

Is treating disability a eugenics issue?

The [latest issue of the American Journal of Bioethics](#) examines the topic of new reproductive technologies and genetic diversity. A series of articles discuss the ethical issues surrounding the protection of genetic variation in a population.

Monash bioethicist Robert Sparrow's 'Imposing Genetic Diversity' – the target article for the discussion – considers the radical implications of arguments against the new eugenics that focus on the importance of diversity.

Sparrow, though himself no friend of eugenic logic, questions whether arguments about the value of diversity could potentially have authoritarian implications. If we desire to conserve genetic variation and naturally occurring instances of disability in our world, then why shouldn't we protect disability and – in extreme cases where disability begins to disappear – impose disability on populations.

In a response to Sparrow's article, bioethicist and disabilities advocate Rosemarie Garland-Thompson argues that the very project of trying to design "the future people we want" (viz. the use of reproductive technologies to produce the best possible babies) is inherently problematic, as we do not have the power to predict all the contingencies of the future world. Hence we should neither impose disability nor attempt to eradicate it.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [The bioethics of genetic diversity](#)