

Constructing Normalcy

Lennard J. Davis

If such a thing as a psycho-analysis of today's prototypical culture were possible . . . such an investigation would needs show the sickness proper to the time to consist precisely in normality.

—Theodore Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

We live in a world of norms. Each of us endeavors to be normal or else deliberately tries to avoid that state. We consider what the average person does, thinks, earns, or consumes. We rank our intelligence, our cholesterol level, our weight, height, sex drive, bodily dimensions along some conceptual line from subnormal to above-average. We consume a minimum daily balance of vitamins and nutrients based on what an average human should consume. Our children are ranked in school and tested to determine where they fit into a normal curve of learning, of intelligence. Doctors measure and weigh them to see if they are above or below average on the height and weight curves. There is probably no area of contemporary life in which some idea of a norm, mean, or average has not been calculated.

To understand the disabled body, one must return to the concept of the norm, the normal body. So much of writing about disability has focused on the disabled person as the object of study, just as the study of race has focused on the person of color. But as

with recent scholarship on race, which has turned its attention to whiteness, I would like to focus not so much on the construction of disability as on the construction of normalcy. I do this because the "problem" is not the person with disabilities; the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the "problem" of the disabled person.

A common assumption would be that some concept of the norm must have always existed. After all, people seem to have an inherent desire to compare themselves to others. But the idea of a norm is less a condition of human nature than it is a feature of a certain kind of society. Recent work on the ancient Greeks, on preindustrial Europe, and on tribal peoples, for example, shows that disability was once regarded very differently from the way it is now. As we will see, the social process of disabling arrived with industrialization and with the set of practices and discourses that are linked to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century notions of nationality, race, gender, criminality, sexual orientation, and so on.

I begin with the rather remarkable fact that the constellation of words describing this concept "normal," "normalcy," "normality," "norm," "average," "abnormal"—all entered the European languages rather

late in human history. The word “normal” as “constituting, conforming to, not deviating or different from, the common type or standard, regular, usual” only enters the English language around 1840. (Previously, the word had meant “perpendicular”; the carpenter’s square, called a “norm,” provided the root meaning.) Likewise, the word “norm,” in the modern sense, has only been in use since around 1855, and “normality” and “normalcy” appeared in 1849 and 1857, respectively. If the lexicographical information is relevant, it is possible to date the coming into consciousness in English of an idea of “the norm” over the period 1840–1860.

If we rethink our assumptions about the universality of the concept of the norm, what we might arrive at is the concept that preceded it: that of the “ideal,” a word we find dating from the seventeenth century. Without making too simplistic a division in the historical chronotope, one can nevertheless try to imagine a world in which the hegemony of normalcy does not exist. Rather, what we have is the ideal body, as exemplified in the tradition of nude Venuses, for example. This idea presents a mytho-poetic body that is linked to that of the gods (in traditions in which the god’s body is visualized). This divine body, then, this ideal body, is not attainable by a human. The notion of an ideal implies that, in this case, the human body as visualized in art or imagination must be composed from the ideal parts of living models. These models individually can never embody the ideal since an ideal, by definition, can never be found in this world. When ideal human bodies occur, they do so in mythology. So Venus or Helen of Troy, for example, would be the embodiment of female physical beauty.

The painting by François-André Vincent *Zeuxis Choosing as Models the Most Beautiful Girls of the Town of Crotona* (1789, Museum de Louvre, Paris) shows the Greek

artist, as we are told by Pliny, lining up all the beautiful women of Crotona in order to select in each her ideal feature or body part and combine these into the ideal figure of Aphrodite, herself an ideal of beauty. One young woman provides a face and another her breasts. Classical painting and sculpture tend to idealize the body, evening out any particularity. The central point here is that in a culture with an ideal form of the body, all members of the population are below the ideal. No one young lady of Crotona can be the ideal. By definition, one can never have an ideal body. There is in such societies no demand that populations have bodies that conform to the ideal.

By contrast, the grotesque as a visual form was inversely related to the concept of the ideal and its corollary that all bodies are in some sense disabled. In that mode, the grotesque is a signifier of the people, of common life. As Bakhtin, Stallybrass and White, and others have shown, the use of the grotesque had a life-affirming transgressive quality in its inversion of the political hierarchy. However, the grotesque was not equivalent to the disabled, since, for example, it is impossible to think of people with disabilities now being used as architectural decorations as the grotesque were on the façades of cathedrals throughout Europe. The grotesque permeated culture and signified common humanity, whereas the disabled body, a later concept, was formulated as by definition excluded from culture, society, the norm.

If the concept of the norm or average enters European culture, or at least the European languages, only in the nineteenth century, one has to ask what is the cause of this conceptualization? One of the logical places to turn in trying to understand concepts like “norm” and “average” is that branch of knowledge known as statistics. Statistics begins in the early modern period as “political arithmetic”—a use of data for “promotion of sound, well-informed state

policy" (Porter 1986, 18). The word *statistik* was first used in 1749 by Gottfried Achenwall, in the context of compiling information about the state. The concept migrated somewhat from the state to the body when Bisset Hawkins defined medical statistics in 1829 as "the application of numbers to illustrate the natural history of health and disease" (cited in Porter, 1986, 24). In France, statistics were mainly used in the area of public health in the early nineteenth century. The connection between the body and industry is tellingly revealed in the fact that the leading members of the first British statistical societies formed in the 1830s and 1840s were industrialists or had close ties to industry (ibid., 32).

It was the French statistician Adolphe Quetelet (1796–1847) who contributed the most to a generalized notion of the normal as an imperative. He noticed that the "law of error," used by astronomers to locate a star by plotting all the sightings and then averaging the errors, could be equally applied to the distribution of human features such as height and weight. He then took a further step of formulating the concept of "l'homme moyen" or the average man. Quetelet maintained that this abstract human was the average of all human attributes in a given country. For the average man, Quetelet wrote in 1835, "all things will occur in conformity with the mean results obtained for a society. If one seeks to establish, in some way, the basis of a social physics, it is he whom one should consider . . ." (cited in ibid., 53). Quetelet's average man was a combination of *l'homme moyen physique* and *l'homme moyen morale*, both a physically average and a morally average construct.

The social implications of this idea are central. In formulating the idea of *l'homme moyen*, Quetelet is also providing a justification for *les classes moyens*. With bourgeois hegemony comes scientific justification for moderation and middle-class

ideology. The average man, the body of the man in the middle, becomes the exemplar of the middle way of life. Quetelet was apparently influenced by the philosopher Victor Cousin in developing an analogy between the notion of an average man and the *juste milieu*. This term was associated with Louis Philippe's July monarchy—a concept that melded bourgeois hegemony with the constitutional monarchy and celebrated moderation and middleness (ibid., 101). In England too, the middle class as the middle way or mean had been searching for a scientific justification. The statement in *Robinson Crusoe* in which Robinson's father extols middle-class life as a kind of norm is a good example of this ideology:

the middle Station had the fewest Disasters, and was not expos'd to so many Vicissitudes as the higher or lower Part of Mankind; nay, they were not subjected to so many Distempers and Uneasiness either of Body or Mind, as those were who, by vicious Living, Luxury and Extravagancies on one Hand, or by hard Labour, Want of Necessaries, and mean or insufficient Diet on the other Hand, bring Distempers upon themselves by the natural consequences of their Way of Living; That the middle Station of Life was calculated for all kinds of Vertues and all kinds of Enjoyments; that Peace and Plenty were the Hand-maids of a middle Fortune; that Temperance, Moderation, Quietness, Health, Society, all agreeable Diversions, and all desirable Pleasures, were the Blessings attending the middle Station of Life. (Defoe 1975, 6)

Statements of ideology of this kind saw the bourgeoisie as rationally placed in the mean position in the great order of things. This ideology can be seen as developing the kind of science that would then justify the notion of a norm.¹

With such thinking, the average then becomes paradoxically a kind of ideal, a position devoutly to be wished. As Quetelet wrote, "an individual who epitomized in

himself, at a given time, all the qualities of the average man, would represent at once all the greatness, beauty and goodness of that being" (cited in Porter 1986, 102). Such an average person might indeed be a literary character like Robinson Crusoe. Furthermore, one must observe that Quetelet meant this hegemony of the middle to apply not only to moral qualities but to the body as well. He wrote: "deviations more or less great from the mean have constituted [for artists] ugliness in body as well as vice in morals and a state of sickness with regard to the constitution" (ibid., 103). Here Zeuxis's notion of physical beauty as an exceptional ideal becomes transformed into beauty as the average.

Quetelet foresaw a kind of Utopia of the norm associated with progress, just as Marx foresaw a Utopia of the norm in so far as wealth and production is concerned.

one of the principal acts of civilization is to compress more and more the limits within which the different elements relative to man oscillate. The more that enlightenment is propagated, the more will deviations from the mean diminish. . . . The perfectibility of the human species is derived as a necessary consequence of all our investigations. Defects and monstrosities disappear more and more from the body.

(ibid., 104)

This concept of the average, as applied to the concept of the human, was used not only by statisticians but even by the likes of Marx. Marx actually cites Quetelet's notion of the average man in a discussion of the labor theory of value. We can see in retrospect that one of the most powerful ideas of Marx—the notion of labor value or average wages—in many ways is based on the idea of the worker constructed as an average worker. As Marx writes:

Any average magnitude, however, is merely the average of a number of separate magnitudes all of one kind, but differing as to

quantity. In every industry, each individual labourer, be he Peter or Paul, differs from the average labourer. These individual differences, or "errors" as they are called in mathematics, compensate one another and vanish, whenever a certain minimum number of workmen are employed together.

(Marx 1970, 323)

So for Marx one can divide the collective work day of a large number of workers and come up with "one day of average social labor" (ibid., 323). As Quetelet had come up with an average man, so Marx postulates an average worker, and from that draws conclusions about the relationship between an average and the extremes of wealth and poverty that are found in society. Thus Marx develops his crucial concept of "abstract labor."

We tend not to think of progressives like Marx as tied up with a movement led by businessmen, but it is equally true that Marx is unimaginable without a tendency to contemplate average humans and think about their abstract relation to work, wages, and so on. In this sense, Marx is very much in step with the movement of normalizing the body and the individual. In addition, Marxist thought encourages us toward an enforcing of normalcy in the sense that the deviations in society, in terms of the distribution of wealth for example, must be minimized.

The concept of a norm, unlike that of an ideal, implies that the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm. The norm pins down that majority of the population that falls under the arch of the standard bell-shaped curve. This curve, the graph of an exponential function, that was known variously as the astronomer's "error law," the "normal distribution," the "Gaussian density function," or simply "the bell curve," became in its own way a symbol of the tyranny of the norm. Any bell curve will always have at its extremities those characteristics that

deviate from the norm. So, with the concept of the norm comes the concept of deviations or extremes. When we think of bodies, in a society where the concept of the norm is operative, then people with disabilities will be thought of as deviants. This, as we have seen, is in contrast to societies with the concept of an ideal, in which all people have a non-ideal status.²

In England, there was an official and unofficial burst of interest in statistics during the 1830s. A statistical office was set up at the Board of Trade in 1832, and the General Register Office was created in 1837 to collect vital statistics. All of this interest in numbers concerning the state was a consequence of the Reform Act of 1832, the Factory Act of 1833, and the Poor Law of 1834. The country was being monitored and the poor were being surveilled. Private groups followed, and in 1833 a statistical section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science was formed in which Quetelet as well as Malthus participated. In the following year Malthus, Charles Babbage, and others founded the Statistical Society of London. The Royal London Statistical Society was founded in 1835.

The use of statistics began an important movement, and there is a telling connection for the purposes of this book between the founders of statistics and their larger intentions. The rather amazing fact is that almost all the early statisticians had one thing in common: they were eugenicists. The same is true of key figures in the movement: Sir Francis Galton, Karl Pearson, and R. A. Fisher.³ While this coincidence seems almost too striking to be true, we must remember that there is a real connection between figuring the statistical measure of humans and then hoping to improve humans so that deviations from the norm diminish—as someone like Quetelet had suggested. Statistics is bound up with eugenics because the central insight of statistics is the idea that a population can be normed. An important con-

sequence of the idea of the norm is that it divides the total population into standard and nonstandard subpopulations. The next step in conceiving of the population as norm and non-norm is for the state to attempt to norm the nonstandard—the aim of eugenics. Of course such an activity is profoundly paradoxical since the inviolable rule of statistics is that all phenomena will always conform to a bell curve. So norming the non-normal is an activity as problematic as untying the Gordian knot.

MacKenzie asserts that it is not so much that Galton's statistics made possible eugenics but rather that "the needs of eugenics in large part determined the content of Galton's statistical theory" (1981, 52). In any case, a symbiotic relationship exists between statistical science and eugenic concerns. Both bring into society the concept of a norm, particularly a normal body, and thus in effect create the concept of the disabled body.

It is also worth noting the interesting triangulation of eugenicist interests. On the one hand Sir Francis Galton was cousin to Charles Darwin, whose notion of the evolutionary advantage of the fittest lays the foundation for eugenics and also for the idea of a perfectible body undergoing progressive improvement. As one scholar has put it, "Eugenics was in reality applied biology based on the central biological theory of the day, namely the Darwinian theory of evolution" (Farrall 1985, 55). Darwin's ideas serve to place disabled people along the wayside as evolutionary defectives to be surpassed by natural selection. So, eugenics became obsessed with the elimination of "defectives," a category which included the "feebleminded," the deaf, the blind, the physically defective, and so on.

In a related discourse, Galton created the modern system of fingerprinting for personal identification. Galton's interest came out of a desire to show that certain physical traits could be inherited. As he wrote:

one of the inducements to making these inquiries into personal identification has been to discover independent features suitable for hereditary investigation. . . . it is not improbable, and worth taking pains to inquire whether each person may not carry visibly about his body undeniable evidence of his parentage and near kinships.

(cited in MacKenzie 1981, 65)

genetic

Fingerprinting was seen as a physical mark of parentage, a kind of serial number written on the body. But further, one can say that the notion of fingerprinting pushes forward the idea that the human body is standardized and contains a serial number, as it were, embedded in its corporeality. (Later technological innovations will reveal this fingerprint to be embedded at the genetic level.) Thus the body has an identity that coincides with its essence and cannot be altered by moral, artistic, or human will. This indelibility of corporeal identity only furthers the mark placed on the body by other physical qualities—intelligence, height, reaction time. By this logic, the person enters into an identical relationship with the body, the body forms the identity, and the identity is unchangeable and indelible as one's place on the normal curve. For our purposes, then, this fingerprinting of the body means that the marks of physical difference become synonymous with the identity of the person.

Finally, Galton is linked to that major figure connected with the discourse of disability in the nineteenth century—Alexander Graham Bell. In 1883, the same year that the term “eugenics” was coined by Galton, Bell delivered his eugenicist speech *Memoir upon the Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race*, warning of the “tendency among deaf-mutes to select deaf-mutes as their partners in marriage” (1969, 19) with the dire consequence that a race of deaf people might be created. This echoing of Dr. Frankenstein's fear that his monster might mate and produce a race of

monsters emphasizes the terror with which the “normal” beholds the differently abled.⁴ Noting how the various interests come together in Galton, we can see evolution, fingerprinting, and the attempt to control the reproductive rights of the deaf as all pointing to a conception of the body as perfectible but only when subject to the necessary control of the eugenicists. The identity of people becomes defined by irrepressible identificatory physical qualities that can be measured. Deviance from the norm can be identified and indeed criminalized, particularly in the sense that fingerprints came to be associated with identifying deviants who wished to hide their identities.

Galton made significant changes in statistical theory that created the concept of the norm. He took what had been called “error theory,” a technique by which astronomers attempted to show that one could locate a star by taking into account the variety of sightings. The sightings, all of which could not be correct, if plotted would fall into a bell curve, with most sightings falling into the center, that is to say, the correct location of the star. The errors would fall to the sides of the bell curve. Galton's contribution to statistics was to change the name of the curve from “the law of frequency of error” or “error curve,” the term used by Quetelet, to the “normal distribution” curve.

The significance of these changes relates directly to Galton's eugenicist interests. In an “error curve” the extremes of the curve are the most mistaken in accuracy. But if one is looking at human traits, then the extremes, particularly what Galton saw as positive extremes—tallness, high intelligence, ambitiousness, strength, fertility—would have to be seen as errors. Rather than “errors” Galton wanted to think of the extremes as distributions of a trait. As MacKenzie notes:

Thus there was a gradual transition from use of the term “probable error” to the term

“standard deviation” (which is free of the implication that a deviation is in any sense an error), and from the term “law of error” to the term “normal distribution.”

(1981, 59)

But even without the idea of error, Galton still faced the problem that in a normal distribution curve that graphed height, for example, both tallness and shortness would be seen as extremes in a continuum where average stature would be the norm. The problem for Galton was that, given his desire to perfect the human race, or at least its British segment, tallness was preferable to shortness. How could both extremes be considered equally deviant from the norm? So Galton substituted the idea of ranking for the concept of averaging. That is, he changed the way one might look at the curve from one that used the mean to one that used the median—a significant change in thinking eugenically.

If a trait, say intelligence, is considered by its average, then the majority of people would determine what intelligence should be—and intelligence would be defined by the mediocre middle. Galton, wanting to avoid the middling of desired traits, would prefer to think of intelligence in ranked order. Although high intelligence in a normal distribution would simply be an extreme, under a ranked system it would become the highest ranked trait. Galton divided his curve into quartiles, so that he was able to emphasize ranked orders of intelligence, as we would say that someone was in the first quartile in intelligence (low intelligence) or the fourth quartile (high intelligence). Galton's work led directly to current “intelligence quotient” (IQ) and scholastic achievement tests. In fact, Galton revised Gauss's bell curve to show the superiority of the desired trait (for example, high intelligence). He created what he called an “ogive,” which is arranged in quartiles with an ascending curve that features the

desired trait as “higher” than the undesirable deviation. As Stigler notes:

If a hundred individuals' talents were ordered, each could be assigned the numerical value corresponding to its percentile in the curve of “deviations from an average”: the middlemost (or median) talent had value 0 (representing mediocrity), an individual at the upper quartile was assigned the value 1 (representing one probable error above mediocrity), and so on.

(1986, 271)

What these revisions by Galton signify is an attempt to redefine the concept of the “ideal” in relation to the general population. First, the application of the idea of a norm to the human body creates the idea of deviance or a “deviant” body. Second, the idea of a norm pushes the normal variation of the body through a stricter template guiding the way the body “should” be. Third, the revision of the “normal curve of distribution” into quartiles, ranked in order, and so on, creates a new kind of “ideal.” This statistical ideal is unlike the classical ideal which contains no imperative to be the ideal. The new ideal of ranked order is powered by the imperative of the norm, and then is supplemented by the notion of progress, human perfectibility, and the elimination of deviance, to create a dominating, hegemonic vision of what the human body should be.

While we tend to associate eugenics with a Nazi-like racial supremacy, it is important to realize that eugenics was not the trade of a fringe group of rightwing, fascist maniacs. Rather, it became the common practice of many, if not most, European and American citizens. When Marx used Quetelet's idea of the average in his formulation of average wage and abstract labor, socialists as well as others embraced eugenic claims, seeing in the perfectibility of the human body a Utopian hope for social improvement. Once people allowed that there were norms and ranks in human physiology, then the idea—

that we might want to, for example, increase the intelligence of humans, or decrease birth defects, did not seem so farfetched. These ideas were widely influential: in the ensuing years the leaders of the socialist Fabian Society, including Beatrice and Sidney Webb, George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, were among the eugenicists (MacKenzie, 1981, 34). The influence of eugenicist ideas persisted well into the twentieth century, so that someone like Emma Goldman could write that unless birth control was encouraged, the state would "legally encourage the increase of paupers, syphilitics, epileptics, dipsomaniacs, cripples, criminals, and degenerates" (Kevles 1985, 90).

The problem for people with disabilities was that eugenicists tended to group together all allegedly "undesirable" traits. So, for example, criminals, the poor, and people with disabilities might be mentioned in the same breath. Take Karl Pearson, a leading figure in the eugenics movement, who defined the "unfit" as follows: "the habitual criminal, the professional tramp, the tuberculous, the insane, the mentally defective, the alcoholic, the diseased from birth or from excess" (cited in Kevles 1985, 33). In 1911, Pearson headed the Department of Applied Statistics, which included the Galton and Biometric Laboratories at University College in London. This department gathered eugenic information on the inheritance of physical and mental traits including "scientific, commercial, and legal ability, but also hermaphroditism, hemophilia, cleft palate, harelip, tuberculosis, diabetes, deaf-mutism, polydactyly (more than five fingers) or brachydactyly (stub fingers), insanity, and mental deficiency" (ibid., 38-9). Here again one sees a strange selection of disabilities merged with other types of human variations. All of these deviations from the norm were regarded in the long run as contributing to the disease of the nation. As one official in the Eugenics Record Office asserted:

the calculus of correlations is the sole rational and effective method for attacking . . . what makes for, and what mars national fitness. . . The only way to keep a nation strong mentally and physically is to see that each new generation is derived chiefly from the fitter members of the generation before.

(ibid., 39-40)

The emphasis on nation and national fitness obviously plays into the metaphor of the body. If individual citizens are not fit, if they do not fit into the nation, then the national body will not be fit. Of course, such arguments are based on a false notion of the body politic—as if a hunchbacked citizenry would make a hunchbacked nation. Nevertheless, the eugenic notion that individual variations would accumulate into a composite national identity was a powerful one. This belief combined with an industrial mentality that saw workers as interchangeable and therefore sought to create a universal worker whose physical characteristics would be uniform, as would the result of their labors—a uniform product.

One of the central foci of eugenics was what was broadly called "feeble-mindedness."⁵ This term included low intelligence, mental illness, and even "pauperism," since low income was equated with "relative inefficiency" (ibid., 46).⁶ Likewise, certain ethnic groups were associated with feeble-mindedness and pauperism. Charles Davenport, an American eugenicist, thought that the influx of European immigrants would make the American population "darker in pigmentation, smaller in stature . . . more given to crimes of larceny, assault, murder, rape, and sex-immorality" (cited in ibid., 48). In his research, Davenport scrutinized the records of "prisons, hospitals, almshouses, and institutions for the mentally deficient, the deaf, the blind, and the insane" (ibid., 55).

The loose association between what we would now call disability and criminal activity, mental incompetence, sexual license,

linked to health + disease

and so on established a legacy that people with disabilities are still having trouble living down. This equation was so strong that an American journalist writing in the early twentieth century could celebrate "the inspiring, the wonderful, message of the new heredity" as opposed to the sorrow of bearing children who were "diseased or crippled or depraved" (ibid., 67). The conflation of disability with depravity expressed itself in the formulation "defective class." As the president of the University of Wisconsin declared after World War One, "we know enough about eugenics so that if the knowledge were applied, the defective classes would disappear within a generation" (ibid., 68). And it must be reiterated that the eugenics movement was not stocked with eccentrics. Davenport was funded by Averell Harriman's sister Mary Harriman, as well as John D. Rockefeller, Prime Ministers A. J. Balfour, Neville Chamberlain, and Winston Churchill, President Theodore Roosevelt, H. G. Wells, John Maynard Keynes, and H. J. Laski, among many others, were members of eugenicist organizations. Francis Galton was knighted in 1909 for his work, and in 1910 he received the Copley Medal, the Royal Society's highest honor. A Galton Society met regularly in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. In 1911 the Oxford University Union moved approval of the main principles behind eugenics by a vote of almost two to one. In Kansas, the 1920 state fair held a contest for "fitter families" based on their eugenic family histories, administered intelligence tests, medical examinations, and venereal disease tests. A brochure for the contest noted about the awards, "this trophy and medal are worth more than livestock sweepstakes. . . . For health is wealth and a sound mind in a sound body is the most priceless of human possessions" (ibid., 62).

In England, bills were introduced in Parliament to control mentally disabled people, and in 1933 the prestigious scientific

magazine *Nature* approved the Nazis' proposal of a bill for "the avoidance of inherited diseases in posterity" by sterilizing the disabled. The magazine editorial said "the Bill, as it reads, will command the appreciative attention of all who are interested in the controlled and deliberate improvement of human stock." The list of disabilities for which sterilization would be appropriate were "congenital feeble-mindedness, manic depressive insanity, schizophrenia, hereditary epilepsy, hereditary St. Vitus's dance, hereditary blindness and deafness, hereditary bodily malformation and habitual alcoholism" (cited in MacKenzie 1981, 44). We have largely forgotten that what Hitler did in developing a hideous policy of eugenics was just to implement the theories of the British and American eugenicists. Hitler's statement in *Mein Kampf* that "the struggle for the daily livelihood [between species] leaves behind, in the ruck, everything that is weak or diseased or wavering" (cited in Blacker 1952, 143) is not qualitatively different from any of the many similar statements we have seen before. And even the conclusions Hitler draws are not very different from those of the likes of Galton, Bell, and others.

In this matter, the State must assert itself as the trustee of a millennial future. . . . In order to fulfill this duty in a practical manner, the State will have to avail itself of modern medical discoveries. It must proclaim as unfit for procreation all those who are afflicted with some visible hereditary disease or are the carriers of it; and practical measures must be adopted to have such people rendered sterile. (cited in Blacker 1952, 144)

One might want to add here a set of speculations about Sigmund Freud. His work was made especially possible by the idea of the normal. It shows us that sexuality, long relegated to the trash heap of human instincts, was in fact normal and that perversion was simply a displacement of

"normal" sexual interest. Dreams which behave in a manner unknown or only exceptionally permissible in normal mental life" (Freud 1977, 297) are seen as actually normal and "the dreams of neurotics do not differ in any important respect from those of normal people" (ibid., 456). In fact, it is hard to imagine the existence of psychoanalysis without the concept of normalcy. Indeed, one of the core principles behind psychoanalysis was that we each start out with normal psychosexual development and neurotics become abnormal through a problem in that normal development. As Freud put it: "if the *vita sexualis* is normal, there can be no neurosis" (ibid., 386). Psychoanalysis can correct that mistake and bring patients back to their normal selves. Although I cannot go into a close analysis of Freud's work here, it is instructive to think of the ways in which Freud is producing a eugenics of the mind—creating the concepts of normal sexuality, normal function, and then contrasting them with the perverse, abnormal, pathological, and even criminal. Indeed, one of the major critiques of Freud's work now centers on his assumption about what constitutes normal sexuality and sexual development for women and men.