern” Deleuze-Guattari duo. She notes instead his work with schizophrenic adults, his focus on mutually transformative relations between people, and the value accorded to his thinking by disability-rights activists.

after the birth whether to carry a newborn into the house or abandon a baby, Rutherford points to the ambivalence that is prevalent in all relationships. The practice of the Korowai presented “reproduction as a leap of faith.”

Rutherford and Weigel point to the exploitation of caregivers. With the demise of socialism, state provision for care has eroded. Recent austerity policies have further continued to limit our imagination to live differently. Rutherford’s notion of vulnerability can be tied to Weigel’s notion of a universal human right to pleasure, together paving the way for social reproduction to allow for something entirely new. This might serve as the foundation for more ambitious arguments for what Schoen defines as the recognition of the full personhood of the disabled and of women. At the end of her introduction Herzog outlines questions which remain unanswered, including “Why are intimate rights of all kinds so hard eloquently to defend?” (14). Yet it is her own work which lays the groundwork for the defense we still need. As Rutherford explains, for the Korowai, the decision to pick up a baby—not necessarily by the parent—“created more than just one person; it created a pair.” Allowing oneself to be altered by engagement: it is this expansive imagination that forms the heart of Dagmar Herzog’s history writing, and that illuminates precisely how much we have left to dream and desire.

Participants:

Dagmar Herzog is Distinguished Professor of History and Daniel Rose Faculty Scholar at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, where she works on the histories of religion and secularization, Holocaust and aftermath studies, and the histories of sexuality and gender. Her publications include: *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton University Press, 2005); *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); *Cold War Freud: Psychoanalysis in an Age of Catastrophes* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); and *Unlearning Eugenics: Sexuality, Reproduction, and Disability in Post-Nazi Europe* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2018). She is currently writing on the histories of disability, theology, and ethics in the Christian and Jewish traditions.

Lotte Houwink ten Cate is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of History at Columbia University, and a Visiting Fellow at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Her dissertation is an intellectual history of the classifying and criminalizing of domestic and sexual violence across western Europe since 1970. Her research has appeared in *New German Critique*.

Susanne M. Klausen is Professor of History at Carleton University, Ottawa. She has published studies about the eugenics movement in interwar South Africa in, inter alia, *Race, Maternity, and the Politics of Birth Control in South Africa, 1918-1939* (Palgrave 2004), and the impact of the thalidomide catastrophe on white South Africans’ ideas about abortion in, “‘Are We Going to Stand By and Let These Children Come Into the World?’: The Impact of the ‘Thalidomide Disaster’ in South Africa, 1960-1977,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41:4 (2015): 735-752 (co-authored by Julie Parle). She has also published an essay on public demands for a clause permitting abortion on grounds of fetal abnormality in “‘There is a Row about Foetal Abnormality Underway’: The Debate about Inclusion of a Eugenics Clause in the Contraception, Sterilisation, and Abortion Act, 1977-1978,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 51:2 (October 2017): 80-103.

Danilyn Rutherford is the author of *Raiding the Land of the Foreigners: The Limits of the Nation on an Indonesian Frontier* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), *Laughing at Leviathan: Sovereignty and Audience in West Papua* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), and *Living in the Stone Age: Reflections*

on the Origins of a Colonial Fantasy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). She taught at the University of Chicago and the University of California, Santa Cruz before becoming President of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. She is currently working on a project on belief and communication in the social worlds of severely disabled young adults.

Johanna Schoen is Professor of History at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with an affiliation at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research. She is the author of two books: *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), and *Abortion after Roe* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2015) which won the Welch Medal of the American Association for the History of Medicine. Her current work explores ethical frameworks in defense of the right to decide over life and death in abortion care, neonatology, and at the end of life.

Katherine Sorrels is Associate Professor of History and Co-Chair of the Taft Medical Humanities Research Group at the University of Cincinnati. Her research concerns nationalism, internationalism, and health in modern Central European Jewish history. She is the author of *Cosmopolitan Outsiders: Imperial Inclusion, National Exclusion, and the Pan-European Idea* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Her current book project concerns Austrian Jewish refugee doctors who pioneered new approaches to intellectual and developmental disabilities in the UK and U.S. during and after the Second World War. She earned her Ph.D. in History from the University of Pittsburgh in 2009.

Maira Weigel is a writer and scholar currently at the Harvard Society of Fellows. She earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Film and Media Studies from Yale University in 2017.

Dagmar Herzog's new book is a bracing exploration of the relatively new, entirely false idea that disability rights and reproductive rights are incompatible. Social conservatives who are determined to undermine women's autonomy are constantly on the lookout for new tactics,¹ and for the past decade they have vigorously peddled the claim that there is a profound conflict between the right of people with physical and cognitive disabilities to freedom from discrimination, and the right of women to control their reproductive sexuality. With alarming focus and rapidity, conservative political parties and right-wing non-governmental organizations in Europe as well as the United States have been seeking official support for restricting abortion rights by instrumentalizing recent, positive changes in social attitudes towards disability. Essentially, they argue that procuring an abortion on grounds of foetal abnormality is discriminatory towards people with disabilities and therefore should be prohibited. In Britain, for example, the 2013 report of the parliamentary Inquiry into Abortion on the Grounds of Disability recommended, without success, that "Given the changes in domestic and international law and societal attitudes in recent years which are influencing views on disability, we recommend that Parliament reviews the question of allowing abortion on the grounds of disability..."² And in the United States, since 2013 at least five states—Ohio North Dakota, Indiana, Louisiana and Utah—have passed legislation, thus far overturned on appeal, criminalizing abortion of fetuses diagnosed with some kind of genetic disease.³

Disability and reproductive justice advocates alike have condemned the trend in instrumentalizing disability. For example, activist attorney Shain Neumeier rejects as false anti-abortion groups' claims to be motivated by concern for disabled people, arguing instead that they are exploiting discourses of disability to attack reproductive rights. Neumeier declares, "The disability rights community should not allow ourselves to be used."⁴ And in September 2018 the United Nations Committees on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) issued a joint statement voicing concern that opponents of reproductive autonomy are invoking the importance of disability rights in efforts to restrict or prohibit women's access to safe abortion, calling this "one of the most pressing issues that affects women and girls."⁵ The leaders of the two committees, Theresia Degener, Chairperson of the CRPD

¹ For example, in the 1970s, so-called "anti-abortion feminists" formed groups like Feminists for Life and claimed abortion was anti-motherhood. See Laury Oaks ["What Are Pro-Life Feminists Doing on Campus?" *NWSA Journal* 21:1 \(Spring 2009\): 178-203.](#)

² *Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Abortion on the Grounds of Disability* (London, 2013), 48, <http://dontscreenusout.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Abortion-and-Disability-Report-17-7-13.pdf>, accessed 16 September 2018.

³ David M. Perry, "Republicans Are Using Fear of Eugenics to Attack Reproductive Rights," *The Nation*, 4 January 2018, <https://www.thenation.com/article/republicans-are-using-fear-of-eugenics-to-attack-reproductive-rights/>, accessed 12 September 2018.

⁴ Shain Neumeier, "The Disability Rights Movement Must be Pro-Choice," *Nos Magazine*, 11 April 2017, <http://nosmag.org/disability-rights-must-be-pro-choice/>, accessed 12 September 2018.

⁵ The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Stop Regression on Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women and Girls, UN Experts Urge," 5 September 2018,

and Dalia Leinarte, Chairperson of CEDAW, remind national governments that disability rights and gender equality are two components of the same human rights standard that should not be construed as conflicting: regression in terms of respect for reproductive rights threatens all women, including those with disabilities.⁶ As Herzog states in the opening sentence of *Unlearning Eugenics*, “Few topics raise problems of precarious citizenship and dilemmas of moral argument and legal strategy more powerfully than the impasse currently evident across Europe (both Western and Eastern) between women’s reproductive rights and disability rights” (3).

Herzog’s new book is a must-read for scholars and activists wishing to understand why and how the current political impasse emerged in Europe, though her insights are applicable to other regional contexts, especially North America. The book pulsates with a sense of political purpose and urgency, making it a compelling read. Two of the chapters were first given as George L. Mosse Lectures at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2016, and the brisk pace and accessible language of engaging public presentations has been deliberately maintained. The book is deceptively slim: comprised of only three chapters, the main body of the text is only ninety-eight pages in length. However, the footnotes are extensive and fascinating, containing in-depth elaborations on points made in the main text and suggestions for future research; some are more than a page long. Reading this book reminded me of tennis, because in order to be sure not to miss anything substantive I was constantly flipping pages of the book back and forth between the body of the text and the sixty-four pages of footnotes.

The first chapter is mostly a reprint of Herzog’s important 2011 article, “Christianity, Disability, Abortion: Western Europe, 1960s–1970s.”⁷ The essay focuses on an often-overlooked aspect of the fight to liberalize restrictive abortion laws in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, namely the widespread invocation of disability by both advocates and opponents of accessible abortion. Religious and secular activists and authorities argued that abortion should be available when doctors detect some type of fetal abnormality. Some did so in hateful terms, such as the argument that women could avoid giving birth to “cripples and mental deficient” who would be a “heavy burden” to society, while others argued out of concern for mothers and marriages which would be forced to bear the “extraordinary weight” of disabled children in societies offering precious little financial and social support.⁸ Feminists, too, deployed disability as an argument for liberalizing restrictive abortion laws, and Herzog appears to think this was a strategic choice: emphasising disability, she writes, reveals “how difficult it apparently was for defenders of abortion rights to argue straightforwardly for sexual pleasure without reproductive consequences as a human right also for women.”⁹ Simultaneously, social

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23503&LangID=E>, accessed 8 September 2018.

⁶ The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Stop Regression on Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women and Girls, UN Experts Urge.”

⁷ Dagmar Herzog, “Christianity, Disability, Abortion: Western Europe, 1960s-1970s,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 51 (2011): 375-400.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 397.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 396-97.

conservatives called abortion on any grounds “genocide,” and some West German Catholics even predicted that permitting it would cause another Auschwitz; religious and secular conservatives alike compared it to Nazism. Herzog makes the crucial and disturbing observation that for many years after the mass murder of the disabled under Nazi rule, “not only eugenics but even the murders themselves did not immediately have the bad name one might think they would. It took quite some time before the murders were understood as crimes.”¹⁰ Thus, she concludes, it was clearly much harder to “unlearn eugenics” than we often assume.

The subsequent two chapters explore the persistence of eugenics – by which she means negative attitudes towards people with disabilities ranging from fear to pity to contempt, even hatred – in very different ways. Chapter Two, “Moral Reasoning in the Wake of Mass Murder,” is a case study that traces in detail the origins of the fraught relationship between disability and abortion in Germany in the 1980s and 1990s. She explains that the disability rights movement, which emerged in the context of Germans finally acknowledging the Nazi-era murder of at least 290,000 people with intellectual or psychological disabilities in Germany and occupied Poland and the Soviet Union, vehemently opposed abortion on the grounds of foetal disability. The New Left and the Green Party were unable to successfully counter their arguments; after a series of thoughtless and offensive references to disability in campaigns like the one opposing nuclear power, left-leaning nondisabled feminists were on the defensive. Ultimately, social conservatives succeeded in deploying disability to further restrict access to abortion in legal amendments made in 1995 and again in 2009.

The chapter presents a complicated history and as an entry point, Herzog examines the “Singer Affair”—the furor that erupted in 1989 when the Australian philosopher Peter Singer was invited to Germany to discuss, among other topics, euthanasia. In fact, at the time Singer was arguing that euthanasia for “severely disabled newborn infants” (46) was morally defensible, and there was an explosive popular reaction to news that he had been invited to speak (the invitation was rescinded). The Singer Affair, which occurred at a moment when German researchers were making clear the multiple links, “in staffing, gassing technology, but also in attitude toward ‘lives unworthy of life...’” (50), between the Nazi-era murder of people with disabilities in killing centres and the mass extermination of Jews during the Holocaust, helped spur radical disability activism in Germany. And, as discussed, ultimately the disability rights movement succeeded in stigmatizing abortion in cases of foetal abnormality, a development that ultraconservatives exploited. This was a negative outcome for women that can be traced back, in part, to Singer once again. In the late 1980s Singer was hailing the liberalization of abortion laws in Western nation-states and, while doing so, made the profoundly offensive claim there was an essential similarity between “killing the late fetus” and “killing the newborn infant” (58). Herzog argues that the negative impact on German women’s reproductive rights was by no means inevitable; instead it was an example of “the contrapuntal relationship between different moments in time” that “ricocheted” in unpredictable ways (10). The chapter is a cautionary tale of how two vitally important progressive social movements, disability rights and feminism, came to be opponents instead of allies, and there are lessons to be mined here for both movements going forward.

The final chapter, “Time Well Wasted,” looks to the past as well as the present to locate possible routes we can follow to finally ‘unlearn eugenics,’ to find alternative, humane ways to (re)think about disability in the future. While Herzog is fully aware of the argument that “a new kind of eugenics” (71) has been unleashed in recent years with the explosion of new technologies for diagnosing anomalies in fetuses and embryos, she urges readers to do two things in light of such medical developments. First, in numerous places in the book,

¹⁰ Herzog, “Christianity, Disability, Abortion,” 399, fn 94.

she subtly calls on us to refrain from judging women and their partners who opt for abortion when told their child, if born, would have a disability; parents should not be blamed for wanting their children to be healthy, she suggests, especially when living in societies that offer at best mediocre support to people with disabilities and their families. Second, she exhorts us not to miss “the bigger story” (72): the “recognition and even celebration of disability rights” (70) in courts and civil society in countries around the world since the turn of the new millennium, including in diverse efforts underway to win recognition for the full human subjecthood of people with disabilities, especially in relation to sexual and political rights.

The book ends by highlighting ground-breaking “intentional disabled-abled life-sharing communities” founded in the 1940s to the 1960s at least indirectly as a reaction to the Nazis’ mass murder of people with disabilities, as well as present-day experiments in inclusive research, defined as “research *with* rather than *on* or *for* disabled people” (94) (emphasis in the original). Herzog highlights innovative experiments in creating community to enable “being experienced and treated, every day, as someone with a full psychological personhood,” (87) including the Camphill movement, founded in the late 1940s by Karl König, a Jewish Austrian émigré to Scotland, and the L’Arche movement started by Canadian Jean Vanier in France in 1964.

But for Herzog, “no historical touchstone has been more important” (91) than the recovery and application of the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, co-authors of *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, published in 1972, who challenge the Enlightenment ideal of autonomous bounded individuality.¹¹ Activist scholars such as physical disability queer theorists Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, for example, build on Guattari and Deleuze to argue for recognition of the ubiquity of interconnectivity.¹² This is a radical challenge being taken up by researchers like Duncan Mercieca and Daniela Mercieca, who work with children with severe and multiple learning disabilities in Malta.¹³ They seek profound social connection with the children, a research approach that requires a desire for engagement, what they call “a desire to live *otherwise*” (96) (emphasis in original). Overall, Herzog concludes after this survey of “experiments,” there has been a paradigm shift in approaches to disability since the 1960s, from one of *charity* to *justice* and sometimes even more than justice: “the most provocative recent efforts [like those of the Merciecas]...are also based on desiring and becoming” (96), emphasis in original). This is a shift she is supporting in *Unlearning Eugenics*.

As Herzog writes, today “it has become ever more difficult to celebrate diversity (including neurodiversity) and passionately to defend disability rights and adequate government financial support for dignified and flourishing lives for the physically, cognitively, and emotionally disabled and simultaneously to argue for the rights of pregnant women and their partners to choose whether or not to carry a disabled fetus to term” (41). *Unlearning Eugenics* does both. People everywhere striving to also do so, whether through their scholarship or

¹¹ Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983 [1972]).

¹² Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, “Deleuzian Connections and Queer Corporealities: Shrinking Global Disability,” *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 11/12 (Fall 2005/Spring 2006), <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue11/>.

¹³ Daniela Mercieca and Duncan Mercieca, “Opening Research to Intensities: Rethinking Disability Research with Deleuze and Guattari,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 44:1 (2010): 79-92; Duncan Mercieca, *Living Otherwise: Students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities as Agents in Educational Contexts* (Rotterdam and Boston: Sense Publishers, 2013).

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social activism, will find in Herzog's new book a vital source of ideas and sources that will assist in thinking through and making sense of the complicated post-World War Two politics of sexuality, reproduction, and disability.

Making Ourselves Vulnerable

To whom do we make ourselves vulnerable? This is a question we all confront. To be human is to be vulnerable: to be dependent on others, human and non-human, living and dead, to whom we owe our existence, identity, and ability to thrive. To be human is to be vulnerable to the vulnerability of others – to feel the grip of our obligation to those we have taken into our care, those who are joined with us in relationships that define who we all are.

Our particular vulnerabilities are not simply given. To take another into one's care is to neglect the other others.¹ We can't rely on an existing set of preferences and ideal types to guide us at such moments, since our identities emerge through such experiences, and we will only know who we are becoming after the fact. For this reason, the language of choice isn't quite accurate, to the degree it calls to mind individual consumers selecting from an array of goods. To make ourselves vulnerable is to sacrifice the selves we might have become in concert with those from whom we are turning away. This is the sacrifice a woman confronts when she considers whether to continue a pregnancy. It is the sacrifice political leaders make when they stop asylum seekers at the border and determine which government programs to preserve, and which to cut. When we give someone a gift or invite someone to a party, when we start a conversation with a stranger on a crowded street, we are gambling with the future. We can place this dilemma in the context of reproductive politics Dagmar Herzog brilliantly analyzes in this very necessary book. But it ramifies much further. To whom do we make ourselves vulnerable? How do we decide?

In *Unlearning Eugenics*, Herzog traces how this question has been asked and answered in European debates over abortion. She offers us the origin story of a paradox: why have right wing Christians found it so easy to pit two progressive social movements against each other? Across Western Europe, in Spain, the United Kingdom, and Germany, and in Eastern Europe, in Poland and Hungary, a new assault on reproductive rights is underway, spearheaded by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) funded by right wing Christian movements. Conservative critics of abortion have gained traction by appealing to the specter of eugenics, which they see as haunting women and their partners when faced with the wrenching decision of whether to bring a disabled fetus to term. How did the struggle for disability rights become a resource in an international campaign to curtail women's ability to decide? And why is Europe the place where this strategy has emerged with particular force at a moment when cuts to government budgets are threatening disabled people's ability to live satisfying lives? This impasse, Herzog argues, is a legacy of the Nazi past. Or, to put it more precisely, it is a legacy of a failure to confront the disdain for difference that justified Nazi efforts to eliminate disabled men, women, and children from the German population in the years immediately preceding the Holocaust. The current impasse reflects an inability to 'unlearn' eugenics: to grasp the implications of this shameful episode in European history and to make sense of what it would take to leave it behind.

The problem, Herzog shows us, is not that Europeans have forgotten the sterilization and murder of disabled people; it is that they have remembered these atrocities in partial and interested ways. Herzog builds on her

¹ On the problem of the other others, see Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

previous work in Holocaust studies and the history of religion and sexuality in making this argument. The project began with Herzog's discovery of a trove of primary documents by Christian thinkers of the 1960s and 1970s; she went on to cast her net much more widely, across countries, constituencies, and historical moments in time, drawing on government reports, surveys, media coverage, websites, art works, and writings by activists on all sides of the debate.

Drawing on this wealth of sources, Herzog walks us back from the current moment to earlier phases in the debate over abortion. Protestant and Catholic leaders, fashioning themselves as the moral conscience of their societies, play a central role in the story Herzog relates. Immediately after World War II, German Catholic leaders condemned Nazi eugenicists less out of empathy for their victims than concern over their use of sterilization at a time when the Church forbade all forms of birth control. German Protestant leaders tacitly condoned them at a time when the German government was advancing its own program of 'voluntary' sterilization in cases not unlike those the Nazis addressed. In the 1960s and 1970s, Protestant and Catholic theologians, inspired by the sexual revolution and the struggle for women's rights, introduced a new thread into the conversation. By this point, historians had come to label Nazi policies towards the disabled as a form of racism. This did not stop Protestant and Catholic activists from advocating for the legalization of abortion to save women from being forced to bear 'defective' children against their will. It was left to disability rights activists in the 1980s and 1990s to underline the connection between the disabled and other victims of Nazi atrocities in their public protests against ethicists who called into question the moral personhood of the severely disabled. In the early 2000s, with nationalist governments taking hold in Eastern Europe and Christian political activism taking a sharp turn to the right, the ingredients were there for an assault on reproductive freedom that evoked the Nazi past to justify the curtailment of present rights.

Herzog weaves together these moments into a contrapuntal history, with themes from one moment reprised in another, often to do very different work. There was the demographic argument against reproductive rights, grounded in a commitment to the abundance of the nation. There was the gender argument against them, which turned on the need to control women's labor and their access to the varieties of female pleasure non-reproductive sexuality could bring. On the opposing side, there were the religious arguments for them, which prioritized the interests of "already living women" (26) and assigned ethical standing to "incipient life" only when it was "called to be born" (27).

Finally, serving as a resource for both camps, there was the "contempt for the disabled" (31) that directed the Nazi assault on "useless eaters" (29) and continued unabated in its wake. Both religious and secular progressives who fought to decriminalize abortion in the 1970s found a useful nightmare in the image of a woman forced to bear a disabled son or daughter. When the ethicist Peter Singer came to Germany in the 1989, disability activists found themselves fighting their battle on the terrain set by Singer's question: do the disabled have a right to life? International Christian advocacy organizations have revived the controversy to justify new limitations on abortion and prenatal diagnosis. Over much of history, in much of the world, women's vulnerabilities have been chosen for them. As the philosopher Eva Feder Kittay has shown, this is a source of injustice and exploitation for caregivers, who are often poor and minoritized women: caught in a sense of obligation to their charges, they accept poor working conditions and little pay.² As their reproductive

² See Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency*. (New York: Routledge, 1999).

rights are eroded, more women will become trapped by their vulnerability to the vulnerability of others, living lives in which there are no decisions left to make.

But at the same time, Herzog uses this contrapuntal history to show us a way beyond the current impasse. Out of feminism grew movements on behalf of sexual minorities that moved beyond the limits of the gender binaries that had served as the basis of rights. Out of the fight for disability justice has come a form of activism that has insisted on contesting taken-for-granted models of intimacy and embodied norms. *Unlearning Eugenics* draws on the insights of those who have lived with disability not as a tragedy, or a challenge to be overcome, but as an incitement for new ways of living together with others. The book ends with a discussion of Duncan Mercieca's reflections on the agency exercised by his students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities.³ Mercieca drew on the insights of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to understand his relationship with these individuals, who used their minds and bodies in ways that diverged dramatically from how he used his own.⁴ In making himself vulnerable to his students, Mercieca opened himself to the adventure of "becoming disabled" (98)—taking on the embodied experience of his students in his effort to forge a connection—a decision fraught with possibility and risk.

To whom do we make ourselves vulnerable? How do we decide? Herzog steers clear of a direct confrontation with this question. This is a principled strategy, if Jacques Derrida is correct: such decisions are made in secrecy and silence, and often in agony, by people who can't be sure they are doing the right thing.⁵ Yet Herzog's book has something to tell us on this topic that resonates far beyond the particular history it relates. The Korowai of West Papua, an indigenous group in the area where I have conducted research, have a way of thinking about the gamble involved in bringing a new person into the community.⁶ A child will survive you, they say, and preserve your name for future generations, but at the same time, a child will kill you. The work and worry involved in raising them will wear down your healthy body. The baby is both a pleasurable weight in your lap and a reminder of your mortality: a source of life and a sign of death.

As Rupert Stasch points out in his wonderful study of kinship and alterity in this society, the Korowai have a word for a newly born infant; it means flesh-devouring demon. In the past, they left the outcome of every pregnancy undetermined until shortly after the moment of birth, when parents and other relatives decided in the flash of an instant whether to abandon the baby or carry it into the house. In picking up the baby, a mother, aunt, or friend of the father did more than simply affirm the humanity of the infant when they suddenly imagined a future made pleasurable and fulfilling by its presence. This person's gesture created more

³ See Duncan P. Mercieca, *Living Otherwise: Students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities as Agents in Educational Contexts* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013).

⁴ See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Viking, 1977). See also Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

⁵ *The Gift of Death*, p. 62. See also Jacques Derrida, *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁶ I am drawing on Rupert Stasch, *Society of Others: Kinship and Mourning in a West Papuan Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

than just one person; it created a pair: from then on, she or he and the child would know each other by the same nickname—say “my compassion” or “my carrying and climbing”—which memorialized this foundational event.⁷

I recognize the risks in bringing up this kind of example. The Dutch, then the Indonesian government, collaborated with missionaries to close this space of decision, seeing the prevalence of infanticide as a marker of Korowai savagery—yet more evidence that New Guinea was trapped in the past.⁸ And yet Korowai understandings of personhood contain a usefully critical edge—they add another theme to Herzog’s score. Eugenics constrains reproductive decision making by subjecting it to racist and ableist guidelines. Whatever we make of the abandonment of Korowai newborns – which today’s Korowai do not defend—this is not what this past practice did. It brought forward the ambivalence at the heart of all relationships. It presented reproduction as a leap of faith.

I am not the first feminist mother of a severely disabled child who has thought back to her own experience with prenatal testing from the perspective of the person she has become. It’s not my beautiful daughter, who is so similar to the students Mercieca came to desire, who comes first to mind at these moments. It’s her typical older brother.⁹ Is there any way I could have predicted the particular joys and heartbreak parenting him would bring? In a world in which there was more support for those who care for the disabled, prospective parents facing a prenatal diagnosis might make different kinds of decisions. Without contempt for disability, people’s dreams and nightmares would change. We all might find it easier to “give ourselves up to the intensities, forms and forces” wrapped up in the becoming of others. This is the wisdom at the heart of Dagmar Herzog’s wonderful study. “This too,” as Herzog puts it, “[is] not solely a minoritizing message, but also a potentially universalizing one. A message that could speak to us all” (98).

⁷ Stasch, *Society of Others*, Kindle location 2029.

⁸ See Danilyn Rutherford, *Living in the Stone Age: Reflections on the Origins of a Colonial Fantasy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

⁹ I was surprised by how much his birth delighted me. I was also surprised by how much it scared me. Now life could hurt me in ways it never could before.

Review by Johanna Schoen, Rutgers University

Dagmar Herzog and I share a common emotional affiliation with Germany and an intellectual interest in issues of reproduction and sexuality. Our work, while dealing with different continents, has always engaged overlapping questions about women's sexual self-determination, access to health care, and larger questions of social justice.¹ My current work circles around questions of life and death—in particular the moral frameworks that surround decisions over life and death in abortion care, neonatology, and in case of terminal illness. I am interested in how we talk about the value of life and how we construct moral reasoning that supports ending a life—of a fetus, a neonate, a person suffering in terminal illness—and how the moral reasoning shifts as our positionality changes. In our casual conversations over the years, Herzog and I have both expressed consternation at the ways in which Germans engaged—or failed to engage—with abortion and reproductive technologies in light of Germany's Nazi past. *Unlearning Eugenics* provides a timely first answer to the intractable hurdles that Germans seem to face when confronting questions of reproduction, life, and death. It is a beautiful book, long overdue in the way in which it analyzes the discourse surrounding abortion and disability.

Herzog contemplates the limits of women's reproductive choices in post-war Germany. Drawing on a wide array of sources, including a comprehensive survey of news reports from the European and American press, professional journals, position papers and publications from the disability movement and from churches, as well as government and European Union publications, Herzog notes that negative attitudes about disability in the 1960s and 1970s played an essential role in advancing women's rights to reproductive self-determination across Western European nations. Individuals with disabilities, whether physical, emotional, or cognitive, were hardly ever understood or treated as agents with personal dignity and rights. Reducing the number of infants born with disabilities featured as a core argument in favour of abortion reform. Haunted by the Nazi past, however, the German state never granted German women full access to abortion and reproductive technologies. Women's choices were circumscribed by fears that offering women access to abortion on demand, would bring Germany back down the slippery slope to eugenics and euthanasia.

In the 1980s and 1990s, German disability rights activism emerged into mainstream politics and media discussions, bringing with it a new insistence on a more positive attitude toward disability. This development, Herzog notes, was accompanied by negative repercussions for women's rights to abortion access as insensitivities inherent in the prochoice rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s came to haunt abortion politics in the twenty-first century. Buoyed by the rise of pro-life movements, anti-abortion activists exploited the new sensitivity towards disability to generate doubts about the morality of abortion in general and in cases of disability in particular. In a final chapter, Herzog explores how we might talk more thoughtfully about matters such as sex, personhood, rights, autonomy, and self-determination.

A deep suspicion towards technology and the possibility of selection of some human traits over others limited not only reproductive choices, but also conversations about these choices. Legislators, physicians, and the German public have been suspicious of women's ability to make moral decisions if given full access to

¹ "Between Choice and Coercion: Women and the Politics of Sterilization," *Journal of Women's History* 13:1 (Spring 2001): 132-156; Johanna Schoen, *Choice & Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Johanna Schoen, *Abortion after Roe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

information and medical technologies. As a result, women lack access to information, testing, and technologies that would offer choices about which pregnancies to carry and which pregnancies to end. Indeed, as I wrote this review, I received a text from a close friend in Munich, telling me that her niece gave birth to a stillborn girl who suffered from a genetic condition incompatible with life. In the U.S., the diagnosis of such a fetal abnormality might have resulted in a referral to an abortion clinic specializing in late term abortion, giving the woman the choice between ending the pregnancy early or giving birth to a baby whose life could not be sustained. In Germany, this option is not available.

From an American feminist perspective, the German state's inability to concede full reproductive decision-making authority to women speaks to the very erasure of women as moral agents. *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* and a generally hostile climate for women questioning the parameters of motherhood seem here to be disguised behind the fear that German women might repeat the horrors of the Nazi holocaust. Yet, the assumption that German women are not able to make decisions about the details of their caretaking work but will devote themselves to the care of children regardless of their child's particular needs, speaks to a willful blindness about the suffering this can bring to women, their offspring, and, indeed, their entire families.

Herzog describes how debates over the specter of fetal indications have been hijacked by the German anti-abortion movement—a development not entirely surprising since the U.S. anti-abortion movement has repeatedly attempted to hijack the dialogue over abortions for African American women by conjuring up the threat of racial genocide. To illustrate the depth of hostility and distrust that existed in the late 1980s and the 1990s towards discussions about the value of life, Herzog points to the Singer affair. When the Australian philosopher and animal rights activist Peter Singer was invited in 1989 to address a conference in Marburg and to speak on the subject “Do severely disabled newborn infants have a right to life?” (Singer's short answer to this question was no), organizers of both events withdrew their invitations after a media firestorm and public outcry protesting his appearance. This hostility, Herzog notes, was illustrative of the unwillingness to engage in a careful analysis and debate about the differences between Nazi eugenics, euthanasia, and contemporary reproductive choices.

The feminist physician, scholar, and medical ethicist Lisa Harris warns of practical blind spots in bioethics if we refuse to explore difficult ethical questions. Such blind spots, she cautions, render conscience an empty concept and leave us with no moral ground to stand on.² While Harris issues this warning to emphasize that some providers offer abortion care because their conscience tells them to do so, we can extend this warning to larger debates about the value of life. How can we make moral claims about the beginning and end of life, the value of life, and whether life ever becomes futile if we are unwilling to engage in conversations about these issues? It is urgent that we address these questions and be permitted to answer them for ourselves—and in conversation with our loved ones.

In the American context, the German silence on these issues is somewhat surprising. Despite the unrelenting conflict between supporters and opponents of abortion, the U.S. is able to sustain a healthy discourse about the moral frameworks and ethical considerations that surround reproductive decisions at the edges of life – in particular abortion at late gestational ages, in cases of fetal abnormalities, and as this relates to assisted

² Lisa H. Harris, “Recognizing Conscience in Abortion Provision,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 376:11 (13 September 2012): 981-983.

reproductive technologies and the creation of life. However imperfect, access to information and the marketplace of technologies underlines the experience of pregnancy for many American women.

In a recent class—I am at the moment teaching an undergraduate class on health, culture, and society—I had my students watch the 2014 documentary *After Tiller*, which chronicles the work of a small handful of abortion providers who continued to perform third trimester abortions after the 2009 murder of George Tiller, whose medical practice stood most publicly for this kind of work.³ These procedures are most frequently performed in cases of fetal abnormalities and in the documentary, we meet three couples who chose to end pregnancies because the fetuses they were carrying had been diagnosed with a variety of conditions that significantly limited quality of life or that were not compatible with life. One suffered from a congenital joint contracture making it impossible for her to bend at her joints. As her parents explain: she would be unable to walk, feed herself, etc. The father, who coaches his 11-year old son in soccer, notes tearfully: “It just didn’t seem fair to her.” Another had no corpus callosum, meaning the baby would be blind, deaf, or never able to walk or talk. Ridden with guilt over the choice to end the pregnancy or give birth to the baby, these parents, too, concluded that their son would have no quality of life and chose abortion. A third suffered from a form of anencephaly—a condition incompatible with life, although it is unclear whether the fetus might die in utero, be stillborn, or die after a short-term life filled with surgeries and seizures. As the mother explained: “I just didn’t want him to suffer anymore.”

The documentary offers no answers to the question what life is worth living. What it does do, however, is show a group of parents and abortion providers who grapple with the very questions in detail specific to each case. It shows parents and clinicians who think deeply about questions of life and death, the value of life and suffering, and then allows parents to make very individual decisions—decisions that are right for them and their families. And the documentary illustrates that these are hard questions and issues to grapple with—but that doing so is important if we are to respect the physical and emotional life of patients. As one of the providers who performs third trimester abortions explains: “I think about what I do. I recognize what I do. And at times I struggle. But I always come back to the woman. And often: what life will this baby have? What will it mean to be alive with horrific fetal abnormalities? It’s not just about being alive. It’s about life and what does it mean.”

This is a question that Herzog approaches in her last chapter. Here, she exposes the chasm between our lives and the lives of those living with disabilities. Reading this chapter made me think that the empathy it takes to create communities that care for persons with severe disabilities is the kind of empathy that is needed to acknowledge that women have the moral capacity to decide about their and their fetuses’ lives. It takes a humility that understands the texture of life and is willing to grapple with it. The radical notion that those with disabilities are full citizens and should have full citizenship rights—regardless of their mental health or cognitive abilities—would support the same radical notion that women can make autonomous decisions concerning the morality of life and death. These issues are interconnected—understanding persons with disabilities as full persons and understanding women as full persons.

³ *After Tiller*, 2013, directed by Lana Wilson and Martha Shane.

Review by Katherine Sorrels, University of Cincinnati

“We cannot solve the problem of a cripple-hostile society on the backs of individual women.”¹

The quotation above, taken from a 1989 German roundtable discussion between feminists and disability rights activists, sums up the problem that Dagmar Herzog seeks to explain and resolve in *Unlearning Eugenics*. The problem is the impasse between women’s rights and disability rights activists over the ethics of abortion based on prenatal screening for disability. She argues that the two, as modern human rights movements, ought to make common cause, though they have not always done so. She traces the paradigm shifts and entanglements of the two movements over more than half a century in Europe, synthesizing a vast amount of scholarly literature, journalism, legislation, and NGO records. Her style is flowing and conversational, even as she makes forceful arguments and offers penetrating and precise analysis of complex and difficult material.

The book comprises three chapters which are based on the George L. Mosse lectures Herzog delivered in 2016. In the first two, she examines key moments in what she refers to as the contrapuntal relationship between the two interdependent yet independent movements. The first is the 1960s and 1970s, when the feminist push for decriminalization of abortion in European countries succeeded, in part by denigrating disability. The second is the 1980s and 1990s when the radical disability rights movement won a series of policy battles and successfully challenged the medical/charity model of disability, in part by scapegoating pro-choice feminists. In both cases, the movements used each other as foils to advance their causes. Herzog argues they did so because the intense public hostility faced by both movements made purely positive arguments inadequate. Denigrating the other allowed each movement to reach a broader public and generate arguments that were convincing to policy makers. Specifically, feminist arguments *for* abortion rights based on disability worked because Europeans both in post-Nazi and in continuously democratic nations failed to ‘unlearn’ eugenics. And arguments *against* abortion, based on disability rights, worked because they resonated with members of politically and sexually conservative Christian groups. What is more, members of the latter have successfully *instrumentalized* disability rights in order to attack abortion rights. The result is that the second half of the twentieth century saw women’s rights and radical disability rights activists caught in an internecine conflict. Their solidarity of cause—the fight for self-determination, women’s and disabled people’s—was overshadowed because their conflict was entangled with and manipulated by increasingly popular right-wing, sexually conservative groups. That manipulation continues in the twenty-first century, Herzog argues, in the form of conservative, religious, anti-abortion campaigns coming out of post-communist European Union countries.

But her aim is not just to explicate tensions. She wants to reveal what she sees as their false bases, expose the cynicism that has exacerbated them, and recover junctures at which activists on both sides found common ground and rebutted would-be manipulators. She argues that it was possible, and remains possible, to simultaneously honor a woman’s individual decision not to carry a pregnancy to term on the grounds of disability *and* to support disability rights: that is, to argue for the right to abortion on the grounds of disability without implicitly commenting on the worth of lives lived with disability. Moreover, the exclusive focus on the *beginning* of life among sexually conservative activists, who claim disability rights as a basis for opposing abortion, reveals their cynicism. Genuine disability rights allies, she argues, would also advocate for the rights

¹ Adrienne Goehler, “Krüppelschläge,” *Konkret*, April 1989, as cited on page 64.

and inclusion of disabled children and adults, and they would lobby to rectify the woeful underfunding of support services for them and their families. Until these challenges are met, we cannot, to quote Adrienne Goehler again, seek to “solve the problem of a cripple-hostile society on the backs of individual women” (as cited on 64).

Herzog devotes the final chapter to newer approaches and little appreciated historical examples that suggest ways toward a society that is not hostile to disability. Her focus is on case studies of life-sharing in community, as well as models of sexual, political, and psychological subjecthood. All aspire to a cultural revolution that radically alters the public understanding of disability. She concentrates especially on cognitive disability, which the social model of disability (her focus in Chapters 1 and 2) does not address as well as it addresses physical and sensory disability. The social model posits that social attitudes, cultures, and built environments are defective, rather than disabled people. Wheelchair users are often taken as paradigmatic examples to illustrate how the causes of disability are located in the way society is organized—in this case, an inaccessible built environment that reflects exclusionary concepts of normality. Progress in the inclusion of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is surely advanced by such rethinking of the built and social environment, but it also calls for “a broadened grasp of human possibility and value” (71). The target of reform thus shifts from the organization of society to the idea of the individual.

The Enlightenment notion of the individual as the locus of rights seems to deny the dignity and even the personhood of those who are not fully independent. Herzog describes a first level of critique that exposes how this ignores the ways in which we are all dependent and vulnerable.abled people rely on each other and use assistive technologies, neither of which they choose to see as obstacles to self-determination. She then explores arguments, drawing on work by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, for a notion of ‘disaggregated personhood’ that captures the network of relationships that are core to every individual, and serve as a basis for disabled people’s ‘right to have rights.’² The challenge then becomes reversing attitudes and practices that infantilize people with disabilities. As examples, Herzog discusses efforts to provide assisted freedom for disabled people to pursue sexual expression and satisfaction (which may require the involvement of their care givers). Another example she touches on is the extension of the right to vote to people with cognitive disabilities and access to supported decision-making in order to exercise that right. The ideas behind such initiatives are enshrined in the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which asserts that states cannot focus solely on identifying and lifting barriers; they must promote emancipation and empowerment.

But the logic of disaggregated personhood implies more than the additional rights and thus better support for people with disabilities. It inspires a model of community and care focused on reciprocal relationships of mutual reliance and enrichment. Herzog discusses several examples in the form of life-sharing communities. These include the Camphill movement, founded in Scotland during the Second World War by the Austrian Jewish refugee physician Karl König, and the L’Arche movement, founded in France in the 1960s by the Canadian Catholic philosopher and theologian Jean Vanier. Both are now international networks of intentional communities in which care givers and people with intellectual disabilities live, work, and socialize

² Herzog references Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983 [1972]); and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987 [1980]).

together. The communities reject the notion of disability as deficit and understand relationships between abled and disabled people as mutually transformative.

Reciprocity becomes even more intimate in Herzog's discussion of Duncan and Daniela Mercieca's work with children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).³ They conceptualize their life-sharing and research as a process of 'becoming-with' and 'desiring.' Theirs is 'inclusive research,' or research *with* rather than *on* or *for* people with disabilities. It challenges not only the biomedical and social models, but also contends that the focus on emancipation and empowerment falls into the *to/for/on* pattern. Emancipation and empowerment, they suggest, are things abled people do *to* people with disabilities. Becoming-with aims to shift the focus from achieving milestones and promoting inclusion to observing and experiencing "intensities, flows, and forces" (98). The Merciecas's approach has the goal, in Herzog's words, of "turning these nonverbal subjects of research into agents who can affect the lives of the nondisabled" (95).

How this particular, "provocative" (96), community and care approach supersedes the emancipation and empowerment model is somewhat unclear. I was left questioning how 'turning someone into an agent' can be disaggregated from doing something *to/for* someone. Conversely, if a person with disabilities has become an agent, is that not emancipatory and empowering? Admittedly, the passage on the Merciecas is not meant to be an in-depth analysis. However, Herzog's discussion invites the question of whether such alternative and new approaches are the radical departures they claim to be. I only wish she had been able to go into depth here, as her discussion of complex material elsewhere in the book is so incisive.

A more important question, given the book's aim, is whether the alternative and newer approaches overcome the conflict between disability and reproductive rights. Other than a brief mention of tensions over new genetic technologies, that conflict is absent from the third chapter. A reader might conclude that these approaches have overcome the conflict. I am not confident they have. In at least one case, the Camphill movement, one can find public expressions of opposition to screening and abortion that use the same metaphors and reasoning employed by right-wing anti-abortion groups.⁴ Such commentary is scattered but there is broad-based skepticism among its members about any interference with natural processes and thus with all genetic technologies and abortion. Camphill does not, however, get drawn into public clashes over these issues and declines to issue an official stance. It identifies as apolitical. In this case, the conflict has not been superseded, it has been muted.

Perhaps there is a similar aversion to politics among others who seek to move beyond self-determination, emancipation, and empowerment. If their perspectives become the new status quo, this will certainly diffuse the conflict over reproductive rights. Not only will such disability rights activists decline to take a stance

³ Herzog references Daniela Mercieca and Duncan Mercieca, "Opening Research to Intensities: Rethinking Disability Research with Deleuze and Guattari," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 44:1 (2010): 79-92; and Duncan P. Mercieca, *Living Otherwise: Students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities as Agents in Educational Contexts* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013).

⁴ See, for example, Nick Blitz, "Vendetta against Down's Syndrome," *Camphill Correspondence* (May/June 2013), 1-3.

against abortion based on genetic screening, but, more importantly, they will refuse to be instrumentalized by anti-abortion groups.

Herzog's argument, however, is not just that the conflict has been artificially stoked, but that it is, in itself, artificial. In essence, she suggests that women's rights and disability rights activists share a root identity as members and allies of oppressed people. Acting accordingly would require that both movements limit themselves to arguments that do not undermine other oppressed people. Women's rights activists would have to fight for reproductive rights solely on the basis of a woman's right to self-determination; disability rights activists would have to fight for the rights of people living with disability solely on the basis of a disabled person's right to self-determination. To resort to negative arguments is to fight the political battles of groups who seek to oppress one, the other, or both.

Why, then, have these two movements become politically entangled in this way? Herzog points to two phenomena: first, historical contingencies that have sharpened and dramatically raised the stakes of debate (such as the Singer affair), and second, the rise of conservative groups that have successfully instrumentalized elements in the disability rights movement. These causes of conflict are, in her view, external to women's and disability rights. Thus she talks about the conflict between them as a "perceived" one (63), and characterizes the alliances between disability rights and anti-abortion activists as marriages of convenience, initiated by and benefitting the latter. However, my sense is that characterizing the conflict in this way, however skillfully, forces one to replicate it. Disability rights activists tend to come off alternately as extremists and or as passive victims of manipulation. By pointing this out, I do not claim to reveal an oversight or uncover a flaw in the book's analysis. Rather, I note that Herzog comes to her topic as a scholar of sexuality and she makes a forceful argument grounded in that perspective.

Accordingly, it seems that in Herzog's view, the only disability rights position on abortion that is true to its root identity as a human rights movement is one that affirms the women's rights position; that is, again, the position that abortion based on genetic screening for disability does not reflect a broader judgement on the value of lives lived with disability. If the conflict between the two movements is artificial, a spectrum of genuinely held positions on abortion consisting of open questioning, ambiguity, or even pro-life sentiment cannot exist. But of course, as Herzog herself notes, things are not that simple. Issues around health, broadly conceived, have always brought together unlikely and unstable alliances. Such alliances, moreover, evince the situational identity that enables people to hold ideologically complex positions that align only selectively with the root values of the various movements with which they engage.

I have only been able to address a few themes here. *Unlearning Eugenics* is a complex, nuanced, beautifully written history and analysis of a difficult and timely debate. It is also deceptively short, based as it is on three lectures. It stays with you and keeps revealing more layers and raising more questions. It's a little book that you can and should spend a lot of time with.

Unlearning Reaction

Reactionaries everywhere are ascendant. But what is reaction? To take the term at face value is to risk taking the cruelest regimes in history at their word, as they have so often claimed only to be responding to the excesses of their enemies. Reactionaries say that their goal is to restore a situation that existed *before* the present. They often invoke a before that they call ‘nature.’ (Another before they call ‘we.’) But in fact, when reactionaries go to the past, it is to forge a future. As Jeffrey Herf argued some time ago, it was the combination of nostalgia with futurism that made Nazi thought so dangerous. “Had the pastoral vision vanquished technological advance,” he wrote, “German modernity would not have led to the German catastrophe.”¹ More recently, Corey Robin has characterized conservatism in general as having an “antagonistic structure”: conservatives create a “narrative of loss” in order to motivate their “program of recovery.”² Cooptation is a key move in this game. Robin shows that, time and again, reactionaries have been “the left’s best students,” analyzing and adopting the tactics of progressive movements to overthrow established hierarchies.³

Why am I going on about this? Dagmar Herzog’s new book, *Unlearning Eugenics*, examines a contemporary movement that seems to follow the logic that Robin describes: a movement against abortion that has, improbably, allied with and absorbed the language of radical disability activists. The book uncovers a set of forgotten histories whose convergence produced this strange alliance. At the same time, Herzog models a method that I would like to propose as an alternative, or even antidote, to reaction: *unlearning*. Reaction does not examine the past for which it expresses nostalgia. Indeed it cannot; claiming the rectitude of that past as a given, reaction must blur out its inner conflicts and complexities. By contrast, unlearning, as Herzog practices it, involves reopening history, looking for points of contestation that might also serve as points of departure toward the new.

The malleability of the past, its openness to use and abuse, has been a theme across Herzog’s work. So too has the central role of gender and sexuality in history in general, and histories of atrocity in particular; “Racism of any kind has necessarily always been also about sex,” she reminds us, early in *Sex after Fascism*.⁴ *Unlearning Eugenics* arrives at a moment of intense anti-feminist backlash worldwide—from attacks on gender studies departments in Hungary and Brazil to rollbacks of abortion rights across the United States, renewed “witch

¹ Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1.

² Corey Robin *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 23

³ Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*, 47.

⁴ Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 10.

hunts” in Africa⁵ and the jailing of feminist activists in China.⁶ It also arrives at a time of systemic crises in social reproduction, from falling birthrates to failing childcare and eldercare systems and decaying infrastructure to poisoned water. So, reading *Unlearning Eugenics*, I found myself wondering: In our moment of crisis, what is the nature of the challenge to existing hierarchies that these anti-abortion reactionaries want to coopt and suppress? Juxtaposing primary texts and mass media publications, as well as historiographies of the Holocaust and recent disability rights activism, Herzog tunes us in to “complex reverberations between various presents and pasts” (11). What resources do these archives offer against reaction—for resistance?

The first chapter, “Abortion and Disability,” returns to two rarely remembered aspects of the fight to decriminalize abortion in Western Europe. The first concerns the “remarkable efflorescence of efforts... to make a case for abortion rights *within* a religious, specifically Christian, framework” in the 1960s and 1970s (16). The second shows that both feminists and theologians advocated for reproductive rights during those decades by arguing that it would be “an especially awful fate” for a woman to have to give birth to a disabled child (16). Tracing this shared preoccupation through primary texts by both Protestant and Catholic theologians, as well as a range of popular publications, this chapter tells the story of both a *moral failing* and a *strategic error* by feminists and their allies. The moral failing was to perpetuate Nazi contempt for disability. The strategic error is evident from the fact that apparently politically expedient arguments against disability turned out not to be able to withstand their opposition in the longer term.

The German postwar context exerted specific pressures; but Herzog shows that these tactics were deployed both in countries that had succumbed to fascism and countries that had remained democratic. Of course, both failures—moral and strategic—also have parallels in American history. Here, too, at least since the activist sex educator Margaret Sanger championed birth control among the ‘socially unfit,’ advocates of contraception and abortion have appealed to widespread prejudices in order to advance their agenda. Here too, this history has allowed opponents of reproductive rights to pit the goals of women’s emancipation and racial justice against each other, accusing providers of contraception and abortion of inciting genocide, arguing that, in the words of one controversial billboard, “the most dangerous place for an African American is in the womb.”⁷ Here, too, at least since *Griswold v. Connecticut*, advocates of reproductive rights have sought to make them palatable by grounding them in a right to privacy from government intervention that is relatively uncontroversial in the United States. Yet, this negative liberty has turned out to be inadequate to prevent the steady erosion of women’s access to abortion.⁸

In postwar Europe, French Catholic opponents of abortion seized on the failure early on, comparing the right to an abortion based on the “embryopathic indication” (67) or evidence of a disability to Nazi treatment of

⁵ Silvia Federici, *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women* (Oakland: PM Press, 2018), 60-86.

⁶ Leta Hong Fincher, *Betraying Big Brother: The Feminist Awakening in China* (London and New York: Verso, 2018).

⁷ Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* Second Edition (New York: Vintage Books, 2017), 56-103.

⁸ See William Saletan, *Bearing Right: How Conservatives Won the Abortion War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

the handicapped as “useless eaters” (29). In the past decade, a range of right-wing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have revived that criticism. For me, the success of these abortion opponents raises the question of whether it was not a mistake for advocates of abortion rights not to have been *more* ambitious. Would such rights have proven more robust if they had been grounded in claims of the dignity and autonomy of female life, rather than in the denigration of the disabled? Or even in a universal human right to *pleasure*?

The second chapter, “Moral Reasoning in the Wake of Mass Murder,” traces a series of contingencies that converged to bring disability and anti-abortion activists together after the fall of the Berlin Wall. At the center of the story stands the visit that Peter Singer, the moral philosopher and well known animal rights advocate, made to Germany in 1989. The wave of protest that his controversial arguments in favor of euthanizing disabled children excited was intensified because activist researchers had recently uncovered information about the Nazi murder and sterilization of the disabled. Finally, Herzog cites the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the eventual reentry of conservative Eastern European countries into the European Union as ‘cultural’ factors that drove the current turn against reproductive rights. Alongside culture, I want to raise the question of capitalism.

Starting in 1989, the reaction that Herzog describes coincided directly with the dismantling of socialist states and the rapid privatization of public services in the former Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR/GDR) and the Soviet bloc—including childcare. Feminist scholars, including, most recently, Kristen Ghodsee, have shown that socialist states improved the condition of women by many metrics, ranging from free personal time to employment in high-prestige science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields to sexual satisfaction.⁹ When a state ceases to provide care services, private citizens (usually female) must provide them for free or pay other people (also usually female) to provide them. Restricting the ability of women *not* to choose motherhood induces them to continue reproducing the labor force despite this situation. More broadly, naturalizing care work as female devalues it, justifying the fact that it remains unpaid or low paid. (Why should anyone be paid much to do what comes ‘naturally’ to them?) The denigration of pleasure, experienced outside commodity relations, may also expedite the development of a consumer economy, where goods and work themselves are eroticized—where we are exhorted to ‘love’ our jobs and that ‘sex sells.’ Given that the contemporary anti-feminist backlash is taking place in the context of another global crisis of capitalism, it seems imperative to ask, again, what work misogyny does for markets. Given that a wave of new right wing movements in Europe demonize immigrants for burdening the welfare state, we must investigate how denying reproductive rights in order to enforce reproductive work discipline also intersects with racism.

In the final chapter of *Unlearning Eugenics*, “Time Well Wasted,” Herzog shifts her sights from debates over abortion of the disabled to “the rights of disabled individuals already living” (72). Looking to communities built by members of the anti-fascist resistance after World War II, where able and disabled people lived together, Herzog finds new models of human “interconnectivity” (93). Recognizing the tension between “minoritizing” and “universalizing” messages in recent disability activism, she seeks to chart a course between; “What is needed is *both* to attend to the specificities of disabled lives (and not glibly assert that ‘we are all disabled’ because that would be gratuitous nonsense) and yet always again also see the spectrum, the universalizing implications of disability” (76). Nobody enters and leaves this world able to care for herself

⁹ Kristen Ghodsee, *Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism: And Other Arguments for Economic Independence* (New York: Nation Books, 2018).

fully. Herzog finds that the solution to the impasse that she has diagnosed between women's rights and disability rights is not to place new burdens on women, but to create new networks of care.

In this final movement, the book's project of *unlearning* opens onto a next stage: creating the conditions for new desires to take shape. We can simultaneously affirm that women must have freedom to control their own fertility and express regret that the current configuration of our world makes it extraordinarily difficult to want to bear and raise a child with a disability. Without suggesting that women should be obligated to give birth under any circumstances, it seems safe to say that better social services for the disabled would go a long way toward unlearning eugenics—a long way to helping us desire differently. If the abortion debates have been defined in terms of individual 'choice,' here we have an expansion of the field. How can we make sure that social reproduction is free to be *creative*, to make the world new and not simply repeat it? This may be the ground on which to stake claims for the lives of women and the disabled, now.

Author's Response by Dagmar Herzog, Graduate Center, City University of New York

At first glance it may seem odd to discuss a book concerned with “sexuality, reproduction, and disability in post-Nazi Europe” (as my subtitle has it) in an H-Diplo forum. Yet the topics addressed in the book are, I believe, pertinent to anyone concerned with diplomatic history. Among other things, readers will learn about the growing, woefully understudied phenomenon of right-wing Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as among the most successful of the European Union’s ‘citizens’ initiatives.’ They will not only discover the unanticipated recent unraveling of Western Europe’s once-firm consensus in defense of both reproductive and LGBT rights, but will also come to understand more about the prehistories of the achievement of those rights. They will learn, too, I hope, about unfulfilled promises as well as some quite unexpected uses, both emancipatory and insidious, of the United Nations’ remarkable 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. And, not least, readers will gain substantive insight into the decades-long and still unfinished struggle to have politicians and the wider public alike both understand that the murder of 210,000 (or, if we count also the killings in the occupied territories on the Eastern front, 300,000) individuals with cognitive and psychiatric disabilities was a grotesque and singular crime—the Nazis’ first genocide—and recognize it formally as, quite literally, the ‘trial run,’ or ‘prologue,’ to the Holocaust of European Jewry. In addition, readers will come to see with what astonishing intricacy, though in ever-shifting constellations, these seemingly disparate topics have been connected.

Unlearning Eugenics can be situated in quadruple contexts, as it concerns: the postwar *international human rights agenda*, to which the intimate matters of sexuality and disability were both decided latecomers—neither considered adequately until the 1980s-1990s and now, moreover, in the 2010s, being pitted against each other, with agonizing moral-political conflicts ensuing; *postmodern forms of religiosity* across the ideological spectrum—in which the lines between religion and secularity can nowhere be cleanly drawn; an apparently increasing *global ambivalence about sexual freedoms* and a geopoliticization of sexuality involving levels of imbrication of sexual matters with high politics to an extent that Michel Foucault could not have imagined when he was writing in the 1970s about sex as “an especially dense transfer point for relations of power”¹; and an unmistakable surge, transnationally, in the popularity of extreme right-wing politics coupled with significant *reconfiguration of lessons thought to be drawn from the various fascisms* of the past—and all of this in the midst of dramatic cutbacks in social services in what once had been welfare states.

As the wonderful introduction by Lotte Houwink ten Cate explains, the book consists of three chapters—the logic of which could be thought of as one of *thesis-antithesis-alternative antithesis*—supplemented by a capacious footnote apparatus to encourage future research. The first chapter examines how derogatory attitudes about disability proved unfortunately essential to advancing women’s rights to reproductive self-determination in the 1960s-1970s across Western European nations, with unplanned but significant consequences for how opponents of all abortion are succeeding strategically in the 2000s-2010s. The second homes in specifically on West German and then German discussions of the 1980s-1990s in order to explore how the appallingly long-delayed eruption of disability rights activism into mainstream politics and media discussion, coming as it did at the particular juncture in postwar history and retrospective engagement with the Nazi, and more immediate post-Nazi, past of the 1940s-1950s, caused—conversely to the developments of the 1960s-1970s—the new insistence on a more positive attitude toward disability to have adverse repercussions on women’s rights to abortion access. And then the third widens out again to all of Europe,

¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 103.

documenting a range of disability rights efforts in the 2000s-2010s, as it shows how activists have grappled with various intellectual traditions, both secular and religious, in order to reconceive how we might talk more thoughtfully about such concepts as personhood, rights, autonomy, and self-determination. But once again complex ricochets and reverberations between various presents and pasts are manifest, as this final chapter traces a variety of literal and conceptual connections between avid present-day efforts to insist on full human subjecthood for individuals with disabilities, especially including individuals with cognitive disabilities, in all dimensions of existence—sexual, political, psychological—and an eclectic but vital handful of intentional lifesharing communities, bringing together disabled and abled individuals, founded already in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s in either direct or indirect reaction to the National Socialists’ systematic murder project.

I am challenged, honored, and inspired by these five (or six, if we count the introduction) marvelous responses to *Unlearning Eugenics*. I see several areas in which their comments converge. Danilyn Rutherford and Moira Weigel have a significant amount to say about my method of inquiry, and about the ways in which I analyze memory politics more generally. Johanna Schoen calls attention to important peculiarities of the German political context—particularly with regard to how women are seen (or not) as moral agents, and Katherine Sorrels pushes me to confront how I have represented German disability rights activists in particular. Sorrels and Susanne Klausen both note the cynicism apparent in European antiabortion activists’ newfound enthusiasm for presenting themselves as advocates for disability rights; Klausen offers important additional evidence with comparative material on the U.S., and Sorrels observes the pervasiveness and persistence of eugenic animus toward the disabled in continuously democratic European nations. And all five commentators, though most fully Rutherford and Klausen, take note of my appreciative recovery of various innovative endeavors—whether from the 1960s and 1970s or from the 2010s to the present—in transforming how relationships between disabled and abled individuals are lived and experienced. All extend my thinking in novel directions.

With regard to method and memory, I particularly value Rutherford’s formulation that in the postwar decades the Nazi past was “not... forgotten,” but rather Europeans “have remembered these atrocities in partial and interested ways.” Rutherford also sees that the structure of the book, along with its interest in ricochets between different moments in time, deliberately provides a “contrapuntal history, with themes from one moment reprised in another, often to do very different work.” Weigel too notes my emphasis on “the malleability of the past, its openness to use and abuse,” and she makes brilliant points about reactionaries as “the left’s best students” and as often claiming to be recovering a lost past whilst actually forging a new future.² I am moved by her searching reflections on how the practice of “unlearning” could perhaps provide an alternate method for “reopening history, looking for points of contestation that might also serve as points of departure toward the new.” I am intrigued as well by Weigel’s assessment that in “perpetuat[ing] Nazi contempt for disability,” advocates for decriminalizing abortion in the 1960s and 1970s engaged in “both a *moral failing* and a *strategic error*,” but that the lesson for feminists is to be “*more*” rather than less ambitious – to defend the value of pleasure and to make *more* robust claims with regard to “the dignity and autonomy of female life.”

² Weigel quotes from Corey Robin’s *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017) and cites Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

With respect to the idiosyncrasies of the German situation and the decidedly “partial and interested ways” Germans have wrestled with the ugliness of their national past, I am grateful for the reflections provided by Schoen and Sorrels. Especially significant is Schoen’s insight that although abortion in general, on non-disability grounds, is far less ferociously contested in Germany than it is in the U.S., there is nonetheless in the U.S. a substantially more differentiated, nuanced conversation about complications that can arise during pregnancy and much less anxiety about technology. Schoen finds in Germany “a deep suspicion towards technology and the possibility of selection of some human traits over others” and I can only concur with her assessment that “legislators, physicians, and the German public have been suspicious of women’s ability to make moral decisions if given full access to information and medical technologies.” Schoen continues that it also bespeaks “a willful blindness about the suffering” that caretaking work for children with intense needs “can bring to women, their offspring, and, indeed, their entire families.” Here I notice the divergence between scholars attuned to the U.S. context, and those immersed in the German. Schoen does not say this, but as it happens, the “suffering” caused by disability was precisely one of the concepts abused by the Nazis to justify mass murder; invoking it in a German context inevitably raises echoes with Nazism and the word itself has become contaminated and is near unusable. This too is one of the ways in which, as Rutherford put it, Germans have remembered selectively. Yet Schoen is absolutely correct to observe that public discussion in Germany reveals an “unwillingness to engage in a careful analysis and debate about the *differences* between Nazi eugenics, euthanasia, and contemporary reproductive choices” (emphasis mine).³

Staying with the German context, I do worry a bit about Sorrels’s concern that disability rights activists in the book “come across alternately as extremists and/or as passive victims of manipulation.” That was definitively not my intent, and I certainly hope it is not the effect. On the contrary, I believe, and believe I have shown, that many disability rights activists in the present who are critical of reproductive technologies, and of terminations on grounds of fetal anomalies, are sincere, and that their positions are both deeply felt and extensively thought-through, whether they are themselves directly affected by disability, or love someone who is. But I would also stress here the importance of historicizing disability itself, and would want to underscore once more just how excruciating it manifestly was specifically for young Germans with disabilities (whether induced by polio or thalidomide or any of many possible inherited or random conditions) to live in a (barely) post-fascist society.

For, as it happens, the military defeat of Nazism in 1945 and the international promulgation of the facts of mass murder—not least via the Nuremberg trials—did not lead directly into any fresh concern for disability rights. On the contrary, as Klausen notes, quoting me, “it took quite some time before the murders were understood as crimes.” I am glad also to have the opportunity here to elaborate—based now on further research since I completed *Unlearning Eugenics*—on just what an achievement it was to make the point more generally accepted. It took until the 1980s, and involved the three-way cooperation between initially rather disempowered constituencies—self-advocates (whether survivors of the Nazis’ coercive sterilizations, family members of the murdered, or members of the ‘radical cripple’ movement); historians (many of them, indicatively, independent scholars outside of the formal academy); and members of the just-formed Green Party which took up the cause of the so-called ‘forgotten victims,’ including the victims of the sterilizations—

³ An outstanding critical analysis of this unwillingness was recently provided by law professor and member of the German Ethics Council Reinhard Merkel, “Von wegen Selektion,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 April 2019, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/diskriminiert-ein-bluttest-embryonen-mit-trisomie-21-16157312.html> (accessed 14 May 2019).

to put justice for the disabled more centrally on the political agenda. Reparations for survivors and their family members had been for decades vigorously refused by politicians across the political spectrum—as ‘experts’ were consulted to guide government policy who had themselves been among the perpetrators. Concern about the potential expense of needing to make amends if wrongdoing were admitted led to such intentional gaffes as a Ministry of Finance memo from the early 1960s which contended that if all the persecuted were to receive restitution of some kind, the majority of the funds would go to “psychotics, imbeciles, and alcoholics.” Needless to say, as advocates pointed out, this was “a second stigmatization of the victims.”⁴

These reflections, moreover, direct our attention to Weigel’s excellent insistence on the need to think further about economics. One point she makes (echoed by Rutherford, citing Eva Kittay)⁵ is that the labor of care has been, and remains, all too often abysmally low-pay or (within the family) unpaid. Another point involves the question she poses about what the end of the Cold War and the abrupt introduction of capitalism into the former Eastern bloc at the turn from the 1980s to the 1990s might help to explain about the suddenly notably heightened resistance to women’s rights at that historical moment. And the third is to inquire into our contemporary moment of “another global crisis of capitalism” and to wonder yet again “what work misogyny does for markets.” These are indispensable queries, and they raise uneasy-making additional questions about the newest archival findings on the “euthanasia” murders themselves, all of which indicate that those chosen to be slaughtered were not, as the Nazis claimed, either “hereditarily” ill or “suffering” from their disabilities, but rather were specifically those who could not contribute labor themselves but rather were dependent on the intensive labor of care from others.⁶

Like the other respondents, Weigel notices that to the extent I offer ways out of the present impasses with regard to disability rights, my suggestions involve “better social services” and “new networks of care.” I am especially encouraged by Weigel’s call to get beyond the language of individual “choice” and instead find ways in which “social reproduction is free to be *creative*, to make the world new and not simply repeat it.” This is also one of the reasons I did my best to recover distinctive, unusual but precious, imaginative voices and practices.

In addition, while I am invested in having readers understand with what conspicuous efficacy right-wing, religiously inspired NGOs are increasingly using secular language to mobilize broad popular constituencies against hard-won sexual and reproductive rights, I also wanted to insist, throughout, that “religion” is itself a contested site and one with extraordinary subversive and justice-oriented potential.⁷ In the third chapter, as I

⁴ Margaret Hamm, “Zwangssterilisierte und ‘Euthanasie’-Geschädigte: Ihre Stigmatisierung in Familie und Gesellschaft,” in Maike Rötzoll, Gerrit Hohendorf, Petra Fuchs, Paul Richter, Christoph Mundt, and Wolfgang U. Eckart, eds., *Die nationalsozialistische “Euthanasie”-Aktion “T4”* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010).

⁵ Eva Feder Kittay, *Love’s Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁶ For a fuller discussion, see Dagmar Herzog, “The ‘Euthanasia’ Murders Archive: Confronting the New Findings,” in Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, Jürgen Matthäus, and Mark Hornburg, eds., *Beyond “Ordinary Men”: Christopher R. Browning and Holocaust Historiography* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2019).

⁷ Indicatively, for instance, already in the introduction to the book, I included as one of my illustrations a 1998 photographic artwork by the Azerbaijani filmmaker Raef Mamedov in which—in this particular remake of Leonardo da

survey a variety of lifesharing endeavors, I make a point of including both religiously informed ventures (like Jean Vanier’s Catholicism-rooted *L’Arche*) and secular experiments (like the radical French educator Fernand Deligny’s encampments with autistic children in the Cévennes mountains).⁸ But as was evident to all the respondents, I find most reorienting the meditations of the contemporary special education experts Duncan and Daniela Mercieca in Malta, who draw inspiration from the writings of the left Lacanian Félix Guattari, co-author with philosopher Gilles Deleuze of the 1970s counter-culture classics *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*.⁹ And I conclude the book by tracing the historical arc, as it were, from the medical model of disability through the social disablement-by-the-environment and empowerment models to a model which is concerned above all—here building especially on Guattari and Deleuze—with justice and desire. What the Merciecas engage in is a “turning” of *perspective*, not an instructional intervention into the lives of the children with “profound and multiple learning disabilities” they encounter; the idea is a whole different way of being-with—or as the Merciecas put it, a “becoming together.”¹⁰ These are individuals who will always be dependent on others, but experiencing oneself as affected *by* them is a radical way of (as Klausen also notes) “living *otherwise*.” Or, as Rutherford puts it, these are people who take the opportunity to “live[] with disability not as a tragedy, or a challenge to be overcome, but as an incitement for new ways of living together with others.”

In many of the recent popular and fretful debates, in Europe and elsewhere, about whether reproductive tests and technologies and concomitant novel reproductive choices constitute a new form of eugenics—often, critics aver, a eugenics now deviously embedded *within* the liberal language of self-determination and individual risk management, while others insist that it is precisely the freedom of individual choice and absence of state coercion that keeps these new technologies and practices distinct from the pernicious eugenics of yore—my argument is that inadequate attention has been paid to *disability as it is actually lived*. As, in any event, the vast majority of disabilities only become evident *after* birth, one of the most important areas of inquiry in the present thus involves asking what it would mean to take disability rights seriously through the lifespan, and to engage earnestly the genuine enormity of disability care and the intricacy of interpersonal, often lifelong, imbrications it can entail. It involves asking what emotional resources and political reconsiderations, as well as financial commitments (in this era of shrinking welfare states), it would take in order to advance, concretely, the rights of individuals with cognitive disabilities in particular, and to provide them and those who love and care for them with flourishing and joyful rather than demeaned lives. It

Vinci’s *Last Supper*—Jesus and all the disciples are individuals endowed with Down syndrome. Far from being glib or exploitative, the image can be seen as theologically profound.

⁸ Cf. Dagmar Herzog, “Psychoanalysis Confronts Cognitive Disability,” *Psychoanalysis and History* 21/2 (2019): 135-145.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

¹⁰ Duncan P. Mercieca, *Living Otherwise: Students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities as Agents in Educational Contexts* (Rotterdam and Boston: Sense, 2013), 7, 139, 14; Daniela Mercieca and Duncan P. Mercieca, “Opening Research to Intensities: Rethinking Disability Research with Deleuze and Guattari,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 44/1 (2010): 79-92, here 90.

involves, in sum, refusing simple answers about what it would take truly to unlearn eugenics in post-Nazi Europe.