

Introduction to Volume 3

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In the months since the last issue of *The Journal of Philosophy of Disability* was published, disability perspectives surfaced numerous times in mainstream news media stories on climate change, education, and artificial intelligence, among other topics. At the time of this writing, the most cited news related to disability in 2023 was the passing of Judith Heumann, the United States' disability activist often referred to as the “mother of disability rights” and whose early years as an activist were chronicled in the Academy Award-nominated documentary film *Crip Camp*. Despite the work of Heumann and scores of disability advocates and activists since her time, the presence of ableism in mainstream media persists. For example, ableism as specifically combined with ageism can be seen in full force in the October 2, 2023 *New Yorker* cover depicting President Joe Biden, former President Donald Trump, Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi racing against each other using walkers. Pushback on social media followed swiftly, condemning the use of ableist and ageist imagery to criticize Congress and noting that a walker does not indicate incompetence or an inability to do one's job. Others pointed out that disability discrimination is one of the barriers disabled politicians and those running for election face, as we noted in our 2022 introduction to the JPD. Wherever one looks in the world, the fight for accessibility and for more accurate ways of not just representing, but *conceiving* of disability rages on.

Many philosophers of disability are also disability activists, often by necessity due to barriers encountered in our daily lives as philosophers. For example, between the two of us we have expended hundreds of hours advocating for communication accommodations required by law and/or consulting conference organizations and academic institutions concerning accessibility and the inclusion of disability as a component of DEI efforts. Famously, the scholarship of the late Anita Silvers was informed by her unique ability to combine her philosophical training with her lived disability justice advocacy. This year, the Society for Philosophy and Disability announced the creation of the Anita Silvers Essay Prize for “the best unpublished (or published within the last two years) English-language philosophical essay in the field of philosophy of disability as decided by the current board.” If the winning

essay is unpublished, the author will receive an invitation to publish it in *The Journal of Philosophy of Disability*. We are excited that this award exists, a first for the field of philosophy of disability, and we look forward to featuring future Silvers prize-winning essays, which are awarded annually, in this journal.

The third issue of the JPD broadens the reach of philosophy of disability in several ways, forging new connections to interdisciplinary fields and various philosophical schools. More than one of the articles in this issue creates these connections by examining and reframing topics that are well known in the philosophy of disability literature, such as wellbeing and gene editing, and by deploying philosophical inquiries rooted in the lived experiences of disabled people to intervene on contemporary debates in other fields, such as those over critical phenomenology and the methods of phenomenology writ large.

In the opening article, “How Does Disability Affect Wellbeing? A Literature Review and Philosophical Analysis,” Avram Hiller challenges the view that the social scientific literature on the relationship between disability and wellbeing/life satisfaction supports a mere difference view of disability as defended by Elizabeth Barnes and others. He begins with a literature review that undercuts these claims, noting that the empirical evidence offered by supporters of the mere difference view in fact points in the other direction or at least demands a more complicated picture. Hiller then pivots to a different disability-affirmative view, arguing that people with disabilities “typically have good lives,” and he argues that there should be more focus on the positive qualities of being disabled, including disability pride. He ultimately concludes that these affirmative claims of disability are not inconsistent with reports of lower levels of wellbeing—in at least some respects and on some metrics.

Licia Carlson takes up a different examination of the question of human valuation in her article, “Intellectual Disability, Dehumanization, and the Fate of ‘the Human.’” Carlson brings together discussions in two different interdisciplinary fields, dehumanization studies and critical disability studies, and examines how each field has approached the phenomenon of dehumanization regarding people with intellectual disabilities. Carlson begins with David Livingstone Smith’s work on dehumanization before turning to explore the more specific phenomenon of *disability dehumanization*, a form of dehumanization wherein an individual or group’s humanness is denied based on perceived or actual disability. She then reviews a variety of cases of disability dehumanization using examples from the history of intellectual disability and moral philosophy. In the final sections of the paper, she argues that a concept of “the human” is in fact morally relevant when addressing the lives and the dehumanization of people with intellectual disabilities.

In “Access Without the Demand for Explanation: Glissant, Disability, and the Right to Access Opacity” Rhea Ienni turns to the philosophy of Édouard Glissant, providing two reasons why his work should be included in philosophy of disability

as well as disability studies more broadly. She first suggests that Glissant's notion of compulsory transparency calls attention to underlying colonial values behind the demand that a person's disability must be understood in order to provide them with respect and access. She then turns to an analysis of Glissant's arguments for a right to opacity, offering the notion of a *right to access opacity* as a way of rethinking accessibility.

Amber Knight considers two interdisciplinary approaches in "Gene Editing Technologies, Utopianism, and Disability Politics" as she evaluates utopian thinking in the literature on transhumanism and across critical disability studies. She argues that the field of critical disability studies is better positioned to address the goal of promoting and protecting future people's autonomy interests by focusing on improving ableist environments rather than using genetic technology to enhance or modify individuals' capacity. She concludes with an appeal to disability justice scholarship that the "right to an open future" is best interpreted as a "right to an accessible future," one wherein society is inclusive and open to people across genetic differences.

In "The Import of Critical Phenomenology for Theorizing Disability," Christine Wieseler argues that phenomenological accounts can and should correct and supplement disability models in the existing philosophical literature. Drawing on research in critical phenomenology, she develops an account of the relationship between impairment and disability in philosophy of disability that focuses on lived experience, arguing that such an account can "provide a fuller account of what it is like to be disabled—in ways that acknowledge ableism and the particularities of body-minds without treating them as the totality of anyone's existence." She concludes by discussing the metaphilosophical issue of one's *conduct* in inquiry concerning disability. Drawing especially on the work of Perry Zurn and using as her foil ableist assumptions and forms of curiosity, Wieseler offers in their stead practices of curiosity centered in active anti-ableism.

Jane Dryden's article, "Disability, Teleology, and Human Development in German Idealism: Exploring Disability in the History of Philosophy" examines the teleological frameworks of human development used by German idealist philosophers such as Kant and Hegel. Guided by feminist discussions within the history of philosophy, Dryden considers in detail how teleological discussions of the body or nature are embedded in Kant's and Hegel's philosophical projects and how it impacts their their respective understandings of and assumptions about disability. This in turn contributes to human (de)valuation. Dryden's next move is to call attention to recent work by Dilek Huseyinzadegan that offers a path to broaden "the Kantian imagination of what counts as a valuable life." Dryden also argues for a framing of Hegelian Spirit in terms of "owning one's determinations" as a way to open up new thinking about disability.

In addition to the aforementioned articles, this issue introduces our inaugural *Considerations* piece, “Tlön, Uqbar, ChatGPT,” by George Estreich. JPD *Considerations* are musings, responses, commentaries, and opinion pieces that reflect upon issues of interest to JPD readers. Estreich’s narrative essay is a reflection on societal anti-disability bias and stereotypes in expressive AI, via a thought-provoking critique of ChatGPT poetry using ‘preimplantation genetic diagnosis’ and ‘Down Syndrome’ as prompts. Issue three closes out with David Peña-Guzmán’s book review of *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* by Sunaura Taylor (The New Press, 2017). His review begins with the compelling example of Mack, a three-legged bear housed in an animal sanctuary, as a backdrop for his analysis of Taylor’s book-length exploration of “what it means to commit oneself to animal and disability liberation simultaneously, especially in a world where ableist oppression and speciesist violence conspire to subjugate and marginalize forms of life that deviate from the vaunted norm of the neurotypical, able-bodied human.”

As usual, we will end with gratitude to all those who make the journal possible. We thank our editorial board. We thank Georgetown University for its financial support of the journal. We thank the Philosophy Documentation Center—especially director George Leaman, current producer Beth Stombock, and former producer Lorena Perez—for publishing the journal and for doing such a fantastic job on the production side of things. We also want to thank all our reviewers—this academic journal, like all others, would not exist without you! This summer, Sabrina Leeds signed off as the inaugural managing editor of the journal. We cannot thank Sabrina enough for the exceptional job they did; it was a pleasure and honor to work together. We are excited to announce our new managing editor, Matthew Koshak. Welcome, Matthew! Lastly, thanks to you, our readers, for your continued support of the journal and of the field of philosophy of disability.