## 1: FW

#### **The role of the ballot is to critically engage with discussions of disability. Failure to center these discussions erases disabled individuals from academia and renders ableism permanent.**

Dolmage, Jay. https://www.press.umich.edu/9708722/academic\_ableism . *Academic Ableism*. 2017. (Jay Dolmage is Professor and Associate Chair, Undergraduate Communication Outcome Initiative and University of Waterloo.) Bracketed for identity first language

Yet as disability studies scholar David Bolt and others have shown, even though “disability is relevant to most if not all disciplines” in the contemporary academy, there is a “critical avoidance [and a] lack of critical engagement” with disability that evidences a “manifestly academic form of Othering” (2). While academics will talk about health, or the body, they will rarely talk about disability studies, rarely engage with the authority of disabled people on these matters, and rarely locate their work within the field of disability studies itself. As David Mitchell argues, the root cause of this is “unabashed commitment of universities to the reproduction of practitioners of normalization as the terms of exchange in the awarding of higher education degrees” (18–19). Universities create doctors and special educators and therapists who learn how to rehabilitate or cure disability, or how to tokenize or minimally include it. Seeing disability as fixable is very, very different from seeing disability as desirable, or understanding disability subjectivity as diversifying a “stag- nating cultural knowledge base about differential embodiment” (David Mitchell, 19). In short, educating people to erase and diminish disability ensures limitations on our knowledge about bodies and minds. Moreover, the continued struggle to fight for small accommodations for [disabled students] also ensures that perhaps we are now in the era of [disabled people] fighting to get the chance to study at all. Educators must recognize both the long history of exclusion and experimentation upon [disabled people], as well as the more recent history of academic ableism experienced by disabled students. I begin this exploration with some numbers, and some anecdotal facts, all wrapped together to give a snapshot of disability and higher education today.

#### The affirmative is an attempt to read the resolution in a new light, one which understands how the topic of the debate relates to the everyday lives of the debaters that discuss it. The role of the judge is to engage the round with a pedagogy focused on sustainable interdependence.

Jung, Julie, “Interdependency as an Ethic for Accessible Intellectual Publics.” *Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing and Service Learning*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2014. Accessed 3 Nov. 2021.

An accessible society,” crip theorist Robert McRuer argues, “is not one simply with ramps and Braille signs on ‘public’ buildings, but one in which our ways of relating to, and depending on, each other have been reconfigured” (94). Using McRuer’s definition as a starting point, in this article I seek to work toward creating a more accessible society of teacher-scholars by exploring interdependency as an ethic for intellectual work.1 Toward this end, I will first argue that creating such a public requires a reconceptualization of the term “pedagogy,” one that moves beyond the boundaries of the classroom such that learning emerges as a dynamic process of recognition and interrelation. I will then review the concepts of independence, dependence, and interdependence as they have been taken up in disability studies and conclude by using these meanings to map out how interrelations on multiple levels make our intellectual work possible. In *Democracies to Come: Rhetorical Action, Neoliberalism, and Communities of Resistance,* Rachel Riedner and Kevin Mahoney argue that pedagogy understood as that which occurs only within classroom spaces is problematic because it represents pedagogy as a closed system and thus fails to recognize how classroom practices are part of a larger network of bodies, emotions, and economies. To counter such an understanding, they redefine pedagogy as “a praxis of learning strategies for intervening, reassembling, and inventing sustainable relationships of solidarity, networks of affinity, that hold out the possibility of countering” hegemonic ideologies (3). In this sense, then, pedagogy, as they understand it, is explicitly political, for it necessarily involves practices for “making, reproducing, and remaking social relations, identities, and intervening in relations of dominance and exploitation” (xiv). For Riedner and Mahoney, this work of re/making and intervening in democratic publics necessitates that teachers move into them: by participating in actions of social protest with students and community members beyond the institutional space of the classroom, teachers remake existing social relations by making and sustaining new relations of solidarity. Riedner and Mahoney’s conceptualization of pedagogy, when put into conversation with McRuer’s theory of accessible societies, gestures toward the value of understanding pedagogy as practices designed to reconfigure existing social relations through the unlearning of traditional ways of relating. In disability studies scholarship, as I will explain below, this important pedagogical work translates into the need to challenge the normalizing status of independence, specifically, its status as the originary position from which publics are both freely chosen and forged. It is only by recognizing interdependency as the norm, these scholars argue, that can we begin to take up our ethical obligation to help sustain relations that in turn help to sustain us. As an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, disability studies is well positioned to forge a reconsideration of pedagogy as involving the unlearning of hegemonic forms of relating because of its trenchant critiques of what it means to be “normal,” who gets to define these meanings, and what these meanings do. Key to these critiques is a direct confrontation with ableism, an ideology by which ablebodiedness is constructed as the norm and disability is assumed to be “abject, invisible, disposable, less than human” (Dolmage 22). Disability studies scholars contest these constructions by framing disability as “a political and cultural identity,” thereby “challeng[ing] the idea that disability is a deficit or defect that should be cured or remedied” (Dolmage 19, 20). It is through such a framework that ableist concepts can be identified and critiqued, and one such concept is independence. Indeed, scholars in disability studies have long critiqued independence as an ableist fiction borne from Enlightenment, colonial, and masculinist ideologies that privilege it as the primary signifier of citizenship, adulthood, and human achievement. Tobin Siebers, for example, explains that within the tradition of liberalism, citizens are constructed as “autonomous, rational beings” whose existence is marked by an “essential freedom and independence” (182). Likewise challenging a liberal construction of citizenship, McRuer argues that the “bourgeois public sphere, as it has been most famously theorized by Jurgen Habermas, is founded on principles of independence and ability” (81). These principles are constitutive of what Jay Dolmage terms the “normal position”: “able- bodied, rational-minded, autonomous, polite and proprietary” (21).

## 2: Harms

#### **Debate tournaments from the beginning have been designed to test physical and mental stamina and to create a “fight ring” only for “first class” students. They were designed with the idealized neurotypical, able-bodied, white, and male student.**

Lionel Crocker (1938) The values of tournament debating, The Southern Speech Journal, 3:2, 5-6, DOI: [10.1080/10417943809370667](https://doi.org/10.1080/10417943809370667)

Mental and physical stamina are required of the successful de- bater in a tournament. It requires a healthy mind in a healthy body to stand six hours of listening intently and speaking to the point. Ex- cept perhaps on the athletic field there is no such protracted demand made upon the participant. Tournament debating is almost professional in its intensity. The liberal arts student needs more of this rigorous training. In a short space of time a student sees his own weaknesses. He is like a prize fighter in a ring that must take round after round of punishment. If he is in poor condition that fact will be pointed out to him. Sometimes debate coaches need to have their advice reinforced. Brilliant but lazy students need such jolts. Mental agility is taught by a rapid fire of different attacks on a question. Good college debating does not depend upon the briefs of handbooks. Each team works out its own case. Students who like mental stimulation relish different attacks on the same question. All the compulsions of working for a decision operate in a tourna- ment. There are many arguments against decisions but as an educa- tional technique the decision has its values. To be tested four times in one day is healthy. If the test does not show up so well the student knows that something is the matter. Usually it is lack of preparation. Four defeats can not be laid to the prejudice of a judge. All the evils of judging tend to disappear in a debate tournament. An educational value lies in the fact that a number of students can gain experience at a low cost. Traveling costs money. A debate with an institution sixty miles away costs at least ten dollars, counting mile- age and meals. For the same amount a team can have four debates. With the emphasis today on the training of a number of students debate budgets can be stretched by means of the debate tournament. Not all the variations of the debate tournament can be taken up in this short article but the novice debate holds many educational values to which attention should be called. Not all students who would like to debate are potential first-class material. Yet those who string along with the debate squad ought to be given a chance. The novice tourna- ment with or without decisions provides for them. Tournaments are easy to set up. Any state can profitably run a tournament. In Ohio the state is divided into two geographical divi- sions. Before the Christmas recess these divisions meet in tourna- ment and each one selects by elimination three teams to represent it in the finals in the state capitol. These six teams have four rounds of debating and after the last round scores are computed. If there is a tie another debate is held to determine the winner. Each participat- ing school pays $7.50 into the treasury. This pays office expenses and judging costs for the finals. Coaches of the eliminated teams serve as judges and receive $20.00 for their day's work. The supreme value of all this is that the best brains of the youth of the state meet. What this assembling of the future leaders of the democracy means only time can tell. Friendships are started at these tournaments that last as long as life lasts. A fellowship among the debate coaches is developed that makes for friendly feeling among the institutions of the state. These are but a few of the educational values of tournament de- bating which account for the rapid growth of this type of college ac- tivity on American college campuses.

#### **Debate remains inaccessible to disabled students through physical, emotional, and mental barriers. National circuit requires both the capacity to travel far and the health to handle meal and rest breaks being cancelled to fit the tournament. Arguments concerning trauma maybe deployed without warning, with only a forced and public disclosure of disability to be used as a shield, and even then it may be ignored.**

Dolmage, Jay. https://www.press.umich.edu/9708722/academic\_ableism . *Academic Ableism*. 2017. (Jay Dolmage is Professor and Associate Chair, Undergraduate Communication Outcome Initiative and University of Waterloo.) Bracketed for identity first language

But the structural and financial details are just one part of this picture because the process of seeking accommodations for those students who actually do try to do access them is so difficult, the path strewn with bar- riers. [Disabled students] often meet peers who have little familiarity with disabilities, hold stigmas about [disabled people], or even consider academic accommodations for [disabled students] to be an unfair advantage (Olney & Kim). It is not uncommon for [disabled students] to find themselves in a position of explaining to faculty details about eligibility for accommodations, the accommodation process, and the range of available support to students with disabilities on campus (Cawthon & Cole; Ryan). These same faculty are very likely to believe— just as students do—that the accommodations are an unfair advantage (O’Shea and Meyer). For most students who seek accommodations for our classes, they aren’t allowed to know what the actual range of accommodations might be. Instead, they have to go in to disability services, offer up their diagnosis, and have that diagnosis matched with a stock set of accommodations. In other exchanges, students might be asked by disability services to “tell us what you need”—and again students have to guess. Just imag- ine how much further this disadvantages students from other cultures, first-generation college and university students, and other students who might not fully understand the culture of higher education. Throughout the book, I will explore the toll this accommodation process takes. Another crucial but drastically understudied aspect of disability in higher education: How does disability diagnosis intersect with other markers of difference? We know that “African American males are dis- proportionately placed into categories of special education that are associated with extremely poor outcomes” at the K-12 level (Losen and Gillespie). Yet education researcher Joy Banks has shown that “African American students with disabilities experience difficulty accessing dis- ability support services and appropriate accommodations” at colleges and universities (28). So how can it be that for the same group of stu- dents, a disability diagnosis at the K-12 level can be hastily applied, and will speed them into the school-to-prison pipeline, and at the postsec- ondary level is so much more difficult to get? As Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, points out in an interview: [Y]outh of color, particularly those in ghetto communities, find them- selves born into the cage. . . . The cage is the unequal educational opportunities these children are provided at a very early age coupled with the constant police surveillance they’re likely to encounter, mak- ing it very likely that they’re going to serve time. Middle-class white children, children of privilege, are afforded the opportunity to make a lot of mistakes and still go on to college, still dream big dreams. But for kids who are born in the ghetto in the era of mass incarceration, the system is designed in such a way that it traps them, often for life.” (n.p.) Further bars within this cage metaphor, then, are the disability diagnoses that might be applied to these students. What about international students? While many schools are targeting these students and charging them quite a bit more tuition than domestic students, and while the number of international students in the West climbs every year, very few schools consider the difficulty these students may have getting the diagnoses required to obtain accommodations, or dealing with other linguistic and cultural barriers to access.7 Will they be eligible for government support programs? How will they access doctors? Will diagnostic tests even be offered in languages other than English? Is the passive approach to their support in fact a form of immigration restriction? That is, if higher education is a pathway to recruiting talent- ed immigrants, could a lack of disability support act to filter out disabled immigrants? currently, the world’s primary education hosts are the colonizing countries and the offshoot white settler societies from the 19th- century age of imperialism. . . . This exchange contributes to Western nation-building and reduces the capacity of source countries to build their own knowledge economy with research and education based on their own resources and power. In a marriage with neoliberal ideas, this exchange decimates national social welfare systems, thus increasing wealth disparities, inequality, and the oppression of marginalized populations (such as newcomers, racialized, disabled and gendered groups) while fostering private purchase of social services (e.g. educa- tion brokers, tutoring, and counseling). (219) In short, international education can be disabling on a global scale. As Patricia McLean, Margaret Heagney, and Kay Gardner argue, “as global educational opportunities expand, the implications for students with a disability must also be considered; not to do so is potentially dis- criminatory” (226). Though statistics were unavailable in North Amer- ica, Higher Education Strategy Associates show that “between 2001/02 to 2004/05, the percentage increase in disabled international students entering British higher education (38.24 per cent) exceeds both dis- abled domestic students (37.02 per cent) and non-disabled internation- al students (31.38 per cent)” (quoted in Soorenian, n.p.). I offer this tangle of citations, this stack of numbers not as decisive facts—the numbers shift, and they are used from a wide variety of angles to make a wide variety of arguments. Someone might use many of the same numbers or studies I have tangled up here to fashion a strong warning about the ways students with disabilities are infiltrating higher education, for instance, or to encourage teachers and administrators to panic, or to argue for exclusive programs. It may seem that we have moved through the approach, mentioned at the beginning of this book, away from the era of eugenics, and toward an era of access, fueled by the disability rights movement and the rise of academic disability studies. But a few facts are irrefutable[Disabled students] are still kept out of the university in large numbers. Disabled students will face steep steps as they work to attain an education. The programs and initiatives that are developed in the name of diversity and inclusion do not yet deliver tangible means of addressing the ableism inherent in higher education.

#### Ableism within speech and debate continues today. It was only when the world was also faced with these obstacles that the community took steps to rectify them.

“The Forensics Experience.” The Forensics Guy, Guest Isabel Mavrides-Calderon. September 23, 2021. https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-33-do-we-need-a-special-forensics-w-isabel/id1481505188?i=1000536409891

What, what is something that you really want to press on the community that absolutely needs to change right now? Well, I've realized that there's a big difference between online tournaments, and in person tournaments. And I think especially as a disabled student doing speech, I feel so privileged now doing online because it is so much easier. And I truly opened up how much how many obstacles there are in, in person tournaments, like, it's actually having to physically go to a tournament could be a big issue for some of them for the illness, because you like if you need to do treatments midday, which I need to do, like going to an actual tournament can be really problematic. And as much as we'd like it to happen, not all schools are accessible, they're not all wheelchair accessible, they don't all have elevators. And the whole issue of having to change rooms constantly can be a big issue. And having a time limit of having to get to a room before your round can be really useful. So I think a lot of disabled students have to worry more about their disability or illness than the speech itself, which is really wrong. And I think now that we have online, we've realized that it is possible to accommodate two disabled students. And I just think it's really sad that it took able bodied people needing it to, for the US to make a change. We didn't do it when just disabled students leader that that is such an amazing point. I really appreciate that. You even mentioned that, you know, like, this is definitely something that we should have had in place before. It's almost it's it's funny because like I'm I'll be honest, I'm I'm a little bit of robotics a little bit because I tried to run a online speech and debate tournament literally, like, I mean, I mean, like a month or two before the pandemic even started before people knew what it was. And like the sign was were unfortunately like, abysmal, and it was I literally created it because I wanted it to be that opportunity. Having more accessible like categories and everything. I'm working, I'm a member of ACB which is the American Council for the Blind and my best friend who's also blind we've been talking about like creating like the cat, there's a category called Radio in Wisconsin and it it it's perfect for accessibility because you're not just don't like physical movements and things of that nature is purely like your voice the way you speak and everything which is great for as a As a category for students to be able to do, as well as for judges to be able to judge if they are visually impaired in any way. And I had so many ideas of how to make this really great, but I am glad Well, I wouldn't say I'm glad that the pandemic, the pandemic has not been a great friend. But I am. A positive of that is that it has allowed us as a community to see what we can open up and how we can do things. I, I've thought about it in the past, and there was just never, I don't run tournaments, like other you know, people do. So it wasn't like, I didn't have an opportunity to but I thought about those things. If I were to run a tournament, like, it would be really awesome to give students who might be stuck at home in those positions. It can't travel, you know, a chance to compete in an online format. And you definitely can like, it's like, it's crazy how available in advance now, because you can totally run a room and like almost like have like a projector, for example, kind of up and a student does their piece in real time with the other students. But like, it's, you know, it's, you know, done virtually it'd be, it'd be really amazing. And also, the person literally, before you that I was interviewing, we were talking about, obviously accessibility from a financial aspect to, I'm sure, I can definitely say this has been the happiest time. And I'm, I'm obviously not actively coaching your team, unfortunately, this year for a lot of for some reasons. But it's been amazing to see kids who are like, wow, I never would have had the chance to go to Emory Berkeley, and Glenn Brooks and all of those because it cost a ton of money, you got to fly across the country, stay in a hotel for multiple days, have the hotel food and all that stuff like and then and then these tournaments are charging ridiculous amounts, like 150 for for one injury, and it's crazy, you know? So it's really amazing to see that this has given us an opportunity to make Speech and Debate even more accessible in a bunch of different realms. It's really amazing. I, I don't I don't know, I don't know what the I don't know what the pandemic will put us to like, I don't know if in the future now we'll just all do online, because we realize it's much better. Or if we'll just immediately gay one, everybody gets vaccines, we just go back to in person. But whichever route we choose, I definitely hope that we can implement something that's going to make things a lot more accessible for people who can't always be there. Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I think I think that'd be really awesome and appreciative of the community. And I don't know, I think it'll be, it'll be really interesting, especially, you know, all of the every single big tournament can definitely just run online. Like, there's no reason there's no reason not to. It saves so much money on a bunch of different fronts. It might lose money for the hotel industry or something or whatever. I don't know, but and for our community, we're safe, you know. So that's, that's a positive. I'm a little bit a little bit about you, are you? Well, it's weird, cuz I'm asking questions that I felt like I already know. But you know, obviously, for the sake of the podcast, what year are you? How and like, how big is your team? I'm curious to know that. Yeah, so I'm in 10th grade. My school is very big in debate, but we have a separate debate and speech team. And my speech team was recently started. So right now we only have seven members. Wow. I'm Vice President of my team. So it's pretty small, but we're get recruiting more and more, and we're hoping to grow. That's awesome. Um, and so you, so you don't do anything debate related. I didn't debate in middle school. But for accessibility purposes, it wasn't really fair to have a partner, because I miss a lot of school to be in the hospital. And I also have to cancel a tournament last minutes all the time, and really wouldn't be fair to a partner. So it was much easier to do an activity that John was just me. I definitely understand that. And I yeah, I appreciate that on that front, you know, being self aware and kind of knowing that this might, you know, this might be harmful to the person that you could be competing with. So that's yeah, that's not it's, unfortunately, not a great thing that you aren't able to, but it would be, but it's a great gesture for you to be knowledgeable of that and make it happen. Um, how how do you think in general, like, in terms of accessibility? I guess, I guess, I guess kind of my question is, and like, what other ways besides like, digitally or doing, you know, online things how can we make this happen? And how can we, what's the perfect Speech and Debate community look like to you? I think a big component is recognizing that disabled bodies might move differently than able bodied bodies. I definitely saw this issue more in di yeah, like I used to do di and my body doesn't move the same as someone that's able bodied. And I always got balance on it. And I think that we need to be more appreciative that like, while this movement might be different, while they might do this in a different way, that it still is valuable. And I think we're definitely looking at things through a lens of just able bodied speedy students. So I think that just changing that mindset. And I think even when you do ask for accommodation from a tournament, judges just don't always implement that. And I've definitely seen that a lot. So I think just recognizing that having tournament to be more strict about letting go just know that they cannot take off points for something that is part of a student's disability. I constantly get points for tremors. And I know that tons of other disabled students get points off for things that are part of disabilities. I know people who have chronic stammers. And in nationals got points off for that. So I just think that that is that has to change. No one should be penalized for something that they can't control. Even in events, like Oh, and every event, the whole walking component, the whole how much you move, even making eye contact. I know that for certain disabilities like autism, it's really hard. And there's a lot of things people don't think about, it's not just about being in a wheelchair, there's just so many components that there's so many different disabilities. So I think people need to be more aware about that. And there has to be more just like knowledge about that. And then I think for if we do go back to in person tournaments, that people should be able to like there should be more options in terms of like sitting duck zooming in. I think honestly having an online component, we just let so many more voices get into speech and debate, like so many more students like it used to stop me all the time, I only went to three competitions last year. And because I just couldn't go, and now I'm competing every weekend. So it's just a difference. I know so many different people who finally got the opportunity to compete in speech and debate and love it. And it will be so heartbreaking for all my like sick and disabled friends, that just got the opportunity to learn how beautiful this event is to get it taken away. And right now we're getting a very one sided view of Speech and Debate, we're getting a one sided, mostly rich students that can afford to go to these tournaments, able bodied to so many more voices would be such a more intersectional activity, we just accommodated.

## 3:Advocacy

#### My list of strike demands of the debate community before resuming the discussion of the topic:

#### 1] Permanently create 2 online TOC bid tournaments per topic. Allowing for 2 online bid tournaments per topic presents all debaters with an opportunity to qualify while removing on site accessibility and travel obstacles.

#### 2] A creation of standards for handling mental health concerns. There is a need for procedures to help students with anxiety, PTSD, depression, etc. This should include the designation of quiet areas at tournaments, for students with sensory issues or anxiety.

#### 4] Increasing the number and diversifying the location of bid tournaments. Local bid tournaments reduce traveling which allows for disabled debaters to have easy access to medical devices and support systems.

## 4: Solvency

#### The only way to confront structures and administrators within debate is to remove the idea of business as usual. The withdrawal of our support can render such structures inoperative.

Roth, K. R., & Ritter, Z. S. (2021). *Whiteness, power, and resisting change in US higher education : a peculiar institution*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature Switzerland.

Thinking about the various examples I have looked at in this chapter, the theoretical model supplied by Benjamin, the case of the general strike by Black slaves in the US South described by Du Bois and the Seattle general strike and the thinking of Strong, we can begin to see what some of the building blocks of a radical general strike against neoliberalism in the university might look like. I think such a strike, if isolated from larger worker's movements, might not quite live up to its full potential. After all a general strike has to be, well, general. But even if it were confined to academia, such a form of a (limited) general strike would remain a powerfulway to face off against a body of implacable administrators where no words (or charts, or excel spread sheets, graphs, etc.) are able to move them. The general strike asserts this is not just business as usual It announces not only to administrators but to the strikers themselves something has shifted, ontology itself is now possibly in question. In fact, I think it's clear &om the preceding that the greatest effects of the general strike come on the part of the strikers rather than on those whom they oppose. Their opponents only see the failure of their regime if the strike is successfuL The strikers themselves, on the other hand, are ushered into an entirely different way of life (or perhaps more accurately, ushered into life itself, into the life neoliberalism has been slowly but surely — and then not so slowly — eating away at), and this, by their own actions. By way of conclusion, let me return to Benjamin's comment while the political strike is "lawmaking," the general strike is "anarchistic." I think it is very important to connect the general strike to anarchism as a political movement and set of practices. The very name "anarchism" suggests its opposition to archism, a set of political systems based on hierarchy and projection, which I would define in our own time as being equated with neoliberalism itself. Go In many ways neoliberalism — at least in terms of its US variant with which I am most familiar — poses as being post political and highly egali- tarian. In modes like the "sharing society" which purports to be about human connection rather than profit (but where the exact opposite is true), or in terms of the rampant libertarianism of the tech world, the broader practices of neoliberalism pretend to be about casual and unenforced forms of sociality, as if the internet and other modalities of neoliberalism were all about free choice and easiness. Yet the regimes of contemporary neoliberalism are, in my view, if anything *more* archist, more hierarchical than much of what preceded them. It is no acci- dent, I think, aside &om the period of slavery itself, that social and economic inequality have reached new heights in the United States just as neoliberalism has come to the fore. This is no less true at the level of the university as it is in the country- and indeed the world — as well. If neoliberalism is an extreme form of archaism, one that is perfectly comfortable showing a fascist as well as a liberal face when needed, then anarchism is, I would argue, the way out of this entanglement with the general strike being a principle mode by which that anarchism can be realized. Insofar as neoliberalism takes up all of the air in the room, it becomes impossible to recognize the forms of academic work that are existing under the aegis of neoliberalism but which are not themselves neolib- eral. When we are forced to recode intellectual work, pedagogy, and other academic formulations in strictly neoliberal terms, the fact of their ongoing independent existence becomes more and more obscure even to their practitioners. This means that we cease to see our own separate practices as such. The general strike serves as an opportunity, not only to create brand new ways of being (and striking) together, but also to recuperate existing practices that have been swept along, coopted and hijacked by neoliberal forms of vision and organization. The general strike exposes a number of unexpected vulnerabilities about the regime of neoliberalism (as it does for all ontological regimes). As already mentioned, it exposes the fact, in this case of administrators, as opposed to the strikers themselves, of not being able to Not see through neoliberal eyes. This means the kinds of transformations the general strike creates in its own strikers will be entirely unexpected and invisible to them so they cannot prepare for or anticipate what is coming (that's exactly why Strong spoke of how the strike would lead to "no one knows where"). The administrators might, probably do, expect- and maybe even welcome — threats and violence against them (they know perfectly well how to deal with such things ) but a total disengagement &om practice is something else. The complete withdrawal of authoriztion can bring down this kind of regime in an instant (as we can see in cases of mass revolt more generally). This leads to a second asymmetry and vulnerability on the part of administrators. They need the academic workers under their thumb to exist at all. To be administrators and to justify their ever increasing salaries, they have to administer something and someone. The reverse, however, is not true. There is no need for the massive, bloated, and parasitic struc- tures that sit atop contemporary colleges and universities which take all the resources for itself and then insist on subjecting the rest of us to point- less and very costly innovations (often profiting the regents or others who control universities very much, including public ones), all of which lead to greater administrative power at the expense of everyone else. Accord- ingly, if and when the administration's bluff is called and the raison d' etre supplied by neoliberalism is refused, there is no other form of justification they can bring for their continued domination of the university system. A related third vulnerability comes from the fact neoliberalism — like every ontology — is premised on its own invisibility. To function best, it should be background, not visible as a functioning system at all (this is probably one of the reasons why no one ever says "I am a neoliberal." ) The kinds of changes in thinking and awareness that come &om engaging in a general strike exposes neoliberalism for what it is, not an ordered, coherent and highly rationalized plan for maximal human efficiency and organization but rather a form of imperialism, an aggression and an attack on collective and individual forms of expression and freedom including academic forms. As such, what may seem seductive and alluring within its own logics becomes thoroughly unpalatable even unbearable when so exposed. In this way it is possible — not certain but possible — that a kind of virtuous circle of further exposure and resistance to neoliberalism might result &om turning to the general strike. It would serve as a means (a pure means at that!) of making the university and the world around us other than what it otherwise seems doomed and fated to be. If you think academic freedom is no longer possible and you have nothing but a dreary eternity of neoliberal predation in store (and the examples of neoliberal practices from universities in the United Kingdom and Australia are **so much worse** than in the United States itself, offering us a very grim future indeed) isn't it worth thinking about a general strike as a way to change the terms of what is and isn't possible in the first place~

#### **We must practice a reciprocity of care. Communities are sustainable when they are willing to provide what they can to one another.**

Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. Care Work (p. 147). Arsenal Pulp Press. Kindle Edition. 2018 (queer disabled nonbinary femme writer, educator and disability/transformative justice worker of Burgher/Tamil Sri Lankan and Irish/Roma ascent.)

Reciprocity of care labor is also a disabled practice. In disabled communities, we talk about the idea that we can still offer reciprocity to each other, even if we can’t offer the exact same type of care back. For example: if my disabled body can’t lift yours onto the toilet, it doesn’t mean I can’t be reciprocal—it means I contribute equally from what my particular body can do. Maybe instead of doing physical care, I can research a medical provider, buy groceries for you when I’m out shopping, or listen to you vent when one of your dates was ableist. Fair trade care labor is not a one-sided, femmephobic, sexist shit show. ﻿Fair trade care economics could be kinda like … permaculture? The more systems are not a monoculture, the more sustainable they will be. The more there are a lot of different kinds of folks giving and receiving different kinds of care, the more there’s room for boundaries, ebbs and flows, people tapping out, and people moving up. Crips and nonnormative people have a lot of different gifts to offer, and normals and ableds often assume not only that we have nothing to offer, but that we can only be (patronizingly and abusively) cared for. But care doesn’t have to be one way. It can become an ongoing responsive ecosystem, where what is grown responds to need.

#### The point of the affirmative is not only the call for action, as there is no guarantee that it will be followed. Disability activism is an attempt to take steps even if there are no guarantees of larger success, as it is a form of individual and communal healing and progress.

Pulrang, Andrew. “What Moves Some People with Disabilities to Be Disability Activists?” *Forbes*, 14 Sept. 2021, www.forbes.com/sites/andrewpulrang/2021/09/14/what-moves-some-people-with-disabilities-to-be-disability-activists/?sh=1d0f264eb539. Accessed 5 Nov. 2021.

Activism as a way of life offers unique and valuable rewards to the committed activist. It also wears us down, both physically and emotionally. This may be even more true in particular for disability activism. It’s one of the most common avenues for building a more liberating sense of self for people with disabilities. It also regularly chews disabled people up, leaving many of us exhausted, disappointed, and demoralized. We may end up more empowered and connected in some key ways, but at the same time worn out, cynical, and alienated in others. A wheelchair user can do all of the supposedly “right things” to get restaurants and stores in their area to install ramps and accessible restrooms. But years of good-faith, polite but persistent advocacy may still fail to bring about anything but vague promises, mild regret, and only the most minor changes. Coalitions of both professional and grassroots disability organizations may fight for decades to expand home care and end institutionalization, but continue to run into political obstacles and public indifference or misunderstanding. Still, victories do happen. Individual advocates sometimes win the services, benefits, or accommodations they were initially denied. And organized disability activism does shift thinking and practices over time. Occasionally it wins genuinely historic changes, like passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Outspoken disability advocates and activists are sometimes portrayed and secretly viewed as obsessive cranks or bitter, angry malcontents. We are never satisfied! We nitpick unimportant details! We let our rage overrule good sense! Maybe worse than all of this, our intense focus on seemingly narrow issues makes us boring! Or, so goes the familiar narrative. At the same time, strong advocates and activists are often admired, at least in theory. We know that social progress is almost always driven by activists, by people who are dissatisfied with the way things are and willing to devote themselves to changes that few other people seem to care about. And successful advocacy is almost always praised, at least for a time.  Disability activism is also supposed to be, among many other things, a community. It’s one of the few venues where disabled people collaborate, communicate, and socialize. So while the *purpose* of disability activism isn’t to make us feel connected and supported, at it’s best, activism *can* give us community. Unfortunately, this is often an ill-defined and elusive goal. Activism doesn’t always breed kindness. And fighting for disability rights and justice doesn’t guarantee that the fight itself will always be fair, inclusive, or nurturing to those carrying it out. A great many disabled people find in disability activism an enduring community and true acceptance for the first time in their lives. But just as many find burnout, backbiting, and surprising flavors of intersecting prejudice in a movement whose purposes are supposed to be the opposite of these things. Disability activism can be incredibly rewarding. It can also break your heart. So why do disabled people become disability activists? It’s a question worth exploring. **Practical Reasons** Many of us first become disability activists because they have to: To solve pressing personal problems. For those of us born with disabilities, it often begins with our parents being forced to fight for an equal, integrated education. Later, we ourselves start tangling with programs, services, and benefits that are supposed to help us, but are often too difficult to obtain, and then too restrictive to allow personal growth and self-sufficiency. Eventually, we experience the everyday grind of asking for accommodations and assertively insisting on opportunities, because if we don’t we won’t get anywhere, or even perhaps survive. In response to imminent policy threats or opportunities. Many of us also find that fighting for our own services and accommodations isn’t enough. The disability community as a whole is constantly faced with larger-scale threats that make organized activism necessary. Budget cuts threaten vital supports like [health care](https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/disability-rights-activists-are-the-real-heroes-of-the-health-care-fight/). There is a constant danger of our rights being eroded through neglect or [outright legal attack](https://dredf.org/hr620/). And there are opportunities to fight for too. Good ideas and long overdue reforms occasionally become politically feasible, like as expanding [home care funding](https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Better%20Care%20Better%20Jobs%20Act%20One%20Pager%20SBS%20072821.pdf) and [updating SSI](https://www.brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/social-security-program-update). But such measures always need all-out support through activism before the narrow window of political possibility closes again. Necessity drives both individual disability advocacy and organized disability activism. But there is usually choice, passion, and other incentives involved as well. **Beyond Necessity** Other disabled people enter disability activism as much or more by more complex combinations of interest, conviction, temperament, and emotional need. Which came first? Some of us have a pre-existing interest in activism and social justice, and only later apply it to our disability experiences. Some of us may grow up in politically active households, but don’t at first link these values to disability issues. Sometimes this is because a disability only starts later in life, through accident or illness. For others it’s because even with a lifelong disability, it can take awhile to develop the kind of disability consciousness that can shape a person’s politics or world view. In either case, for some disability activists, new experiences and ideas about disability are influenced by already existing political and social beliefs. For others, it’s the other way around. Disability activism starts with disability first, which leads later into an interest in broader social justice. Quite a few disability activists considered themselves to be “apolitical,” until disability issues demanded their attention. Later, experiencing mistakes and victories in disability activism helped build interest in other arenas of politics and activism. Meanwhile, growing understanding of the social, cultural, and political experience of disability-based ableism helps some of us gain greater insight and appreciation for other oppressed groups and social justice issues. A viable identity There aren’t that many easily recognized models of an appealing life as a disabled person –– though there are a lot more straightforward options now than there were even just 30 years ago. In theory, any disabled person can opt for any career or lifestyle that appeals to us. But for those looking for a more developed model to adopt, there are a handful of recognized models. There is disabled athletics, through institutions such as Special Olympics and the Paralympics. There’s “white collar” businesses and professions where certain kinds of disabilities are for some less of an obvious difficulty. In recent years, the internet and social media have made writing, journalism, and other creative outlets another notable option for disabled people. One of the most recognized options for disabled people is to be a disability advocate or activist. In some ways these are two different but related identities. Advocates are more heavily involved in fighting for their own needs and goals, while activists fight for broader change in practices, policies, and laws. While being a disability activist or advocate doesn’t always bring praise, and it’s far from a sure fire way to make a living, it is a recognized, definable identity uniquely available to disabled people. Community Disability activism in particular tends to include focused opportunities for disabled people to find friendship and community. Disabled people’s orientations towards other disabled people are often confused and contradictory. On the one hand, most of us don’t want to be isolated with only other disabled people, in segregated classrooms, sheltered workplaces, or institutional care facilities. At the same time, a single-minded drive for complete social integration and even invisibility can deprive us of valuable peer connections and mutual support from other disabled people. Another complication is that there is only a very shaky consensus on what “disability community” is, if such a thing exists at all. And a lot of people who should feel welcomed and part of a disability community instead feel excluded. Nevertheless, disability activism at its best does offer real community. And disabled people still look for it as both a benefit of the disability activism experience and something that can help sustain us in the work. Empowerment Both individual advocacy and group activism can help disabled people –– who may feel powerless much of the time –– experience a greater degree of power and effectiveness. Of course, this is especially true when advocacy and activism are successful, but not exclusively. It’s not just victories that empower. Strategizing, planning and executing complex events, communicating with a wide audience, and collaborating among diverse individuals and groups, all are inherently empowering activities. In an ableist society where disability is still too often associated with a degree of helplessness and futility, the work of activism itself helps disabled people change how we perceive ourselves, and how our family, friends, and neighbors perceive us. A career For some disabled people, advocacy and activism can be a way into rewarding and financially stable careers. It’s one of the few careers where being disabled is almost a prerequisite, and always an asset, not a liability. It’s hard to say just how significant the disability activism and nonprofit sectors are as major employers. But there are enough disability organizations of various sizes and missions to make at least a few such jobs available in most areas in the U.S. There is still far too much feel labor in disability activism, and pay rates are chronically low. But in many cases the pay and prospects for advancement are at least marginally better than entry-level retail –– and occasionally a lot better. At the same time, “careerism” in disability activism inevitably raises concerns about authenticity, personal ambition, and the dangers of compromising on a cause to preserve a job, a salary, and a career. Some disabled people also instinctively recoil from any hint of “using their disability” as the basis for a career. From a certain point of view about disability, devoting even part of your life to disability issues and endeavors can feel stereotypical and confining. These are valid considerations to keep in mind. But worries about what other people might think shouldn’t deter disabled people from making disability advocacy and activism a life’s work. If that’s where our ambitions and talents lie, or where our lives lead us, that’s good enough.  People with disabilities get into disability activism because it’s necessary, and eventually, at least sometimes effective. They stay involved because it can be satisfying and rewarding, both materially and emotionally. Despite its costs, failures, and limitations, disability activism continues to draw in disabled people, offering both the changes and liberation we need, and worthwhile experiences along the way.