

self-narration solves

Linton 98 (simi, claiming Disability: Knowledge & Identity)

Literary criticism has not done a very good job of challenging the dominant disability narratives. Analyses are needed, similar to those that have been done on the self-loathing homosexual figures in the *Boys in the Band*, or of passive, meek women in stereotypical roles. Where is the critique of the aching narrative of the blind man or of the crippled man, trapped in a pitiable body, the body he says has betrayed him? Not only have these characters been written of predominantly by nondisabled women and men, those same authors don't also write the stories of disabled people comfortable in their skins, those for whom disability is an integral but not despised element of life.

Nancy Mairs (1996) talks of the need for voices in her review of Michael Bérubé's (1996) *Life as We Know It: A Father, a Family, and an Exceptional Child* and identifies Bérubé as one of those voices:

The mediated picture of disabled life is so untrue to that life's realities as to encourage the view that people with disabilities constitute sores on the social body to be eradicated rather than the ordinary wens and freckles to which any flesh is heir. (To counteract such a view requires voices—linguistically sophisticated, intellectually nuanced and politically astute—capable of articulating the issues raised by the full inclusion of people with disabilities in society. (30)

I have also seen in the past few years, a number of actors, performance artists, poets, and dancers with a range of disabilities who take on these issues. They often use their bodies or life experiences to confront stereotypes and to depict the peculiar ways that outsiders' respond to disabled people. They also represent experience from the insider's viewpoint in candid, often hilarious.



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charged and confrontational ways.⁴ So often thought by our very existence to transgress moral or aesthetic standards, disabled people in these events purposefully transgress social standards. For any significant curricular or social change to take place, radicalizing voices such as these will need to be admitted into the canon.

In this chapter I have examined the limitations of the dominant curriculum with respect to the accurate representation of disability: the structure and content of the curriculum, and the methods of inquiry employed each contribute to misinformation, and gaps and weaknesses in the knowledge base. In its placement of disability inquiries in the specialized applied fields, the curriculum medicalizes and individualizes disability. In restricting representation of disability issues to pathologized quadrants of the curriculum, it reinforces the idea that disability is deviant and undesirable, for an individual or a society. Disability is a thing to be avoided and contained rather than an inevitable part of life that can be responded to more effectively and positively. The absence of meaningful inquiry in the humanities compounds this problem. The curriculum is devoid of the types of interpretative research and analyses that could shed light on the preponderance of malignant and unsavory imagery in the curriculum and in cultural products. Disability studies, which is examined in the next chapter, provides the means to redress these faults.

(114-115)