# Shell

#### Link – Using disability as a metaphor perpetuates ableism

Ben-Moshe, Syracuse University, Doctorate in Disabilities studies, 5

(Liat, 4-1-05,“Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum,” http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf, accessed: 7-5-2012, p.107, CAS)

In the English language, using disability as a metaphor, an analogy and a derogatory term is common. Examples of such phrases and terms include: lame idea, blind justice, dumb luck, felt paralyzed, argument fell on deaf ears, crippling, crazy, insane, idiotic and retarded. One might argue that using these words without relating them to particular individuals is not offensive. However, using disability as an analogy not only offends certain individuals, but it also impedes clear communication, perpetuates false beliefs about disability and creates an environment of unease and exclusion.

#### Impact – Ableism operates as foundational tactic of oppression that must be resisted

Siebers, University of Michigan, Professor of Literary and Cultural Criticism, 9

(Tobin, “The Aesthetics of Human Disqualification”, Oct 28, Lecture, <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdisabilities.temple.edu%2Fmedia%2Fds%2Flecture20091028siebersAesthetics_FULL.doc&ei=LWz4T6jyN8bHqAHLkY2LCQ&usg=AFQjCNGdkDuSJkRXMHgbXqvuyyeDpldVcQ&sig2=UCGDC4tHbeh2j7-Yce9lsA>, accessed 7/7/12, sl)

Oppression is the systematic victimization of one group by another. It is a form of intergroup violence. That oppression involves “groups,” and not “individuals,” means that it concerns identities, and this means, furthermore, that oppression always focuses on how the body appears, both on how it appears as a public and physical presence and on its specific and various appearances. Oppression is justified most often by the attribution of natural inferiority—what some call “in-built” or “biological” inferiority. Natural inferiority is always somatic, focusing on the mental and physical features of the group, and it figures as disability. The prototype of biological inferiority is disability. The representation of inferiority always comes back to the appearance of the body and the way the body makes other bodies feel. This is why the study of oppression requires an understanding of aesthetics—not only because oppression uses aesthetic judgments for its violence but also because the signposts of how oppression works are visible in the history of art, where aesthetic judgments about the creation and appreciation of bodies are openly discussed.

One additional thought must be noted before I treat some analytic examples from the historical record. First, despite my statement that disability now serves as the master trope of human disqualification, it is not a matter of reducing other minority identities to disability identity. Rather, it is a matter of understanding the work done by disability in oppressive systems. In disability oppression, the physical and mental properties of the body are socially constructed as disqualifying defects, but this specific type of social construction happens to be integral at the present moment to the symbolic requirements of oppression in general. In every oppressive system of our day, I want to claim, the oppressed identity is represented in some way as disabled, and although it is hard to understand, the same process obtains when disability is the oppressed identity. “Racism” disqualifies on the basis of race, providing justification for the inferiority of certain skin colors, bloodlines, and physical features. “Sexism” disqualifies on the basis of sex/gender as a direct representation of mental and physical inferiority. “Classism” disqualifies on the basis of family lineage and socioeconomic power as proof of inferior genealogical status. “Ableism” disqualifies on the basis of mental and physical differences, first selecting and then stigmatizing them as disabilities. The oppressive system occults in each case the fact that the disqualified identity is socially constructed, a mere convention, representing signs of incompetence, weakness, or inferiority as undeniable facts of nature.

As racism, sexism, and classism fall away slowly as justifications for human inferiority—and the critiques of these prejudices prove powerful examples of how to fight oppression—the prejudice against disability remains in full force, providing seemingly credible reasons for the belief in human inferiority and the oppressive systems built upon it. This usage will continue, I expect, until we reach a historical moment when we know as much about the social construction of disability as we now know about the social construction of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Disability represents at this moment in time the final frontier of justifiable human inferiority.

#### Alternative – Vote for us to reject their speech act - Ableism must be challenged at the level of rhetoric

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

In this essay I analyze ableism as a rhetorical problem for three reasons. First, ableist culture sustains and perpetuates itself via rhetoric; the ways of interpreting disability and assumptions about bodies that produce ableism are learned. The previous generation teaches it to the next and cultures spread it to each other through modes of intercultural exchange. Adopting a rhetorical perspective to the problem of ableism thus exposes the social systems that keep it alive. This informs my second reason for viewing ableism as rhetoric, as revealing how it thrives suggests ways of curtailing its growth and promoting its demise. Many of the strategies already adopted by disability rights activists to confront ableism explicitly or implicitly address it as rhetoric. Public demonstrations, countercultural performances, autobiography, transformative histories of disability and disabling practices, and critiques of ableist films and novels all apply rhetorical solutions to the problem. Identifying ableism as rhetoric and exploring its systems dynamic reveals how these corrective practices work. We can use such information to refine the successful techniques, reinvent those that fail, and realize new tactics. Third, I contend that any means of challenging ableism must eventually encounter its rhetorical power. As I explain below, ableism is that most insidious form of rhetoric that has become reified and so widely accepted as common sense that it denies its own rhetoricity—it "goes without saying." To fully address it we must name its presence, for cultural assumptions accepted uncritically adopt the mantle of "simple truth" and become extremely difficult to rebut. As the neologism "ableism" itself testifies, we need new words to reveal the places it resides and new language to describe how it feeds. Without doing so, ableist ways of thinking and interpreting will operate as the context for making sense of any acts challenging discrimination, which undermines their impact, reduces their symbolic potential, and can even transform them into superficial measures that give the appearance of change yet elide a recalcitrant ableist system.

# Links

### Ableist Metaphors

#### Disability is often used to denote deficiency

Ben-Moshe, **Syracuse University**, Doctorate in Disabilities studies, 5

(Liat, 4-1-05, “Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum,” http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf, accessed: 7-5-2012, p.108, CAS)

Disability has negative connotations when used metaphorically, while the real experience of living with a disability can be quite enriching and empowering. In all the examples above disability is used in a value-laden way. “Lame idea” means bad idea or one that is not constructed in a sufficient and persuasive manner. When we call a notion or act “idiotic/moronic/ retarded” we are trying to convey the message that the idea or notion is ill-conceived, lacking in thought or unintelligent. When we describe someone as “blind” to a fact (for example, men are blind to sexist practices), we mean that they are lacking knowledge or have no notion of what transpires around them. “Crazy” means excessive or without control. None of these signifying phrases carries positive and empowering interpretations.

### Mobility

#### The Binary of able/disable seeks to normalize the able body while ostracizing the disabled

Imrie University of London Geography Professor 2000

(Rob Imrie, January 6, 2000 Environment and Planning A 2000, volume 32, Disability and discourses of mobility and movement <http://www.envplan.com/abstract.cgi?id=a331> pg. 1641-1642 accessed 7-6-12 BC)

The inequities of mobility and movement are connected to sociocultural values and practices which prioritise mobile bodies or those characterised by societally defined norms of health, fitness, and independence of bodily movements. Such bodies are, as Ellis (2000, page 5) notes, ``naturalised as a biological given'' and projected as ``the legitimate basis of order in a humanist world''. Illustrative of this are the plethora of metaphors of mobility and movement which are infused with conceptions of bodily completeness and independence, of the (normal) body far removed from those with physical and mental impairments. Such representations counterpoise the mobile body to the immobile, the capacitated to the incapacitated, the abled to the disabled, and the normal to the abnormal. These binary divides reinforce what Oliver (1990) refers to as a ``legacy of negativism'', or values which mark out disabled people as ``problems because they are seen to deviate from the dominant culture's view of what is desirable, normal, socially acceptable, and safe'' (Corker, 1999, page 20; in addition, see Abberley, 1987; Paterson and Hughes, 1999).

#### Mobility in context of freedom or political action constructs disability as ‘broken’ or ‘stuck’

May & Ferri, Syracuse Feminism and Disability studies Professors, 5

(Vivian M, Beth A, “Fixated on Ability: Questioning Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Theories of Resistance,” 2005, Prose Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1&2 April-August 2005, pp. 120-140, <http://syr.academia.edu/BethFerri/Papers/160692/Fixated_on_Ability_Questioning_Ableist_Metaphors_in_Feminist_Theories_of_Resistance>, Date Accessed: 7/5, JS)

In addition to the use of explicitly ableist metaphors, it is equally important to think about how ableism plays out in more implicit ways. In this vein, we wonder about many of the metaphors of movement being used in contemporary discourse. Consider this query posed to incite innovative action toward a more positive future: “What . . . if we were to tap into the life force that confers upon us the right to live and work toward possibility as opposed to remaining paralyzed and dissatisﬁed . . . ?” (Cervenak et al. 354).A life of possibility, and even the life force itself, is constructed here in opposition to “paralysis” and dissatisfaction: in other words, being moved to act and live in fulﬁllingways requires a form of movement that is understood in ableist terms. This example is not unique, however. References to roving subjects, boundary crossers, and migrating subjects abound: is the movement invoked to signal freedom conceptualized in ways that account for or include disability? Our suspicion is that it is not. Are contemporary theorists imagining rolling down the road to freedom—or is there an assumption of marching as the authoritative sign of collective group action? What notions of motilityare at use in the idea of crossing borders, leaving home, or exile? What of the ideas of unrestrained movement at work in the many references to untethered subjectivities or “ﬁgures of hybridity and excess [such as the cyborg]” (Thomson, Integrating 9)? Just as whiteness frequently operates as an unstated/unmarked racial norm (in, forexample, analogies between homophobia and racism (Carbado 291)), able-bodiedness continues to operate as the unstated/unnoticed bodily norm both in analogies todisability and in metaphors for freedom and agency. This dynamic obscures the fact that able-bodied people are, in fact, embodied and that disabled persons are disenabled bysystems of power. Additionally, it denies the myriad forms of unearned able-bodied privilege accorded to non-disabled persons. The able-bodied or “ambulist” (Keith)notions of mobility and movement used to deﬁne and imagine liberation, resistance, and transformation require an unstated, but understood, notion of stasis as their ﬁgurative, disabled doppelganger. Here, we turn again to our own writing to further illustrate our point. In our discussion of the character Nichole in Atom Egoyan’s ﬁlmadaption of the novel, The Sweet Hereafter , we analyze Nichole’s newfound agency, which rests on her astute uses of ableism to refuse sexual exploitation by her father. Yetin our article, we problematically celebrate the scene at the close of the ﬁlm when she wheels herself away from the deposition table. Ironically, in analyzing the interdependent nature of ableism and sexism, we privileged autonomy and a narrow notion of motility as signiﬁers of freedom and agency (May and Ferri, 145). The motility that is imagined, in our example and in many others, as signaling freedom, political action or movement, or agency often (directly or indirectly) constructs disability as a state of being that is dependent, relational, “stuck,” broken, and/or in need of a cure— in contrast, of course, to the critical or postmodern subject who seems unfettered, onthe move, independent, and whole. Such a framework replicates a troubling ﬁgure/ground dichotomy and stymies our ability to rethink diverse modes of motility, movement, agency, freedom, and subjectivity.Our insights here build on Biddy Martin’s critique of theories that imagine queer subjectivity and liberation in opposition to the duped and stuck femme character/body.

### Ambulatory (Stand, Walk)

#### English language ambulatory expressions are ableist

Brignell, BBC radio producer and tetraplegic wheelchair-user, ‘7

 (Victoria, *New Statesmen*, Dominated by Amublist Metaphors, <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/crips-column/2007/10/english-language-walk-stand>, Accessed: 7/4/12, LPS)

It’s a succinct, easily understood and everyday piece of terminology. I just wish there were a more appropriate verb for someone in my situation so I didn’t constantly have to be economical with the truth. The English language is full of expressions which are based on an ability to walk. Young adults are encouraged by their parents to leave home and “stand on their own two feet”.

Successful business people are those who stay “one step ahead” of their competitors. Politicians “stand” for elections. If we feel we are being treated unfairly, we are told to “stand up for yourself”. When learning a new skill, we are advised to take it “one step at a time”. If someone is undermining our dignity or self-esteem, we do our best to “hold our head up high”. Certain job titles are rather amusing to wheelchair users. Broadcasting companies, for example, often employ people as “runners” – has there ever been a wheelchair-using runner, I wonder? When I was growing up, I had an ambition to become a stand-up comedian. For some reason, at the age of 10, that struck me as peculiarly amusing.

Bearing in mind how walking-orientated the English language is, it’s not surprising that history is littered with famous quotations that convey an able-bodied perspective on the world.

#### Associating being courageous by standing up is exclusionary and works to reinforce ableist culture

McNary, spoken word poet, 10

(Oscar, Oscar’s blog, This is What a Man Sounds Like, is a vindication of the rights of genderqueers, “Left of the Body Hatred”, January 24, http://thisiswhatamanlookslike.wordpress.com/tag/ableism/)

Students with disabilities are under attack.

What do we do?

Stand up fight back!

This was one of many chants I heard the other day at a rally to end a local university’s budget cuts and support students’ and workers’ needs. Another chant mentioned standing with workers. So, here’s the problem: not everyone stands. The phrase “Stand up fight back” implies that standing, which normatively abled people like me are able to do, is a necessary part of resistance. Associating being courageous and working against oppression with standing is exclusionary, and it reinforces ableist cultural devaluation of people with disabilities and their centrality to liberation struggles.

Here’s how the chant works: it goes through a series of different groups or needs that are “under attack.” So, the opening phrase started off, “workers’ rights are under attack,” then progressed through each issue or group of people. When the chant progressed to “students with disabilities are under attack,” I thought, “There’s no way they’re going to follow that up with a call to stand up.” And I was wrong. In this instance, the chant claims anti-ableism while using a normatively abled slogan. What does it mean to “stand up fight back” for people with disabilities? That the walk people (not necessarily all normatively abled) will stand up and fight for disabled people, while those who can’t stand will remain gratefully in the background? It implies that people who can’t stand are not capable of fighting for their own liberation. Now, I like the rhythm of this particular chant, but the word stand could probably be replaced with something less oppressive (act?) without doing much damage to the meaning or sound.

I believe that with this particular set of organizations, I can probably communicate with them about this problem and they’ll work to make their chants less ableist. If ableism within leftist circles was limited to this one set of organizations, it could be corrected easily, but this shit is so much bigger than that. Across the continent, leftist cultures tend to take body issues less seriously than other issues of oppression and privilege. In the same way that a ubiquitous chant would would incite folks to “stand up fight back,” can you imagine if folks yelled, “Be a man! Fight back!” or “Grow a pair! Fight back!” at protests? No? Oh, because sexism is taken seriously, and overt misogyny is not (usually, I hope) tolerated in leftist culture. Would we yell “Don’t be a fag! Fight back!”? Oh, no, we wouldn’t, because leftist culture values homophobia as a valid issue. How about “Act American! Fight Back!”? Right, we wouldn’t, because we think racism and xenophobia are for real. If leftists took ableism as seriously as we take sexism, homophobia, racism, and xenophobia, it would never cross our minds to shout about standing as an act of empowerment. If we took ableism seriously, we would never make our speeches from stages only accessible by stairs. We would not use step up/step back as a community norm.

### “Wheelchair Bound”

#### Implies confinement and ignores empowering potential of wheeled mobility

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

Emotive terms relating to disabled people, such as ‘afflicted’, ‘restricted’, ‘stricken’, ‘sufferer’, ‘unfortunate’ and ‘victim’ tend to reflect a person’s negative reactions to a disabled person. Similarly terms like ‘housebound’, ‘wheelchair bound’ and “confined to a wheelchair” are emotive and inaccurate, since wheelchairs are pieces of equipment that empower rather than restrict (Corcoran, 1977). In addition, many wheelchair users can walk short distances, often using mobility aids other than their wheelchairs, and are not therefore attached to them.

### “Crippled”

#### “Crippled” is equated with useless

Kali, self-identified disabled blogger, 10

(Brilliant Mind Broken Body: Living with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, “I am not your Metaphor,” October 17, 2010, <http://brilliantmindbrokenbody.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/i-am-not-your-metaphor/>, Accessed:7/6/12, LPS)

This is something that has bothered me for a long time, and actually led to one of the very few spats between the boyfriend and I (quickly mended, once we both cooled off a bit).  I really hate the use of disability-based metaphors.  Hate them, hate them, hate them.  I believe that they’re part of what makes disability such a fearful, distorted, tragic cloud to people who are able-bodied. It’s all well and good to say they’re bad, but I think it makes more sense if I actually go through some of the more common disability metaphors so you can see what I mean**.** Crippled **–** this one gets used ALL THE TIME.  The city was crippled by an unexpected snowstorm.  The political entity is crippled by corruption.  So-and-so was crippled by a powerful emotion.  The poor are crippled by their lack of savings.  I’ve even heard references to people being crippled by scruples.  Here’s the thing – crippled has a pretty specific physical meaning – it’s a physical disability, usually related to walking.  What being a crip really means is that you have to get creative about how you do things and how you get around.  It doesn’t mean that you’re unable to do things!  I think these metaphors that tell us an entity or person is incapable of doing ANYTHING (or at least, anything useful) really emphasize that being crippled is being useless.  And as someone who identifies as a crip, I can tell you I’m damn well not useless!  I do a great many things, including my work at a legal center for people of limited means and my disability advocacy, that I think have a great impact on the world.

Their deployment posits disability as unworthy of the same consideration as racism of sexism and as the source of its own oppression

Ferri, Assoc Prof Disability Studies, Syracuse Univ and May, Asst Prof Women’s Studies, Syracuse Univ ‘5

[Beth &Vivian, “Fixated on Ability: Ableist metaphors in feminist theories of resistance,” *Prose Studies*, v27, <http://syr.academia.edu/BethFerri/Papers/160692/Fixated_on_Ability_Questioning_Ableist_Metaphors_in_Feminist_Theories_of_Resistance>]

The thread of connection across these examples is of course the slippage between disability and ignorance or the assumption that to be crippled is to be unable to move or act. In all of these examples in which oppression is linked to illness and dis/ease, *the analogies position the source of disability oppression as impairment itself.* Once again, there is little to no understanding of disability as resulting from social structures and objectifying knowledge practices that create disabilities out of corporeal differences. In other words, although racism and sexism are seen as socially produced, disability remains as an absolute state, both apolitical and asocial it is the source of its own oppression.

### “Paralysis”

#### “Paralysis” metaphor is overtly ableist

Gent, PhD – Special Education, 10

[Pamela,– severe disabilities, in Stewart and Webster’s Problematizing Service-Learning: Critical Reflections for Development and Action, p233]

We have said students are "paralyzed perfectionists" (Higgins 8c Boone, 2003, p. 139), "feel paralyzed, unsure of where to start or what to do," (Maryland Student Service Alliance, 2004, p. 2), "become paralyzed by a sense of impotence, rage, and cynicism" (McNall, 1999), and "are crippled by an amazingly constricted frame of reference" (Barilen, 2003, p. 107). People whose impairments have resulted in paralysis would tell us that their paralysis is not the result of feelings, rage, perfectionism, or their frame of reference. They would also tell us that it is ableist to assume that the type of temporary inactivity suggested in these quotes is in any way similar to their own lived reality.

While many of us would question the use of overtly racist or sexist language in our classrooms, we may never have questioned the use of such ableist language.

### “Recovery”

#### Societies expectations assume that when one recovers, they should reject their mode of living and attempt to fit into society

Wheelchair Dancer 11

(“With Light: In Search Of Peace”, June 4 2011, <http://cripwheels.blogspot.com/search/label/language>, accessed 7/10/12)

You understood the impossibility of "recovery." Not in the sense of getting well. You did get well. And you became ill. You got "well," but you didn't necessarily "recover." As I reflect on your life, I think of the utter uselessness of our concept of -- no, our very belief -- in recovery.

Literally, "recover" is more of a getting back, a taking ownership of. But today, as I think about you, I see "recover" as a desire to hide the open, gaping wound, to "re-cover" it because allowing such things to show is not acceptable. I think about how open you were about your various disabilities -- smile. I still don't understand your choice of "handicapped" as the word to describe your identity. I believe you were showing me that covering again and again can only complicate my ability to move and live. Hiding helps no one; I saw you live so freely. Society want us to "recover," "to go back to where we were," "to move on and through" -- to close our gaping wounds, not live them. Even when, for the medical world, you were "well," you understood there was no going back. You knew that this was nothing to be covered. Your blog; your writing; your pictures... All this because covering was not you. (Did you actually hide in or behind your openness? Shyly, I wonder?)

### “Lame”

#### “Lame” is someone who has a physical problem walking- our discourse implies something that is foolish and ignorant

Kali, self-identified disabled blogger, 10

 (Brilliant Mind Broken Body: Living with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, “I am not your Metaphor,” October 17, 2010, <http://brilliantmindbrokenbody.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/i-am-not-your-metaphor/>, Accessed:7/6/12, LPS)

Lame – I’ll admit, part of my hatred for this one stems from its use in my own family, and finding it over and over again in my own language.  Lame means having an altered gait, typically a limp.  If you don’t believe me, ask someone who deals with horses what it means for a horse to be lame.  Now we use it for all kinds of different meanings – stupid, foolish, clumsy, easily injured, ridiculous, unfair, etc.  A lame call in a sports game, a lame excuse, a lame-o who just doesn’t get it, etc.  Notice how having an altered gait – like me – suddenly gets turned into all these nasty negatives?  Listen for people using the word lame around you.  I bet they aren’t using it to literally mean a limp, and that what they’re using it for is more negative.

###  “Blind”

#### “Blind” implies being incapable of planning, being unable to comprehend information and regularly misunderstanding the motives of others

Kali, self-identified disabled blogger, 10

 (Brilliant Mind Broken Body: Living with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, “I am not your Metaphor,” October 17, 2010, <http://brilliantmindbrokenbody.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/i-am-not-your-metaphor/>, Accessed:7/6/12, LPS)

Blind - I bet you can’t count the number of times you’ve heard this one –  blinded by viewpoints, blind to miss facts, blind to misunderstand intentions, blind to misread things, so on.  It’s definitely a favorite metaphor.  I count short-sighted in the same category, as short-sighted originally means nearsighted (as in, someone who can only see the shorter distances, not the longer ones).  Similarly, long-sighted originally means farsighted (as in, someone who can see things at greater distances, but not up close – someone who needs reading glasses).  We use sight metaphors to a ridiculous extent in our lexicon.  And through all of these, we imply that people who are blind or nearsighted are incapable of planning, unable to comprehend the information available, so naive as to misunderstand the motives of others, and similar issues that have NOTHING to do with sight!

### “Deaf and Dumb”

#### Deaf or Dumb assume one is ‘silent’ or that they have a learning disability

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

For thousands of years, being a Deaf person has been associated with ‘dumbness’ or lack of intelligence; the use of the term ‘deaf and dumb’ is commonly used to label Deaf people (Carver, 1995). The Greek philosopher Aristotle (350 BC) is credited with being one of the first to associate ‘deaf’ with ‘dumb’: “accordingly, of persons destitute from birth of either sense, the blind are more intelligent than the deaf and dumb.” Over the years the word ‘dumb’ when used in this context became synonymous with ‘silent’. The American National Association of the Deaf point out two reasons why Deaf people consider this offensive. First, Deaf and hard of hearing people are by no means silent since they use sign language and lip-reading to communicate. Second, the word ‘dumb’ is misleading since it automatically implies that all Deaf people also have a learning difficulty (Gannon, 1981). The two words are associated with each other a couple of times in the bible: “And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak” (Mark 7:37).

### “Mute”

#### Incorrect and Offensive

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

For similar reasons, the word ‘mute’ is also considered offensive. This term was first used around 1483, stemming from the Latin word ‘mutus’ meaning: “to press together the lips” (Little et al, 1969). It is technically inaccurate, since Deaf and hard of hearing people generally have functioning vocal chords. However in order for a person to successfully modulate their voice, they need to be able to hear their own voice. Again, because Deaf and hard of hearing people use various methods of communication other than their voices, they are not mute.

###  “Retarded”

#### “Retarded” used to belittle intelligence

Kali, self-identified disabled blogger, 10

 (Brilliant Mind Broken Body: Living with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, “I am not your Metaphor,” October 17, 2010, <http://brilliantmindbrokenbody.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/i-am-not-your-metaphor/>, Accessed:7/6/12, LPS)

Retard/retarded – (I am using the whole word only for clarity; I’ve written other social justice related pieces about how awful and hurtful this word is.)  Just mentioning this one makes my blood boil, in part because we generally don’t use this one as much of a metaphor.  When we say someone is a retard, we mean that they have so low an IQ as to fall into the category that used to be labled ‘mental retardation’.  We mean they’re stupid, they’re foolish, they’re naive, they’re incapable…but mostly that they’re stupid.  Plenty of people will argue that the way we use the word today doesn’t tie back to those roots, but think critically about the last time you heard someone use that word – I bet it was to belittle someone’s intelligence.

#### It is an insult implying a comparison to the allegedly “normal”

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

‘Retard’ is an offensive word, stemming from the Latin verb ‘retardo’ meaning, "to delay", which in turn was taken from the root word ‘tardus’, meaning "slow or late". In English the word became ‘retard’, meaning to keep back, delay, hinder or impede development (Little et al, 1969). The word implies that disabled people are slow, under-developed and lagging behind the allegedly ‘normal’ people. It is often used as an insult (Reiser and Mason, 1990), particularly in America.

#### Mental retardation is a social construction

Ben-Moshe, Doctorate in Disabilities studies, 5

(Liat, 4-1-05, The Graduate School, Syracuse University, “Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum,” http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf, accessed: 7-5-2012, p.108, CAS)

The category of mental retardation, by itself, is highly contested for its reification of all perceived differences in cognitive abilities into one unified category. The important fact here is that mental retardation is a social construction, not a real condition that is innate in people’s minds. The only requirement for inclusion in this category is deviation from a norm (usually prescribed by the use of IQ test) and perceived incompetence. Mental retardation is by itself a linguistic metaphor that means “cognitively delayed.” When used metaphorically in everyday speech, “retarded” stands for slow or underdeveloped thought processes.

### “Moron”

#### Moron is not only ableist but it implies valuing certain brains over others

Smith, Co-Founder Feminists with disabilities for a way forward, 10

(s.e., FWD (feminists with disabilities) for a way forward, “Ableist Word Profile: Moron”, Jan 1, <http://disabledfeminists.com/2010/01/01/ableist-word-profile-moron/>, accessed 7/9/12)

Today’s word: moron! As in “what a moron, I can’t believe he forgot to change the filters,” or “she’s such a moron,” or “we had the most moronic discussion in class today.” Moron is another in the long list of ableist words which have their roots in the idea that certain types of intellectual ability are more valuable than others, and, as a bonus, it has a history in a diagnostic context as well. Today, people usually use it when they want to insult someone who lacks knowledge or who is behaving in a way which they deem “stupid.”

Again, it’s interesting to note that this word often comes up in contexts in which the person being insulted lacks knowledge. Someone who hasn’t done the reading for class is called a moron. Someone who hasn’t graduated high school is called a moron. Someone who is not as intimately familiar with an issue as other people are is called a moron. It gets to this idea that knowledge=intelligence.

Fun fact: This word entered English in the early 20th century, from the Greek for “foolish” or “dull.” It was almost immediately appropriated as a diagnostic term by, I kid you not, the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-Minded, used to refer to adults with a “mental age” between eight and 12 and an IQ of 51-70. (Hey, did you know that the IQ test is deeply flawed because it was not actually designed to measure “intelligence,” despite the name?) This put them, incidentally, above “idiots” (a “mental age” below six) and “imbeciles” (“mental ages” between six and nine).

By 1922, “moron” was being used as an insult, and it was subsequently dropped from diagnostic use. We use terms like “developmental disability” or “intellectual disability” today to refer to people who formerly would have been diagnosed as “morons.”

Henry H. Goddard, who kindly translated the Binet test into English so that it could be abused to reify intelligence, introduced “moron” into diagnostic use. He also happened to think that people who fell under this classification should be institutionalized, sterilized, and effectively erased from society. (Incidentally, Goddard wasn’t a total jerk, he was also one of the people who pushed for special education in American schools, providing access to education for people who were previously deemed unschoolable.)

Soooo…knowing about the origins of this word, do you still want to use it to describe human beings? As an insult? I thought not. Every time people use words like “moron,” “idiot,” “imbecile,” and “feebleminded,” they are hearkening back to an alarmingly recent time in which people were diagnostically labeled with these terms, and that labeling was used to justify heinous abuses. That may not be the case anymore, but the legacy lingers, and so do the social attitudes which supported the belief that people with disabilities were not fit for society.

“Moron” is most definitely ableist, not only because of its history in a diagnostic context, but because of the implications it carries about valuing certain brains over others. This, again, is a word which is tricky to eradicate from one’s word usage because of the ways in which it is used. People use “moron” because they want to insult someone’s intelligence. To stop using this word, you first have to rethink the way you think about “intelligence,” and think about what you actually want to say when you use this word.

### “Spaz”/”Spastic”

#### The implications of the term spastic serve to make someone worthless

Smith, Co-Founder Feminists with disabilities for a way forward, 10

(s.e., FWD (feminists with disabilities) for a way forward, “Ableist Word Profile: Spaz/Spak”, Dec 14,

<http://disabledfeminists.com/2009/12/04/ableist-word-profile-spazspak/>, accessed 7/9/12)

Spaz/spak, both derived from “spastic,” come with a lot of variations. Someone may be said to be a “spaz” or a “spak,” for example. Someone who is behaving erratically is spazzing or spakking out. “Don’t spazz out,” people say dismissively when someone is reacting to a situation in a way which they think is extreme. There have also been proposals to use “spakking up” or “spakface” to describe what we and many others have been referring to as “crip drag,” in which actors without disabilities portray people with disabilities on stage and screen.

These words pop up in some surprising places; doing some research for this AWP, I even found a model of wheelchair called a “Spazz.”

So, what gives? “Spastic” is a word from the Greek, derived from a root which means “drawing or pulling up,” used to describe people who experience muscle spasms. The word dates from the late 1700s, and began to be used in the 1800s to describe people with spasticity. Spasticity can be associated with multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and a number of other conditions. “Spaz” as a slang term popped up in the 1960s.

To the layperson, someone with spasticity might appear clumsy or inept, because of the muscle jerks and clenches which characterize spasticity; folks with spasticity can have difficulty walking, talking, and so forth because their muscles are not entirely under their control. Thus, it’s not too surprising that people started using “spaz” to refer to people who appeared clumsy, because, you know, why just call someone “clumsy1” when you can use an ableist slur instead?

The word is also used to describe erratic or “crazy” behavior, such as “flipping out,” along with some characteristics of neuroatypicality such as awkwardness in social situations, saying things which appear random, not following a conversation, or simply being “geeky” or “dorky” in the eye of the observer. I’ve also heard the word used in reference to epilepsy, most recently on everyone’s favourite television series, Glee.

Both “spaz” and “spak” have clear ableist roots because they’re shortened versions of an actual diagnostic term. They shouldn’t be used to refer to “spasticity” at all (unless, of course, as self identification by someone with spasticity) and they’re definitely not appropriate as slang terms to refer to people without spasticity. The implication here is that spasticity makes someone worthless, inept, awkward, laughable, useless, etc., and “spaz/spak” have become umbrella terms to refer to a wide range of human behaviour.

###  “Crazy”

#### Crazy is an ableist slur that carries with it negative connotations

James, feminist blogger at Deeply Problematic, 10

(Rachel McCarthy, FWD (feminists with disabilities) for a way forward, “Ableist Word Profile: Crazy”, May 17, <http://disabledfeminists.com/2010/05/17/guest-post-from-rmj-ableist-word-profile-crazy/>, accessed 7/9/12)

Like every ism, ableism is absorbed through the culture on a more subconscious level, embedding itself in our language like a guerrilla force. Crazy is one of the most versatile and frequently used slurs, a word used sometimes directly against persons with mental disabilities (PWMD), sometimes indirectly against persons with able privilege, sometimes descriptive and value-neutral, and sometimes in a superficially positive light.

As a direct slur against PWMD:

Crazy as a word is directly and strongly tied to mental disability. It’s used as a slur directly against PWMD both to discredit and to marginalize. If a person with a history of mental illness wants to do something, for good or bad, that challenges something, that person’s thoughts, arguments, and rhetoric are dismissed because that person is “crazy”. If a PWMD is going through pain because of something unrelated to their mental state, culpability for the pain is placed solely on their being crazy. Even if their suffering is related to their disability, it is, in a catch-22, dismissed due to their “craziness”; the PWMD is expected to pull themselves up by their bootstraps if they want to be viewed as a valid human being.

Examples:

“I can’t believe Britney shaved her head. Crazy bitch.”

“Not only is Dworkin cissexist, she’s fucking crazy!”

As a way to discredit neurotypical people:

Crazy is also often used to describe a neurotypical person that the speaker disagrees with. It’s used to discredit able-privileged persons by saying that they are actually mentally disabled – and what could be worse than that?

Examples:

“Tom Cruise is fucking crazy. Seriously, he’s batshit insane about Prozac, yelling at Matt Lauer and shit.”

“Did you hear that Shirley broke up with Jim? She thought he was cheating on her.” “Yeah, she’s crazy, Jim’s a great guy.”

As an all-purpose negative adjective:

Crazy is often used – even, still, by me and other feminists – to negatively describe ideas, writing, or other nouns that the speaker finds disagreeable. Conservatives are “crazy”, acts of oppression are “crazy making” , this winter’s snow is “craziness”. This usage makes a direct connection between mental disability and bad qualities of all stripes, turning disability itself into a negative descriptor. Whether it means “bad” or “evil” or “outlandish” or “illogical” or “unthinkable”, it’s turning the condition of having a disability into an all-purpose negative descriptor. When using crazy as a synonym for violent, disturbing, or wrong, it’s saying that PWMD are violent, disturbing, wrong. It’s using disability as a rhetorical weapon.

Examples:

“They took the public option out of the health care plan? That’s fucking crazy!”

“Yeah, Loretta went crazy on Jeanie last night. Gave her a black eye and everything.”

Crazy as a positive amplifier:

On the flip side, crazy is often used as a positive amplifier. Folks say that they are “crazy” about something or someone they love or like. But just because it’s positive doesn’t mean it’s a good thing. Crazy as a positive adjective still mean “overly” or “too much”. It’s meant to admit a slight lack of foresight or sense on the part of the speaker. Furthermore, a slur is a slur is a slur, no matter the context. Crazy is mostly, and overtly, used to mean “bad”, “silly”, “not worth paying attention to”, “too much”. Persons with mental illnesses are none of these things as a group. The positive use is not that positive, and it doesn’t absolve the mountains of bad usage.

Examples:

“I’ve been crazy busy lately, sorry I haven’t been around much.”

“I’m just crazy about ice cream!”

Crazy a destructive word, used to hurt people with mental disabilities. It’s used to discredit, to marginalize, to make sure that we feel shame for our disability and discourage self-care, to make sure that those of us brave enough to publicly identify as having mental disabilities are continually discredited.

### “Mad”/ “Crazy”

#### “Mad” and “crazy” pertain to someone with a neurosis- modern discourse uses these terms as dismissive ways to marginalize people-when we use ableist language we hurt those who have disabilities

Kali, self-identified disabled blogger, 10

 (Brilliant Mind Broken Body: Living with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, “I am not your Metaphor,” October 17, 2010, <http://brilliantmindbrokenbody.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/i-am-not-your-metaphor/>, Accessed:7/6/12, LPS)

Mad/crazy – Here’s one we use to a ridiculous extent in our language.  I’m crazy-busy.  Work was crazy today.  …and then she just went crazy!  I am just crazy about this designer.  You’re driving me crazy!  The way they treated her was just crazy.  That idea is just crazy.  Political opponants are crazy.  (most of which you can substitute mad for crazy and get the same meaning)  Yeah, that’s not exactly the same as mad or crazy meaning someone who is experiencing psychosis (a break with reality) or neurosis (not a full break with reality, but having an altered relationship with reality).  These words originally mean someone who has some kind of mental illness, and are being reclaimed as such.  Most uses of crazy are dismissive, ways to marginalize people and ideas.  Using them for negatives has obvious problems, but what about positives like ‘crazy about this designer’?  Well, it still means ‘overly’ or ‘too much’ – when we say things like that, we mean ‘I’m excited about this designer beyond reason.’  See how even that seemingly positive thing slides around to a negative? Look, using disability as a metaphor tends to come from one basic problem: linguistic laziness.  There are SO many other words that can be used!  Foolish, ridiculous, thoughtless, senseless, hampered, troubled, restrained, naive.  Just to name a few.  When you use disability metaphors, you hurt those of us who actually have disabilities.  I am NOT your metaphor.  Find a new one.

### Schizophrenia

#### Their attempt to create mental illness in opposition to rationality reifies systems of domination and should be rejected

May & Ferri, Syracuse Feminism and Disability studies Professors, 5

(Vivian M, Beth A, “Fixated on Ability: Questioning Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Theories of Resistance,” 2005, Prose Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1&2 April-August 2005, pp. 120-140, <http://syr.academia.edu/BethFerri/Papers/160692/Fixated_on_Ability_Questioning_Ableist_Metaphors_in_Feminist_Theories_of_Resistance>, Date Accessed: 7/5, JS)

Equating visual acuity with knowing is one common way to place disability in opposition to knowledge. But many others are equally as frequent, including dualisms between mental illness and rationality and/or characterizations of faulty knowledge models as “pathologies” or “illnesses.” For example, because Frederic Jameson relies heavily on ableist notions of schizophrenia and pathological illness in his critique of the postmodern subject, these ideas inﬁltrate Chela Sandoval’s reading and critique of Jameson. Sandoval writes that for Jameson, the “euphoria” of the postmodern subject“ marks the onset of a new form of mass cultural pathology. It is ‘schizophrenic’ innature— charged with hallucinogenic intensity” (21). Similarly, June Jordan (in Collins, Fighting 150) describes constructivist approaches to identity as a “delusional disease.” In asserting her own social theory, Patricia Hill Collins writes that deconstructivist theory can be “crippling” because it “runs in circles” and fosters nihilism ( Fighting 189). Once again, disability is enlisted to represent foolishness and despair. Similarily, Susan Stanford Friedman, in querying whether a doctoral education in an interdisciplinary ﬁeld such as Women’s Studies is even viable, asserts “that way,madness lies” (318). Other scholars refer to those occupying opposing sides of theoretical or political debates as “mad heads” (Jamila 390), as “crazy,” or as “wingnuts”(Be´rube´). As these examples illustrate, schizophrenia and madness more generally are often placed in opposition to more reasoned approaches, arguments, or positions. Disability as a state of unknowing, or irrationality, is invoked in order to be deplored. Reading our own works, we found that Vivian discusses the “crazed” and troubled state ambiguity can elicit (May 366) and Beth discusses the “paranoia” about differential birthrates that Eugenicists tried to evoke (Ferri and Connor).Schizophrenia can also be used rather romantically, as a potentially liberating state of mind that allows us to think beyond given categories and binaries,to free ourselves from modernist impulses of mind or from “autistic” egocentrism! As Felix Guattari writes, “in a certain sense people who are operating on the level of social sciences or on the level of politics ought to ‘make themselves schizophrenic.’ And I’m not speaking of that illusory image of schizophrenics, caught in the grip of a repression, which would have us believe that they are ‘autistic,’ turned inward on themselves, and so forth. I mean that we should have the schizophrenic’s capacity to range across ﬁelds . . . of study” (Guattari, 83).Obviously, Guattari is not alone in this rhetorical strategy. If we were to tell the “origin story” for wanting to write this paper, it would begin with a talk given by Judith Butler in New York City reﬂecting on the events of September 11th in which she made an analogy between post-9/11 experiences and schizophrenia. 7 Because she was using schizophrenia to highlight the beneﬁts of destabilization, Butler could not fully grasp why her use of schizophrenia could be problematic. 8 Yet the trouble with this kind of “borrowing” of disability, whether it is seemingly positive or negative, is that in these instances schizophrenia becomes, primarily, a rhetorical device. Schizophrenia as an embodied lived experience, a social and political history, an ontology with meaning in its own right, disappears. Instead, it is transformed into an imagined state of dis/order available for using , for deepening the audience’s understandings of their own (able-bodied) lives and their own modes of rationality.

### Human Nature

#### Their arguments about human nature appeal to the able-normative body behind screen of false scientific neutrality

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

In this article I analyze "normal is natural," a third rhetorical norm that obscures as "natural law" the ideological preference for things "normal." Like "deviance is evil" and "body is able" this warrant justifies ableist discrimination by providing rationale for subordinating disabled people. It works by deploying the idea of the normal body as a fact of nature, thereby absolving responsibility for employing it in medical, scientific, political, and religious institutions. According to this norm, valuing normal bodies and devaluing "abnormal" bodies reflects sensible awareness of the way things naturally work instead of employing questionable ideology. Presumably dispassionate and objective science that merely describes natural law presents the idea of the normal body as "objective truth." Normality thus becomes an inherent and relatively unquestionable characteristic, appearing against a framework grounded in scientific certainty. Historically, society often declaims discriminatory assumptions as scientific fact. As Robert Garland observes: "Modern science has often served merely to reinforce our cultural presuppositions."[22](http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606%22%20%5Cl%20%22endnote22) Scientific or medical evidence can redefine what counts as normal because generally the culture considers these approaches (at least when conducted "objectively") to merely report "facts." In contrast, social criticism and commentary (particularly when conducted "subjectively") struggle for legitimacy. This tends to bury and protect the roots of ableist discrimination. As Abby Wilkerson argues, this division between the natural and the social works "to obscure the social origin of practices that differentially harm members of oppressed groups, while making these harms appear to be 'facts of nature.'"[23](http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606%22%20%5Cl%20%22endnote23)

### “Competitiveness”

#### Their preference for competitive, economically productive subjects is rooted in ableist assumptions which reinforce all other forms of oppression

Wolbring, University of Calgary, Assistant Professor Program in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, 10

(Gregor, Asst Prof @ UCalgary, Faculty of Medicine, Dept. of Community Health Sciences, Program in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, Dilemata, No 3, “Human Enhancement through the Ableism Lens”, <http://www.dilemata.net/revista/index.php/dilemata/article/viewArticle/31/46> Accessed: 2/24/11 GAL)

Ableism

1. Ableism is a concept used by the disabled people community and further expanded on by you. What is the contribution of this concept to the enhancement controversy?

The term ableism evolved from the civil rights movements in the United States and Britain during the 1960s and 1970s to question and highlight the prejudice and discrimination people experienced whose body structure and ability functioning was labelled as ‘impaired’ as sub species-typical. Ableism of this flavour was defined as a set of beliefs, processes and practices that favours species-typical normative body structure based abilities and labels sub-normative species-typical biological structures as deficient, as not able to perform as required, as being in need of fixing. The disabled people rights discourse and scholars of the academic field of disability studies (for a list of disability studies programs see (Steven Taylor, 2003)) questions the favouritism for normative species-typical body abilities (Carlson, 2001; Finkelstein, 1996; Mitchell & Snyder, 1997; Olyan, 2009; Rose, 2003; Schipper, 2006; Fiona A. K. Campbell, 2001; Carlson, 2001; Overboe, 2007).

The discourse around deafness and Deaf Culture (Burch, 2000; Abberley, 2003; Chimedza, 1998; Hladek, 2002; Kersting, 1997; Lane & Bahan, 1998; Sparrow, 2005) would be one example where many people expect the ability to hear and see deafness as a deficiency to be treated through medical means whereby many Deaf people do not perceive deafness as a deficiency and hearing as an essential ability. Within the disabled people rights framework ableism was set up as a term to be used like sexism and racism.

However ableism is evident far beyond the species-typical, sub species-typical dichotomy. Ableism is one of the most societal entrenched and accepted “isms” and it exists in many forms such as biological structure based ableism, cognition based ableism, ableism inherent to a given economic system, and social structure based ableism (Wolbring, 2008a). The ableism’s that expects the ability a) to generate a high GDP and be productive and efficient; b) to consume products and c) to be competitive are just three ableism’s outside of the species-typical, sub species-typical dichotomy cherished by many. The favouritism of abilities furthermore contributes to other isms such as racism, sexism, cast-ism, ageism, speciesism, anti-environmentalism and other ism’s (Wolbring, 2008f).

### “Able Bodied”

#### Ignores cognitive differences and shifts focus away from discrimination

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

This term is also often incorrectly used, in this case to refer to people who are not disabled. This ignores the fact some disabled people, for example people with learning difficulties may also be ‘able-bodied’. Morris (1993, page x) explains: “the term non-disabled people is used rather than able-bodied people because the point is that people who do not experience physical, sensory or intellectual impairments are not disabled by the prejudice and discrimination which denies opportunities to people who do experience such impairments." Similarly the British movement rejected American terms that revolve around ability, such as ‘differently-abled’ and ‘temporarily able-bodied’ (Rae, 1989).

### “Handicapped”

#### Handicapped is a derogatory term

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

A popular misconception is that the whole of life is a competition, and therefore disabled people are hampered and will not do well.

5.1 ‘Handicapped’ / ‘Mentally Handicapped’

This word was traditionally thought of as having allusions to begging and going ‘cap in hand’ (Barnes, 1992, page 43). However recent work has rejected notion of the word originating from begging, instead tracing its derivation from a 17th century method for setting odds. Crowley and Crowley (1999b) say that the game of ‘handicap’ was first mentioned by that name in 1653, though it was known centuries earlier by the name of ‘Newe Faire’. Basically, one person would challenge another for an article that he owned, and offer something of his own in exchange. If the challenge was accepted, an umpire was chosen to decide the difference of value between the two articles, and all three parties (including the umpire) deposited forfeit-money in a cap or hat. The two contending parties each placed a hand in the cap (hence the name hand i' cap). The umpire then announced how much money was to make up the difference in value between the two items. Both parties then withdrew their hands from the cap at the same time. If either person thought the deal unfair then they would withdraw an open hand, otherwise they would pull out a closed fist. If both parties were in agreement the umpire took all the cash. However if they disagreed then the money went to whoever had been willing for the deal to occur.

The use of the term ‘handicapped’ to refer to a disabled person did not come about until 1915, when a writer used the phrase "the handicapped child". The term rapidly caught on and, by 1919, the educational journal “School and Society” was using the term ‘mentally handicapped’. Disabled people have long since rejected this term as derogatory. In the UK the national organisation of people with learning difficulties, People First, said that ‘mentally handicapped’ has become a term of insult. However these issues have still not dissuaded the non-user led organisation Mencap from using and perpetuating the term (People First, 1992).

### “The Disabled”

#### Using “the disabled” de-humanizes persons

Anna, DisabledFeminists.com writer, 10

(Feminists With Disabilities for a Way Forward, “The Disabled,” June 18, 2010, <http://disabledfeminists.com/2010/06/18/awp-the-disabled/>, Accessed:7/6/12,LPS)

We’re still living in a society that makes a lot of casual assumptions about people with disabilities and their experiences. When people start talking about “the disabled” they are generally about to launch into some sort of stereotype – “the disabled are the pawns of the religious right”, for example. This boils down a lot of complicated people – people who have a wide variety of needs, wants, opinions, thoughts, and experiences – into one homogeneous group. This contributes to the de-humanization of disabled people. “The disabled” aren’t people, they’re a big collective noun who can’t be reasoned with, can’t be talked to, can’t be considered – they’re just to be placated, and dealt with, and put out of our minds as quickly as possible in case they sue us.

#### Using “people with disabilities” solves

Anna, DisabledFeminists.com writer, 10

(Feminists With Disabilities for a Way Forward, “The Disabled,” June 18, 2010, <http://disabledfeminists.com/2010/06/18/awp-the-disabled/>, Accessed:7/6/12,LPS)

Saying “people with disabilities” or “disabled people” may seem like a pretty minor thing. It is, so it shouldn’t be that difficult. The reason for it, though, is that it can be that small reminder: that people with disabilities are people. That disabled people have opinions and thoughts and experiences and needs that are not universal to all people with disabilities. That we are, in fact, people, and it would be nice if we could be treated as such.Language doesn’t change everything. It isn’t an end in and of itself. But it can be the first step in combating the sort of ableism that makes it okay for many people – including editors and writers for major and minor news sources – to dismiss us as pawns without thought.

#### Objectifies and dehumanizes

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

Phrases that dehumanise and objectify disabled people, denying individuality, are also regarded as oppressive by the movement (Barnes, 1992, page 43). Examples include: ‘the disabled’, ‘the blind’, ‘the deaf’ and ‘the deaf and dumb’. Various acts such as the Poor Law (1601) use such terminology: “And also competent Sums of Money for and towards the necessary Relief of the Lame, Impotent, Old, Blind…” There are also numerous examples of this from the bible: "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind…” (Luke 14:13). The acceptable alternatives are, of course, disabled people, blind people, Deaf people, etc.

### “People with Disabilities”

#### Associates disability with impairment while denying political identity

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

The British civil rights movement has rejected the term ‘people with disabilities’, as it implies that the disabling effect rests within the individual person rather than from society. The term ‘disabilities’ when used in this context refers to a person’s medical condition and thus confuses disability with impairment. In addition it denies the political or ‘disability identity’ which emerges from the disabled people’s civil rights movement in a similar way to the Black and Gay political identities (Barnes, 1992, page 43; Oliver and Barnes, 1998, page 18). Indeed some are now going further and writing Disabled with a capital ‘D’, in order to emphasise the word’s political connotations. The Deaf people’s movement largely does not identify with the term ‘disabled people’, instead adopting a cultural model and defining themselves as a linguistic minority. Corker (2002) defines Deaf people as “that group of people with hearing impairments who are excluded from the dominant areas of social and cultural reproduction by the perpetuation of a phonocentric world-view.” Deaf people too have adopted a capital ‘D’ in order to politicise the word.

### Disability

#### There is a sense of shame in the word “disability”

Mont, World Bank, Disability & Development Team, 7

(Daniel, March 2007, “Measuring Disability Prevalence”, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Data/MontPrevalence.pdf> , Pg.7-/ 8, accessed 7-2-12, FFF)

The reasons that this question identifies few people as being disabled are several-fold. First, the word “disability” has very negative connotations. People may feel stigma or shame at identifying themselves as disabled. In fact, in some cultures disability is seen as punishment for transgressions committed in previous lives. According to one author, people can perceive that “At a profoundly serious and spiritual level, disability represents divine justice (Bacquer and Sharma, 1997).” For this reason, the question Do you have a disability? is especially inadequate at picking up mental or psychological disabilities which tend to be particularly stigmatizing and are sometimes more easily hidden. Even if people do not feel stigma, the word “disability” often implies a very significant condition. Persons who can walk around their homes but are incapable of walking to the market may perceive their situation as not severe enough to be considered a disability. 3.9 Finally, disability is interpreted relative to some unspoken cultural standard of what is considered normal functioning. This may vary across various cultures, age groups, or even income groups. For example, elderly people who have significant limitations may not selfidentify as having a disability because in their minds they can function about as well as they expect someone their age to function. However, at the same time they may have significant difficulties performing basic activities.

#### Attempts to define “disability” do not meet societal needs, and just further perpetuate discrimination

Dr. Iezzoni, Harvard Medical School, MD Institute for Health Policy, Dr.Freedman, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Department of Health Systems and Policy, PhD 8

(Lisa I and Vicki A, Journal of the American Medical Association, “Turning the Disability Tide: The Importance of Definitions” January 23, 2008, <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1149278>, Accessed: 7/7/12, LPS).

While recognizing that further work must refine and strengthen the ICF, the IOM recommends adopting its conceptual framework in all US efforts to monitor and measure population disability.1 Doing so would explicitly capture social and environmental contributors to disability, according them the same recognition as medical model factors (ie, individuals' impairments and other deficits). Nonetheless, the IOM acknowledges that a single definition of disability cannot meet societal needs. Just as in earlier eras, society must still decide which individuals merit income support or protection from disability discrimination. These functions require different definitions of disability. Federal and state laws and regulations contain dozens of formal disability definitions for these various purposes. Several prominent definitions are shown in the Article . They draw from the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which mandated civil rights protections for individuals with disabilities; the Social Security Administration, which provides income support for qualifying individuals through Social Security Disability Insurance and which benefits disabled workers; Supplemental Security Income, which supports impoverished disabled individuals20 ; and American Medical Association guidelines, which evaluate permanent impairments used by many workers' compensation programs to assess claimants.21 The ADA definition also recognizes that societal attitudes can prove disabling, whereas other definitions firmly locate disability in diseases, disorders, impairments, and other limitations of individuals. The Social Security Administration, for example, maintains detailed medical definitions to adjudicate its massive entitlement programs.20 ,24**.** Health insurers and much of the health care delivery system remain firmly rooted in classic medical thinking about disability, which does not offer insight into how individuals with disability might participate in daily activities or community life (eg, by eliminating environmental barriers or using assistive technology). Products and services that might address environmental barriers (eg, grab bars, ramps, mobility aids) or promote participation in daily life (eg, eyeglasses, hearing aids, accessible transportation) generally fall beyond boundaries of insurance coverage.1 ,17No single definition of disability will likely ever suffice to meet multiple societal needs. Nonetheless, for setting policies that will affect US population health over coming decades, we advocate a definition like that of the ICF, incorporating both medical and social perspectives. This all-encompassing approach leads to fundamentally different goals, solutions, and targets for interventions and therefore offers the greatest hope to guide policies that might stem the disability tide.

### Disablism v. Disability

#### Disablism is a useful term of art

Reeve, Lancaster University, PhD student 6

(Donna Reeve, September 20, 2006 Department of Applied Social Science, Lancaster University, Disability Studies: Research and Learning “‘Am I a real disabled person or someone with a dodgy arm?’: a discussion of psycho-emotional disablism and its contribution to identity constructions,” <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/disabilityconference_archive/2006/papers/reeve2006.pdf> pg. 2 accessed 7-3-12 BC)

An advantage to using the term disablism as opposed to disability means that discussions about the different forms of social oppression experienced by people with impairments will remain in the realm of the social relational, like the sister terms of racism, sexism and ageism which people are more familiar with.

Disablism operates along different pathways. The structural dimensions of disablism refer to barriers which affect what people can do; for example environmental restrictions which prevent people with impairments physically accessing buildings and social spaces.

On the other hand psycho-emotional dimensions of disablism refer to barriers which affect who people can be; for example dealing with the thoughtless comments and stares of strangers which can leave people with impairments feeling psychologically and emotionally undermined. Whilst disability studies has been excellent at theorising the structural dimensions of disablism, the psycho-emotional dimensions remain relatively understudied (Reeve, 2004a; Thomas, 1999).

# Impacts

## Internal Links

### Ableist Rhetoric Causes Oppression

#### **Ableism acts as a discourse of power and domination**

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

Stuart Hall defines ideology as "the mental frameworks—the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works."[4](http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606%22%20%5Cl%20%22endnote04) This theory of ideology "helps us to analyse how a particular set of ideas comes to dominate the social thinking of a historical block … and maintain its dominance and leadership over society as a whole." Ideology thus described is especially useful for explaining the hierarchical arrangements of dominance and subordination through which society organizes itself. As Hall writes, ideology "has especially to do with the concepts and the languages of practical thought which stabilize a particular form of power and domination; or which reconcile and accommodate the mass of the people to their subordinate place in the social formation."[5](http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606%22%20%5Cl%20%22endnote05) Hall's articulation of ideology is an excellent construct for understanding ableism. Ableism dominates the thinking of our society as a whole and it clearly operates as a discourse of power and domination. Furthermore, ableism becomes most visible as a "mental framework" transmitted through rhetorical devices including language, imagery, and systems of representation.

#### Ableist language produces a hierarchy and power relations

Ben-Moshe, Doctorate in Disabilities studies, 5

(Liat, 4-1-05, The Graduate School, Syracuse University, “Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum,” http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf, accessed: 7-5-2012, p.109, CAS)

As Marxists, feminists and anti-racist activists and scholars have claimed for decades, the world is viewed mostly from the perspective of the rulers, and language is created in their image as well. Therefore, we must not be surprised that the use of disabling language not only persists, but is neither contested nor acknowledged. Disabling language is language that accepts the assumption that disabilities are bad, unfortunate or denote lack/deficiency; that they are invisible and insignificant to society as a whole; and that disabilities belong to the Other and are distinct from what we would term as normal. What this language hides is that there is a power struggle of definitions, that normalcy is culturally determined and everchanging, and that there are more people who are defined as having disabilities than we acknowledge. The question that disability activists and scholars are asking is not who is disabled, but who gets to be defined as blind, mentally retarded or crippled and under what power relations? Using an oppressive abelist language to denote deficiency reproduces the same hierarchy and power relations in the classroom, and renders these phrases unproblematic

### Language Shapes Understanding of Disability

#### **Language shapes the way one identifies people with disabilities**

Roberts, Baylor University, Masters thesis in Communication, 7

(Jeff, *The Rhetorical Structure of Disability: Bridging the Gap Between What is ‘Spoken’ and What is ‘Said’ with Song - Over-Signifying with Personhood Against the Backdrop of Disease-Centric Discourse,* [http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=37&ved=0CGkQFjAGOB4&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbeardocs.baylor.edu%2Fxmlui%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F2104%2F5086%2FJeff\_Roberts\_Masters.pdf%3Fsequence%3D1&ei=hUL3T52RN4SlrQH1j6iLCQ&usg=AFQjCNHd4PB3kECHEjVxxEx07R2Oqb2EBg](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=37&ved=0CGkQFjAGOB4&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbeardocs.baylor.edu%2Fxmlui%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F2104%2F5086%2FJeff_Roberts_Masters.pdf%3Fsequence%3D1&ei=hUL3T52RN4SlrQH1j6iLCQ&usg=AFQjCNHd4PB3kECHEjVxxEx) , Pg. 19, FFF)

Our choice of language in regard to how we identify and discuss individuals with disabilities is incredibly important. Language has the ability to define selfhood, identity and being (Tyler, 1990). Language choice in media and every day speech effects how we become oriented to others and ourselves. The words we use and representations we deploy have the power to change our understanding of others, society, and ourselves. Language creates “otherness” both in our understanding of individuals and others understanding of themselves. With our words, we have the power to both challenge and reify normative assumptions and our interaction with society. People first language is a powerful tool in altering and abstaining from a dominant discourse that creates people with disabilities as “broken” or “inferior,” a societal frame that dis-empowers, discriminates, and is complicit with acts of dehumanization (Szasz, 1997). Just as mental illness has become an important issue in the field of medicine, the language surrounding the issue has significant importance for the field of communication studies where we have a responsibility to investigate harmful discursive practices often overlooked by the medical system that deploys them.

#### Social Images of people with disabilities serve to reinforce barriers

Roberts, Baylor University, Masters Thesis in Communication, 7

(Jeff, The Rhetorical Structure of Disability: Bridging the Gap Between What is ‘Spoken’ and What is ‘Said’ with Song - Over-Signifying with Personhood Against the Backdrop of Disease-Centric Discourse, http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=37&ved=0CGkQFjAGOB4&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbeardocs.baylor.edu%2Fxmlui%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F2104%2F5086%2FJeff\_Roberts\_Masters.pdf%3Fsequence%3D1&ei=hUL3T52RN4SlrQH1j6iLCQ&usg=AFQjCNHd4PB3kECHEjVxxEx07R2Oqb2EBg , Pg. 5-6, FFF)

Fueled by disease-centric rhetoric, the societal image of people with disabilities as “inferior” and “broken” fosters cultural attitudes of pity, anger, and ablest supremacy over people with disabilities. These attitudes create a world of inter-relationships predicated on viral difference and hatred. Within this matrix of interaction the other can never be authentically embraced in its infinity or manifest oneself in accordance to anything but its difference. The individual with a disability is not “monstrous” or “savage” within this world, for radical exoticism is overcome through the domestication of the other. “Difference is what destroys otherness (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 127);” all societal interactions involving people with disabilities become premised on “difference,” and the societal incorporation of such difference accepted out of pity and compassion. The rules governing this symbolic exchange of “structural interaction of difference” assume that there is a proper use of difference, and that otherness can be negotiated (Baudrillard, 1993). This type of acceptance never facilitates an ethical confrontation with the other, nor can it advance full and equal participation in society, for its viral nature only cause’s society itself to draw new lines of demarcation, erect new barriers to equality and find new claims to difference which justifies further segregation. Jean Baudrillard argues “there is no such thing as the proper use of difference (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 130),” and that efforts which attempt to “protect difference” offer no solutions, only serving to threaten communities which society labels as different with annihilation. Baudrillard (1993) further explains:

There is no such thing as the proper use of difference – a fact revealed not only by racism itself but also by all anti-racist and humanitarian efforts to promote and protect differences. Humanitarian ecumenism, the ecumenism of differences, is in a cul-de-sac: the cul-de-sac of the concept of the universal itself. The most recent illustration of this, in France, was the brouhaha over the wearing of headscarves for religious reasons by North African schoolgirls. All the rational arguments mustered in this connection turned out to be nothing but hypocritical attempts to get rid of the simple fact that no solution is to be found in any moral or political theory of difference. It is difference itself that is a reversible illusion…

## Impacts

### Dehumanization

#### Ablist Language is an act of dehumanization

Anna, DisabledFeminists.com writer, 10

(Feminists With Disabilities for a Way Forward, “The Disabled,” June 18, 2010, <http://disabledfeminists.com/2010/06/18/awp-the-disabled/>, Accessed:7/6/12)

Doug S, **it’s almost like people treat having a disability like it’s this horrible thing, and that people with disabilities aren’t human**. That’s the subtext I see in comments about how all words that describe intellectual disabilities are going to turn into insults. Of course they are – **people treat people with disabilities, mental or physical, like they’re subhuman.** Part of **asking people to consider their language** (and really – it’s a request. No one can make you not use these words) **is asking them to consider that people with disabilities exist.** When I see comment after comment elsewhere saying “I hadn’t even HEARD of Ablism!”, I wonder where the heck they’ve been hanging out that there are NO progressive people in their circles talking about people with disabilities. (Then I remember the confusion people look at me at when I go to progressive-focused meetings and ask for things like “wheelchair accessible” locations, and transcripts of videos for the Deaf. \*sigh\*) Part of **bringing up the ablist nature of language is reminding people I would expect to be our natural allies that we exist, we’re not your pity cases,** we’re not here to make you feel better or support whatever notion of “Good Charity” you want. **Most of us our living our lives**. **All we want is some respect for those lives.** Maybe we don’t want to be turned away from voting. Maybe we don’t want to be told that our doctor-prescribed medication is banned from our graduation. Maybe we don’t want to be told that if we get a job, we’ll lose all of our benefits that pay for the care we need to live. Maybe we don’t want to be unable to leave our home because the elevator has been shut down for the next three hours, and no one thought to warn us. Maybe we want some bloody curb cuts. **Maybe we don’t want to be your go-to insult. Pointing out ablist language is part of the advocacy of pointing out we exist.**

### Genocide

#### Rhetoric of Disability is used as justification for genocide

Roberts, Baylor University, Masters thesis in Communication, 7

(Jeff, *The Rhetorical Structure of Disability: Bridging the Gap Between What is ‘Spoken’ and What is ‘Said’ with Song - Over-Signifying with Personhood Against the Backdrop of Disease-Centric Discourse,* [http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=37&ved=0CGkQFjAGOB4&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbeardocs.baylor.edu%2Fxmlui%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F2104%2F5086%2FJeff\_Roberts\_Masters.pdf%3Fsequence%3D1&ei=hUL3T52RN4SlrQH1j6iLCQ&usg=AFQjCNHd4PB3kECHEjVxxEx07R2Oqb2EBg](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=37&ved=0CGkQFjAGOB4&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbeardocs.baylor.edu%2Fxmlui%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F2104%2F5086%2FJeff_Roberts_Masters.pdf%3Fsequence%3D1&ei=hUL3T52RN4SlrQH1j6iLCQ&usg=AFQjCNHd4PB3kECHEjVxxEx) , Pg. 3, FFF)

Congressional legislation, is an area ripe for criticism and study. The inherent social negativity and connotation of difference associated with the term “disability” itself, along with the ways in which that term is deployed to categorize individuals for no other reason than falling outside the social norms of a given time, circumscribes the rhetoric of disability within a unique sphere of power. Historically, the rhetoric of disability has exerted its power overtly as a justification for mass extermination of entire sections of a populationi; allowed for state sponsored forced sterilization in the name of social progressii; and has been actively deployed in an effort to link nearly all social minorities with defect and inferiority so to bolster legitimacy for their oppression. Given the propensity for the rhetoric of disability to play an integral role in violence and atrocity, how then is it possible to maintain an infinite commitment to creating a better world for people with disabilities while simultaneously viewing the legislation aimed at pragmatically achieving such a goal under a lens of strict scrutiny for rejecting dangerous rhetoric? How then would it be possible to overcome the gap between the dangers presented by disease-centric rhetoric in what is “spoken” in legislative texts, and still affirm what is “said” by those same texts attempting to make pragmatic gains for people with disabilities in the spirit of equality?

### Poverty

#### Disability and Poverty are intricately linked

Mont, World Bank, Disability & Development Team, 7

(Daniel, March 2007, “Measuring Disability Prevalence”, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Data/MontPrevalence.pdf> , Pg.7-/ 8, accessed 7-2-12, FFF)

Disability and poverty are intricately interlinked. Poverty can cause disability with its associated malnutrition, poor health services and sanitation, and unsafe living and working conditions. Conversely, the presence of a disability can trap people in a life of poverty because of the barriers disabled people face to taking part in education, employment, social activities, and indeed all aspects of life.

### Violence

#### Turn – using the rhetoric of disability props up the cultural norm of violence

Goodley, Psychology and Disability professor and Runswick-Cole, Psychology Research Associate; Manchester Metropolitan University, 11

 [Dan Goodley, and Katherine Runswick-Cole, 2011, Sociology of Health & Illness, “The violence of disablism,” volume: 33, http://s3.amazonaws.com/files.posterous.com/temp-2011-07-13/GqxdylmeDalzCndgChbxDDcxwyiuwnrwbamIgnyileElnygJjxsGoxovmCby/goodley\_and\_runswick\_cole\_violence.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJFZAE65UYRT34AOQ&Expires=1341100909&Signature=n5u9enn1d%2FUFUCp0ipKdk8RJXM8%3D, pg. 8, accessed 7/1/12, JTF]

In the formalised routine of professional assessment this mother is incited to articulate an abnormal version of her child. Parents have reported to us many times that often it is less effort and more convenient to explain their children’s health, demeanour, comportment or behaviour in terms of culturally acceptable disability discourses than to offer more enabling alternatives. While parents do resist – as we can see in this account above – it is often easy to explain away the ontological make-up of their children in terms of sticky labels such as ‘oh, he’s being autistic’ or ‘forgive him, he’s ADHD’ or ‘it’s his impairment’, because these are culturally acceptable and expected ways of describing the ontologies of disabled children. Indeed, as Reeve (2002, 2008) and Thomas (1997, 2007) have noted, these cultural discourses (‘out there’ in the social world) inform internalised conversations about disability (‘in there’ of the psychological worlds of disabled children and their families). These cultural expectations threaten to promote ontological attacks on disabled people: viciously othering and marking the beings of disabled children and their families. The responses of non-disabled others to disabled children and their families described in the accounts above are not responses of demonic, violent, bad nor evil others. They are responses perfectly compatible with a culture of disablism that pathologises difference, individualises impairment and maintains ableism. This culture appears to equate proper care for disabled children with that of full time mothering. This culture places educational, health and social care professionals who work with disabled children in often low paid, high pressured and exacting conditions of employment. This culture has clear sight of what makes for normal childhood and what constitutes abnormality. Our view, then, is that these accounts of psychoemotional violence take place in cultures and systems. We follow Zizek’s (2008: 53) point that attending only to subjective violence – enacted by social agents or evil individuals – ignores the more systemic roots of violence. We move our analysis up a notch to systemic violence.

#### Violence against people with disabilities reflects the violent culture of society as a whole.

Goodley, Psychology and Disability professor and Runswick-Cole, Psychology Research Associate; Manchester Metropolitan University, 11

[Dan Goodley, and Katherine Runswick-Cole, 2011, Sociology of Health & Illness, “The violence of disablism,” volume: 33, http://s3.amazonaws.com/files.posterous.com/temp-2011-07-13/GqxdylmeDalzCndgChbxDDcxwyiuwnrwbamIgnyileElnygJjxsGoxovmCby/goodley\_and\_runswick\_cole\_violence.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJFZAE65UYRT34AOQ&Expires=1341100909&Signature=n5u9enn1d%2FUFUCp0ipKdk8RJXM8%3D, pg. 3, accessed 6/30/12, JTF]

Shakespeare’s reﬂexive account captures the multi-faceted nature of the violence of disablism. He asks, when does hate crime begin and bullying stop? How can we separate ignorance and hatred? Is violence against disabled people deeply ingrained in the psyches, social relationships and cultural practices of members of contemporary society? In this article we consider the ways in which violence against disabled people – speciﬁcally children and their families – reﬂects a trenchant dimension of culture; in this case disablist culture. Drawing, in part, on Zizek’s (2008) book Violence, we come to the conclusion that violence experienced by disabled children and their families says more about the dominant culture of disablism, and its effects upon the subjectivities of people, than it does of the acts of a few seemingly irrational, mad, bad or mean violent individuals. Those that enact violence against disabled children should be understood in ways that recognise that the being of people is a sociosymbolic or culturally formed being (Zizek 2008: 62). Disabled people experience violence because of contemporary society’s deeply held contradictory discourses about disability. While Shakespeare (2010), did not want to think that the protagonists of hate crime could be so vile, we did not want to think that acts against disabled children reﬂected common circulating practices of a contemporary culture of disablism. Sadly, accounts from our research suggest that we were wrong

### Vs. Race/Gender Arguments

#### Dooms their political action—eliminates the potential of ableist resistance

May & Ferri, Syracuse Feminism and Disability studies Professors, 5

(Vivian M, Beth A, “Fixated on Ability: Questioning Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Theories of Resistance,” 2005, Prose Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1&2 April-August 2005, pp. 120-140, <http://syr.academia.edu/BethFerri/Papers/160692/Fixated_on_Ability_Questioning_Ableist_Metaphors_in_Feminist_Theories_of_Resistance>, Date Accessed: 7/5, JS)

All of these rhetorical uses of disability to identify and critique systems of domination rely on concepts of disability that are negative, simplistic, and utilitarian. This precludes any possibility for recognizing complexity and nuance in people with disabilites’ phenomenological and political identities and experiences. Stereotypical notions of blindness, mental illness, and paralysis are invoked in the examples above in order to underscore the workings of privilege and power without acknowledging disability as also constructed in and through power. Not only do people with disabilities disappear: ableism as a systemic form of domination and privilege with its own ability to skew perceptions and perpetuate inequity is not even implicitly included in the analyses. Disability, in other words, is not really considered as part of an intersectional politics or a core aspect of coalition-building for change: it has pedagogical value for highlighting the negative repercussions of unearned privileges other than those associated with ableism. However, feminist theorists do not only use analogies to disability to identify various unacknowledged forms of privilege and power. Many critical race-gender theorists also invoke disability to highlight the negative and destructive effects of oppression, to characterize how oppression can be internalized, and to urge others to reject given social hierarchies. For example, emphasizing the costs of a colonized imagination, Nada Elia explains, “Living at one remove from oneself is indeed a handicap” (230). Others link the destructive results of internalized racism to a “stumbling mind” (Cervantes 5) or to being “muted” and “paralyzed” (Lugones 49, 53).Gloria Anzaldu´a asserts that internalized racism “mutilates and stunts your life” because your personhood is “chopped off at the knees” ( Haciendo caras xix; En rapport 207). In her later work, Anzaldu´a continues to use ableist notions of paralysis to characterize a “stuck” consciousness. She writes, “Coyolxauhqui’s luz pulls you from the pit of your grief. Realizing that you always use the same tactics, repeat the same behaviors in each stage, breaks your paralysis” ( Now 253–54).The thread of connection across these examples is of course the slippage between disability and ignorance or the assumption that to be crippled is to be unable to move or act. In all of these examples in which oppression is linked to illness and dis/ease, the analogies position the source of disability oppression as impairment itself. Once again, there is little to no understanding of disability as resulting from social structures and objectifying knowledge practices that create disabilities out of corporeal differences. In other words, although racism and sex ism are seen as socially produced, disability remains as an absolute state, both a political and a social—it is the source of its own oppression.

### Vs. Oppression Impacts

#### Their rhetoric reinforces the systems of oppression they claim to challenge

Wheelchair Dancer, 4/28/8

(“On Making Argument: Disability and Language”, <http://cripwheels.blogspot.com/2008/04/on-making-argument-disability-and.html> Accessed 7/10/12)

Relying on the figurative value of disability metaphors tends to render disabled people invisible; it cuts us out of the conversation. And we are a part of those communities -- a necessary part. Disability IS a feminist issue and vice versa (think choice, think end of life, think pre-natal testing, think any part of body autonomy). The constructions and experiences of disability in a divergence of racial and ethnic communities are important to us -- for the disability civil rights movement is mainly white. We who are feminist, of colour, and of disability are critical to the conversation, but, to quote [Vicki Lewis](http://www.tcg.org/publications/at/2001/metaphor.cfm), we disabled folk are not your metaphor.
And we do experience the exclusion from the conversation in many of the same ways discussed over and over again in the past weeks. Personally, I get tired of trying to bring the disability angle to the table -- others I know do, too. As a movement, in our daily lives, and even as a scholarly field in the hallowed halls of academia, disability and disabled people have yet to be recognized as full participants in the conversations about intersecting identities, power, the body, etc. etc.
In the disability movement, we often talk about interdependence and the way all humans are dependent, in some ways, on each other. We use these terms as a way of countering the very material point that disabled people are dependent, non contributing burdens on society, and we use it to challenge the narratives of able-bodied American self-sufficiency. I can't speak for a very diverse movement, but, to me, one of the signature disability moves is to look for a collaboration that acknowledges the interdependence of all peoples while respecting and valuing their differences. There is no logical need for one of us to leverage off the other: collaboration not competition floats more boats on a rising tide.
So, the next time you need to make an argument about the value of your particular minoritized group, its place in society and culture, its history, etc., I'd ask you to look down and check whose broken back (metaphorically speaking, of course) you are standing on.

# Alternative

### Solvency

#### Ableism requires a shift in orientation, to realize ones everyday ableist ways

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

Recognizing ableism requires a shift in orientation, a perceptual gestalt framed by the filter of the term "ableism" itself. The same texts that broadcast "Ableism!" to those oriented to perceive it are usually read innocently even when viewed from a liberal, humanitarian, or progressive perspective. Ableism is so pervasive that it is difficult to identify until one begins to interrogate the governing assumptions of well-intentioned society. Within the space allowed by these rhetorical premises, ableism appears natural, necessary, and ultimately moral discrimination required for the normal functioning of civilization. Consider a set of stairs. An ableist culture thinks little of stairs, or even sees them as elegant architectural devices—especially those grand marble masterpieces that elevate buildings of state. But disability rights activists see stairs as a discriminatory apparatus—a "no crips allowed" sign that only those aware of ableism can read—that makes their inevitable presence around government buildings a not-so-subtle statement about who belongs in our most important public spaces. But the device has become so accepted in our culture that the idea of stairs as oppressive technology will strike many as ludicrous. Several years ago when I began to study ableism, a professor—unconvinced of the value of the project—questioned my developing arguments by pointing to a set of steps and exclaiming, "Next you'll be telling me that those stairs discriminate!" He was right.

The professor's surprise suggests that commonplace cultural assumptions support themselves because the very arguments available against them seem unwarranted and invalid. Interrogating stairs was such an outrageous idea that a simple reductio ad absurdum argument depicted the critique of ableism as a fallacy. As an ingrained part of the interpretive frameworks sanctioned by culture, ableism gets reinforced by the everyday practice of interpreting and making sense of the world. Using this idea of what ableism does at the intersection of rhetoric and ideology, I next develop a way of understanding how it operates. I argue that this way of conceiving ableist thinking as rhetorical practice identifies potential approaches for challenging ableism.

### Floating PIC Solves the Aff

#### Vote for us to reject the Ableist rhetoric they have used to justify the plan, not exclusive with acting to increase infrastructure investment

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

Finally, focusing on ableism as rhetoric makes rhetorical responses more attractive. Political rhetoric seems much less empty when one understands that the problems confronted are also rhetorical in nature. The problem is not that deviance is bad, it is that ableism teaches seeing it that way. The problem is not that being abnormal is unnatural, it is that ableism teaches valuing normalcy that way. The problem is not that ability resides in the body, and that a body with different skills is inherently unable to function in society, it is that ableism teaches knowing ability that way. Confronting ableism as visual, ideological, and epistemic problems does not require us to set aside efforts to change the material order of society—such as working to provide access to public spaces—but it does empower disability literature, art, slogans, and protests as crucial to the effort to change what disability means.

### Ballot Matters

#### Changing Ableist Rhetoric is possible

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

If we locate the problem in disability, then the ableist absolves his or her responsibility for discrimination and may not even recognize its presence. If we locate the problem in ableism, then the ableist must question her or his orientation. The critic's task is to make ableism so apparent and irredeemable that one cannot practice it without incurring social castigation. This requires substantial vigilance, for ableist thinking pervades the culture. For example, as I write this, I am tempted to use medical metaphors to explain the task and script something like "we cannot simply excise the tumor of ableism and heal the culture, for it has metastasized and infiltrated every organ of society." Yet this metaphor relies on an ableist perspective that motivates with the fear of death and turns to medical solutions to repair a body in decay. Using it, I would endorse and perpetuate ableist rhetoric, just as I would by using deafness as a metaphor for obstinacy ("Marie was deaf to their pleas for bread") or blindness to convey ignorance ("George turned a blind eye to global warming"). The pervasiveness of these and similar metaphors, like the cultural ubiquity of using images of disabled bodies to inspire pity, suggest the scale of the work ahead, and the ease with which one can resort to using them warns of the need for critical evaluation of one's own rhetoric. Yet the task can be accomplished. Just as feminists have changed Western culture by naming and promoting recognition of sexism, the glass ceiling, and patriarchy—admittedly a work in progress, yet also one that can celebrate remarkable achievements—we can reform ableist culture by using rhetoric to craft awareness and political action.

# Framework

### Voting Issue

#### Because Debate is a scholastic activity grounded in public discourse and critical thinking, this must be a Voting Issue

Ben-Moshe, Ph.D. student in Sociology, Disability Studies and Women Studies at Syracuse University 5

(Liat,, “Lame Idea”: Disabling Language in the Classroom,” in Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability into the University Classroom and Curriculum, [Http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf](http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf))

When we use terms like “retarded,” “lame” or “blind”— even if we are referring to acts or ideas and not to people at all— we perpetuate the stigma associated with disability. By using a label which is commonly associated with disabled people to denote a deficiency, a lack or an ill-conceived notion, we reproduce the oppression of people with disabilities. As educators, we must be aware of the oppressive power of “everyday” language and try to change it. False Beliefs Contained in Disabling Phrases We learn about disability through everyday use of language. In the same way that racist or sexist attitudes, whether implicit or explicit, are acquired through the “normal” learning process, so too are negative assumptions about disabilities and the people who are labeled as having them. Our notions of people who are blind, deaf or labeled as mentally retarded come into play when we use disabling phrases, and these notions are usually far from accurate. They do not convey the complexity of living in a society that regards people with disabilities as the Other on the basis of perceived mentally or bodily difference. The use of disability as a metaphor perpetuates false beliefs about the nature of impairment and disability. People who are blind, for example, do not lack in knowledge; they simply have different ways of obtaining it. Paralysis does not necessarily imply lack of mobility, stagnancy or dependence since there are augmentative instruments, such as wheelchairs and personal aids, that secure independence and mobility. The continued use of disabling language in the classroom perpetuates ignorance and misconceptions in regards to the lived experience of people with disabilities. Power Relations in the Classroom As Marxists, feminists and anti-racist activists and scholars have claimed for decades, the world is viewed mostly from the perspective of the rulers, and language is created in their image as well. Therefore, we must not be surprised that the use of disabling language not only persists, but is neither contested nor acknowledged. Disabling language is language that accepts the assumption that disabilities are bad, unfortunate or denote lack/deficiency; that they are invisible and insignificant to society as a whole; and that disabilities belong to the Other and are distinct from what we would term as normal. What this language hides is that there is a power struggle of definitions, that normalcy is culturally determined and ever-changing, and that there are more people who are defined as having disabilities than we acknowledge. The question that disability activists and scholars are asking is not who is disabled, but who gets to be defined as blind, mentally retarded or crippled and under what power relations? Using an oppressive abelist language to denote deficiency reproduces the same hierarchy and power relations in the classroom, and renders these phrases unproblematic. Disability is not a metaphor. It is an identity. Using disability as a metaphor to represent only negative aspects of a situation is problematic. It is made worse by the fact that blindness, deafness, paralysis, etc., are not floating signifiers, but have real referents behind them—people with disabilities. When using disabling language, we do not only de-value the lived experience of people with disabilities, but we also appropriate these lived experiences for our own use.

### AT: Case Outweighs

#### Theory precedes policymaking

Lang, University of East Anglia, Senior Research Associate Overseas Development Group, 1

(Dr. Raymond, January, “The Development And Critique Of The Social Model Of Disability”,

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lc-ccr/lccstaff/raymond-lang/DEVELOPMMENT_AND_CRITIQUE_OF_THE_SOCIAL_MODEL_OF_D.pdf>, accessed 7/7/12, sl)

The social model of disability should not be considered as a monolithic entity, but rather as a cluster of approaches to the understanding of the notion of disablement. As will be demonstrated below, different variants of the model ascribe differing and relative importance to a multiplicity of factors that result in the oppression and discrimination that disabled people experience. However, common to all variants of the social model is the belief that, at root, “disability” and “disablement” are socio-political constructions. It is therefore the inhospitable physical environment, in concert with the negative social attitudes that disabled people encounter which result in the systematic oppression, exclusion and discrimination of disabled people.

It can therefore be appreciated that the consideration of the theoretical understandings of disability are not solely of semantic, academic interest. The manner in which disability is popularly perceived has a profound impact upon the way in which “stakeholders” are considered (by disabled person’s organisations, policy makers and NGOs alike) to have a legitimate role in deciding how resources are distributed. The manner in which disability has been variously conceptualised, with the resultant ramifications for the provision of disability services, has become a highly emotive and politically charged issue.

### AT: Cede the Political

#### Attending to discourse IS Political

Cowley, Syracuse University, doctoral candidate in Special Education and Disability Studies, 12

(Danielle, “Life Writing, Resistance, and the Politics of Representation: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Eli Clare's ‘Learning to Speak’”, Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies, Volume 6, Number 1,

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\_of\_literary\_and\_cultural\_disability\_studies/v006/6.1.cowley.htmlaccessed 7/8/12, sl)

By paying attention to discourse, we discover that language is social and political. The narratives and counternarratives produced through language determine how individuals make meaning of difference and disability. By examining the cultural models present in various discourses one can uncover "how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world" (Scott 25). I ask what narratives and counternarratives are shared through "Learning to Speak" and how Clare's use of language politically disrupts the dominant discourse of difference.

### AT: Language Doesn’t Matter

#### Ableist speech acts goes unrecognized, should respond to it the same way we would racism or sexism in debates

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

Whatever the factual (or material, or empirical, or scientific) status of disability, my only concern here is the concept's meaning. Disability is a loaded term, weighted down with tools and supplies sufficient for the task of making difference. Such baggage begs to be unpacked. But the project quickly becomes complicated because the ropes that bind the luggage are largely invisible as common sense. Racism and sexism may have no legitimate place in this "civilized" world, but the precepts governing modern civility continue to allow an ableist orientation. This requires those who would undermine ableist thinking to step outside of the rhetorical foundations bounded by ableist assumptions in order to recognize ableism as a destructive and dangerous perspective. In rhetorical terms, the problem is one of studying from within a rhetoric that denies its own rhetoricity.

#### Disabling language perpetuates ignorance and misconceptions in regards to the lived experience of people with disabilities

Ben-Moshe, Doctorate in Disabilities studies, 5

(Liat, 4-1-05, The Graduate School, Syracuse University, “Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum,” http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf, accessed: 7-5-2012, p.109, CAS)

We learn about disability through everyday use of language. In the same way that racist or sexist attitudes, whether implicit or explicit, are acquired through the “normal” learning process, so too are negative assumptions about disabilities and the people who are labeled as having them. Our notions of people who are blind, deaf or labeled as mentally retarded come into play when we use disabling phrases, and these notions are usually far from accurate. They do not convey the complexity of living in a society that regards people with disabilities as the Other on the basis of perceived mentally or bodily difference. The use of disability as a metaphor perpetuates false beliefs about the nature of impairment and disability. People who are blind, for example, do not lack in knowledge; they simply have different ways of obtaining it. Paralysis does not necessarily imply lack of mobility, stagnancy or dependence since there are augmentative instruments, such as wheelchairs and personal aids, that secure independence and mobility. The continued use of disabling language in the classroom perpetuates ignorance and misconceptions in regards to the lived experience of people with disabilities.

### Language Determines Reality

May & Ferri, Syracuse Feminism and Disability studies Professors, 5

(Vivian M, Beth A, “Fixated on Ability: Questioning Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Theories of Resistance,” 2005, Prose Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1&2 April-August 2005, pp. 120-140, <http://syr.academia.edu/BethFerri/Papers/160692/Fixated_on_Ability_Questioning_Ableist_Metaphors_in_Feminist_Theories_of_Resistance>, Date Accessed: 7/5, JS)

By critiquing exclusionary practices within libratory theoretical, pedagogical, or historical frames of reference, we hope to have illustrated the radical possibilities of a transformative, rather than tokenizing, methodological and rhetorical inclusion. We remain hopeful that Lorraine Code’s “empathy at its best” and Megan Boler’s “testimonial” relations are possible. We have come across a few examples in our reading. For example, Anzaldu´a describes “blank spots” to describe gaps in knowledge as well as the selective reality induced by privilege ( Haciendo xxi). Margrit Shildrick uses the term “disenabled” to discuss how systems of domination simultaneously enable some at the expense of others (116). And Nancy Mairs quips, with humorous redeployment, “as a cripple, I swagger” ( Plaintext 9).Rather than advocating a “cure” for wayward language use, we are suggesting the need for more nuanced uses of language and metaphor that do not characterize people with disabilities in stereotypical, one-dimensional ways. Because language does not merely reﬂect reality but constructs it, we must be thoughtful about the politics of our words if we want to enact the kinds of social transformation we say we do. In order to promote changed social relations, we must continue to create new ways of linking our experiences and recognizing and accepting our differences in ways that retain and encourage an ambiguous, intersubjective ethic between self and other.

#### **Rhetoric plays a significant role in perception**

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

From the perspective of ableism as a framework of interpretation, we identify its dimensions by examining the linguistic codes and rhetorical assumptions that govern sense making. As Burke put it, "We discern situational patterns by means of the particular vocabulary of the cultural group into which we are born. Our minds, as linguistic products, are composed of concepts (verbally molded) which select certain relationships as meaningful." In other words, meaning exists primarily as a function of language rather than a natural or necessary consequent of material objects or bodies. Our comprehension of reality itself arises from our perspective, so "different frameworks of interpretation will lead to different conclusions as to what reality is."[8](http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606%22%20%5Cl%20%22endnote08)

# 2NC Answers to Aff Arguments

### AT: Perm – Do Both

#### Still links to the net benefit by including the objectionable rhetoric -

#### No warrant for including these representations, we have a responsibility not to use them

Smith, associate prof of int'l relations and comparative politics U. Alberta, 6

(walinda, - Beyond the 'African Tragedy:' Discourses on Development and the Global Economy - p 22)

Finally, the critical discourse analysis of 'tragedy' also revealed that words have meanings and evoke feelings, both of which can have implications for certain courses of action or inaction. The exploration of tragedy in the works of Leys and Arrighi. Two critical scholars sympathetic to the African condition, remind us that as critical scholars we have a responsibility not to tell our stories using the language and tools of the master, or as Audre Lorde wrote some two decades ago, 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'. My. hope is that these reflections and the chapters in this volume will further stimulate debate in the larger interest of human development, indigenous forms of governance and democratic accountability across the African political space.

### AT: Perm – Reject in Other Instances

#### Rejection in Other instances doesn’t solve, avoids accountability

Cherney, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor 11

(James L, 2011, Disability Studies Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”,Vol 31, No 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, accessed 7-4-12 FFF)

When we first encounter the name "ableism," we understand it by analogy to words like sexism, by our knowledge of its apparent roots ("able" and "ism"), and by the rules for combining roots into words. A possible referent at this stage is hate crime against, abusive or mocking behavior toward, or Nazi Germany's genocide of people with disabilities. Targeted here, many find ableism easy to reject and use the term to describe a distasteful way of acting. Ableism becomes problematic when individuals come across a case where their own seemingly benign opinions might be labeled "ableist." Using the label to identify an act or an opinion that fits within one's own orientation requires individuals to reconcile their own sense of self worth and their judgment of the issue in question.

This neologist method of critiquing an antirhetorical rhetoric has certain advantages over other alternatives. In this approach empathy and understanding become tools in the struggle against ableism, for recognizing in oneself motives behind actions previously ascribed solely to the Other generates far more pressure to examine and explain those motives than when they can be quickly dismissed as somebody else's problem. We can think of the Other as a two-dimensional being, driven by indiscernible, illogical, and unrealistic ideas, but we resist thinking about ourselves in this way. Finding similarities between our thoughts and those we ascribe to Others not only allows us a measure of empathy and understanding, it expands our awareness of our own unexamined biases. Furthermore, this method maintains a process perspective of language and its relationship to thought. It is not necessary to have a complete understanding of ableism before beginning to recognize it, for that understanding can grow and evolve. Finally, this explanation puts the emphasis on one's perspective, orientation, or worldview. Naming ableism in these terms allows us to recognize it as a rhetorical construct, sustained by articulation and iteration, and open to transformation by these same techniques.

### AT: It’s Just a Metaphor

May & Ferri, Syracuse Feminism and Disability studies Professors, **5**

(Vivian M, Beth A, “Fixated on Ability: Questioning Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Theories of Resistance,” 2005, Prose Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1&2 April-August 2005, pp. 120-140, <http://syr.academia.edu/BethFerri/Papers/160692/Fixated_on_Ability_Questioning_Ableist_Metaphors_in_Feminist_Theories_of_Resistance>, Date Accessed: 7/5, JS)

Before exploring questions of disability and language use more fully, we want to clarify that we are using the terms analogy and metaphor broadly to mean ways of thinking or arguing that borrow from one set of experiences or identities to explore the characteristics of another. However, as Devon Carbado argues, such rhetorical strategies can set up a “discourse of equivalents” which often “falsely disaggregates”intersecting identities (289–90). In other words, like Iris Marion Young, we contend that “this idea of symmetry in our relation obscures the difference and particularity of the other position” (44). Borrowing from or paralleling as symmetrical different sets of experiences often entails unstated assumptions of reversibility or universality among subjects—a “circular relation [that] displaces and silences the other as she might speakin a different, incommensurable register” (Luce Irigaray in Young 44). Lorraine Code describes these ways of thinking, which seem to be avenues of connection, as “a system of metaphorics” which create seamless universality by eradicating particularity and difference. In other words, bridging differences and forging collectivity often relies upon an “instituted social imaginary” comprised of a “complex of interlocking assumptions that presume universal human sameness and discount singular experience at the limits of what the society deﬁnes as thinkable” ( Rational 272).This rhetorical and epistemological method of bridging, which can be overt as well as implicit, can be enacted through the use of metaphor, simile, adjective, analogy, and more. Here, we are primarily interested here in what “analogical” borrowing or bridging violates or does not allow, in what gets glossed over or ignored and in what gets reiﬁed by means of the analogy. As Geraldine Pratt writes, in thinking about metaphors of space and place in feminist discourse, “Metaphors are . . . representational strategies that help us to think and articulate ways of being . . . ., they open up some avenues of thought and necessarily close down others” (13).Again, by highlighting some “areas of closure” (13) that emerge in feminist Theorists’ uses of disability, our goal is not curative or remedial—rather, we want a more thoughtful and varied conceptualization of disability and of intersectional politics to be put into play. In addition, because emotions are ways of knowing, we are interested in the nature and kind of emotional links created through analogy, for “our emotions reveal the moral dimensions of our relationships—in particular, . . . emotions reveal how seriously we take the concerns of others, what we take to be our responsibility for others’ plights, and the extent to which we regard others as even having points of view we need to take seriously” (Spelman, Fruits 99–100). Finally, we are interested in the underlying notions of understanding and perception enacted by analogizing that need to be troubled, or at the very least, revisited. As general rhetorical and epistemological practices, analogies and metaphors are so common they often go unnoticed as if they were “dead”—seemingly without origin or history (Mairs, The View 215). We therefore ﬁnd it necessary to begin by addressing the question, “What are some of the risks of analogy, anyway?” Ellen Samuels, for example, notes the “vexed issue of analogy . . . [which] cannot be extracted from the tangled history of the use and abuse of such identity analogies in past liberation movements” (234). Borrowing “evidence” from somebody else’s experiences of, say racism, to illuminate our own experiences of sexism or homophobia can be a form of what Spelman describes as “boomerang perception”—I take one look at another and come right back to myself ( Inessential 12). This way of thinking about differences does not require one to depart in any way from oneself: instead, another’s difference becomes a means of shoring up the self-same. The difference in experience or corporeality becomes deﬁned by its mirror-function. María Lugones argues that this way of reading another and her experiences can be understood as an “arrogant” rather than “loving” and “world-traveling” form of perception (390–95). Lugones underscores that within frames of arrogant perception, her person gets turned into a tool for another’s analysis. Similarly, Paul Longmore critiques the pedagogical function and mode of address of charity telethons. Telethons display people with disabilities as “less fortunate and afﬂicted” and encourage the grateful and “fortunate” viewer to feel better about him/herself by acting in a benevolent way to help redeem others by means of a cure. Therefore another problem with the “boomerang” involved in analogizing is that its rhetorical and epistemological structure relies upon notions of use, of using other persons and/or their experiences. In other words, analogy can be a means of objectifying or exploiting others. This creates and requires distance between selves and worlds even though it seems like a form of connection, of bringing differences together. Moreover, the comparative nature of analogical thinking requires that we conceptually retain each “side” of the analogy as separate and distinctly different. Thus, analogy relies on given categories of differentiation, identity, and experience, in order to work. These categories (and their distinctness or separateness, rather than their interactive, intersecting qualities) become further naturalized with each comparative use. Our concern is that this sedimentation impedes our capacity to rethink relations between systems of domination and between self and other in more radical ways. An over-reliance on stale modes of address reiﬁes disability as a problem/need or as a “vehicle of other people’s redemption” (Longmore), which stymies possibilities for imagining alternatives or for re-deploying disability metaphors in ironic or agential ways that disrupt simplistic equivalences between disability and social death. In addition to the fairly abstract issue of upholding as “real” constructed categories of experience and identity, such that their nuances, contexts, and interconnected histories disappear, the other problem with analogies involves the conceptual separation required for them to work. Consider again race-sex analogies, which many have critiqued, the most infamous query perhaps being that of Sojourner Truth asking, “and ain’t I a woman?” (36) As Jean Fagan Yellin, for instance, demonstrates in her book, Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture , 19th and 20thcentury U.S. race-sex analogies required homogenous notions of race and of sex or gender to work, an insight also suggested by the provocative title of the book, All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women’s Studies .Because race is understood to signify black men and gender white women, black women disappear altogether. Spelman therefore argues that analogies tend to support a dualist metaphysics in which each aspect of our identities seems like a separate “bead” in a pull-apart “pop-bead necklace” ( Inessential 15, 136). Moreover, because race-sex analogies tend to reify “race” as non-whiteness and “gender” as non-maleness, those who live with and gain advantage from privilege remain unmarked by race and/or gender. Thus not only do black women, for example, disappear in the context of 19thand20thcentury race-sex analogies, but the intersectional nature of identity, the insidious workings of power, and the complexity of simultaneous privilege and oppression (Barbara Smith xxxii) all become impossible to consider. Within race-sex analogies, then, it becomes difﬁcult to acknowledge the fact that we are all raced and gendered and that these are imbricated not separable identities and experiences. Of course, another dilemma with analogy stems from its reliance on duality, of two elements in comparison: the intersectional nature of more than two categories of identity or experience is impossible to consider. Race-sex analogies therefore tend to suppress anything that doesn’t seem to be “about” race or gender: class, sexuality, nation, disability, and more, are obscured and intersectional approaches to change are hindered by a sequential, dualist approach.

### AT: “We Didn’t Mean it Like *That*”

Smith, Co-Founder Feminists with disabilities for a way forward, 9

(s.e., FWD (feminists with disabilities) for a way forward , “What We Talk About When We Talk About Language”, <http://disabledfeminists.com/2009/10/16/what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-language/>, accessed 7/8/12, sl)

There are a lot of things we talk about when we talk about language, of course, but it’s worth highlighting something important: when we talk about language, we don’t talk about what it used to mean, or what it is supposed to mean, or what you think it means. We talk about how society uses language, right now. Because it’s the social use of language which can turn language into a weapon, and it’s the engrained nature of ableist language which makes it so harmful.

One of the most common defenses I see of ableist language is “well, it doesn’t mean that anymore.”

So, my question is, what does it mean?

One of the things I like to do when I am illustrating why language is exclusionary is I plug in a commonly-known original meaning of the word in question into a sentence. Let’s take “lame,” which is generally taken to mean “has difficulty walking” or “limps,” although the original use was actually just “broken.”

So, if someone says “this television show is lame” and you turn the sentence into “this television show has difficulty walking,” it doesn’t really make sense, right? Just like when you say “this social activity which I am being forced to do by my parent is a homosexual man,” it doesn’t really make sense. And this should tell you something. It should tell you that the word you are using has an inherently pejorative meaning.

Which means, actually, you’re totally right when you say a word “doesn’t mean that anymore.” In fact, it’s gone from being a value neutral term used to describe a state of being to being a pejorative. A pejorative so universally accepted that you can expect users to understand exactly what you mean when you say it. When you say “this television show is lame” you mean it’s bad, not worth your time, boring, etc., and here’s the trick: People understand that meaning and they derive it from the word that you have used, because that word is universally accepted as objectively bad.

### AT: Re-appropriation

#### Using disabling language de-values people with disabilities

Ben-Moshe, Doctorate in Disabilities studies, 5

(Liat, 4-1-05, The Graduate School, Syracuse University, “Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum,” http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf, accessed: 7-5-2012, p.110, CAS)

Using disability as a metaphor to represent only negative aspects of a situation is problematic. It is made worse by the fact that blindness, deafness, paralysis, etc., are not floating signifiers, but have real referents behind them—people with disabilities. When using disabling language, we do not only de-value the lived experience of people with disabilities, but we also appropriate these lived experiences for our own use. This means that disabled people have been presented as socially flawed able-bodied people, not as people with our own identities. As responsible instructors, we must ask ourselves, when was the last time we discussed disability in our classrooms, not as metaphors, but as lived experiences?

### AT: Language Policing Bad

#### Calls to stop using exclusionary pejoratives make language more precise

Smith, Co-Founder Feminists with disabilities for a way forward, 9

(s.e., FWD (feminists with disabilities) for a way forward , “What We Talk About When We Talk About Language”, <http://disabledfeminists.com/2009/10/16/what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-language/>, accessed 7/8/12, sl)

People often accuse people like me of being “language police.” I’ve been informed that addressing exclusionary language is limiting, too restrictive, etc. That’s not actually the case. Being aware of my own language use has, in fact, enriched my use of the English language, because it has forced me to actually think about what I am saying and how I say it. And I grew up in the household of an English professor, so I know my English.

Instead of using an exclusionary pejorative, why not find a word use which actually describes what we mean?

That guy who cut me off at the intersection the other day wasn’t an idiot. He was arrogant, perhaps. He may also have been reckless, thoughtless, careless, unobservant, or possibly just a moldering toe-rag. But he wasn’t an idiot. So, why would I use the word “idiot” to describe him? And why would I tolerate that word from someone else?

Using inclusionary language is actually fun. You get to explore the roots of words you use, you get to find new and exciting words to use, and you get to learn more about the structure of a language you speak every day. It constantly amazes me to see how quickly exclusionary terms trip to my tongue when I’m in a hurry, because they are so ingrained as appropriate pejoratives. I’m actually relishing the process of eradicating them from my spoken and written language, because I love words and language play.

# Aff Answers

## No Link

### “Disabled People”

#### “Disabled people” best indicates a social understanding

Clark and Marsh, Disability activists, 2

(Laurence and Stephen, “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark%2C%20Laurence/language.pdf), accessed 7/9/12, sl)

Traditionally it is thought that a disabled person’s medical condition was the root cause of their exclusion from society, an approach now referred to as the medical or Disabilities’ individual model of disability. Social exclusion led to inadequate policies and legislation, inappropriate attitudes, a poor stereotyped media image and inaccessible buildings and information. In the mid-seventies a new way of thinking about disability emerged from the disabled people’s civil rights movement called the social model of disability or barriers approach (Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation, 1976; Oliver, 1983). This stated that disabled people are those people with impairments who experience barriers within society. It redefined disability as pertaining to the disabling effect of society, rather than the functioning of people’s minds, bodies and senses, by making the following definitions (Barnes, 1991, page 2): a) Impairment is a physical, mental or sensory functional limitation within the individual. b) Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers. Therefore the term ‘disabled people’ was redefined by the movement to mean “people with impairments who are disabled by socially constructed barriers.”

### No Correct Rhetoric

Rose, Editor of BBC disability website Ouch!, 4

(Damon, Oct 4. “Don't call me handicapped!”, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/3708576.stm>, accessed 7/10/12)

But it also raised a thorny question: what words are suitable when talking about disabled people?

The BBC's disability website, Ouch!, regularly get calls about language from people frightened about "getting it wrong".

Due to popular rubbishing of what is referred to as "political correctness', many disabled commentators now publicly say they don't care how people refer to them.

But privately they fume if someone calls them "handicapped" or "brave".

Last year Ouch! ran a poll to try and determine what really are the most vilified words and expressions around disability.

Unsurprisingly "retard" came top as the most offensive followed by "spastic".

TOP TEN WORST WORDS

1. Retard

2. Spastic

3. Window-licker

4. Mong

5. Special

6. Brave

7. Cripple

8. Psycho

9. Handicapped

10. Wheelchair-bound

Worst Words vote in full

When breaking down the figures though, it was interesting to see that disabled people had voted "special" as fifth most offensive.

"Special service", "special school" and "special needs" are phrases used in an attempt to be positive about disability.

But in the same way women don't like being elevated to "lady", disabled people find it patronising to be lifted to the status of special.

It differentiates them from normal, but in a saccharine manner. Disabled people are different, but not better or more important. Besides, putting them on a pedestal does not appear to be shifting attitudes or solving the appalling disability unemployment situation.

Clearly, language in this field is a hotch-potch of confusion.

### Language Doesn’t Create Reality

#### The assumption that language shapes reality and that intentions behind words matter is empirically flawed

Roskoski & Peabody, Florida State, 91

(Matthew and Joe, 1991, A Linguistic and Philosophical Critique of Language "Arguments,” [http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski&Peabody-LangCritiques](http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski%26Peabody-LangCritiques), Date Accessed: 7/8, JS)

Initially, it is important to note that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis does not intrinsically deserve presumption, although many authors assume its validity without empirical support. The reason it does not deserve presumption is that "on a priori grounds one can contest it by asking how, if we are unable to organize our thinking beyond the limits set by our native language, we could ever become aware of those limits" (Robins 101). Au explains that "because it has received so little convincing support, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has stimulated little research" (Au 1984 156). However, many critical scholars take the hypothesis for granted because it is a necessary but uninteresting precondition for the claims they really want to defend. Khosroshahi explains: However, the empirical tests of the hypothesis of linguistic relativity have yielded more equivocal results. But independently of its empirical status, Whorf's view is quite widely held. In fact, many social movements have attempted reforms of language and have thus taken Whorf's thesis for granted. (Khosroshahi 505).

One reason for the hypothesis being taken for granted is that on first glance it seems intuitively valid to some. However, after research is conducted it becomes clear that this intuition is no longer true. Rosch notes that the hypothesis "not only does not appear to be empirically true in any major respect, but it no longer even seems profoundly and ineffably true" (Rosch 276). The implication for language "arguments" is clear: a debater must do more than simply read cards from feminist or critical scholars that say language creates reality. Instead, the debater must support this claim with empirical studies or other forms of scientifically valid research. Mere intuition is not enough, and it is our belief that valid empirical studies do not support the hypothesis. After assessing the studies up to and including 1989, Takano claimed that the hypothesis "has no empirical support" (Takano 142). Further, Miller & McNeill claim that "nearly all" of the studies performed on the Whorfian hypothesis "are best regarded as efforts to substantiate the weak version of the hypothesis" (Miller & McNeill 734). We additionally will offer four reasons the hypothesis is not valid.

The first reason is that it is impossible to generate empirical validation for the hypothesis. Because the hypothesis is so metaphysical and because it relies so heavily on intuition it is difficult if not impossible to operationalize. Rosch asserts that "profound and ineffable truths are not, in that form, subject to scientific investigation" (Rosch 259). We concur for two reasons. The first is that the hypothesis is phrased as a philosophical first principle and hence would not have an objective referent. The second is there would be intrinsic problems in any such test. The independent variable would be the language used by the subject. The dependent variable would be the subject's subjective reality. The problem is that the dependent variable can only be measured through selfreporting, which - naturally - entails the use of language. Hence, it is impossible to separate the dependent and independent variables. In other words, we have no way of knowing if the effects on "reality" are actual or merely artifacts of the language being used as a measuring tool.

#### Their argument is non-falsifiable

Roskoski & Peabody, Florida State, 91

(Matthew and Joe, 1991, A Linguistic and Philosophical Critique of Language "Arguments,” [http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski&Peabody-LangCritiques](http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski%26Peabody-LangCritiques), Date Accessed: 7/8, JS)

The second reason that the hypothesis is flawed is that there are problems with the causal relationship it describes. Simply put, it is just as plausible (in fact infinitely more so) that reality shapes language. Again we echo the words of Dr. Rosch, who says: {C}ovariation does not determine the direction of causality. On the simplest level, cultures are very likely to have names for physical objects which exist in their culture and not to have names for objects outside of their experience. Where television sets exists, there are words to refer to them. However, it would be difficult to argue that the objects are caused by the words. The same reasoning probably holds in the case of institutions and other, more abstract, entities and their names. (Rosch 264).

The color studies reported by Cole & Means tend to support this claim (Cole & Means 75). Even in the best case scenario for the Whorfians, one could only claim that there are causal operations working both ways - i.e. reality shapes language and language shapes reality. If that was found to be true, which at this point it still has not, the hypothesis would still be scientifically problematic because "we would have difficulty calculating the extent to which the language we use determines our thought" (Schultz 134).

#### Language doesn’t shape reality

Roskoski & Peabody, Florida State, 91

(Matthew and Joe, 1991, A Linguistic and Philosophical Critique of Language "Arguments,” [http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski&Peabody-LangCritiques](http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski%26Peabody-LangCritiques), Date Accessed: 7/8, JS)

The third objection is that the hypothesis selfimplodes. If language creates reality, then different cultures with different languages would have different realities. Were that the case, then meaningful crosscultural communication would be difficult if not impossible. In Au's words: "it is never the case that something expressed in Zuni or Hopi or Latin cannot be expressed at all in English. Were it the case, Whorf could not have written his articles as he did entirely in English" (Au 156).

The fourth and final objection is that the hypothesis cannot account for single words with multiple meanings. For example, as Takano notes, the word "bank" has multiple meanings (Takano 149). If language truly created reality then this would not be possible. Further, most if not all language "arguments" in debate are accompanied by the claim that intent is irrelevant because the actual rhetoric exists apart from the rhetor's intent. If this is so, then the Whorfian advocate cannot claim that the intent of the speaker distinguishes what reality the rhetoric creates. The prevalence of such multiple meanings in a debate context is demonstrated with every new topicality debate, where debaters spend entire rounds quibbling over multiple interpretations of a few words.1

## Permutations

### **Perm – Plan & Alternative**

Permutation solves

Ho, The College of St. Catherine, Assistant professor of philosophy, 5

(Anita, and a cocoordinator of the Center for Women, Economic Justice and Public Policy, “Mainstreaming Disability: A Case in Bioethics,” 2005, <http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf>, Page 21-22, Date Accessed: 7/7, JS)

In promoting diverse perspectives, we also need to pay attention to how we incorporate disability issues. It is not enough that instructors include materials about disabilities. As previously mentioned, some textbooks do discuss disability issues, but they do so from an able-bodied bias, which can perpetuate various stereotypes regarding disability. An inclusive course must balance various perspectives and incorporate the voices of people with disabilities. Students need to critically examine how and why the existing structure may affect individuals of various characteristics and experiences differently. Some may worry that incorporation of disability issues will distract students from the most important topics. Some instructors have told me that, just as it is often impossible to add an extra course to the curriculum, they have no time for a disability topic in their already-full schedules. I challenge the uncritical assumption that the current able-bodied curriculum is best, such that any change would compromise the quality of the learning. Some instructors mistakenly assume that incorporation of disability issues means that we must replace the mainstream topics with disability topics. However, as previously mentioned, disability is not an additional “topic” that is separate from other issues. It is not enough to spend a week “tackling” disability issues. Rather, disability perspectives are an important part of most topics. Many issues have important implications for people with and without disabilities. The strategy is not to replace 6 mainstreaming disability “traditional topics” with “disability topics.” Instead, the strategy is to examine or incorporate the disability perspective in these “traditional” topics.

## Alternative Fails

### AT Forms Better Politics

#### Straight-jackets politics—censorship is antithetical to their project

Roskoski & Peabody, Florida State, 91

(Matthew and Joe, 1991, A Linguistic and Philosophical Critique of Language "Arguments,” [http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski&Peabody-LangCritiques](http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski%26Peabody-LangCritiques), Date Accessed: 7/8, JS)

As Justice William Brennan observed in his dissenting opinion in Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier, "students do not shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate." (Brennan 580). Given that the Supreme Court has already affirmed the first amendment rights of primary and secondary schoolchildren, it seems logical to assume that even greater protection would be given to the (theoretically) more mature and responsible university student. It is for this reason that many label university speech codes as "anathema to a university," and assert that "speech codes have no place at all on the American campus." (Hyde & Fishman 1486).1 The proper interpretation of these first amendment rights is articulated by the now famous words of Justice Oliver Wendall Holmes, who declared:

If there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other it is the principle of free thought - not free thought for those who agree with us, but freedom for the thought that we hate. (Holmes 654).

Certainly this principle would prohibit the enforcement of any language "argument." If one despised the rhetoric of a given debater enough to vote against that debater, then as Holmes suggests, the principles of the Constitution require one to refrain from censorship. The Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts articulated the essence of this argument so eloquently that their entire statement deserves repetition here:

When language wounds, the natural and immediate impulse is to take steps to shut up those who utter the wounding words. When, as here, that impulse is likely to be felt by those who are normally the first amendment's staunchest defenders, free expression faces its greatest threat. At such times, it is important for those committed to principles of free expressions to remind each other of what they have always known regarding the long term costs of short term victories bought through compromising first amendment principles. (Strossen 487).

Certainly debaters and debate coaches, whose entire activity is premised upon the freedom of expression, ought to be among the staunchest defenders of that freedom. When we are asked to censor the rhetoric of a debater, as the C.L.U. warns, we ought to think long and hard about the risks associated with playing fast and loose with free speech. As Brennan notes, the mandate "to inculcate moral and political values is not a general warrant to act as 'thought police' stifling discussion of all but state-approved topics and advocacy of all but the official position." (Brennan 577).

Not only does the first amendment create a moral or deontological barrier to language "arguments", the principles it defends also create a pragmatic barrier. The free and sometimes irreverent discourse protected by the first amendment is essential to the health and future success of our society. History has borne out the belief that the freedom to challenge convictions is essential to our ability to adapt to change. As Hyde and Fishman observe, university scholars must be allowed to "think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable, and challenge the unchallengeable" because "major discoveries and advances in knowledge are often highly unsettling and distasteful to the existing order." This leads them to conclude that "we cannot afford" to impose "orthodoxies, censorship, and other artificial barriers to creative thought" (Hyde & Fishman 1485). Given the rapid pace of political and technological change that our society faces, and given that debates often focus around the cutting edge of such changes, the imposition of linguistic straitjackets upon the creative thought and critical thinking of debaters would seem to uniquely jeopardize these interests. This is not just exaggerated rhetoric, nor is it merely our old debate disadvantages in new clothes. Hyde & Fishman's claims have been repeatedly validated by historical events. Had Elie Wiesel debated in Germany, a "Zionist language" argument would not have been unlikely. As Bennett Katz has argued,

The essentiality of freedom in the community of American Universities is almost self-evident... To impose any strait jacket upon the intellectual leaders in our colleges and universities would imperil the future of our Nation... Teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding; otherwise our civilization will stagnate and die. (Katz 156).

### AT Change Happens

#### Makes real change impossible—lures us into thinking we have solved anything, damning the emancipatory potential of their arguments

Roskoski & Peabody, Florida State, 91

 (Matthew and Joe, 1991, A Linguistic and Philosophical Critique of Language "Arguments,” [http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski&Peabody-LangCritiques](http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski%26Peabody-LangCritiques), Date Accessed: 7/8, JS)

There are several levels upon which language "arguments" are actually counterproductive. We will discuss the quiescence effect, deacademization, and publicization. The quiescence effect is explained by Strossen when she writes "the censorship approach is diversionary. It makes it easier for communities to avoid coming to grips with less convenient and more expensive, but ultimately more meaningful approaches" (Strossen 561). Essentially, the argument is that allowing the restriction of language we find offensive substitutes for taking actions to check the real problems that generated the language. Previously, we have argued that the language advocates have erroneously reversed the causal relationship between language and reality. We have defended the thesis that reality shapes language, rather than the obverse. Now we will also contend that to attempt to solve a problem by editing the language which is symptomatic of that problem will generally trade off with solving the reality which is the source of the problem. There are several reasons why this is true. The first, and most obvious, is that we may often be fooled into thinking that language "arguments" have generated real change. As Graddol and Swan observe, "when compared with larger social and ideological struggles, linguistic reform may seem quite a trivial concern," further noting "there is also the danger that effective change at this level is mistaken for real social change" (Graddol & Swan 195). The second reason is that the language we find objectionable can serve as a signal or an indicator of the corresponding objectionable reality. The third reason is that restricting language only limits the overt expressions of any objectionable reality, while leaving subtle and hence more dangerous expressions unregulated. Once we drive the objectionable idea underground it will be more difficult to identify, more difficult to root out, more difficult to counteract, and more likely to have its undesirable effect. The fourth reason is that objectionable speech can create a "backlash" effect that raises the consciousness of people exposed to the speech. Strossen observes that "ugly and abominable as these expressions are, they undoubtably have had the beneficial result of raising social consciousness about the underlying societal problem..." (560).

The second major reason why language "arguments" are counterproductive is that they contribute to deacademization. In the context of critiquing the Hazelwood decision, Hopkins explains the phenomenon: To escape censorship, therefore, student journalists may eschew school sponsorship in favor of producing their own product. In such a case, the result would almost certainly be lower quality of high school journalism... The purpose of high school journalism, however, is more than learning newsgathering, writing, and editing skills. It is also to learn the role of the press in society; it is to teach responsibility as well as freedom. (Hopkins 536).

Hyde & Fishman further explain that to protect students from offensive views, is to deprive them of the experiences through which they "attain intellectual and moral maturity and become self-reliant" (Hyde & Fishman 1485). The application of these notions to the debate round is clear and relevant. If language "arguments" become a dominant trend, debaters will not change their attitudes. Rather they will manifest their attitudes in non-debate contexts. Under these conditions, the debaters will not have the moderating effects of the critic or the other debaters. Simply put, sexism at home or at lunch is worse than sexism in a debate round because in the round there is a critic to provide negative though not punitive feedback.

The publicization effects of censorship are well known. "Psychological studies reveal that whenever the government attempts to censor speech, the censored speech - for that very reason - becomes more appealing to many people" (Strossen 559). These studies would suggest that language which is critiqued by language "arguments" becomes more attractive simply because of the critique. Hence language "arguments" are counterproductive.

### Policing Language Bad

#### Policing ableist language is a bad idea – better to employ a variety of metaphors to create better engagement

Vidali, Dept of English U of Colorado-Denver, 10

 [Amy, “Seeing What We Know: Disability and Theories of Metaphor,” *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, v4, #1, pp33-54]

This process has made it obvious that **there is no possibility of breaking the links between metaphor and disability**, which is emphasized in a recent discussion of disability metaphors on the Society for Disability Studies listserv (which generated 19 posts).'5 In discussing the metaphorical concept of "paralysis," Stephen Kuusisto argued that "disability as a cognitive metaphor is always pejorative and its use as a trope represents a failure of critical and/or imaginative thinking." In response, Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson suggested that there is little "'pure' language without metaphor" and that perhaps we can "trope it for new ends." Growing from this, **Anne Finger** claimed that she is not incapable of motion because her right leg is paralyzed, but rather, as she says, "it means I have to find other, out of the ordinary ways of moving," and she **suggests we avoid taking the "red pencil to all such language about disability**" (Kuusisto, Lewiecki-Wilson, and Finger). **This** exchange **reflects the difficulty of drawing attention to disability metaphors, as identification can lead to avoidance and the "red pencil," rather than thoughtful engagement.** To be sure, phrases like totally lame might best be weeded out of language, but writing off a metaphor like understanding is grasping, because it assumes a body that can grasp, misses an opportunity to consider the often ignored kinesthetic ways that many of us learn.

The imperative, then, is not simple avoidance of the knowing is seeing metaphor and other metaphors, but a willing embrace of the opportunity to diversify our writing to represent a wider range of bodily and cognitive experience. For example, we can ask students to find the "scents" of previous course ideas while reading a new article, as an exciting alternative to asking them to "see" the main point. We might suggest that colleagues taste and digest a new subject, in order to encourage bodily ways of knowing and interacting that go beyond "witnessing" texts.'6 Changing the verb from see/highlight/envision to a new sensory experience not only recognizes, but creates, new ways of knowing. In Talking Sketching Moving: Multiple Literacies in the Teaching of Writing, Patricia Dunn argues that we must engage "visual, aural, spatial, emotional, kinesthetic, or social ways of knowing" (1). Similarly, so must the language of Disability Studies scholarship and teaching—and the metaphors we use—represent this diversity, rather than relying on "seeing."

As May and Ferri note, the disability community must always be "re-deploying disability metaphors in ironic or agential ways that disrupt simplistic equivalences between disability and social death" (124). And in a piece on theater and disability, Carrie Sandahl similarly argues, "Exerting some control over metaphorical representation in language, theory, politics, and artistic practice is a vital strategy for radical disability culture," and she importantly critiques the metaphors that manifest in her own stage productions (13, also see Tolan). While **a mere policing of language is not helpful, disability communities must actively challenge ableist models and reclaim disability metaphors.** Such shifts are more than playful language: like the impact of she or she or he as third-person pronouns that replace the supposedly neutral he, these **revised metaphors do matter and can facilitate change and awareness, most immediately in our own communities.'**7

## Not a Voting Issue

### AT Have to Reject

#### Post Round Discussions solve better—rejecting the team does nothing

Roskoski & Peabody, Florida State, 91

(Matthew and Joe, 1991, A Linguistic and Philosophical Critique of Language "Arguments,” [http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski&Peabody-LangCritiques](http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski%26Peabody-LangCritiques), Date Accessed: 7/8, JS)

Rodney Smolla offered the following insightful assessment of the interaction between offensive language and language "arguments": The battle against {offensive speech} will be fought most effectively through persuasive and creative educational leadership rather than through punishment and coercion... The sense of a community of scholars, an island of reason and tolerance, is the pervasive ethos. But that ethos should be advanced with education, not coercion. It should be the dominant voice of the university within the marketplace of ideas; but it should not preempt that marketplace. (Smolla 224-225).1

We emphatically concur. It is our position that a debater who feels strongly enough about a given language "argument" ought to actualize that belief through interpersonal conversation rather than through a plea for censorship and coercion. Each debater in a given round has three minutes of cross-examination time during which he or she may engage the other team in a dialogue about the ramifications of the language the opposition has just used. Additionally even given the efficacy of Rich Edwards' efficient tabulation program, there will inevitably be long periods between rounds during which further dialogue can take place. It is our position that interpersonal transactions will be more effective methods of raising consciousness about the negative ramifications of language. These interactions can achieve the goals intended by language "arguments" without the attendant infringements upon the freedom of speech.

### Turn Using People for the Ballot

#### Turn – Making it a voting issue only exacerbates the power relations they claim to resist – commodifying the lived experiences of PWD for their own academic gain

Kitchin, Prof of Geography, Nat’l Univ of Ireland, 2000

[Rob, “The Researched Opinions on Research: Disabled People and Disability Research,” *Disability & Geography*, v15, #1, pp25-47]

**Many disabled academics**, such as Oliver (1992), are unhappy at the widespread exclusion of disabled people from disability discourse and call for the adoption of research strategies that are both emancipatory (seeking 'positive' societal change) and empowering (seeking 'positive' individual change through participation). They suggest that current research on disability issues is flawed and problematic in a number of respects. Most crucially, they **argue that disability research is not representative of disabled peoples' experiences and knowledges.** This is because, as noted, the vast majority of research is conducted by non-disabled researchers. **They contend that it is only disabled people who can know what it is like to be disabled and so only disabled people who can truly interpret and present data** from other disabled people. **Moreover, they argue that research concerning disability research is invariably researcher-orientated, based around the desires and agendas of the (non-disabled) researcher** and able-bodied funding agencies, **rather than subject(s) of the research (disabled people**; Sample, 1996). Indeed, Oliver (1992) argues that **the traditional 'expert' model of research** represents a 'rape model of research' that is alienating, and **disempowcrs and disenfranchises disabled research participants by placing their knowledge into the hands of the researcher to interpret and make recommendations on their behalf; that researchers are compounding the oppression of disabled respondents through exploitation for academic gain.**