Body-Chair

The Entangled Relationship between a Girl and Her Wheelchair

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between an adolescent girl with an orthopedic impairment and her wheelchair. The study looked at the relationship of a high school female and how she views her wheelchair as a separate entity and not an extension of her body. This study also looked at how the relationship with her wheelchair had a profound influence on how she self-identified, as a “normal girl” and refuted the disability identity that was assigned her. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) states that there are about 6.7 million children in the United States (U.S.) with some type of a disability (NCES, 2019). Out of that number in the year 2015-16, there was a relatively small number of children with orthopedic impairments (i.e. 1% or 67,000). Approximately 16,640 of that number are females (NCES, 2019; OSEP, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). The NCES concludes that there are 0.8 percent of females between the ages of 3-22 that participate in some type of special education program at a public school in the Unites States.

This study moved away from the traditional humanist lens (human v nature) and instead employed new materialist and post humanist theoretical frameworks to explore the entangled material reality of the body-chair relationship. Exploring the body-chair relationship through a material discursive approach allowed for data to be read and re-read exploring the relationality between self and matter. The participant of the study refuted the notion to claim disability due to her ability to perform acts typical of a high school female (e.g. engage in social media, ride public transportation independently).

The results of the study suggest that a disability identity is multifaceted and diverse in similar ways, as are the people with impairments and disabilities. This dissertation provides the opening for further research to explore the disability identity and is not the final word. The relationality between self and matter is entangled with social discourse on what it means to be disabled. Questions not easily answered: Who gets to claim disability? Who does not? The implications for educations are numerous and profound.

I dedicate my dissertation to my children: Ian, Pari and Emerson McIntyre

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences (Lorde, n.d.).

Lorde's poignant words sound hopeful, reasonable and eye opening. She identifies that we are not divided by our differences; rather it is our reaction to those differences that prevent us from finding commonality. Instead, we spend countless hours writing and enacting polices to uphold cultural codes that deem what is normal and what is inferior. Furthermore, the immaturity of society goes beyond codification and into forming certain mindsets and approaches that not only limit our worldview, but also impose informal dominance of such societal attitudes, which overtime transform into negative cultural norms. Thus, these cultural norms, such as ableism, suggest that people with physical impairments are only capable of living restricted and marginalized lives, often located within marginalized communities. Such cultural norms propagate, which in turn limit people's worldview, and further solidify these ill-formed beliefs about people with impairments. It causes not only problems to the holders of such attitudes in appreciating the world as a beautiful place in its wonder of diversity, but also causes social and emotional complications to the lives of people with impairments as they are rejected, socially suppressed, discriminated against, and ultimately excluded. Such negative attitudes and cultural norms can be one of the biggest barriers facing people with physical impairments in living their lives the way they want.

Societal attitudes which refer to girls or women with impairments as "double jeopardy" (Rousso & Weheymer, 2001, p.35) reinforces the idea that a female with a physical impairment is invisible because her body does not meet the Western standard of beauty. For an adolescent girl with a physical impairment, the struggle to "claim disability" (Rousso, 2013, para.10) and to be comfortable in her own body, may be a bit more difficult, since most adolescent girls do not want to stand out as being different (Rousso, 2013). In addition to fitting in with peers, girls with physical impairments often must "confront assaults on their sense of self engendered by negative attitudes that they are weak, broken, and without emotion" (Perduta-Fuginiti, 1996, p. 298). Rousso concludes that (2009), "If we just realize that difference is part and parcel of life and everyone can walk down the street differently and not be stared at" (Rousso, 2013, para. 13) then we as a society would begin to break down negative attitudes which cause barriers and begin to accept, recognize, and celebrate, our differences… unfortunately, we are not there yet.

This study delves into the materiality of girl-wheelchair inter and intra-actions and the complexities of those relations. One's sense of self is not innate but rather shaped by lived experiences inside and outside of the school environment (Bracken & Lamprecht, 2003). For example in the article *Teachers Experience's with Inclusive Classrooms: Implications for Special Education Reform* (Bear, Minke, Griffin & Deemer, 1997), the authors surveyed 185 general education teachers (in traditional classrooms), 71 general education teachers, and 64 special education teachers (who used the co-teaching model of an inclusive classroom) regarding the effects of self-concept and academic achievement (for students with learning disabilities). The findings suggest that there is in fact a link between one's positive self-concept and academic achievement. Although the participant in this study has an orthopedic impairment and not a learning disability the results of the study are none the less important. The results of the study can be used to help general classroom teachers (traditional classroom) to shift their own perceptions of what is required of them to foster an inclusive classroom in which students with a variety of abilities along with impairments/disabilities can thrive academically and reach their academic outcomes in a respectful manner. This can be done by educators receiving additional training how to adapt/modify curriculum, create a classroom culture that welcomes all students, providing adequate technology, chairs and desks to accommodate wheelchairs or other items that are needed for students. As previously discussed, educators must cultivate a sense of awareness of the diverse needs of their students. This sense of awareness and acceptance exhibit by educators of students with a variety of abilities/impairments/disabilities will help to shape a positive school experience, with the added feature of a positive academic self-concept (Lawrence, 1991).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) states that there are about 6.7 million children in the U.S. with some type of a disability (NCES, 2019). That number includes all disabilities that are recognized and served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004). In addition the NCES states that out of that number in the school year 2015-16, there was a relatively small number of children with orthopedic impairments, 1 percent or 67,000, and approximately 16,640 of that number are females (NCES, 2019; OSEP, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). NCES (2018) notes that out of the 16,640 females between the ages of 3-21 years of age, reported to have an orthopedic impairment, 0.8 percent of female students are receiving special education services in a public school. These statistics reflect the relatively small number of females with an orthopedic impairment receiving special education services in a public school in the U.S.

Furthermore, one could surmise, that the lack of females with an orthopedic impairment, for example, when compared to a high incidence impairment such as learning impairments can be a significant factor as to why a study is needed to address the self-concept of females with orthopedic impairments. There is a wealth of research in regards to students with learning impairments in these areas: self-concept (Markus & Kunda, 1986; Oyserman, 2004) self-esteem (Lewis, 1990; Mruk, 2006) and identity (Cote & Levine, 2014; Higgins, 1989; Maddux, 1991). In contrast, as stated earlier, the data for females with an orthopedic impairment is low, and is reasonable to conclude this can be a possible cause for the lacking body of scholarly research in this area, and why it is important to bring this issue to the forefront. There are stories to be told of/by females with low incidence impairments, in spite of the low numbers of females with orthopedic impairments. Even though the NCES (2018) data on females with orthopedic impairments is considered low incidence, the fact remains this is an area that is not represented in the disability literature, and in particular, when it comes to their voices being heard by the research community and described in the literature. When voices or experiences of marginalized people, in this case females with an orthopedic impairment, are not retrieved, it is easy to perpetuate demeaning stereotypes about people with differing abilities. In sharp contrast, when heard, these voices can denounce pervasive attitudes on what it means to live with an impairment.

Although the NCES provides additional demographic information such as race/ethnicity of female students served under the provisions of IDEA, this study will not focus on this particular issue. I recognize and agree that this information, while important, cannot be ignored. One’s racial or ethnic makeup, as in the case for the participant of this study who identifies as a Hispanic female, undoubtedly shapes one’s perception of the world and how one fits into the world. Similarly, the area of gender cannot be ignored; due to the fact, the participant in this study is a female adolescent in high school. The notion of gender, as seen through the lens of the participate, what it means to be a “normal girl”, will be embedded throughout this study as her sense of self and what it means to be a female with an orthopedic impairment with a wheelchair, unfolds. This rethinking of what it means to be a “normal female” according to the participant of the study will be explored through the entangled performative conditions she finds herself situated in moment-to-moment (Butler, 1990, 1993).

This lack of literature regarding females with physical disabilities, according to Corbman (2018), renders young girls and women invisible. These feelings of invisibility can be attributed to the lack of positive images of disabled females. The implications can be far reaching. For example, when young girls try and break through the “invisibility barrier” (p. 2) to live, work, and/or go to school in the non-disabled world, many find themselves alone, ostracized or “othered” by their non-disabled co-workers or peers (Corbman, 2018). Additionally, families of females with disabilities often unknowingly perpetuate the ongoing cultural stereotype, that states females with disabilities are “weak, or broken” (Rousso, 1988, p.35) by having lower expectations for their daughters, in terms of schooling and employment after high school or into adulthood (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Marder, 2007). This limited view of females with impairments not being capable or employable continues to marginalize and propagate group-based inequalities towards females with disabilities (Gerschick, 2000). Sadly, this often results in young girls with disabilities having lower expectations for themselves. Consequently, young girls and women, with a physical impairment are often defined by what is viewed as lacking, physical normality, rather than who they are, a female who happens to have an impairment (Gerschick, 2000).

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This dissertation explores the relationship between a female with an orthopedic impairment and her wheelchair and how this relationship influences her sense of becoming. By using a new materialism framework, this exploration will look at how and in what ways her sense of becoming is iteratively performed and shaped by numerous intra-actions influenced by both human and non-human entities of matter, the environment, the meanings we ascribed to certain human conditions and systems of power, and our communities in which we live (Barad, 2007). Each one of these influences creates assemblages or an “event or happening” (Tsing, 2012, p. 23) of meanings and entanglements through inter-active or mutually constitutive entangled agencies (Barad, 2007) whose performances are malleable and constantly changing shapes. This emanates into new representations which allow us to rethink and reimagine her relationship with her chair and how her sense of becoming is continuously being shaped and re-shaped as a result (Braidotti, 2013). The relationship between a girl and her chair, in and of itself, is indeterminate. Namely, it is through the aforementioned conditions, that the material-discursive intra-active process is performed moment by moment (Barad, 2007). It is this very process of subsequent becoming, unbecoming, and layering performativity that produces and gives meaning to her relationship with her chair.

Over the past 35 years, there has been wide interest in adolescent girls within the social sciences: science, math, special education, body dysmorphia, sexual abuse, and teen pregnancy. The same is true for research within the disabilities studies literature, which yields scholarship that focuses on problems that mainly encompass adolescent females' psychological issues, such as body image and sexual awareness and identity (Calogero 2012; Cash, 2003; Cash, Melnyk, & Hrabosky, 2004; Stryker, 1968; Stryker, 2007). This observation is by no means minimizing the importance of such research. Yet, there is minimal research that has talked at length about girls with physical impairments (National Institute of Health, 2010). The same is also true for girls with physical impairments who use assistive technologies such as a wheelchair. But rather, suggesting there is room for additional bodies of work, within the realm of disability studies. I posit that part of the challenges for lack of scholarship regarding the relationship of females with an orthopedic impairment and their assistive technology, and how that relationship influences their sense of self, stem from three assumptions from research of self-concept, as viewed within the field of psychology: 1. Placing the dominant norm of the subject as the pinnacle of research. 2. The lack of a relevant body of research, in terms of how an impairment and the relationship with and use of technology can shape a female's sense of becoming, within psychology. 3. The lack of material-discursive (i.e. intra-active) analysis framework in that body of research.

DISCOURSE ON THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In this section, I will summarize key theoretical frameworks that will direct my study: New Materialism, Post Humanism, and Disability. In turn I will discuss the humanist theory of *self -concept* and explain why this study moves away from the self as the focal point, in other words, the aim of this study is to decenter the self . In addition, I will explain the relational material constructs that are guiding this study: Intra-action, Agential Realism, Diffraction, Becoming, and Performativity. I chose these relational material constructs because they complement each other. The neologism “intra-action” signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies (Barad, 2007, p.33) and the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action. These intra-actions are tangible via consideration of the phenomenon of diffraction. The phenomenon under scrutiny (diffraction) the relationship between the girl/wheelchair are not separate entities but collide into each other. It is actually only through diffraction that what appear to be its constituent agents (girl/wheelchair) come into being (becoming and performativity). These conceptual frameworks are needed to help me conceptualize the relationship between the girl and her wheelchair and how her sense of becoming is created through material agents and continuously shaped complex intra-action among multiple forces (discursive, material, political to name a few) within these various frameworks in philosophical terms.

POST-HUMANISM

According to Braidotti (2013), humanism is rooted in psychology and upholds the belief that “The human of Humanism is neither an ideal nor an objective statistical average… but rather spells out a systemized standard of… sameness by which others can be assessed, regulated and allotted to designated location” (p. 26, 28). What Braidotti (2013) aptly suggests is that this *dominant norm* which researchers are held up against, can be unattainable at best. Therefore, this idea of the *dominant norm* has the power to normalize by “transposing a specific mode of being human into a generalized standard” (p.26). It stands to reason that if one has an orthopedic impairment, he/she may find his/herself located on the periphery of this highly systemized society. This othering or difference often resulted in “passing off entire categories of human beings as devalued and therefore invisible to others, or simply seen as ‘less than’ or inferior” (p. 27, 28). People with disabilities/impairments are forced to occupy these marginalized spaces are subjected to dismissive attitudes, victims of violence, half-truths, rendered invisible and silenced (Braidotti, 2013).

This is precisely where humanism is limited in its research scope. The idea of human agency being the center of social life of research as described by Braidotti (2013), when located within the self-concept literature, can be viewed as a negative aspect of humanism. When humans are routinely placed in the center as the most important part of the study, this positioning of the subject becomes fixed, while other aspects of the research such cultural norms, gender, race, sense of self, and identity formation are therefore minimized or rendered not as important as the subject, “man” himself. Thus, creating additional bodies of scholarship that fail to challenge the status quo in traditional humanities research. Consequently, the research outcomes will most likely be viewed as one dimensional, not offering any new information, just more of the same trope: man vs. society, safely explored within the boundaries of the traditional humanities research (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 1994, 2013). When in fact humans are complex and participate in and simultaneously making sense of messy, and difficult situations regardless if the experiences are self-perpetuated or culturally informed are not necessarily neat and tidy. This limited viewpoint does not allow people who have been marginalized to have their stories told. By continuing to place the human at the center of research in the field of psychology, the articles produced will not have created innovative ways in which to rethink or reimagine the relationality between matter and self. (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011).

The traditional belief that anchors humanist thought, that man is master over the universe, has been radically over turned and a new thought, post-humanism theory, has been ushered in to stop the marginalization of the material world in the production of meaning. Scholars who propose post-humanist thought believe a re-configuration of the human and non-human binary is needed to address the current self-evident nature of the human self (Braidotti, 2013; p. 46, 47). This reconfiguration partially deconstructs the human to the material by suggesting that human and non-human bodies are inter-connected, and can only be viewed as such when the notion of self-centered individualism is rejected. Post-humanist theory rejects the idea that humans are separate from the material word. In doing so, it creates a space for researchers interested in examining the inter-connectedness between the human and non-humans and how these entanglements of bodies create new ways of promoting ethical relationships between self and others, including the non-human ‘earth’ others, by removing the individual from the center of the research (Braidotti, 2013, p. 49, 50-51; Coole & Frost, 2010).

In a radical shift, post-humanism theory decentralizes the human, and in doing so makes a bold move to disrupt the traditional way of informing research in the humanities (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Post-humanism’s ability to problematize the human subject, will support and enhance this study as it resonates with a materiality research approach to disability studies, which departs from humanist traditions that often view people with impairments through a deficit lens and draws attention to what she/he is not, when compared to an able-bodied or a normal human being (Braidotti, 2013; Lang, 2001). In an effort to remedy this problem, post-humanism offers to recast the position of the human from the focal point and instead views the human as part of a shared world, a geographical space that is social and ecological (Braidotti, 2013, p.193). Living within and among these various bodies of matter, we can begin to see how the self is a “transversal entity, fully immersed in and immanent to a network of non-human (e.g. animal, vegetable, viral) relations” (p. 193). Thus, the embodied subject is then immediately “shot through with relational linkages”, which connect to various other bodies emerging from the environment (p.193). This idea of recasting the position of the human, creates a “common moveable assemblage life-space” (p. 193) in which the subject is not the master over the environment but rather, the subject is nomadic: he/she inhabits, crosses, and is always in a community (Braidotti, 2013). The post-human turn, with its focus on materiality, and the affirming aspects of the framework: the young female is not viewed as weak nor vulnerable, but located within the “flow of relations with a multiple of others" (p. 50). Locating the subject within the "flow of relations", highlights that the young female is always in a state of becoming, which is produced by the multiple material intra-actions that take shape and how those assemblages of matter impact the relationship of this young female with her wheelchair and how her sense of self is formed (p. 50). Post-humanism considers humans as part of a dynamic assemblage, recognizes all entities in an environment, and aims to produce a view of disability that celebrates the differences, possibilities, and potentialities.

Not all theorists are pleased with this sudden turn of events. I for one, am excited to employ this theoretical framework in my dissertation study as I explore the relationship of an adolescent female with an orthopedic impairment and her wheelchair and how that relationship influences her sense of knowing and becoming and allows her to counter the disability identity narrative in favor of a more suitable identity; that of a normal girl. Post-humanism according to Braidotti (2013) is needed and tasked with the job of "inventing new configurations and new ways of representing the complex subjects we have become" (2013, p. 193). "These new configurations are needed to help redefine one's sense of attachments and belonging to a shared world" (p. 193).

To be post-human does not mean that researchers do not care about others, nor dehumanize others as well, scholars need to practice sustainable ethics that, according to Braidotti (2013), "rest on an enlarged sense of interconnection between one's self and others" (p.190). Researchers need to come together as a collective entity across all spaces. Unlike in humanism in which self-interest and individualism was accepted in the traditional form of humanism, a system fraught with inequities. Post-humanism wants to combine ethical values with the greater world community. In other words, post-human subjects have a responsibility for the well-being and inclusion of others.

PROBLEMATIZING SELF MATTERS

Self-concept is rooted in the field of psychology and, in following suit in the traditional humanities fashion, also positions the subject at the center of research. Self-concept has been conceptualized in the past as being this thing we have or possess, which is fixed and permanent (James, 1950; Erickson, 1950). Fortunately, recent scholars debunked James' idea of the fixed self, and aptly ascribed to the idea noted by Markus and Kunda (1987) that one's self-concept is fluid, malleable, always in flux, constantly working and developing over time, throughout one's life. True, Markus and Kunda's view of the self is more palatable, than James' notion of a fixed self, but the research is still human-centered. Thus, offering no groundbreaking insights into the self-concept body of research. New materialism moves away from the idea of the fixed self. It looks at how the girl is in relation to her wheelchair, school, home, her community, friends, cultural practices and attitudes toward disability and how these objects, spaces, bodies and practices are in mutually constituted relationships with the girl evolving and continuously making new material realities. That is, the complex intra-action between these forces create an assemblage of performing and substantive entangled entities, that worked together to create new possibilities. These configurations and re-configurations of matter (social and subject) "allow us to ask different questions" in relation to the girl and her wheelchair, without assuming them (Tsing, 2012, p. 22).

I will leave the realm of psychology and move forward with a new theoretical framework of new materialism which is situated in the field of philosophy. This move will allow me as the researcher to delve deeper into my data analysis, with greater latitude, to reimagine, rethink, read and re-read my data over and over looking for minute nuances in the data to produce new insights that will help me understand two things: 1. The relationship between a female adolescent girl with a physical impairment and her wheelchair. 2. To examine the label of ‘disability’ to examine the ‘impaired’ person and the ensuing becoming, unbecoming, and layering of disability performativity.

The utilization of a material discursive approach will allow for greater depth when exploring the material realities (bodies, spaces, objects and practices) that influence the participant’s relationship with her wheelchair. This is possible because the material discursive approach is not bound and tied to the traditionalist research approach in which the subject (human) is the pinnacle of the research hierarchy (Braidotti, 2013). Decentering the human as the focal point, allows the data to inform how the constitutive material agencies influence the becoming and unbecoming of the girl and how these influences through acts of her “normal girl” performativity impacts her relationship with her wheelchair. (King Shultz, Steel, Gilpin, & Cathers, 1993; Orlikowksi & Scott, 2015).

DISABILITY: MEDICAL VS SOCIAL MODELS MATTER

There is an ongoing shift in thinking about impairments. The traditional medical model of disability, located in schools or social institutions, is usually viewed through a medical lens. This model views people with impairments (visible and/or nonvisible) as broken and need to be fixed to resemble an able-bodied person (e.g. normal) regardless of gender. Recently within the last 15 years a paradigm shift has occurred, as the conversation about disability moves from the traditionalist medical model to a humane and inclusive, social model of disability. Social model of disability builds its foundation on the belief that calls for greater participation of people with impairments into society (Gannon & Nolan, 2006) by removing both physical and attitudinal barriers. These barriers often prevent people, in many cases females, with impairments from living independently and seeking competitive employment (Banja, 2015). Using a material discursive approach when discussing the social model of disability, will allow me to side-step the typical humanist discourse which divide humans into the familiar binary normal/impaired subjects (Feely, 2016). By utilizing material discursive approach, I will be able to explore in more depth how various bodies of matter (e.g. culture, humans, objects, practices) converge, overlap to create additional ideas on how we can better understand how cultural codes and identity politics which are rooted in power, and create unbalanced power structures, that in turn shut out certain members society, in this study females with physical impairments. Incorporating Butler's idea of performativity, along with Baradian's notion of entanglements, diffractions and agential cuts, these concepts will allow me to consider disability as a material phenomenon (Barad, 2003, 2007; Butler, 1990).

RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question of this study is: What is the relationship between the adolescent girl with orthopedic impairment and her wheelchair? The sub research question of this study is: How does the relationship girl/wheelchair influence her sense of becoming? This study will attempt to answer these questions through the exploration of how the material bodies- human and non-human are mutually constituted through intra-active material-discursive reality.

The body-wheelchair unit has been selected as the focal point of this study, as a means to explore the material relationality between the girl/environment/school/home. This study will attempt to uncover the entangled relationship using a material -discursive reality approach that includes entities of matter in the form of bodies, geographical spaces and locations, objects, and practices. Within the material reality, these various bodies of matter will change form in infinite ways constantly creating new forms of meanings and understandings that radically disrupts our former views on the material world, and how these material agents create news ways of understanding how meaning is made out of knowing and becoming as a function of influences from material entanglements. These new representations of information, as a result of these constituted material entanglements, allow for different discussions to take place allowing for additional interpretations of what it means to be disabled or impaired.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

New Materialism (Materiality): Matter Matters. When we hear the word "matter" it is usually in reference to a situation or topic under consideration or to define something as being important. For example, if someone was feeling angry and had a furrowed brow, you would probably ask, "What's the matter?" Alternatively, if there was an important issue to discuss with a colleague, you might say, "Do you have time to discuss an important matter?" These brief examples of how the word matter is used are common to most people and are part of our everyday language. However, in this study the word *matter* will be defined by using terminology and concepts that are aligned to the new materialist theoretical framework. According to scholars whom use the concepts of materiality, Bennett (2010), Barad (2003) and Braidotti (1994), the word matter can be defined as, human, nature, objects, culture, politics, not dull or passive but vibrant, alive, and changing form over and over again. Shifting towards a material discursive view of matter (i.e. matter is inseparable) is needed to move away from the traditional humanist research paradigm, which views and separates matter as "dull matter (it, things)" from the "lively vibrant life (us, beings)" (Bennett, p. vii).

Viewing matter as inseparable entities forces the researcher to look beyond the human-object paradigm to a more nuanced concept of matter complete with messy, complex, and dynamic entanglements that when looked at closely provide, as Bennett suggests, "lively powers of material transformations" (2010, p. vii). This shift requires a reimagining of how research will be conducted. These entanglements consist of, but are not limited to, societal oppression and the marginalization of people who have been deemed “other”, attitudes on who can claim a normal identity verses a socially prescribed identity based on the existence or nonexistence of physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ageism, body image, race and ethnicity, and cultural heritage or political affiliations that are both materially situated and socially constructed. All of this together produces a mutually constitutive intra-action (Barad, 1999, p.2). For example, when entities of matter intra-act we can see “the powers of material formation” (Bennett, 2010, p. vii) as in the case of enacting the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) building requirements. This federal law permits students who use wheelchairs to enter schools independently. It is from these ongoing entanglements (i.e. inseparable entities of matter) and reconfigurations of materiality that influence societal attitudes to produce regulations that remove structural barriers to school buildings, so that students can feel valued, respected, and perhaps less marginalized while at school.

The material discursive approach moves research beyond the boundaries of the humanist subject/object dichotomy to uncover the nuances that abound in the entanglements of matter. Revealing these nuances helps us understand how “power-laden distinctions” through cultural representations (e.g. language) influence “subject and object, nature and culture, [and] human and non-human forms of matter” so that we can examine their consequences (Barad, 1999, p. 2). When used in research, material discursive practices should not be confused with mere utterances or only descriptive statements, but rather viewed as “practices that define what counts as meaningful statements” (p. 146-7). In other words, material discursive practices produce rather than simply describe the subjects and objects. This approach allows the “statements and subjects to emerge” from a sea of possibilities (p. 147). A material discursive approach will help me explore how environmental, cultural, social, political and other material forces intra-act and play a relevant role in creating conceptual devices to understanding the relationship between an girl and her wheelchair, and how that relationship informs her sense of knowing and becoming.

AGENTIAL REALISM: INTRA-ACTION, DIFFRACTION

I will utilize the Baradian (1999, 2007) concept of agential realism to explore the relationship between the young female with an orthopedic impairment and her wheelchair and analyze how this relationship, along with other material realities, influence her sense of self and how her identity formation of a normal girl is produced. Before I move into the concepts of agential realism, intro-action and diffraction, I believe it is necessary to discuss the dual definition of *agency*. In order to understand the concept of agential realism, the definitions of agency need to be articulated. In the humanist view, the term agency denotes something that is held or something that is by choice. For example, the collective agency of parents and other supporters fought a long and hard battle to create federal legislation that resulted in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) over 30 years ago, to provide educational opportunities for children from 0-22 years of age. This sentence uses the word “agency” to illustrate conviction or being proactive with the idea to support an objective. However, when the word agency is used in the new materialist framework, its meaning is radically different. I am not suggesting the word agency and its humanist definition be ignored, but on the contrary, Barad (2007) suggests a reworking of the notion of agency in ways that are appropriate to relational thinking (p. 174). Put another way, agency is not a subject or object, but is an enactment: a “matter of possibilities and accountability for reconfiguring entanglements” (p. 247). To be clear, agency is not about choice or conviction in the humanist sense; rather, it is about the possibilities and accountability located in the “reconfiguring material-discursive apparatuses of bodily production, along with boundary articulations and exclusions that re marked by those practices” (p. 274-5). Matter has agency.

Agential realism, which was based on the works of the quantum physicist Neils Bohr, seeks to decenter the human (i.e. subject) and focus on the materiality of research. Barad borrowed this concept from Bohr as a solution to end problems in research generated by the dichotomy opposing realism and social constructivism. Barad provides an example of a problem she believes is caused by this dichotomy: “... efforts to incorporate material factors in social constructivist accounts have been debilitated by the reductive choice between repositioning the material world outside of discourse…” (Barad, 1999, p.2). Barad suggests that in order to remove the tension that exists in traditional research (i.e. subject/object), due to the “dichotomous portrayal of these positions… humanist scholars can only acknowledge the situated/constructed character” of only one pole of this dichotomy at a time (p. 2). Agential realism examines the entanglements of material agents (e.g. particles of light, humans, animals) and the discursive agents (e.g. cultural representation, research practices, gender identity). These agents are entangled matter and are not indeterminate and only become determinate in intra-action, thus agential realism examines these intra-actions through material discursive practices (Barad, 2007). Agential realism will be used to help bypass the problems that are inherently located in the traditional humanist research subject/object dichotomy.

Agential realism, which was developed to counteract the domination of language, reduces the power of language and written text as the primary unit of concern and in turn intensifies the effect and impact of the material (Barad, 2007). Agential realism is viewed as an epistemological (i.e. study of knowledge) and ontological (i.e. study of being) framework, which provides an understanding of science as “material discursive” practices (Barad, 1999, p. 2, 2007) and that these practices of objectivity and agency are tied up with issues of ethics, accountability and “power imbalances” (e.g. race, gender, sexuality) (Barad, 2007, p.168). What this framework aims to make clear, is that neither the human nor the non-human bodies of matter is the primary focal point in social analyses, but rather, it is intra-active entanglements of these entities of matter and the discursive that give rise to meaning, that is in a constant state of reconfiguration (Barad, 2007). This constant state of reconfiguration questions the ideas of “matter, discourse, causality, agency, power, identity, embodiment, objectivity, space, and time” (p. 26). The questioning of these ideas makes it clear that humans are an integral part of “nature that we seek to understand” (Barad, 2007, p. 26). Barad states, “researchers can no longer intentionally separate the researcher from the material, the material from the researcher nor the material from the discursive; all forms of matter are inseparable” (p. 26). In keeping with Barad’s thinking of materiality, researchers are charged to examine all of these elements as mutually constitutive.

The outcomes (i.e. products) of these practices according to Barad (2007) are constrained by particular material discursive practices, or apparatuses, and not randomly construed. Apparatuses are material discursive practices in which intra-actions are causal productions through which “matter-in-process-of-becoming is iteratively and differentially articulated” (p. 170-171) as a means to reconfigure the material discursive field of possibilities. It is through this agential intra-activity that boundaries of phenomena produced (i.e. agential cuts) from the material entanglements, that are intra-actively co-constituted become determinate and that particular embodied concepts become meaningful” (Barad, 2007, p. 139).

In this study, the interview process served as an apparatus in which the shifting roles researcher/researched, non-impaired female/impaired female were engaged in an iteratively reconfigured series of questioning. For example, I conducted in person interviews with the participant of my study. I then asked the participant to take a camera and through photographs record her relationship with her wheelchair during a 24-hour period. Instead of being questioned by me during the second part of the interview process, the agential cut enacted in this process changed the apparatus of the second interview from non-impaired female to an impaired female to an apparatus of impaired female to a disposable camera. The post-humanist framework, along with the previously discussed concepts, will allow me to explore the performativity of the relationship between the young female and her wheelchair shifted through the agential cuts and apparatuses from the first interview with me and when given a camera to record visual images of her relationship with her wheelchair

Language matters. “Language has been granted too much power”, states Barad. (2003, p. 801). There is no denying language in the form of cultural representations, interviews, or written text is how we make sense of the world (Barad, 2007; Crossley, 2015). The written form of language, or representationalism of language, has been deemed trustworthy to the extent that scholars have allowed the linguistic structure to shape or determine our understanding of the world. This can and often is a dangerous proposition when written text is consumed without question. Consumers of written text can be lulled to sleep while reading information that represents social or cultural structures without questioning the validity of such text (Barad, 2007). In many instances, this can be how ideas about certain segments of the population, such as individuals with impairments, are easily seen as “other” in their communities.

The philosophical concept of language or “representationalism is the belief that words, concepts, ideas, and the like accurately reflect or mirror the things in which they refer” (Barad, 2007, p.86). Whenever there is a shift in a long-standing research strategy such as representationalism, there are bound to be questions raised as to the continued importance of overarching concepts that seem to best describe particular conditions, such as ableism and impairments. I would argue that the long-standing use of representationalism in research, if allowed to go unchallenged, will continue to reinforce with words and beliefs that which may not accurately reflect the things being referenced. In this case, representationalism with its deeply engrained social beliefs of what it means to claim/not claim the identity of disability, continues to marginalize people/communities by reproducing self-similar knowledge (Barad, 2007).

In direct opposition to representationalism, is the theoretical concept of diffraction. Diffraction, as viewed by physicists, is a phenomenon that discusses wave behavior. For example, water waves according to Barad “exhibit a diffraction pattern” (p. 29). An example of a diffraction pattern is when you drop a rock into a pool of water and the ripples overlap. According to Haraway (1992), diffraction exists in research as the noticing and "processing of small but consequential differences" (p.55). The diffraction methodology differs from representationalism, in that diffraction is a re-reading or rethinking of data and being critical about what constitutes meaning that matters. This rereading and rethinking of the data does not simply mirror old social beliefs about people with a disability/impairment. Instead, it topples the old beliefs on their head, by asking questions that result in a more human way to view individuals with impairments, or asking questions that require a closer look at the ways in which "disabled people live within a disabling world" (Barton, 1996, p.8). This can be done by reviewing polices enacted that may need to be revised or creating new policies to provide basic human rights for those with impairments. In addition, there is a need in the research field to utilize ethically based research methods (e.g. materiality) that welcome the discovery of new meanings or alternative ways to look at impairments and in connection with other material bodies (e.g. environment, cultural beliefs, politics, and disability policies) to create the notion of what it means to be disabled or to be impaired.

Reading with a diffractive lens come with a sense of accountability and responsibility (Barad, 2007). This process of reading, re-reading, thinking and re-thinking insights through one another in multiple ways that help highlight differences as they emerge: "how differences get made what gets excluded and how those exclusions matter." (Barad, 2007, p. 29-30). It is equally as important to consider "Who gets to make these decisions?", "Whose voice is heard and valued?", and "Whose voice is silenced?". There is an ethical responsibility and accountability on the part of the researcher, when determining through the intra-active process of diffraction, what constitute meanings and which meanings matter when utilizing material discursive practices to examine differences (Barad, 2007).

DE-CENTERING THE SELF MATTERS

As mentioned earlier, I will move out of the realm of psychology when discussing the concept of *self*. That is not to say that the information on the *self*, which is located in the psychology field has no purpose. I am also aware re-framing conceptual concerns such as *self* away from human-centered approaches is a bold step and in doing so disrupts long-standing assumptions informing many traditionally held ideas about the topic of self-concept (Crossley, 2015; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). In keeping with my material discursive framework, unlike the traditional view of the subject and object dichotomy, the materialist theory removes the human as the focal point of the research and instead assumes all bodies of matter (i.e. human and non-human) play an integral role in the shaping of one’s becoming, unlike the concepts of self and identity, it is not fixed. The idea of becoming is fluid it is always evolving and making meaning about “what we are and what we can be beyond” the labels that try to contain us (Sotirin, 2007, p. 99).

The idea of self as defined earlier in this paper appears to be fixed and shaped by our social and cultural lived experiences, in which the human is at the center. As a result, when used in research this dualist approach (i.e. subject and object) produces limited insights of representation of the self. In contrast, the new materialist framework disrupts the traditional dualist theory, and does not separate subject and object; instead it examines the entanglement of subject and object in the material world (Barad, 2007).

Haraway (1988) uses the word *vision* to aptly describe the position of one's self: "We are not immediately present to ourselves". She continues, "Self-knowledge requires a semiotic- material technology to link meanings and bodies" (p. 31). Put another way, Haraway (1988) claims that we make connections to our bodies, and minds, with our environments, material objects such as technology. She states that this process of "[t]he knowing self" is always bending, changing, splitting into different entities, never finished; and "it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly" (p. 31). It is these enactments with our material world that help use create a sense of knowing and becoming. In the case of the participant of this study, her sense of being a 'normal' girl, is in large part, from the many activities and social engagements in which she participates. The activities are with her school friends, such as playing badminton, eating at a local restaurant, getting a manicure, going shopping for clothes, and engaging with social media. She performs these activities with her non-impaired friends, and these performances with friends give her a sense of normalcy.

PERFORMATIVITY MATTERS

Butler's (1990) concept of performativity will be used to anchor the idea of identity formation. In this study the participant conceives her identity as a normal girl through her repetitive performative actions that at are "constantly being made" and reshaped "in material discursive practices" (Orlikowski & Scott, 2015, p. 5). The concept of performativity operationalizes the assumption that one's identity is constructed in its 'becoming' through acts or doing rather than "internal features of self" (Butler, 1999, p.8). Simply, performativity is Butler's term for describing how social identities and roles are performed. Butler provides an analysis of how gender gets produced and reproduced through a series of enactments with the material world. When speaking about how gender is produced and reproduced, whether male or female, Butler (1990) suggests "it is the both the intentional and performative repetition of the act" (p. 190-92). Continuing this line of thought, Butler concludes that the socially contingent acts of gender create the idea of gender. Thus, gender, according to Butler, "is a tacit collective agreement to perform, and produce and sustain. Gender, is not an entitlement that we are given with at birth but a becoming" (p.191). Therefore, gender is viewed as something that is performed and regulated by cultural codes, instead of something that we are.

In the area of gender, Butler states that one is not born a specific gender (i.e. boy/girl) but one's gender identity gets made through the "repetition of acts through time" (p.191). The participant of this study is female, but in keeping with Butler's analysis of gender performativity, this means that she is in engaged in arbitrary repetitious acts which over time forms her gender identity. Butler is saying that we do gender. This is accomplished by doing things that have been socially constructed and agreed upon as to what it means to be female. For example, the participant of this study gets her nails done, curls her hair, wears make-up, and goes shopping with her friends. These are socially accepted performative acts of what it means to be female. Femaleness is not an inherent quality but rather becoming- something that an individual does rather than what an individual is. Therefore, the act of becoming female is an iterative process by enacting repetitious actions that have been discursively produced through relations of power derived from cultural beliefs and practices. These notions of becoming and performativity are not limited to gender identity. On the contrary, disabled/impaired individuals have multiple identities that require different performative actions/doing (to produce desired outcomes, according to the needs of the individual (Butler, 1990; Garland-Thompson, 2012).

BODIES MATTER

Advancements in "western medicine as well as in information and communication technologies have forced us to abandon our concept of what is deemed 'natural' and 'bounded' in terms of the human body" (Gupta & Richters, 2008, p. 239). New technological advancements have made unseeingly far-reaching interventions in the body possible, thus extending the boundaries of a "single body beyond its skin, tissues and organs" and resulting in humans, which have become an "assemblage of body parts" (p. 239) in many cases. The question that begs asking is: What constitutes a disabled body? Butler suggests, "That bodies are only and always constructed (Meijer & Prins, 1998, p. 276)". The disabled body is constructed through codes that legitimize such bodies through policies and politics. Butler alludes to the idea the "disabled" body is socially and politically constructed, through an entanglement of material discursive practices, a material phenomenon. In other words a body is only considered disabled/impaired based on a material discursive reality.

The entanglement of material bodies (e.g. medical technology, human body, performative discourse) allow for disabled/impaired bodies to disrupt the normative-political understanding of what disability means. With the advent of medical technology bodies that may once been seen as not having legitimate existence are now able to disrupt the idea of the disabled/impaired body, through modern technological advances. For example, people are able to access a host of prosthetics for missing limbs such as arms, legs, and ankles. Prosthetic limbs used as extensions of the body allow for people to continue living fulfilling lives as they once had before, performing a variety of activities. In addition, a person who is paralyzed can acquire the assistance of mobility through use of assistive devices, such as a wheelchair. Likewise, there are communication devices for those who are speech impaired. For example, augmentative and alternative communication devices (AAC) can be used to supplement or replace speech or writing for those with impairments in the production of both spoken or written language.

Should we view these new technologies as instruments that are extending the natural boundaries of the human body, or as part of the human body? In the case of the participant in the study, when does the wheelchair become an extension of her body and not merely an object? Barad (2007, p. 157) suggests that “the successful performance of everyday bodily tasks depends on the mutual incorporation of the instruments used to perform the task” (as cited in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 94). In other words, the wheelchair becomes a part of the body due to her daily performances. I would also argue dependence, of her wheelchair as an extension of her body for mobility, which allows her to participate in various environments. This intra action with the wheelchair creates an entanglement of matter between the girl and her wheelchair. This is where the complexity comes in: she readily acknowledges the benefits of her wheelchair; however, she does not view herself as part of her chair when she is the observer. For example, when she engages with social media she does not post pictures of herself in her wheelchair. Thus, her relationship with her wheelchair is both positioned and situated (Diedrich, 2001, p. 218-19).

MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY MATTERS

The Medical model of disability has been the dominant paradigm of disability in the United States since the inception of the IDEA. This model operates within the binary of “disabled” and “non-disabled” and presumes that a person’s disability is medical in nature, therefore, only requiring individualized medical treatment. What is less clear, however, is the extent to which disabled children have been negatively affected by the eligibility provisions designed to implement this legislative objective. In order for children with disabilities in most states to receive a publicly funded education appropriate to their needs, they first have to be "diagnosed" as fitting into one of several predetermined categories that have “traditionally governed disability in Western society” (Ahearn, 2008, p. 185). It also has to be shown that their medical label, or impairment, is the "cause" of their educational difficulties and that special education and related services are the "cure."(Triano, 2000, p. 2). In exchange for placement in a special education program students will now have a label of disability as part of their school identity. As the medical model views the “individual as the locus of disability” (Ahearn, 2008, p. 187).

In spite of the evolving etiology of disability in the past decade, for the most part, these categories have undergone little change since 1975 and still provide the basis for special education eligibility in the United States (Ahearn, 2008). Labeling people with disabilities by medical categories and attributing the problems they experience to their disabilities is in sharp contrast to the philosophy and goals of the disability civil rights movement. With the passage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (or 504 plan), however, disability rights activists and their allies began articulating a "social model of disability" which "[de-emphasizes] the significance of individual impairments (such as, impairments, blindness or intellectual disabilities) in causing the problems persons with disabilities face" (Gill, 1997, p. 1). The focus shifted instead, on such “socially constructed barriers as exclusion, blocked access and negative attitudes towards disability as the 'real' problems of disability" (Gill, 1997, p. 1). According to a social model of disability, therefore, the educational difficulties experienced by disabled children in the regular education classroom are not necessarily caused by their individual impairments, but might rather be the result of a poorly-developed regular education system that is not equipped to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Sadly, rather than acknowledge this, however, the eligibility requirements for IDEA explicitly locate the problem within the individual disabled child. This line of thinking is completely contrary to the social understanding of disability that was prevalent in the 1970s and articulated in such policies as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY MATTERS

As previously discussed, the social model of disability arose in response to the critique of the medical model of disability. Which held that the disability/impairment was located within the individual and that the individual was therefore responsible for the effects of their disability/impairment (Lang, 2001). The social model of disability is markedly different philosophically from the medical model of disability. In that the primary difference of the social model is that it “shifts the deficits of the functional, physiological and cognitive abilities of the impaired individual” to the society, which has the ability to enact systems that oppress and marginalize those with impairments (Lang, 2001, p. 3). Simply, impairment is distinguished from disability (Davis, 2013). The former is “individual and private; the latter is structural and public” (Davis, 2013, p. 1). While professionals, such as school personnel looked to the medical model of disability as a way to fix impairment (special education programs), the real priority is to accept impairment and to remove disability. For example, take feminism and the distinctions between biological sex (male and female) and social gender (masculine and feminine) (Oakley, 1972). Like gender, disability is a culturally and historically specific material phenomenon, not a “universal and unchanging essence” (Shakespeare, 2014, p. 216). Under the social model the definition of disability is a social creation – “a relationship between people with impairment and a disabling society” (e.g. discriminatory attitudes, individual deficit beliefs, social oppression, and, structural barriers) (Garland-Thompson, 2012; Shakespeare, 2014, p.1). Mike Oliver writes:

> Models are ways of translating ideas into practice and the idea underpinning the individual model was that of personal tragedy, while the idea underpinning the social model was that of externally imposed restriction. (Oliver, 2004, p. 19)

Social model thinking according to Shakespeare (2013), “mandates barrier removal, anti-discrimination legislation, independent living and other responses to social oppression” (p. 217). From a disability rights perspective, social model approaches appear progressive, while the medical model approaches seem reactionary. At its most basic, the social model reduces the terminology people use: “disabled people” signals a social model approach, whereas “people with disabilities” signals a mainstream approach (Lang, 2001; Shakespeare, 2014, p. 217)

By identifying social barriers to be removed, the social model has been effective instrumentally in the liberation of disabled people. Michael Oliver, argues that the social model is a “practical tool, not a theory, an idea or a concept” (2004, p. 30). The social model aptly demonstrates that the problems disabled people face are solely the results of social oppression and exclusion, not their individual deficits. This places the burden of responsibility on society to remove the barriers which have been imposed, and to enable disabled people to participate freely in their communities. The social model has the power to change attitudinal barriers, namely, the perception of disabled people. Admittedly, this is no small task. Attitudinal shifts can be achieved by shifting the view that the problem of disability is not located within the impaired individual, but in society (Garland-Thompson, 2012; Oliver, 2004; Shakespeare, 2014).

DISABILITY AS MATERIAL PHENOMENON MATTERS

Philosophical essentialism remains a contentious topic among disability theorists. Within essentialist thought, it is assumed that for any “specific kind of entity (e.g. a human body) there exists a specific set of attributes or characteristics that any entity of that kind must possess” (Feely, 2016, p. 864). These essential attributes or characteristics are presumed to be “immutable, inherent and context independent” (Feely, 2016, p. 864). Put differently, a human body must possess an essential set of attributes or characteristics to secure membership of its type or kind, a normal human body. Traditional essentialist thought has been, and continues to be, arguably the cause of much suffering for millions of humans with differing bodies or minds, functioning to exclude these people from full human status and in some instances justifying to eliminate them by eugenics.

Essentialism is not new but it does have a storied past. For example, Aristotelian essentialism, suggests that “species have an ideal form or a timeless essence” (Feely, 2016, p. 864), which individual members approximate to a greater or lesser degree, without ever fully embodying (Futuyma, 2009). During the nineteenth century, Davis (2013) argues, the Aristotelian notion of the ideal human was dominated by the neo-essentialist concept of the statically normal human. Eugenic scientists began constructing bell curves and calculating statistical norms for a whole range of corporeal and cognitive traits. These objective statistical norms were quickly to become moral norms, and subnormal outliers – for example, those with low IQ scores – were inherently viewed as deficient and diseased. Moreover, they became seen as a problem that needed to be eliminated through a range of eugenic measures (Feely, 2016).

As discussed earlier in this section the social model conceptualizes impairment as real, while stating that disability is a result of environmental and attitudinal barriers that prevent those with impairments from fully participating in society- is a social construction that could be reduced, may be even irradiated, if given enough political will (Oliver, 1990; Lang, 2001). In recent decades critical disability scholars have begun to challenge the social model by arguing that impairment, as well as disability, should be seen as a social construction rather than an essential truth (Lang, 2001; Feely, 2016). To justify this turning-away from an essentialist understanding, critical scholars have drawn from the work of Foucault’s on the discourse and the body (Shakespeare, 2014; Feely, 2016).

Foucault focused on how societal forces such as the powerful social-scientific discourses such as psychiatry, which classify and prescribe responses to human conditions, have produced “devalued subjects (a person with a disability/impairment) and social species (people with disabilities/impairments)” (Freely, 2016, p. 865). Foucault’s account of devalued subject creating (Rabinow, 1984), when applied to the field of disability, does not deny powerful social-scientific discourses such as psychiatry, which classify and prescribe responses to human diversity, have produced devalued subjects (‘a person with an intellectual disability’) and social species (‘people with intellectual disabilities’). Foucault’s account of devalued subject creation (see Rabinow 1984), when applied to the field of disability, does not deny the existence of diversity among humans. However, it does offer an explanation of how a “cognitively and corporeally diverse human species” came to be conceptually split and hierarchically ranked into valued ‘normal’ subjects and devalued ‘impaired’ subjects with respect to a range of traits (Feely, 2016, p. 865). This was the product of a specific set of interrelated scientific and social processes, namely scientific classification, dividing practices and subjectification. Scientific classification involves “arbitrary taxonomical acts by authorities within human sciences” (Lang, 2001; Feely, 2016, p. 865). For example, the decision to classify those who score above 70 in an IQ test as ‘normal’ and those who score below 70 as ‘impaired’. While such decisions are arbitrary, because they are found within a seemingly scientific discourse, they come to be accepted as objective and true. “Dividing practices,” according to Feely (2016)… “ are practices of separating humans arbitrarily classified as ‘impaired’ from the ‘normal’ majority, which serves to increase their otherness (e.g. segregating ‘impaired’ people through institutionalization)” (p. 867) (Oliver, 1990; Lang, 2001; Shakespeare, 2014). Finally, subjectification involves bodies that have been classified as ‘impaired’ coming to accept the pathological labels applied to them as their true identity; for example, when a woman classified as physically impaired begins to accept this and comes to think “I am a woman with a physical impairment”. At this point, argues Lang (2007) subjectification is complete.

For those who are in alignment with the Foucauldian view, new political responses to the problem of impairment become possible (Chen, Brodwin, Cardoso, & Chan, 2002; Finlay & Lyons, 2000; Feely, 2016). Because labelling people as impaired is arbitrary (Chen, Brodwin, Cardoso, & Chan, 2002; Feely, 2016), it becomes legitimate to resist these labels and refuse to identify with them, either at an individual or a collective level. A number of researchers have found that a significant amount of people who have been labeled with a disability/impairment either refute to self- identify with the label ascribed to them or do not use the label to describe themselves or the situation they might find themselves (Bogdan, 1980; Castles, 1996; Davies & Jenkins, 1997; Edgerton, 1993; Finlay & Lyons, 1998, 2000; Jahoda, Markova, & Cattermole, 1988; Mest, Rapley, Kiernan, & Antaki, 1998; Simons, 1992; Szivos & Griffiths, 1990). In short, many of these people resist or reject the labels applied to them (Bogdan, 1980; Simons, 1992; Finlay & Lyons 2000).

Poststructuralist approaches have been the subject of much debate within academia in general, and disability studies in particular. Critics cite three problems: these approaches overlook the material world that disabled people inhabit; they are unable to engage productively rather than critically with science and technology; and they discount the importance of embodied experience (Feely, 2016). Regarding poststructuralism's failure to deal with the realities of the material world, Bennett (2010) suggests, "matter is taken for granted…because we'd (disability studies scholars) rather focus on words we play with friends than on the messy, mutating forms of organismic being" (p. 1). Similarly, Wendell (1989) and Barnes (2012) are in agreement with Bennett, as they both argue that poststructuralists accounts minimize the material reality of disabled people's lives and have been instrumental in the de-radicalization of disability studies by shifting critical attention away from identifying and challenging material forces underpinning disablement "towards a politically benign focus on culture, language and discourse" (Bennett, 2010, p. 1). The new materialist turn is critical to rethinking subject-object relations in a more "dynamic way", because it allows for "discovering alternate ways of being on the world" (Kafer, 2013, p.83). Some advocates for the material reality approach draw from Bhaskar's critical realism (Danermark, 2002; Shakespeare, 2006, 2014). This they posit "allows for non-reductionist, multifactorial accounts that consider disability on a multiplicity of levels" (e.g. biological, the socio-economic) (Feely, 2016, p. 868). This bold shift towards a material discursive approach requires disability scholars to think about the place of embodied humans within a material word. What does this mean for disability studies going forward? Simply, that disability studies (as a field of research) will be forced to think about the ways in which "people produce, reproduce, and consume the material environment" (Chen, Brown, & Kotbungkair 2012, p. 202).

BECOMING MATTERS

The concept of becoming moves away from the Social model of disability which still holds onto a fixed identity, that of impairment. In thinking about disability researchers have to keep in mind that a socially constructed label of ‘disability/impairment’ does not always fit the people to whom they are given. In the case of the participant of this study, she refuses to accept a label of disability/impairment, even though she may be perceived as disabled by the majority of people, she adamantly does not experience her world as a disabled person. True, she has a physical impairment that other people may have, but because of her opportunities and the context of her life, she does not feel significantly limited in her activities. That is why the concept of becoming is important to add to the field of disability studies, because it disrupts previously held assumptions about disability and is not limited to a human centered fixed identity but rather allows for the girl to be viewed outside of those old humanist constraints that want to contain her due to her impairment. Similarly, using the material discursive lens on reading disability researchers will be able to unearth contributing factors that lead to oppression of people with disabilities: Whether to stress sameness or difference in relation, to the dominant group; whether to place great value on independence from the help of other people as the dominant culture espouses, or to “question a value-system that distrusts and de-values dependence on other people and vulnerability in general” (Wendell, 1989, p. 105), these important questions can begin to spark ethical/responsible conversations about the insights and experiences of disabled people. Another benefit of looking at disability through the material discursive approach is how the ‘doing’ of disability is made. This ‘doing’ of disability is made through the productions of bodies, buildings, books, adaptive desks, technologies, policies, theories and discourses. These forms of matter are granted power in shaping social discourses about disability/impairment which impact the girl and her relationship with her wheelchair in school/home/environment.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This dissertation is informed by new materialism and post-qualitative inquiry; each of these unique perspectives problematizes the idea of representation and possibly what is traditionally held to be true when speaking to a young girl with an impairment in terms of her lived experiences. I would be remiss to describe this chapter as anything other than an account of my methodology, data collection, and data analysis. My related accounts should be viewed as partial/unfinished, maybe unintentionally perspectival, and shifting as the stories revealed to me from my participant. The writing about uncertain data should be viewed as an iterative process never finished, rather a space to find a myriad of possibilities and differences, thus, never final. Barad (2007) informs us that the past is reshaped by current intra-actions and the “future is not what will come to be”, but rather, “the past and present are enfolding in matter’s iterative becoming” (p. 234). In keeping with the sentiment of Barad, I offer that this chapter is also an intra-active reconfiguration; this chapter simply suggests what I have done in the process of my inquiry. This belief may be at odds with traditional humanist methodology, in which data analysis results of cause and effect, are considered in most cases finalized, and/or shed limited insights, to further reinforce limited narratives. In other words, rethinking humanist thought is possible, if “we cease to privilege knowledge over being” (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013, p. 603), this is an intentional undertaking to explore the relationship between a girl and her wheelchair through the entanglements from the productions of material bodies.

My goal was not to simply write a story about a girl and her wheelchair, but to explore through my results and research designs, the relationship between the girl and her wheelchair and how this relationship is produced in a material reality. Methodology is a ‘doing’, an enactment with the data that is never final, as the agential cuts are not permanent (Barad, 2007), therefore the reading of the data is always changing. In the following section, I have outlined my research methodology and design.

METHODOLOGY MATTERS

As stated before, I have chosen to think disability differently and employ new materialism, post-humanism and post qualitative inquiry as my theoretical frameworks. In doing so, this move has stirred some scholars (i.e. St. Pierre, 2013) to suggest that researchers should therefore not use methods that were developed under humanist traditions. These methods are part and parcel of the humanist methodological process, according to Law (2004); these “standard methods” qualitative and quantitative are “significant, and they will properly remain so” (p.4). When these “standard methods” are moved into another realm, such as materiality, things get messy, as these methods are embedded with Euro-American assumptions, and do not “adapt well to the “ephemeral, the indefinite and the irregular” (p. 4). Just because a method is *messy* does not mean there is no value. I am trying to re-imagine how to carry out inquiry differently and what data produced these ways may reveal. It’s fair to reason that the majority of methods, or possibly all of them, would then appear to be inadequate for post-humanism inquiry (Law, 2004). This shift away from method and empiricism leads to philosophical inquiry and thinking with theory as a methodological tool (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). I argue that moving this dissertation into a philosophical inquiry will enable the collapse of subject/object binary, when thinking/rethinking/reading/rereading differently about data.

My aim is not to seek detachment from the world but how to engage with the world, in a manner that allows for differences in the data to emerge from traditional language/words that have been used to conceptualize subjects with impairments and their ensuing identity formation. I aim to challenge damaging narratives about impairments/disabilities.

I will incorporate the framework of post qualitative inquiry (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013) in this study and will employ Baradian concepts to help me re-think and re-read as I analyze the interviews, journal notes, photographs, and observations. The move towards post qualitative inquiry is a risky move as it eliminates the traditional methodological rules of qualitative research that have long guided techniques such as interviewing and observations. I would argue that instead of doing away with techniques, which is not necessary, that they should be co-constituted instead, so that my inquiry may explore what my data might look like in a world that is "unformed but generative producer of realities" (Law, 2007, p. 8). By removing the constraints of traditional techniques my inquiry becomes fluid, and the past is remade. Subjects and objects constitute a "series of flows, energies, and movements" (Somerville, 2017, p. 37); these bodies are in motion and never standing still. In addition, Barad (2003) informs us that the past should not simply be seen as what proceeds the present. Rather, "the past is never left behind" and is constantly being "reconfigured and reconfiguring" in the action of the present and in entangled memory (p. 234). In other words, my reading of the data will more be liberal and flexible, which creates an environment for other insights to be used when analyzing the data. For example, if I used the social model of disability to read and process my data, instead of the medical model of disability, the insights produced from the social model reading of data would be markedly different. In that, the insights would not locate disability in the individual but rather in material discursive realities, that impose forms of social oppression upon the person with the impairment. I believe in utilizing a more ethical, accepting and celebratory stance of diverse abilities, rather than one that marginalizes and categorizes individuals as *others*.

NEW MATERIALISM AS THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This study will use the new materialism theoretical framework by re-framing the traditional humanities concept away from the human-centered approach. This may be considered a radical move, and viewed as a bold step that disrupts the traditional way scholars have studied self-concept in the field of psychology (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Additionally, within the framework of new materialism, this study will use a discursive approach (Hardy & Thomas, 2015) to study materiality. This will offer a deeper examination of the relationship between “materiality and discourse” (p. 3) which will yield valuable insights into the relationship between the girl and her wheelchair, how these constructs of meaning influence her sense of self, and how they help her to create her own identity of a normal adolescent girl (Barad, 2003, 2007).

New Materialism has many names, such as empiricism (Clough & Nutbrown, 2009), however not all theorists use the same theoretical underpinnings when using a materialist framework, which results in a scholarship that is theoretically rich, even though many researchers such as Foucault and Butler also utilize feminist thought and practice. New Materialism finds its alignment on the condition that the significance of materiality is located across science, social and culturally mediated practices (Orlikowski & Scott, 2015). Hardy and Thomas (2015) propose the use of discursive approach to study materiality.

New forms of knowledge are produced because a new materialism framework “cuts across the realist/constructionist dualism” (Van de Tuin & Dolphijn, 2010, p. 157). The realist/ constructionist dualism is traditionally found within the humanities where the subject occupies center stage of the research, while other aspects of his world are positioned in a subordinate manner (Braidotti, 2013). In other words, new materialism aims to displace the human researcher/observer from his/her central position in the “intra-actions” (Barad, 2007) between the world of events and the processes of research (Fox & Allred, 2015).

Additionally, the new materialism and post-qualitative inquiry approaches will generate alternate ways of becoming and knowing, specifically the relationship body (girl)-wheelchair. Using a material discursive approach to explore what kinds of entities exist in the space of body-wheelchair helps to fully explore the implications of science, culture, and nature, and the relation of being in the material world. More specifically, new materialist and post-qualitative inquiry theories will provide multiple opportunities to document how matter, and human and non-human entities, in this case, body-wheelchair, create ontological intra-actions (Barad, 2007), which are then reflected within “epistemological stances” (Fox & Allred, 2015, p. 1).

POST QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

Post qualitative inquiry methods will guide my data collection analysis. I decided to move away from the traditional humanistic, “human centered practices” (Koro-Ljungberg & Löytonen, 2017, p. 1; Tesar, 2017, p.1) toward a methodology that I believe compliments a material discursive approach to research. The research in this paper also utilizes certain aspects of post qualitative inquiry. As described by MacLure (2013) such method “proposes the development of non- or post-representational research practices, drawing on contemporary materialist work that rejects the static, hierarchical logic of representation, and practices such as interpretation and analysis as conventionally understood” (p. 665). Such research utilizes the ontological and practical implications of said approach, by taking into consideration a fragment that constitutes the data of the research. By emphasizing the matter of language and representation, such approach engages “the materiality of language itself” (MacLure, 2013, p. 665) and the material force along with its entanglements in bodies and matter; specifically in the case of this research paper, the girl and her wheelchair. MacLure (2013) draws from previous work that utilizes concepts and labels, such as new materialism (Hird, 2009) or new empiricism (Clough & Nutbrown, 2009). New materialisms is viewed to encompass and cross categorize the realm of science and social interaction, and examining the connectedness of nature in its materialistic interpretation and culture. In this process MacLure (2013) points out that the critique of representation does not deny that it flat out does not exist, and that “its cultural, ideological and symbolic productions” (p. 661-62) constitute the focus of the inquiry, but she argues that representation is deemed as being a second-order intervention. In this approach the hierarchy of representation is replaced by materialist ontologies and by the logic and discourse of matter as it exists and interacts in a material world.

In addition, in defining post qualitative inquiry MacLure (2013) attempts to describe the meaning of “sense”, that has been viewed as “resistance and perplexity” where “the data” resist analysis and refuses to render up meaning, thus making way to what is deemed as “good sense” or “common sense” (p.664) . In the case of this paper, it allows one to read the data diffractively by means of coding and categorizing information and raw facts, which may reveal patterns and regularities, which is deemed as a “retroactive, research-producing process” (p.660). The concept of “sense” is important in this research paper for its potential to trigger inquiry and action into a research area fairly unknown and unexplored by social science. MacLure (2013) points out that reading of data taken as sense-event could be the starting point of such inquiry. The argument of such qualitative inquiry methodology is that it should replace the focus of “depth” and highlight the relevance of “height” in the process of research.

Additional light on the subject of post qualitative inquiry is shed by the research of Lather and St. Pierre (2013) where the categories “interviewing”, “observation,” and “privileged face-to-face methods of data collection” are defined as “humanist qualitative inquiry” (Lather & Pierre, 2013, p. 631). They argue that if “phenomenology” is skipped in the process of qualitative research, the privilege of the presence of the researcher, in the course of qualitative interviewing and observation, is taken away too, which by itself poses problems on the foundational nature of authentic lived experience. In the case of this research paper, the acts of recognition of essential phenomena constituting raw data along with the recognition of matter prove to be relevant to this study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of this study is: What is the relationship between the adolescent girl with orthopedic impairment and her wheelchair?

Sub question for this study is: How does the relationship girl/wheelchair influence her sense of becoming?

RESEARCHER/PARTICIPANT ENTANGLEMENTS MATTER

My role as a researcher was initially that of an outsider, since I am not an adolescent female 18 years of age and personally never needed assistive technology such as wheelchair. I do not have a physical disability nor do I need the assistance of a wheelchair for mobility. What I do possess are my own perceptions, knowledge and understanding of the world through my lived experiences both socially and culturally that undoubtedly have shaped my life, my perceptions, and my means of creating my own reality.

As soon as I started working with my participant I was no longer on the periphery (as I may have been while engaged in traditional qualitative methods) but instead became entangled and thus a subject myself in the intra-actions (Barad, 2007) and the materiality of this study. At the same time, I recognize that the stories are not mine; during the data collection process we shared a material reality that of a researcher and participant, a mutual constitution of entangled agencies (Barad, 2007). During our sessions together, our lived experiences past and present became intertwined as I listened to her tell her stories. In my research I recognize that I have had a different life experience with my body, in comparison to the physical impairment than my participant has (Morris, 1992).

My employment as a high school teacher puts me in a position of power, guidance and oversight. I have a dual role. I am a teacher at the high school where my participant is also a student. I will also assume the role of a researcher. Both positions are embedded with power. There is an obvious power differential: teacher: student and researcher: student. Recently, I was told that my participant is shy and it may take some time before she allows me into her personal space. Having this information about the participant before our first meeting helped me to be aware of my body language as I tend to be naturally gregarious. In that regard, I toned down my visible presence and avoided talking too much during our first few encounters. I mostly observed and listened. It was imperative to develop a trusted relationship between myself and the participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

In my entangled position as researcher, I targeted and created an environment of trust and likeability. I ensured that my participant felt safe and secure in meeting with me for interviews and allowing me to observe her therapy sessions as part of my study. Establishing rapport with my participant was a crucial component to the success of my interviews and observations (Kolb, 2012). I was aware at all times and realized that my participant had to feel comfortable with me, if I wanted her to reveal her true feelings and thoughts, which is the essence of conducting a narrative inquiry, telling people’s stories (McIntyre, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

WHO TO STUDY, WHAT MATTERS

I looked to qualitative research to find an appropriate sample size for my research, which tends to be relatively small, and can range from 2-10 participants (Creswell, 2014). Samples in qualitative research are usually *purposive* (Marshall & Rossman, 1999: emphasis added). In other words, participants are selected because they are likely to generate useful data for the project. My case was no different. I worked at a local high school and wanted to recruit a student who attended there. I asked my colleagues, who worked with students with both learning disabilities and students with physical impairments, for potential research participants.

Inclusion requirements for this study were: 1.) The participant had to be an adolescent female (14-18 years of age), 2.) The participant had to currently be attending high school, 3.) The participant had to have an orthopedic impairment, and 4.) The participant had to use a form of assistive technology. My research subject criteria proved to be challenging; I was hoping for more than one participant in my study, and at the very least two, but soon settled upon one participant. One of my colleagues a physical therapist informed me that she worked with a student that fit my participant criteria. My colleague set up an appointment with the participant’s home room teacher so that I could explain what my study was about and if she (participant) was interested in participating in my research. The student was a seventeen year old Hispanic female with an orthopedic impairment and uses a wheelchair to navigate her high school campus and her community. At our first introduction which was arranged by her teacher in the classroom, I noticed she was a bit shy, soft spoken, with caramel colored skin, and her dark brown hair fell past her shoulders. Her dark brown eyes and warm wide tooth smile made me feel at ease in her presence. She was sitting in her wheelchair at her desk. She politely shook my hand and we talked for about 10 minutes or so, regarding my upcoming research study. The conversation quickly turned into one about the color of her wheelchair. I noticed that her wheelchair was a sparkly purple hue. I had never seen a sparkly purple wheelchair before. She told me that purple is her favorite color and she was allowed to choose the color for her current wheelchair. I gently guided our conversation back to the main reason why I came to meet her in the first place; I wanted to ask her if she would be interested in participating in my research study. I explained to her that I was looking for a female high school student that had a physical impairment and used a wheelchair. I wanted to explore a young female girl's relationship to her wheelchair. She agreed to participate in my research study. With one stipulation: I could mention that she lost the use of her legs over ten years ago, when she was 8 years old, in a tragic car accident that claimed the lives of her family, she was the only survivor. Part of her agreement to participate in this study was that I was not allowed to ask about the nature of her accident nor include any forthcoming information (that she may have volunteered) in this study. She chose not to dwell on the accident but to move forward in her life as a capable young woman.

One participant was the optimum sample size for this research study (Geertz, 1973). I wanted to delve deeper into the material relationality the participant had with her wheelchair/environment. On the surface one participant may not have looked sufficient but as I started to utilize the Baradian concepts of agential realism, intra-action and diffraction (Barad, 2007): reading, re-reading and thinking and re-thinking my data, it became quite clear that I had multiple participants in this study. In addition to the female participant, the other actors in this study included many material elements such as wheelchair, school, elevator, house, kitchen, bedroom, wooden board, and friends. These multiple material actors added complex, rich, multiple layers to the data analysis.

LOCATION AND RESEARCH SETTING

The participant attended a high school that is located in the metro Phoenix area in which 80 percent of the students receive free and reduced breakfast and lunch. This is the only high school in the district that is considered a Title 1 school based on the student demographics, more specifically the numbers of students identified to qualify for free and reduced lunch. The current school year (SY2015/16) student population is 1,322 students attending grades 9-12th. The high school offers a Gifted and Talented program for students who meet the criteria of the program. In addition the school features a Bilingual education program for students whose first language is not English, and after school clubs and service organizations as well as various sports teams. The high school has a diverse student population: Asian 3%; Black 7.26%; Hispanic 46.52%; Native American 5.14% and White 38.5%.

In addition to the general education curriculum the school has a sizeable special education program. The school's special education programs consist of Learning Resource Center (LRC) and the Life Skills Center (LSC) both programs support students with cognitive and physical disabilities. The LRC, has ninety-nine students with disabilities ranging from specific learning disabilities (i.e. math, or reading) to Autism spectrum disorders. Students in the LRC program typically have higher cognitive abilities when compared to students in the LSC program, and spend the all of their day in the general education classroom with academic support staff. The LSC program currently has sixty-six students, with eight of those students remaining in a self-contained classroom that is appropriate for their cognitive and multiple physical disabilities. The remaining LSC students spend about 80% of their day with other LSC teachers in various classes, and spend the rest of their day taking elective courses (i.e. art, music, photography) with their general education peers.

The district's policy on special education is mandated by the federal government and state department of education. The climate and culture of the high school is one of inclusion or as stated by the federal legislative mandate Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), children have the right to be educated in the "Least Restrictive Environment" (LRE) that statement may mean different educational settings for individual students. The overall goal of the IDEA was to make sure that students receive an appropriate and fair education (IDEA, 2004) in a public school setting. In other words, if a student's cognitive needs deem it necessary that they are educated in a self-contained classroom environment that would be considered the least restrictive environment for that child, or an appropriate educational placement. The same holds true for another student that may have a learning disability and may be fine academically in a general education classroom setting with social supports from the teacher or possible a teacher's assistant (Forman, 1988). Social supports according to Elbaum (2002) consist of the collaboration between teachers, other school personnel and parents that may offer academic support in the way of tutoring and emotional support for students with LD who receive the majority (80 percent or more of their school day) of their education in a general education classroom setting (Forman, 1988). In the case of the student in this study, she received part of her education with teacher support in the LRC (2 out 6 class periods) and the remainders of her academic periods were spent in the general educational setting with her same age and grade peers. The student's academic needs are in compliance with the rules and regulations as set forth in the IDEA (2004) and the Arizona department of education guidelines as they pertain to the education of students that fall under the special education program.

INTERVIEW-MATTER

I used the familiar technique of the interview in this dissertation. This interview method is used to instantiate the participant, to tell her story, and to make visible her performativity. To clarify, the theoretical frameworks being used, such as post qualitative inquiry has space, within its framework, to include the use of the interview process, and will allow for my inquiry to take place. I am not suggesting techniques do not matter; simply, that I used the interview technique because it met the needs of this dissertation. The interview technique is a process I am familiar with and felt comfortable facilitating. I found myself in agreement with both Lather and St. Pierre, that we bring in traditional techniques into new theoretical frameworks to help us normalize our thinking and to create order in our study (e.g. research questions). Techniques do matter. Technique is simply a tool, an object of ritualized action(s), or a repetitive practice(s), such as the interview process that was used in this research study. Manning (2013) suggests, that the importance of a tool cannot be understated, but should be viewed along with its technicity, or its function, a "modality for creating out a system of techniques the more-than of system" (p. 32). It's through the coexistence of technique and technicity that "technique engages the repetitive practices that form composing body, be it organic or inorganic" - technicity, as Manning clarifies, "is a set of enabling conditions that exact from technique the potential of the new for co-composition" (p. 33). This new information that I am seeking to uncover from my interviews is not an attempt to deny my participant's past but rather, "a quality of the more-than of the past, a tuning toward the future" (p. 33). The past is not simply what proceeded the present, it is constantly being remade in the action of the present and in entangled memory (Barad, 2007). The past, according to Manning (2013, p. 33), "now caries potentiality that was always there" but was relegated to the background, and thus made invisible.

The interview and other techniques used in this dissertation are what Manning refers to as *enabling constraints* (Campbell & Manning, 2016, p.32): Observations, review of participant journal entries, and visual materials. Each of these tools became enabling constraints, as they provided me with a certain amount of information upon the first read; while still providing space for additional information to emerge after re-reading and re-thinking my data. These techniques foreground and turn "multiplicities into emergence" (Campbell & Manning 2016, p.32). The relationship between two bodies of matter in this case, human and non-human are messy, uneven, and fragmented. The interview technique makes the young girl and her wheelchair visible, and yet the interview constrains me, the study, and participant into knowable constraints – the multiple forced into emergence (Manning 2013). The interview technique is a productive constraint, one which grounds me into listening “between the words” (p. 35) with the goal of in-forming; or in other words, creating a process of taking form from the various levels of information. I also viewed the interview technique as a means to shift some portion of my inquiry practices from what Lather and St. Pierre (2013) describe as, “from a focus on accuracy of description towards the development of plausible and desirable narratives of the future” (p. 632). This shift enabled me to view the information as moments in time, cause and effect, before and after, as performative realizations, and as intra-activity (Barad, 2007). I did not assume at any time during the interview process, or overall data collection, to have an insider’s view of the voice of my participant or anyone with an orthopedic impairment, nor did I assume to know anything about her lived experiences (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). Again, the interview technique creates a space for the young girl to become visible, and is critical for this study; otherwise this dissertation would lack meaning.

I used a semi-structured qualitative approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) as the structure tends to be more open ended and less structured, thus allowing the participant the flexibility needed to respond to the questions. This type of in-depth interview allowed the stories to be told from the voice of the participant. Semi-structured interview questions were designed to be fluid rather than rigid (Gelman & Rubin, 1995), thus allowing the participant to answer the questions in the way she sees fit. It was important that I remained neutral and non-judgmental during the interview process. In addition, I was conscious of my verbal and non-verbal cues during the interview process and the need to be flexible to rephrase a response or provide a prompt if the situation warranted. On several occasions, I had to restate the question(s) because the participant did not understand what I was asking of her. I had originally slated for interviews to be 30-40 minutes in length and to occur at least twice a month, starting from March 2016 through mid-May 2016. The interviews were originally scheduled to take place at school, but ended up being conducted at the participant's home due to privacy concerns. The young girl felt that she could talk more freely in the comfort of her own home. Due to the participant's time constraints and shift of location, the in depth-interviews lasted 12-24 minutes in length, depending on the subject matter and context. The meeting involved brief socializing at the beginning for 2-3 minutes, adjustments in the room set-up (if needed) to accommodate the participant and her needs, time to establish rapport with the participant and get a feel of her mood for the day and willingness to participate, in the scheduled interview session(s) (see Appendix C). Spending additional minutes before each interview was helpful in establishing a sense of trust between us, as this was the first time she had ever been a part of a research study.

This semi-structured interview process involved many open-ended questions and probes such as: "Tell me more" and "Why do you feel that way?" It was not enough to create thought provoking interview questions. Rather, the challenge was to make sure I asked the right questions that generated meaningful answers that could be interpreted. I was faced with a short interview data collection time frame, due to the fact that the participant was graduating from high school and her afterschool/weekend hours were limited for additional interview sessions. However, probing did serve a useful purpose: probing allowed more time spent on identity talk and to provoke identity performances based on the materiality of questions asked. Probing also maximized the potential for deeper interactive opportunities between the participant and me, which helped us to establish rapport with the aim to reduce the risk of socially desirable answers (Dingwall, 1997; Patton, 1990). Although I believe that the participant answered questions truthfully, I was often aware that due to the demands of the interviews, the respondent (i.e. social desirability) may attempt to present a self that meets these demands. I wanted to make sure the participant was using her own voice to relate her lived experiences, and not what she may have thought was the “right” answer (Denzin, 1989, p.186). While it may be impossible to completely eliminate biases, it is possible and important to acknowledge and “bracket” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 126) or be aware of my biases when conducting interviews and listening to the participant’s responses.

Due to modifications to traditional interview processes, within new materialist frameworks, the semi-structured interview is not without its challenges. As with many interviews, the participants have the right to refuse to answer a specific question or questions. Although the ultimate goal of the semi structured interview is to illicit responses in a non-directive manner, there were a few times in which I asked probing questions, to elicit an additional thought about a specific question that was asked of the participant. In that instance, I re-worded the question or replaced the question.

OBSERVATION-MATTER

Observations in qualitative research generally involve spending prolonged amounts of time in the setting of the study (Creswell, 2003). I did not have the luxury of spending prolong amounts of time observing my participant, as she graduated that year from high school (i.e. May of 2016). I choose to take notes and to record observations for the data analysis process (Adler & Adler, 1994; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Throughout the remaining school year I observed my participant five times over a course of three months (i.e. April through June 2016) at different times for the duration of 30 minutes, to get a sense of her relationship with her wheelchair after school, and at home. My participant did not like the initial idea that I would conduct observations during her lunch activities at school. Instead of observing her at school in front of her peers, I chose to observe her after school on her way to her bus with her friends and also I observed her from a far as she waited for public transportation and watched her interactions and intra-actions with the bus/bus driver/wheelchair/bus ramp/ as she rode public transportation away from the school site (see Appendix C). Observations proved to be fruitful, that is- I was able to see/hear first-hand how girl/wheelchair/friends/outside/bus/concrete/school buildings/ noise of the other students intra acted and how this assemblage of material bodies helps her feel like a "normal girl" She was laughing and talking as you would expect any high school young girl to engage in with her peers. On another occasion, I observed (after school) her waiting at the bus stop in front of her school to take the bus. I observed that she was not talking to the other students around her she was waiting and looking around until the bus came. One the bus arrived, she wheeled herself to the back door and waited for the bus driver to lower the ramp and she then rolled herself up the ramp onto the bus. The bus driver proceeded to help back up her chair into the designated wheelchair space on the bus- he secured her and the wheelchair into place and drove off. Again, another observation, different location, with sounds of cars, buses, the sound of hydraulic brakes lower the ramp, door closing, and the sound of the bus and it drove down the busy street. The girl's interaction with the bus driver appeared to be friendly as they both smiled at each other during the process to get her and the wheelchair onto the bus. This observation was interesting in that one moment she was capable in riding the bus alone, but at the same time she needed the assistance of the bus driver to get her and the wheelchair onto the bus, so that she could go home. Her sense of knowing and becoming changed moment to moment during the girl/wheelchair/bus/ramp/driver/street intra-action with entangled material bodies.

I am aware that observations have their drawbacks, namely obtrusiveness. For example, a stranger with a pad and pencil may attract unwanted attention in the research setting while recording people’s behavior. The task of the qualitative researcher would be to make sure that the participants become accustomed over time to having the researcher around. It was necessary for me to visit the site several times before collecting data. In this way my presence felt less intrusive in the setting, and made for a more relaxed research setting for the participant and myself, thus avoiding as much as possible the so called Hawthorne effect. The Hawthorne effect is a type of reaction, in which individuals improve an aspect of their behavior in response to their awareness of being observed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

VISUAL-MATTER

Visual images were used to document a 24 hour period of the participant’s life with her wheelchair. Lister and Wells (2001), suggests, that culture can be “seen, imagined, classified and narrated” through visual images (p. 62). The significance in giving the participant a camera to visually record a 24 hour period with herself and her wheelchair was to let the participant capture and tell her reality through pictures. I wanted to see what images she would take that would shed light on her relationship with her wheelchair. In addition, I was also curious if the visual images would provide a visual counter-narrative to her idea of what a “normal” young female with an orthopedic impairment looks like and what type of activities a “normal” young female engages in. I was curious as to what she might leave out in her visual images as well. She had the freedom to choose any setting or location, with friends or by herself. The visual images provided another window of opportunity to view her relationship with her wheelchair and how that relationship is depicted through visual images. In addition to taking the pictures, I asked her to write down what were her thoughts that prompted her to take specific pictures, in a note book. Out of a roll of 24 exposures, she took 11 color pictures. She told me that she had accidently exposed the film in the camera, thus destroyed 13 exposures. The images, along with captions written by the participant, were collected and used in the data analysis.

JOURNAL-MATTER

The journal was given to the participant at the start of the study with ten additional semi-structured interview questions for her answer in the privacy of her own home, or any space that she chose. I wanted to find out more information about her lived experiences and due to time constraints, I thought providing her with a journal and a few more questions would provide me with additional insights into her sense of self and for me to get to know her better. The participant answers a journal question:

> Q: Are you comfortable in asking for help when getting into certain spaces that may not be wheelchair accessible?

> A: “ yes, throughout the time I got comfortable asking people for help whenever its[sic] necessary[sic] No I dont [sic] feel uncomfortable being in a place that is not wheelchair accessible even of it was wheelchair accessible I wouldnt[sic] feel any different.

She said that she appreciated the journal (see Appendix A) because it allowed her to take her time and answer as many questions as she wanted. It was important for me to give the participant time to reflect on the questions being asked for her to answer, because she had never participated in a research study, and did not share her inner feelings about her impairment with members outside of her family, teacher and close friends.

WORKING THROUGH DATA

Once the interviews, observations, journal entries and visual images were completed, I chose to use the concepts of agential realism, diffraction, and intra-action, as theoretical frameworks to help me make sense out of my data; this was not an easy endeavor. By utilizing Baradian (2007) theoretical frameworks such as agential cuts and diffractions, I explored the relationship between the girl and her wheelchair, using the lens of cause and effect through intra-actions. I was convinced that a material discursive read on my data collection, instead of the more comfortable qualitative data analysis methods, coupled with the idea that my data analysis would offer new insights and possibilities into the relationship between a girl and her wheelchair, was a risk I was willing to take. To help me get a better understanding of the data I collected, I created a spread sheet (see Appendix E) with two categories at the top of the spread sheet: Units of Meaning and Labels.

1. I organized all of my transcripts into various sections (i.e. interviews, observations, journal entries, and visual images), combed all of my transcripts for units of meaning (i.e. “Who and What” units of words spoken by the participant during the interviews), and labels (i.e. meanings of the short combinations of words) to put on my spread sheet.
2. With each consecutive reading/re-reading/think/re-thinking the labels highlighted additional insights (i.e. the identity of “normal”) that were not uncovered during the first reading/thinking process.
3. I added additional categories (i.e. Interaction with Interaction with Bodies of Matter and Intra-Actions-Girl and Wheelchair) to further refine my data to view entanglements with matter.
4. I organized data into emergent themes from the data analysis to help me view the body of my data collection (I will go into further analysis of what this data suggests in chapter 4).
5. I organized photographs into various sections according to Lister & Wells’ (2001) cultural studies approach, along with Barad’s agential intra-activity and diffraction concepts. I organized each photograph in the following categories: Pleasure, Power, Location of Photograph, Girl/Wheelchair, Girl, Wheelchair, Framing, Lighting, Camera Position, Time of Day, Objects, What is Absent in Photograph, and Emergent Theme. I performed this analysis several times with each photograph, making that sure I did not react impulsively to objects and

shapes located in the pictures, but mindfully took the necessary time to ponder every detail located within each photograph. I then employed Baradian's agential intra-activity and diffraction concepts. These cuts provided in-formation for me to build events upon events, bringing the past into the future by uncovering the movement of these objects and shapes. I was eager to see how these visual images or "vitality of movement" (Manning, 2013, p. 93), which are propositions co-constituted by the participant's environment, shaped the lived experiences of the participant (Manning, 2013) and her relationship to her wheelchair.

HOW TO TRUST THIS WORK?

Over the last 25 years the question of what makes qualitative research valid has been widely contested and viewed from many angles naturalistic and constructivist (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), discourse theory (Mishler, 1995) by researchers, little consensus exist (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Traditionally qualitative researchers have typically critiqued realism and scientific empiricism, and have, instead, set out to establish paradigm-specific notions of validity (Tracy, 2010). The end result according to Lather (1993), is a "proliferation of paradigms" (p. 676). The proliferation of concepts for "qualitative excellence undeniably illustrates the creative complexity of the qualitative methodological landscape" (Tracy, 2010, p. 838). The plethora of distinct concepts stands in marked contrast to the traditional consensus in the quantitative community that good research aims for validity, reliability, generalizability, and objectivity (Winter, 2000). The antifoundationalism of the linguistic turn "brought withering critiques" to the notion that research can be categorized by the binary of valid/invalid—that validity is always “multiple, partial, endlessly deferred” (Lather, 1993, p. 675). The movement from the linguistic turn to the ontological turn (e.g., posthumanism) has continued to fuel this discussion of validity as decentering the human subject also decenters traditional notions of ethical behavior, an inherent component of validity (Tracy, 2010).

In the presence of a validity landscape that is fraught with challenges (e.g. methodological, ethical) and an unforeseeable consensus on what to use instead of the “dominant foundational, formulaic and readily available codes of validity” establishing absolutes of validity is difficult. With that said, I will employ Lather’s transgressional validity, Ironic validity, and Rhizomatic validity to move my work into a “regime of truth” (Lather,1993, p. 676) a space in which “ new forms of thought and practice reside” (p. 676).

Transgressive Validity. I will use Lather’s (1993) transgressive validity as part of my validity criteria. Transgressive validity is poststructuralism in orientation, I believe that diffracting transgressive validity with my Baradian conceptions of intra-action/agential realism/becoming, will provide "a space of the incitement to see"(Rajchman 1991, p. 85). I will uncover insights through my data analysis. Lather (1993) employs four ‘frames’, described below, of transgressive validity: ironic validity, paralogical validity, rhizomatic validity, and voluptuous validity.

Ironic/Simulacra validity. Employing Baudrillard’s (1983) notions of simulacra, copies without originals, Lather described ironic validity as “using simulacra to resist the hold of the real and to foreground radical unknowability, the invisible can be made intelligible via objects that are not about nonobjecthood” (Lather, 1993, p. 677). Ironic validity is the process by which “the distinction between the copy and real ceases to have meaning” (1993, p. 677). This action foregrounds the problems of representation and language.

Rhizomatic validity. Drawing on Deleuzian conceptions of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), Lather described rhizomatic validity as the subversion and unsettling from within the framework itself, “it is a vocation,” a response to the call of the otherness of any system. Rhizomes produce paradoxical objects that disrupt notions of orderly structures (Lather, 1993, p.680) in an effort to “open up thought to creative constructions” (Deleuze, 1992, pp. 163-164) the “rhizomes work against the constraints of authority, regularity, and commonsense, and open thought up to creative constructions” (Lather, 1993, p. 680). To function rhizomatically is to act unconventionally as a “relay circuit, multiple openings, as unwanted ‘crabgrass’ in the lawn of academic preconceptions”. In other words rhizomes disrupt the status quo by challenging long held academic beliefs- like a tree there is no trunk, no emergence form a single root rather "arbitrary branchings off and temporary frontiers" which can only be “mapped, not blueprinted” (Lecercle, 1990, p. 132-133) thus allowing for thought to be fluid and transformative and not stable nor fixed.

When validity is used as a process to create knowledge, Koro-Ljungberg (2007), suggests the researcher opens him/herself up to possible alternative outcomes, such as “openness to difference and infinity” (p. 987). In other words, by creating knowledge during the data collection and data analysis I realized that I am not creating “one truth…but invit[ing] other truths and realities” (Koro-Ljungberg, 2007, p. 988). Drawing upon the ideas of Lather’s (1993) Transgressive Validity, Baudrillard’s (1983) ironic’s validity, and Deleuzian (1992) Rhizome Validity, will help me think through the space I have created between/within/without/discourse, matter, entanglements, ethics, new materialism, and intra-actions. Transgressive validity aims to disrupt and challenge old ideas (i.e. what it means to be disabled/impaired) and by using Baradian concepts of agential realism, intra-activity and diffraction to create new possibilities, the ability to transform creative thoughts, and break down oppressive social practices (Lather, 1993, p. 680). I believe that my work gained 'validity' through my onto-ethico-epistemology, my ethical stance as a researcher, my epistemology, and ontology in my study is the method by which my work can be evaluated.

ETHICS-MATTER

Throughout my study, I made sure to adhere to ethical norms to ensure a safe and productive working relationship with my participant. I choose the following ethical standards to guide my relationship with my participant during the course of my research: 1.)Honesty, 2.)Objectivity, and 3.)Integrity. At the beginning of my data collection (the interview process) I made sure to check in with my participant as to how she felt about being interviewed. I wanted to make sure she felt comfortable and I still had her permission to start the interview portion of my study. Building a trusted relationship with my participant was crucial to the success of my study. Equally as important, I did not want to unknowingly harm my participant in any manner during the course of the research. To that end, I made a concerted effort to check in with my participant before every meeting to discuss her comfort level as a participant in my study (Kvale, 1996). These check-ins with the participant allowed space for her not only to talk about how the interview portion of the research feels to her but also these check-ins provided the space or opportunity for her to cease participation in the research study.

Using ethical standards honesty, objectivity and integrity helped me to be cognizant of any potential ethical issues that may have arisen during the course of the study. I knew it was important for me to listen to the responses given by the participant during the interview session. As a researcher, it was my duty to honestly report the participant's exact words and not falsify or misrepresent any data during the data collection, data analysis or dissemination phases of my study. The same is true for making sure there was no objectivity or researcher bias on my part. For the integrity of this study, it was crucial that the participant's words were acknowledged, valued and given the utmost respect that they deserved. Although ethical dilemmas may be difficult to predict during a research study, as a researcher it is my responsibility to be aware that sensitive issues may arise during the course of the study, and if so, my responsibility is to rectify the problem immediately as not to cause further injury to the participant (Patton, 2002)

At the beginning of my research, I presented the participant with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Arizona State University informed consent and confidentiality agreements (see Appendix B). Discussing confidentiality at the beginning of my research study is not only necessary to acquiring signed consent but is necessary for building trust with the participant (Crow, Wiles, Heath, & Charles, 2006). To help make sure that I protected the confidentiality of the participant throughout the research I used, convention of confidentiality. The convention of confidentiality (Baez, 2002), is often used by researchers to protect research participant from harm. This is done when participants are protected throughout the research study by not using any personal identifying markers such as name, city of residence, race or gender (Sieber, 1992). The overall goal of protecting the participant's confidentiality is to minimize the likelihood that readers of the study would be able to link the participant to the study.

I used the convention of confidentiality in the majority of this research study. I took every precaution to use pseudonyms whenever I was confronted with any details that may connect the participant to this study (Sieber, 1992). Part of the study required the participant to use a disposable camera, taking pictures of herself with her wheelchair over a 24 hour period. These visual images while important to the study as it depicts a component of her relationship with her wheelchair may comprise her confidentiality. I addition to the visual images I left certain identifying markers in the data: high school student, impairment and wheelchair, those along with the visual images may reveal her identity to readers of this study. The participant and I discussed this possibility, and she gave her consent to leave the visual images in the study.

As I developed my dissertation topic, wrote the proposal, and received an approved IRB from my university. I hoped that my research would be presented at a professional conference or disseminated into a journal article. She might have assumed, because I worked closely with her teachers I would share her insights with other teachers at the high school she attended. I know as a researcher it is my responsibility to carefully consider future use for my research findings, as much as I possibly can. However, anticipating future audiences present challenges that may be unrealistic to plan for during the course of the study (Morse, 2008).

LIMITING-MATTER

During the design of this study, I had hoped to have at least two participants for my study. My criteria for a research participant was also a limiting factor in my research: A high school adolescent female (14-18), with an orthopedic impairment and who used a form of assistive technology (e.g. wheelchair). I knew the specificity of my criteria would render a small population of eligible participants. I was only able to recruit one participant that fit my criteria and she was a student at the high school where I was a teacher. In retrospect I am glad that I worked with one participant because I was able to forge a researcher- participant relationship that may not have materialized to such an extent had I been obligated to attend to other participants in the study. Knowing this was her first research study I wanted to make sure she felt comfortable with me throughout the research process. In addition to this being the first time participating in a research study, she had never spoken about the nature of her impairment to anyone outside of a small group of close friends and her immediate family (aunt, uncle, and sister).

Having one participant in my study did not prohibit the results of this study to be generalizable to a large segment of the population of people with impairments. There are other adolescent females with physical impairments in public high schools who may also be struggling with their identities and how these identities get shaped through educational policies, federal legislation such as IDEA, ADA and societal attitudes about disablement, and what it means to be “normal”. Moreover, the words that the participant expressed during the course of the interviews, the photographs that she took, and her views in regards to how she represents herself on social media, and the observations that I made all pertain to her life and her lived experiences. Her experience is uniquely hers and does not belong to anyone else. Again, I knew at the onset having one participant would be a limiting factor in my research design, but to what extent I could not predict.

During the interview phase of the research we got a slow start. This is an area in which I did not anticipate I would have to change our agreed upon timeline throughout the study. The timeline at first appeared to align with the participant’s school schedule. However, once time drew near for us to begin our first interview, I realized we had a short window in which to collect interview data, due to her school schedule. During the interview time we had to shift interview sessions dates and times and locations due to her family obligations afterschool and on the weekends. Once we had an updated interview timeline, we met for our first interview. The first interview session consisted of us building rapport, and spending time to talk about her day and what her interests are outside of school. The first round of interview questions did not go as smoothly as I had hoped. The participant had a hard time understanding what I was trying to ask her. So I had to rephrase the question so she could understand what I was asking her. This was hard because I did not want to lose the integrity of the question and force her to answer the question in a manner that did not feel right for her. It was my responsibility to makes sure she understood each question that was being asked. She also confided to me that no one had ever asked her questions about her thoughts on disability and more importantly, her impairment. As a result, initially, she had a difficult time articulating in-depth responses to some of the questions.   I spent a considerable amount of time during the interview session, rephrasing the questions to the participant. As a result the interview sessions on average lasted only about 12-24 minutes in length. I had initially anticipated the interviews lasting anywhere from 30-40 minutes. In retrospect it was my responsibility to make sure the participant not only understood each question, was comfortable in answering each question and continued to want to be a part of my study.

SUMMARY

In my professional practice, field studies, and research work, I have developed an understanding on how the intended research methods and methodologies can provide data analysis that may lead to a solid foundation to impact the process of better hearing the voices of young adolescent girls with orthopedic impairments. It has been an opportunity to learn from their stories how they create their own identities, and do not accept the prescribed labels (e.g. disabled, etc.) that are thrust upon them. This research study is intended to provide new insights and possibilities into how we can celebrate our differences in a kind, respectful, and honorable manner; and demonstrate how adolescent girls with disabilities may experience a more fulfilling and socially inclusive life experience while developing a self-concept that gives them a better opportunity to experience success in school and life

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present a synthesis of my participant's performative becomings, from our interviews, observations and visual figures. In keeping with my new materialist framework, the interviews with the participant consisted of reconstructions of past events in intra-action with the discourses of the interview. I did not analyze the memories as 'true' accounts of my participant, instead, I analyzed them as reconstructions of events to understand how she performed her identity (Butler, 1993). In this way, what the participant revealed was not evaluated on the 'truthfulness' of her memories; that she chose to draw upon certain events during the interview intra-action makes these stories a site of analysis for this dissertation. The following sections incorporate visual figures taken by the participant to provide insights and to describe the results of my interviews and observations with the participant. This portion is divided into four sections: 1) Entanglements Matter, 2) Intra-action Matters, 3) Agential Cuts Matter, and 4) Notion of Becoming an *Abled Girl* Matters.

ENTANGLEMENTS-MATTER

While preparing meals for herself or her family, the girl/chair/kitchen will engage in a series of entanglements to help the girl navigate the material space of the kitchen to make a meal for her family. This is not a single action but a series of entanglements. The girl is sitting in her wheelchair, the rubber wheels of the chair are in contact with the kitchen floor, the enabling the chair to move across the floor in this space along with the girl. The girl is sitting on the cloth seat in the chair to reach the counter/stove/oven/microwave/food items. The food items are placed on counter/table and chairs in the kitchen, are all working inseparably and influencing each other while she makes a meal for herself or her family. If she cannot reach an item on a top shelf in the kitchen, the girl/wheelchair /kitchen/floor/long-reach lopper will work in relation to each other to help the girl reach the item on an overhead shelf. This particular movement will be influenced by the other moving material entities to create the desired outcome of making a meal.

Figure 3. Participant's Lopper.

Figures 3, 5, and 6 illustrate the entanglements of girl/chair/kitchen tool. In an effort to remain self-reliant while performing household activities her uncle gave her a long-reach lopper, a tool used for pruning tress, to use in the kitchen for areas above the sink. In order for the girl to reach her food, the girl/chair/lopper are entangled and working in relation with each other to allow the participant to obtain items that she may want to eat or use as ingredients for cooking meals. In reference to the lopper, she states **"I use this tool to get things that I can't reach, from the shelves above the sink. This way I can get what I want by myself**." [1]

[1] All bold lettering indicates direct quotes from the research participant.

Figure 5. Participant's Kitchen (view 1).

Figure 6. Participant's Kitchen (view 2).

Figures 5 and 6 provide a look into the kitchen in her home. Figure 5 places the stove/oven and counter, topped with various items, in the center of the frame. Both objects take up the entire frame of the picture. To the left you see a white oven/stove with three black burners and a black griddle on top of a front burner. In the shadows, to the far left of the stove, you can see faint outlines of objects that appear to be some type of bottles. On the counter to the right of the stove, there is a metal teakettle, a blue, yellow and white round container of salt with a picture of a girl in a yellow dress with a blue umbrella on the outside. Behind the salt container, there is a roll of white paper towels, nestled in-between the paper towels and container of salt, sits a half full plastic bag of pasta. To the right, but behind the pasta, is a ceramic chicken with its head poking above the salt container and bag of pasta. To the left of the pasta is a round object; however, it is unclear what type of object it is as the kitchen is dark. The placement of the items described on the counter allows easy access for the participant to cook meals for herself or her family. The girl/wheelchair/kitchen/ceramic container, kitchen counter, become entangled as mutually constituted agencies, in the simple task of cooking a meal. **"I cook my own food and sometimes I cook for the family. Most of the things I need in the kitchen are on the counter, where I can reach them from my chair."** The placement of food items on the counter within reach, and the added accommodations of her lopper, assist her in being a positive contributor and give her full independence in her own home. Figure 6, provides another view of her kitchen. The picture was taken further back from the stove and counter area, to include a larger view of the kitchen which contains three high wooden cabinets to the left of the stove/oven and five wooden cabinets below the kitchen counter top. The counter is filled with a small white microwave on top, with a white chicken resting on top of the microwave. There is a reflection from the flash of the camera to the left of the microwave, which makes any items located there undiscernible. To the right of the microwave, there is a small bottle of syrup, and a clear container with black and red cooking utensils inside. The figure shows a water cooler, and a rectangular shaped doorway that leads to an undisclosed portion of the house. Also, in view in the lower right-hand section, there is a corner of the kitchen table along with the backs of two chairs. This figure, along with previous pictures taken in the participant's kitchen, illustrates how she is able to navigate this space independently. The entanglement of the girl/chair is mutually constituted in relation to the entanglements of these other bodies of matter in the kitchen: stove/counter / three high wooden cabinets/ five wooden cabinets below kitchen counter/ small microwave on top of counter/ white chicken on top of microwave/ small bottle of syrup/clear container with black and red cooking utensils/watercooler/rectangular doorway/corner of kitchen table/backs of two chairs—these bodies of matter all exists in the same space, the kitchen, creating a materiality reality for the girl/chair, thus influencing her movements in the space of the kitchen.

ENTANGLEMENTS: GIRL/WHEELCHAIR/BEDROOM/WOODEN BOARD

The entanglement of the girl/chair/bedroom/wooden board clearly reinforces her claim that she is both capable and independent. Figures 2 and 7 show the wooden board that is used to assist the participant out from her wheelchair, independently onto her bed.

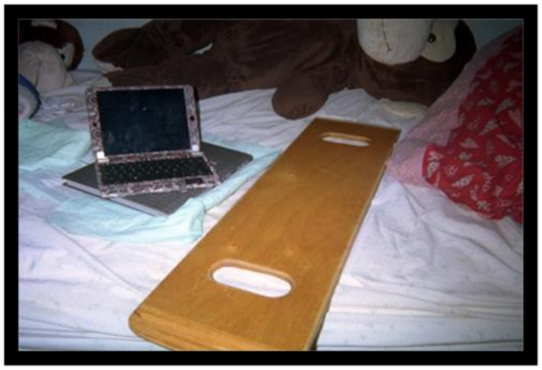

Figure 2. Participant's Transportation Board.

Figure 7. Participant's Wheelchair with Transportation Board.

Figures 2 and 7 show her wooden board, which she uses to transport herself from her wheelchair onto her bed. Although the board does not take up the space of the entire frame in either figure, the board is prominent in both figures. Her reliance on her board allows her to be self-reliant, capable and independent. She is able to transport herself from her chair into bed whenever she wants to get out of her wheelchair. She asserts, **"This board helps me get into bed from my wheelchair. This board helps me get into bed by myself."** Interestingly, one can surmise the placement of the wooden board on top of the chair could be seen as intentional since both items, the board and wheelchair, are used as tools to help her remain capable and independent. In any event, the placement of the wooden board (i.e. on her bed in front of her computer) in figure 2 lets us know that she uses the board to independently access her various activities, such as using her computer. The girl/wheelchair/board become mutually constituted agencies through intra–action when she wants to leave her chair and get onto her bed.

Entanglements the ontological inseparability of intra-acting agencies (e.g. girl/chair/board) are not bounded by geographic location or time, nor do they begin or end, but rather are continuously intra-acting with bodies of matter. The notion of entanglement is especially relevant to this study of the relationship between a girl and her wheelchair in that, it looks at how humans intra-act with their social and material world (Butler, 1997).

INTRA-ACTION: GIRL/WHEELCHAIR/ SCHOOL ELEVATOR

As was previously stated, the girl's relationship with her wheelchair is based on her past and current beliefs of disability and is further shaped by the intra-action of discourse and materiality of entangled bodies. Although she views herself and her wheel chair as separate entities, when in actuality the girl/chair/school elevator and are mutually constituted entities. They are considered mutually constituted agencies because when combined these bodies provide an action or movement. In this case the wheelchair provides mobility for her as she moves within her environment. She asserts: **“my wheelchair is something that gets me around”**. She continues, **“[it] gets me to places I need to get to**” during her day at school and outside of school. The utility of the wheelchair for her mobility is the only value she assigns to it, without any sense of connectedness to the object, the wheelchair constitutes the girl because it allows her mobility to move from one place to another.

Human and non-human entities, in this case the girl and her chair, are bodies of matter that are constantly influencing and working inseparably, causing an entanglement between the bodies of matter each affecting the other simultaneously. For example, this entanglement of girl and chair happens simultaneously while meeting her friends by the elevator, which is located on the second floor of a high school building. The relationship between the girl and her chair in this context is mutually constituted with the material agencies of that space (but not limited to). The girl physically moves the chair with both her hands placed on the wheels of the chair. Not only is the girl engaged in a physical intra-action with the chair, conversely, the chair could not move without the influence of the girl, in this case her physical strength. This synergistic movement of girl/chair and chair/girl are needed for mobility purposes, so that the girl can meet her friends at an assigned location: the school elevator. The intra-action does not stop here; rather is continuously moving as the girls, as bodies of matter, are now entangled with and influencing the relationship of the girl/chair and become part of the entanglement of entities as they create actions by pushing the buttons on the elevator. The elevator itself becomes another component of the entanglement of bodies, as all forms of matter converge inside the elevator as it descends from the second floor to the first of the school building.

INTRA-ACTION: GIRL/WHEELCHAIR/BEDROOM MATTER

Engaging in normal activities such as using her cellphone, and using a computer to access friends via social media helps solidify a normal sense of self. Participating in the same activities that other girls her age allows her to refute the disability narrative in which she believes that having a disability means **"Not being able to do something."** It is through these intra-actions of girl/bed/cellphone/computer working within themselves that produce actions that allow her to engage in similar activities as other young girls her age. These intra-actions are also influenced by the larger discourse on what is means to be normal, disabled/impaired/and female.


Figure 4. Participant's Bed.

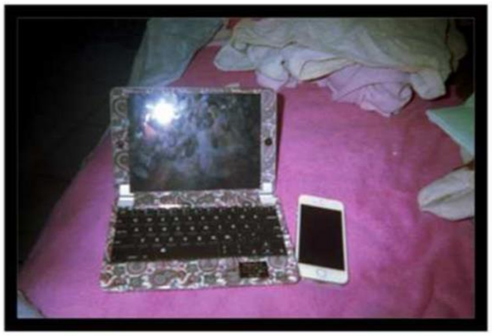
Figure 8. Participant's Laptop and Phone.


Figure 10. Participant's Karaoke System.


Figure 11. Participant's Dresser.

Figures 4, 8, 10, and 11 provide a glimpse into her private sphere, her bedroom. It is in this space that she chooses to engage in various activities that she believes normal nondisabled girls participate in and enjoy. The girl/bed and her bedroom/all items in her room/ act in mutually constitutive ways, meaning they are acting together thus creating a space for the girl to perform acts that she believes are “normal”. In figure 4, the bed takes up the entire frame of the picture. The bed is an important part of her life. This is where she has her stuffed animals, high school yearbook, and she states, **“I spend a lot of time in my bedroom.”** The angle of the picture focuses entirely on the bed, indicating the importance of her bed as a particular space in the layout of her bedroom. Evidently, the bed is an important part of her life. It provides much more than a place to sleep, but as a person with limited mobility, she spends more time on the bed, including time to play with her stuffed animal toys from childhood, as well as time to be in touch with friends by means of computer and cell phone. Additionally, the bed provides her a view of her room with important components in her life, such as the picture of her parents, whom she can see and think about while in her bed. In the upper right hand corner of the figure, you can see a glimpse of her wooden board and wheelchair. The location of these two objects creates the sense that the wooden board and wheelchair are not part of her activities, and they serve a separate purpose. While figure 8 shows what types of activities she engages in while sitting/lying on her bed; the computer is the focal point of this figure, as well as her cell phone. She says, **“I use the computer and phone to talk to my friends. I text a lot.”** The aforementioned quote along with the figure clearly depict the importance of her computer and cell phone as they help fuel her own sense of self as a normal adolescent girl. That is not much different from any other adolescent –

communication via digital media and mobile devices are an integral part of her life. In that respect, there is no difference between her and any other person of her age. Similarly figure 10, as in previous figures 4 and 8, places the activity at the forefront of the picture frame. Figure 10 shows a full side view of her music system, which is black with a center console and two microphones on both the right and left sides of the column. Behind the music system, there is a large piece of material that resembles foam that shares the focal point of the figure. The location of the picture is unclear, except that the music system is located in her house. You see a window with blinds and lacy-type curtains along with other items such as a multi-colored striped bag and possibly a red and white blanket or article of clothing to the right of the music system. On the left side of the music system, you see various wires from the sound system and multi-colored items behind the wires toward the left front of the picture.

Having a space in her bedroom to place her personal items is important. The location of her dresser in figure 11 is front and center, which suggests the importance of the dresser in her life. She states, **“This is where I put my earrings, pictures of friends, and other important things.”** As in previous figures, the activity or item used for said activity is clearly in the center of the visual figure, thus signifying the importance of the activity to the participant. The placement of the activities also reiterates her normal identity formation which she referenced throughout the interview process: **“I don’t see myself as a disabled person.”** She engages in **“normal things that everyone does”** such as, having boxes on her dresser, for earrings, pictures of friends (shown on the left side of the dresser above the earring box, in front of the mirror and on the wall) and parents on the upper right hand of the picture. The dresser is brown with three drawers, two smaller drawers and one longer drawer. The top of the dresser is filled with various items which are important to the participant: a red graduation cap, and boxes of different shapes, sizes and colors. The various activities depicted by the figures, help us to understand how she normalizes her disability through her engagement in multiple activities.

INTRA-ACTION: GIRL/WHEELCHAIR/FRIENDS/AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The entanglement/intra-activity of girl/chair and chair/girl changes depending on the geographical location in which she and her chair are situated. For example, when playing badminton with friends at the park outside additional bodies of matter are introduced: humans, metal and rubber materials that make up the wheelchair, grass, the nylon string and plastic materials that create a badminton net, badminton birdie, the outside weather, and temperature all influence each other by creating mutually constitutive exchanges which are inseparable, thus creating many different types of entanglements and mutual impacts as the game of badminton is played.

Spending time with friends is an integral part of the participant's social life. When asked about outside school activities, she stated that she likes to **"Go out with friends and [her] sister."** She likes to go out to eat at different restaurants, and frequently orders one of her favorite foods: French fries. These mutually constitutive entanglements that are located inside the restaurant include: girl/chair, chair/girl, restaurant/girl/chair, chair/girl/friends/other patrons/ in the restaurant/various noises in the restaurant/different aromas of food. The entanglements also include the structure of the restaurant, walls, texture of the floor, glass in the windows, operations of the restaurant staff, money exchanging hands, setting up tables, with silverware, and glassware for eating. During the course of her dining experience, diverse bodies of matter work in concert creating a multitude of exchanges. Again, intra-activity is the idea that all of these bodies matter which include social discourse about disability, access to buildings are constituted agencies, which have an impact on the girl's relationship with her wheelchair.

Riding public or school transportation results in intra-activity of girl/chair/chair/girl/bus/ trolley/passengers/students/bus driver/perception of disability/culture/geographical locations. All of these designated material bodies are constantly diffracting, influencing each other, and creating a multitude of diverse entanglements, which in turn creates new definitions or perceptions on what it means to be disabled. The girl is unable to perform getting onto public transportation independently. At this moment she needs to rely on assistance from another person while this action is unfolding, her perception on what it means to be disabled ("depends on others") is in sharp contrast to how she views herself, as a capable young female.

The intra-actions which are experienced with the material bodies that intra-act with the materiality of others in any environment which provokes identity performances are often entangled with her past and present (Butler, 1997). The intra-actions transcend space and time by enabling her to reinterpret her past beliefs about disability and how those beliefs influence her current beliefs.

AGENTIAL CUTS MATTER: DISABILITY

According to Barad (2007) a specific intra-action enacts an agential cut, a disturbance “affecting a separation between subject and object within the phenomenon” (p. 139, 140). In other words, agential cuts in the data highlight “properties and boundaries of phenomena (e.g. how body is separated from the wheelchair, girl from school setting)) which become determinate and that particular concepts (e.g. material-discursive practices) become meaningful” (Barad, p. 140). By making agential cuts of the interviews and visual figures I sought to uncover identity instantiations of the participant. I wanted to understand the participant’s reasons for rejecting a disability identity in favor of a self-imposed identity, that of a normal girl.

Rejecting a disability identity was born as a response to perceived negative assumptions that often plague people with physical impairments. According to some societal perceptions a person with a disability/impairment is supposed to feel less than a whole person due to the physical limitations as dictated by disability narratives that are powerful and in turn produce her refusal to accept an identity of disability. She rejects the societal prescribed identity, that of a person with an impairment, in favor of a more suitable identity that of a “normal” girl in high school.

The findings of the research indicate that there is hope that social dogma, views, and perceptions of the past and ones that are currently held can be overcome by the voice of the person with a disability/impairment who can clearly articulate and argue that neither disability itself, nor the devices used to achieve mobility can attribute to the identity of the person (Rousso, 2013). Just like the automobiles that people use to move faster from place to place are not part of the identity of a person, wheelchairs and other mobility devices do not comprise the identity of people with disabilities. In the process of observations and interviews, the subject of my study reveals **“I don't feel different”**, and then offers a poignant view of how others may see her: **“Oh you know; she probably has struggles in her life or something like that”.**

Furthermore, she challenges the assumption and cultural norms that people with disabilities/impairments, somehow “should” feel different. She **“does not feel different”** because she is simply in a wheelchair. She considers herself a normal 18-year-old high school girl with friends that she can hang out with during lunch time. As with most young girls in high school, she also has her own struggles, but not much different in nature and not influenced by the fact that she has to use a wheelchair**.** She states that she **“feels the same as everyone. Naturally, has [*sic*] struggles in various situations in life, just like every young girl who is her age.”** However, she does not attribute her struggles as a young girl to be related to her physical limitations. Conversely, she acknowledges that her struggles are part and parcel of being a high school student, not related to her physical impairment or using a wheelchair.

Although she acknowledges her physical limitations, she does not ascribe to the physical as her sole identity nor as part of her identity. In her perspective, prescribing or assigning to a disabled identity means an inference of dependence and/or lack of capacity. This is an ideal that is diametrically opposed to that which she embraces: viewing herself as independent and capable. She prefers to place emphasis on her productiveness and achievements, she states **“I can do things myself, make appointments, and cook dinner for the family”.** She finishes her thought by adding that she engages in **“normal things that everyone does”** such as **“go out with friends and sister [*sic*].”**

Instead of adopting a disability identity or one of impairment, she challenges the general consensus and standard expectations of what an “abled-bodied” or “body beautiful” girl looks like. She does not embody the tenants of the abled bodied narrative, which is a pervasive cultural belief and societal norm which depicts a normal female as someone who has use of her whole body, and does not require a wheelchair for mobility. The abled bodied narrative is entrenched and is at odds with an assumed disability identity that suggests a girl with a physical impairment is broken, weak, and solely dependent on others and lives a life of adversity.

When people see her, they may think she has a challenging life, but she does not subscribe to such understanding and philosophy. However, she wants to tell others that **“she has a good life; she is a normal girl”** who happens, by means of unpredictable circumstances, to have a wheelchair for mobility purposes. In her mind, the wheelchair does not define her identity as a female with a physical impairment. The significance of her response towards negative societal attitudes regarding disability, based on her reality as a female with a physical impairment, is important to note, because she feels that she has to debunk the myth of the “weak and helpless” person who cannot walk. She aptly claims, **“I don’t see myself as a disabled person”.** She asserts, **“I want people to see me as a normal person because thats [*sic*] what I am, I just cant [*sic*] walk.”**

Such demeaning cultural norms have sadly become fixed in certain collective views about persons with a physical impairment. The strongest counter thesis to such norms from the past is the confidence and assertion of a young person who uses a wheelchair for mobility. That person does not succumb to the demeaning societal attitudes that attach identity with regard to the wheelchair use and link it to the individual traits and character of the person using it. That holds particularly strong with regard to a young female who is a successful high school student. Societal perceptions should not intentionally assign an identity of the wheelchair user, but take into account the individual personal character traits as identifiers of individuality. The strongest argument with that regard is her own perception of herself and her identity, that clearly counters certain societal bias, deemed to be a perception of the past and not a diverse view of society and the individual, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, and in this case: physical mobility.

The wheelchair, though a mere object and a tool, sometimes appears to have a more complex role within social context and with regard to certain societal perceptions. However, despite the fact that some members of society may see her and the wheelchair as a connected entity, and the wheelchair as a component of her individuality, the reality is that it is just a tool used for mobility that has nothing to do with her character and personal identity. When asked if her chair makes her life easier, she provided a non-definitive response: **"I honestly don't think so."** Similarly, when questioned if her chair makes her life harder, she replied, **"No, not really."**

Based on her other responses during the interview process, it can be concluded that her wheelchair is simply a tool that she uses for mobility. The relationship she has with her chair is multi-layered, entangled and not easily defined. Throughout the interview process, she used words such as **"friend"**, **"bother"**, **"cumbersome"**, and **"tolerate"** to describe her relationship towards her wheelchair. One can surmise from these conflicting terms that her relationship with her wheelchair may be problematic at best, depending on the situation she finds herself. Furthermore, said relationship is shaped by how much the external dialogue and, even more importantly, her own inner dialogue about physical disabilities and wheelchairs influence her perception of herself, which in turn shapes her relationship to her wheelchair. In her mind she does not have a "relationship" with her wheelchair in the same way as she has relationships with people. She views her chair as a mere tool and does not see the reciprocal relationship that she has with her wheelchair. There is no response from the wheelchair in the same way you might elicit a response about an issue from a friend, the wheelchair is a one-way use of a tool without a response from the chair other than the utility and functionality it provides and that is how she sees it. However, since she needs it regularly, at times it may appear to be attached to her, and may evoke a perception that it is part of her, thus forming a relationship. In essence, it is simply the most frequent tool used by her, just like she uses a pencil in school to write her assignments, a knife when cooking or a pair of scissors, etc.

Social media platforms, such as Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram have presented another social arena in which she had to reconcile her relationship with her wheelchair. Should she take pictures of herself and her wheelchair? What would people think when they saw her sitting in her wheelchair? Her decision to exclude her wheelchair was based on several reasons. She states, **"Everyone in my social media knows about the chair, I don't like how I look in it and everyone who sees the chair often assumes… my life is depressing and I am not in a bad mood or depressed."** She follows this sentiment by stating, **"I am happy."** She does not post any pictures/images of herself on social media with herself and her wheelchair because she does not like how she looks sitting in her wheelchair. Additionally, others who may not know her have the ability to see a girl in a wheelchair. Posting a visual image of herself and her wheelchair is not the lasting image she wants people to have of her. Instead, she wants to post pictures of a beautiful young girl, full of life, hopes and aspirations, along with posts that include uplifting messages of encouragement and being positive. This can only be obtained without the use of her wheelchair being included in her visual images of her body. She has used her voice to determine how she is depicted on social media to her friends and others who are not in her social group. The decision not to post visual images of herself in her wheelchair is a powerful message and one that allows her control of how she is viewed, accepted by others, and more importantly, how she perceives herself as a normal girl in this performative act.

The relationship between girl and chair is multi-layered and multi-dimensionally rooted in material discursive practices of what it means to be able-bodied. Social practices that normalize ableism describe a normal person as one who typically can walk or is able-bodied. In addition, cultural norms assume that such a person is independent, capable and a contributing member of society, not someone who has a physical impairment and uses a wheelchair for mobility purposes. These institutionalized societal perceptions in the minds of generations have shaped societal practices and views with respect to perceiving and identifying people with physical impairments and, in particular, with respect to people who use a wheelchair. Not only is she grappling with such negative views about people with disabilities/impairments, but, at the same time she has to physiologically reconcile her feelings about her own body and what that means, in terms of constructing her own sense of self.

However, the difference is that she sometimes finds herself navigating under the shroud of negative societal perceptions of what it means to be impaired, despite choosing not to submit to the disability narrative. She has forgone a disability identity as a way to describe herself to others and, most importantly, to herself. In that regard, she realizes that society can judge a person who uses a wheelchair. When asked how she feels about her wheelchair, she adamantly responds: **"[it] just helps me get around."** She clearly does not see her wheelchair as part of her identity. She asserts that she views herself, the girl, as a separate entity from the wheelchair, thus she and her wheelchair are not parts of one entity; although, she readily admits, she has a level of dependence on her chair for mobility purposes.

Although she has had a wheelchair in life for some time now, she still has her frustrations at being dependent for mobility purposes on a wheelchair, the perceived social stigma that goes along with having a physical impairment, and defining that as a limitation of the character. She asserts that **"the wheelchair can be cumbersome in certain situations, by being too big,"** thus **"not allowing her to access an area in her home independently."** She continues that **"sometimes it gets in my way",** or presents a barrier to activities that she would like to engage in, such as **"walking on the beach, or kicking a ball."**

In terms of architectural/engineering barriers, her wheelchair does not cause her too many complications and/or problems while at school or out in public places; in particular those that are designed for easy disabled access. She **"[does] not enjoy having**

a wheelchair in her life, but has learned to tolerate living with a wheelchair" as a means for better mobility**.** Despite her personal feelings about using a wheelchair, she still feels that some people are uncomfortable when they see her out in public in her wheelchair. She says **"people stare at [her] sitting in her wheelchair."** She continues that she **"[does] not like people staring at her in a wheelchair."** The wheelchair can be seen as both friend and an object she has to contend with, despite the fact that her wheelchair provides mobility and accessibility to items and locations due to her physical limitations. However, she is adamant that the wheelchair is not an extension of her body, nor does having a wheelchair define her character and individual personality, her personal view of self is one of a normal young individual.

When she is hanging out with her friends, though, her wheelchair takes on another form; her girlfriends like riding on the back of the wheelchair. They call it **"their car"** and **"me and my friends play around with it."** She and her friends have fun with her chair. During this interaction with her friends she confesses that she does not think about being in a wheelchair. She states, **"I forget about it."** She is able to be at ease with her chair when allowing her friends to jump off the back. This playful interaction between these bodies of matter (i.e. wheelchair, her friends, and herself) allows her to be a typical 18 year old girl hanging out with her girlfriends, while in her mind the wheelchair becomes a toy, and the materiality of the wheelchair fades into the background. During this whole exchange the girl, wheelchair and friends, location are still constituted agencies in that moment.

SELF-CONSTRUCTED IMAGES: BECOMING

The matter of disability and self-concept/identity has been researched in this study initially using a traditional humanist lens which lead to a fixed idea of self and identity. An intentional move was made to view the self through a philosophical lens one that sought to tease out (through agential cuts/diffraction)the intra-activity of constituted bodies of matter that shape her relationship with her wheelchair and continuously shapes her sense of becoming through performative acts. This move is in direct contrast to her fixed identity that of a normal girl. The difficult part in moving beyond a fixed identity was that I believed that I intentionally would not be able to honor her not voice, that of a normal girl, which I struggled with. At that same time I was eager to employ the Deluzian (1988) concept of becoming along with Butler's (1992) performativity concept to explore how material reality shapes her becoming and unbecoming. In an effort to reconcile her perception of herself as a normal girl and keep in tune with my material reality framework, I realized that the concept of becoming allowed me to see that she has through acts of performance (Butler, 1993) many appearances, and that view of herself as a normal girl is one moveable/subjectable appearance. The visual figures that were taken by the participant did in fact accomplish this goal. The figures showed the multiple ways of constituting bodies of matter in relation to her many selves and her chair. Even so, she still does not self-identify as a female with a disability. In her mind, a person with a disability is often viewed by others as living a life of adversity; in that regard she states, **"They think my life is depressing, my life has challenges,"** and then she adds, **"I am not in a bad mood or depressed."** Furthermore, she asserts, **"I do live a good life."** She believes that a person with a disability **“depends on others”** and is viewed as **“not being able to do something like someone else.”**

In fact, she stresses throughout the interview process that she **“can do things, such as make appointments”.** In addition, she views herself as, and actually is, a contributing member of her household, she can take care of a number of household chores, including that she **“takes care of [her] cousin, and cooks her own breakfast.”** Being able to contribute in a productive manner at home, and having girlfriends that she goes out with, provides her with the feeling of normalcy, amongst other things of which she considers capable. She states that the ability to **“Go out with friends and sister… like a normal person”** and participating in recreational activities such as badminton all contribute to her idea of being a normal high school female, and thus overshadow the fact that she cannot walk.

The inability to use her legs to walk becomes a moot point based on the other areas in her life in which she is successful and **“like everybody else.”** That does not mean that she is not aware of her physical limitations; on the contrary, she is, but prefers to focus on the activities that she can perform independently, thus constructing a normal sense of self. This construction of self is what allows her to feel accomplished, esteem herself as **“not broken”** as a result of her physical limitations, use **“public transportation on her own,”** and **“go to the park and eat with [her] friends.”** She has typical high school aspirations: attending a community college, after which she plans to transfer to Arizona State University, and is considering studying Business Management. She states that she also wants to be an **“entrepreneur, selling clothes.”** Her aspiration of entrepreneurship itself speaks to the fact that she is striving to be independent, self-sufficient, bottom-line oriented, a self-starter, capable to face and overcome challenges, ready for challenges, creative, and constructive. All of her activities, in which she engages, help cement the notion and self-concept of her being a normal female.

Psychologically, the idea of normalcy is firmly rooted into her consciousness by perceiving herself as a normal girl. She does not embody the socially constructed narrative of a disabled person, in which lies psychological tension within certain definitions of what a disabled person personifies in actions and behaviors. According to her lived experiences as a person with a physical impairment, and in contrast with words and descriptions that are often used to frame disability, she has constructed her own view of a disabled individual to mean a person with physical limitations who is **"physically hurt"** or has a **"broken arm, broken leg,"** and may use either **"crutches or a wheelchair."** The activities she engages in contribute to and perpetuate her need to define herself as normal; she states, **"I don't see myself as a disabled person."** She continues that she **"feels the same as everyone… I want people to see me as a normal [person]."** Psychologically and emotionally, she is and always will be a normal 18-year-old female who **"just can't walk."** As a result, she does not self-identify as a disabled female. Rather, she identifies with being a normal 18-year-old female, who participates in typical 18-year-old activities with her sister, family, and friends and is capable, happy, **"independent and self-reliant."** The notion of happiness is a solid argument of normalcy. Generally, the inability to enjoy simple things in life, connect with others, contribute to society or immediate community, take care of self, and communicate with others may be factors that lead to not being happy. None of those factors and/or conditions are present in her lifestyle and in her perception of who she is and what she can do. On the contrary, she perceives herself as highly capable in many areas, confident that she can accomplish many things in life, and that gives her the perception of being successful and a happy person.

She always deems herself a normal person, which can be at odds, with existing social attitudes and practices about people with physical impairments. However, her paradigm of normalcy does not necessarily include the ability to walk by foot, but rather the ability to move and reach a desired destination in space, regardless of method of movement. Thus, her paradigm of normalcy is focused on the human relationships and interactions, the ability to produce desired results, achieve set goals, the capacity to be self-sufficient, and contribute to others, instead of her degree of mobility and method of movement.

The visual figures 7 and 9 (shown below) regarding her relationship with her wheelchair do not deviate from her verbal response when asked "How do you feel about your wheelchair?” she asserts, **“[just] helps me get around”**. She continues, **“My wheelchair and I are not one thing, but separate things**, **and I don’t like how I look in it.”** The final selection amongst all pictures taken does not feature her in the wheelchair, as she clearly does not view the wheelchair as part of her identity, but as part of her “things” that facilitate her life. With that in consideration, no analysis of a visual material was deemed relevant for adding information and data to the research, related to her being in the wheelchair. The visual figures taken solidify her normal identity construction regarding self but her sense of self does not encompass her wheelchair. For example, how she sees herself and the things she chose to have on the pictures portray what an average young female high school student does: polish her nails, keep a journal, choose pink color for her blanket, and red color with hearts for her pillow cover, and keep three stuffed animals – brown and tan chimpanzees, possibly toys from her childhood that have sentimental value to her, much like any other girl her age. The stuffed animals provide comfort and peace to her, much as it does to any girl her age, who chooses to keep them as reminders of her childhood. How she sees them and arranges them on her bed explains how she feels about those precious moments from her childhood, perhaps the feeling she had when her parents or loved ones presented them to her. The visual figures convey a powerful message: she and her chair are not one entity, but are separate entities – girl and chair.

Figure 7. Participant's Wheelchair with Transportation Board.

Figure 9. Participant's Wheelchair.

Figures 7 and 9 are similar in that only a portion of her body is visible in the picture. In figure 7, the wheelchair takes up most of the frame of the picture; you see the wheels, seat and backrest, with her board sitting on top of the wheelchair. The picture is taken at a slight angle, in her bedroom, allowing the wheelchair and board to take center stage. Only a small portion of her bent leg and knee is visible in the right hand corner of the picture. It is assumed she is leaning back to take the picture of her wheelchair. Similarly, figure 9 was taken in the same location as figure 7 in her bedroom. She intentionally did not position herself on the wheelchair when describing visually her mobility devices, because she does not place personal identity into those devices, she sees them as separate items from her personality and psychological view of herself. However, she captured her hand, which depicts pink nails holding onto the purple colored wheelchair structure that she got to choose. Both color choices, the one on her nail polish and her wheelchair structure, describe how she sees the world in terms of preference and favorite colors that please her and provide aesthetic sensation. However, despite her purposeful choice of the color purple for her wheelchair, she still chose not to position herself in the chair when taking the picture. This indicates that she is not directly associated with the hardware device itself, which is a visible marker and association of disability to which she does not personally ascribe.

Being capable and independent are two qualities that she stressed throughout the interview process. When given a camera to take pictures over the course of a 24 hour period, she performs by sorting out and selecting objects in her life, environment and immediate surrounding that she deems relevant and useful in practical terms. Some items serve the purpose of maintaining an emotional balance (e.g. childhood stuffed animal toys), as well symbolizing as her affection with the ones she loves (e.g. picture of her parents).

Interestingly, she took just a few pictures of her wheelchair with a reference as being one of her tools, not an identity of hers. The remainder of the pictures are comprised of her activities and depict her perception of what it means to be a capable and independent young female.

Figure 1. Participant's Mom and Dad.

The final picture, figure 1, is of her parents who passed away several years ago. Family is important to the participant. The angle of the camera is in an upright position, due to the participant taking the picture either sitting on the floor or sitting in her wheelchair. This angle does not allow the picture of her parents to take up the entire frame, instead their picture is in the background of the frame, which makes the framed picture of her parents appear smaller. However, the picture portrays her parents in an elevated position, from her location, which coincides with her feelings, affection and desire to place them on a pedestal in her life. The square shaped gold picture frame holds a picture of a man and woman; they are both looking into the camera. Their bodies are close in proximity and their hands are touching in front on the woman's left leg. The picture hangs on a beige color wall directly across from the participant's mirror on her dresser in her bedroom.

The figures used in this chapter reflect her choices and depict items that are important in her life. The pictures can be categorized into four groups: pictures of practical tools and objects that help her with her mobility and everyday functions around the house; photographs of electronic devices (i.e. cell phone, and lap top computer) that help her stay in communication with the rest of the world, as well as learn and gather information; pictures that focus on her emotional world, aesthetic needs, and childhood memories (stuffed animal toys and music equipment); and perhaps the most important of all with respect to her life – the picture of her parents.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I attempted to explore the multilayered, complex, and dynamic relationship which exists between and girl with a physical impairment and her wheelchair. I realize that the participant ebbed and flowed in an intra-active response to me the researcher, the interview questions, observations, analyzing visual figures, and making the agential cuts. Surprisingly, I did not think to account for during this study at the onset, that there is nothing to suggest that the young girl, her performativity, her ‘being’ has to align to that which is currently accepted, in the current discourse of what is means to be disabled/impaired

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the relationship between an adolescent high school girl (with an orthopedic impairment) and her wheelchair. This was done by the intentional act of displacing the human subject in self-concept and identity research and by examining the material-discursive process of identity performativity and individuation. I left the comfort of a humanist, psychological view of self-concept and identity, towards the often viewed radical new materialist, agential realist, and ensuing subjectification, and individuation. To accomplish this task, I interviewed one participant (during her last semester of high school), documented numerous observations of the participant in various geographical locations with her wheelchair (outside of her school day), and analyzed visual figures taken by the participant (with a disposable camera). I aimed to address the following research question: What is the relationship between the adolescent girl with an orthopedic impairment and her wheelchair? How does the relationship (girl-chair) influence her sense of self?

I will address this research question in the sections below and following these sections I will attempt to provide a tentative closing section for this dissertation: 1.) To turn away from Psychology towards Philosophy matters, 2.) Attempting to fill a gap in the disability literature matters, 3.) Implications for educators' matters, and 4.) Suggestions for future research matters.

THE TURNING AWAY FROM PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HUMAN TOWARDS PHILOSOPHY MATTERS

At the onset of this dissertation, I was set to use a traditional approach that relied on the customary binary: human: non-human. However, my advisor challenged me to use a different framework and conceptual landscape: new materialism. In short, a material discursive approach views both human and non-human bodies as matter and through intra-actions, these bodies of matter are the mutually constituted agencies. Put another way, through intra-action these bodies of matter, people, policies and societal attitudes about disability derive agency or the ability to act. In the case of people with disabilities, it is policies and regulations, such as ADA, IDEA, that can shape the lives of people with disabilities in the U.S. (by providing civil rights and protections) in the workplace, community and schools as well as shape/shift attitudes of non-disabled people towards those with disabilities as well.

To do this, I turned away from the traditional humanist, psychological view of self-concept and identity formation and turned towards a new materialist and agential realist account of the subject in this study. Conceptually leaving the field of psychology towards a philosophical viewpoint on the importance of interactions and matter enabled me to focus on the subject and her wheelchair, while at the same time allowed me to incorporate a material reality framework in which to view the entanglements of the/girl/chair/environment and how these intra-actions influenced her relationship to her wheelchair. I was eager to see how this switch from humanist towards a material discursive approach would allow me to see something different in the data. Admittedly, I needed help to push my own thinking about how a person with an impairment/disability views cultural markers that often oppress and marginalize those with impairments/disabilities. Additionally, I wanted the participant's perspectives and material relations to be shared throughout the study.

I used the interview technique in this study. This particular qualitative research method was a process that I was familiar with and it served the needs of this study. Incorporating the interview technique, along with my written observations, and visual figures (which were taken by the participant) are regarded as traditional techniques. These techniques, helped me to normalize my thinking around my research question while utilizing a new theoretical framework. The young girl engaged in semi-constructed interviews questions, which were intentionally designed to be fluid and not rigid allowing the participant's voice to be heard during the interview sessions. I know the interview questions undoubtedly pushed her thinking about what the word "disability" means and what it means to be disabled, from her perspective as a young female who is automatically labeled and viewed as disabled by our cultural attitudes and practices. In addition to interview questions, I included observations which gave me an idea of how she and her friends intra-acted with the girl/wheelchair/environment on serval occasions. The wheelchair had been reduced from a device that is associated with people with impairment/disabilities to a toy like "car." The visual images taken by the participant provided an intimate view of the entangled relationship between girl/wheelchair/environment. In these images, she retains her "normal girl" identity and show cases her engaging in age appropriate activities much like her non-impaired peers. These performative acts produce the needed effect for her to eschew a disability identity, which allows her to view the relationship with her wheelchair one of separateness despite the fact that she is part of the entanglements of her wheelchair and environments.

Without making assumptions concerning the mood during the interview sessions, in retrospect, I believed the participant pushed back against a few of my questions, specifically when asked to describe what the word “disability” looked like to her. During those brief moments, I wonder if her hesitation stemmed from her view of herself, capable and independent, countered with her own perception of how she and others with impairments are often automatically labeled, as “broken” in the community. It was as if her acts of performativity as a capable and independent, thus normal girl allowed her to rightfully resist any label that did not fit her own chosen identity. When in fact, her performances as a normal girl in fact did just that. Her belief that she was normal and “just can’t walk” was a theme that permeated our interview sessions, and other forms of data collection (observations and analysis of visual images) and was evident during the agential cuts and diffractions portions of my data analysis. Surprisingly, I as the researcher and my research design are implicated in the becoming of the participant. In that, I do not believe that the “subject” produced by my research is not necessarily revealing on their own; the observed subject would not have performed as they were had I not been there, during the data collection phase. I can aptly state that it is the process of individuating as a “normal girl” subject that speaks to the intra-active nature of “normal girl” instantiation. Put another way, the participant of the study did not simply have a “normal girl” subject but rather she created and re-created that subject identity over and over in response to material-discursive changes during the interview. I would also add that this creating and re-creating of a “normal girl” subject is ongoing and continuous and occurs in many environments (e.g. school, home, with friends, taking public transportation) beyond the scope of this research study.

CONCLUDING MATTER

I set out to create my research design and to frame my research question around the relationship between a girl and her wheelchair. It is important to note, my research was not going to be the result of my interpretation of what the participant did/not infer during the data collation phase. On the contrary, I wanted to present a body of work that was told from a different perspective; perspective which was intra-actional and material. During the data analysis phase and dissemination of findings that I saw emerge this idea that one's becoming/identity is not fixed, but rather constantly changing through the entanglements and intra-actions of our material reality. These constitutive material agencies influenced the becoming and unbecoming of the girl and these interactions and intra-actions constantly changed throughout her day whether she was at school, at the park with her friends, cooking her own meals at home, or lying on her bed engaging with social media. This change or becoming of my participant was 'inferable' by me in the materiality of responses to agential cuts.

It is here, at the very least that my study offers another theoretical framework in which to explore the idea of becoming and identity as it relates to a young high school female with an orthopedic impairment and her relationship with her wheelchair. This study highlighted how the participant chose to self-identify as normal and what that looked like based on her perception of disability/impairments. Her self-imposed identity “normal girl” firmly resists the label of impairment, which often means, a body is broken and needs to be fixed. Her resistance supported the idea that disability does not exist on its own or in a vacuum. Rather disability forms relational matter and it is constructed within intra-action between the participant/subject and material objects. Many of these material objects are influenced by and include policies that are found at the federal, state and local levels. These policies, in turn, regulate bodies and perpetuate the ability/disability dualism, and other material bodies are societal attitudes towards people with differing abilities.

Although the participant used a wheelchair for mobility purposes, this did not mean that she considered herself a female with impairment. This is where the contradiction lies. For example when she needed to use the school elevator to access the ground level, in that moment in time and space she is entangled with bodies of matter, girl/chair/elevator/school building/metal/electricity these constituted agencies were acting in concert and allowed the participant to go down to another floor of the building. In doing so she is viewed by others as disabled because she cannot walk down the stairs, however she viewed herself as “normal” because she accessed the elevator independently. Put another away depending on the intra-active situation she found herself engaged in, influenced how she self-identified during any given activity. Her perception of normal differed from a non-impaired female partially due to the matter she had to interact with including wheelchair, boards, lifts etc.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS' MATTER

As a certified K-12 Special Education teacher in the Southwestern part of the U.S., I have spent my entire tenure teaching public schools. At the onset of this study, my goal was to bring to life the lived experiences of a young girl with a physical impairment and explore the relationship she had with her wheelchair. It seemed fairly simple at first; or at least I thought. But as I started to design my research question and learned a new theoretical framework, new materialism, admittedly, it was challenging and many times I had to re-read the books several times and ask my advisor for clarification before I could even get started. Once I became comfortable with the overall idea of new materialism, I started looking at how my interest could fill a gap in the literature or at the very least offer a new way of looking at a high school female with an orthopedic impairment that used assistive technology.

As I reflect upon writing my dissertation, I would have never guessed that the dissertation process, the data collection, data analysis and dissemination would have impacted my positionality as a teacher, researcher and mother as much as it had. In that, my beliefs about disability/impairments were challenged. I asked myself: "Had I succumbed to the medical model of viewing students with disabilities/impairments as broken and needed to be fixed?" Why had the data collection and analysis caused me to pause and re-examination my own commitment to working with students with disabilities/impairments? Simply, I had become the lone champion of social justice and equity as it related to students with disabilities/impairments, and that can be a lonely fight. I know I was not perfect but at least I tried. I tried to use a holistic approach with my students, being aware that social emotional health is as important as successful academic outcomes. I nurtured and fostered respected relationships with my students' families/caregivers. I tried not to use old labels or beliefs that often left a fixed identity on students, and in turn conjured up deficit beliefs about their capabilities in the classroom. Yes, I know we use labels to make sense of our world. However, this study showed me just how easily we place labels on children with disabilities.

Educators need to be mindful that disability does not exist on its own. It is relational and constructed within intra-action between the girl and material objects. Take for example a high school classroom and its materiality; what does the materiality of the classroom environment look like? Are the class assignments and text books utilizing liberal pedagogical approaches and thinking outside of the fix bounded curriculum when working with students with disabilities (McBride, 2013) or is the general curriculum inaccessible to students with disabilities? How do teaching materials, books, laptops, websites, manipulatives and so on interact with bodies and bodies with disabilities? Are schools using a medicalized functional pedagogy when working with children with disabilities? The problem is it does not attend to their "embodied negotiations with school" (Reddington & Price, 2018, p. 468), rather the primary focus is on assessing their deficits and creating individualized programs to meet their academic needs. For example, the IDEA is a special education rights based inclusive policy based on a medicalized model which is turn regulates how students with disabilities/impairments experience school. Explicitly many special education policies situate learners with disabilities/impairments are specific types of subjects in school ("special education students") (Redding & Price, 2018). As such, the categorical definitions of disability continue to be problematic producing an ability/disability educational system that marks difference and informs our ideas about disability and normality (Garland-Thomson, 2002). It is this type of thinking that continues to perpetuate the social constructs of disability, that disability is a "thing" or "condition" that people have, but instead a social negation that has a long history of shaping attitudes towards people with disabilities/impairments (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher, & Morton, 2008, p. 440-441).

Utilizing a material discursive approach to create special education programs and classrooms would be a productive method to disrupt dualism (e.g. able/disable, normal/special) and in doing so would promote the idea of looking at students' lives in a non-binary manner (Braidotti, 2013). I would argue that educators should attempt to employ a material discursive approach in their practice to disrupt the current special education models that place too much emphasis on "remediating bodily difference and alternatively produce new ways of knowing how students with disabilities engage in school" (Reddington & Price, 2018, p. 470; Biklen, 1997). By using a material discursive approach in the classroom, educators, can begin to shift their own understanding (and that of their non-disabled students) and think beyond the "universal subject" (Frost, 2011, p. 70) and think through possibilities on all of their students' lives. Additionally, teachers should pay attention to material object and matter and how these things shape students with disabilities/impairments.

Although, she resisted the label of disability and the "othering" that often accompanies a label of impairment. Although heavily debated by many educators, the reality is students have labels in schools. For the sake of simplicity, you are either placed in the general education classroom setting or you are placed in a special education school program at your local school. Some may argue the system is unjust but to a school district, the two-tiered system is efficiency at its best.

I am in support of using a more celebratory view of differences when speaking about students with impairments/disabilities. I adhere to the educational philosophy "presumed competence" (Biklen & Burke, 2006, p. 166), a term that means in the case of missing conclusive evidence teachers assume that all students can participate in an age-appropriate general education curriculum as form meaningful relationships. I believe presumed competence fits nicely into the overall model of social disability. Unfortunately not all teachers agree with the idea of presumed competence this is probably based on their teaching experiences and their beliefs about whom gets educated in which spaces in a school building.

Not having appropriate school equipment to accommodate a person in a wheelchair is definitely not embracing the tenets held forth in the social model of disability. In particular at my current school, would be the lack of accommodating school desks, and workable handicap buttons for doors to allow access to buildings for the participant in my study and other students. During the course of my study, I noticed that when I walked into a room, in which the participant had a class, there would be no desk that would fit her while sitting in her wheelchair. She had to sit way from the group at a table (that did not fit her and her wheelchair). This lack of adaptable furniture does not make a person in a wheelchair feel included in the classroom. In addition to lack of adaptable furniture, the school's handicap buttons did not always function properly.

Therefore not allowing students to enter the buildings independently, instead having to wait patiently until some able-bodied person came and opened the door. Part of the ADA states that students with impairments and disabilities should have access to buildings at all times during school hours. I made it my job to make sure all of the buildings were accessible to all students at all times during school hours. The participant of this study taught me the importance of independence (in the lives of disabled people) and how her own acts of independence help her to resist a disability identity in favor of a much more appropriate identity, "normal girl". Additionally this study highlighted the importance of using a material discursive approach to viewing disability. In that the idea of "normal" can be viewed in many different ways. In the case of the participant she believed that the mere fact that she could access the school elevator and take public transportation independently, in both cases with the assistance of her wheelchair, provided her with a sense of normalcy.

The disability identity is multifaceted and diverse in similar ways, as are the people with impairments and disabilities. This dissertation provides the opening for further research to explore the disability identity through a material discursive approach and is not the final word. Future research on disability identity should explore how the various subjects intra-act in milieus beyond the research study, and beyond an observation at the end of the school day. The social world of a person with an impairment or disability is not typically limited to those spaces so it would only seem logical that the future research takes place in the daily mundane, daily routines of everyday life.

Nevertheless, what I do know is the data revealed the participant's relationship with her wheelchair is situational and based on dominant discourse of what it means to be disabled/impaired. Her own perception based on what she internalized from cultural practices and attitudes toward disability and the disabled. Together these ideas color her relationship with her wheelchair. What does disability look like? Who gets to claim disability? Who does not? The place to unpack these concerns could be the classroom. Classrooms are unique spaces that can talk about how meanings of bodies and histories converge (Anderson, 2006, p. 375). Nondisabled students find points of connection with their disabled/impaired peers “without slipping into pity responses” (Anderson, 2006, p. 375). Material discursive approaches when employed allow students to be more aware of how campus practices, lack of adaptable furniture or accommodations (as stated earlier) impact the lives of their peers with differing abilities.

The goal is that students will be better able to relate to their disabled/impaired peers. Nevertheless, the questions previously posed may be a good place to start future conversations on what type of research is needed in the field of disabilities studies and education. Exposure to disability inquiry and culture enhances a school’s capacity for inclusion. This happens because all participants (students, staff) have opportunities for more meaningful learning about disabilities experiences- about the world, people with disabilities/impairments and themselves.

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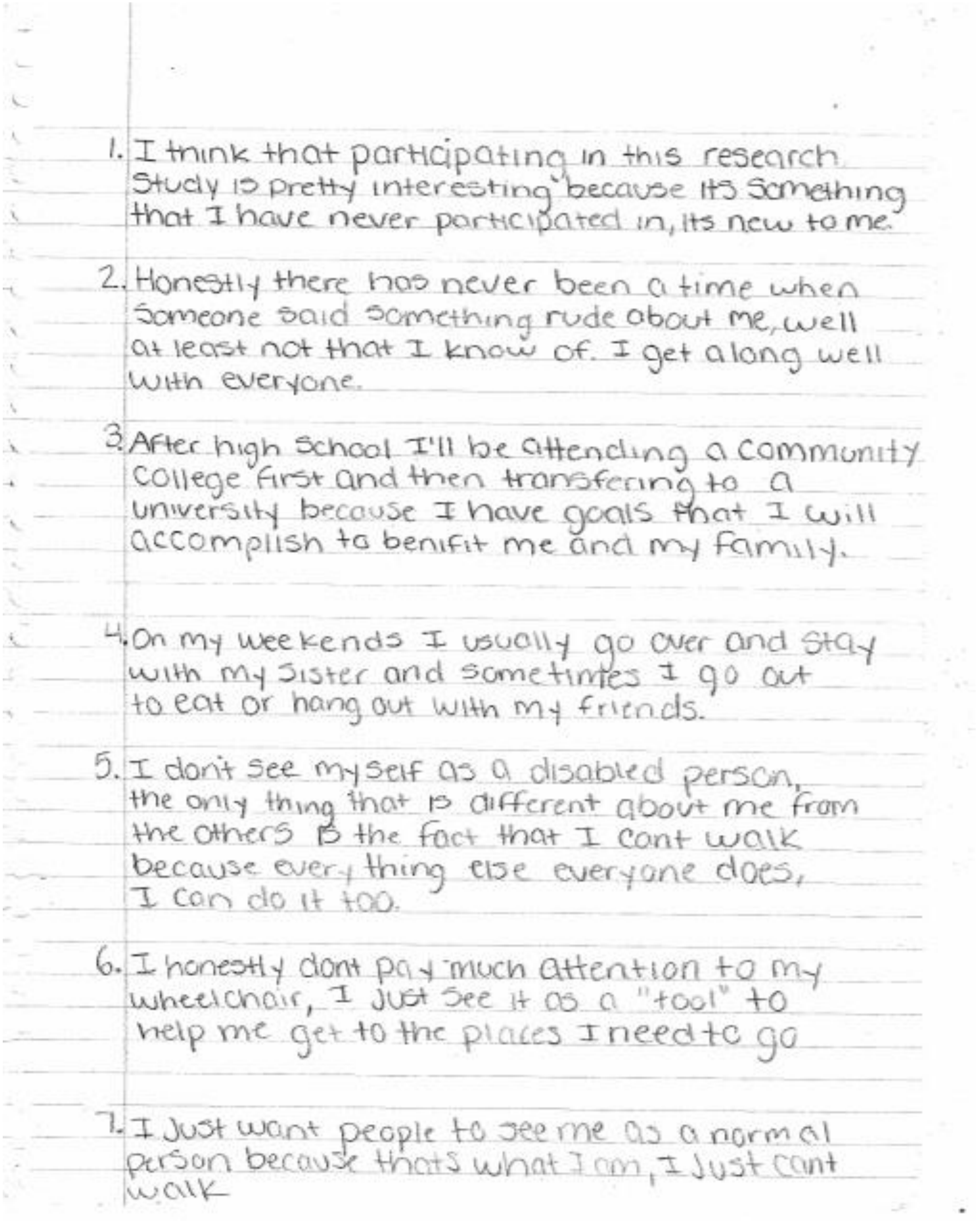
APPENDIX A

JOURNAL WRTING PROMPTS AND ENTRIES

1. What are your thoughts about participating in a research study? Why?
2. Tell me about a time a school in which someone made a rude remark about your physical condition. How did that make you feel?
3. What are your plans after high school? Why?
4. What type of social activities do you engage in with friends during your weekend(s)?
5. Do you see yourself as a disabled person? Please explain.
6. How do you view your wheelchair? Please explain.
7. How do you want people to see you? Please explain.
8. Tell me about your relationship with your family.
9. Are you comfortable in asking for help, getting into certain spaces that may not be wheelchair accessible?
10. Tell me about a time when you had to tell someone that despite your disability you are a capable young woman.



1. I think that participating in this research Study is pretty interesting because its Something that I have never participated in, its new to me.

2. Honestly there has never been a time when Someone said something rude about me, well at least not that I know of. I get along well with everyone.

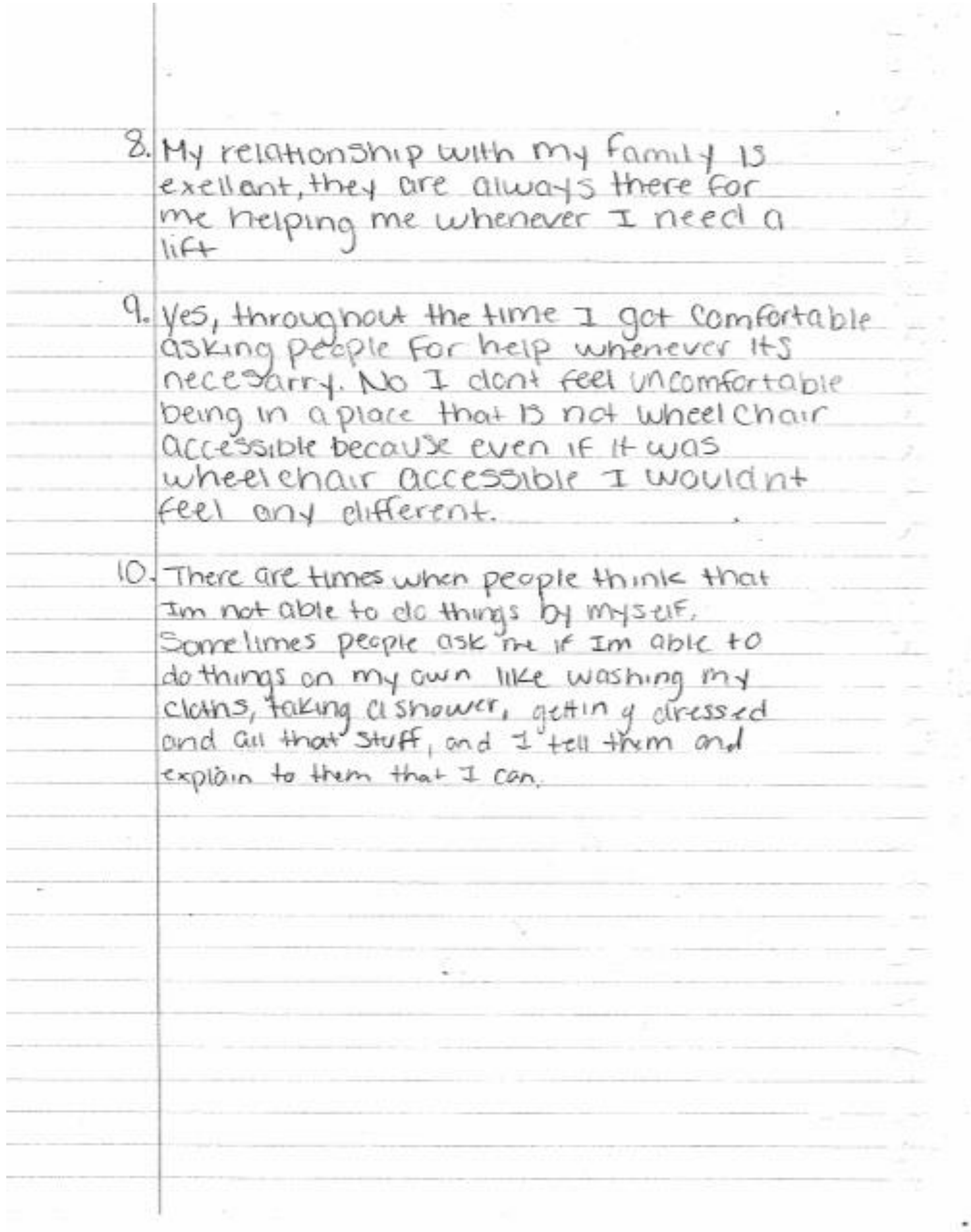
3. After high School I'll be attending a community College first and then transfering to a university because I have goals that I will accomplish to benifit me and my family.

4. On my weekends I usually go over and stay with my Sister and sometimes I go out to eat or hang out with my friends.

5. I don't see myself as a disabled person, the only thing that is different about me from the others is the fact that I cant walk because every thing else everyone does, I can do it too.

6. I honestly dont pay much attention to my wheelchair, I just see it as a "tool" to help me get to the places I need to go

7. I Just want people to see me as a normal person because thats what I am, I Just cant walk



8. My relationship with my family is exellant, they are always there for me helping me whenever I need a lift

9. yes, throughout the time I got comfortable asking people for help whenever its necesarry. No I dont feel uncomfortable being in a place that is not wheel chair accessible because even if it was wheelchair accessible I wouldnt feel any different.

10. There are times when people think that Im not able to do things by myself. Sometimes people ask me if Im able to do things on my own like washing my cloths, taking a shower, getting dressed and all that stuff, and I tell them and explain to them that I can.

APPENDIX B

IRB FORM

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

APPROVAL:CONTINUATION

Dale Baker
Teachers College, Mary Lou Fulton (MLFTC) - Tempe
480/965-6067
DALE.BAKER@asu.edu

Dear Dale Baker:

On 3/7/2018 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Modification and Continuing Review
Title:	Body-Chair: The entangled relationship between a girl and her wheelchair.
Investigator:	Dale Baker
IRB ID:	STUDY00004152
Category of review:	(7)(b) Social science methods, (7)(a) Behavioral research
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Interview Questions for Participant, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them); • School District Approval to Conduct Research, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • Child Assent, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Parent Letter, Category: Consent Form; • Research Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Interview questions for Caregivers, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them);

The IRB approved the protocol from 3/7/2018 to 4/11/2019 inclusive. Three weeks before 4/11/2019 you are to submit a completed Continuing Review application and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 4/11/2019 approval of this protocol expires on that date. When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the “Documents” tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Lisa Lacy
Mirka Koro-Ljungberg
Lisa Lacy

APPENDIX C

TIMELINE OF OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Table 1
Timeline of Observations and Interviews

Month	Observations	Interviews
March 2016 3-5 observations per week; 2 interviews per month, one interview every two weeks based on participant's availability. No observation and interviews during Spring Break (Mar 7-13)	This observations will start in the middle of the school semester of last year/semester of school. They will consist of accompanying participant during lunch, moving between classes, physical therapy sessions and at home, if necessary.	The initial set of interviews will consist of 20-30 minute meetings with the participant during her school day. Interviews can also take place at home, based on the participant's schedule.
April 2016 4-5 observations per week; 2 interviews per month, one interview every two weeks based on participant's availability.	Observations will continue and consist of accompanying participant during lunch, moving between classes, physical therapy sessions and at home, if necessary.	April (mid-semester time) Interviews will be most intense in frequency and duration. They will consist of 25-40 minute meetings with the participant during her school day. Interviews can also take place at

		home, based on the participant's schedule.
May 2016 2-5 observations per week; 1 interview the first of week May based on participant's availability. Last day to collect data from observations and interviews is May 27 (last day of school).	Final set of observations will take place during the last month before student's graduation and will consist of accompanying participant during lunch, moving between classes, physical therapy sessions, final's week, and preparing for graduation ceremony and at home, if necessary.	The last interview will consist of one 20-30 minute meeting with the participant on Saturday at her home. Interviews can also take place at home, based on the participant's schedule. One interview is planned during this time, to honor the participant's needs to prepare for high school finals and graduation ceremony.
*The frequency of both observations and interviews may vary throughout the study	*Location of observations are subject to change during the study.	*Location of interviews are subject to change based on the comfort level and availability of the participant.

APPENDIX D

PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS

Pictures of Abbey's home with captions containing Abbey's description of each picture.

Figure 1. "This is picture of my mom and dad. I miss them. This picture is in my room. I look at this picture every day."

Image 2. "This is a picture of my board. This board helps me get into bed from my wheelchair. This board helps me get into bed by myself."

Figure 3. “My uncle gave me this tool. I use this tool to get things that I can’t reach, from the shelves above the sink. This way I can get what I want by myself. I spend a lot of time on the computer, posting on Facebook, which is why the computer is in the picture.”

Figure 4. “This is a picture of my bed and stuffed animals. I spend a lot of time in my bedroom. Also when I am not in bed, my board is on the side of my bed.”

Figure 5. “This is the kitchen at the house where I live with my aunt and uncle. I cook my own food and sometimes I cook for the family. Most of the things I need in the kitchen are on the counter, where I can reach them from my chair.”

Figure 6. “This is a picture of my kitchen at home. Everything I need for breakfast and lunch today my aunt left on the counter for me. I make my own meals. The microwave is on the counter so that I can easily reach it from my wheelchair.”

Figure 7. “This is my wheelchair in my room with my board on top. I took this picture from my bed. I keep my wheelchair and board next to my bed.”

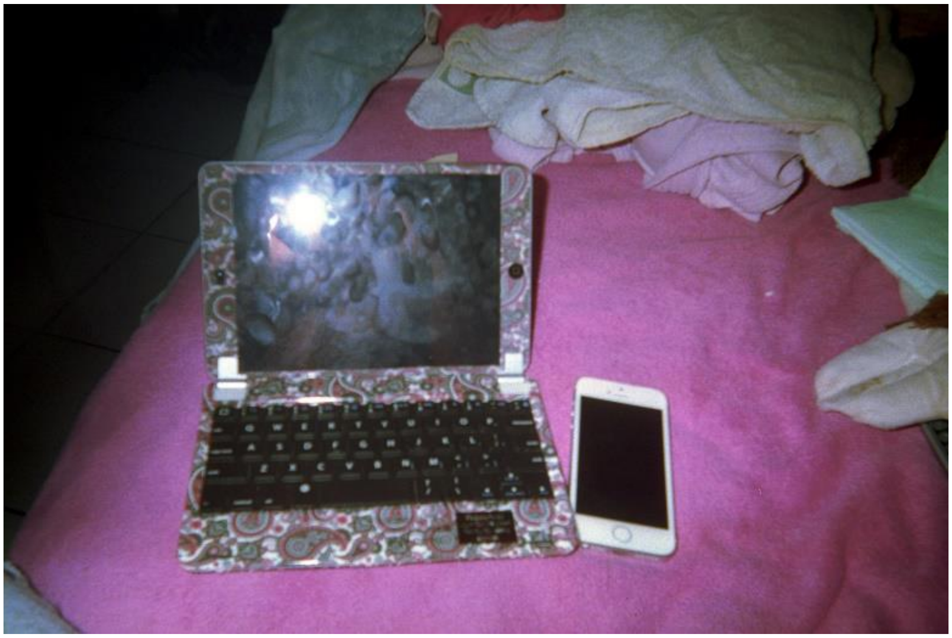


Figure 8. “This is my computer and phone. I use the computer and phone to talk to my friends. I text a lot.”

Figure 9. “This picture of my wheelchair was taken while I was sitting on the floor in my room.”

Figure 10. “This is a picture of my music system. I like to sing.”

Figure 11. “This is a picture of my dresser, in my room. This is where I put my earrings, pictures of friends, and other important things.”

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

File Name: 130102_0003.mp3
Recorded: 04/22/16
Recording Length: 0h 10m 54s
Lisa: Hi, today is April 22nd. My name is Lisa Lacy and I'm here with Abbey. This is our first interview and I'm going to ask Abbey a couple of questions. So, the first questions I'm going to ask you Abbey is, tell me about yourself. Like, your age

Abbey: Well, I'm 18 years old. I'm a senior this year. Um, well, what do you want to know about me?

Lisa: Uh, what do you do at school?

Abbey: At school, I…

Lisa: What are some of the classes that you take?

Abbey: Right now I take English class, math class, government, um and all the general classes we take.

Lisa: Are you involved in any extracurricular activities, things outside of school?

Abbey: No, not really, I'm not involved in anything.

Lisa: Okay, I'm just going to ask you one more question. What does it mean to be a girl?

Abbey: Well to me the meaning of being a girl, being a girl is really like challenging, we go through more things, more challenges for us. I mean, I don't know, I guess…

Lisa: Like give me an example. What… have you faced as a challenge of being a girl today, like at school today did you face any challenges?

Abbey: Well, today, no. Like we don't always get challenges but like…I don't know, I feel my opinion, girls are a little stronger than guys.

Lisa: Can you give me an example? I know that's your opinion and that's fine but do you have an example for that?

Abbey: Um, were not physically strong but like emotionally and stuff like that.

Lisa: Have you had some encounters with some of the… some of your guy friends at school? Like, they may not understand girls or just maybe different things in which they have to show emotions.

Abbey: Well, they, well… like they just, guys think that you know that they're all strong and they don't show emotions or anything like that but like, like, I don't know, I guess um, well right now I can't think of a time

Lisa: Yeah, and we can always go back to that questions. Okay, so every time we meet I'm going to ask you a few informal questions so that I can get to know you and then I'm going to ask you a couple of things that are formal. So I'm going to ask you two. So one would be, tell me about your everyday activities and hobbies. So one question I would like to know, what is your favorite part of your school day and why?

Abbey: My favorite part of the school day is lunch time.

Lisa: And why would that be?

Abbey: Because that's the time where I get to see my friends

Lisa: And do your friends meet you at your fourth period or do you guys meet by the cafeteria?

Abbey: We meet by the elevator.

Lisa: Okay, and then you guys all go to lunch together.

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: And are your friends important to you?

Abbey: Yeah, they are.

Lisa: They are, huh? Yeah. Okay and the next one would be… and so think about it and if you're not comfortable answering this question today, we can wait until later. What does it feel like to live with a disability? We all have different disability. I mean, we all have different types, levels of abilities but what does it feel like to be you with your disability because you're in a wheelchair? How does that feel for you?

Abbey: Well, honestly I don't feel anything different than anyone else. I feel like the same as everyone. I have a normal life it's just that I can't walk.

Lisa: Right, yeah. Do people look at you differently, do you think?

Abbey: Yeah, I think sometimes yes when like they see me. They feel like, "Oh you know, she probably has struggles in her life or something like that," 'cause they don't know.

Lisa: They don't know you. They're just um they might be thinking what a lot of people in society, their preconceived idea is someone in a wheelchair, we have to feel sorry for them. Right? And when you're ever, um, out in public are you always with family? Or are you ever by yourself?

Abbey: Sometimes I am by myself.

Lisa: And how does that feel?
Abbey: Um, well I mean, like I said I don't really feel different. It feels like I'm out like a normal person.

Lisa: And if people look at you or little kids come up to you and stare at you, you just, what do you do?

Abbey: I just smile at them.

Lisa: Right, and then that usually… okay. Okay. And then I'm going to ask you one more question in that area. Umm, what does it feel, I know that you that you view yourself as a normal person and you don't necessarily view yourself as a person with a disability. How does it feel to live with your disability?

Abbey: Well, sometimes it is a lot of challenging 'cause there's like… its challenging because there are things that I'm not able to do.

Lisa: Can you give an example.

Abbey: Like sometimes when we go out to places there are usually stairs and all that stuff, there are no ramps and they have to like help me get up the stairs.

Lisa: And how does that make you feel when people have to help you get up the stairs.

Abbey: Sometimes it makes me feel, sometimes uncomfortable but like I never feel bad for myself.

Lisa: And why do you think that you have a very positive outlook? Is it your family has helped you or is it just the kind of person you are?

Abbey: No, I uh, well I did honestly like when this all, my accident all happened I did feel like I became depressed and all that but my family helped me out and they made me understand that just because I can't walk anymore doesn't mean that I can't do anything. Life goes on.

Lisa: Right, so you have a very nice support staff at home. That's really nice. You know what? I'm going to ask you one more question and then I think that we'll be done here today because this is our first interview. How about this, one more time? One more time how do people at school see you? Not just your friends because you did explain how your friends saw you but just in general, how do people see you at school? Do they see you as Abbey, a senior, or do they see you as something else?

Abbey: Well, I feel like there are people who see me as a normal girl and there are others who don't see me that way.

Lisa: And what would you say to those who don't see you that way?

Abbey: What would I tell them?

Lisa: Yeah, what would you tell them?

Abbey: Well, I would tell them that, that I can tell that you guys think I live um, my life struggling and that I can't do much but that's just how it looks like but that's not at all what it is. I can do things, I can... just because I can't walk I can still achieve my dreams.

Lisa: And what would one of your dreams be?

Abbey: One of my dreams would be to open up my own business.

Lisa: What type of business?

Abbey: I honestly still don't know.

Lisa: Okay, but you want to be an entrepreneur

Abbey: Well yeah, something like that.

Lisa: And, how do people at home see you? Do people at home like your tia or tio, right, and then your sister. So tio and tia, uncle and aunt, and your sister, and maybe cousins, I don't know your family structure. How do they see you?

Abbey: They all know I can, like they all, they all show me that they see me as like just, just a normal girl.

Lisa: Um, yeah, okay. I think that will do it today and then next week, we'll just get into some more questions. Okay?

End of recording

File Name: 130116_0004.mp3
Recorded: 05/06/16
Recording Length: 0h 24m 45s

Lisa: Hi Abbey, this… Today is May 6th. This is my second interview with Abbey and we are going to go over some questions, but before we get started, I want to ask you Abbey… In our last interview you used the word normal a lot: I'm a normal girl, my family looks at me as normal, I feel normal. Can you just explain to me in your own words what does it mean to be normal? What doe normal mean to you?

Abbey: Normal is just like doing the normal things that everyone does. Like school, hanging out with friends, going home with family, doing your homework, and all that stuff.

Lisa: So what would a normal person look like to you? Because you say normal, so what if someone didn't know what the word normal meant? How would you describe what that would look like to a person, maybe or what a person could look like or yeah.

Abbey: Um…

Lisa: You're not sure what I'm asking? What most of us think is normal is a person who is able bodied. Right? Who can stand and who can walk but you see yourself as that person. No? That's not what you mean when you say normal? Okay, so just is that what you mean? I'm just wanting…

Abbey: (unintelligible interjection)

Lisa: Hang on. I'm just wanting to know what YOU mean by normal, not what society means by normal but what you mean by normal.

Abbey: Okay. Just a person. Any size, short, tall, it doesn't matter.

Lisa: Okay.

Abbey: Well I mean like… I don't know.

Lisa: And what about… so ability level doesn't matter either?

Abbey: No.

Lisa: Okay. Thank you. Thank you for clearing that up for me. Okay, um. Tell me about… tell me about what does it feel like, now you're 18. What is that like for you?

Abbey: Um, it's… I mean it's nice I guess (laughs)

Lisa: (laughs) Do you feel any different?

Abbey: No not really.

Lisa: Not really (laughs)

Abbey: Well, I do feel older.

Lisa: You feel older? Do you feel… do you have more responsibilities now?

Abbey: Yeah, I do kind of.

Lisa: You do. Like, can you give me an example? Like what for instance?

Abbey: Like, 'cause like, I'm learning how to make my own appointments.

Lisa: Nice! So, doctor's appointments? Thing like that?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Nice. That's right because you're 18 and you're an adult. So is that kind of scary?

Abbey: Yeah, it is. Like, I made my first one already. Well, like, my XXXX one I was supposed to go in March but I didn't go and they didn't call me so I called. And I schedule it for June.

Lisa: Nice! So then you have to be responsible to get yourself there or, or to ask someone to help get you there?

Abbey: Like I'm learning how to like do all of it. Like How to get transportation when I get over there. Who to call and all that stuff.

Lisa: Nice. So when you're looking for transportation is that, do you take a bus or what type of transportation do you use to get places if it's far away?

Abbey: What do you mean? Like here or when I travel?

Lisa: Like when you, like for your doctor's appointment, are you going take the trolley or will you take a taxi?

Abbey: My, my, my aunt or mom will take me in the car.

Lisa: You're what? I'm sorry.

Abbey: My aunt or mom will take me.

Lisa: Oh, your aunt or mom. Okay, okay, so you just have to let them know when you're appointment is and what time and so they can get you ready and get you on the road. Okay, alright. And when you're not in school, what type of activities do you do? When you're not in school.

Abbey: Well I just. Sometimes I go out with my friends and my sister. Or sometimes I just stay home and do my chores.

Lisa: And where do you and your friends go when you go out?

Abbey: To the park or to go eat somewhere.

Lisa: Yeah, and what do you guys do at the park? Just hang out?

Abbey: I like to play that one game. What's it called? I think it's called badminton.

Lisa: That is really fun.

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: I was on the badminton team in high school. I know. That is really fun. So when you go out to eat, what kinds of foods do you like?

Abbey: Fast food (laughs lightly)

Lisa: (laughs) Like French fries?

Abbey: Yes.

Lisa: Yes.

Abbey: And pizza.

Lisa: And pizza. Do you like McDonald's?

Abbey: It's okay. I mean it's not my favorite.

Lisa: Where do you… So when you go get your French fries where do you go usually? Or where do you go or where do you suggest?

Abbey: To the Costa Liscos

Lisa: They have French fries?

Abbey: They have, they make the fries with carne asada and cheese all mixed together.

Lisa: Oh yum. Okay, I haven't had any food from there. I'll have to try that out. Okay. Tell me a little bit about your family. What makes up… besides your and uncle, what makes up your family unit? How many people are in your family?

Abbey: A lot (laughs lightly)

Lisa: Like ten? More?

Abbey: Maybe more.

Lisa: But how many people live with you at home right now.

Abbey: Right now…

Lisa: So you have your aunt, you have your uncle. Do you have any…

Abbey: Probably four, there's four others.

Lisa: There's four others. So does that include your aunt and your uncle?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: And then two other people?

Abbey: Two cousins.

Lisa: Are they girl cousins or boy cousins?

Abbey: They're boys.

Lisa: They're boys. Do you hang out with them at all?

Abbey: Sometimes.

Lisa: Yeah. Are they younger than you?

Abbey: One, I think he's eleven or ten.

Lisa: Oh, he's young, yeah.

Abbey: The other's like twenty something.

Lisa: Oh, but he still lives at home?

Abbey: Mhm (in agreement).

Lisa: Yeah. Um, okay, oh, another question. Um, if you had the opportunity, the opportunity to be involved in a new activity. What would it be? Anything you choose that you want to do that you've never done before? What would it be? A new activity.

Abbey: Um, I'm not sure.

Lisa: You're not sure? Okay, well we can come back to that one, can come back to that. Maybe we can come back to that one next time, I'll give you some time to think about that one. Um, this is a good one. What does the word disability mean or look like to you? So you've heard the word disability before, what does that mean to you?

Abbey: To me that word means to, it means living a life with… living a life with like, how do you say it… like with a, not with… living a life with a challenge but… like, I don't know. Like, I, I, in my opinion, I think that people that have disabilities are like braver 'cause they… 'cause like they have… like I'm not saying that no one else is brave but people with disabilities, they go through more challenges than the usual people would go through, so like I don't, I just… I feel the word disability means, just…

Lisa: Possibly challenged, having maybe challenges, more barriers, or… I like what you said, they have to be brave… so maybe stronger, you think?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: And why do you think that?

Abbey: Because it really depends on what disability they have.

Lisa: Mhm (in agreement) it does because there are some disabilities that we can't see and then there are some that we do see. Right?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: And do you think that, do you find yourself to be more brave you think or more courageous?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Yeah, mhm (in agreement), yeah. And do you feel like that's a lot of responsibility for you sometimes that you… or let me see, maybe that's not the right way to say it. Do you feel that, do you always want to be brave?

Abbey: No, not always.

Lisa: Do you feel like people expect you to be brave and have more, to be braver I guess, or to be stronger and maybe more courageous than maybe someone else who isn't in a wheelchair. Do you think maybe people expect that from you?

Abbey: Yeah sometimes.

Lisa: Sometimes, yeah. Does your family? Do you, do you sense that from your family or people who don't know you maybe?

Abbey: From both. Like sometimes my family I do… like there are times where… or like well, yeah, like, I sometimes I feel like my family does expect a little too much from me, and from like people who don't know me too. But not always but sometimes.

Lisa: And how do you feel… with that when they expect a lot from you? Do you feel it's fair? Do you get frustrated or do you just take up the challenge and you try to and then you just do what they expect of you… you know, do more than they expect of you?

Abbey: Sometimes I… I just do it but there are times where I feel like I can't so I don't. But then I feel like I disappoint them.

Lisa: Right. So you put a lot of pressure on yourself sometimes?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Yeah… Okay, and I'm going to ask you this question and you think about for a moment okay? Because I'm going to talk a lot about you and your wheelchair. So, how do you… my first question to broach that subject is, um… how do you feel about your wheelchair?

Abbey: Like what do I think about it?

Lisa: Mhm (in agreement)

Abbey: Honestly, I don't really pay much attention to it. Sometimes it is like a bother. Um…

Lisa: And how can it be a bother to you sometimes? Or how do you see it as being bothersome?

Abbey: 'cause sometimes I can't, like, be in a place that I would want to be or like reach for something that I want.

Lisa: Does your wheelchair ever? Does it ever get in the way for you at school?

Abbey: No.

Lisa: And you know where all the elevators are and everything, right? So everything's accessible to you, so that's good. So you don't have any trouble, there are no barriers getting upstairs and downstairs for you?

Abbey: No.

Lisa: Good… Good, good, good. Yeah, ummm… When something goes wrong with your wheelchair, what do you do? I mean, do you have an extra wheelchair at home or do you get a loaner?

Abbey: No, I have um the hospital in California, if I ever need something like a repair or something they will get it for me.

Lisa: Oh nice, and then your uncle will fix it or is there someone here who can fix it for you?
Abbey: No, I have to like go over there or they will send me the things over here and then I know how to do it.

Lisa: Oh, okay, so you either go to California where the wheelchair is made or whomever gave that to you and then they can fix it or they bring parts to you and you know how to put them on.

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Okay, so have you ever had to fix something recently on your wheelchair?

Abbey: Yes.

Lisa: What did you have to fix?

Abbey: My um wheel… like…

Lisa: Oh, okay.

Abbey: This part right here because it's like kind of wiggly.

Lisa: Oh. So, what, it just wiggles because it just gets used a lot.

Abbey: It's 'cause the like little black things they have here kind of fell off.

Lisa: Oh, I see. Yeah, so besides having a wheelchair, you have to make sure it's maintained, right?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: That’s a lot. That can be a lot of work.

Abbey: Sometimes yeah.

Lisa: (laughs)

Lisa: Are you okay with the questions?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Okay, I’m, I’m just checking in with you… just checking in with you. Um… when you’re at home, I know that you said that sometimes your aunt and uncle expect a lot from you at home, but when you’re at home what roles do you play? Meaning, how do you help your family at home? Do you do chores?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Do you help take care of your younger cousin? I mean, what do you do at home?

Abbey: Yeah, sometimes I take care of my cousin.

Lisa: When you’re um, when they’re um…

Abbey: When they go to work.

Lisa: When they go to work. Yeah. Um, do you do chores in the house? Do you have to help with dishes? Keeping the house clean? Or your room clean?

Abbey: Um I mostly just do my room and my laundry and sometimes I help out with the dishes and stuff like that. I cook.

Lisa: You do? What’s your favorite dish? Or your favorite meal to cook?

Abbey: Enchiladas.

Lisa: Yum. Chicken?

Abbey: Yes.

Lisa: Yum, I love those, yeah. So you cook and you babysit and you help take care of the house. It sounds like you have a lot to do. And then you have homework to do when you get home from school, so your afternoons are pretty busy.

Abbey: Yeah, kind of.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. Um, you already answered this one (scratches on paper). Okay, if you could give your physical condition a name what would it be? What would you call it? Because we know people use the word disability all the time, but what would you call it? Because you obviously have a lot of abilities, so… What would you call it if you were to name it?

Abbey: I honestly don't know.

Lisa: You don't know? Okay. Or maybe you could, or maybe what it's what you said before… you consider yourself normal so that's it.

Abbey: Mhm (very quietly and unable to tell if it's in agreement or disagreement)

Lisa: Okay... Let's see… Oh, so we'll do one last questions because I know that you have to get going, so how about this one? And this will be in regards to social media. In what ways do you find social media to be a beneficial tool for your self-expression and communication? So how do you use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to express yourself to people that you know?... Does social media allow you freedom to express yourself in a way that you might not do it at school with your peers?

Abbey: Well, I don't really express myself on my social media. Like, like with… what do you mean?

Lisa: I saw this picture, I think… somebody "X" showed me this picture and it was beautiful and she asked your permission and I believe you said she could show it to me and it was absolutely beautiful. And you had this beautiful saying underneath and I don't remember what it is right now but I was so moved and touched by this, what you came up with. So do you look around for really nice, for really positive things to post with your beautiful pictures? I mean, you're really stunningly beautiful, I mean you're really pretty.

Abbey: Thank you.

Lisa: And um, I wish, I wish I remembered what it said underneath but it was amazing. I… yeah… it was… it was just very uplifting and very positive. And I… the underlying message was believe in yourself.

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Yeah, so… So do you think you might use or you may use social media to um… communicate maybe positive things to people or…

Abbey: Well, yeah, because I know a lot of people… like, for example, Facebook, there are a lot of people who post what they feel and it's mostly like they're mad or they're sad or something.

Lisa: Yeah.

Abbey: And like I, like I just try to like, post things that will like make them think like, oh you know, I shouldn't feel sad. Or, you know I should keep going and believe in myself. Like, it doesn't matter what other thinks about me, what others think about me.

Lisa: Yeah, so would you say that your self-expression or what you want to convey to people is um that you need to believe in yourself.

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Do you think that would be… am I understanding you correctly?

Abbey: Mhm (in agreement)

Lisa: Alright, um… oh, okay. How about this one last one because I know you have to get going and so do I. How about, tell me about the people, I know you've talked about wanting to go to college after high school, so, tell me about the people who support you're educational career or who encourage you to go on after high school.

Abbey: My sister.

Lisa: That's, that's great. So you guys are, you've talked about your sister a bit, so are you and your sister um really close.

Abbey: Yeah, we were, we um, like things happened that we kind of weren't close

Lisa: Between the two of you? Okay.

Abbey: Well not like between me and her, it's just that like, there were family problems and all that stuff that we kind of became apart with each other. But like um, like over these past years we've been like, we were trying to get back close again and we did so like she was like… she told me… like I told her my plan after graduation and she was like, "Oh yeah, you know I support you, anything you need, you know you have me here."

Lisa: That's really nice to have the support of a sister. I think that's really important to have. I really do. I have a sister, sisters and I think, the support of sisters is wonderful. Um, so your sister doesn't live with you, so she lives on her own? Is that correct?

Abbey: Right now she lives with another uncle.

Lisa: Oh, okay. So what are your plans after high school? Besides going to school, are you moving or are you staying with your aunt and uncle and your cousins?

Abbey: No, I'm moving in with my sister and my uncle, the other one.

Lisa: Yeah.

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Well how fun is that going to be? That will be fun right?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: You guys will be together. That's going to be fun. That will be a lot of fun. Um, and do you guys do a lot of things together? Like shopping?

Abbey: Yeah, she doesn't like to like stay inside. She's always like, "Oh, let's go out."

Lisa: Yeah. Would you consider her your best friend maybe? One of your best friends?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. That's awesome. So, when you leave high school do you plan to go to community college or do you plan to go to a four year university or what are your plans?

Abbey: First, I'm going to go to community college and then transfer to university.

Lisa: Do you know which university?

Abbey: ASU.

Lisa: ASU, yeah. So what is going to be your major? What would you like to pursue in college?

Abbey: Um, I'm going to do business management.

Lisa: Oh nice. To maybe have your own business or to work for a company in a management position?

Abbey: Well, that's what I'm still trying to figure out.

Lisa: Okay. So if you were to have your own business what would it be?

Abbey: I don't know. I think, I guess it would be clothes. Selling clothes.

Lisa: So, when you go shopping, where are some of the places that you go for clothes?

Abbey: I go to Forever 21.

Lisa: Mhm (in agreement).

Abbey: The Old Navy.

Lisa: Yeah.

Abbey: Macy's. The store called Wave.

Lisa: Is that in the mall?

Abbey: Mhm (in agreement)

Lisa: Wave? W-A-V-E?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Oh, I haven't seen that before. Is it a lot like Zumies.

Abbey: I don't know, I don't know what that is.

Lisa: You've never been in Zumies. Um, are the clothes like, are they pretty similar to Forever 21 then?

Abbey: Yeah, kind of.

Lisa: Kind of. Okay, okay… I think that is going to be it because I have to go now. So we will meet again.

End of recording

File 130129_0005.mp3 (0h 11m 52s)
Recorded: 05/19/16
Recording Length: 0h 11m 52s

Lisa: Hi, today is Thursday. I'm meeting with Abbey and today's interview is going to focus on Abbey and her relationship with her chair. Okay, so my first question is, do you think of yourself differently now that you have a wheelchair… then before?

Abbey: No I don't.

Lisa: Okay, let's see. Um, has being, has having a wheelchair as part of your life has that changed your life goals or your career goals? Do you see your future being any different?

Abbey: No, um I honestly wasn't sure when I was little what I wanted to do. So it didn't really change anything.

Lisa: Okay. Um, so this is a two part question. How does your chair make your life easier? I guess you know what, before we even… Okay, no, let's just stick to that. How does… because the next question… I'll ask another question. How does, how does your chair, I'm sorry… How does your chair make your life easier? How about in terms of mobility? Are you able to get around? Um, does your chair make your life easier?

Abbey: I honestly don't think so.

Lisa: You don't think so. So do you think it makes your life harder?

Abbey: No, not really. I mean…

Lisa: Do you find, um, when you're in chair do you find that there are barriers that you can't get every place you want to get or…

Abbey: Well, sometimes it is. I guess sometimes it does make it harder.

Lisa: Can you give me an example?

Abbey: 'Cause they're like places where I would like to be but I can't.

Lisa: Like where for instance?

Abbey: Like walking on the beach. The sand.

Lisa: Yeah. I didn't even think about that. Yeah. Okay. Um, how about this… okay so this is another two part question. Do you like your chair? Just looking at your chair as a… What do you… When you look at your chair what does it look like to you? I mean it might sound like a silly question, does it look like a piece of equipment? I mean like steel and rubber. Do you look at it that way, like the components, it's made of aluminum and it’s got rubber for the tires. Um, do you just look at it as um, this thing? Or do you look at your chair as an extension of your body perhaps?

Abbey: I guess I just see it like the first thing you said. Like just, rubber. Something that helps me get around.

Lisa: Do you look at your chair as a, as a friend or an enemy?

Abbey: It’s both sometimes.

Lisa: So tell me a little bit how your chair can be your friend, how… yeah, how your chair can be your friend to you or how you view it as a friend.

Abbey: Because it helps me get to places I need to get. But then its turns into an enemy because sometimes it gets in my way.

Lisa: And what do you do when it gets in your way?

Abbey: Just deal with it.

Lisa: Or how does it get in your way?

Abbey: ‘Cause sometimes I can’t reach things.

Lisa: Okay.

Abbey: And like sometimes it doesn’t fit in places.

Lisa: And how does your chair… does your chair fit… like when you say sometimes it doesn’t fit in places, how does it fit in the classroom, in the typical classroom? Does it fit in the classroom?

Abbey: Yes it does but there are rooms that are smaller in my house that I can’t get in.

Lisa: So what do you do then?

Abbey: I need someone’s help.

Lisa: To get in the room or to get out of your chair?

Abbey: To get in the room.

Lisa: To get in the room, okay. And your family’s pretty willing to…
Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Yeah, to get you out of your chair. Do you think of your chair as part of your body?

Abbey: No I don't.

Lisa: So you think of your chair as separate?

Abbey: Mhm (in agreement)

Lisa: Okay. So would you say that there's an Abbey and her wheelchair. Two separate entities or would you say, Abbey and wheelchair is one thing?

Abbey: Different, separate.

Lisa: They're separate. So, so, here's Abbey and then here's her chair. So then you see your chair as completely separate from Abbey the girl.

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Okay. I just wanted to make sure I was clear. Okay. Some people who have prosthetic limbs, you know what those are right? Artificial arms and legs. You've seen those runners who have those legs that look like this, and for the transcription I'm drawing Abbey a picture of a titanium looking runner's prosthetic limb. So um they think of themselves as bionic, almost super human. Do you think of yourself that way with your wheelchair, as bionic or super human?

Abbey: What do bionic mean?

Lisa: That you've got these um scientific artificial um, like for instance people would have these artificial legs and they would be made out of titanium, really light metal, and they can run super-fast. They can run really really fast or they're legs are never going to wear out. They're legs are going to last longer than a human leg. In terms of using your wheelchair do you think of yourself as bionic?

Abbey: Yeah, kind of.

Lisa: Kind of.

Abbey: Like sometimes a lot of people will tell me, "Oh, you're so lucky. You don't have to stand or walk."

Lisa: Alright, okay. And then what do, what do you say back to them when they say that to you?

Abbey: I just tell them, "yeah". (Laughs)

Lisa: (Laughs)

Abbey: And then like, my like, like some people, like since they walk without like socks or anything and they're feet get messed up sometimes. Mine are like really smooth.

Lisa: And soft, huh? (Laughs)

Abbey: Yeah. (Laughs)

Lisa: Okay. So this, and if this is too personal, then you just tell me that you don't want to answer this one, okay? So, do you think of the world differently now than before you were in the wheelchair? So I don't know when you were, you, your accident happened but now that you have your wheelchair do you think of your, of the world differently. Do you see things differently?

Abbey: Yeah, I do.

Lisa: You do.

Abbey: 'Cause before the accident I was like seven or eight.

Lisa: Oh, okay.

Abbey: And so like… but now that I'm in a wheelchair, I see who people really are because I use to think that everyone was nice. Everyone likes you, is going to be there for you but now I realize, I see who the real people are. Like, who really actually is going to be there for you in hard times and who is not.

Lisa: And um, so the hard times, are you talking about as soon as your accident happened? Or from the accident even until now? Do you see some people were in your life and people kind of come and go or…

Abbey: Yeah, like people come and go from, since the accident. Like, there are people that I haven't seen since the accident.

Lisa: And is that because you don't want to see them or is that because…

Abbey: No because like we just lost contact.

Lisa: Do you think they're not sure what to say to you now or…

Abbey: I don't know. I'm not sure.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. Okay. Um, okay. How many wheelchairs have you had?

Abbey: I’ve had two.

Lisa: You’ve had two. And why have you had two? And you have to remember that I don’t know anything about wheelchairs. So, why have you had two?

Abbey: ‘Cause of when the accident happened I was little so I had a small one but I grew so they had to give me this one. And because they said this one was specially designed for when I drive. It will be easier for me to take it apart.

Lisa: So, okay. So you plan on getting your driver’s license and driving.

Abbey: Mhm (in agreement)

Lisa: Great, so they you can… that will give you even more mobility, right? With a car? And so then, um, so then I guess… do you know how to fold up your chair now and put it in a car?

Abbey: Yeah, I do.

Lisa: Oh, okay. And you can do that by yourself?

Abbey: No, I still haven’t done it.

Lisa: Oh, okay. You still haven’t done it yet. So do you rely on a lot of help or can you do a lot of things on your own that need your wheelchair?

Abbey: Like to take it apart?

Lisa: Yeah to take it apart or when you get on the trolley, well… that’s different I guess, public transportation because they have to help you and they have to lock you in. Um, do you feel independent in your wheelchair?

Abbey: I do.

Lisa: Do you feel dependent? Like do you depend on people as well?

Abbey: Sometime I do.

Lisa: Mhm (in agreement)

Abbey: But most of the time, I feel that I can do things myself.

Lisa: Yeah, and that makes you feel good huh?

Abbey: Mhm (in agreement)

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. So will you get another wheelchair or is this it.

Abbey: No this is it.

Lisa: This is it, okay. Now do you get to have any say in how it is designed? I know it's designed for you to drive, but did you get to pick the color?

Abbey: Yeah, I got to pick the color.

Lisa: See I love that it's purple. That's your favorite color, isn't it?

Abbey: Yeah.

Lisa: Yeah, I just… yeah, I just figured that out. So that's awesome, so you get to custom it, custom design it a little bit so that it makes it yours.

Abbey: Mhm (in agreement)

Lisa: Yeah, I like that, wow. Okay, um. I think that's it for us because I know that you have to go. Um, anything that you want to add to our interview today about you and your wheelchair.

Abbey: Um, no.

Lisa: Yeah, um okay. Thanks Abbey.

End of recording

File Name: 130212_0007.mp3
Recorded: 06/02/16
Recording Length: 0h 8m 28s

Lisa: Okay, this is Lisa and I'm with Abbey and we are having another interview today. And what I would like to do is go back and ask Abbey another… ask Abbey a question that I've asked her before but I just want to know if she has had a chance to think about it and if she can expand on her original answer. So I'm going to go ahead and ask Abbey the question again and it's under living with a disability. So, Abbey what does the word disability mean or look like to you? We can take the first part; what does disability look like? So when you hear the word disability, what does that look like to you?

Abbey: It looks… to me it looks like someone who, who is physically hurt.

Lisa: Okay. And what would physically, what does physically hurt look like to you?

Abbey: Like a broken arm or broken leg or someone in crutches or someone in a wheelchair.

Lisa: Ok, ummm. Ok, so that's what it looks like to you but what does the word disability mean? Just that one word disability; what does that mean to you?

Abbey: Not being able to do something like someone else.

Lisa: Okay and give me an example of what that could be. Like someone doing something like someone else. Give me an example of what that could be.

Abbey: Like someone who doesn't have a disability can kick a ball or something, play soccer.

Lisa: Okay

Abbey: And someone who does have a disability like a broken leg or someone in a wheelchair or someone in crutches can't do it. They can't kick the ball or run like the person who can.

Lisa: Okay. And I know I asked you this question last time. How do you feel about your wheelchair, ummm and last time you said your wheelchair can be a friend and an enemy. Ummm, can you elaborate on that a little more and starting with how can your wheelchair be a friend? How can you see your wheelchair as a friend?

Abbey: Uh, like it helps me get to places where I need to get.

Lisa: Okay

Abbey: And… yeah.

Lisa: Okay. And how can your wheelchair be an enemy at times to you? Or all the time? How can your wheelchair be an enemy?

Abbey: Not always but most of the time it gets in my way. Like, um… like sometimes I can't reach things or sometimes… sometimes I can't… well, like it helps me get to places that I need to get but not always 'cause then sometimes it's too big and I can't get to where I need to get, or there's no room for it.

Lisa: So the space is too big or the wheelchair is too big for the space you need to get through. Okay. Um, the fact that you go to choose the color, this beautiful purple color of your chair; does that help you, um, does that make you like your chair more?

Abbey: Like feel a little better about it?

Lisa: Yeah, exactly.

Abbey: Kind of, yeah.

Lisa: Like in what way?

Abbey: Like 'cause some people just see it as the… like, it's a horrible chair, you know, but it's not. It's not as horrible as they think. I don't know, it just does.

Lisa: So you've made your peace with it? I mean…

Abbey: I got used to it? Yeah.

Lisa: You got used to it. And then um I'm sure that the fact that you go to… I can't, I have to be really careful with interviewing because I don't want you to say what I want you to say. I want you to say what you say. So, by having the opportunity to pick the color, did that make you… how did that feel? You were given the choice… Okay. You had the opportunity to pick out the color design of your chair. Did that help you… like your chair more because you chose the color and you like purple? I think what I'm trying to get at is the fact that you had, that you're able to participate in the color or design of your chair, did that make you feel better about having a wheelchair as part of your life, as part of your body?

Abbey: Um, no not really.

Lisa: Okay, so…

Abbey: Like I just go used to it over the time. Like at first it bothered me a lot.

Lisa: To be in a wheelchair?

Abbey: Mhm (in agreement).

Lisa: But what about it bothered you?

Abbey: What? How did it bother me?

Lisa: Yeah, how did it bother you?

Abbey: Because a lot people kept staring at me. And then, like, I wasn't used to it. I had a hard time, like, getting to use it. Like, it would literally leave me like scars right here.

Lisa: Oh, on…

Abbey: On my arm.

Lisa: And Abbey is pointing to her forearm.

Abbey: 'cause of the arm rest.

Lisa: Okay. And that because you were trying to move the wheels.

Abbey: Yeah because I wasn't used to it so I would rub it a lot.

Lisa: Okay. Um

Abbey: But now I got used to it. Like sometimes me and my friends play around with it. We call it my car (laughs lightly).

Lisa: (laughs)

Abbey: And like every time, they're like helping me, they're pushing me and we run into something, I'm just like you got to pay for my car (laughs).

Lisa (laughs) Do they ever push you and jump on back of it?

Abbey: Yeah (laughs), they do.

Lisa: So, do you ever forget that you have this… do you ever forget that you have a wheelchair? I mean is such a part of who you are that you forget that you have it or are you still reminded that you have a wheelchair?

Abbey: No sometimes I don't even think about it. I forget about it.

Lisa: And when are the time that you think about it?

Abbey: When I need to like get to a place and then they ask me, “Do you think your chair will fit in the car?”

Lisa: Then you have to stop and…

Abbey: And think.

Lisa: Okay. And I think… and what roles do you play at home? I think I asked you that question. I did ask you, and you we’re telling me that you help babysit. Okay, um

End of recording

File 130302_0008.mp3 (0h 4m 03s)
Recorded 06/20/16
Recording Length: 0h 4m 03s
Lisa: Hi, I'm with Abbey today and this is our last interview. And today's interview is going to um, talk about social media and how Abbey uses social media to express herself or to show specific users um, who she is. And the first question that I have for Abbey is, how do you engage with social media? So basically, are you actively on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter?

Abbey: Yes.

Lisa: Are you on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter? All three?

Abbey: I have all three.

Lisa: You have all three, okay. And do you engage with it every day or just depending on which one?

Abbey: I mostly use Snapchat.

Lisa: Oh, Snapchat. Can you explain what Snapchat is?
Abbey: Uh, it's just like you take, you can take pictures of random stuff and send it to people and write on it what it is or what you're doing.

Lisa: Okay. What type of images do you post of yourself on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter?

Abbey: Picture of myself, or with my friends, or of my sister. On my Snapchat I mostly post like videos and pictures on it of the places I go and what I do when I go out.

Lisa: Okay. Um, I, I noticed that when I saw your Facebook pictures you don't take a, you don't have your wheelchair in your Facebook pictures and may I ask you why is that?

Abbey: Um because I don't know, I just, I don't like how it looks. And everyone in my social media knows I am in a wheelchair. They know but I just, I don't like how it looks… how I look on it.

Lisa: Okay. In what ways do you find social media to be a beneficial tool for your self-expression and communication? And because when I have looked on your Facebook pages, you have a really beautiful picture of yourself and then always have a really nice quote. A quote, a really positive quote, a very encouraging quote or expression. So, I'm wondering, um, do you post those quotes for yourself? Or are they… why do you post those quotes?

Abbey: Because I… because like um… because I feel like since people know I'm in a wheelchair they probably think my life is like depressing. So I post those quotes to like for myself and to show that I'm not… I'm not in a bad mood or depressed. You know, I like… how do I say this? Um, that I do live a good life and I am happy.

Lisa: Okay.

Abbey: And because they're like motivation quotes too.

End of recording