



# Compliance or Culture?

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*Toward disability justice  
and collective liberation*

People resist by telling their story.

-bell hooks



# How do we understand disability?

Image: Miguel Ortiz



“My unscientific study of language reveals that the #1 term used about people with disabilities is **problem.**”

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-Kathie Snow

## Community: It Takes A Village

*“What if I told you that in my Indigenous community, Diné (Navajo), ancestral teachings of disability are a relational concept that embodies a sophisticated value system of care?”*

-Sandra Yellowhorse





## Survival: What does survival look like?

*"Disability cannot stop me from becoming a complete personality." -Samyak Lalit*

- Miguel Ortiz: Preacher, Mentor, and Teacher
- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha: Writer, Author, Activist and Educator
- Samyak Lilat: Author and Disability Rights Activist



When did you  
first encounter  
the idea of  
ability or  
dis/ability?

....Sorting?



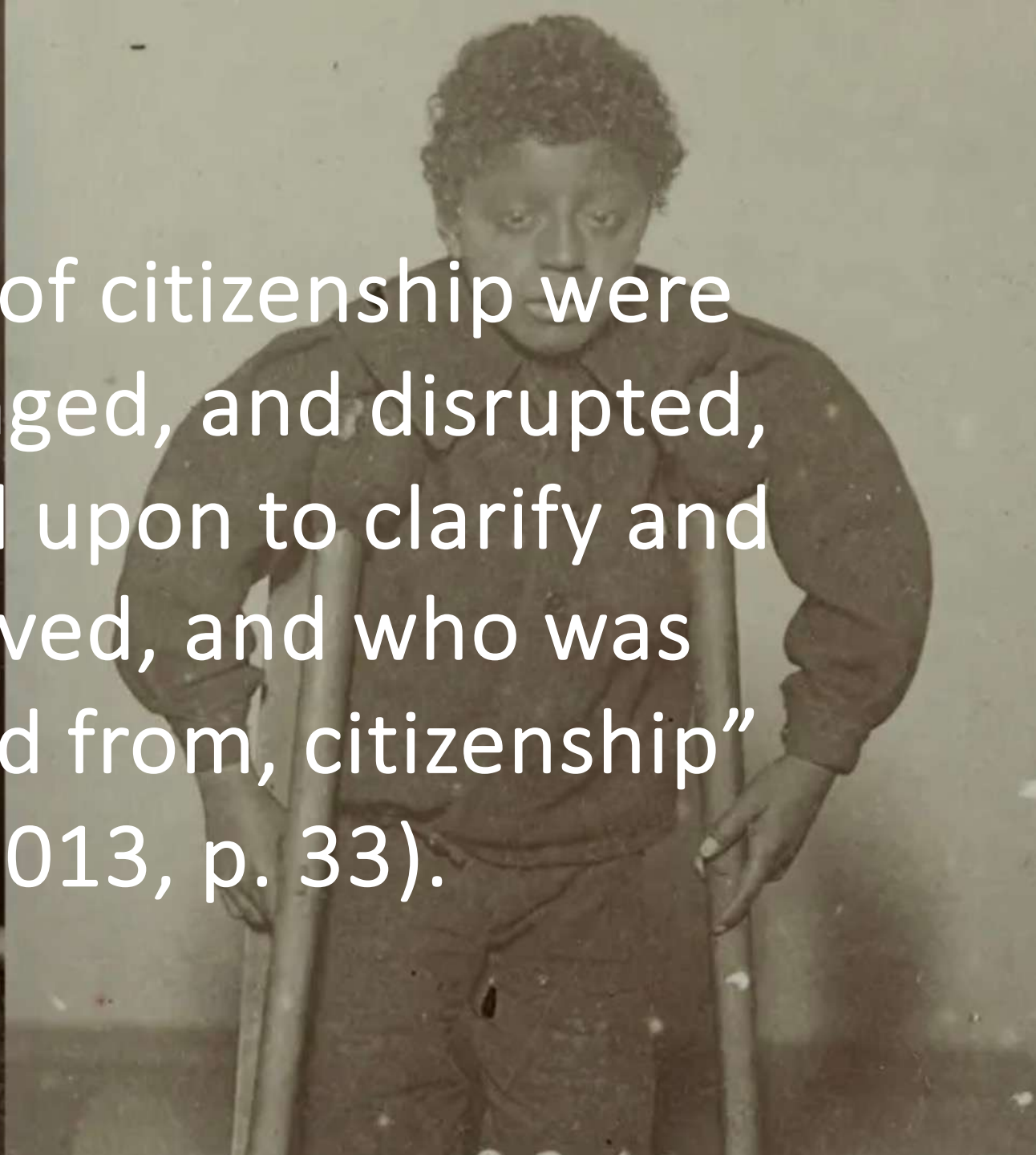
U.S. Civil War Veterans







“When categories of citizenship were questioned, challenged, and disrupted, disability was called upon to clarify and define who deserved, and who was deservedly excluded from, citizenship” (Baynton, 2013, p. 33).



This light flashes every 15 seconds

Every 15 seconds \$100 of your money goes for the care of persons with bad heredity such as the insane feeble-minded criminals & other defectives

**Some people are born to be a burden on the rest.**

This light flashes every 16 seconds

Every 16 seconds a person is born in the United States.



This light flashes every 7½ minutes

Every 7½ minutes a high grade person is born in the United States will will have ability to do creative work & be fit for leadership. About 4% of all Americans come within this class





# Civil Rights, Title IX, & Affirmative Action

**DIVERSITY**

**JUSTICE**

**CLUSTERS**

**EQUITY**

If the diversity narrative says we are all different therefore we are all the same then we have to find an “other” to oppress...

**That “other” is disability.**



# WISDOM & GENIUS





“...Disability Studies looks to different kinds of **signifiers.**”



# Monica & David



a film by Alexandra Codina



"One of the greatest love stories of all time"

—Anthony Kennedy Shriver

# The Floor or the Ceiling?

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- ADA
- Section 504
- IDEIA (K-12 only)

*“The law can’t guarantee what a culture isn’t willing to give.”*

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# ABLEISM

a·ble·ism \ ăbə- ,li-zəm \  
noun

A system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, excellence and productivity.

These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, colonialism and capitalism.

This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable and worthy based on a person's appearance and/or their ability to satisfactorily [re]produce, excel and "behave."

You do not have to be disabled  
to experience ableism.

*a working definition by Talila "TL" Lewis in conversation with Disabled Black and other negatively racialized folk, especially Dustin Gibson; updated January 2020*

**Ableism (noun):**

The de-valuation of non-normative ways of moving, being, communicating, behaving, (re)producing.

You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.



...What do you get in  
trouble for at  
school?

**Ableism (noun):**

The de-valuation of non-normative ways of moving, being, communicating, behaving, (re)producing.

You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.







DISABILITY CAN BE SEEN  
"AS A LENS THAT CROSSES  
ALL COMMUNITIES & CENTERS  
ON THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS  
& INFINITE CREATIVITY OF A  
PEOPLE SUBJECTED TO ABLEISM"  
- REBECCA COKLEY

Disability can be seen "as a lens  
that crosses all communities





What Now?

# Contact

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## Disability Studies, Equity, & Higher Education

Dr. Lauren Shallish is a community-engaged scholar in disability studies, transformative justice, and equity in higher education. She is currently an Associate Professor of Disability Studies at Rutgers University-Newark in the Department of Urban Education and affiliated faculty member in the Africana Studies Department.

