#### **The 1ACs postmodern methods pessimistic stance towards technology and focus on discourse overlooks material crip violence – and rejects solutions for disabled folk**

Feely 16 Michael Feely (2016) Disability studies after the ontological turn: a return to the material world and material bodies without a return to essentialism, Disability & Society, 31:7, 863-883, DOI: 10.1080/09687599.2016.1208603

Poststructuralist approaches have been the subject of much critique within academia in general, and disability studies in particular. Critics regularly cite three problems: these approaches overlook the (often inaccessible) material world that disabled people inhabit; they are unable to engage productively rather than critically with science and technology; and they discount the importance of embodied experience, including pain. Regarding poststructuralism’s failure to deal with the realities of the material world, Shakespeare (2014, 52) suggests that ‘critical disability studies writers generally seem much Disability & Society 867 more interested in texts and discourses than in the ordinary lives of disabled people’. Meanwhile, Wendell (1996, 45) notes that ‘in most postmodern cultural theorizing about the body, there is no recognition of – and, as far as I can see, no room for recognising – the hard physical realities that are faced by people with disabilities’. Similarly, Barnes (2012, 23) argues that poststructuralist accounts ‘downplay the material reality of disabled people’s lives’ and have served to de-radicalise disability studies by diverting critical attention from identifying and challenging material forces underpinning disablement ‘towards a politically benign focus on culture, language, and discourse’. Poststructuralism’s difficulty with discussing the material world also leads to problems engaging productively with the material sciences and new technologies. These shortcomings have been highlighted by philosophers, scientists and disability scholars. The philosopher Searle (1998, 38), for example, suggests that while cultural practices may be relative, treating the knowledge produced by material sciences as simply a social construction is foolish and prevents meaningful engagement with ‘the most successful system that the human intellect has ever produced for getting knowledge of how the world works’. Material scientists have voiced similar objections, sometimes in very creative ways. In 1996, for instance, the physicist Sokal submitted a spoof paper – which suggested quantum gravity was a social construction – to a postmodern journal, Social Text. The journal published the jargon-rich but utterly meaningless paper, prompting a gleeful Sokal (1996) to invite poststructuralists who believed gravity to be a social construction to jump from his apartment window. Poststructuralism’s ambivalent and often suspicious position on science and technology is also problematic and limiting for disability studies. To explain, from a Foucauldian perspective, a prosthetic arm might be treated with suspicion as a normalising device whilst overlooking its positive potential to increase a body’s capacities. Similarly, psychiatric medications might be understood as disciplinary technologies that produce docile patients whilst overlooking their capacity to reduce mental pain and visceral suffering. This brings us to a third common criticism of poststructuralist approaches: that they fail to provide an account of embodied experience. In Grosz’s (1994, 116) words: ‘The body remains primarily as a text to be marked, traced, written upon by various regimes of institutional, (discursive and non-discursive) power’. Meanwhile – in common with the social model – poststructuralist approaches remain relatively silent on the embodied and visceral aspects of impairment, including pain. Shakespeare makes this point by drawing on personal experience: I confess to a certain discomfort when it comes to non-disabled researchers … telling me, who has two rather painful and disabling impairments, that impairment does not exist or is only the product of discourse … My problem is my physical embodiment and my experience of negative symptoms arising from impairment. (2014, 66–67) Similarly, Vehmas and Watson (2014, 649) argue that certain impairments – for example, motor neuron disease and depression – are undesirable ‘not merely because of the cultural representations attached to them but because these conditions … cause suffering irrespective of one’s cultural environment’. Finally, Siebers (2008) suggests that – in overlooking visceral experience – poststructuralists offer wholly inadequate solutions to the problem of impairment, and their political strategy of refusing to identify as impaired is deeply flawed because it ultimately implies that ‘imagination can cure what ails the body’ (2008, 76). Overall then, for critics, poststructuralist perspectives offer an incomplete and unsatisfactory account of disability. What is needed is a more holistic approach that includes consideration of the material environments people with impairments inhabit and their embodied 868 M. Feely experiences. Consequently, some advocates turn to Bhaskar’s critical realism (Danermark 2002; Shakespeare 2006, 2014). This, they argue, allows for non-reductionist, multifactorial accounts that consider disability on a multiplicity of levels (the biological, the socio-economic, the cultural, etc.).

this is the trap of critical thinking that can only be exercised if it presupposes the naivete and stupidity of the masses. – Baudrillard 81

if it is not stupidly to take concepts in their literalness – Baudrillard 96

#### **Disabled folk are always locked into ontological zones of exception – all behind the guise of disgust and psychogenesis – our unruly behavior and the literal disgust of our bodies causes a visceral reaction due to the able bodies vulnerability and fear of deviance.**

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Ableism and disgust: Psychogenesis and disability The stratifying binary of disability/non-disability and the antagonism of the latter towards the former is mediated and maintained, principally, by the emotion of disgust. Disgust is the bile carried in a discursive complex that Campbell (2008: 153) calls ‘ableism’: ‘a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human’. The body produced by ableism is equivalent to what Kristeva (1982: 71) calls the ‘clean and proper body’. It is the body of the ‘normate’, the name that Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (1997) gives to the body that thinks of itself as invulnerable and definitive. It is the hygienic, aspirational body of civilising modernity. It is cast from the increasingly stringent norms and rules about emotional behaviour and bodily display that mark mundane social relations in the lebenswelt (lifeworld). This curious non-disabled body/self has no empirical existence per se. On the contrary, the body of ableism is a normative construct, an invulnerable ideal of being manifest in the imaginary of ‘modernist ontology, epistemology and ethics’ as something ‘secure, distinct, closed and autonomous’ (Shildrick, 2002: 51). It embraces ‘human perfectibility as a normative physical or psychological standard’ and involves ‘a curious disavowal of variation and mortality’ (Kaplan, 2000: 303). It is what we are supposed to aspire to, to learn to be but can never become. It has no grounding in the material world. It is a ‘body schema, a psychic construction of wholeness that … belies its own precariousness and vulnerability’ (Shildrick, 2002: 79). It is a ‘body divorced from time and space; a thoroughly artificial affair’ (Mitchell and Snyder, 2000: 7), the epitome of civilisation, closed off from any connection with the animal side of humanity and from the ways in which our bodily nature wallows in its carnal improprieties. It is a body aghast at the messiness of existence. Disability is the opposite of this ideal body, its ‘inverse reflection’ (Deutsch and Nussbaum, 2000: 13). The disabled body is or has the propensity to be unruly. In the kingdom of the ‘clean and proper body’, disability is the epitome of ‘what not to be’. As a consequence the disabled body can be easily excluded from the mainstream ‘psychic habitus’ (Elias, 2000: 167). The ‘clean and proper’ – a normative body of delicacy, refinement and selfdiscipline – has powerful social consequences most manifest in its normalising dynamics. It is the standard of judgement against which disabled bodies are invalidated and transformed into repellent objects. It is the emblem of purity that by comparison creates existential unease. It apportions the shame and repugnance that underwrite the civilising process (Elias, 2000: 114–19, 414–21). Through ableism, modernity has been able to structure disability as uncivilised, outside or on the margins of humanity. One of the great books of the science of natural history published under the title Systema Naturae by Linnaeus in 1735 distinguishes between homo sapiens and homo monstrosus. In this classification impairment – at its extreme and highly visible end – is excluded from the human family. The distinction is, in itself, an act of violence and invalidation, an object lesson in transforming difference and ‘defect’ into the abominable. The distinction mobilises the aversive emotions of fear and disgust. Ableism is a cruel teacher. It embodies violence at many levels: ‘epistemic, psychic, ontological and physical’ (Campbell, 2008: 159). It is at its most bellicose when it is mediated by disgust: a mediation invoked mostly in the social fabrication of taboo and most compellingly in a context when the human/animal boundary is under threat. Ableism rests on the effort to eliminate from awareness, chaos, abjection, animality and death: all that civilisation seeks to repress. It encourages us to live in the false hope that we will not suffer and die, to adopt a perspective of invulnerability, to confuse morality with beauty and to see death, pain and disability as the repulsive woes of mortality rather than as the existential basis for community and communication. Kolnai (2004: 74) reminds us that, ‘in its full intention, it is death … that announces itself to us in the phenomenon of disgust’. Disability, in modernity, has been produced in the ontological household of the abject, as the antithesis of communication and community, in a place that we might on occasion peer into only to ‘choke’ on the unsavoury sights that greet us. Disability is put out, put away, hidden, segregated or transformed into its opposite, covered up by whatever medical or aesthetic techniques are available to achieve this end. Any opportunity that disability might have to take its place at the heart of communication and community is thwarted by the ablest sensibilities that push it back down among the disgusting, the sick, the dead and the dying. In fact, as Elias (2000) suggested, the making of ‘civilised’ community and communication in modernity proceeds by exclusion and interdiction, by cutting out and hiding away whatever causes or might come to inspire angar (choking) or anguista (tightness). It is important to understand ableist disgust as an emotion that attests to the failure of non-disabled people to fully recognise their own vulnerabilities and imperfections particularly as these relate to their mortal selves and to the death and decay that is the fate of all. Although it appears as an aversion to ‘the other’, it is a form of self-aversion or a means by which we hide from the bodily basis of our own humanity (Nussbaum, 2004). Indeed, disgust begins close to home and is derived from our discomfort with our own bodily functions, our oozy, sticky ‘leaky selves’ (Shildrick, 1997; Kolnai, 2004), the fact that we cannot contain ourselves within our own boundaries and the shame and embarrassment that the ‘civilising process’ brings to bear upon us if our leakiness is exposed to others. Because modernity is a charter for anal retentiveness, we cannot forgive ourselves for our physical impurities. We hold ourselves ransom to the myth of the ‘clean and proper’ body; the perfect body of ableist culture is a myth that we use to screen ourselves from the visceral realities of our own lives. The ableist body ‘helps’ non-disabled people cope with their fears about their own corporeal vulnerability. It does so by invoking its opposite, the disabled body, a foreign entity that is anomalous, chaotic and disgusting. Modern history helps to make this object of disgust more tangible. Civilising processes clarify stigma and make biological differences into socio-moral categories. Disgust provokes the civilising sensibilities. It warns them of the presence of possible contaminants (Miller, 1997). Consequently, psychological and social distance between disability and non-disability expands. Disgust in ‘it’s thought- content’ is ‘typically unreasonable, embodying magical ideas of contamination, and impossible aspirations to purity, immortality, and non-animality, that are just not in line with human life as we know it’ (Nussbaum, 2004: 12). Disgust is an emotion that has a central role in our everyday relationships with our bodies, our patterns of social interaction and – most pressingly from the perspective of this chapter – in processes of social exclusion. Disgust is the emotional fuel of ableism. The threat posed by ourselves to ourselves (and projected onto others), the threat of our ‘bodiliness’ and the shame and anxiety associated with it is a product of ableism, of the ‘tyranny of perfection’. Ableism makes the world alien to disabled bodies and, at the same time, produces impairment as an invalidating experience. It is manifest in our cultural inclination towards normalcy by way of correction, towards homogeneity by way of disparagement of difference. What this means for disabled people is that they are ‘expected to reject their own bodies’ and ‘adjust to the carnal norms of nondisabled people’ (Paterson and Hughes, 1999: 608). The ‘corporeality of the disabled body’ is, according to Campbell (2008: 157), ‘constantly in a state of deferral’ awaiting the affective response that will demean it or the travails of sociogenesis that will either do away with it or ‘make it better’.

#### The 1ACs desire of the better future is in opposition to the disgusting disabled child, their attempt at progress through policy requires the erausure of disability due to their psychogenesis tied desires.

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Elimination and/or correction have been the primary social response to disabled people in modernity. The primary form of experience (of disability), during the same period, has been one of invalidation. Invalidation carries a ‘dual meaning’ as both ‘confinement through incapacity’ and ‘deficit of credibility’ (Hughes, 2000: 558). This (latter and more crucial) claim is based on the view that in the non-disabled imaginary disability is an ‘ontological deficit’ – a reduction of ‘leib’ to ‘korpor’, human to animal, subjectivity to flesh, identity to excessive corporeal presence. It is this deficit of credibility that provides the spurious rationale for the disposal of disabled bodies by means of elimination (inter alia extermination or segregation) or correction (inter alia sterilisation or rehabilitation). These are the social practices that have been used to erase both the psychological aversion and the problematic social difference that disability has come to represent. In this chapter, I will argue – using Norbert Elias as a touchstone – that the treatment of disabled people in the modern period is a barbaric sideshow in the long march of the ‘civilising process’ (Elias, 2000). The ‘personality structure’ ableism (see Kumari Campbell (2001) and in this volume) in modernity transforms its own ontological precariousness into aversion for and disposal of disability. The negative response to biological and intellectual difference in modernity is strongly influenced by the tendency embedded in the ‘civilising process’ to incrementally deride the value of physical and intellectual difference and promote a sanitised norm of human behaviour and appearance (Elias, 2000). The social and social policy response to disability in the modern period cannot be separated from the emotional aversion to impairment characteristic of non-disabled hegemony. I will utilise Elias’s concepts of psychogenesis and sociogenesis1 to explain that the story of disability in modernity is one that develops towards the social and ontological invalidation of disabled people’s lives. The sociogenisis of disability is, in practice, twofold: it can be ‘anthropoemic’ or ‘anthropophagic’. The first refers to social processes that rootout and eliminate people: if error and imperfection are the anti-heroes of modernity, then one might expect to find examples in which the desire for truth and purity is exercised through the root and branch elimination of those who offend against this moral universe. Locking disabled people into a ‘zone of exception’ (Agamben, 2004) in which they are subjected to the eugenic gaze and categorised as inhuman or sub-human is one strategy for dealing with disability (Reave, 2008). ‘The real solution to heresy’ suggested George Canguilhem in his discussion of the normal and the pathological (1991: 280) ‘is extirpation’, meaning to destroy totally or exterminate. In modernity medical ideas and practices have been a fertile source of radical solutions to impairment. Medical solutions also embrace anthropophagic strategies. They deal in the correction and rehabilitation of ‘abnormal bodies’. Cure/rehabilitation stands at the heart of the medical doctrine of salvation (soteriology) and it is a prospect often held up to disabled people by optimists who fetishise scientific progress and promote biological solutions to impairment. Both strategies – to kill or to cure – transmit the same core cultural message: disabled people represent ‘what not to be’ and are, therefore, ontologically invalid or ‘uncivilised’. Social responses to impairment, in modernity, are underpinned by the processes that constitute the psychogenisis of disability. These include the emotional aversions and intolerances of impairment that derive from the civilising process. The ontological invalidation that disabled people experience in their everyday encounters is mediated primarily by the emotion of disgust (with fear and pity in tow). At an existential level the presence of the disabled body is unsettling for non-disabled people who are often in denial about their own vulnerability. This is the psychological and emotional component of what disability scholars call ableism. The standard resolution to this ‘problem’ of non-disability in modernity has been to have the object of discomfort – the disabled person – removed or corrected. The sociogenesis of anthropoemic and anthropophagic strategies for dealing with impairment are rooted in the emotional dispositions of non-disabled people as they develop their civilised protocols for behaviour and bodily comportment. In what follows, I will focus on the ways in which the ‘civilising process’ invalidates impairment and demonstrate how opportunities to escape this ontological dead-end usually require the erasure of disabled identity. In the first section that follows I will give some examples of the way in which one can read disability as a product of the civilising process. In the section, thereafter, I will examine the psychogenesis of disability relating it to the disgust response to impairment and to the development of ableism, the complex of processes that exclude disabled people from the ‘psychic habitus’ (Elias, 2000: 367) of modernity.

#### We affirm crip pessimsim – we embrace deviancy and failure of disabled folk – I lose hope in a society that is based on my erasure.

Kolářová 14 (Kateřina Kolářová, Ph.D. Charles University, Prauge, “The Inarticulate Post-Socialist Crip On the Cruel Optimism of Neoliberal Transformations in the Czech Republic” Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies Volume 8, Issue 3, 2014 p.270-3)

The aspiration of post-socialism was progress, moral emancipation, and eventual happiness. I recall the quotation above that attempted to articulate the vision of the optimistic future as a moment when “every citizen of this country fe[els] content and happy” (Váchalová, 2). Yet, as Sara Ahmed cautions, happiness is a troubled notion. She asks, “What are we consenting to, when we consent to happiness?” and offers us a troubling answer: “perhaps the consensus that happiness is the consensus” (Promise, 1). Ahmed’s questioning of happiness as the normative horizon of our orientation resonates with the key issues that I address; the promise of happiness is a twin of “cruel optimism.” Most acutely, Ahmed’s critical discussion focuses on revealing how (the vision of and desire for) happiness participates in establishing structures of consensus, which are in fact structures of dominance. With (falsely) positive energy, recuperative logic said, “you should be happy communism is over”; the promise of happiness was used to justify the oppression of “the disabled” through ideologies of ableism constitutive to liberal individualism and liberal humanism. The impossibility of seeing and envisioning crip(topias) in the situation of (post-)shameful identity illustrates not only the harmful and utterly disabling work of certain affective attachments, it also and just as vividly illustrates the equally harmful impacts/effects of attachments to affects, in particular attachments to affects of positivity, affects seemingly necessary to foster self-embracing identity and subjectivity. In other words, the post-socialist crip challenges Western-developed theories of (disabled) identity that argue that positive affects are necessary to foster self-embracing and affirmative understandings of disability and disabled subjectivity. The symbolic violence embedded in recuperative positivity offers us the opportunity to think about crip failure and crip negativity. The violence also points toward conditions that (could) make (some forms of) failure useful for cripistemologies and that (could) map crip horizons. Cripness is already rich with failure; cripness is infused with negativity that sustains. The crip negativity I plead for is a critical strategy rupturing ideologies of cure, rehabilitation, and overcoming, ideologies that inflict hurt and violence (not only) on crips. I wish to initiate a discussion about crip negativity as a political practice working toward (if never reaching) crip utopian horizons. Still, the post-socialist crip opens other and new questions about what crip failure would mean if it were to foster and sustain life, what forms of crip negative energies would allow for crip utopias and make possible the desire for crip survival. J. Jack Halberstam’s theory of failure elucidates how the compulsory positive nature of optimism, hope, pride, and success precludes the realization that failure can be a form of sustenance and strategy of critique/survival. In failing the normative prescriptions of compulsory heterosexuality (and able-bodiedness), failure “imagines other goals for life, for love, for art, and for being” (88). Coming back to the image of the women failing/surviving with AIDS at the post-socialist Odessa hospice, failure also imagines signs of crip solidarity and sustenance where the visions of an optimistic future create spaces of abandonment for subjects who will never be offered a fantasy of the “good life.” Despite its lack of substantial attention to cripness that would surpass the level of metaphorics, The Queer Art of Failure does offer some lines along which to think also about crip failures. The most helpful to the current analysis of post-socialist affects would seem to be Halberstam’s discussion of the failure to remember. Forgetting, losing, and looping between past and future are the techniques of resistance to normative temporalities. Such failures at temporalities of progressive and curative futurity, I argue, could offer forms of sustenance (for the post-socialist crip). The failure to remember would produce a rupture in the dominant narratives of shame (of a failed socialism) and the futurity of “getting better.” It would forget visions of pride based on overcoming the failed socialist crip, and it would loosen/lose the compulsory vision of optimism of (neoliberal) humanism. It would forget the ideologies that we have seen hurt and violate crips and our futures. Cripping, disjointing, the normative forms of (linear) knowing about the past-presentfuture, could offer resistance to the cruel hope that directs our desires into (an evacuated) future while foreclosing the negotiation of difficult yet important relationships, past and present. The rejection of the curative and always already deferred future opens up a space for developing a more complicated relationship with failed pasts. Queer theorist Heather Love devises the politics of “feeling backwards/backwards feelings” as an affective strategy of resistance to liberal understandings of the “repressive hypothesis” and emancipation. Her concept is both a corrective to the deeply problematic progressivism of “gay pragmatism” with its compulsorily positive futurity of “getting better,” and an affective reaching backwards to legacies of difficult pasts. As she puts it, “[b]ackward feelings serve as an index to the ruined state of the social world; they indicate continuities between the bad gay past and the present; and they show up the inadequacy of queer narratives of progress” (27). I wish to add that they show up continuities between crip pasts and presents obscured by the undisputedly “good intentions” (McRuer, Crip, 110) of rehabilitation. Halberstam for his part appreciates the strategies of backward feeling as a way of recovering the past of queer and racially marked subjects erased in the tidy versions of the past: “[w]hile liberal histories build triumphant political narratives with progressive stories of improvement and success, radical histories must content with a less tidy past, one that passes on legacies of failure and loneliness as the consequence of [ableist] homophobia and racism and xenophobia” (98). To retrieve lives undone by ideologies of ableism, homophobia, racism and xenophobia, and practices of institutionalization, forced sterilization, ethnic segregation, and on and on, we need backward feelings. The project of “reformulated histories” feels backwards to past forms of crip survivals and past experiences that have been erased (see also Kafer’s discussion of Halberstam 42–44). Alongside this move, I also want to “feel backwards” to the hurt caused by the shame of the bad past itself. This is not a naïve reclamation of the idealized communist past ignorant of the violence committed by the communist regime (violence and hurt inflicted on disabled people still remains mostly undocumented, unspoken, and unanalysed). What I argue is that the notion of the bad and failed past is too comfortable and too tidy and serves only the ideology of capitalist recovery that prescribes only one version of futurity, a futurity—I argue—that is constructed upon the abjection of cripness. To open critical discussion I propose that we need to continue to produce untidy, crooked, queer, twisted, bent, crip versions of pasts. Only they will provide for more generous horizons of the present and future.

## FW

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for the debater who best methodologically challenges ableism. Assumptions of ableism is always already inherent in any system of knowledge production thus ableism is *always* a prior question. Evaluate the 1ACs scholarship and assumptions – anything else allows for ableist norms to be replicated

Campbell 13 (Fiona Kumari Campbell, Adjunct Professor in the Department of Disability Studies at Griffith University. Wednesday 27 November 2013. Problematizing Vulnerability: Engaging Studies in Ableism and Disability Jurisprudence. Keynote speech at Disability at the Margins: Vulnerability, Empowerment and the Criminal Law)

What is meant by the concept of ableism? The literature suggests that the term is often used fluidly with limited definitional or conceptual specificity. The work of Carlson (2001)5 and Campbell (2001) represented a turning point in bringing attention to this new site of subordination not just in terms of disablement but also ableism’s application to other devalued groups. **Ableism is deeply seeded at the level of knowledge systems of life, personhood and liveability.** Ableism is not just a matter of ignorance or negative attitudes towards disabled people; **it is a schema of perfection, a deep way of thinking about bodies, wholeness and permeability.**6 As such integrating ableism into social research and advocacy strategies represents a significant challenge to practice as ableism moves beyond the more familiar territory of social inclusion and usual indices of exclusion to the very divisions of life. Bringing together the study of existence and knowledge systems, ableism is difficult to pin down. Ableism is a set of processes and practices that arise and decline through sequences of causal convergences influenced by the elements of time, space, bodily inflections and circumstance. Ability and the corresponding notion of ableism are intertwined. **Compulsory ablebodiedness is implicated in the very foundations of social theory,** therapeutic jurisprudence, advocacy, **medicine and law; or in the mappings of human anatomy.** Summarised by Campbell (2001, 44) Ableism refers to; …A network of beliefs processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the bodily standard) that is projected as the perfect, speciestypical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability then is cast as a diminished state of being human. Writing today (2013) I add an addition to this definition: ‘The ableist bodily configuration is immutable, permanent and laden with qualities of perfectionism or the enhancement imperative orientated towards a self-contained improvability’. Sentiency applies to not just the human but the ‘animal’ world. As a category to differentiate the normal from the pathological, **the concept of abledness is predicated on some preexisting notion about the nature of typical species functioning that is beyond culture and historical context**. Ableism does not just stop at propagating what is typical for each species. An ableist imaginary tells us what a healthy body means – a normal mind, the pace, the tenor of thinking and the kinds of emotions and affect that are suitable to express. Of course these ‘fictional’ characteristics then are promoted as a natural ideal. **This abled imaginary relies upon the existence of an unacknowledged imagined shared community of able-bodied/minded people held together by a common ableist world view that asserts the preferability** and compulsoriness **of the norms of ableism.** Such ableist schemas erase differences in the ways humans express our emotions, use our thinking and bodies in different cultures and in different situations. This in turn enacts bodily Otherness rendered sometimes as the ‘disabled’, ‘perverted’ or ‘abnormal body’, clearly demarcating the boundaries of normal and pathological. A critical feature of an ableist orientation is a belief that impairment or disability is inherently negative and at its essence is a form of harm in need of improvement, cure or indeed eradication. **Studies in Ableism** (SiA)inverts traditional approaches, by shifting our concentration to what the study of disability **tells us about the production, operation and maintenance of ableism.** In not looking solely at disability,we can focus on how the abled able-bodied, non-disabled identity is maintained and privileged. Disability does not even need to be in the picture. SiA’s interest in abledness means that the theoretical foundations are readily applicable to the study of difference and the dividing practices of race, gender, location and sexual orientation. Reframing our focus from disability to ableism prompts different preoccupations: • What does the study of the politics of ‘vulnerability’ tells us about what it means to be ‘non-vulnerable’? • Indeed how is the very conceptualisation of ‘autonomy’ framed in the light of discourses of ‘vulnerability’? • In representing vulnerability as universal does this detract from the specificity of disability experiences? **SiA examines the ways that concepts of** wellbeing, **vulnerability and deficiency circulate throughout society and impact** upon economic, social, **legal and ethical choices**. Principally SiA focuses on the limits of tolerance and possessive individualism. Extending the theorization of disability, **studies in ableism can enrich our understanding of the production of vulnerability and the terms of engagement in civic life and the possibilities of social inclusion.** I now turn to unpacking the nuances and structure of a theory of ableism.

#### Debates surrounding disability studies allow us to destabilizes notions about debaters and make us better advocates for our bodies.

Lanning 14 (Eric Lanning< Eric Lanning is a debater at the University of Houston and former National Debate Tournament Champion.> January 22, 2014, “What is Access?”, access debate, <http://accessdebate.com/2014/01/22/what-is-access/>)

I’ve been thinking a lot lately about what “access” means in the context of the debate community. I don’t have all (or even a lot) of the answers to this question, but I’m beginning to think that might be the point. We can’t figure this out alone. We need each other. Disability Studies gives the means, motives and opportunity to reframe this “dependence” as inevitable, necessary and valuable. **What would it mean to universally design debate? What would it mean to ask and answer this question together? I believe that “access” is the process (not outcome) of answering that question over and over. It is the process of destabilizing our assumptions about what debaters “are” and “do”.** What assumptions do we make about debaters inherent “abilities” or natural “capabilities” when we debate in particular ways and in particular spaces? What changes should we make to debate practice and culture? These are questions that I am asking and answering in every negative debate – but the “pre-requisite” for me to asking and answering these questions in any debate was my own disability consciousness. The most portable skill debate ever gave me was consciousness. Debate gave me a vocabulary and audience to articulate what my lived experience with disability teaches me everyday. It gave me the experience and environment to develop and explain my own consciousness of disability. For me, that is the beginning of access. Before we can debate about what access means, it is worth thinking about the status quo – what does it mean for debate to be “inaccessible” to particular debaters and particular identities?  What is wrong with the status quo? For many years and for most debaters, “ableism” was nothing more than a list of words you should not use: blinded, silenced, paralyzed, crazy, lame, disabled, crippled, etc. To be clear, I think that ableist language is problematic and constitutes a micro-aggression against disabled people that we should all work to stop. But it is about SO much more than language. **Disability is an embodied experience.** In a poem I wrote called “Broken” – I explain this distinction as, “disability is not something you have, its something you are” (If you’re interested in hearing/reading the entire poem, I’ve included a link at the end). **This recognition of the lived experience of disability – of disability as a social and political fact – of disability as a category of human existence is missing from our current debates about ableism and access.** One of the most meaningful and empowering contributions of disability studies is expressed in the mantra, “nothing about us without us”. **It is a call to foreground and privilege the experience of disability.** This is not to say that TABS (temporarily abled bodies) can’t participate and contribute to the conversation about access, but instead it is a call to reverse the history of marginalization [of] disabled people[‘s] experience in the academy and our society.  Obviously not every debater has a lived experience with disability, but we all do research. **In debate, this research is a reflection of our priorities – if you want to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem: read a book! Cut some cards!** Ask and answer (yourself) the question, “what is access”! In my negative debates this year, I’ve learned a lot about disability and access. **I’ve learned that the process of “debating it out” is powerful and revolutionary. I’ve learned that my opponent’s willingness to listen and engage with my arguments makes me a better advocate.** But even more than the potential of the debate round – I’ve been inspired by the potential of the debate community. I’ve had countless conversations, emails and chats with disabled and non-disabled debaters, coaches and judges that have fundamentally changed my answer to the question, why do you debate? Debate made me the person I am today. Everything I love about my self and my life is a result of my decision to debate. Why do I debate? For access. I debate because I believe in this activity and community. I believe we could and should make debate accessible to everyone, but we can’t do it alone. We need each other. **I’ll end with a quote: “[access] is not a thing that can be delivered by politician, policymakers or educators, but a process of struggle that has to be joined**

#### The idea that epistemic resistance is all that is needed erases the material conditions of disability

Siebers 06 **(Tobin, Prof of Literary and Cultural Criticism at the U of Michigan, “Disability Studies and the Future of Identity Politics”) DR 16**

**The attack on identity by social constructionists is designed to liberate individuals constrained by unjust stereotypes and social prejudices. The example of disability in particular reveals with great vividness the unjust stereotypes imposed on identity by cultural norms and languages as well as the violence exercised by them.** It also provides compelling evidence for the veracity of the social model**. Deafness was not, for instance, a disability on Martha’s Vineyard for most of the eighteenth century because 1 in 25 residents was deaf and everyone in the community knew how to sign**. Deaf villagers had the same occupations and incomes as people who could hear.3 This example shows to what extent **disability is socially produced.** In fact, **it is tempting to see disability exclusively as the product of a bad match between society and some human bodies because it is so often the case. But disability also frustrates theorists of social construction because the disabled body and mind are not easily aligned with cultural norms and codes. Many disability scholars have begun to insist that the social model either fails to account for the difficult physical realities faced by people with disabilities or presents their body and mind in ways that are conventional, conformist, and unrecognizable to them. These include the habits of privileging pleasure over pain, making work a condition of independence, favoring performativity to corporeality, and describing social success in terms of intellectual achievement, bodily adaptability, and active political participation.** David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder have noticed that **the push to link physical difference to cultural and social constructs, especially ideological ones, has actually made disability disappear** from the social model. They cite a variety of recent studies of the body that use “corporeal aberrancies” to emblematize social differences, complaining that “physical difference” within common critical methodologies “exemplifies the evidence of social deviance even as the constructed nature of physicality itself fades from view.”4 As Davis puts it, **cultural theory abounds with “the fluids of sexuality, the gloss of lubrication, the glossary of the body as text,** the heteroglossia of the intertext, the glossolalia of the schizophrenic. **But almost never the body of the differently abled.”5 Recent theoretical emphases on “performativity,” “heterogeneity,” and “indeterminancy” privilege a disembodied ideal of freedom, suggesting that emancipation from social codes and norms may be achieved by imagining the body as a subversive text. These emphases are not only incompatible with the experiences of people with disabilities; they mimic the fantasy, often found in the medical model, that disease and disability are immaterial as long as the imagination is free. Doctors and medical professionals have the habit of coaxing sick people to cure themselves by thinking positive thoughts, and when an individual’s health does not improve the failure is ascribed to mental weakness**. Sontag was perhaps the first to understand the debilitating effects of **describing illness as a defect of imagination or will power**. She traces the notion that disease springs from individual mental weakness to Schopenhauer’s claim that “recovery from a disease depends on the will assuming ‘dictatorial power in order to subsume the rebellious forces’ of the body” (43-44). **She also heaps scorn on the idea that the disabled or sick are responsible for their disease concluding that “theories that diseases are caused by mental states and can be cured by will power are always an index of how much is not understood about the physical terrain of a disease**” (55**). The rebellious forces of the body and the physical nature of disease represent a reality untouched by metaphor.** Sontag insists that “the reality has to be explained” (55).