Critical Ability Studies, Brexit & Trump

Dan Goodley, University of Sheffield, England and Rebecca Lawthom, Manchester Metropolitan University, England
DRAFT – please contact d.goodley@sheffield.ac.uk for details on how to cite this paper

Abstract
We are living in difficult times. One feels light-headed even trying to decipher the actualities of the global political system and cultural order in light of the traumatic events of Brexit and the President Elect Trump. One trope that needs to be carefully dissected is the play and presence of ableism as a logical conclusion of neoliberalism. The concept of neoliberal-ableism is one that one of us (Goodley, 2014) has recently coined to capture the elision of key tenets of both processes that emphasise self-containment, autonomy and independence. Such ideas were key to the Trump and Brexit campaigns and now leave us in a dangerous space of isolationism. Recently, Cornell West has argued that Trump's election signals the end of American neoliberalism. However, our own sense is that his triumph (and Brexit too) hails in a new kind of neoliberalism; one associated with the rolling out of ableist ideals. And while West might be correct in predicting the death of some elements of late capitalism we know from history that ability and disability – or dis/ability – are used to restructure political orders. In this paper we will consider the rise of neoliberal-ableism as a key guiding ideology of both Brexit and Trump supporters and ask: what does this mean for disabled people? After considering these two historical events we will think of the future and consider some of the ways in which we may respond and resist.

1. Introducing critical ability studies
We locate ourselves in relation to the burgeoning critical disability studies literature. In the final chapter of Dan's Disability Studies (2016 second edition) he argues that while critical disability studies scholars start with an

analysis of disability they inevitably become interconnected with with the politics of class, gender, sexual, race and ethnicity:

> Such intersections are key to *critical disability studies*. While critical disability studies might start with disability they never end with it: remaining ever vigilant of political, ontological and theoretical complexity. Reflecting upon recent reflections[1] my own understanding is that critical disability studies:

- Acknowledges the importance of analysing disability through materialism and is respectful to the building blocks of disability studies especially the social model of disability;
- Recognises that our contemporary times are complex as they are marked by austerity, a widening gap between rich and power, globalisation of the guiding principles of late capitalism and therefore require sophisticated social theories that can make sense and contest these processes;
- Remains mindful of global, national and local economic contexts and their impact on disabled people;
- Adopts a position of cultural relativism whilst seeking to say some things about the global nature of disability;
- Recognises the importance of the constitution of the self in relation to others (and is therefore always attuned to the relational qualities of disability);
- Brings together disability alongside other identities as a moment of refection that Lennard Davis[2] terms as dismodernism;
- Adopts the practice of criticality in order to be critical of all kinds of disability studies (including critical disability studies);

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[1] Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009), Barnes (2012), Shildrick (2012), Goodley (2012), Vehmas and Watson (2013), Mitchell and Snyder (2015).
[2] Davis (2002; 2006c)

- Keeps in mind the view that any analysis of disability should not preclude consideration of other forms of political activism.

Critical disability studies is not:
- A futile exercise that simply adds the word 'critical' to disability studies to suggest all previous examples of disability studies have not been critical;
- Just another approach to sit alongside traditional approaches like materialist social model perspectives;
- The insertion of a discursive preoccupation with culture that ignores the material realities of disablism;
- Simply the study of disability or ability for that matter;
- An academic exercise without political commitment;
- Incapable of having values and ambitions that it wants to share with the world.

(Goodley, 2016: xx)

There are a number of emerging approaches including crip, discursive, new materialist, posthuman and Global South disability studies perspectives. This paper emerges specifically from two emerging theoretical projects: critical studies of ableism and dis/ability studies. *Critical studies of ableism* has been pioneered by the disabled scholars Fiona Kumari Campbell (e.g. 2008a, 2008b, 2009) in Australia and Gregor Wolbring (e.g. 2008, 2009, 2012) in Canada. Wolbring and Campbell's work is highly interdisciplinary mobilising ideas from law, medicine, rehabilitation, sociology, cultural and religious studies. Each of these discplines, they argue, is built upon the maintenence of the autonomous, rational, reasonable and healthy citizen. And in their work they seek to reveal and destabilize the kinds of human being that are valued – through ableism – and assumed to form the kinds of personhood desired by society. Their work has been incredibly influential to us in thinking through the relationship of disability to the wider world and leads us to our second

approach that of *dis/ability studies*. This is the title for Dan's 2014 book which sought to bring together critical disability studies with studies of ableism. As good poststructuralists we already knew that disability relied on its opposite ability in order to exist. But the work of disability and ability scholars pushed us to embrace a bifurcated consciousness that acknowledged the push and pull of disability and ability upon one another. Disablism was something that people with sensory, mental, physical and cognitive categories of impairment endured. Carol Thomas's (2007) now classic work had made it very clear – that just as people of colour face racism, women are subjected to sexism and LGBTQ folk bear homo and transphobia – so people with impairments endure disablism. In contrast, ableism is something everybody (and every body) endures (though there will be differentiation throughout the population. Acknowledging the split term dis/ability requires us to think simultaneously about the processes of disablism and ableism and how each nurtures the other.

So, following Goodley (2014: xx), ableism accounts 'for the stifling practices associated with a contemporary society that increasingly seeks to promote the species typical individual citizen: a citizen that is ready and able to work, productively contribute, an atomistic phenomenon bounded and cut off from others, capable, malleable and compliant'. This species typicality is at the heart of both Wolbring and Campbell's work: drawing attention to the societal idealisation of a normative idea of what it means to be homo sapien (the latin word, by the way, for 'wise man'). Ableism breeds paranoia, confusion, fear and inadequacy. Ableism is an ideal that no one ever matches up to. As [Robert] McRuer (2006) carefully puts it: compulsory ableism is to disablism what compulsory heterosexuality is to homophobia. 'Ableism provides just the right amount of temperature and nutrient from which disablism can grow' (Goodley, 2014: xx). Hence, disabled people come to occupy a crucial role in the reproduction of ableism. Human enhancement, individual progression, cognitive advancement, economic independence and

therapeutic growth are just some of the aims of an ableist regime. Disabled people are constituted as the perfect objects of these interventions; the lacking subjects who might be made better through ableist rehabilitation. But, at the very same time, disabled people are cast as those damaged others who sit in stark contrast to the ableist imperative of economic, embodied, cultural and psychological self-sufficiency. The critical study of ableism plugs us into a key trope of the 21st Century: autonomy and self-containment.

This sovereignty of the human subject is of course an old idea. The popularity of Foucault's (e.g.1977, 1978) work has grown over the last four decades because of its fit with the increased emphasis on the human subject as the object, subject and carrier of advanced capitalism. Modern societies are characterised by individual citizens internalising their own sovereignty. Neither God, government nor monarchy will govern the modern subject: he is free to govern himself (Rabinow and Rose, 2006). This emphasis on self-governance fits perfectly with the rise of neoliberal thinking in the latter decades of the 20th Century. Neoliberalism is the latest stage in capitalism's global hegemonic domination (Ong, 2007). For Cooley (2011) the beginnings of neoliberalism were associated with talk of free enterprise, the 'American way' and working for one's family, more contemporaneous iterations of neoliberal discourse would indicate that we are entering a cultural epoch where such a vision of human development automatically inducts each and everyone into, what Jakobsen (2009: 224) describes as 'a relational structure that provides for privatized resource-provision'. Or, in short; you don't have to be self-sufficient here but it helps. In Goodley (2014), it is argued that ableism is wrapped up in the machinations of neoliberalism: '[t]he way I would like us to think of this relational structure is this: *neoliberalism provides an ecosystem for the nourishment of ableism; which we can define as neoliberal-ableism'*. This concept does something crucial: it brings a consideration of the centrality of ability (and its counter disability) to the theorisation of late capitalist neoliberal societies. And while many recent observers have the

celebrated the death of neoliberalism our sense is that obituaries are premature; not least because they ignore the strengthening discourse of ableism in these advanced days of neoliberal capitalism. We are not convinced by claims of Post-Truth proponents who suggest ideology is dead killed by emotional soundbites of the online generation. While we do recognize the changing political and techno-cultural landscape we assert that a preferred citizen lies implicitly at the heart of policy making and political discourse.

2. Them and Us: Brexit and the logics of neoliberal-ableism

On the 24th June at 7.20am our mobile phone rang. It was our daughters Ruby and Rosa. They had rung to tell us about the results of the EU referendum. We were half asleep. We were nursing headaches from a heavy night in the fields of Glastonbury festival; a major British music event that we have been lucky enough to attend for a number of years. Our daughters were not with us for the first time in years: their school's Headteacher refusing to giving them authorized leave to attend the festival because this would mean them 'missing crucial parts of the curriculum'. This narrow understanding of proper learning only taking place in schools (rather than in fields) is but one other element of ability studies that we can pick up in another piece of writing perhaps. For now, let us get back to the phone call, where everything was about to change.

Ruby exclaimed 'You will never guess what they have done …' 52% of the British voters had chosen to leave the European Union. Our other lovely daughter, Rosa, wrote on her prescient Facebook update:

> I feel totally let down by the people who have not thought this decision through? I'm not glad to say our country has the same view as Donald Trump either.

Both girls were upset, angry and anxious about what some of their Leave campaign supporting peers at school were going to say to them that day. The referendum had been the regular topic of conversation in the classroom and refectory for a number of months. Back in Glastonbury, we fired up the kettle, made our coffees and slumped into our camping chairs. There was no pretty sunrise this morning. The cloud was appropriately slate grey. We turned our phone onto speaker mode and struggled to find words of comfort to share with our daughters. We told them things would not be as bad as they predicted. They were unconvinced. Soon they had to say their goodbyes. The school bus ride was beckoning. We told them that we loved them. That we were proud of their politics. The phone call ended.

'Fuck'. We said. Aloud. To nobody in particular. 'Fuck'.
Ruby said: 'You will never guess what they have done'.
'I feel totally let down by the people'. Rosa posted.

But what does Ruby mean by 'they'? By 'them'? And who exactly does Rosa have in mind when she talks about 'the people'.

Well, as we slumped back in our camping chairs, we understood these people as others to our own community. Them and us. The latter group – at least for our family and friends – are Remain: this is but one way in which we have come to view ourselves over the last year. It has become, as Bauman (1994) would have it, a marked identity. We are Remain. We are our people. And in finding this commonality we inevitably flatten distinctions and obscure differences of opinion. We *have* talked about the problems of the EU. We are good students of British socialists such as the late great British socialist Labour man Tony Benn who rejected the capitalist monster that was the EU. And we loved Tony (and still do). But we certainly knew that we did not relate to them: those Leave people.

The then Chairperson of UKIP (The United Kingdom's Independence Party) Nigel Farage is just one of those people that Rosa describes. He had made the UK's withdrawal from the EU his life's work and was prone to any tactic to get his message across, however crude. He was, for example, responsible for the use of a poster during the EU Referendum which depicted a snaking line of mostly non-white migrants and refugees (probably Syrian refugees) with the slogan "Breaking point: the EU has failed us all"[3]. But, and it is important to acknowledge this, not everyone who voted to leave the EU is like Nigel Farage. That would be a gross simplification of the complexity of the issues at stake (if not potentially libelous). Some seemingly considered, moderate and thoughtful people voted to leave. 52% of Britain cannot be mindless xenophobes. Decision-making behind each individual's vote was complex, personalized and idiosyncratic. One suggestion that many agree upon is that the seeming simplicity of the referendum's question (are you in or out?) failed to account for the many varied reasons behind individual's voting behavior. Voting out (or in) meant many different things to different people. Brexit was not simply a vote against immigration. Brexit for some was a cry for help and recognition. In poor parts of the UK, where communities felt disenfranchised by austerity and the collapse of the British manufacturing industry, a vote for Brexit was a vote against career politicians based in Whitehall London who seemed to be ignorant about the everyday concerns of working people. In other parts of Britain, such as the fishing industries in the North East and South West of England, Brexit was a hammer to the nail of the faceless EU bureaucracy; an administration that seemed to have put other nations fishing before Britain's. Whilst acknowledging these complexities, attempts by the left (and their media) to make sense of Brexit resulted in the production of a number of common tropes. These included:

● We are now Little Britain

[3] https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/16/nigel-farage-defends-ukip-breaking-point-poster-queue-of-migrants

- This is the final nail in the coffin to the death of social justice
- Brexit is a cultural vent for the rise in racism and xenophobia
- We are witnessing the expression of opposition to the bureaucratic machine of the EU project
- This is one more sign of the move to the right in democratic politics
- People are suspicious of immigration

But what does Brexit mean for disabled people, disability politics and disability studies? And, as importantly, what does Brexit tell us about British society and the values that underpin this society? What would happen to a reading of Leave if we were to think of it in terms of a rational decision reflecting a particular kind of guiding discourse or ideological narrative? Those defending leaving the EU have developed an explanatory discourse that includes the following tropes:
- Standing alone
- Reclaiming our independence
- Being self-sufficient
- Seeking autonomy (economic, cultural and national)
- Self-rule over our national concerns
- Maintaining our sovereignty

These statements are familiar to those of us who work within critical disability studies. They are our bread and butter. Because we know that each of these concepts are consistently fused together in order to articulate an *ideology of ableism*. We should acknowledge that ableism is a psychoemotional and global economic project. And ableists are prepared to do deals with others who associate their practices with normalcy (including whiteness, heteronormativity, Anglocentric and malestream takes on the world). And ableism, as we are witnessing with Brexit, is at the heart of British national discourse. Is this a claim too far? Are we in danger of over-theorising Brexit? Are we pushing things too far? We think not. Because even seemingly benign

ideas like national pride, celebrating one's independence or upholding one's individual acheivements may well reveal implicit assumptions associated with the preferred kind of global citizen preferred by the locality of Britain. As Dan has written about previously:

> For many of us, ableist expectations are impossible: and are set as impossible dreams for many. And, as a snowball effects, ability picks up speed, expands in nature, drawing into it cognitive, economic, cultural factors to become a monsterous entity: a great ball of ability. One might say that in its beginnings ability emerges as a seemingly objective concept. We all want to have abilities of some kinds in order to live. But when ability grows in scope and reach and remains fundamentally linked to the valuing of distinct individual traits, qualities and characteristics then it becomes an individualising and anti-social phenomenon: wary of anyone or any practice that gets in its way (Goodley, 2014: xx).

Clearly, Brexit pins down ableism as *the way to live one's life*. Alone. Segregated. Bounded. Fixed. Immovable. Static. Dead (or at least dead to the needs and demands of others). Brexit is the writing large of ableism: the ideology that assumes independence lies at the heart of what it means to be a good British citizen. Brexit marks the nation state of Britain as an ableist ideal: capable of governance and trade devoid of reliance on interdependent relationship with other European nations. And crucially a nation state with non-porous borders. Where non-European others are cast as threats to British ideals. Where now, as Farage would have it, non-Europeans (especially those of colour) threaten to create Breaking points.

Ruby: They…
Rosa: The people…

… are the neoliberal citizens of this brave new world of self-sufficient independence. These individuals are the treasured subjects of austerity. Working hard. Shopping enough. Delighting in their lack of need to pull down resources from the welfare state. Standing alone. Pulling themselves up by the boot-strings. In this together (but only with others that resemble themselves). With similar boots. And similar ways of marching in those boots.

The timing of Brexit and austerity are not coincidental. What we have witnessed over the last four years is a fundamental rewriting of the British citizen's relationship with government. The government rolls back and individual responsbility rolls in. Brexit should come as no surprise. It is merely another example of the neoliberal-ableist individualism that marks our communities. Why would anyone want dependence, mutuality or interconnection with the European project when we are all austerity subjects now? So, where does this leave us. What hope can we offer in these dangerous times? And what about us? The Other to the dominant them? The 48% remain? And more importantly what about those Others that have literally been cast as outside of this new British neoliberal-able project? We will come back to responses later in the paper. For now, let us turn to the horror show that was the 2016 American election.

3. President Elect Trump: a logical consequence of neoliberal-ableism
On the day of announcing his election win, Donald J Trump tweeted:

> **Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump 9 Nov 2016
> Such a beautiful and important evening! The forgotten man and woman will never be forgotten again. We will all come together as never before

Here was a Billionaire with no political experience announcing himself as elected man of the people. Trump achieved what he set out to do: a Brexit

plus plus. It seemed too easy for opponents to claim that Trump was unfit for office (a point President Obama made strongly during the campaign[4]). The reality was very different: Trump was deemed very much electable especially by particular sectors of the voting population. According to an analysis of the BBC News website:

> The poll suggests that 53% of men voted for Mr Trump, with 41% voting for Mrs Clinton - those proportions are almost exactly reversed for women. Among white voters (who made up 70% of voters), Mr Trump won 58% to Mrs Clinton's 37%, while the Democratic candidate won the support of a huge majority of black voters - 88% to Mr Trump's 8% - and Hispanic voters - 65% to his 29%. Looking specifically at white women, they favoured Mr Trump, with 53% supporting him compared with 43% for Mrs Clinton[5].

What does this reveal? A few days after the result Cornell West announced:

> The neoliberal era in the United States ended with a neofascist bang. The political triumph of Donald Trump shattered the establishments in the Democratic and Republican parties – both wedded to the rule of Big Money and to the reign of meretricious politicians. The Bush and Clinton dynasties were destroyed by the media-saturated lure of the pseudo-populist billionaire with narcissist sensibilities and ugly, fascist proclivities. The monumental election of Trump was a desperate and xenophobic cry of human hearts for a way out from under the devastation of a disintegrating neoliberal order – a nostalgic return to an imaginary past of greatness. White working- and middle-class fellow citizens – out of anger and anguish – rejected the economic neglect of neoliberal policies and the self-righteous arrogance of elites.

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[4] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-36958126
[5] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2016-37922587

Yet these same citizens also supported a candidate who appeared to blame their social misery on minorities, and who alienated Mexican immigrants, Muslims, black people, Jews, gay people, women and China in the process (West, 2016: np).

It is tempting to read Trump's election as the end of neoliberalism. However, such a reading fails to attend to dis/ability studies and ignores the use of neoliberal-ableist idealisations at the heart of the Trump campaign. In order to make our case let us analyse three key Trump slogans Make America Great; *Drain the Swamp* and *Repeal Obamacare*.

Make America great again. In November 2015, Trump was attacked for ridiculing the physically impaired journalist Serge F. Kovaleski[6]. For many this was further evidence of Trump's disdain for minority groups in the USA. A month later Trump called for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States 'until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on' [sic][7]. He has referred to Mexicans as 'drug dealers, criminals and rapists'[8] and is actively involved in lawsuits brought against him by women claiming that he sexually harassed them[9]. Trump has indicated that he will help overturn the 1973 *Roe v Wade* decision allowing states to ban abortion (thus putting the health of many young women at risk)[10], while one of his first appointments as President Elect was the Alt-right advisor Steve Bannon as chief strategist[11] (infamous for being the driving force behind the right-wing US Breitbart News website). This preference for

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[6] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-34930042

[7] https://www.donaldjtrump.com/press-releases/donald-j.-trump-statement-on-preventing-muslim-immigration

[8] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-37230916

[9] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2016-37956018

[10] http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/donald-trump-abortion-pro-life-pro-choice-equality-us-presidential-election-women-a7416611.html

[11] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2016-37971742

white men with Hawk-like tendencies has been replicated time and time again as more members of his administration are revealed. When Trump talks of making America Great Again, one should ask; what kind of American citizen he has in mind? Wolbring defines ableism as 'the favoritism for certain abilities for example cognition, competitiveness or consumerism and the often negative sentiment towards the lack of favored abilities' (http://ableism.wordpress.com/about-the-project/). Trump's forgotten citizen is one ready and able to work – exemplified by the redundant manufacturing workers of the rustbelt[12] – set in counter-distinction to the deviant Mexican other and disabled individual so easily ridiculed (for further discussion of both each case see Wilton and Schuer, 2006; Delgado Wise and Márquez Covarrubias, 2008). Indeed, it would not be a shot in the dark to suggest that Trump's ideal citizen fits readily with individual desired by contemporary society as outlined by Goodley (2016: xxx)

The desired individual is …	… and he is constituted through the processes of …
Cognitively, socially and emotionally able and competent	Disabling society and ableist society
Biologically and psychologically stable, self-contained, genetically sound and ontologically responsible	Societies governed by bio and thanatopolitics, technology, new eugenics and the Human Genome Project.
Normal: Sane, autonomous, self-sufficient, reasonable,	Mentalism, sanism, normalcy, normate culture, normative mobility, normalising, neurotic, meritocratic and entrepreneurial society

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[12] see http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2016-36883729 which captures the growing republican vote amongst the American rustbelt

law abiding and economically viable	
White, heterosexual, male, adult, living in towns, global citizen of WENA	Heteronormativity, occidentalism, colonialism, self-contained individualism, patriarchy, malestream and phallocentric society, compulsory heterosexuality, masculinity and ablebodiedness.

Trump's campaign played with idea of the forgotten wo/men: but held on to strong tropes of ability, work readiness, whiteness and heroic sentiments associated with being a True American. These idealisations sit in stark contrast to his use of hate speech with many minority groups.

Repeal Obamacare. Marans (2016) reported that many disabled activists have expressed concern at Trump's plans. These include repealing the Affordable Care Act (or Obamacare as it is often known), rolling back the healthcare expansion of medicare (which includes some 10 million disabled people who are insured through this policy) and reducing ADA enforcement (Americans with Disabilities Act which seeks to recognise the rights of disabled people in work, education and other institutions) . These measures will put many disabled people at risk: increasing their already precarious position in society. A shrinking state has been described as a by-product of neoliberalism (Williams, Cloke & Thomas 2012:1480), as the state rolls back (Sothern, 2007). The removal of big government from healthcare is yet another example of what Tickell and Peck (2002) terms the neoliberalisation of space and there is already ample evidence to suggest that these reforms are disproportionately affect disabled people (Roulstone, 2011).

> … the rhetoric of individuality, personal fulfillment and entrepreneurial responsibility under which these neoliberal reforms were sold serves to deny the particularity and irreducibility of the disabled body thus making disabled bodies rhetorically invisible even while their physical and discursive presence is fore grounded. The perversity of this

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argument is that, in the claim that the disabled body 'is just like everyone else', its difference is at once marked in relation to the norm (everyone else) that it reproduces even while the specificity of its difference is effaced (the political claim of being 'just like'). (Sothern, 2007: 147)

Plans to dismantle the safety net of Obamacare reveals a distrust of the place of government in the personal lives of citizens. Trump emerges as Bastard love child of Reagan and Thatcher; a natural successor to their belief in the market over welfare.

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Drain the Swamp. The Trump campaign made a big noise about cleansing American politics, removing corrupt politicians and ensuring outside interests did not influence the political ambitions of senators in Washington, D.C. The #DrainTheSwamp hashtag became increasingly popular with Trump's voting base: supporters interpreting the phrase in different ways with varying meanings, from removing greed in local and federal government, to imposing term limits on politicians serving in Congress so as to reduce the domestication of corruption. This sloganeering sets up Trump as an anti-establishment, non-career-politician with whom the working man and woman can relate to (unless they are female, disabled, Mexican or a Muslim one might assume). In reality, however, Trump is a billionaire businessman entering the White House with numerous legal cases hanging over his head. One might suggest that he is hardly draining but further populating the swamp. The American political scientist Sasha Breger Bush (2016) asserts that 'Trump's election is in some ways a neoliberal apex, an event that portends the completion of the U.S. government's capture by wealthy corporate interests'. Similarly Grossmann (2016) writes that Henry Ford and Donald Trump have much in common, not least in their appeal to self-styled triumphalist entrepreneurialism. These individual qualities are the same sovereign qualities that hailed in neoliberal discourses in the latter

decades of the 20th Century. We agree with Breger Bush (2016: np) who writes;

> Trump's election does not signal the beginning of a rapid descent into European-style fascism, it appears to be a key stage in the ongoing process of American democratic disintegration. American democracy has been under attack from large and wealthy corporate interests for a long time, with this process accelerating and gaining strength over the period of neoliberal globalization (roughly the early 1970s to the present).

Trump embodies a neoliberal commitment to private property rights, market-based solutions to social problems and a rejection of big government intervening in the private lives of citizens. Since the election win, Trump's conservatism has been further revealed through his questionable use of social media. He continues to publicise his thoughts on national and global through 140 or less characters:

> **Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump Jan 2
> China has been taking out massive amounts of money & wealth from the U.S. in totally one-sided trade, but won't help with North Korea. Nice!

> **Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump 16 Dec 2016
> Thank you Florida. My Administration will follow two simple rules: BUY AMERICAN and HIRE AMERICAN! #ICYMI-

This isolationism and national harks back to a bygone age of Fordist manufacturing in the early 20th century. Moreover, for Breger Bush (2016), Trump's political capital was built upon a naïve but clearly sellable idea of national neoliberalism: America will be made great again through the sweat

and toil of the forgotten working majority in a revamped and successful market economy.

4. Responding to neoliberal-ableism: A call to community

On the 12th November 2016 Nigel Farage's team tweeted a photo of him and Trump shaking hands in Trump tower. He was the first British politician to meet with the President Elect. Their alliance reflects a more broader ideological meeting of minds one which we have described as developing a neoliberal-able model of citizenry. In order to survive the current socio-economic climate one needs an armour of nationalistic self-governance and isolationist sovereignty. So how might we respond to this latest iteration of neoliberal life?

We are of the opinion that we need to maintain our networks and re-energise our networks. If our analysis was beholdant to Foucault then our political resistance is aligned with Deleuze and Guattari. Listening to the words of Ruby and Rosa we need to refind us. Our people. And here disability has much to offer. Disability often sits as the monstrous Other to 'the people' and the 'them' described by Ruby and Rosa. And disability, we would argue, does not fit readily into the rationalist discourse of neoliberal-ableism. In this sense then disability has the potential to be the focal point for our commons: a community of activists and scholars that work to understand and contest the workings of ableism. So, we conclude this paper with some calls for – and examples of - urgent analytical work that we must undertake. First, we must problematise neoliberal-ableism's psychological, social, economic, cultural character which normatively priviledges able-bodiedness; promotes smooth forms of personhood and smooth health; creates spaces only fit for normative citizens; encourages an institutional bias towards autonomous, independent bodies and leads to economic and material dependence on neo-liberal and hypercapitalist forms of production. Second, we must seek to explore the possessive nature of neoliberal-ableism that clings to its own and expels

outsiders. Our task must be to deconstruct its logics: to contest a politics of normalization of the human subject which creates the desiring of sameness: of work, wealth and consumption as the markers of valued personhood. (Richardson, 2005). We need to contest an unthinking cherishing of a 'post-Cartesian entrenchment of the notion that the self-possessive inviolability of the bounded body grounds the autonomous subject' (Shildrick, 2007: 225). Third, we need to think again about bodies , their fleshy nature and their materialization in this latest stage of neoliberal capitalism. We need to ask which bodies are valued or debilitated by the dance of capital. The capitalisation of the flesh that occurs through neoliberalism makes the body, as Vanderkinderen (2013) puts it; a key site of investment for the state. Here we find the production of a viable and productive body politic: the able body and mind. The discourse of neoliberalism has proven to be so compelling because in representing the world of market rules as a state of nature, marketization has been naturalized (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 382). The ideal able body is the stuff of nature. We must refute this naturalization of ability. We must the ideology of ability as the unquestioned 'preference for able-bodiedness... the baseline by which humanness is determined, setting the measure of body and mind that give or denies human status to individual persons' (Siebers, 2006: 175 8). Fourth, we must resist the implicit theory that a successful human subject as an entrepreneurial subject.TNeoliberal discourses on freedom, borne through entrepreneurship, 'reassert the ideas of self-actualisation and self-development as one of the many needs and aspirations of the enterprising self' (Masschelein & Simons, 2005). Individual and societal progress are characterised as one's success as a producer–consumer in a (market) environment where everything has an (economic) value. Similarly, for Freeman (2007) we are witnessing the rise of the reflexive project of the self: the entrepreneurial self flexible, inventive and adaptable. Ready to take control. We are told we are all entrepreneurs now: take control as Bexit and Trump told us. We must contest this isolationist view. Fifth, we must shed light on those historical, political and economic conditions that

permit only a small minority (think: white, heterosexual, bourgeois and able-bodied male or Donald / Farage for short) to exercise the 'material freedom to choose' (Erevelles, 1996: 523). Meritocracy is, of course, a limited and limiting definition of citizenship. It is also bullshit. Trump infamously started his business empire with a small loan of a million dollars from his father. Sixth, we need to demonstrate that the self-serving autonomous individual so highly valued by our contemporary times is actually an 'abandoned citizen'. This concept, taken from the work of Vanderkinderen et al (in press), relates to the ways in which citizens are abandoned in the sense they are cast off if they feel to meet the neoliberal imperative. But, following Goodley (2014: xxx) we can also 'turn the concept round on to the ableist self: the citizen is abandoned, set afloat in the sea of ableist signifiers, to find and contain themselves'. We must reject this desire for abandon and reclaim our communities. Lastly, we need to recover the human that seeks being lost in our political times. In times when self-sufficiency becomes the leitmotif of our times we must attune ourselves to the related production of disability as a difference that is naturally excludable (Titchkosky, 2016). Disabled people risk becoming the collateral damage of neoliberal-ableism: justifiably excluded because they simply cannot survive the demands of everyday living. In contrast, we would argue that disability is a starting point for thinking again about humanness and as a vehicle for challenging two logical consequences of late capitalism: Brexit and Trump.

The truth of Brexit and Trump is that we have all lost. Even some Leave voters have now expressed their 'Bregret' as we are plunged into psychological and economic uncertainty. The reality of Trump is that his meritocracy will only benefit a few and will dehumanise whole groups of humans. One source of hope is found in critical disability studies: and specifically the urgent need to deconstruct the logics of ableism and neoliberalism that continue to do damage even in these Post-Truth times.

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