Metaphorically Speaking: Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Writing

Sami Schalk
Department of Gender Studies, Indiana University
E-mail: sschalk@indiana.edu

Keywords:

metaphor; language; ableism; feminism

Abstract

This article examines the use of metaphors of disability in feminist texts. Starting from an understanding of feminism as a movement to end sex and gender oppression in the lives of all people, a movement aligned with anti-racist, anti-homophobic, anti-classist and anti-ableist movements, I make connections between sexist and ableist rhetoric in order to expose the political and intellectual repercussions for feminist work that relies upon metaphors of disability. I argue that most current uses of disability metaphors promote an ideology of impairment as a negative form of embodiment. In order to articulate my claims, I provide a close reading of extended disability metaphors used in work by bell hooks and Tania Modleski, identifying the implications about disability and problems that occur in their overall arguments when the metaphors are read from a disability studies perspective. The article ends by offering recommendations for a feminist philosophy of language, calling for a reflective political commitment by feminists to interrogate our theoretical assumptions and consider the effects of our language so as to prevent further marginalization of disempowered groups in general and disabled people in particular.

> *Language is so central, so fundamental to social interaction, to our becoming who we are that no one interested in influencing and inflecting their society can ignore it.*
>
> *—Margaret Gibbon, Feminist Perspectives on Language*

Introduction

I first began to think critically about disability and language—particularly metaphor—after two experiences that occurred in the summer of 2010, one during the 2010 Society for Disability Studies (SDS) conference and one immediately following it. In a panel session at the SDS conference that year, I had presented a paper on bell hooks's theories of love and how they can be applied to people with disabilities. A small portion of my paper established that bell hooks clearly did not intend her theories to apply to people with disabilities, for these theories focused exclusively on issues of gender and race. In the paper, I had off-handedly noted that a critical analysis of disability did not seem to be in hooks's political consciousness at all since, in her book on men and love, she referred to men as "emotional cripples" (hooks 2004, 27). During the question-and-answer period of the session, I was surprised that the majority of the questions from the people in attendance were directed at me in regard to hooks's use of the term "cripple." The disability scholars and activists in the room asked me: "Are you planning on pursuing her disability rhetoric further in future work?" "How can a black feminist known for her intersectional and radical politics use such blatantly ableist language?" I had no real answers. Two days later, I flew home.

Seated next to me on the small airplane was a woman who, along with her two sons seated in the row in front of us, was flying to visit relatives. When I explained to her that I had been in Philadelphia for a disability studies conference, she told me that her youngest son—the one with the buzz cut, sitting in the window-seat, furiously playing video games—was Deaf. This remark led us into a brief discussion about the role of nondisabled allies in a disability community after which we settled into our respective books as the plane took flight. When the plane landed, the woman's sons burst out of their seats and headed up the aisle, without waiting for her to catch up. She and I stood a few people behind them in the very slow-moving line to disembark. Just before we reached the door, the pilot emerged from the cock-pit to help the flight attendants load a wheelchair for a man at the front of the line. My seat-

mate's Deaf son, still staring down at his handheld video game player, continued to walk forward, following his older brother. "Hold-on a minute, son," the pilot commanded. The boy continued to walk past the pilot, without looking up from the screen of his game player. "Sorry, he's Deaf," my seat-mate said loudly over the shoulders of the people ahead of us. The pilot looked back at her, laughing: "It's OK. Mine are too. Those video games affect their hearing."

The two interactions that I describe above offer important lessons about the relationship between language and ableism. In fact, these interactions motivated me to seriously reflect upon the ways that our ability to recognize diverse embodiment is limited by figurative language that conceptually distances us from the reality of impairment. In particular, I began to question the function and impact of disability metaphors and the role that such figures of speech play in feminist scholarship. In this article, I consider how disability is used as metaphor in two feminist texts: bell hooks's *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love* (2004) and Tania Modleski's *Feminism without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age* (1991). Beginning with a broad understanding of feminism as a movement to end sex and gender oppression in the lives of all people, a movement aligned with anti-racist, anti-homophobic, anti-classist, and (most importantly for this piece) anti-ableist movements, I make connections between sexist and ableist rhetoric in order to expose the political and intellectual repercussions of the use of disability as metaphor in these feminist texts in particular and in feminist theory more generally. I argue, for instance, that when feminists use metaphors of disability to represent the negative effects of patriarchy, they conceptually and theoretically position feminism and disability in opposition to each other and thereby imply that the goals of feminism are two-fold: to end patriarchy *and* to erase disability. I insist, furthermore, that this theoretical and conceptual strategy runs counter to the goals of contemporary, intersectional feminist politics, activism, and scholarship.

Insofar as I make these connections, I may seem to enter into a broader discussion about what is often derisively referred to as "political correctness." Such discussions [1] tend to devolve into accusations of censorship and battles over what is, or is not, offensive, and who does, or does not, have the "right" to be offended in the first place. [2] In some mainstream and feminist philosophical contexts, these discussions have tended to revolve around the use of ocular metaphors to represent a lack of knowledge and information (as in "blind review") or to refer to forms of moral negligence (for example, "blindly

followed"). Although this article will address negative metaphoric uses of disability, my aim is not to argue that certain words and phrases are *inherently* offensive, nor do I assert that politically-engaged feminist scholars should act as arbiters or censors of each other's linguistic practices; rather, I aim to show the impact that such language-use has on feminist scholarship and for feminist politics at the structural, as opposed to the individual, level. In short, I contend that feminist scholars should recognize that these negative metaphorical uses of disability variously impact, limit, and contradict the aims of their arguments, in addition to compromising their professed political goals, regardless of whether or not everyone in a targeted disabled group is offended by any given disability metaphor. To advance my argument, I draw on the insights about metaphor that disability scholars such as Vivian M. May and Beth A. Ferri have made.

In "Fixated on Ability: Questioning Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Theories of Resistance," May and Ferri (2005) identify numerous examples of common disability metaphors in feminist scholarship in which disability is conflated "with stigma or stuckness," rather than recognized "as a constructed outcome of power" (121). As May and Ferri explain, feminists, in various eras, have used metaphors of madness, crippling, immobility, blindness, deafness, and other impairments in a variety of ways for a range of purposes. Within the varying terms of these disability metaphors (and analogies), feminists have typically positioned disability either in opposition to knowledge, or as a negative effect of gender power and privilege. In response to these feminist rhetorical practices, May and Ferri call on feminists to make nuanced rhetorical and metaphorical use of disability, rather than to simply police or clean up language by restriction alone: to employ "the both/and simultaneity, the ironic redeployment, and the playful position via language that not only allow us to come to terms with ambiguities, but to flourish by engaging with multiple structures of difference and identity simultaneously" (133).

My aim in this article is not to suggest that language in general and metaphor in particular have some timeless and universal character, nor is it to adjudicate what should count as (in)appropriate linguistic practice. Like May and Ferri, however, I maintain that the use of disability metaphors promotes an ideology of impairment as a negative form of embodiment. These metaphors typically position disability as invariably bad, undesirable, pitiful, painful, and so on. They are, therefore, ableist because they promote discriminatory attitudes toward people with disabilities. May and Ferri list a number of unconnected and separate examples of disability metaphor and analogy in feminist work in order

to demonstrate that there is a pattern to the way that feminists have used these rhetorical devices. I expand upon their groundbreaking feminist disability theory by examining two examples of the metaphorical use of disability mobilized in a different way than the metaphors that May and Ferri investigate: namely, hooks's repeated use in her aforementioned text of the term *emotional cripples* and the repeated use in Modleski's text of the concept of the mute body. I examine their repeated use of these metaphors in the texts by considering the role that the metaphors serve within the overall arguments of the respective texts; that is, I analyze these topically and temporally distinct texts because of their systematic (rather than occasional or unsystematic) use of *extended* disability metaphors. Thus, although I build upon the insights of May and Ferri's work on discrete and separate instances of disability as metaphor in feminist theory, I also depart from it. I show that the extended (ableist) use of disability as metaphor in hooks's and Modeleski's respective texts limits and even contradicts the feminist arguments that these feminist authors profess to advance in the texts (and elsewhere).

My argument proceeds as follows: I begin with a general discussion about metaphor, outlining the theories and terms that I will use for my analysis in the rest of the article, including feminist rhetorical scholarship, particularly referencing the work of Sarah Mills on sexism in language. I then draw upon this discussion of cognitive metaphor theory, feminist rhetoric, and disability rhetoric in order to make claims about the implications and consequences of the ableist use of disability as metaphor in hooks's and Modleski's feminist texts. I propose that although figurative language is useful and, perhaps in this historical moment, even an unavoidable device with which to explain complex and abstract concepts, feminists should strive to develop ways in which to talk and write about the damage done by patriarchy that do not simplistically, negatively, and detrimentally associate and even conflate that "damage" with disability. For although feminism aims to be a set of theories and practices designed to advance the goal of social justice for all, ableist language within feminism greatly compromises efforts to achieve this goal. I end the essay with reflections on what is needed for a feminist philosophy of language that attends to the limits and possibilities of metaphors of disability. That is, I call upon feminists to adopt a reflective political commitment in which we more diligently interrogate the assumptions that underlie our theoretical practices and more closely consider the implications of the words we use—especially our metaphors—in order to prevent further marginalization of disempowered social groups within our own work.

Theories of Metaphor: Limits and Possibilities

> *It's raining cats and dogs. I'm a fish out of water. You're blowing my mind. We've burned those bridges*.

Metaphors are all around. They are part of everyday speech, ways of relating to the world outside of us. Murray Knowles and Rosamund Moon (2006) define metaphor as "the use of language to refer to something other than what it was originally applied to, or what it 'literally' means, in order to suggest some resemblance or make a connection between the two things" (3). Knowles and Moon note that people often use metaphors because there is no one word that represents what they want to say or describe, but that more often people use metaphoric language in order to creatively and evocatively convey meaning. As they explain: "metaphors use concrete images to convey something abstract, helping to communicate what is hard to explain" (4-5). In order to convey meaning, metaphors rely upon presuppositions or assume a shared understanding and knowledge of the chosen concrete item through which the abstract concept can be better communicated and understood. The assumption that we can presume the existence of a shared understanding and knowledge of bodily (including sensory and cognitive) experiences that will serve as the concrete concept through which we figuratively communicate abstract ideas (as metaphors of disability do) is, however, very problematic. By and large, such presumptions rely upon allegedly universal experiences of the body: everyone sees, speaks, hears, feels, and moves in the same (nondisabled) ways (see Vidali 2010).

Much contemporary scholarship on metaphor is based upon the work of George Lakoff and his colleagues, most notably a book that he co-authored with Mark Johnson in 1980: *Metaphors We Live By*. In this text, Lakoff and Johnson establish cognitive metaphor theory which argues that metaphors are not merely creative or literary devices, but rather are essential speech acts. [3] They contend that the way in which we understand and use metaphor is informed by our (presumed to be universal) experiences of embodiment as evidenced by the preponderance of concrete bodily and experience-based conceptual metaphors. [4] Though I do not accept these philosophical assumptions nor the conclusions that Lakoff and Johnson derive from them, I use some of their analytical terminology in my argument below. That is, I use Lakoff and Johnson's term *source domain* (also referred to as *the vehicle*) in order to refer to the main concrete concept—namely, disability—that is used to

explain another, usually abstract, idea. As Elena Semino explains it, typically, under Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive metaphor theory, source domains are (what they regard as) "concrete, simple, familiar, physical and well-delineated experiences, such as motions, bodily phenomena, physical objects and so on" (Semino 2008, 6). Alternatively, I use their term *target domain* to refer to the abstract concept (in this case, the bad, deficient, or painful effect of patriarchy) that is assumed to be represented through the invocation of the source domain (disability). I should point out that the metaphors I discuss in this context do not fit within the category of conventional or dead metaphors, which have become "lexicalized" or officially incorporated into dictionary meanings. Rather, the two metaphors I examine (hooks's "emotional cripples" and Modleski's "mute body") should be considered as *novel metaphors*, to use Semino's term: ones which are "likely to be conscious and deliberate on the part of its user, and recognized and/or processed as such by its receivers" (19). In the terms of scholarship on metaphor in language, they could also be referred to as *creative metaphors*: "those which a writer/speaker constructs to express a particular idea or feeling in a particular context, and which a reader/hearer needs to deconstruct or 'unpack' in order to understand what is meant. They are typically new… although they may be based on pre-existing ideas or images" (Knowles and Moon 2006, 5). Though the terms *novel metaphors* and *creative metaphors* signify similar figures of speech, for the sake of parsimony, in this argument, I refer only to the term *creative metaphors*.

I employ the work of Lakoff and Johnson cautiously for several reasons. Like Kim Q. Hall (2012), I am wary of the ways in which allegedly universal, transhistorical, and transcultural sensory, physical, and physiological experiences are increasingly used as the sole or even primary basis with which to explain a phenomenon that is as socially and culturally determined as is figurative language. This universalizing is essentially what cognitive metaphor theory does. I maintain, therefore, that cognitive metaphor theory should be considered a product of the "biological turn in the humanities", which Hall identifies as an "epistemology of ignorance" that uses the banner of science to speculate on all manner and aspects of human existence with little to no concrete supporting evidence (40-41, 32). It seems unlikely that the widespread use of common metaphoric language is primarily based upon actual, lived experiences of the body when some of our most common source domains—such as blindness—although a physical, embodied experience for some people, are not actually experienced, nor even understood, by the population at large. On the contrary, in this particular case, metaphors of blindness are based

upon the *presumption* of what the experience of blindness must be like, rather than the lived experience of blindness itself. Indeed, I contend that dominant cultural ideas about, and (mis)representations of, blindness are the factors that make blindness a useful source domain, enabling metaphors of blindness to be generally understood in everyday and academic linguistic practices. In other words, cognitive metaphor theory does not adequately account for the sociocultural basis of commonly used metaphors of disability.

In short, an ableist perspective undergirds such philosophical and scientific explanations of metaphor. As Amy Vidali (2010) shows in "Seeing What We Know: Disability and Theories of Metaphor," Lakoff and Johnson's claims are ableist insofar as they assume that all bodies have certain physical/cognitive /sensory experiences and that people generally use related metaphorical expressions that correspond to these experiences (notably, they repeatedly refer to the metaphor of "knowing is seeing") (34; emphasis in Vidali). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim to philosophically reject notions of objective or absolute truth in favor of the multiplicity of human experiences of the body which come to structure "the way we learn to reason and use metaphor" (ix-x); in their text, however, "able bodies take precedence" through the assumption that all bodies can see, hear, speak and move in normative ways (Vidali 2010, 38). Experiences of disabled bodies are refused meaningful existence and elaboration within cognitive metaphor theory. The theory assumes that there can be no common cultural metaphors based upon the experiences of tremors, stuttering, or using a wheelchair because these experiences are regarded as random, accidental, and idiosyncratic. Within the terms of the theory, nondisabled experiences are considered the universal grounding of metaphor, despite the fact that not even all people who (for instance) see, hear, speak, and walk perform and experience these actions in exactly the same way, especially given that these actions are in many ways conditioned by factors such as gender, age, and body size.

As I have indicated, despite the fact that (like Vidali) I regard Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphor as implicitly and explicitly ableist, relying on false assumptions about the universality of certain embodied experiences, I use their technical terminology. With Ellen Samuels (2011), I think that disability scholars should not simply discard oppressive theories, but rather should carefully and critically investigate how such theories can be used and applied in disability studies scholarship, while simultaneously identifying the limits of their use and applicability. **5** That is, I use a theoretically-nuanced and politically-informed

"approach to metaphor that engages the diversity of disability; refrains from policing metaphor; encourages transgression from the disability community; and invites creative and historic reinterpretations of metaphor" (Vidali 2010, 34). Such an approach is important because certain uses of metaphor that have, within a given discourse, become the dominant ways in which to refer to particular aspects of reality tend to be regarded as commonsensical, as representing the "natural" view of things, and hence may be extremely difficult to perceive and challenge (Semino 2008, 33). Challenging the politically-potent (ableist) rhetorical practices that have, in this way, become a commonplace form of thinking, speaking, or writing about disability within feminist scholarship is, nevertheless, precisely the aim of this essay. As Margaret Gibbon (1999) writes, "[m]etaphor is always significant" because "when we use language, we make choices and choices are not always innocent, but determined by belief systems which underlie them" (3, 24). These belief systems (or ideologies) provide justification for what people do and how they represent what they do in language. Hence, it is important to recognize the social dimension of metaphor and the key role that language plays in realizing these social and political values (Knowles and Moon 2006, 97). An approach to metaphor that counters dominant assumptions and misunderstandings about disability, while simultaneously advancing the social and political values of disability studies and disability rights communities through new and innovative writing and reading of disability metaphors, must be informed by the lived experiences of disabled people.

Feminist and Disability Studies Theories of Language

You throw like a girl. Man up. Don't be such a pussy. What a bitch!

In the United States, second-wave feminists worked hard to draw attention to and change the androcentric and sexist nature of both formal and everyday language. Initially, this feminist scholarship on language took the form of investigation of language-practices, attempting to locate and explain differences between the ways that men and women use language (for example, men's habitual tendency to interrupt and women's habitual tendency to apologize), or investigation of language-systems, examining the sexist assumptions embedded in standard English language itself (for example, the use of gender-specific language such as "man" and "mankind" to represent all people or the androcentric etymology of words like "seminal") (Gibbon 1999, 2). In *Language*

and Sexism, Sara Mills (2008) writes that this early feminist rhetorical scholarship worked against *overt* sexism, identifiable through its use of linguistic markers and presuppositions that have historically been associated with the expression of discriminatory opinions about women, signaling to readers (and listeners) that women are inferior to men (11). As Mills explains it, "overt sexism" includes hate speech, insults, alleged gender-neutrality of masculine pronouns and nouns (i.e., to represent the entire human species), semantic derogation (use of words associated with women as pejoratives), and reference to women by first names, nicknames, or a husband's name only (e.g., Mrs. Robert Smith) (38-68). Second-wave feminist language reform has typically confronted these forms of overt sexism through the development of alternative terms (such as chair or chairperson, rather than chairman or chairwoman), by renaming or with neologisms (such as "her-story"), by using marked words (such as "pig" to refer to particularly sexist or chauvinist men), with positive inflection of pejorative words (also called reclaiming), and by "talking back" (to borrow hooks's phrase) with humor and wit (83-91).

By contrast, "indirect sexism" involves the denial of a speaker's responsibility for an utterance, the mediation of the utterance through irony or the prefacing of sexist statements with disclaimers or hesitation (Mills 2008, 135). Forms of indirect sexism include humor, stereotyping presuppositions, conflicting messages, scripts and metaphors, collocation (words that tend to be placed together and retain each other's connotations), and the articulation of an androcentric perspective (140-152). As Mills points out, the occurrence of indirect sexism is more difficult to challenge than overt sexism because words and phrases cannot be identified as inherently or unequivocally sexist; therefore, "[i]ndirect sexism can only be countered by making apparent some of the presuppositions which are implicit or by making explicit the sexism underlying statements" (152, 153). Indirect sexism, Mills notes, has been the focus for third-wave feminist scholars of language and rhetoric who are concerned less with issues of inclusive language and etymology than with the context of use and issues of power within discourse, though clearly third-wave feminist scholars who produce this latter kind of feminist work on power and discourse are indebted to the groundwork of second-wave feminist language reform in the first place (25-26).

…

I've had the craziest day. The snowstorm completely paralyzed the

> *city. That's such a lame excuse. What are you blind? What are you deaf? Idiot! Moron! Retard!*

Disability too has become part of everyday language, and not positively so. In order to demonstrate this negative state of affairs, disability activists and rhetoricians have drawn lessons from feminist philosophy/theory of language scholarship, utilizing some of the same language-reform techniques in response to overt ableism that feminists have employed to resist overt sexism, including the introduction of alternative terms and phrases (such as the replacement of *handicap* with *disability* and the use of person-first language [6]) and the revaluation of pejorative words (for example, the reclaiming of the terms *crip* and *gimp*). Although Mills (2008, 73), for instance, is concerned to make connections between overt sexism and overt racism, homophobia, and ableism, I am concerned to show the connections between *indirect* sexism and *indirect* ableism in language-use, in addition to the overt connections that can made between these axes of power. Indeed, by interrogating metaphors of disability and their underlying presuppositions about bodies, disability theorists can challenge indirect ableism in feminist writing just as third-wave feminists have challenged indirect sexism in mainstream (and alternative) popular culture, academia, the mainstream media, and public policy.

Disability rhetoricians have brought attention to the fact that "when Americans think, talk, and write disability, they usually consider it as a tragedy, illness, or defect that an individual body 'has,'… as personal and accidental, before or without sociopolitical significance" (Wilson and Lewiecki-Wilson 2001, 2). In other words, when disability is used in figurative and metaphorical ways, it is primarily understood in terms of inability, loss, lack, problems, and other forms of negation (Titchkosky 2007, 8). Although, unlike gender, disability is not centrally implicated in the basic grammatical system, the use of disability as a metaphorical construct is nonetheless prevalent and implicit in our language. Just as a word such as *seminal* has lost its original etymological connection (in this case, to male ejaculation) in our contemporary connotations, so too many words that refer to disability have transitioned from medical discourse into common speech and slang and have lost their linguistic connection to the original referent. In this regard, Jay Dolmage (2005, 113) gives as examples the words *crippled*, *retarded*, and *handicapped*, to which I would add *idiot* (once a medical category of cognitive disability), *dumb* (once used to refer to lack of oral speech communication, as in the phrase "deaf and dumb"), *lame*, *crazy*, and *insane*. Though most of these disparaging words are no longer generally

recognized as connected to, or associated with, specific impairments, they have nevertheless retained connotations of insult, inability, and lack due to more widespread negative conceptions of disability. This, then, is indirect ableism. Vidali, May and Ferri, and Dolmage are among the disability studies scholars who have explored disability metaphors, that is, the way that metaphors of disability are used as a source domain that confers negativity upon things not themselves directly associated with disability due to the retention of broader negative cultural connotations of disability itself. As I indicate above, the work of these scholars has tended to deal primarily with conventional, rather than creative, metaphors by citing a variety of brief examples, rather than considering the role that these metaphors play within the wider context of the original text's argument. By analyzing the creative disability metaphors of "emotional cripples" and "the mute body" in the feminist texts of hooks and Modleski, I expand on the work of these scholars, modeling a process of transgressive reading that reveals how extended disability metaphors impact the overall argument of the texts. Knowles and Moon (2006, 12) note that metaphors allow an open-endedness that is less precise than literal language, which gives metaphor its creative, emotional, and intellectual potential. A transgressive reading of disability metaphors mines these creative, emotional, and intellectual potentialities with a "commitment to retelling the stories of disability in such a way that resists the illusion that disability is a limit without possibility" (Titchkosky 2007, 131).

Extended Metaphors of Disability: Two Close Readings

In her fourth book on love, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love*, bell hooks (2004) attempts to reveal the consequences of patriarchy on men's ability to love. In her first book on love, upon which *The Will to Change* draws and builds, hooks defines love not as simply an affective emotion, but rather as "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth … Love is as love does. Love is an act of will—namely both an intention and an action" (hooks 2000, 4). In her definition of love, hooks rejects patriarchal notions of love that have associated it with pure affect, femininity, and even weakness, arguing that love in its true form is not something we unconsciously fall into, but rather is something intentionally enacted. hooks theorizes that patriarchy wounds men in a way that prevents them from choosing or enacting love, as she defines it, relegating them to a state of "emotional deadness" (134). Throughout the fourth book on love, disability (the

source domain), variously alluded to and referenced as (for instance) "crippling" or "wounding," communicates the detrimental effects of patriarchy on men's emotional capacities (the target domain). To take one example, hooks writes that patriarchy "is the single most life-threatening social dis-ease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation," it "demands of men that they become and remain emotional cripples" (2004, 17, 27). To take another example from the earlier book, she asserts that "patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves. If an individual is not successful in emotionally crippling himself, he can count on patriarchal men to enact rituals of power that will assault his self-esteem" (hooks 2000, 66). These are "creative" disability metaphors, that is, they have been newly created by hooks.

As I show below, this type of metaphor cannot be redeemed or re-read without the loss of the content on which it primarily relies, namely, the equation disability = bad. I maintain that insofar as hooks uses disability in this manner, she ostracizes her disabled and disability-allied readers and also contradicts her earlier calls for an inclusive, intersectional feminism that eradicates "the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture" (hooks 1984, 24). As I have pointed out, metaphoric uses of disability that primarily understand impairment as negative are oppressive and contribute to the continued domination and marginalization of people with disabilities. Although the word *cripple* (often shortened to *crip* [7]) has been reclaimed within disability rights communities, hooks does not redeploy this term in order to empower people with disabilities. On the contrary, she implies that cripples are broken, wounded, (self)mutilated, unhealthy, and near death, as well as that all of these meanings are interchangeable. Nor does hooks subtly or contextually employ these words for the denotative differences and nuances between them, but rather solely for their negative connotations. That is, she does not take care to note that words such as *wounded* and *unhealthy* imply a potentially temporary state, whereas words such as *mutilated* and *broken* imply permanency. Furthermore, terms such as *broken* and *wounded* imply the actions of an(other) agent who does the breaking or wounding, that is, an agent who is not necessarily identical with the individual broken or wounded. By contrast, the term *self-mutilation* clearly implicates males themselves as the cause of their current state and the term *unhealthy* suggests that the cause of male inadequacy in this regard may be due to either personal (internal) flaws or external causes. That hooks uses these words haphazardly and interchangeably results in a lack of clarity about who, or what, is "crippling" men emotionally. Is it self-mutilation or patriarchal

wounding? Is this a permanent state or remediable? The ambiguity between internal/external, transience/permanence in hooks's text throws into relief the sociocultural injunction to heal, to overcome disability, and to become as able-bodied as possible—a familiar trope in representations of disability (see, for instance, Titchkosky 2007, 175).

Interestingly, in hooks's metaphors, it is not medical institutions and professionals who will provide such healing; rather, feminism is posited as the great savior and healer, the cure for the emotional wounds inflicted by patriarchy. She writes: "A feminist future for men can enable transformation and healing" (hooks 2004, 142). This feminist future, however, is neither straightforward, nor automatic. There is clear moralizing around the choice presumed to be involved in healing, as evidenced through the title: *The Will to Change*. It seems that feminism must be appropriately chosen and used by both men and women in order for men's healing to occur. hooks writes, "we cannot heal what we cannot feel, by supporting patriarchal culture that socializes men to deny feelings, we doom them to live in states of emotional numbness;" but, ultimately, she concludes that "men must set the example by daring to heal, daring to do the work of relational recovery" (6, 175). Taking the metaphor on its own premises, then, one could conclude both that disability is a negative, anti-relational state of injury and brokenness that ought to be healed by the appropriate social institutions and that, in stark contradiction, disability is a wounded state that must be resisted by individuals themselves through sheer will. In hooks's text, the thirteen uses of the word *heal* and the additional thirteen references to "men's emotional health" and "being healthy" underscore this ultimate push to heal at all costs. **8**

Another reading of hooks's metaphor is possible. That is, one can interpret the metaphor of "emotional cripples" more creatively by resisting the stereotypically negative connotations to which hooks steers her readers. If we do not assume that to be "crippled" means to be broken, numb, and unable to act, but rather that mobility impairment offers different ways in which to move in the world, then we can interpret hooks's metaphor as incorporating another contradiction into her argument. If patriarchy "wounds" or "cripples" men emotionally, perhaps it is the "emotionally-able" who need to adapt their conception of valid emotional "movement." Perhaps men are indeed feeling and enacting love in ways that we, as a culture, do not recognize and that, therefore, feminism needs to create access to love by changing the social and material environment, creating ramps to assist men in knowing and enacting love. By

understanding that mobility impairment is not a monolithic or singular experience, one can read new possibilities into hooks's text, but such an understanding of disability presents problems for this particular feminist argument. From a disability studies perspective, it is not the duty or responsibility of people with disabilities to change, but rather the responsibility of nondisabled and disabled people alike to adapt the physical and social environment in ways that encompass the needs of disabled people. Disability studies perspectives are concerned with how environments, practices, discourses, and social contexts can be adapted to include a variety of bodies and minds; they are not, primarily, concerned with the "source," [9] origin, or etiology of disability or impairment. This redirection of responsibility compromises hooks's argument that patriarchy has negative consequences for men (which it does), to which problem feminism is the solution (which it can be), because the source of the problem—namely, patriarchy—would no longer be of central concern. The metaphor of "emotional cripples" ceases to be effective when approached from a disability studies perspective because this new understanding of the metaphor shifts the focus *away from* "curing" disabled people (in this context, men impacted by patriarchy) and hence, *away from* resisting and changing patriarchy and *toward* adjustment, acceptance of, and adaptation to, its consequences. Clearly, this shift in meaning is not what a feminist text would be designed to argue. Thus, in order to agree with hooks, one must either comply with the notion that disability is synonymous with brokenness or resist that connotation, as I have now done, and consequently shift the focus away from patriarchy as a damaging system of oppression. These alternatives present a no-win situation in which both readings of the disability metaphor are unsatisfying, that is, one is unsatisfying from a disability studies perspective and the other is unsatisfying from a feminist perspective. hooks's metaphor can be satisfactorily sustained to support her argument only if it is construed in ways that are ableist. That is, in order to make sense, hooks's current use of the metaphor depends upon the construal of disability as an irredeemably negative state of being. Feminist scholars must find a way to discuss the harmful effects of patriarchy on both men and women without simplistically equating such effects to impairment.

The conceptualization of feminism as healer also occurs in Modleski's *Feminism Without Women* (1991). The third chapter of the book is entitled "Some Functions of Feminist Criticism; Or the Scandal of the Mute Body," a title that plays on Shoshana Felman's *The Scandal of the Speaking Body* (2003), with which Modleski disagrees and which she aims to critique (Modleski 1991,

48-49). As Modeleski explains it, the chapter centers on the question of what "feminists hope to accomplish by examining popular texts—or, for that matter, any texts at all" (36). In the chapter, Modleski critiques what she refers to as the "political paralysis" (an ableist metaphor) of ethnographic cultural critics and their tendency not to heed their female interlocutors, erasing women from the published work (36, 41). She uses the creative metaphor of the "mute body" (in contrast to Felman's "speaking body") in order to explain the marginalized position that women often occupy in cultural criticism. Although the word *mute* actually appears only three times in the chapter, the metaphor itself is nonetheless ever-present, not only in the way that Modleski repeatedly invokes the terms *silence* and *silencing*, but also in the "meta-text" of the chapter, since a portion of the title—"The Scandal of the Mute Body"—appears as a header on every odd-numbered page throughout the chapter. Indeed, the use of *silence* as a metaphor for marginalization and oppression is widespread in feminism and other identity-based political movements, such as in ACT UP's "Silence = Death" slogan. Thus, we ought to consider how *silence* is deployed as a metaphor, despite the fact that silence itself it not a disability. In the case of Modleski's text, the particular way in which both *silence* and *muteness* are used helps reveal the potentially ableist assumption undergirding of what is or is not considered politically possible without oral speech. This extended disability metaphor relies on negative connotations of impairment in which a "mute body" is associated with restriction, inability, and total, non-communicative silence. In the terms of this metaphor, "muteness" or speech impairment is the source domain, while patriarchy's exclusion and erasure of women's "voices" (a metonym for women's thoughts, opinions, writing, speech and so on) is the target domain. In other words, muteness (the embodied experience of nonverbal people) is inherently and oppressively undesirable and oral, hearing, and literate female feminists are called upon to resist it by speaking and writing publicly in the name of all women. Since *mute* is only occasionally used in Modleski's text and *silence* is so often used, it seems that, as in hooks, there is a slippage of meaning. That is, Modleski presents *muteness* and *silence* as interchangeable, disregarding the denotative and connotative differences between these terms. Like hooks's interchangeable uses of *wounded*, *mutilated*, and *crippled*, Modleski's metaphorical use of *mute* and *silence* [10] is simplistic, alluding to a monolithic experience of speech and hearing impairments that covers over the radical diversity amongst Deaf, deafened, hard-of-hearing, and other disabled people.

In short, Modleski, like hooks, offers feminism as the potential savior of women

from their supposed "muteness." She asks: "Is the female feminist critic able to give an authentic voice to the women traditionally silenced by patriarchal culture and sometimes even by that culture's sternest dissidents?" (Modleski 1991, 41). Modleski concludes that feminist criticism should perform a dialogue that values and promotes the voices of women, asserting that "feminist critical writing is committed writing, a writing committed to the future of women" (47). Notice that feminism is again positioned as that which will prevent or heal metaphoric impairment. In Modleski's argument, the positioning of women outside of discourse and the refusal to authorize them to speak publicly performs patriarchal rhetorical violence, which is "the real, historical scandal to which feminism" should address itself (51, 52). Modleski offers Virginia Woolf's fictionalized representation of Judith Shakespeare [11] as an example of feminist writing that enacts resistance to patriarchal violence by giving "a name, a desire, and a history to one of the mute females who lived and died in obscurity" (53). As Modleski boldly states: "[I]t could be said that *every* time a feminist critic speaks and writes as a woman in a world that has always conspired to silence and negate women she brings into being a new order and enacts the scandal of the speaking body in a more profound way than those people already authorized to speak by virtue of their gender" (ibid.; emphasis in Modleski). Female feminist critics who become speaking bodies, she explains, perform a seizure of power and resist the current state of affairs in which "mute women remain mostly mute" and cannot "speak freely to and of one another" (54, 58).

Even if we take Modleski's metaphor on its own terms, the choice of the term *mute* is a strange one, for it erases patriarchy as a system of exercised power insofar as "mute" implies a permanent state of being in which one cannot speak, not merely a state in which communication is controlled or restricted by another. To read Modleski's metaphor against the ideological grain, one simply needs to shift the focus from public speech and writing specifically to communication more broadly. Just as hooks's metaphor potentially devalues or overlooks men's possible alternative forms of enacting love, so too Modleski's concept of the "mute body," in combination with her insistence that feminist critics should speak and write publicly in order to resist patriarchal restrictions, ignores other, non-standard, marginalized forms of communication. As a feminist and disability studies scholar, I must (rhetorically) ask: Are public speech and published writing the only ways in which to communicate freely and with power? I contend in fact that non-verbal forms of communication—such as sign language or note-writing—are far from powerless and that other forms of

communication—via a computer, voice synthesizer, or interpreter—also have the potential to seize power for the female communicator. A disability studies approach to Modleski's argument would value the *content* of the communication, rather than the *form* in which it is conveyed.

In addition, Modleski's insistence upon the public nature of communication occludes the possibility that private, interpersonal communication can be a mode of finding freedom and effecting change. If we accept the metaphor's presuppositions, we miss other forms of free and powerful communicative acts that do not appear in the expected public and performative state. In fact, the metaphor and its presuppositions seem to contradict feminist arguments about the political nature of the private realm by defining effective feminist critical expression as exclusively public speech and writing. That is, given the way that the public realm has historically been associated with men, while the private realm has been associated with women, it seems counterproductive for a feminist to validate public speech acts only. I contend that by taking a disability studies-informed approach to these states of affairs, we can identify and redeem various modes of public and private communication—as well as silence and non-communication—as different acts of freedom, as self-care, and as ways to subvert or seize power. Modleski's "mute body" does not allow room for these possibilities and thus limits her conclusions. In short, while the metaphor of "mute" may have a type of impact or force as figurative language, it is clear that it carries problematic implications when read from a disability studies perspective.

When we examine extended disability metaphors closely, we should ask: What is gained and what is lost when feminists use this metaphor? In other words, we should ask: How does the use of the metaphors of "emotional cripples" (hooks) and "the mute body" (Modleski) benefit feminist movements and how does such use of metaphor undermine these movements? In both of these uses of metaphor, the "gain," which seems to be their rhetorical affront and memorability, is achieved through the deprecation of various groups of people with disabilities. In the case of hooks, the "loss" is an inclusive feminist argument and potential coalition with people with disabilities, particularly disabled feminists. In the case of Modleski, what is "lost" is recognition and valuation of non-public modes of communication as effective and empowering. When choosing metaphors, especially extended metaphors upon which our arguments rely, feminist scholars must decide if what is gained rhetorically and linguistically through the metaphor is worth what may be ultimately lost

argumentatively and politically.

Toward a Feminist Philosophy of Language

Can feminists think, talk, and write about the damage done by patriarchy without relying on stereotypical and ableist notions of disability? Doing so is not simply a matter of propriety or personal discretion. On the contrary, ableist metaphors of disability limit the scope of, and contradict the goals of, the feminist arguments in which they are used because these metaphors are neither innocent nor value neutral, but rather are simplistic, homogenizing, and implicitly political in character. Just as feminist scholarship has eschewed universal notions of "woman" and challenged masculinist metaphors of the female body, [12] it must now address its use of figurative language about disability. As I have suggested, when feminists negatively employ disability as metaphor, they institute an opposition between feminism and people with disabilities. As May and Ferri (2005) put it, "by conflating disability with stigma or stuckness many feminists also construe disability in opposition to the feminist subject" (121). This use, in feminist texts, of disability to represent stigma—or, in the case of the two metaphors analyzed above, restriction, or woundedness—could alienate disabled readers from these texts and, therefore, prevent effective cross-group and ally actions. Though the use of disability metaphors is clearly not exclusive to feminists, such use is nonetheless problematically habitual and historically consistent in feminist contexts. Sharon Lamp (2006, 2) writes:

> Reacting to characterizations of being weak or *inferior* as slander, feminists deflected such portrayals by distancing themselves from these categories, and denying association of feminine gender with disability. Using an ableist line of thinking still in place today, nineteenth-century women agreed that there was a category of hopelessly, inherently dependent *defectives* that should be subjected to social control, but they argued against women being included in this *defective* class simply by virtue of their sex. …The move by feminists to separate themselves from the devalued group of *defectives* without challenging the hierarchical value-system that produced it served to make disability central to feminism as a negative marker. (emphasis in Lamp)

Notable historical examples of this feminist "distancing" from disability include Charlotte Perkins-Gilman and Margaret Sanger, both of whom used disability rhetoric and metaphor in the context of the widely-popular late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century eugenics movement as a way to promote women's rights (Lamp 2006, 14; Lamp and Cleigh 2011, 176-182; Seitler 2003). Both women, that is, used "positive" eugenic rhetoric and rhetoric about women's roles as breeders in order to encourage better education and treatment of white, middle-class, able-bodied women who would give birth to the next generation of eugenically-sound, rather than "weak" or "feeble-minded," children. This sort of ableist rhetoric within feminist political organizations and movements has historically distanced (nondisabled) feminists from disability, making alliances between disabled feminists and nondisabled feminists hard to establish. Though this history does not explain away or excuse the use of ableist disability metaphors today, it provides a context within which to situate the habitual positioning of feminist women *against* disability and the conceptualization of patriarchal power as disabling. The issue at hand now is how to resist this historical usage without losing the important purpose of previous feminist work.

What does the lesson of this discussion mean for feminists in the present (and future) who want to align themselves with disability rights scholars and activists and resist the use of negative and monolithic representations of disability? Does my argument in this article entail that one should never use disability metaphorically? Not exactly. Rather, the problem is the use of disability as a negative source domain to represent inability, loss, and lack in a simplistic and uncritical way. As I have shown, this use of disability as metaphor creates problems for understanding lived embodiment and ultimately limits or contradicts the feminist arguments that are proffered. Despite the problems in most past and current uses of disability metaphors, I nonetheless encourage creativity, nuance, and experimentation in feminist writing because innovative, politically-accountable uses of metaphor could make people think more deeply and alternatively about embodiment than conventional metaphors currently allow. For example, Vidali (2010) suggests that we alter the sensory experiences that have traditionally been used in a metaphor by (for instance) asking "students to find the 'scents' of previous course" concepts rather than asking if they can "see" connections (49). She writes that this sort of "creative engagement with disability metaphors can further complicate, or 'denaturalize,' ideas of how bodies and metaphors interact" (ibid.). Furthermore, Moya Bailey (2011, 142), in "'The Illest': Disability as Metaphor in Hip Hop Music," writes that

in "the liminal spaces of hip hop, the reappropriation of ableist language can mark a new way of using words that departs from generally accepted disparaging connotations." It is indeed possible and even desirable to use disability metaphorically in ways that are empowering and that acknowledge the complexity of disabled minds and bodies. To do so, feminist scholars could take cues from disabled creative writers such as Eli Clare (2007) who describes tremors as a bodily experience that prevents playing the piano, provokes stares and taunts, and also causes a lover to rise up in pleasure and beg for more (34, 79, 82). How, we might ask, would a creative metaphor of tremors attend to the multiplicity of that experience?

Attempts to use metaphor creatively do not release anyone from responsibility. The growing corpus of work on disability and rhetoric will clearly be useful to feminists (nondisabled and disabled alike) who aim to use metaphor more responsibly in their work. As Titchkosky points out, however, "Texts never just get it right or get it wrong insofar as they are also a 'doing'—right or wrong, texts are always *oriented social action*, producing meaning" that involves both the writer and the reader (Titchkosky 2007, 21; emphasis in Titchkosky). We can never fully predict the way in which our metaphors will be read or used once our words are out in the world. Although I never contacted hooks to ask about her use of "emotional cripples" (as so many folks at the conference wanted me to do), nor did I point out to the pilot that he had misunderstood the woman's use of "Deaf," my experience of these two events and my further research into the topic of disability as metaphor have made clear to me that better incorporation of disability issues into feminist work is not simply a matter of using more inclusive, politically-correct language; rather, we must be willing to engage in difficult dialogues, to acknowledge the open-endedness of our inherently metaphoric language and communicate with one another across differences—in whatever ways and with whatever modes we use to do so.

I contend, therefore, that a feminist philosophy of language—that is, language conveyed in any format or mode of communication, not just scholarly writing alone—ought to incorporate insights from disability studies and be premised on the following general concepts. Note that this feminist philosophy of language is a process, not a product, "an art, not a science" (Hall 2012, 31). First, do no harm. Do not use language that aligns negative concepts or connotations with another marginalized group, even if that language is what seems most powerful, evocative, and effective. Many of us have taught our students and our peers to consider the meanings that are embedded in phrases such as

"throwing like a girl" and "acting like a pussy." We have likely shunned the use of the term *gay* to refer to something as silly and discouraged use of the term *retard* in order to insult; yet, some of us cling to the terms *blind*, *deaf*, *dumb* in order to insult, invalidate, and demean. Therefore, second: be responsible. Language is never neutral. We make choices about the words we use and we have a responsibility to understand both the denotation and connotation of the words we choose. We must interrogate metaphors and other forms of speech in the same rigorous way and to the same extent that we would investigate and understand any theory or concept before we use it in our work. Metaphors have political content and effect; they are not merely the creative, stylistic delivery of the "real" meaning of a given phrase or argument. On the contrary, the content and style of delivery of these rhetorical practices are inseparable: they inform and inflect one another. Third, and finally: be accountable and open to criticism. Despite our best feminist intentions, we cannot always get it right. Nevertheless, we must be willing to let go of words or concepts that do damage to others and develop new words, new metaphors, and new ideas that better serve and further our feminist goals. This feminist philosophy of language allows for us to enact an affective politics that embraces the linguistic utility of metaphor, yet remains intellectually rigorous and committed to the social justice mission of the feminist movement.

References

abbyjean. 2009. The Transcontinental Disability Choir: What is Ableist Language and Why Should You Care? In *Bitch Media*. Bitch Magazine.

Austin, J. L. 1975. *How To Do Things With Words*. Second edition. *The William James Lectures*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bailey, Moya. 2011. "'The Illest': Disability as Metaphor in Hip Hop Music." In *Blackness and Disability*, edited by Chris Bell, 141-148. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Clare, Eli. 2007. *The Marrow's Telling : Words In Motion*. Ypsilanti: Homofactus Press.

Dolmage, Jay. 2005. "Between The Valley and the Field." *Prose Studies* 27 (1/2):108-119.

Erevelles, Nirmala. 2011. *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts :*

Enabling a Transformative Body Politic. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Felman, Shoshana. 2003. *The Scandal of the Speaking Body: Don Juan with J.L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gibbon, Margaret. 1999. *Feminist Perspectives on Language*. London ; New York: Longman.

Hall, Kim Q. 2012. "'Not Much to Praise in Such Seeking and Finding': Evolutionary Psychology, the Biological Turn in the Humanities, and the Epistemology of Ignorance." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 27 (1):28-49. Available at: doi: 10.1111/j.1527-2001.2011.01229.x. Accessed on: August 28, 2013.

Hendricks, Christina, and Kelly Oliver. 1999. *Language and Liberation: Feminism, Philosophy, and Language*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

hooks, bell. 1984. *Feminist Theory From Margin to Center*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

———. 2000. *All About Love: New Visions*. First edition. New York: William Morrow.

———. 2004. *The Will to Change : Men, Masculinity, and Love*. New York: Atria Books.

Knowles, Murray, and Rosamund Moon. 2006. *Introducing Metaphor*. London ; New York: Routledge.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lamp, Sharon. 2006. "'It Is For The Mother': Feminists' Rhetorics of Disability During the American Eugenics Period." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 26 (4). Available at: http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/807/982. Accessed on: August 29, 2013.

Lamp, Sharon, and W. Carol Cleigh. 2011. "A Heritage of Ableist Rhetoric in American Feminism from the Eugenics Period." In *Feminist Disability Studies*, edited by Kim Q. Hall, 175-190. Bloomington: Indiana University

Press.

Malhotra, Sheena, and Aimee Carrillo Rowe. 2013. *Silence, Feminism, Power: Reflections at the Edges of Sound*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

May, Vivian M., and Beth A. Ferri. 2005. "Fixated On Ability: Questioning Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Theories of Resistance." *Prose Studies* 27 (1/2):120-140.

Mills, Sara. 2008. *Language and Sexism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mitchell, David T., and Sharon L. Snyder. 2001. *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Modleski, Tania. 1991. *Feminism Without Women : Culture and Criticism in a Postfeminist Age*. New York: Routledge.

Samuels, Ellen. 2012. "Critical Divides: Judith Butler's Body Theory and the Question of Disability." In *Feminist Disability Studies*, edited by Kim Q. Hall, 48-66. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Sandahl, Carrie. 2003. "Queering the Crip or Cripping the Queer? Intersections of Queer and Crip Identities in Solo Autobiographical Performance." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* no. 9 (1-2):25-56.

Seitler, Dana. 2003. "Unnatural Selection: Mothers, Eugenic Feminism, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Regeneration Narratives." *American Quarterly* 55 (1):61-88.

Semino, Elena. 2008. *Metaphor in Discourse*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Snyder, Sharon L., and David T. Mitchell. 2006. *Cultural Locations of Disability*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Titchkosky, Tanya. 2007. *Reading and Writing Disability Differently: The Textured Life of Embodiment*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Tremain, Shelley. 2011a. "Ableist Language and Philosophical Associations." *New APPS: Arts, Politics, Philosophy, Science.* Available at:

http://www.newappsblog.com/2011/07/ableist-language-and-philosophical-associations.html. Accessed on: January 4, 2013.

———. 2011b. "Bibliography on Ableist Metaphors." *New APPS: Arts, Politics, Philosophy Science.* Available at: http://www.newappsblog.com/2011/08/bibliography-on-ableist-metaphors.html#comments. Accessed on: January 4, 2013.

Vidali, Amy. 2010. "Seeing What We Know: Disability and Theories of Metaphor." *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 4 (1):33-54.

Wilson, James C., and Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson. 2001. "Disability, Rhetoric and the Body." In *Embodied Rhetorics: Disability in Language and Culture*, edited by James C. Wilson and Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, 1-24. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Woolf, Virginia. 1989. *A Room of One's Own*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Sami Schalk is a doctoral candidate at Indiana University in Gender Studies. Her research focuses on the representation of disability in black women's fiction. Her academic work has been published in the Disability Studies Quarterly *and the* Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*. Sami received her MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Notre Dame. She is currently the program coordinator for Young Women Writing for (a) Change of Bloomington and a board member for the Society for Disability Studies.*

Notes

1. Examples of such conversations can be found in the archives of the New APPS: Arts, Politics, Philosophy, Science blog, *Bitch Magazine* online, and elsewhere (Tremain 2011a, 2011b; abbyjean 2009).
Return to Text

2. For example, several comments on one of Shelley Tremain's posts on the *New APPS* blog cast doubt upon, that is, are skeptical about, the claim that blind people are actually offended by the term "blind review" (Tremain

2011a).
Return to Text

3. The concept of speech acts come from J.L. Austin's "How to do Things with Words" (Austin 1975).
Return to Text

4. Examples of these overarching conceptual metaphors include "ARGUMENT IS WAR", "GOOD IS UP/BAD IS DOWN", and "THE MIND IS A MACHINE" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 4, 16, 27).
Return to Text

5. Discussing the work of Judith Butler, Samuels argues that disability scholars cannot simply substitute the word "disability" for, sex, gender, or sexuality. She encourages scholars to take a critical stance in how they take up Butler's theories that do not acknowledge the disabled body (Samuels 2012).
Return to Text

6. The use of person-first language—"a boy with autism" or "people with disabilities" rather than "an autistic boy" or a "disabled person"— is contentious, particularly among disability scholars and community advocates. For discussion of person-first language, see Chapter 6 of *Reading and Writing Disability Differently* (Titchkosky 2007, 177-208).
Return to Text

7. Carrie Sandahl (2003) notes the similarity between the reclamations of queer and crip/cripple. Of the verb form of these terms, she writes: "Queering and cripping are both theatrical and everyday practices deployed to challenge oppressive norms, build community, and maintain the practitioners' self-worth" (38).
Return to Text

8. The uses of "heal" appear on pages xvi, 2, 6, 65, 69, 143, 149, 153, 172, 175, 184, 186, and 187. The references to men's emotional health appear on pages 43, 45, 48, 49, 65, 86, 114, 132, 138, 146, 156, 164, and 179.

Return to Text

9. Nirmala Erevelles (2011) has argued that disability studies scholars must not ignore the sources of disablement when so many people are disabled due to their race, class, and geographic location via war, malnutrition, and lack of healthcare. She cautions against simplistically celebratory narratives of disability and urges a more contextualized approach which is attentive to class, race, gender, sexuality, and geography (132-139).
Return to Text

10. The anthology *Silence, Feminism, Power* (Maholtra and Camillo Rowe, 2013, forthcoming) interrogates the assumption that silence is inherently oppressive.
Return to Text

11. This representation of Judith Shakespeare appears in Woolf's text on women and writing: *A Room of One's Own* (Woolf 1989).
Return to Text

12. For more on masculinist metaphors, see the articles in Hendricks's and Oliver's (1999) *Language and Liberation: Feminism, Philosophy and Language*, Part Three "The Power of Masculinist Metaphors: Words That Keep Women in Place" (243-322).
Return to Text

Return to Top of Page