

OPEN FORUM

‘The Stuff of Slow Constitution’: Reading Down Syndrome for Race, Disability, and the Timing that Makes Them So

Mel Y. Chen

Beyond sociology, where ‘racialisation’ refers to the ascription of racial characteristics to a group not otherwise known as such, it is now fairly common interdisciplinarily to use this term to express the ways that a structure has become, in some way, internally organised, informed, by race or racial difference. But what does it really mean for one notion to inform another – or, taking a different manipulation, to comprise it? In this paper I would like to bring into historical perspective the interrelation of several notions such as race and disability, which at the present moment seem to risk, especially in the fixing language of diversity, being institutionalised as orthogonal in nature to one another rather than co-constitutive. Ever attentive to language and its sly relation to materiality, in this essay I choose to call them ‘notions’, not concepts or categories or words, because they no longer feel like any of the latter; they are ideational *and* lexical but not exclusively so, because they cannot map without materiality and they are certainly not separable from it.

A ‘notion’ can refer to a token commodity (a usage that originated chiefly in the United States in the nineteenth-century in the craft arts and according to the OED referred to: ‘Small wares, esp. cheap, useful articles. Now chiefly: spec. haberdashery; buttons, hooks, ribbon, thread, etc.’), whose minor existence has nevertheless an effervescence of meaning, a creative potential that may or may not be

fulfilled, an effervescence whose effect may come from the very opacity and temporality of its constitution. This, to me, is the status race and disability now carry, and with which, either thorough solidity or intangible evanescence, we engage at our own risk. I will bring these notions into historical clarity primarily through the early history of what is today known as Down Syndrome or Trisomy 21, but in 1866 was given the name ‘mongoloid idiocy’ by English physician John Langdon Down. In order to examine the complexity of these notions, I will explore the idea of ‘slow’ populations in development, the idea of a material(ist) constitution of a living being, the ‘fit’ or aptness of environmental biochemistries broadly construed, and, finally, the germinal interarticulation of race and disability – an ensemble that continues to commutatively en flesh each of these notions in their turn. ‘Notion’ thus becomes the stage for such interconstituted entities and for the dynamics, such as the attractions and impositions of chemistries to bodies, by which they are made. This is an assuredly awkward attempt to shift the habitual staging just enough so that the very formation of such categories as race can be objectified and, putting to rest the old concrete (by which race falls out of new materialisms and other implicitly generalist – and yet undoubtedly Euro-American-white – frameworks), a new materiality can be given more attention once again. Informed by scholarship on the ‘fungibility’ of racial bodies examined from a number of directions and with different objects, in this short article I am interested in getting at the specific chemical-material consequences – and renewability – of such fungibilities.

My approach to these questions is centred on a set of trajectories, judgements, and materialities that converged around and within the event that led to the specific naming by John Langdon Down; my hope is that such a study may lend new caution to the templatic usages of these notions today. But there arises a question of method: given the availability of divergent contemporary frameworks, how precisely is the commingling and interarticulation of ‘race’, ‘disability’, and ‘chemistry’ in the bodies of Down’s patients to be narrated? By means of a mechanistic retrospective calculus of the likely consequences of scientific racism? A Deleuzian theory of affect? An ad-hoc diagnosis? Down’s own craft in the interest of a signal contribution to theories of idiocy? Or, perhaps, all of the above? Having lost faith in the possibility of single methods (at least in my hands) to provide a fully honest representation, I suggest there are advantages to considering several perspectives and crossing them against one another, fulfilling the prophecy of the here-not-here

model of 'notion' I have already set out, and that they are quite useful for giving fuller (if always intractable) form to such notions. In particular, this paper tries to think about 'constitution' as a kind of environmental collectivity that bears affective weight and consequence, particularly in relation to the growth of a sense of *slowness* as it relates to the interarticulation of race and disability in the nineteenth century.

With the notion of 'constitution', an assemblage-like term referring to the composition or make-up of a human or non-human entity, and a term also used in a lay sense to refer to fortitude or inherent capacity, I am attempting to create a broadened framework for understanding the role the extra-human element in the interarticulation of race and disability plays in leveraging different kinds of human constitutional integrity. Furthermore, the species-neutrality of a 'constitution' attempts, however crudely, to allow for a flexible approach to transgenerational peoplehood, as found in some indigenous approaches and in the Western new materialist idea that a sum – of the body and a chemical substance or the body and definitionally exogenous substance – can be, whether a right or wrong thing, the scene of a certain integrity and potency, however tenuous or temporary.

First, to establish questions of time or timing. Already, as temporality scholarship has established, time plays out multiply and unsteadily. But some packagings of time are more potent than others, and none perhaps more so than 'development'. Development is a richly multifaceted word – or, perhaps, it is better to say that it is a set of almost homonymous senses that refer to human individual growth on the one hand and economic fate on the other, both meanings in turn referring to the notion of progression towards a seemingly desirable end. They can lead to contrastive visions – for instance, the idea of disability as the wrong kind of phasal development (which, owing to the politics of reproduction surrounding it, including but not limited to eugenics, is also sexualised and racialised); and homosexuality as the stagnation of sexual development from the perspective of early psychoanalysis. Haunting positive notions of development are their failure: mis-development, undeveloped, regression, which the very thought-provoking 2013 Prague conference description (where this paper began) rightly animated with terms like 'backwards', 'stagnation', and 'chronicity'. One of cultural studies' and critical theory's tropes is to suggest that a proper system is buttressed by the surrounding of a favoured entity by its negated 'others', so that temporal others (such as the so-called regressives,

third-worlds, and mis-developed) are what sub-tend and make possible the distinction of modernity's exemplars. Economists of neoliberalism might say that entitlements – say, in developing economies or in the bodies that inhabit them – are not equally earned. I want to bring all these senses to bear here in my attempt to argue for a continued exploration of the relations, identities, textures, and affects that flesh out what is easily contained within the categories of both 'disability' and 'nondisability' (for instance); it is the exchange between the two that tells a very interesting history.

The next turn of this paper most deeply informs how I think about slow constitution. If we consider science to be the feedback loop between the realm of research and its social, cultural, and political uptake, the function of the scientific uptake of recapitulation had as much to do with legitimising colonialisms and other imperialisms as it had to do with experimental curiosity and a ranging set of questions about difference, variation, evolution, and humanity. In this sense, British clinician John Langdon Down might be claimed to be a central, not derivative, figure in the history of race and disability science, motivated by a 'local' (if, for purposes of the production of knowledge, arguably avaricious) curiosity in his patients. In a famous article published in the *London Hospital Reports* in 1866, 'Observations on an Ethnic Classification of Idiots', Down, working with a residential group of intellectually disabled individuals in the Earlswood clinic he was directing, famously described a condition today known as 'Down syndrome' with the dense phrase 'mongoloid idiocy', a compelling (and lasting) admixture of the studies of race and idiocy by his contemporaries.

Down was interested in assimilating various kinds of intellectual disability to racial types, with the idea that each non-Caucasian race (based on Friedrich Blumenbach's typology – Mongol, Ethiopian, Native American, Malay, Caucasian), doomed to retardation in the human history of 'evolution', lent a white child's delay a particular character ('a classification of the feeble-minded, by arranging them around various ethnic standards'). Here it is worth remembering development's longer temporal trajectory, its implicit evolutionary chronology. For Down, it was the stagnated Mongol race of faded glory (but glory nonetheless, perhaps making it synchronically worthy enough to enter these white bodies as a dilatory pollutant) that atavistically erupted in the bodies of white children, a raciality whose implicit and yet constitutive presence was sufficient to explain their developmental disability. Here, the 'white Mongol', Down's most famous 'ethnically classified idiot', was identifiable by a combination of

phenotype and conduct, to be distinguished from the 'real Mongol'. The peculiar hybridity and transmaterial characterisation suggests that it might be too simplistic to describe this form of intellectual disability as simply 'racialised': the piling-on and arrangement of racial categorisation, temporal persistence, heredity, and synchronic incapacity were at once arbitrary and consistent, precise and sweeping.

Down's apologists, even those who concede that he took part in scientific racism, mention that these ideas did not come out of nowhere, and note that he had great enthusiasm for the care of these young patients (it is often noted, including by the Langdon Down Centre at the former site of the Normansfield home he later managed, that he was interested in fostering the cultural life of his patients, to the extent of building a dramatic theatre for their use). Modern-day moral judgements of historical figures who were fully ensconced in the rapacious spirit of colonialism are difficult for all kinds of reasons. What remains true is that Down was professionally embedded in a series of meaning-lending discourses, from which his evident drive to make more meaning is not surprising. What I would like to use this article to warn against, however, is stopping at moral judgement and nominal abandonment. Disability scholar Chris Borthwick, in 'Racism, IQ and Down's [sic] Syndrome', exemplifies this approach, discarding the old 'characterisation of people with intellectual impairment as equivalent both to children and to people of different races' as 'worthless', likening it to the troubling contemporary work of Murray and Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve*, which adhered to similar ideas of innate racial difference in intelligence, and arguing for a new framework.

And yet Down's closing words, which he described as of great 'philosophical' interest, expressed his hope that a human unity could be asserted in light of the fact that race seemed to be so mobile, moving from body to body in ways that soundly rejected the idea of fixed racial, directly heritable divisions of humanity. Perhaps what may be learned here is that race's mobility – at least for Down, who was far from a unique fantasist – is precisely a (newly opened) question of temporality and transfer (of which linear transgenerational heredity by way of heterosexual sexuality is a narrow example). While some interpreters of Down Syndrome explained atavistic mongoloidism by a long-view image of seemingly earlier interbreeding, by Down's own account such atavisms could appear within a single generation, not necessarily by the fault of the mother; this was what was contained in his notion of the 'congenital'. While thinking about heredity and atavism, race and incapacity were still much in formation in the

nineteenth century, and Down's indeterminate theorisations could be understood as germane to (even if they only happen to look like) contemporary formulations of queer theory, which themselves benefit from the field left open by more specified intertwinings of normative medicalisation, sex, and kinship.

Borthwick wrote of the destructive value of insults attached to misrepresentations:

The analogy between 'mongolian idiots' and Mongolians was insulting to Mongolians, and contributed to their dismissive treatment by Westerners in the colonial era. Analogies, however, point in two directions. If it was insulting to compare Mongolians to people with impaired functioning [anization], it was also insulting to compare people with a disability to the Victorian stereotype of an uncreative, limited, passive race that had ceased its development before the British. Both groups were seen as developmentally delayed. (Borthwick 1996: 405–6)

With similar confidence, Daniel J. Kevles, in 'Mongolian Imbecility: Race and its Rejection in the Understanding of a Mental Disease', concludes that 'the detection of [Down Syndrome's] cause in chromosomal accidents finished off its vestigial association with racist atavism' (Kevles 2004: 127). But Borthwick's and Kevles's confident denials, for all their illustrative power, make deeper, proto-material traffic between Mongolian raciality and Down Syndrome seem unthinkable. Far from defending Down, I would nevertheless like to push further than Borthwick and Kevles to ask what more might be understood from the inheritances of Down's and similar deliberations in the present day, before one is ready to dismiss these 'archaic', 'obsolete', and scientific racial-disabled imaginations in favour of a plastinated, indexed, and purely referential modernity, in which the only realm in which one thing can also be another is in the realm of the digital. For even Borthwick notes that the underlying image of the 'ladder of development remains influential, and the conception of disability groups as quasi-races is still a powerful ordering force' (Borthwick 1996: 406). Notably, Licia Carlson's *Faces of Intellectual Disability* substantially examines species discourse in relation to the representation of intellectual disability, implicating race; however the case of Down Syndrome is only lightly explored in this regard (Carlson 2010).

With regard to mongoloidism and its possible contemporary reflexes, I do wonder what has survived of intuitive racialities, by which Asians are understood as lacking in capacity. Indeed, East Asians, who

continue to be understood as possessing less bodily hair and more facial flatness, marked in relation to a presumably white standard, may be depicted as 'neotenuous', more 'like' white children, say, before the white children go on to develop more advanced features (adults are advised these days to eat less soy to prevent neoteny and depressed reproductive capacity). The overlaps between race and disability are not restricted to regions of interior constitution, for phenotypic identification continues to have its hold on such overlays. In *The Shape of the Eye*, author and poet George Estreich, writing a memoir tied to the life of his daughter, who has Down Syndrome, and whose biological mother is a Japanese war survivor, precisely refuses to let go of this mutuality. Does his infant daughter look 'Asian', as some acquaintances commented, because she has Down Syndrome or because she has a Japanese biological grand/parent?

The minority that in a critical reading suggests a lack of capacity can be attributed to the dominance of the unreflected model minority Asian figure of today; yet it makes great sense when recalling the sticky impressions of permanent exoticisation and of the bungling immigrant stranger, the one slow to catch on, that also accompanies even model minority figures. (Indeed, this very stickiness threatens to make an impression that the examples that appear here are merely caricatural.) Hence my final example, one that involves both interior and phenotypic constitution: In 2004, William Hung, an engineering undergraduate at Berkeley, infamously sang Ricky Martin's 'She Bangs' for an unsuccessful American Idol talent show audition and then pursued a music career, all of which blasted him into laughingstock anti-fame. Recently, a present-day photo of William Hung returned to the Perez Hilton celebrity gossip site. Perez Hilton's site is not known for its production values; it appears that someone has used a picture annotation tool to crudely scribble 'Remember Me?' and added milk, or cum, dribbling from his lips. I see 'Remember Me?' or 'What Happened To?' moments as a way, in the temporal politics of recall, to make something both iterative (maybe even chronic) and belated at the same time; the condition of their presence is looking back, so I see resonance with the citation with the objects of so-called 'ethnic history'.

Crucially, in Perez Hilton's revival of William Hung, comments on the website below this annotated photo showed a continuing familiarity with disability-racial tropes. Among them is what appeared to be a sincere, not mocking, question: simply, 'isn't he mentally retarded?' Another reads: 'His "fame" stems from his goofy appearance. If he looked less like a retard, he would never be

thought of again. My BF and I think he has downs, anyone else???' One of the reasons William Hung shot to notorious fame, then, is that he contains in one figure both the exemplary engineering student at Berkeley, and, shimmering underneath, the mongoloid who is actually developmentally delayed or at least – I want to note – socially incapacitated. Hung embodies anxiety about Asian-American status, by paradoxically keeping both mongoloidism and model minority status in tension. Hung's queerness, his sexual incapacity, is part of the joke – just having sexuality, here, is an achievement of relationality. So we can call that infantilisation and neoteny, the milk; but we can also talk about the sexual queerness of Asian males, the cum. In either case, disability is not far from the surface.

The case of William Hung demonstrates that one of the correlates of the racial description of disability, such as mongoloidism, is that disability continues to lurk in the description of races, and if we think about it may lurk in the defining theme of race itself, race as a colonial trope or as its people-characterising effect. Such exposition can be found in sheer terms, for example, in Jonathan Metzl's work *Protest Psychosis* on white psychiatrists' racialisation of a new variety of schizophrenia for black men in the Civil Rights era in the United States, who would seem to have been *appropriately* imbued with political agitation and protest feeling in the deepest sense. Thus, what is called the racist enjoyment of William Hung's failure has obliquely to do with his double presentation of social disability in the form of nerdiness, and indeed the hardly suppressed image of Down Syndrome. I am for the above reasons hesitant to strive for a certain difference between the race and disability of the once Mongol, now Asian figures (and of course these two are also not simplistically related genealogically; the links between these are messy, vertical and lateral, and also queer).

I now return to John Langdon Down and the third factor of constitution I wish to highlight: that of (bio)chemistry. In a practice that was not particularly unusual for clinics at the time, Down sedated his patients with opium. Yet it is notable that, for purposes of diagnosis, he admitted that intoxication by the drug needed first to be ruled out, since its effects mimicked the condition itself. Hence there existed, at least for John Langdon Down, a suitability of opium (or opium intoxication) to Down Syndrome, and of Down Syndrome to opium – and, perhaps, of opium to delay, or slowness, itself – proximate constituents which the diagnostic process must then segregate in order to find the real thing. Being insistent that the focus of discovery is that which is congenital, not that which has arrived after birth,

Down states that a congenitally aberrant constitution must be distinguished from a series of explanatory conditions that must be ruled out, the first being the question: 'Has the nurse dosed the child with opium?' (Later, he asks: 'Can it be that when away from the family attendant the calomel powders [known as mercury chloride] were judiciously prescribed?' Down 1866: 259) Diagnostically, then, Down's criteria for identifying this form of mongoloid idiocy, or indeed any form of 'congenital mental lesions', were not just phenotypic but also environmental ('whether the supposed defect dates from any cause subsequent to the birth or not'; Down 1866: 259). This *likeness* of idiocy to opium intoxication suggests that opium intoxication could not be quite the same as the mental or intellectual impairment of these youth, and yet it was *close enough to need to be distinguished*, raising questions of where to locate the intoxication or impairment, where that slowness came from. The likeness also suggests a kind of material (more than phenotypic) alliance between the distortionary achievements of intoxicants such as opium and mercury chloride, and the differences in measures like cognition, looks, or temporality, borne by the bodies and minds of children who are understood as being congenitally affected.

Simultaneously, in line with evolutionary theories of that time, the Mongol within the youth simply sufficed to stand in for the developmental delay; no other explanation was necessary. Thus, what would it mean, in spite of the widespread use of opium at the time, for these particular youth to be understood to be *constitutionally deserving of that opium*? What does it mean to think about developmental time, global economic time, and delay together, as Down did, and in particular about the commingling of racial delay with developmental disability to the point that the two cannot be separated? And to ask questions about what the legacies are here, to take this kind of thinking as not exceptional even in the present? This is ultimately to think not only about what opium intoxication means, but simultaneously about how race and disablement are defined in the face of that intoxication.

In the light of such intoxication and the temptation to normalise the politics of it, it is worth recalling the political and material landscape of imperial transactions that spawned the push of opium deep into China in the early half of the nineteenth century by way of the British colonial deployment of India Trade. Chinese Qing dynasty official Lin Tse Hsu's 'Letter of Advice to Queen Victoria' (1839) decried the waste laid by British opium in China and the barbarity, capital profit, and criminality associated with it before the start of the

Opium Wars. What was the effect of opium on China's international station, and what connections can be made to the travel of Chinese 'notions'? In his letter to Queen Victoria, Lin was very specific about describing opium as a kind of 'poison':

The wealth of China is used to profit the barbarians. That is to say, the great profit made by barbarians is all taken from the rightful share of China. By what right do they then in return use the poisonous drug to injure the Chinese people? ... Now consider this: if the barbarians do not bring opium, then how can the Chinese people resell it, and how can they smoke it? The fact is that the wicked barbarians beguile the Chinese people into a death trap. (Lin 1839)

Lin's connection of barbarism to England, not China, reminds scholars of the necessarily overlapping, perhaps even competing, temporalities or progressions by which racially and imperially positioned people considered each other. For some scholars, white Western supremacy's conceptual victory is a complete sweep that has the effect of occluding other imperialisms (as can be found in China's own history). In this case, by noting England's 'barbaric' interest in both profit and poisoning, Lin drew attention to England's interest in doing harm to other places, in contrast to China's innocence. Lin accentuated the divides between national and transnational policy, partly as a way to dramatise what he saw as the relative spiritual generosity of China's beneficial commodities and its trade practices.

Needless to say, the above analysis must be completed by another observation: the sense that this sedative had a directly *institutional* function, rendering likely resistant subjects more docile through what Erick Fabris (referring to post-institutional contemporary biopolitical contexts) would call 'chemical incarceration'. Such containment strategies condensed the effects of animacy, of deanimation, by drawing ever more tightly together the downward web of race, evolution, and sentience, so that a Mongoloid body could simply be understood to be self-explanatory, self-perpetuating, and magically self-generating because it was not conceivable otherwise.

This kind of condensation of animacy can be amply identified in contemporary cases, the most visible of which at the time of writing this paper is the association between poor black children and high traces of lead in the water supply in the city of Flint in the US state of Michigan, where it was revealed that community concern in Flint about contaminants in a re-sourced water supply had been ignored at many levels of government. The revelation that it was poor black children

whose lives (and whose minds, in view of the consensus that brain damage can be caused by lead toxicity) were at stake entered national political expressions of sympathy and community outrage at levels that seemed sensitised to (and to some degree responsive to) reverberations from recent years of Black Lives Matter protests. Nevertheless, environmental justice work has long pointed to the dehumanisation of certain communities that enables such longstanding abuses and asymmetries of care. On top of what are already institutionalised networks of privilege and neglect, access and closure, blackness has not simply or only been a radical other, as suggested by some racial ontologies, but has a positionality too easily crafted *within* animacy hierarchies: de-sentient, de-evolved, and poorly judging subjects. Tellingly and hauntingly, Saidiya V. Hartman writes, in reference to John Rankin's florid restaging in 1837 of what he saw as the theatrical evils of slavery (can one divorce such re-theatricality from today's traveling digital-video theatre of the deaths of black men and women at the hands of police, doubling the asymmetries of exposure?):

Can the white witness of the spectacle of black suffering affirm the materiality of black sentience only by feeling for himself? Does this not only exacerbate the idea that black sentience is inconceivable and unimaginable but, in the very ease of possessing he abased and enslaved body, ultimately elide an understanding and acknowledgment of the slave's pain? . . . Does this not reinforce the very 'thingly' quality of the captive by reducing the body to evidence in the very effort to establish the humanity of the enslaved? (Hartman 1997: 19)

In my view, the importance of ontology, to the extent it is engaged, is such that the depth of racism cannot be apprehended when it is narrated as the abandonment or neglect of otherwise full and deserving subjects. Such is the transhistorical ontologisation of race, deeply materially embedded, and motivated in clusters of meaning and materialising vectors in such a way that it seems to work both backward and forward in time.

Thus it is important to be attentive to the recurring, and racialised, fear of the interpenetration of chemicals and minds as a function of empire. Indeed, are there ways in which to consider opium as in fact a *slow* drug, a drug whose intoxications had the effect of slowing time for its user and perhaps also for its external witnesses? Was opium *self*tuning in some cases, necessary to get through the conditions of a barely tolerable present? Are there, furthermore, ways

to understand the stretch and tug between the present tense of the verb *slow*, of biopolitical and biochemical actancy, and the adjective *slow* or the past participle *slowed*, each of which reveals a longer-term enmeshment of affects into the appearance of a constitution? The past participle also suggests a passivising reception of slowness, a force from without. What does it mean to think about developmental time, global economic time, and delay together, as Down did, commingling racial delay with developmental disability to the point that they cannot be separated? And to ask questions about what the legacies are here, to take this kind of thinking as not exceptional even in the present? What kinds of temporal politics clashed in the case of Down's patients, and which temporal politics emerged as dominant? Where does sexuality, in the form of Down's understanding of his patients as all looking so densely similar to one another, like 'children of the same parents', inform the understanding of delay, and similarly of race, which is itself constituted on the fundamental basis of an increasingly biologised understanding of heterosexual reproduction – of breeding? For Down, futures did indeed matter for such conditions:

existing systems of classification . . . will entirely fail [the medical adviser] in the matter, and that he will have in many cases to make a guarded diagnosis and prognosis, so guarded, in fact, as to be almost valueless, or to venture an authoritative assertion which the future may *perhaps* confirm. (Down 1866: 259)

The children, of course, are not imaginable as anything other than the subjects of their parents, not the future parents of others. The (classically non-reproductive) queer inhered – and were to halt there in multiple dimensions – within the bodies of Down's patients.

One can pause here and think about the relationship between biopolitics, whose definition is so often imagined as involving a closed populace under a system of governance, and the transnational biologisation of governance, which might include the different *heres* and *theres* of British opium, to use M. Jacqui Alexander's formulation of imperial geographies and temporalities as a 'here' and 'there': 'here' being London and the Earlswood clinic, though Earlswood also exercised a 'therewithinthehere' of Mongoloidness working within the bodies of the white children; and 'there' being loci like China in its vulnerable entirety.

Opium, racial specificity, and intellectual delay, formed a kind of interiority-exteriority, a constitution, in the bodies of John Langdon Down's patients. Opium, racial specificity, and intellectual delay,

formed an analogous constitution in Chinese bodies entwined with opium through addiction. I am interested here in the materialist proposition embedded in the notion of 'constitution', which, for instance, aided colonists in understanding what modifications were needed for British forces working in the inhospitable tropics or 'climate,' as Mark Harrison examines, and were naturalised for John Langdon Down in his claim that regression increased for his mongoloid patients during the winter months – 'their mental and physical capabilities are, in fact, *directly* as the temperature' (Down 1866: 259), and, as I argue, continue to inform the rules of interaction and interpenetration for bodies and their sticky contexts, albeit critically understood differently for different bodies and different contexts.

In a final gesture, coming back to the time that sits at the heart of the biopolitical traversals in this article, I reinvoke the conundrum shared by George Estreich's well-meaning acquaintances. Ultimately, how is this conundrum to be dealt with except, perhaps, poetically? Estreich jumps, temporally, from his mother's wartime experiences, to the time of his daughter's birth and her ensuing medicalisation, to moments in his own upbringing, and to his crafting of his memoir; and the effect is one of mixing, temporal and otherwise, and an overall effect of sharedness that nevertheless recognises difference. By the end of the book, we have not arrived – either at the most developed, refined, liberal perspectives on disability or at the moment of now. Nor has a new typological ordering been instantiated. We do not ultimately know where the science is supposed to fit. In some ways, the circumspection of medical authority is not unusual for a disability memoir; viewed on the whole, there is some other work that this memoir is doing that makes it kaleidoscopically sensitive and unresolvable.

Ultimately, time remains an insistent and opaque self-legitimator. Even if we seem to disobey time's logic, if we reject, say, the language of 'developing country' for 'global south', if we reject the progressive narratives of neoliberalism that produce such mystifying attributes as backwardness, retrogradeness, and chronicity, let's also experiment with the 'temporal latitudes', the surprising harmonies among different developmental stages that are born of development's logic. We might also keep close watch on development's own clock, attending to what it kaleidoscopically reveals about its multiple fabrications, about the interweavings of so many more things than disability, the ways that race, geography, sexuality, and disability are the very things that give form and texture to that thing we call ordinary

time: that ‘mundane’ face, that ‘regular’ tick, tick, tick. Simultaneously, the notions that time informs flex and bend, revealing their investments, their protean natures, their attachments, their fictions.

References

- Alexander, M. Jacqui (2005), *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Borthwick, Chris (1996), ‘Racism, IQ, and Down’s Syndrome’, *Disability & Society*, 11:3, pp. 403–10.
- Carlson, Licia (2010), *The Faces of Intellectual Disability: Philosophical Reflections*, Bloomington, ID: Indiana University Press.
- Down, John Langdon H. (1866), ‘Observations on an Ethnic Classification of Idiots’, *London Hospital Reports*, 3:186, pp. 259–62.
- Freeman, Elizabeth (2013), ‘Hopeless Cases: Queer Chronicities and Gertrude Stein’s “Melanctha”’, 29 January 2013, University of California, Berkeley, CA, Unpublished lecture.
- Harrison, Mark (1999), *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India*, Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hartman, Saidiya V. (1997), *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kevles, Daniel J. (2004), ‘Mongolian Imbecility: Race and Its Rejection in the Understanding of a Mental Disease’, in S. Noll and J. Trent (eds), *Mental Retardation in America: A Historical Reader*, New York: New York University Press, pp. 120–9.
- Séguin, Édouard (1866), *Idiocy and its Treatment by the Physiological Method*, New York: William Wood & Company.
- Wright, David (2004), ‘Mongols in Our Midst: John Langdon Down and the Ethnic Classification of Idiocy, 1858–1924’, in S. Noll and J. W. Trent jr. (eds), *Mental Retardation in America: A Historical Reader*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 92–119.

Your short guide to the EUP Journals
Blog <http://eupublishingblog.com/>

*A forum for discussions relating to
[Edinburgh University Press Journals](#)*



EDINBURGH
University Press

1. The primary goal of the EUP Journals Blog

To aid discovery of authors, articles, research, multimedia and reviews published in Journals, and as a consequence contribute to increasing traffic, usage and citations of journal content.

2. Audience

Blog posts are written for an educated, popular and academic audience within EUP Journals' publishing fields.

3. Content criteria - your ideas for posts

We prioritize posts that will feature highly in search rankings, that are shareable and that will drive readers to your article on the EUP site.

4. Word count, style, and formatting

- Flexible length, however typical posts range 70-600 words.
- Related images and media files are encouraged.
- No heavy restrictions to the style or format of the post, but it should best reflect the content and topic discussed.

5. Linking policy

- Links to external blogs and websites that are related to the author, subject matter and to EUP publishing fields are encouraged, e.g. to related blog posts

6. Submit your post

Submit to ruth.allison@eup.ed.ac.uk

If you'd like to be a regular contributor, then we can set you up as an author so you can create, edit, publish, and delete your *own* posts, as well as upload files and images.

7. Republishing/repurposing

Posts may be re-used and re-purposed on other websites and blogs, but a minimum 2 week waiting period is suggested, and an acknowledgement and link to the original post on the EUP blog is requested.

8. Items to accompany post

- A short biography (ideally 25 words or less, but up to 40 words)
- A photo/headshot image of the author(s) if possible.
- Any relevant, thematic images or accompanying media (podcasts, video, graphics and photographs), provided copyright and permission to republish has been obtained.
- Files should be high resolution and a maximum of 1GB
- Permitted file types: *jpg, jpeg, png, gif, pdf, doc, ppt, odt, pptx, docx, pps, ppsx, xls, xlsx, key, mp3, m4a, wav, ogg, zip, ogv, mp4, m4v, mov, wmv, avi, mpg, 3gp, 3g2.*