

Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal

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Editorial

Our Body to Come

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Abstract

The editorial for Volume 20, Issue 4 suggests Alice Wong’s quote that people can learn from disabled people’s experiences about the importance of shared vulnerability and interdependence is truer than ever, and it outlines this issue’s content. It closes with an invitation to the 41st Annual Pacific Rim International Conference, at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, May 28–29, 2026.

Keywords: disability studies, vulnerability, interdependence, disability justice, Pacific Rim, editorial

Editorial

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“Disabled people know what it means to be vulnerable and interdependent.

We are modern-day oracles. It’s time people listened to us.”

— Alice Wong (2020)

This is written at a particularly fractured moment. Across our national and global community, many are feeling frightened and increasingly vulnerable — uncertain what is coming, reaching for what once felt solid, some convinced the best is behind them. This feeling of vulnerability across our global bod(ies) is very real. It is not abstract, and it is not evenly distributed. But as Alice Wong suggests, vulnerability and power are not opposites. What we share — exposure, interdependence, risk — may be the beginning of something. It may be where our power begins. This is not optimism. It is simply what the moment requires. In this sense, the future is disabled. The world ahead will depend on the wisdom of vulnerability, interdependence, and adaptation that define disabled experience every day. And perhaps, as Ocean Vuong writes in *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (2016): “the most beautiful part of [our] body is where it’s headed.”

The articles in this issue take up these questions from multiple directions. This issue of the *Review of Disability Studies*, Volume 20, Issue 4 (2026), includes scholarship that spans policy, technology, arts, history, and Indigenous knowledge — a range that itself speaks to the breadth of disability studies today. Sarchet examines the Advanced Special Education Preparation Standards through a Foucauldian lens, asking whose knowledge counts and how

the language of professional standards shapes the inclusion — or exclusion — of neurodivergent teachers and students alike. Moving from policy to practice, Watanabe and colleagues investigate how assistive technology services adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan, finding that hybrid in-person and remote models hold real promise for expanding access — and that building specialist capacity for those models is the next necessary step. Bullen shifts our attention to Audio Description, looking beyond questions of script quality to the overlooked barriers of delivery, ambient noise, and listening environment that can quietly lock people out of public cultural life. From access to artmaking, Fritsch explores the particular challenges facing racialized disabled artists in Canada, centering the role of community and activist art in building both visibility and justice.

Widening the lens, Lorenzo-Elarco offers a Native Hawaiian researcher's reading of *Indigenous Disability Studies* (Ward, Ed.), connecting Indigenous frameworks of relationality and cultural continuity with traditional Hawaiian understandings of disability as sacred ability; and Sarkar's review of *Disability, Sexuality, and Gender in Asia* (Zhang et al., 2024) traces how disability, gender, and sexuality intersect across Asia — centering lived experience, collective resistance, and the insistence that the Global South has its own knowledge, its own voice, and its own future to claim.

Anchoring this issue in history, this issue also features an interview with Scot Danforth, author of *An Independent Man: Ed Roberts and the Fight for Disability Rights* (University of California Press, 2025), the first full-length biography of Ed Roberts (1939–1995). Roberts' life as a champion for himself and for others shows how vulnerability, embraced and shared, becomes a force that changes everything. The issue closes with a curated listing of recent dissertations and theses, evidence that the questions asked here continue being carried forward.

A final note and an invitation: For forty years, the Pacific Rim International Conference has been hosted by the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. This year, for the first time, the conference comes home — to the campus itself — on May 28 and 29, 2026, under the theme *Unbreakable Threads: Communities of Resilience and Continuity*. The conversation about the ways disability may help lead us toward our best possible futures continues there. We hope you will join us.

References

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