#### Neoliberalism is a regime of compulsory optimism – the modern ethos of “the good life” is not benign, but coaxes subtle investment into an affective regime of citizenship that mandates a normative desire for “the good life” and overcoming the failures of the past which subjects disability to a violent logic of rehabilitation.

Kolarova ‘14

[Katerina, Charles University, Prague, Department of Gender Studies. 2014. “The Inarticulate Post-Socialist Crip: On the Cruel Optimism of Neoliberal Transformations in the Czech Republic,” <https://www.academia.edu/7365478/The_Inarticulate_Post_Socialist_Crip_On_the_Cruel_Optimism_of_Neoliberal_Transformations_in_the_Czech_Republic>] pat

In engaging with these questions I come back to Berlant’s concept of cruel optimism, which has been extremely helpful in my article as I identify structural attachments to promises of better futures that created the ideological base of the project of transition. The engagement with post-socialist material shows, as well, however, that Berlant’s brilliant discussion of the toxicity of the neoliberal version of the promise of good life needs, as I implied earlier, to be reformulated not only to correspond to the specificity of the particular experience of post-socialism, but also to reveal how such a confrontation also brings forth more general challenges and lines of critique.

There is a strange incongruity about Lauren Berlant’s book; disability is literally on its cover, as the crip artist Riva Lehrer provided the cover image If Body: Riva and Zora in Middle Age. It is embedded in the title of the book, as “cruel optimism” could in fact be a very appropriate naming of the violent, recuperative and compulsory optimism of the cultural logic of rehabilitation to which the disabled are permanently subjected. The book’s discussions are haunted by disability; at times disability is even evoked directly, yet it is through the clinical and medicalised language of ‘disease,’ ‘depression,’ ‘obesity,’ ‘spina bifida’ rather than through the transformative and politicised vocabulary of cripness.

In this sense, Berlant’s book replicates the failing of the majority of critical work that exposes the neoliberal debasement of values of solidarity, social justice, and equity. This lack of discussion is startling. Indeed, how is it possible that the bulk of critique of neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality provides such engaging and incisive insights into the politics of maximising vitality, capitalising on the very act of living, or exposing the morbid utilisation of the mechanisms for which Berlant coined the widely circulating term “slow death,” and the necropolitical distribution of death, yet does so without including disability/cripness into its analytical instrumentarium? How can a discussion of ‘the politics of life’ itself do without a category that is integral to modern definition of life and vitality? Taking up the one crip lead from the book, I speak to the image of If Body (differently than Berlant herself does in her closing “Note on the Cover Image” 265-267) and ask what would a critique of cruel optimism look like if it thought of crip bodies, if it thought of crip bodies elsewhere from the Western context and if it thought of crip existence in the context of post-socialist, neoliberal promises.

In formulating the crip reading of cruel optimism, in cripping cruel optimism, we need to address the different affective structures of post-socialist promises. We also need to read those affective structures along with and perhaps against the relationality of cruel optimism Berlant first identified. Most importantly, the concept needs to be expanded so that its more capacious definition would account for the pressures of compulsory able-bodiedness and for the specific experiences of disabled people and crips. In other words, Berlant’s concept of toxic and hurtful promises and her repertoire of critical analysis of fantasies of the good life calls for encounters with crip versions of ‘life’ as well as for a cripping of the notion of the ‘good life.’ It needs to be read more carefully and specifically along with the realities of lives that were never promised (let alone lived through) this liberal fantasy, lives that are appropriated and colonised by images of ‘life not worth living,’ or lives that are at times not even granted the recognition of life itself.

The transition into neoliberalism produced forms of affective citizenship based on what Berlant calls “aspirational normativity” (164 and 169-71). In the post-socialist context, the aspiration promising the utopia of the ‘good life’ was not expressed in the imperative to keep going; the moral aspiration of the post-socialist transition was by definition that of rehabilitation, overcoming the failure and shame of the bad past. It was not the “nearly utopian desire of a prolonged present” (163-4), but the “nearly utopian” desire of a recuperative future.

The cruelness of the post-socialist moment lies – as I hope my analysis above unmasks – in conditioning forms of social belonging by an “affectivity of debt,” discourses of overcoming, and fantasies of cure. The cultural grammar of rehabilitation saturated ‘the political’ and ‘the social’ so fully that claims to social equity could be disavowed and turned into a chimera, the crip monstrous ghost haunting the post-socialist redefinition of sociality and community, where any other form of social belonging for crips than under the rubrics of paternalisingly charitable humanism was (and remains) virtually impossible (see Kolářová).

Registering the temporal coincidence of different structures of compulsory optimism also emphasises their cruel irony. The project of rehabilitating the post-socialist crip virtually overlaps with the moment when, in the West, states started to retract their social-welfare commitments. Even more specifically, the countries in ‘transition’ served to uphold the fantasies of success, health, and the general ‘good life’ made possible by capitalism. For instance, with the claims that it was living the “post-communist dream” (cited in Weiner 53), the Czech Republic was in the early 1990s (before the myth of smooth, straightforward, and successful transition was ruptured by the first crisis in 1994) put forth as the model for the countries of the former Eastern Block. The “teleology of ‘transition’” (Hann 9) of the post-socialist countries along the identical path that the West passed decades earlier (see Verdery) also served, however, as an important projection space for the ‘West,’ where the apparent rehabilitative capacity of capitalism in the East was utilized to bolster the “secular faith” in (neoliberal) capitalism as the only possibility for human history (Duggan xiii). This did not go completely unnoticed, as the key figure of the Czech transformation, Václav Klaus, himself notes: “It is nearly paradoxical that the speeches of some of us [sic] delivered in the West are perceived not only as signs of the vital renaissance of thought in the East, but are also sought after as a support in their own ideological skirmishes […]” (Klaus, “Síla” 1). Yet, in his ego-centrism, Klaus did not draw the conclusions at hand: that the project of rehabilitation/transformation in the ‘East’ and its shock method helped to sustain the ‘West’ – and at the same time inhibited the development of a critical crip consciousness in both locations.

#### As modern neoliberalism shifts to immaterial economies of labor, the work of disabled subjects becomes work on the self­ – labor becomes the process of refining and rehabilitating oneself into wholeness – disabled bodies are inarticulate and incomprehensible, so the labor of disability must and can only be understood as the work of making oneself into a marketable subject.

St. Pierre ‘13

[Joshua, co-founder of the Did I Stutter Project, philosophy at University of Alberta. 2013. “Affective Labour, Disability, and Communicative Stress.” https://disabilitycapitalism.wordpress.com/author/drjaydolmage/] Pat

My talk investigates the means through which disability is constituted by affective labour and neoliberalism. Paralleling the shift from modernization to postmodernization of labor, the constitution of disability has likewise been changed. There are accordingly two questions that will structure my exploration: 1) how are disabled subjects marginalized within an information economy and 2) what kind of disabled subjectivity does informationalization produce? This is largely a new area of inquiry for me and as such I welcome ideas of how to further these questions. To start off, allow me to rehearse a simple truism: capitalism produces competition. Simon Clarke notes that “the intensiﬁcation of the demands of capital throws more and more people into the ranks of the unemployable. The accumulation of capital necessarily leads to the polarisation of overwork and unemployment, prosperity and destitution” (25). As has been well noted within disability studies, this competition notoriously privileges the able-bodied since those bodies which cannot move quickly or efficiently, unable to meet the demands of labour intensification, are the first to be cut from employment. If this resulting exclusion was true within industrial capitalism, then it is even more so within neoliberalism. Here, knowledge and education are translated as human capital to be exploited, and asetheticization gains centre stage. Here, the performance of competencies is a necessary trait since skill no longer determines competency; what is further needed for full-participation in the socio-economic system is to project the right sort of image as a marketable and desirable embodied subject. In this way, it is not uncommon for the compulsion to appear normal and able-bodied to overshadow one’s actual skills. The phenomenon of advertising and marketing the self trades upon communication. Unlike human knowledge and education, I suggest that communication is not capital per se, but serves a more basic function as the conductive medium through which human capital becomes salient and exploitable. Communicative disabilities are the most obvious examples of disabilities marginalized here, but the drive to perform competencies in normalized fashion allows all disabled bodies to be exploited in ways impossible within industrial capitalism. To explain this move, I turn to Michael Hardt and affective labour. In his ground-breaking piece “Affective Labor,” Hardt outlines the succession of economic paradigms since the middle ages: “a first paradigm, in which agriculture and the extraction of raw materials dominated the economy; a second, in which industry and the manufacture of durable goods occupied the privilege position; and the current paradigm in which providing services and manipulating information are at the heart of economic production” (90). The most recent shift of post-modernization, from the secondary sector to the tertiary, marks the overshadowing economic importance of knowledge, information, communication, and affect. It is not that industrial production and the extraction of raw materials cease to play an important role, but rather that their role has been redefined through the informational economy such that production has become informationalized. Hardt argues that within this economy, the quality and nature of labour has shifted from material—the production and selling of “stuff”—to immaterial labour—labour that produces immaterial goods. In particular, there are three types of immaterial labour: 1) industrial production that has been informationalized 2) labour of analytic and symbolic tasks 3) production and manipulation of affect (which requires actual or virtual human contact and proximity). This third category is the one that most interests both Hardt and myself, for while those with communicative disabilities are generally disadvantaged by the move to an informational economy and immaterial labour, affective labour significantly reshapes the terrain of disability. The first two forms of immaterial labour are directly concerned with the exchange of information and knowledge; affective labour produces affect: “a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, passion—even a sense of connectedness or community” (96). In the most obvious sense, affective labour describes the service industry—Disneyland is in the business of selling a particular experience—but affective labour has also reconstituted the socio-economic terrain such that material goods are not sold anymore; that is, Starbucks does not sell coffee, but Zen, wholeness, and friendship while Mazda sells not cars but a lifestyle of freedom and adventure. The creation and manipulation of affect is central. Affective labour collides economy and culture, insofar as “production has become communicative, affective, de-instrumentalized, and ‘elevated’ to the level of human relations” (96). Through affective labour the human is constituted as a node of informational conductivity in relation to systems of communication between the production and consumption of commodities. Since communication is that which holds the flui d socio-economic structure of post-modernization together, informational conductivity becomes key to competing and surviving. Existing as informational nodes, those with communicative disabilities distort and put stress on the mechanisms of production and are therefore disadvantaged in highly competitive markets that exploit human capital. Yet labor is not only produced communicatively, but reciprocally produces informationally structured subjectivities. While Hardt does not here make this connection, affective labour dissolves the informationally closed body-as-organism/body-as-machine constituted by industrialism and ushers in the informationally open posthuman. Through affective labour, communicative disability thus threatens posthuman subjectivity by being unmalleable and impermeable to information flow. Those who are disabled communicatively are further marginalized insofar as affective labour is particularly concerned with producing marketable affects. This has led to the aestheticization of socio-economic space. The common fear, anxiety, and discomfort experienced in the presence of disability—the disruption of the perceptual field—is now internal to the production of capital. The marketable product of affective labour depends upon aesthetically normalized human contact, communication, and projection of ability and the self. The drive to advertise ourselves troubles the borders of ‘disability’ and oppresses those who, for example, stutter, far beyond what was experienced in industrialized capitalism. In this way, neoliberal ableism and affective labour stretch the conception of a normalized body to often unlivable proportions. It is of course true that the stigmatization and enfreakment of the disabled body was economically marginalizing within industrial capitalism (and before), however, the turn to affective labour collapses any previously existing space between asethetics and economics. Consider this response of one forthright interviewer to Marty Jezer, a stutterer: “I’m going to be frank. You’ve got all the qualifications to be a good copywriter. But in advertising it is image that counts. Executives aren’t as impressed by talent and creativity as they are by a person’s ability to fit in . . . Take care of your speech and come back. You’ll never get a job in advertising until you learn to talk.” Jezer’s marginalization is twofold: in the first place, he is marginalized by disrupting information flow since according to post-modernization, the entirety of journalism is structured by informationalization. Yet secondly, the drive to perform competencies in a normalized fashion runs roughshod over bodies affectively abnormal. Jezer’s marginization is inseperable from the asethetics of human interaction and the production of marketable affect. While people with explicit communicative disabilities are the most obvious examples of those sidelined within an informational economy, all disabilities are reconfigured by neoliberalism and affective labour. Through the logic of affective labour all disabilities, like all abilities, are now communicative. Bodies now primarily produce not material goods but affect and are situated within communicative socio-economic networks. Thinking seriously about communication and disability may thus be an important move in pushing disability theory further, into uncharted territory.

#### This regime of rehabilitation turns disability into narrative prosthesis – discourse of liberal inclusion facilitate interventions on the body to to augment or eliminate disability so as to restore wholeness – that requires the exclusion of bodies outside of an acceptable degree of difference.

* Prosthesis is the *norm*, not the other way around – ideal body is divorced from materiality of bodies

Mitchell and Snyder ‘1

[David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois-Chicago. 2001. “Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse.”] pat – ask me for the PDF

The controlling concept of this volume, narrative prosthesis, situates the experience and representational life of disability upon the ironic grounding of an unsteady rhetorical stance. In a literal sense a prosthesis seeks to accomplish an illusion. A body deemed lacking, unfunctional, or inappropriately functional needs compensation, and prosthesis helps to effect this end. Yet the prosthesizing of a body or a rhetorical figure carries with it ideological assumptions about what is aberrant. The judgment that a mechanism is faulty is always already profoundly social. The need to restore a disabled body to some semblance of an originary wholeness is the key to a false recognition: that disabilities extract one from a social norm or average of bodies and their corresponding (social) expectations. To prostheticize, in this sense, is to institute a notion of the body within a regime of tolerable deviance. If disability falls too far from an acceptable norm, a prosthetic intervention seeks to accomplish an erasure of difference all together; yet, failing that, as is always the case with prosthesis, the minimal goal is to return one to an acceptable degree of difference.

It is important to state at the outset that this argument does not deny the reality of physical incapacity or cognitive difference. Rather, we set out the coordinates of the social reception and literary representation of those labeled deviant on ideological as well as physical planes. David Wills defines prosthesis as a term that mediates between the realm of the literary and the realm of the body. In relation to the latter, Wills argues that, far from signifying a deficiency, the prostheticized body is the rule, not the exception. All bodies are deficient in that materiality proves variable, vulnerable, and inscribable. The body is first and foremost a linguistic relation which cannot be natural or average. The textual nature of language, be it oral or print, lacks the very physicality that it seeks to control or represent. A normal body, as Lennard Davis has demonstrated, is a theoretical premise from which all bodies must, by definition, fall short. The body is up against an abstraction with which it cannot compete because the norm is an idealized quantitative and qualitative measure that is divorced from (rather than derived from) the observation of bodies, which are inherently variable. This false model of an ideal body also fails to consider the contingencies of bodies functioning within specific social and historical contexts. It is, in other words, a body divorced of time and space—a thoroughly artificial affair.

Consequently, to return to Wills's fluid notion of prosthesis, the deficient body, by virtue of its insufficiency, serves as baseline for the articulation of the normal body: "the prosthetic body will not be an exception but the paradigm for the body itself. If you will, it is by means of prosthesis that I wish to insist on the non-originary status of the body" (137). The relation between a body and the language used to describe it is unstable, an alien alliance: materiality is not language, and language cannot be material, although each strives to conform to the terms of the other. We engage our bodies in efforts to make their stubborn materiality "fit" ideals. Likewise, words give us the illusion of a fix upon the material world that they cannot deliver.

For Wills this relation between body and word can take on at least four separate poses (137-41).

The word that issues from a body is often believed to glean a corporeal aura from its material host.

The word always augments a prosthetic relation to an exterior material that it cannot possess or embody.

A word returns to the body a sense of possession of the external world that it cannot possess.

The body's need to comprehend a materiality external to it is answered via the ruse of language—that is, the word provides the body with the necessary illusion of its successful entrance into the space of the Other.

This inability of the body to possess, via the word, that which is external to it grounds Wills's (and thus our own) more varied and less singular idea of prosthesis.

While an actual prosthesis is always somewhat discomforting, a textual prosthesis alleviates discomfort by removing the unsightly from view. As we discuss in chapter 2, the erasure of disability via a "quick fix" of an impaired physicality or intellect removes an audiences' need for concern or continuing vigilance. Rather than closet the marred body, the chapters that follow reinstitute its discomforting presence. Narrative Prosthesis is first and foremost about the ways in which the ruse of prosthesis fails in its primary objective: to return the incomplete body to the invisible status of a normative essence. The works under scrutiny here tend to leave the wound of disability undressed so to speak. Its presence is enunciated as transgressive in that literary works often leave the disabled body as a troubled and troubling position within culture.

The prosthetic function in most of the works that follow, then, is to undo the quick repair of disability in mainstream representations and beliefs. In part, this book is about the literary accomplishment of a faulty, or at least imperfect, prosthetic function. The effort is to make the prosthesis show, to flaunt its imperfect supplementation as an illusion. The prosthetic relation of body to word is exposed as an artificial contrivance. Disability services an unsettling objective in these literary works by refusing its desired cultural return to the land of the normative. Ironically, the accomplishment of the works under scrutiny here is to expose, rather than conceal, the prosthetic relation.

#### Debate is ultimately an exercise in “the good life” and rehabilitation – so ask yourself, “what other futures are possible?”

#### Thus, vote affirmative to recognize a crip’s right to strike.

#### If all crips’ work is work on the self, what would it mean to strike, to refuse to work? When hailed with the call to become “productive,” “normal” and “whole,” what would happen if we simply chose to wallow in absence and incompleteness? If all life is labor, and labor is “the good life” of modernity, going on strike means refusing to live in rehabilitated ways.

#### The 1AC is an injunction into debate’s framework of compulsory optimism – crip failure is a strategy of survival that creates new possibilities of care and refusal of affective regimes of futurity.

Kolarova ‘14

[Katerina, Charles University, Prague, Department of Gender Studies. 2014. “The Inarticulate Post-Socialist Crip: On the Cruel Optimism of Neoliberal Transformations in the Czech Republic,” <https://www.academia.edu/7365478/The_Inarticulate_Post_Socialist_Crip_On_the_Cruel_Optimism_of_Neoliberal_Transformations_in_the_Czech_Republic>] pat

The aspiration of post-socialism was progress, moral emancipation, and eventual happiness. Recall the earlier quote from a letter to the former prime minister of Czechoslovakia that attempted to articulate the vision of the optimistic future as a moment when ‘every citizen of this country fe[els] content and happy.’ Yet, Sara Ahmed cautions, happiness is a troubled notion. Ahmed asks us: “What are we consenting to, when we consent to happiness?” and offers 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, resounds with the key issues that I wanted to 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 as vividly illustrates the equally harmful impacts/effects of attachments to affects, in particular attachments to affects of positivity, affects that seemingly are 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 towards (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 realisation that failure can be a form of sustenance and strategy of critique/survival. In failing the normative prescriptions of compulsory heterosexuality (and ablebodiedness), failure “imagines other goals for life, for love, for art, and for being” (Halberstam 88). And 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, Halberstam’s The Queer Art of Failure does offer some lines along which to also think crip failures. The most helpful to my current analysis of post-socialist affects would seem to be Halberstam’s discussion of the failure to remember. Forgetting, losing, 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 into 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 to hurt and violate crips and our futures. Cripping, disjointing the normative forms of (linear) knowing about the past-present-future, 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 the present.

#### The Role of the Ballot is to endorse a critical cripistemology.

#### Academic notions of inclusion only recreate the exclusions of students who fail to live up to pedagogical demands – you should invert disabled success into a failure to become normate.

Mitchell et al ‘14

(David Mitchell, Sharon Snyder, Linda Ware. ““[Every] Child Left Behind” Curricular Cripistemologies and the Crip/Queer Art of Failure” Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies Volume 8, Issue 3, 2014) sbb rc/pat

Most indicators point to the fact that inclusionist practices have resulted in new kinds of exclusion as opposed to integration. For example, while students with disabilities make up 13% of student populations, those labeled with intellectual disabilities receive a diploma only 36.6% of the time; 22% drop out. The rest (59%) finish their schooling but receive no diploma and, over the course of their education, spend time with non-disabled peers only in art, gym, or music classes (Smith 4–5). In other words, inclusionism’s primary purpose of molding crip/queer bodies into tolerated neoliberal normativities scores a less than passing mark. This article may be understood, then, as a companion to recent disability studies in education (DSE) efforts regarding the ongoing critique of inclusionist practices that leave all children behind. If one can be included only by passing as non-disabled then much of the value of crip/queer experiences is lost in traditional pedagogical practices. In undertaking this exposure of pedagogical heteronormativities we seek to accomplish three specific tasks: 1) engage disability studies in a dialogue with Judith Halberstam’s important recent work on “the queer art of failure” (147); 2) draw out how queer theorizing of the last decade can be productive for disability studies even though, as Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow point out, a more direct engagement with disability has been slow in coming within queer studies (3); and 3) pursue what may seem, at first, to be a counter-intuitive argument in the best interests of actively promoting a certain kind of failure in the context of curricular cripistemologies. All of these objectives emerge in our recent teacher training projects to more effectively address shortcomings foundational to inclusionist methodologies now operative in most public schools across the U.S. To accomplish the alternative crip/queer goals of curricular cripistemologies we intend to explain why failure is necessary when educational inclusion operates as an exclusionary undertaking in, perhaps, the most entrenched, neoliberal, and common sense institution of all: public education. By neoliberal we mean to define education as part of a newly emergent “tolerance” of multicultural differences. In particular, our critique centers on inclusionism as a neoliberal gloss of diversity initiatives that get some disabled students in the door while leaving the vast majority of crip/queer students behind. Neoliberal educational practices cultivate further funding opportunities by advancing claims of successful normalization rather than drawing upon crip/queer differences as sources of alternative insight. Curricular cripistemologies, in contrast, openly advocate for the productive potential of failing normalization practices (if they were ever obtainable in the first place) because such goals entail erasing recognitions of the alternative values, practices, and flexible living arrangements particular to crip/queer lives. Whereas the administrative platform of former President George W. Bush pushed for U.S. educational reforms around the promotion of standardized testing to “leave no child behind,” we, in turn, present an argument for recognizing standardization of curricula as ultimately “leaving every child behind,” or at least promoting a certain type of norm-fulfilling child in whose name most students turn up wanting. This curricular abandonment of difference in the name of assimilation occurs primarily through an incapacity (or, perhaps, unwillingness) to adapt the lessons of systemically in-built accommodations and crip/queer content designed to address the range of learning differences comprising today’s classroom demographics. The neoliberal school attempts to resolve the accommodation of disability through downplaying rather than drawing from people’s differences. Through the promotion of active abandonment of crip/queer differences, neoliberal standards guide educational reforms saturated in the questionable values of ableism and normalization. In order to double back on this process, practitioners of curricular cripistemologies undertake critical examinations of “compulsory able-bodiedness” (McRuer 31) and “compulsory able-mindedness” (Kafer 16). Thus, what appears on the surface as disabled students’ incapacity to keep up with their normative peers, turns out to be a purposeful failure to accomplish the unreal (and, perhaps, unrealizable) objectives of normalization. Within the multiplying paradoxes of neoliberal inclusionism, crip success is, paradoxically, to fail to become normate. In The Queer Art of Failure Halberstam advocates a concept of “failure [that] allows us [crip/queer people] to escape the punishing norms that discipline behavior and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods” (3). This queer studies inversion of ways to read non-normative lives as failing standards of heteronormative expectations enables crip/queer people to pursue other modes of existence as alternates to sanctioned social roles. These alternative strategies of living pass by largely undetected because educational assessments measure only the degree to which students clear the bar of normalization. By applying this crip/queer deployment of “failure,” curricular cripistemologies undertake pedagogical practices suppressed (or, at least, devalued) by normative neoliberal educational contexts. In adopting a strategically counter-intuitive slogan such as “every student left behind,” then, the critique of inclusionism acknowledges the increasingly disciplinarian nature of public education’s normalizing objectives. Inclusion has taught teachers a dangerous lesson in what appears to be a failed model of adaptation: crip/queer students cannot effectively compete with their non-disabled peers. The pedagogical assessment of the distance that exists between crip/queer and normal students by standardized testing regimes is now part and parcel of the wider cultural abandonment of non-normativity. But what if a “failure to thrive” in pre-determined educational roles is understood as the product of active refusal (that which Halberstam refers to as a “rejection of pragmatism” [89] and Herbert Kohl terms “willed not-learning” [134]) to “fit” disability paradigms reductively dictated by normative institutional expectations? We could take seriously the findings of DSE scholars such as Phil Smith, who points out in Whatever Happened to Inclusion? that education has actually lost ground in terms of including students with more significant disabilities in recent years (28). Within this context, the objectives accomplished by public relations-driven educational “creaming practices” proliferate. They operationalize inclusionist claims to success wherein the normative accomplishments of the most “able disabled students” eclipse the struggles of those left behind.1 Inclusionism, in other words, covers over an unethical promotion of the successes of the few based upon normative standards of achievement for the inadequacies of the many. Within curricular cripistemologies disability metamorphoses from successful normalization into lesser versions of the ableist self into a meaningful alternative site for transforming pedagogical practices and failed social identities.