close-reading strategies in the materialist tradition of Walter Benjamin.[2] Along the way we hope to identify an array of writers who provide a usable future map for the representation of disability.

At the foundation of our disability politics lies the contention that disability scholars and activists should not cede the literary field, or conceptions of traditional literary study, to the dismissive critical stance that narrative merely replays retrograde politics of disability. For instance, Lennard Davis has argued that the novel has historically cast disability as a sign of abnormality in need of a narrative correction. Such an approach places literature within a post-Marxist framework as a tool of dominant ideology and an organ of oppressive politics. Frank Kermode comes at the issue of novel form in a similar, yet more generic way, by arguing that all narrative

seeks "a sense of an ending." In this we may understand that disability as narrative is inherently correctable and thus in need of fixing—the end of the abnormal is always located in its restitution within the fold of the normal. From this critical angle, narrative approaches disability as a wound in need of a dressing, and thus the narrative act is completed only to the extent that the breach is healed and a disruptive anomaly is concealed beneath a more modest covering.

We would argue that an effective approach to the politics of disability narrative needs to be localized culturally and historically. There is no universal narrative that can do justice to the variegated historical patterning of its material meanings. The "sense of an ending" that Kermode and Davis warn against can indeed result in oppressive characterizations of disability; however, many fictions, particularly modernist and postmodernist antinarratives, seek out means for disrupting the popular disability expectations that accrue around normalcy narratives. Because the "normalcy narrative" line of argumentation can be convincingly established for "dominant" golden-age Hollywood cinemas and popular stories of overcoming, what we will term *disability counternarratives* frequently contest this manner of storytelling. Indeed, Paul Longmore has effectively demonstrated the "kill or cure" imperative that infuses popular film and television plots that introduce disabled characters only to "solve" their "problems." We are contending that many literary works, and even later film practices, precisely because they openly challenge the dominant narrative trends Longmore identifies, offer up disability counternarratives—poetical and narrative efforts that expand options for depicting disability experiences.

In this afterword we would like to trace out a tradition of disability counternarrative from modernist symbolic experiments already broached in our earlier chapter on Sherwood Anderson to the more reform-minded disabil-