

DIALOGUE



Shape Structures Story: Fresh and Feisty Stories about Disability¹

ROSEMARIE GARLAND-THOMSON

In her deeply wise meditation on the question of continuity in human identity, the medieval historian Caroline Walker Bynum offers us the elegant concept that “shape carries story.”² Her inquiry arose from her own personal experience of observing her father’s shift in identity over 10 years of living with progressive dementia. Bynum acknowledges three aspects of identity: individual personality, ascribed or achieved group affiliation, and spatio-temporal integrity, which is the sense of identity upon which she focuses. Her fundamental question is, “How can I be the same person I was a moment ago?” In other words, she asks how we can maintain a continuous sense of self as our bodies change over time. Being an historian, Bynum frames this issue as a historical one; being a literary critic, I am going to frame this question as a narrative one. That different framing leads me to adapt Bynum’s phrase and refer to shape “structuring” rather than “carrying” story. Narrative is a way of constructing continuity over time; it is a coherent knitting of one moment to the next. Bynum’s wisdom is to understand the narrative link between time and space, more precisely perhaps, between time and human materiality. A clunkier explication of this formulation is that the configuration and function of our human body determines our narrative identity, the sense of who we are to ourselves and others. In Bynum’s words, “Story spreads out through time the behaviors or bodies—the shapes—a self has been or will be, each replacing the one before. Hence story has before and after, gain and loss. It goes somewhere....Moreover, shape or body is crucial, not incident-

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson is Associate Professor of Women’s Studies at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Her fields of study are feminist theory, American literature, and disability studies. Her scholarly and professional activities are devoted to developing the field of disability studies in the humanities and in women’s studies.

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tal, to story. It carries story; it makes story visible; in a sense it is story. Shape (or visible body) is in space what story is in time....Identity is finally shape carrying story.” In a sense, I want to extend Bynum’s claim by suggesting that shape not only carries story but also leads to certain structures for stories about the connection between disability and identity. Indeed, I would like to suggest that shape structures story is the informing principle of disability identity.

One of our most tenacious cultural fantasies is a belief in bodily stability, more precisely the belief that bodily transformation is predictable and tractable. Our cultural story of proper human development dares not admit to the vagaries, variations, and vulnerabilities that we think of as disability. This refusal to recognize the contingency of human bodies has its benefits and its liabilities, a point I have discussed at length elsewhere. One of its disadvantages is the social bias it creates toward people whose way of being and appearing in the world offer evidence against the myth of certainty and compliancy in regard to human bodies. Another way of talking about this larger cultural imagining is to say that we would prefer to believe that story is independent from shape, perhaps we would even prefer to go so far as to claim that story structures shape. Indeed, one of the fundamental propositions of what I call Cultural Disability Studies is that the modern impulse to standardize the body through medical technology enacts our conviction that story structures shape. Another way of saying this is that both our bodies and the stories we tell about them are shaped to conform to a standard model of human form and function that is called normal in medical-scientific discourses, average in consumer capitalism, and ordinary in colloquial parlance. The measure of all things human, normal is the central concept governing the status and value of people in late modernity. It is the abstract principle toward which we are all herded by a myriad of institutional and ideological forces. According to Ian Hacking, it is “the centre from which deviation departs” (164).³ Normalcy, as Lennard Davis tells us, is “enforced.” It is the destination to which we all hasten and the stick used to drive us there. We are obliged to act, feel, look and be normal—at any cost. And normal does cost. The anxious demand to achieve the right clothes, cars, toys, faces, bodies creates enormous commercial markets that fuel consumer capitalism. Thus, we use the cultural story that we call normalcy to structure our shapes.⁴

In contrast to this, disability insists that shape structures story. The story structured by the shape we think of as disability is not imagined as a pretty one. This story of despair, catastrophe, loss, excess, suffering, and relentless cure-seeking that we tell about disability is being retold, however. Fresh, feisty stories about disabled shapes and acts abound these days. In what follows, I will offer four examples that recast traditional disability plots. In other words, these are narratives where the shape we think of as disability structures positive instead of negative stories. The examples come from conventional narrative genres—film, poetry, memoir, exposition. Each of these stories is about disability as an occasion for exuberant flourishing. Such a rendering of disability sharply contradicts the usual stories of misery, diminishment, and calamity to which we are accustomed. My brief analysis of these four exemplary stories exposes two narrative currents which are seldom included in the usual stories we tell about disability: sexuality and community. Plots involving suffering, cata-

strophe, isolation, overcoming, or pity abound in our stereotypical disability narratives. Think, for example, about telethons or charity campaigns. Stories about disabled sex or communal affiliation are scarce.

One of the principal fonts of exuberant human flourishing is the erotic, which often is not part of the disability narrative. Indeed, one aspect of disability discrimination in our culture is what Harlan Hahn calls the “asexual objectification” of people with disabilities. A second primary site of exuberant flourishing are the human communities that form through deliberate or situational association in which shared experience bonds people together in mutually sustaining groups. Disability is seldom understood in our culture as the kind of experience that would lead to circles of supportive association based on commonality. Because we think of disability as at once individualized and isolating rather than communal and shared, the concept of a disability community in which one might thrive seems counterintuitive. To introduce sexuality and community into a disability narrative, then, is to make a new story.

In the 2005 documentary film, *Murderball*, the shapes that we think of as disability structure a revisionist narrative of sexuality and community. The presenting plot concerns the outcome of a sport competition among quadriplegic rugby teams. *Murderball* is the hyped-up, suggestively ironic, name for this extreme sport. The film’s conventional suspense-driven emplotment presents the competition between the American and Canadian rival national quad rugby teams and who will win the 2002 World Championship in Sweden and the 2004 Paralympics in Athens. But knitted into this raucous and predictable surge of incidents is the unusual story of how the players on “our” American team became disabled and how their bodies now operate. Because bodies shaped by sport are usually the most regularized we encounter, the particular inflections of these rugby players’ impairments add unexpected variation to both their appearance and functioning. The film is admirably restrained in its answering of the conventional ‘what-happened-to-you?’ narrative mandate of disability stories. More important, the film refuses the expected narrative of overcoming that infuses almost every positive story about disability. We learn that young men are a reckless lot, and with measured drama, their impairment stories unfurl. The impairments that their testosterone-driven antics produce seem catastrophic at the onset but transform through the logic of competitive sport into compelling mechanical challenges that heighten the pleasure of the game for both players and spectators. *Murderball* invites us to relish along with the players how adaptability and innovation produces a new sport—quad rugby—to which their new bodies are perfectly suited. Cyborgs composed of steel fused with flesh—like pumped-up golfers—these men perform ultra-masculinity with disabled bodies, working against the stereotype of sidelined and dejected injured athletes. Thus, the film is a guy story about exuberant flourishing made possible because of rather than in spite of disability. What *Murderball* captures is the counterintuitive idea that disability can provide a meaningful life in which one thrives rather than languishes. Disability provides an unanticipated opportunity for boys to come into themselves as athletes and men.

Sport culture typically provides men with a masculine heterosexual identity and homosocial community, which is precisely what quad rugby players get. For the

Murderballers, disability intensifies rather than attenuates these anchors of masculinity, but it also equips them with new bodies. The shapes that impairment endows the quad rugby players' bodies with produce what Judith Halberstam calls an alternative masculinity. The shared experience which underpins the masculine community partakes of the dominant sport model of cooperation among peers in coalition against a common competitor. At the same time, the alternative experience of medicalized impairment and disability struggle bonds the team members. The sport brings together what would be isolated, individualized cases of impairment as disqualification and forges them together into a communal and mutually supportive cohort of friends and colleagues who flourish through their positive masculinized identities as quad rugby players. As a testament to the cultural work of quad rugby, the film's main character, Mark Zupan, said in a *Washington Post* interview that before becoming disabled he was a lost and confused college dropout and now he's a respected athlete, a famous movie star, and an advocate for his community.

Virile and vibrant heterosexuality also defines the masculine athlete. As with sport community, the quad rugby players perform an alternative masculine heterosexuality in the film. A major suspense-provoking narrative subtext in the film turns on the question that everybody has about paralyzed guys: Can they *do it*? And if they do, *how* do they *do it*? Much typical testosterone banter drives this subplot, which climaxes—so to speak—in an interview with an appealing blond kid on the team who is finally required through the conventions of the documentary to reveal the mechanics of the sexuality that haunts all of the hypermasculine repartee. In my view, it is the film's most successful moment, played with precisely the right degree of economy and irony. Seated in his wheelchair, this charming young rugby player smiles sweetly and slyly and says, "I like to eat pussy." The film manages to distance itself from the vulgar and raw aspect of this typical big boy boast by intimating that he has adapted by developing an innovative, non-phallic, alternative sexuality that is a source of pride rather than shame. This irreverent and endearing moment breaks the tension of the implicit question about the sexual story a quadriplegic male body structures. Rather than being obscene, it comes off as life-affirming.⁵ As such, the film becomes a counter argument to the stereotypical idea that disability ruins a life, obliterates sexual activity and appeal, prevents meaningful work, and isolates one from others. While all of these benefits are imagined as accruing to a successful athlete, seldom are they taken as central to the life of disabled people. Becoming a hot jock is not what something we imagine life with a disability can get you. This is the cultural work of *Murderball*.⁶

If *Murderball* is a guy story, the poem called "I Am Not One of The ..." by Cheryl Marie Wade is a parallel girl story from a different genre that narrates exuberant flourishing made possible because of rather than in spite of disability. Announcing herself as a fully erotic "woman with juice," Wade eschews the euphemisms for people with disabilities, insisting instead on a list of alternative feminine descriptors which structure a disabled female subjectivity that decidedly departs from convention. Here is the entire poem:

I AM NOT ONE OF THE

I am not one of the physically challenged—

I'm a sock in the eye with gnarled fist

I'm a French kiss with cleft tongue

I'm orthopedic shoes sewn on the last of your fear

I am not one of the differently abled—

I'm an epitaph for million imperfect babies left untreated

I'm an ikon carved from ones in a mass grave at Tiergarten, Germany

I'm withered legs hidden with a blanket

I am not one of the able disabled—

I'm a black panther with green eyes and scars like a picket fence

I'm pink lace panties teasing a stub of milk white thigh

I'm the Evil Eye

I'm the first cell divided

I'm mud that talks

I'm Eve I'm Kali

I'm The Mountain That Never Moves

I've been forever I'll be here forever

I'm the Gimp

I'm the Cripple

I'm the Crazy Lady

I'm The Woman With Juice

Although the poem contains no narrative in the strict sense of emplotment through causally linked events, the rapid fire of descriptive images creates a vital character study. Instead, the poem achieves generic hybridity by making a series of identity claims that allude to broader narratives. Wade's self-assertion here draws on archetypes of transgressive, powerful, and threatening quasi-female figures such as "Eve," "Kali," "The Evil Eye," "mountains," "panthers," "primordial mud," and "serpents." Interlaced are stereotypical disability images such as "gnarled fist," "orthopedic shoes," "withered legs," "stub," "Gimp," "Cripple," and "Crazy Lady." The poem is thus a character study and a strong assertion of lyric emotion, both of which depend upon the speaker and audience sharing some understanding of the large narratives alluded to by "a sock in the eye with gnarled fist" and the other "I am" statements.

Sexuality and community interweave in this sketch to flesh out, so to speak, the emergent figure of "The Woman with Juice." Wade's French kisses, "pink lace

panties,” and the “milk white thigh” directly but delicately eroticize this self-portrait and conventionally feminize it. Yet the predictable feminine images of French kisses and white thighs are crossed with inflections such as a cleft tongue and a stub that might be said to “cripple” them, to disable these archetypal female allusions. Although the “I am” statements seem at first individualized, the speaker opens out to a communal identity which contains multitudes of “withered legs,” “imperfect babies,” “cripple[s],” “gimp[s],” and crazies, all of which she claims affiliation with under a single “I.”⁷ The broadest allusion to communal identity that anchors the poetic subject forged here is the “mass grave at Tiergarten, Germany,” that refers to the eugenic euthanasia of people with disabilities under the Nazis.⁸ The physical traits which define disability, from “crazy” to “cripple,” became the markers of a social group destined for incarceration and elimination under the eugenic ideology and regime of Nazi Germany. As with many segregated and subordinated groups, a sense of communal identity arises from the material consequences of persecution. If any disabled people were eugenic targets in Nazi Germany, the poem insists on connecting this woman with juice to the long dead victims whose shapes and functions destined them for the gas chambers, mass graves, and crematoria. The poem’s assertion, then, of Wade’s fleshly being as a disabled woman is key to the poem’s identity politics. Similar to *Murderball*, this “Woman with Juice” tells a new story, a new disability narrative, in which shape structures story.

The memoir, *My Body Politic*, written by arts consultant and activist Simi Linton, offers a fresh narrative of life lived by a disabled body. Nowhere in Linton’s narrative is the usual disability story of suffering and overcoming we have come to expect. Her book emanates from a disability community narratively constructed through the strategic reference to disabled people as “we” rather than “they.” Like *Murderball* and Wade’s poem, Linton’s is a story not about tragedy, pity, and suffering but about a “robust and excitable” young woman’s transition from “the walking world” into the unfamiliar world of disability. Linton emerges from a traumatic accident with a new body, re-entering the world via her wheelchair and her peers from the disability community. Linton details with wit and passion how a new shape gave her a new story, how she transformed into the “substantial person” that disability makes her. She learns, in this story, to “absorb disability,” to pilot a new and interesting body and uncover a fresh perspective on her life. This perspective is not one of loss but of wonder, a discovery of her body’s pleasures, hungers, surprises, hurts, strengths, limits, and uses, a new discovery of a body we characteristically think of as disabled.

Like *Murderball* and Wade’s poem, Linton’s memoir is about redemption, but not through cure. Rather it is about redemption through community. Both Linton and the men in *Murderball* on the quad rugby team develop a new sense of themselves as they experience the world through their new bodies. Yet their identities as disabled people do not emerge as the heroic individual struggle against adversarial forces. Rather, the men forge disability identity in conjunction with their team members, just as Linton develops her sense of self as a disabled woman through and with other members of her new community. Theirs is a process that involves replacing stereotypical and oppressive conceptions of disability with different understandings rooted

in the experience of a new embodiment. Linton writes eloquently of the process of identification through experience:

I have become a disabled woman over time. I certainly would have rejected such a title in the beginning....It took many people to bring me into the fold. To help me move toward disability....My advancement was due to other disabled people....This new cadre of disabled people has come out of those special rooms set aside just for us. Casting off our drab institutional garb, we now don garments tailored for work and play, love and sport. Indeed, as an indicator of our new social standing, the high-toned among us even appear in television commercials wearing such finery. While many of us have obvious disabilities—we wield that white cane or ride that wheelchair or limp that limp—we don't all necessarily, as I didn't in my early years, ally with the group. And all the others, those whose characteristics are more easily masked, come to the surface even more gradually, determining how, when, and to whom to declare their membership.

Linton's explication here of what she calls "claiming disability" occurs through a willed entrance into a positive-identity communal experience. This experience begins for her, however, with the acquisition of a new shape. Although her new shape is instantaneous, the new sense of self develops as a process of simultaneous growth and healing. The recently impaired body pulls along the new sense of self, which resists and struggles as it reforms itself within a new community based on a shared sense of being in and relating to the world. This process of identification is an arduous birthing, attended by a circle of collaborators who ease the way. The identity she ultimately claims is a new story which gives narrative coherence to her new shape.

My final example of fresh and feisty disability narratives is one I offer from my own communal experience of how shared shape structures shared story. My story of collective disability identity is structured by the received conventions we think of as "ethnicity." Thus, I have put together a hybrid narrative which draws from the familiar story of ethnicity in order to create a fresh story about disability which I want to offer as a replacement to the familiar story of disability as tragedy.

I've always been vaguely envious of "ethnicity" as it is romanticized in movies and novels. You know the scenes I mean: celebrations—mostly weddings, sometimes funerals—where gaggles of communally bonded, funkily chic folks get down to extravagant feasting, dancing, and conversing in charming and exotic ways that express their collective quirkiness. The scenes evoke a sense of belonging based on distinctness: you know, everyone talking together with their hands and sharing bottles of Chianti on Italian holidays; fiddling and dancing jigs at the Irish wedding, the down home flavor of the African American family picnic; whole villages in Provence eating chocolates together. Such narratives of communal identity are intended to fuel a nostalgic desire for a sustaining group membership that offers unequivocal belonging and positive identity to those who qualify as the elect.

For ethnicity to emerge as colorful and sharp, of course, it must somehow be distinguished from the ordinary, safe, and dull way of being that we academics call

“the dominant order.” As a white, Anglo girl growing up, I felt bereft of what I imagined as a distinctive ethnic community that would provide the sense of belonging and validation that the compelling stereotypes created for me. I also grew up as a disabled girl. Even though I had lots of friends and identified strongly with women’s culture, I still longed to be enfolded in a community that affirmed something more particular to me: my disability. It took me years to find the distinct culture of the disabled community: to find my part of the one that Linton writes about and that *Murderball* presents.

As is often the case with identity communities, I both found and created a cadre of supportive peers who have much in common with me. They are other disabled academics and activists who work together toward the goal of making the world a more receptive and equitable place for people with disabilities. This work is at once gratifying and isolating because there are so few other academics who are willing to identify as disabled. Often, I feel the burden of being the only one, the one who always has to explain, the one who is different.

My community gathers every June at the Society for Disability Studies (SDS) Annual Convention. We get much good academic work done there, coming together in innovative ways that accommodate our various impairments. Conference rooms abound with a motley assortment of aids that keep us connected to one another and facilitate our scholarly tasks: wheelchairs, sign language interpreters, personal assistants, closed captioning screens, white canes, speech synthesizers, crutches, service dogs. There’s a sense that much more is going on here than at more ordinary conferences where everybody just sits quietly and unobtrusively in rows of chairs, staring intently at a placid speaker behind the podium.

But the communal gathering that most fully fulfills my fantasy for a fierce sense of ethnic belonging is the annual SDS dance. Now, academics, for the most part, aren’t much for dancing. We are a head-centered lot; flamboyance is an anomaly among professors. Not at the SDS dance, however. Here in the shelter of our mutual acceptance, we extravagantly flaunt the bodies that most of us would never expose at the chic discos where what we call the “norms” (those who think of themselves as nondisabled) hang out.

Like the conference rooms, the dance floor is a tangle of equipment and human variation—only here it’s all roused to the beat of the music. Some of us lunge around; others glide smoothly on wheels; crutches prop some of us and stomp to the rhythm; still others fan white canes around them as if marking turf; the dogs rest quietly under the tables; people sip alternately on cocktails and wheelchair puff sticks to move around the room. Sign language criss-crosses the room, reaching through the loud music. Those of us with plenty of involuntary movement, the kind they struggled to keep under wraps in the workaday world, let it go where it may at the dance, twitching, bobbing, and jerking in distinctive patterns that anywhere else would make them targets of derision. One very chic young woman who looks like a model has unstrapped both of her prosthetic legs and cast them in a pile under table so she can more freely and expressively use her body out on the dance floor. The legs lay unremarked in a heap under the chairs, looking like cast off storeroom mannequin parts designed to display the high fashion stilettos that grace their ends. Someone has covered the dance floor with bubble wrap that pops insistently as the wheels

move over it. There's plenty of eros. One woman spins her chair around topless because it's so hot. A few guy chair-users are benefiting from authentic "lap dancing," as they put the moves on the girls snuggled erotically in along with them in their wheelchairs. Everybody dances with everybody else—all partners in this lively violation of ordinary dance decorum. We proudly parade our differences with abandon. No self-consciousness here. Bring on the anthropologists—this is disability culture.

At the SDS (a gesture to the 60's radical Students for a Democratic Society) dance, we've developed our very own ethnic folk dance. It's "tongue dancing," a form of expression that arises out of our collective identity, history, and experience. Tongue dancing got started by one of our forty-something colleagues, John Kelly, a quadriplegic sociologist who's a theory genius. John uses the SUV equivalent of a wheelchair—a big, bright red, motorized one, complete with hand tray in front, puff stick, high back, and straps across his limbs and chest for support. It looks a lot like a high tech throne. John dances with his tongue because that's the part of his body that he can move. His face is incredibly animated as he goofily and seductively bobs his tongue from side to side to the beat of the music. He's got as many moves as Fred Astaire—some graceful, others playful, most erotic. His tongue curls, extends, sways, touches his nose, undulates, thickens, and wiggles. It stirs with a variety and grace unimagined by those of us who move more parts of our bodies than John does. Our tongues are underutilized, almost vestigial compared to John's expressive organ. Of course, the eroticism of tongue dancing is lost on none of us. On the dance floor, John leads and the rest of us follow, discovering the exquisite oral pleasure of watching his alternately phallic and labial movements and simultaneously feeling our own awkward tongues explore new shapes and spaces. Our tongues wear out, but like the old time marathon dancers, John keeps up the stunts.

So we all dance the night away in our peculiar ways. It's our culture, our ethnic distinctiveness. Tongue dancing is our jig, our tango, our hora, our Virginia reel. And like the macherena, it's our contribution to mainstream culture. With its erotic quirkiness, tongue dancing may just catch on faster than the twist or the limbo ever did, once it gets out. One of the "norms" at the conference, a cute, very hip, young guy who has just finished a theater studies project on freak performance, can't wait to introduce tongue dancing to the discos in Seattle. I figure that very soon somebody will do a sequel to the 1987 movie *Dirty Dancing*, set at the Society for Disability Studies Conference. It might have starred Christopher Reeve as our imperturbable leader, John Kelly; but now we have Mark Zupan to do Patrick Swayze on wheels. They'll have to get us as extras because no norm actors could match us for cultural authenticity. The Academy Award nominations then will go to the genuine ethnics. No Jon Voight from *Coming Home*, Tom Cruise from *Born on the Fourth Of July*, Daniel Day Lewis from *My Left Foot*, Dustin Hoffman from *Rain Man*, Tom Hanks from *Forrest Gump* or *Philadelphia*, Geoffrey Rush from *Shine*, Russell Crowe from *A Beautiful Mind*, Sean Penn from *I Am Sam*, Hilary Swank from *Million Dollar Baby*, or Javier Bardem from *The Sea Inside* will walk away with Oscars for this film. Tongue dancing can overturn all that Telethon sentimentality and make disability as cool as all those other trendy ethnicities. Our unorthodox dancing is a response to the demands of our bodies. Our shapes, in all their uncontained variation, structure our stories.

Narratives do cultural work. They frame our understandings of raw, unorganized experience, giving it coherent meaning and making it accessible to us through story. By turning the experience of the dance into a narrative, I can extend the celebration of the community enacted by the dance. This story is a way then to provide access to some elements of my community to both disabled and nondisabled audiences alike.

ENDNOTES

1. I gratefully acknowledge the support of a senior fellowship at The Emory University Center for Humanistic Inquiry that enabled me to write this essay. It is expanded from the Disability, Narrative, and the Law Conference at OSU, May 2006.
2. See Bynum's National Endowment for the Humanities Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities.
3. For discussions of normalcy, also see Georges Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*.
4. Queer theory has similarly challenged the primacy of normal. Both disability and homosexuality are embodiments that have been pathologized by modern medicine. Robert McRuer has theorized this affinity most thoroughly in *Crip Theory* in his useful neologism "Compulsory Ablebodiedness," which alludes to Adrienne Rich's germinal concept of "Compulsory Heterosexuality." Also see Michael Warner's *The Trouble with Normal*.
5. This scene of alternative phallic heterosexual narrative follows the disability tradition first initiated in the Hal Ashby's 1978 film *Coming Home*, in which Jon Voight, who plays a quadriplegic Vietnam War veteran, provides Jane Fonda, who plays a disenchanting war wife, with her first orgasm. The sexual narrative in *Coming Home* and *Murderball* are in contradistinction to the erotic narrative told by Alejandro Amenabar's 2004 feature film *The Sea Inside*, whose quadriplegic hero intransigently insists that he can have no post-impairment sexual life, even though several fabulous women offer themselves up to him as lovers in the film. The film actually suggests that his dogmatic asexuality is one of the chief motivations of his decision to commit suicide.
6. I argue that the film moderates the rugby players' raucous adolescent sexuality by achieving a critical distance inherent in the documentary form. The audience understands the film is not endorsing the masculinist perspective here, but rather it is revealing the undiminished life force behind it. The film allows the players to expose their own liabilities; for example, one young player expresses disability prejudice, even while he claims disability pride, when he says that the Paralympics is superior to the Special Olympics, which is for people that he calls "retarded."
7. This poetic convention of using an expansive communal "I" to etch group identity from multitudinous particular individuals comes from Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," the paradigmatic poem of American identity formation.
8. Wade exercises literary license here in the interest of poetic economy. In fact, Tiergarten is not the location of a mass grave, but is instead the street name in Berlin of the place where the planning and directives for the plan to eliminate Germany's disabled population originated. The building's address, Tiergartenstrasse 4, provided the name for the euthanasia program, T-4. Beginning in September 1939, T-4 was carried out in a network of hospitals throughout Germany which were turned into killing centers for the disabled. At these hospitals, the Nazis developed the bureaucratized methods of mass murder. They eliminated thousands of people by using gas chambers disguised as showers, cremation of bodies, mass graves, and an entire sham medical apparatus, including doctors who directed murders. These procedures, including personnel and equipment, which was developed at the hospital killing centers early in the war was later transferred to the Eastern concentration camps where it was used to kill the Jewish population and other targeted groups. For historical accounts of Nazi eugenic euthanasia, see Aly, Friedlander, and Kuhl, among many others.

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