Towards a Critical Stylistics of Disability

Introduction

This article maps out the terrain for a critical stylistics of disability. My aim is to show that linguistic structures encoding ideologies which disempower, narrowly represent or even demonise disabled people can be revealed using the tools offered by such a discipline. To the best of my knowledge, there is at present no such dedicated field of stylistics. My aim is to initiate this field and show how it could be used in analysis of literary and non-literary texts.

The representation of disabled people in literature and non-literary media is highly prominent. Scholars of disability have repeatedly pointed to the importance of language as a vehicle that might reflect or influence attitudes towards disability (Rieser and Mason 1990: 85-89; Barnes 1992; Mallett and Runswick-Cole 2014: 9; Mallett and Slater 2014: 91-4). As I shall show, this rarely goes beyond questions of 'correct' or 'acceptable' labelling, or research concerned with wider cultural contexts of discourse. These may be of great importance. Nevertheless, research repeatedly refers to highly negative, stereotypical or metaphorical representations of disability in literature and the media. The field of cultural disability studies has thrived on analysis of such ideologies, and while Murray (2014: esp. 260), shows that in contemporary literature things are improving, he concedes that most representations continue to depict disability as

> absence and lack, still are shaped through metaphor, and still misrepresent those with disabilities in ways that simply would not be tolerated were they modes depicting ethnicity or gender. (252)

Similar points are often made about non-literary texts (Cameron 2011: 260-1; Gosling 2011: loc. 2026-2166). Critical stylistic analysis studies a wide array of linguistic structures that can encode ideology and I propose that it will be highly suited to revealing the linguistic means by which ideologies, stereotypes and beliefs about disability are communicated.

This article will be programmatic rather than providing analysis. I shall provide invented examples of language, which are nevertheless plausible and based on common cultural experience, to illustrate the various structures that need to be explored in implementing the models set out.

Background

Disability in recent memory has been seen as an individual medical problem, for which the appropriate response is treatment, cure and rehabilitation. This is widely known as the Medical Model (Grue 2015: 38; Mallett and Runswick-Cole 2014: 3-4). In Britain a split in the understanding of disability was inaugurated from the 1970s onwards. A Social Model developed (see Mallett and Runswick-Cole 2014: 6-11). This distinguished between *impairment* understood as functional deficits resulting from impairment, whether physical, mental or sensory, and *disability* which is externally imposed by social and physical barriers and negative attitudes (Mallett and Runswick-Cole 2014: 4, 10). Similar models developed in North America and Scandinavia (see Mallet and Runswick-Cole 2014: 20, 22; Grue 2015: 30).

Perhaps because of the success in winning rights through an emphasis on social barriers, many in the disability movement have been reluctant to concede a role for individual impairment in disability. Disability was a failing by society. Shakespeare (2014), however, has been prominent in putting forward a model of disability which takes into account impairment, discrimination and culture:

> I define disability as the outcome of the interaction between individual and contextual factors, which includes impairment, personality, individual attitudes, environment, policy, and culture. (77)

Scholars now tend to agree that disability is constructed by such factors and certainly that this includes impairment and social barriers in combination (cf. Hall 2016: 27; Grue 2015: 41, 49). However, my main interest here is in the role of culture. The idea that culture plays a role in disability has long been understood, and there has been a particular suspicion that language communicates attitudes that have disabling effects. I will now offer an initial discussion of this.

Language Debates

Disability activists and scholars have long been conscious of and debated the impact of language. However, there is a tendency either to focus on a relatively small number of specific terms, or to focus on discourse - language as it emerges and is used or determined according to larger institutional contexts, politics, history, power structures and so on (cf. Mills 2004:6, 2005: 125; Grue 2015:7). The latter focus can see specific reference to linguistic structure inside texts as only marginally important (Grue 2015:16).

It is clear that some terms for impairment have become derogatory, even abusive. These include *cripple, spastic*, *retard*, *mongol, loony,* and *psycho,* Some terms are outmoded or have been rejected by disability campaigners. These include

handicap/handicapped, *sufferer/suffers from*, *victim/victim of*, *afflicted by/with*, *wheelchair bound/confined to a wheelchair* and so on. Disabled people may also object to generic labels such as *the disabled*, *the blind*, and *the deaf*.

As noted, in addition to theorising and campaigning on specific terminology, disability scholars have also looked at disability and language at a discourse level. These scholars include those writing in the collection edited by Corker and French (1999a) and Grue (2015). This is often somewhat removed from detailed study of actual linguistic structures inside texts. Indeed, Grue (2015: 3) in his study of discourse downplays detailed linguistic examination of grammar and textual structure in favour of 'social situations and relations' (Grue 2015: 16; cf. Corker and French 1999b: 11). Yet, as I will show soon, this approach faces criticism.

Critical Stylistics

The field of Critical Stylistics has been most fully mapped out by Jeffries (2010, 2014, 2015). However, it owes a great debt to the work of Paul Simpson (1993) on ideology and point of view in texts and also takes much from the principles of feminist stylistics. Ideology is important because it represents commonly held but potentially harmful beliefs that often go unnoticed. Here, a definition by Simpson is helpful:

> An ideology … derives from the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and value-systems which are shared collectively by social groups. And when an ideology is the ideology of a particularly powerful social group, it is said to be *dominant*. (5)

As Simpson (1993: 6) further states, language is necessarily bound-up in the 'socio-political context in which it functions', and may therefore 'construct', 'reflect' and reproduce dominant ideology. As for language within texts, Simpson (1993: 8) argues that ideology or point of view arises because 'a particular style represents certain selections from a pool of available options in the linguistic system' and 'privileges certain readings while 'downplaying others'. For Mills (2005: 1) in her feminist stylistic approach particular choices in language may work in the interests of certain groups but harm others.

Jeffries is most prominent in articulating the tools of analysis available to reveal the structures that can encode ideology. This approach, she states arises out of discontent with the direction taken by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Jeffries (2010: 1, 2014: 410-11) argues that CDA in its preoccupation with context and 'somewhat vague' aspects of 'powerful language' has deliberately abandoned methodology, scientific rigour, and precision of analysis that can expose ideology in texts. Jeffries (2010: 3, 2015: 159) sees Critical Stylistics as a part of the wider enterprise of CDA, and emphasises that both are preoccupied with exposing

ideology, but she nevertheless insists on the need for a set of analytical tools at the level of the text. Jeffries (2014: 412) is keen to emphasise that this is not a return to ideas of texts having single meanings, and insists that meaning arises from the text interacting with the interpersonal, basic linguistic meaning, situational context and 'all the background features that discourse analysis often focuses on'. But she insists that the text itself can create meaning and ideology (2015: 163).

In line with Jeffries, I will show in this article that ideologies about disability may be reproduced and constructed in texts through language in far more subtle ways than are assumed by most disability scholars. However, while Jeffries does not really downplay context and background, it does seem vital to reiterate how rigorous and systematic our attention should be to what we already know about cultural ideologies surrounding disability, and how they interact with linguistic structures cumulatively in texts to construct meaning. I should also note that while I set out several broad tools used by Jeffries, I will make heavy use of other scholars, such as van Leeuwen, Mills and Simpson where they seem to have additional explanatory power. In addition, I will add elements to the framework, in particular Martin and White's work on attitude, as well as issues of foregrounding and deviation. However, given that ideological background is essential to the framework I now wish to explore the cultural construction of disability and the ideologies that underpin that construction.

The Cultural Model of Disability

Overview

The 'cultural model of disability' initially emerged in North America. As Siebers (2008: 3) puts it this approach 'studies the social meanings, symbols, and stigmas attached to disability identity and asks how they relate to enforced systems of exclusion and expression'.

Central to the model are the closely linked concepts of normality and ableism. Garland-Thomson (1997: 8) coins the term 'normate' to describe a minority (even illusory) identity 'outlined by the array of deviant others whose marked bodies shore up the normate's boundaries', an identity which, nevertheless, is an ideal to which people strive. However, she argues that physical disability itself is constructed by 'legal, medical, political, cultural, and literary narratives that comprise an exclusionary discourse' (Garland-Thomson 1997: 6).

The related term 'ableism' was first elaborated by Campbell. It refers to a set of practices and beliefs that produce a particular kind of body and 'self' that is deemed the 'corporeal' standard, the 'fully human', while disability is projected as 'a diminished state' of humanity (Campbell 2009: 5).

Cultural approaches to disability therefore take the view that both 'normalcy' and disability are culturally constructed (Mallett and Runswick-Cole 2014: 23). It is therefore worth considering where most people obtain their ideas about disability. Haller (2010: iv) is clear that for the majority of non-disabled people these are received via the media rather than by encountering disabled people, while Hall (2016: 4; see also Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 6) emphasises the role of literature in disseminating ideas about disability. Such messages are frequently ableist in nature, depicting disability as an 'other' which 'deviates' radically from the norm.

Garland-Thomson (2009: 31-32) argues that in modern culture we face intense pressure to be normal, and the sight of the abnormal or pathological shores this up, re-affirming our own normalcy. Likewise Davis (2013: 9) stresses the need for the 'hegemony of normalcy' to be bolstered in venues such as the novel through comparison with the 'abnormal'.

In fact, it is argued that disability frequently plays a crucial role in literature. Mitchell and Snyder's theory of narrative prosthesis has been highly influential in the area of cultural disability studies. They argue that throughout history literary narratives have used disability as a 'crutch' for their 'representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight' (Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 49). First of all disability is a 'stock feature of characterisation' lending 'a distinctive idiosyncrasy to any character that differentiates the character from the anonymous background' of the supposed norm (Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 48). Secondly, disability is 'an opportunistic metaphorical device' signalling 'social and individual collapse', giving embodied representation to the abstract - this, they call 'the materiality of metaphor' (Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 47-8).

Thus the norm and disability are said to be culturally constructed within ableist cultural conditions. Disability, through its assignment as 'other', may bolster an ableist normate position. Yet in doing so representations may attribute narrow and often stereotyped/metaphorical meanings to the disabled 'other'. These points, once elaborated a little further, will assist me in establishing parameters of ideology that linguistic structures can encode.

Description

There is an almost obsessive desire in society to know about and understand disability. At its most basic this can result in staring. Garland-Thomson (2009: 3, 6) argues that we expect people to have 'certain kinds of bodies and behaviours', and stares arise when we encounter people who 'look or act in ways that contradict our expectations' - the stare is interrogative revealing our desire to know 'what's going on'. Mitchell and Snyder (2000: 6; cf. Grue 2015: 13) too note that the 'unknowability' of disability creates 'the need to tell a story about it', and provokes 'the act of interpretation'. Mallett and Runswick-Cole (2014: 124-125; cf. Gosling 2011: loc. 2172) note that being asked about an impairment or impairment label (sometimes in terms of what is 'wrong' or the 'problem') is a 'mundane and everyday experience for

disabled people and their families'. As Grue (2015: 113) notes, explanations are demanded about the impaired body as to how 'deviance from the norm came about', and as Shakespeare (2014: 95) says an impairment label can dominate interaction.

Yet, as noted, Garland-Thomson (2009: 6) says that unusual behaviour also provokes curiosity. It barely needs to be stated that disability in popular perception must relate to beliefs about agency - the ability or otherwise to act or function. Shakespeare (2014: 36) argues that popular perception of disability focuses on what people are unable to do such as walking, hearing and seeing.

In literary or other textual representations our interrogative relationship with disability, implying as it does a process of 'othering' from the 'norm', may lead to categorisation by impairment, and focused description of appearance and behaviour. At its extreme I would suggest this constitutes what I would term 'textual staring' (cf. Garland-Thomson 1997: 10). Additionally, description and focus on a specific physical trait may become all defining and find its parallel in stereotyped character traits (Garland-Thomson 1997: 10-11; see Hall 2016: 62-3). I shall discuss this shortly.

It is notable that Garland-Thomson (2009: 166) says the sight of a 'radically unusual body provokes cognitive dissonance' because it disturbs 'the placid visual relation we expect between foreground and background'. True, here she is discussing those who resemble the 'giants, dwarfs, or monsters' of fairytale. Nevertheless, Mitchell and Snyder (2000: 47) too argue that disability creates an idiosyncrasy to characterisation that ensures the character stands out from the 'anonymous background of the "norm"'. The notion that disability is foregrounded visually in real life and textually is compelling and relates to the stylistic theory of foregrounding. I will consider this further in my proposed stylistic approaches to disability. But it must be recalled above all, that these processes also involve distancing at the same time as they involve knowing. They insist on the 'otherness' of disability. As suggested already that 'othering' may ascribe stereotyped characterisations to disabled people, motivations or roles into which they are placed that frequently do not reflect individual reality. It is to this that I now turn.

Stereotypes and Metaphors

A number of scholars have examined stereotypes of disability that exist in literature and the media generally. The brief summary I offer here is based mainly on Rieser and Mason (1990: 98-104) and that of Barnes 1992). These are very similar and remain the most wide-ranging tool for analysing stereotyped representations (Mallett and Runswick-Cole 2014: 57; cf. Cameron 2011: 259-61; Gosling 2011: loc. 2026-2166).

The stereotypes are as follows

- **The pathetic and pitiable disabled figure**
  This has its classic realisation in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* with Tiny Tim, but was used frequently in charity advertising in the twentieth century and that

continues (Cameron 2011: 260). Meanwhile, the media and literature continue to equate disability with tragic individual illness under the dominance of medical explanations.

- **The disabled target of violence**
Disabled people are objects of violence in real life but the recurrence of such depictions perpetuates a view of disabled people as vulnerable and helpless.

- **The evil and sinister disabled figure**
This is a very regular stereotype. Barnes gives Shakespeare's Richard III as a classic example. The stereotype clearly persists in the modern crime fiction examined by Gregoriou (2007). Likewise a 'mad bad and dangerous' image of mental illness persists in the media. (see Clarke 2004: 16, 19)

- **The disabled figure as curiosity or atmosphere**
Films often use disability to provide atmosphere - a sense of 'menace, mystery or deprivation' (Barnes 1992). Newspapers feature disabled people with detailed physical descriptions. Thus this stereotype relates to the desire to interrogate and describe discussed already.

   The 'Super Cripple' (from hence superhuman)
   The superhuman can include blind people with supposedly extraordinary hearing, or disabled people (often children) praised disproportionately for achieving everyday things. Underlying the praise is often a 'triumph over tragedy' narrative. Related to this, Grue (2015: 111, 117) argues that impairment is seen as an actual cause of achievement and that the idea of the disabled person as inspirational is integral to the 'Supercrip' stereotype. Some critics expressed concern at the unrealistic assumptions being proposed by the 'Superhumans' advertisement for the 2016 Paralympics (Hall 2016: 11).
   I believe the term 'Super Cripple' should be abandoned in favour of superhuman. Though the term 'Super Cripple' is, of course, ironically used to describe media projections it has potential to cause harmful psycho-emotional effects on disabled individuals (see below).

- **The laughable disabled person**
Barnes notes how damaging this stereotype can be to disabled people's feelings of self-worth and also their ability to be taken seriously.

- **The disabled individual as his or her own worst enemy**
Here the focus is on the idea that self-pity prevents disabled people from overcoming the disability. Those seen as refusing to overcome an impairment are viewed as having a 'chip on their shoulder' (Gosling 2011: loc. 2128). Likewise disabled people expressing anger at discrimination may be viewed as embittered.

- **The disabled figure as a burden**
Disabled people can be seen as a burden on non-disabled people, on carers and on the state.

- **The disabled individual as asexual (or sexually deviant)**

Disabled people have been seen as unable to engage in sexual activity. The classic example is Clifford in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. A variation is the 'sex starved or sexually degenerate' disabled figure.

- **The disabled figure incapable of taking part in communal life**
  This stereotype is actually revealed through the absence of disabled people in portrayals of everyday activities (working, parenting, studying, and teaching and so on).
- **The disabled individual depicted as normal**
  On the face of it presenting disabled people as 'normal' might not seem such a bad thing. Indeed, Shakespeare (2014: 99) has argued that most disabled people want to be seen as exactly that. However, it is arguable that such depictions gloss over the reality of life for many disabled people. As Barnes puts it, if disabled people are depicted as 'normal' then there is not much need to 'bring about a society free from disablism'.

There are almost certainly other sources for our understanding of disability that contribute to or work alongside these stereotypes. In particular, metaphor may provide a wide-range of simplified means for understanding disability that may feed into stereotypes. Thus, as Mitchell and Snyder (2000: 47-8) argue, disability can operate in literature as a 'metaphorical signifier of social and individual collapse', lending a '"tangible" body to textual abstractions'. However, if these metaphors arise ultimately from everyday understanding then they clearly have potential to influence a far wider range of texts.

Metaphors that are conventional and appear to encode everyday understanding can be heavily laden with ideology (Goatly 2007: 29). We need only consider metaphors such as 'the transport system was crippled', or 'their appeals fell on deaf ears' to see how commonly and yet how negatively disability metaphors can be deployed. This, of course, means that it is very easy for underlying ideologies to feed into negative stereotypes and metaphorical themes in literature.

Mallett (2009) warns that a critical focus on stereotypes may narrow the range of possible interpretation towards the detection of negative depictions of disabled people and ignore instances when stereotypes are actively undermined. I agree that we should not pre-suppose stereotyped depictions in cultural representations. Nevertheless, as noted in my introduction, Murray (2014: 252) acknowledges that metaphor and narrow representation does remain prominent.

I propose that a critical stylistics of disability should be applicable to historical as well as contemporary texts, and also that it should be applicable to literary texts in addition to those from news media and so on. This being so, an awareness of stereotypical, metaphorical, and ideologically preconceived representations is essential alongside an approach flexible enough to respond to the absence or ironic use of stereotypes or metaphors.

I have discussed the types of representations of disability that can arise from dominant ableist culture. However, it is also important to acknowledge the consequences of those representations.

Disempowerment and Psycho-emotional Disablism

The need to describe disabled people often in terms of stereotypes may have a number of effects in culture and on disabled people themselves. The insistence on describing disabilities either in terms of physical attribute or agency (action/lack of action) may result in and perpetuate 'othering' - reinforcing the idea that disability is not 'normal'. This itself can be disempowering for disabled people. Likewise, the stereotypical or metaphorical depiction of disability also denies agency to disabled characters in that their actions or lack of actions may be pre-determined. This too may reinforce beliefs in wider society about what disabled people should be like. As we have seen, some of these beliefs may be highly negative. However, it is important to note also that disabled people themselves can absorb ideas and attitudes spread through the media. Reeve (2012: 89) discusses this as a central aspect of 'psycho-emotional disablism' . The latter is 'the socially engendered undermining' of an impaired person's 'psycho-emotional well-being' (Thomas 2007: 73). This can take several forms ranging from the impact of repeatedly encountering physical barriers, to being the subject of staring and jokes (Reeve 2012: 79-82). A key aspect of the impact of psycho-emotional disablism for Reeve (2012: 85-6) is 'internalized oppression' or 'internalised ableism' in which ableist stereotypes including the equation of disability with loss, lack and abnormality are absorbed by disabled people (cf. Gosling 2011: loc. 2178, 2197). For Reeve (2012: 89) the media plays a crucial role in propagating stereotypes. In other words the media (literature, film and so on) contributes to the internalised often negative self-image of many disabled people.

It is with all of these ideological considerations in mind that I now turn to stylistics and disability, first relating depiction of disability directly to the stylistic concept of foregrounding.

Disability Stylistics

Foregrounding Disability

The concept of foregrounding and its sub-category deviation provides an important basis for a stylistics of disability. At its most simple foregrounding refers to the 'perceptual prominence that certain things have against the backdrop of other, less noticeable things' (Gregoriou 2014: 87). I have already highlighted the point that disabled people are seen as being foregrounded socially and in literature (Garland-Thomson 2009: 166; Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 47). More specifically we can say that disabled people 'deviate' from an ableist social norm. This idea is reflected in the history of medical sociology (Thomas 2007: 45-6). Gregoriou (2007: 18-34, 2014: 88, 96) offers a three way model of stylistic deviation: these are linguistic or textual

deviations, social deviations and genre deviations. For Gregoriou (2007: 91-122, 2014: 96) social deviation includes people who differ from expected 'norms' and certainly includes physically, psychologically and learning disabled people.

At this stage it is important to acknowledge that some aspects of disability have been investigated quite extensively by stylisticians. In particular they have been attracted by the concept of 'mind-style' first articulated by Fowler in the 1970s. Hence, as Fowler (1977) says:

> Cumulatively, consistent structural options, agreeing in cutting the presented world to one pattern or another, give rise to an impression of a world-view, what I shall call a 'mind-style'. (76)

For Fowler (1977: 76) 'mind-style' reflects a 'mode of consciousness' such as that of a narrator or character.

While Leech and Short (1981:187-208) indicate that 'mind-style' can be studied on a continuum or cline, numerous scholars now believe that it is most effective for representing the most distinctive modes of consciousness. Hence, Hoover (2016: 333; cf. Semino 2014: 142, Semino and Swindlehurst 1996: 145) discussing 'quintessential' examples, says '"mind-style" seems to apply most naturally and effectively to truly deviant mental functioning'. This is frequently the mental functioning of people with cognitive impairments or mental health difficulties, and has been studied in relation to linguistic 'deviation' such as unusual transitivity patterns, under-lexicalisation and simple syntax (Leech and Short 1981: 204-6; Fowler 1996:169), metaphor (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996), pragmatic failure (Semino 2014), and nonstandard spelling (Gregoriou 2014).

I will assume that representations of disabled people in most texts signal some degree of social 'deviation' whether or not this is accompanied by obvious linguistic deviation, and whether or not depictions fall within mind-style. However, I do so in the light of the discipline of cultural disability studies and an awareness that some depictions may harm disabled people by 'othering' them, forcing them into stereotyped depictions, and through the impact of psycho-emotional disablism.

Given the above points I wish to draw attention to an argument made by Burton (1982: 197) that any analyst who claims to be ideologically or politically neutral is merely supporting the political bias of the status quo and therefore it is important for the observer to state their political stance. I believe that stylisticians who choose to write about the representation of disability have a responsibility to demonstrate in-depth awareness of ideological frameworks related to disability within which texts are produced and state their position. Without this they risk making glib acknowledgements of disabling and disempowering practices in texts. Worse still they risk upholding those practices in their own analysis. This could take the form of inappropriate terminology in relation to disability. However, it could equally be that the emphasis of analysis itself risks such consequences. In particular, it seems to me

to be impossible that the attribution of 'deviation' to disabled people in 'mind-style' analysis can be neutral. Having dealt with these points, I shall now consider specific features of texts and structures that may need to be examined in a critical stylistics of disability.

The Authorial Persona

Any disability stylistics will need to consider the issue of text type and authorial persona. Key issues will be whether the author, of say, a newspaper article, advertisement, or narrator of a novel purports to be disabled or not. While a disabled identity is in no way a guarantee that an author or narrator will seek to problematise or challenge dominant ableist ideology, it is surely relevant to consider who is the vehicle of ideology ableist or not.

An issue which intersects with the above is that of narrative mode. Simpson (1993: 55) outlines three basic narrative modes. These essentially distinguish between the following:

Category A: first-person narrators who themselves participate in the narrative as characters.

Category B in Narratorial mode: third-person narrators who do not participate in the story and are outside the consciousness of participating characters

Category B in Reflector mode: third-person narrators who do not participate in the story but enter the consciousness of a character.

It will be important to consider, for instance, whether a narrator first or third-person is responding to a disabled character, or whether a disabled first-person narrator or a third-person reflector is responding to the world and so on.

What Disability or Impairment is Depicted?

From a strong social model perspective I acknowledge that this question might seem objectionable. Yet consideration of the type of disability and impairment is unavoidable. This is because ableist culture focuses upon disability in impairment specific terms and deploys impairment specific stereotypes and metaphors (cf. Mallett and Runswick-Cole 2014: 125; Bolt 2014; Reeve 2012: 89-90). Without taking account of specific impairments we cannot fully explore the ideologies surrounding disability.

Metaphors

As suggested in the section on the Cultural Model of Disability metaphor may be very important. The detection of specific metaphors in texts that use disability or specific impairments as source domains should be a useful tool for the exploration of more over-arching metaphors and stereotypical deployments of disability in texts.

Naming and Describing

This section will deal primarily with the issue of names, labels and related description within noun phrases. Labels and names are frequently given by dominant groups and can encode dominant ideologies (cf. Mills 2005: 76). Jeffries (2010:17-36) notes the importance of the noun phrase for description and encoding of ideology. However, what follows relies mainly (albeit with major simplifications) on van Leeuwen's work (1996: 32-70) on the representation of social actors.

Names, labels and description of attributes might be realised as noun phrases through head nouns, through premodification (adjectives, adverbs, nouns), postmodification (prepositional phrases and clauses). They might also be realised by noun phrases in apposition. Such description may, of course, occur in various positions in verb processes. And I discuss this later.

The decision whether to name an individual is important in terms of personalisation, or the assumed importance or status of the individual whether they are disabled or not. In addition, decisions about uses of or combinations of given names, family names or titles obviously have implications for the status accorded to an individual (cf van Leeuwen 1996: 52-3; Mills 2005: 81-2).

Equally important for present purposes is the decision whether to describe a person (named or otherwise) in terms of what van Leeuwen (1996:54) calls 'functionalisation' - a focus on activity especially what job they do or how they obtain money. We can consider the following:

	Naming	**Functionalisation**
1.	John,	a disability benefits claimant
2.	John,	an IT consultant

To call someone a disability benefits claimant rather than an IT consultant has obvious ideological implications for their implied status. In the absence of a name the person may be defined even more by the functionalisation as a member of a positively or negatively perceived category - 'an IT consultant', 'a disability benefits claimant'.

A further set of categories given by van Leeuwen (1996: 54) includes 'classification', which identifies people by socio-demographic group - gender, class and so on. Obviously, one could add disability. Nevertheless, van Leeuwen (1996:57) also categorises people by 'physical identification', which represents them by 'physical characteristics which uniquely identify them in a given context'. His examples include 'blonde' and 'cripple'. I would suggest that because of the ableist focus on impairment all disability/impairment description could be categorised under what I will call 'attribute identification' rather than 'physical identification'. However, it must

be stressed that this category crosses into 'classification' (cf. van Leeuwen 1996: 58). Again, some examples:

Naming	Attribute Identification
3. Jessica,	who is blind
4. John,	who has a learning difficulty
5. David,	who has a false arm

Attribute identification	Naming
6. schizophrenic,	Rachel

Disability/impairment status, where mentioned, will always have prominence, but in the absence of naming it may become all defining and impersonalising, as in 'a blind woman', 'a man with cerebral palsy' (cf. Bolt 2014: 35-37). Where plurals are used with the definite article and the disability forms the head noun - 'the disabled', 'the blind' - this can be particularly alienating and has long been rejected by disability campaigners.

Ideology and evaluation are built into assumptions carried within description. For instance, assumptions can be built into head nouns and modification of the noun phrase in relation to attribute identification. As Jeffries (2010: 21-2) notes, such assumptions are often not opened up for questioning as noun phrases are taken as given, not part of the proposition of the clause. In noun phrases such as 'cerebral palsy *sufferer*' or simply 'a *sufferer*' the head nouns simply carry assumptions that suffering takes place. In terms of premodification *'wheelchair-bound* Sarah' carries unquestioned assumptions about the restrictive nature of wheelchairs. Likewise, 'John, *who suffers from cerebral palsy*' is an example of assumption in postmodification through a relative clause, but is not part of the proposition in a main clause. While disability campaigners have long been aware of and objected to such assumptions, it remains important to understand that linguistic structure itself actually facilitates them.

A further point can be made here. I have already suggested that disability can become all defining. But description also fulfils the desire to interrogate disability. Often that may involve use of a folk or medical diagnosis. However, it may also involve detailed description of physical attributes and body parts, analogous to what feminists have called 'fragmentation' (Mills 2005: 32). The results may be similar in both cases - impersonalisation and the reduction of the body to a single feature or a set of objects for the male gaze or, in this instance, normate stare (cf. Mills 2005:132; Garland-Thompson 1997: 10-11). The outcome for disabled targets may be that they are seen at the very least as 'other'.

Description also becomes an aspect of 'attribute identification' and this can result in what both van Leeuwen (2006: 57-8, 61) and Garland-Thompson (1997: 10-11) have called over-determination, with physical and impairment attributes signalling other meanings. This can play to disabled stereotypes. Villainy and the pitiful may be signalled quite easily by the respective noun phrase 'his scarred face' and 'her thin shaking hand'.

This section has provided a wide range of analytical possibilities. Nevertheless, description, as I have strongly suggested often involves evaluation. The section specifically dedicated to evaluative language inevitably overlaps with this section but provides a further means by which description can be approached either on its own or in combination with the approaches outlined here. Likewise, evaluation can also complement the next topic, transitivity.

Transitivity

The model of transitivity has been one of the most popular tools in the tradition of critical linguistics / stylistics. Jeffries (2010: 40) relies mainly on Simpson's (1993) account to describe this tool. As Simpson (1993: 104) notes, the model has been used to show how readers are encouraged towards particular interpretations of texts, how some meanings are pushed to the fore and others suppressed, and hence how texts convey a certain 'world-view' or ideology.

As Simpson (1993: 96) notes, the most basic question that the transitivity model can answer is 'who or what does what to whom or what?' Given that curiosity, doubt, presuppositions, suspicions and even fear about what disabled people can or cannot do are central to ableist cultural representations of disabled people the model demands to be used to analyse representation of disability. It is true that the model has been used by Burton in her feminist analysis of the electro-convulsive therapy episode in Plath's *The Bell Jar*. However, Burton (1982: 201) despite referring to 'disenabling syntactic structures' to describe Plath's language, does not do so from a disability perspective.

At a very simple level transitivity analysis could involve considering voice and whether disabled people are the agents in active sentences or the subject in passive constructions. The latter may place the focus on the disabled person being passively acted upon as in the following example.

> 7. He is kept alive by a ventilator.

In this section, however, I focus on the more complex transitivity model first developed by Halliday, and described by Simpson.

The transitivity model that Simpson (1993/2004) describes allows for six basic kinds of processes: material, behavioural, verbal, mental, relational and existential. In any process there are at most three possible components: the actual process represented by a verb phrase, the participants, represented by noun phrases, and

circumstances represented by adverbial phrases or prepositional phrases (Simpson 1993: 88). To the latter we can add adverbial clauses. Based on Simpson (1993: 89-92, 2004) I will briefly outline the processes.

Material Processes

These must include an ACTOR 'do-er', with the option of a GOAL representing the individual or thing that the process affects. Material processed subdivide into Actions, which have animate ACTORs, as opposed to Events which have inanimate ACTORs. Actions themselves can be further split into Intention processes in which the ACTOR performs the action deliberately or Supervention processes that simply happen.

	ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	GOAL
8.	The blind man	tapped	the pavement
9.	The blind man	ate	

	ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION SUPERVENTION
10.	The man with the limp	stumbled

	ACTOR	MATERIAL EVENT
11.	His hearing aid	whistled

Verbalisation Processes

Verbalisation processes are essentially processes of saying something. The participants are the SAYER, an optional addressee or TARGET, and also optional is what is actually said, the VERBIAGE.

	SAYER	VERBALISATION	VERBIAGE		TARGET
12.	He	said,	'I have arthritis'	to	her
13.	She	wrote	that she had restricted growth		

Mental Processes

The category of mental processes is rather complicated. They are essentially related to thoughts, emotions and perceptions. They subdivide into Reaction processes (liking or hating and so on), processes of Perception (hearing, tasting, seeing), and Cognition processes (understanding, thinking etcetera). There are two possible participants in mental processes. These are the SENSOR who reacts, perceives or thinks. The other participant is the PHENOMENON which is the trigger for the reaction, perception or thought.

SENSER	MENTAL REACTION	PHENOMENON

14. He	hated	his reflection
SENSER	**MENTAL PERCEPTION**	**PHENOMENON**
15. She	did not see	the wall
SENSER	**MENTAL COGNITION**	**PHENOMENON**
16. She	considered	suicide

Relational Processes

Relational processes show there is a relationship between two participants but often they do not actually affect each other. Relational processes are subdivided as follows. They may be Intensive denoting that '*X is a*', Possessive indicating that '*X has a*', and finally Circumstantial describing a relationship whereby '*X is at/on a*' (Simpson 1993: 91-2).

The participant roles are CARRIER or the topic of the clause and ATTRIBUTE which is a comment on or description of the CARRIER. In other words the CARRIER is characterised or has a particular ATTRIBUTE.

CARRIER	**INTENSIVE**	**ATTRIBUTE**
17. He	is	deaf

CARRIER	**POSSESSIVE**	**ATTRIBUTE**
18. He	had	polio

CARRIER	**CIRCUMSTANTIAL**	**ATTRIBUTE**
19. His hand	was	on the light switch

Behavioural Processes

I base my description of behavioural processes on Simpson's (2004: 22-4) later work. These processes occupy the space between Material processes and Mental processes. This is because they represent physiological actions by a conscious being, such as 'cough' and 'breathe', or the physiological expression of a mental / emotional operation like 'laugh', 'sigh' or 'cry'. The only participant in these processes is the BEHAVIOUR.

BEHAVOUR	**BEHAVIOURAL**
20. She	wheezed
21. He	dribbled

Existential Processes

Finally, there are Existential processes. Again I use Simpson (2004: 25) to describe these. Such processes simply state that something happens or exists. Usually, these processes include the word *there* as dummy subject and have just one participant known as the EXISTENT.

DUMMY SUBJECT	EXISTENTIAL	EXISTENT	CIRCUMSTANCE
22. There	was	a wheezing noise	from his chest

The range of processes that I have listed yield different answers to Simpson's question, 'who or what does what to whom or what?' This may permit a sense of hierarchy in terms of agency, ability, control and power. In the field of feminist stylistics Mills (2005: 112) argues that a figure typified by deliberate action would be expected to be represented often as an ACTOR in Material Action Intention processes, while characters involved in Supervention processes may seem to lack control. Although Toolan (1996: 89) cautions against easy comparisons of agency and power across process types, it does seem clear that such differences can exist. For instance, Mills (2005: 112-15) suggests that characters who are typified by Mental, Verbal, or Behavioural processes might seem to be introspective or incomplete. Also, a character represented as simply being in a Relational process and not affecting another participant is potentially less dynamic than an ACTOR in an Intention process. This deals with those who 'do' or are the topic of a clause and what they do. But also we need to consider who or what is affected. An individual who is affected in a clause may appear to possess less control, as with the GOAL here:

ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	GOAL	CIRCUMSTANCE
23. She	pushed	him	in his chair

A character acting in the world but not upon it may seem less dynamic, as in the GOALless clause here:

ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	CIRCUMSTANCE
24. He	felt	along the wall

Also, a character acting upon themselves alone may seem less dynamic.

ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	GOAL
25. He	lifted	his unsteady hand

There is another important point here. I have repeatedly noted that disabled people might be represented through description of physical characteristics and specific attributes and that they might be fragmented.

Circumstances may be important here, giving additional description:

ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	CIRCUMSTANCE
26. She	walks	with a limp

However, circumstances may give information about means by which activity takes place.

ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	GOAL	CIRCUMSTANCE
27. She	removes	the nappies	with her teeth

ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	GOAL	CIRCUMSTANCE
28. He	tapped	the pavement	with his stick.

This draws our attention to the notion of disabled people being described with their bodies or instruments being involved in what they do. However, it raises further issues about what happens when the body part or instrument becomes the 'do-er' as grammatical subject. In the case of body part agency, Toolan (1998: 94-5) argues it can have the effect of detaching or alienating an individual from their physical faculties. In other words a sense of individual agency and control may be reduced.

ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	GOAL
29. His hand	found	the gate

BEHAVOUR	BEHAVIOURAL PROCESS
30. Her mouth	dribbled

Likewise Toolan (1998: 90) suggests that when an instrument is represented as the grammatical subject it may deny or disregard human agency. In the case of disability stylistics, I will give this the term prosthetic agency (interpreting prosthesis as widely as possible) and offer the examples

ACTOR	MATERIAL ACTION INTENTION	GOAL
31. His stick	tapped	the pavement

32. His wooden leg	thumped	the deck
SAYER	**VERBALISATION**	**VERBIAGE**
33. His speech synthesiser	said,	'yes'

As with Toolan, van Leeuwen (1996: 59-60) argues that body part and instrument agency might background the role of social actors, lending an impersonality to actions and potentially lending an activity negative or positive implications.

The points given above are important because textual description may be realised as a demand to know how and whether disabled people can function. However, it may also facilitate a concomitant process of 'othering' to which I have referred. It may also relate to presupposition, about disabled people, preconceived ideas about ability and agency (or lack thereof). Certain process types may be downplayed in representation of particular impairments. We might ask how blind or deaf people are represented in Perception processes and how learning disabled people are represented in terms of Mental processes.

However, the transitivity model may also be of crucial importance to stereotypes of disability. The pitiable disabled person, the disabled figure as burden, or 'own worst enemy' may be represented through lack of agency. They may be the GOAL in many Material Action Intention processes. The superhuman or the evil disabled person might be represented in the opposite way as the ACTOR - though clearly with different effects. We might also ask if body part agency or prosthetic agency is particularly prominent for such figures and whether there is a moral dimension added by such agency.

Transitivity analysis will undoubtedly be rewarding. Yet, as we shall see there is some overlap with the model of evaluation that I outline in the next section. While transitivity tends to aid analysis related to dynamism and control, I believe the appraisal system will aid in conveying attitude to such dynamism, control or otherwise.

Appraisal

In the section on noun phrases I introduced the issue of the encoding of attitudes and assumptions. However, there is a more wide ranging system for encoding attitude that I believe needs to be added to a critical stylistics of disability. Martin and White's model of attitude (part of their appraisal system) is closely related to the modality framework (cf. Thompson 2014: 83). Despite a rather confusing mapping onto modality suggested by Martin and White (2005: 55), I argue that for practical purposes, it can be related to the subsystem of Boulomaic modality, which expresses levels of desirability (Simpson 1993: 48).

The following greatly simplified taxonomy is based on Martin and White (2005) These authors divide attitude into three major categories: Affect, Judgement and

Appreciation. Each of these can be classified as essentially good/positive or bad/negative (cf. Thompson 2014: 80), hence my belief that it aligns well with the Boulomaic system.

While most of the examples I will offer shortly are adjectives, Martin and White (2005: 10) also note that attitude can be expressed across a range of grammatical categories including adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verb processes. The major categories of attitude are described below, with the examples given in tables taken directly from Martin and White.

Affect

Affect deals with emotion and can itself be subdivided into three categories based on Martin and White (2005: 49-50). Thus, 'un/happiness' encodes sadness, happiness, love and hate (related to feelings of 'the heart' including those provoked by others); 'in/security' - including fear, anxiety, confidence and trust covers emotions related to our sense of wellbeing in response to our environment including other people; and 'dis/satisfaction' encodes displeasure, ennui, respect, curiosity (emotions related to senses of frustration or achievement in relation to goals). Examples are provided in Table 1

Table 1: Affect

	Positive	Negative
un/happiness	*cheerful, buoyant, jubilant* *love, adore*	*down, sad, miserable* *hate, abhor*
in/security	*together, confident, assured* *comfortable with, confident in, trusting*	*uneasy, anxious, freaked out* *startled, jolted, staggered*
dis/satisfaction	*involved, absorbed, engrossed*	*flat, stale, jaded*

Judgment

Judgement is concerned with meaning related to our attitudes towards people and their behaviour and character, and it may be the most fruitful aspect of this

framework in relation to disability. It includes categories dealing with Social Esteem and Social Sanction.

Social Esteem can be subdivided as follows, based on Martin and White (2005: 52-3). Thus 'normality' relates to whether the person is usual or unusual; 'capacity' is concerned with capability; and 'tenacity' describes how resolute and dependable the person is (see Table 2).

Table 2: Social Esteem

	Positive	**Negative**
Normality	*normal, natural, familiar stable, predictable*	*odd, peculiar, eccentric erratic, unpredictable*
Capacity	*sound, healthy, fit balanced, together, sane*	*unsound, sick, crippled flaky, neurotic, insane*
Tenacity	*plucky, brave, heroic tireless, persevering, resolute*	*timid, cowardly weak, distracted, despondent*

Social Sanction also subdivides, based on Martin and White (2005: 52-3). Thus, 'propriety' involves ethical judgements about a person, and 'veracity' involves judgements about their truthfulness. See Table 3 for examples.

Table 3: Social Sanction

	Positive	**Negative**
Propriety	*good, moral, ethical altruistic, generous, charitable*	*bad, immoral, evil selfish, greedy, avaricious*
Veracity	*truthful, honest, credible candid, direct*	*dishonest, deceitful, lying deceptive, manipulative, devious*

I will not give a detailed account of Appreciation, as this concerns our attitudes to 'things', which we may make or perform, but also natural objects (Martin and White 2005: 56). It may well need to be considered in the future.

As noted, the model can range across grammatical categories and therefore creates the opportunity for ever more nuanced analysis of naming, labelling and describing and evaluation of transitivity patterns. For instance, the following examples refer to 'brave':

34. The *brave* teenager had two operations.   Adjective

35. The teenager *braved* two operations.   Verb process

36. *Bravely*, the teenager has had two operations.   Adverb

37. The teenager showed her *bravery*, having two operations. Noun

It seems clear that the examples offered for 'brave' fit the positive tenacity framework. They would impact upon our understanding of description in, for instance, noun phrases and the dynamism of the verb process, giving additional evaluative weight and potentially contributing to the superhuman stereotype. In other cases there may be disapproval of lack of tenacity ('cowardly', 'lacking determination') reinforcing the disabled person as their 'own worst enemy' stereotype. In the case of the evil or criminal disabled figure we might see high tenacity working alongside negative vocabulary from the 'propriety' and 'veracity' categories. Hughes (2012: 68, 75-6) argues that fear, pity and disgust are common ableist emotions and inform stereotypes of the evil, threatening, repulsive, contemptible, and pitiable disabled person. Hence we might see negative Affect for the evil disabled figure, the pitiable figure, or the 'own worst enemy'.

I view evaluation as a means of highly nuanced analysis. Nevertheless, I am not suggesting that it along with naming and describing and transitivity should be the only major frameworks.

Other Features

The range of features that I have suggested for disability stylistics is not exhaustive. I have raised concerns about the analysis of 'mind-style', but this is not a rejection of such analysis. However, I believe that scholars at the very least must show awareness of the risk of re-affirming negative ideologies when identifying disabled minds as 'abnormal' or 'deviant'.

A number of other areas of analysis will also be important. I have briefly mentioned narrative mode and modality. The types of modality used in depictions of disability will be important as will its implications for narrative mode. Likewise, the well-established model of speech and thought is another area that will need to be explored in relation to disability (cf. Jeffries 2010: 130-45). For instance, the model of Free Indirect Discourse may be of particular relevance blurring as it does the authorial and character voice (cf. Jeffries 2010: 141-42). Overall, we need to ask how are disabled people's voices and thoughts represented? The concept of 'mind-style' captures some of this but it may be necessary to consider the ethics of who assumes the right to speak for disabled people and how their voices are presented. This may be particularly important for people with cognitive impairments or speech impairments.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to provide a justification for a stylistics of disability which recognises the harmful effects of many current written representations of disabled people. It couples insights from cultural disability studies with analytical techniques from Critical Stylistics and related disciplines. I have outlined some areas for stylistic

analysis that I believe will be most fruitful in revealing the linguistic underpinnings of disabling representational practices, ideologies and stereotypes. Needless to say, I do need to apply and test the model thoroughly in the future. Almost certainly the linguistic tools will need to be augmented, and the model needs to be tested against more of the stereotypes listed.

I hope that this paper raises awareness about disability amongst stylisticians and linguists. I also hope that it offers additional insights for scholars of disability studies who wish to probe the impact of language within texts.

Above all I want to encourage further study of disabling language among stylisticians and students. Disabled scholars may bring specific knowledge to the field and have a greater stake in it, and I certainly hope that this encourages similar analysis by such scholars.

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