New Books Network
Disability, Revolution Interview Transcript

Clayton Jarrard: Welcome to New Books Network. My name is Clayton Jarrard. My pronouns are he, him, and today I'm here with Robert McRuer, author of Disability, Revolution.

In recent political times, disability identity has been mobilized in ways that paradoxically compound bodily injury and disability. This single-issue approach obscures the oppression of disabled people and prevents solidarity across difference. In *Disability, Revolution*, Robert McRuer introduces alternatives to one-dimensional disability.

Providing an accessible overview of disability justice movements and their relevance to larger emancipatory coalitions. Exploring the most prominent examples from the past several decades, the book focuses on the convergence of queer and crit movements, mad pride, intersectional disability justice work, neurodiversity, and the globalization of disability alliances. Essential for anyone interested in disability politics, this book shows how these multivalent movements help us imagine alternative disabled worlds.

So, thank you so much for being here with me today, Dr. McRuer. Before we dive in, would you mind introducing yourself to the listeners?

Robert McRuer: Yes, my pleasure, I'm happy to be here, thanks for having me. I am calling in from Washington, D.C, where I am a professor of English at the George Washington University, and affiliated with other departments, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and American Studies as well. I've been here for quite a while, and I have, during that time, been working and teaching, researching and teaching, pretty much centrally at the intersections of queer theory and disability studies. I am most known for a book called Crip Time, Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability, which was published in 2006, so it's 20 years old, and I'm actually busily writing an expanded edition that will come out perhaps as early as late next year. That book helped, I think, to found a field crip theory as a project is now something that crosses borders and that resonates with people in many different locations.

Disability, Revolution, the book that we're here to talk about today, is my most recent publication, and it's unique in that I was invited to contribute to the American Studies Now: Critical Histories of the Present series, published by University of California Press. These are designed to be short, accessible volumes for a wider readership—for students at all levels but for general readers as well.

I've found over the course of writing about disability that a lot of disability texts are crossover texts, because people in the disability community generally hunger for, positive representations and representations that counter many of the negative ways that disability has been understood culturally. So, *Disability, Revolution*, or the title is actually Disability Comma Revolution, is my latest attempt to speak to a broad

audience. The book will be published in Spanish in early 2027. It's possible there will be a Portuguese translation following soon after that, so that is where the book stands now, and I'm happy to talk about it with you today.

CJ: Awesome, thank you so much for that introduction. It's exciting to hear about the new expanded edition of Crip Theory, and also about, like, setting the stage for what brought this book into the world. So to start our conversation, can you break down a little bit of the title by discussing how you approach both disability and revolution? You mentioned the title was Disability comma Revolution, how does that set the stage for the history that you're presenting in this book?

RR: I try to theorize in the book several meanings of revolution, which perhaps, at this point, this is a very outdated understanding of revolution, but it has usually, historically, been associated most predominantly with class, and often with a sort of violent overthrow of existing structures. I draw on feminist thinkers, queer thinkers, disability thinkers to try to put forward a more stretch—a stretchier understanding of revolution.

Women and gay and lesbian people in particular have often been told that our concerns are for later. So to sort of parody something that actually has circulated for several decades. Often LGBT people and women were told, ‘Well, those concerns will come after the revolution.’ And so, *Disability, Revolution* tries to suggest, ‘No, there are revolutionary things going on in multidimensional disability movements now, and that's been happening for quite some time.’

So, I theorize, the ways in which disability revolution is about leadership by disabled people and disabled movements. It's about, as you mentioned in the introduction, intersectionality. So sort of revolutionary thinking in disability movements has been thinking about race, class, gender, language, location, nation, in intersectional ways.

And the comma does a bit of different work. On the positive side, Disability comma Revolution suggests, ‘Okay, disability can be appended to our thinking about revolution,’ and the movements that I trace in the book can be put forward as contemporary—going back about four decades—revolutionary movements that might, animate thinking in other locations. So disability kind of calling on a crip revolution.

But it's also a pause, so there's no guarantee that disability in and of itself is going to lead to a progressive or revolutionary consciousness. And much of the book, as you mentioned, although this is not the main topic, much of the book is haunted by what I call one-dimensional disability.

So one-dimensional disability—and one of the main figures here, is the governor of Texas, Greg Abbott—I theorize how one-dimensional disability has emerged in our moment. By our moment, I mean the past 40 years of neoliberal capitalism, which has been about containing difference, but not necessarily muting it. So, neoliberal capitalism has given us a sort of muted celebration of difference, where people can be out and proud with their various identities. But that kind of domesticated focus on

identity obscures the ways in which most movements that are centered around identity have been much more radical.

So, looking at Greg Abbott in particular, he is out and proud as the governor of Texas, as someone who he claims repeatedly, ‘Other politicians or other people claim to have a steel spine. I actually have one, and I will use that spine to fight for Texan values every—and I will use that to fight for Texans every day of my tenure.’

Interestingly there he moves from metaphor—some people talk about having a steel spine—to material. He actually does have steel in his spine, but then he moves it back towards a metaphor where it means robustness, muscularity, and an ability to fight for Texans. My point about this is he's out and proud as a disabled person, as are others in the book: Madison Cawthorn, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, various people whose impairments were on high display over the past few decades. But whose policies and ways of thinking actually are detrimental to the vast majority of people with disabilities. So one-dimensional disability kind of functions as a smokescreen in our moment. In Texas in particular, it's easy to sort of look at the ways in which that happens. That includes, sort of notoriously, the border, where people kept in cages have faced sickness, COVID-19, and other disabilities and impairments and injuries. It's not just that element of the border. I write in the book about how Abbott put buoys in the middle of the Rio Grande, and people trying to cross the Rio Grande literally died on his watch. A quick impairment and death in that river. Beyond that, though, he's one of many people making it more difficult for other disabled people to vote. And that is by limiting mail-in voting, by getting rid of drop boxes and things like that—modes of voting that actually disabled people depend upon, and some disabled people require assistance with voting, so he's trimmed a lot of that. He's cut healthcare for many people, and particularly in Texas, there's been a well-nigh criminalization of gender-affirming care. So, doctors and parents and families that were affirming their child's gender were able to access certain services, but that is increasingly difficult in Texas and elsewhere. So, my idea here is that one-dimensional disability mutes the multivalent and multidimensional disability movements that actually are at the center of the book.

I draw on a book by Roderick Ferguson called *One-Dimensional Queer*. What Ferguson argues is that vibrant, anti-war, anti-capitalist, intersectional movements that began with the Stonewall riots get diluted over the 70s and 80s, and it becomes a gay movement focused on white, cis men. I don't see exactly the dilution that Ferguson, is tracing, but I am indebted to one-dimensional queer in terms of putting forward my own notion of one-dimensional disability. I say there's not been a dilution in that we started somewhere that we've lost ground from. Rather, the book traces the ways in which the movements that I trace have been vibrant for decades.
So we can talk more about this, but Mad Pride is a great example. It's not like it just popped up now. Since the rise of big pharma and various, techniques of psychiatrization and institutionalization, people with what Margaret Price calls mental disabilities—she uses that as an umbrella term—have fought back, sometimes naming themselves as mad, and in the process, reversing the negative stigma that is

associated with mad, much in the same way that queer and crip have been reclaimed, and made to signify positively.

It might be useful to just briefly say for your listeners, crip is a reclaimed term from the derogatory term in English, cripple, and it has been reclaimed as a kind of in-your-face, defiant, flamboyant identity that's claimed by many different people, not just people with mobility impairments. It's traveled quite a bit across languages, and so, mad functions like crip in that regard, and queer as well. All three, I would stress, still carry that negative history. The strength of these terms is that they were terms used to wound and contain and discipline, and the power of the reclamation, making it into something different, re-signifying what these terms mean, the power of the reclamation comes, in part, from being built upon that history of stigmatization and harm.

So the Disability comma Revolution, again, there's a pause. There's no automatic connection, but these movements that I trace have been putting forward world-making possibilities, in multiple locations.

CJ: Awesome, thank you for speaking to that. It's really helpful how you foreground just the contested space between disability and revolution and these aspirations for change. And I appreciate you mentioning the one-dimensional disability movement versus multidimensional disability movements, and I'd love to continue pulling that thread a little bit. Would you be willing to talk a bit more about the importance of—or the importance for you of—delineating these types of disability movements, and what are some of the ways in which, you know, you identify this as a one-dimensional or multi-dimensional disability movement?

RR: Yeah, pretty much all of the chapters do this work, sort of, simplistically. Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 are centered on queer crip movements, disability justice movements—often centered around race—mad pride and neuroatypicality, and global trajectories. Those are the four chapters, but they spin in and out of each other in ways that make clear that global trajectories, for instance, are queer as well; people working on disability justice are also thinking about neuroatypicality and so forth. So maybe it's useful—well, I'll back up a sec. Clearly, in what I've said so far, the book is argument-driven, in the sense that I'm putting forward this notion that hopefully will be useful to readers of one-dimensional versus multidimensional. That is the main argument, but it's also very much a curatorial book. I want to amplify the voices of others throughout the book in those four different general topics.

I note in the introduction that queer theorist Gyatri Gopanath looks at how the origins of curating come from a sort of etymological connection to care, and so she puts forward the notion of queer curation as a mode of caring for those lives that have been devalued, or underappreciated, or neglected, or forgotten. So I build on that to put forward, basically, a crip curation throughout the book, and, as I said, want to amplify the voices of others in each of the chapters. That's probably most important in the disability justice chapter. It's one of the most vibrant, if not the most vibrant, disability movement to emerge in our century, and there's no way that one can write a book

about Disability comma Revolution without talking about disability justice. However, curatorially here, it's really important to stress that that concept emerged from the work of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), many of them trans and queer disabled people. The emergence of disability justice happened in the Bay Area in San Francisco, often is associated with a group called Sins Invalid, a performing group that is about celebrating the beauty of disabled bodies, largely disabled bodies of color, and so I want to amplify those voices.

The important work of disability justice is literally how intersectional it is. So, Patty Berne, B-E-R-N-E, Patty Byrne, was one of the main figures drafting what she called—she unfortunately has recently passed away—but what she called the principles of disability justice. There were 10 of them. They included things like intersectionality, first and foremost. They also included an anti-capitalist politics, largely because thinkers in the movement were convinced that the disability rights movement, even though they took inspiration from it and benefited from it, the disability rights movement was too much focused on integration into the system as it is without recognizing that the system harms the vast majority of disabled people. So that anti-capitalist ethos comes from that. Leadership of the most impacted, is another one of the principles. But my point in turning to this chapter in particular is to spotlight the great work that Patty Berne and others have done. Those others would include Leroy Moore, it would include many people who have focused on what's now called care work, including the Caribbean-born Korean disabled writer Mia Mingus. Akemi Nishida, who writes about networks of care and has a great book called *Just Care*. So this is just one example in the book of how I'm talking about disability justice, it's not something that I formulated or that I am at all responsible for, but I can use the book as a place to send people off to read the great work that all these other people have put out. And each of the chapters does that in its own way.

CJ: Awesome, yeah, thank you for going over that. To start, you know, getting into the book a little bit further, the first chapter is called Crip/Queer/Trans Worldmaking, and it offers an overview of some of the world-making endeavors that have come from crip, queer, and trans movements. You discuss queer-/crip-of-color critiques and cripistemologies. Would you be willing to talk a little bit about how these interventions have been involved, “materializing other modes of existence,” or like, you know, how this actually does become a world-making project?

RR: Yeah, it was really important to me in that opening chapter after the introduction—it was important to me to bring together a queer/trans/crip, all three. One of the most obvious reasons, probably for many listeners to this program, one of the most obvious reasons is that we're in a horribly anti-trans moment. And so moving towards world-making, world building, world-creating, I wanted to open with what various thinkers have called the world-shrinking or world-destroying efforts that we're seeing right now, particularly in relation to trans lives.

So Abbott, again, is a great example, but he's by no means the only example. Trans people have become, in the last few years especially, a target. I mean, we're talking

about a population that is not huge in terms of percentage of the population, and yet trans people are targeted as though they're responsible for everything from the collapse of the economy to the “state of the family,” or what have you. Your listeners can't tell that I'm putting State of the Family in scare quotes, because that's what it's meant to do. This is all sort of scaremongering. So the chapter looks at those world-shrinking efforts that are in circulation around non-normative genders and sexualities, and pivots to these other ways of thinking that, that you spotlighted. I'll go through a couple of them.

I wanted to really open that particular chapter with the groundbreaking work of queer transcript theorist Eli Clare, who at this point has several very important books, one that is definitive is *Exile and Pride*: *Essays on Queerness, Disability, and Liberation*. I might have the subtitles slightly wrong. It came out in 1999, and it's been just widely circulated, and I appreciate it for so many reasons. I appreciate it for bringing in the necessity of thinking queerness and disability together, but I am really—I find it incredibly provocative the ways in which Clare has long allowed us to use disability as a site from which we can know, and most obviously for Clare, environmentalism and thinking about ecology are things that people don't automatically think, ‘Oh, disability is a site from which you can actually think about that.’ And yet Clare, who grew up in rural Oregon and watched the decimation of old-growth forests, turns his experience of being disabled into a way of reflecting on the environment. And he builds on that in later work, especially a book called *Brilliant Imperfection*, where he looks at bodies that are deemed imperfect and revalues them, and also looks at the ways in which environments that are deemed imperfect might come together, and we might care for both. So that's the opening to the chapter, but as you said, I try to put forward various other things, such as queer of color critique, which is, at this point, a mode of thinking in queer theory that you can't be doing queer theory sincerely if you're not actually thinking about queer of color critique. Ferguson, who I mentioned, is one of the founders of that, along with others, including Jose Esteban Muñoz and many others at this point. I would say right now, at the intersections of queer and disability and queer of color critique, you have figures like Sammi Schalk, Gina Kim, Sony Korania's Bolton. These are all writers who are building, the current shape of crip of color critique.

And I've long looked at queer of color critique as really talking about disability without always acknowledging it, and so some of my work, not just in *Disability, Revolution*, has been to tease out that disability or crip strand, that is, already there in queer of color critique. What do I mean by that? Well, queer color critique isn't just looking at race and sexuality as substantive things, but rather, as processes. So, racialization is a process, often a process that is stigmatizing, that is often about making various groups perverse, and here's the turn towards disability, pathological. And yet, queer of color critique responds to that situation of making perverse, making pathological by stressing that queers of color speak in their own voices, and have knowledges that emerge from their experiences. So, Ferguson's own book, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*, opens with this haunting and beautiful image of a street worker, a trans worker of color, who often would be cast, in many theories, as sort of a symbol of excess. Excesses of capitalism—the excesses of what have you. And Ferguson asks,

what if we turn to this figure and instead of seeing her as an object, a symbol, see her as a subject with a critical capacity. And I found that to be really useful, and useful for sort of pivoting queer of color critique towards disability as well.

Famously, the history of disability has been a history of medicalization, of turning people into objects to be poked, prodded, diagnosed. And the movement, in all its forms, has been about speaking back in our own voices. And again, as with the figure I was just noting from Ferguson, turning disabled people from being symbols—symbols of lack, of pity, of, of what have you—to turning disabled people into subjects, again, in our own voices. So, queer of color critique at the center of queer theory right now is a great location for thinking those things through.

Cripistemologies is an interesting history as well, and I put that in the queer chapter 2. Mary Lisa Johnson and I have edited a couple special issues of the *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* on cripistemologies. It's a term she coined, and that now it travels with both of us, but we were actually just sitting around talking about disabled ways of knowing in 2010, and she just, out of the blue, said, 'What we're really talking about here are cripistemologies.' And from that moment on, cripistemologies became a way of thinking about how disabled people know, how disabled people know in embodied ways, or ways that speak to minds, our neuroatypical minds, and it has been a really germane, generative concept for getting at all of those notions. So… those are among the things that I treat in the queer crip chapter.

But after after surveying Eli Clare's work on the environment, I try to sort of stress he's not alone. So, Sunaura Taylor has written *Disabled Ecologies* at this point. There is a wonderful book on queer trans river flows by— Wölfle Hazard is the author's last name. And so, I think without necessarily being a direct person who engendered that, Clare set the stage for, 'Look, disability is a site from which we can think about any range of issues.'

And feminism is this sort of originary story here. We know that you can think about things that don't appear to be about gender on the surface. You can… they're saturated with gender, and gendered ways of knowing and thinking can be used to analyze. that issue, or situation, or historical period, or what have you. So, the chapter in the book, and my work in general, is trying to put forward that disability is similar. Crip theory and crip thinking are similar. We can use them as modes for thinking about anything, including, in this instance, the environment.

CJ: Awesome, thank you for talking about that. I really appreciate the overview that you provided, and how, you know, weaving together the queer, trans, and crip world-making, and, like, ways of knowing has become a really generative project. So going forward, looking at Chapter 3, you turn to mad pride and mad liberation movements, which in many ways emerge in complex tensions with psychiatry and psychiatric. Could you discuss how madness and neurodiversity expand these discussions of multidimensional disability movements.

RM: Yeah, I put, both in this chapter and can defend that, though I know there are some people who pause over, like, ‘Okay, you're talking about mental disability, you're talking on the one side about that, and on the other side, you're talking about neuroatypicality.’ I want these modalities of thinking about mental difference together, because doing otherwise, in my mind, is kind of a recoil, like, ‘Oh, I might be neuroatypical, but I'm not going to be associated with those mad people over there.’ And I think it's better in the book as a whole to foreground moments of solidarity. It's like, I might not be this group, but I have solidarity with that group. So, that's one of the reasons why these various forms of mental difference are present in the same chapter.

I do open with a lot of great work that has been done against incarceration. So, the figure most associated with that is probably Liat Ben Moshe, who wrote a book called *Decarcerating Disability*. And Ben Moshe is great for a lot of reasons, not least because her book and her work in general isn't looking towards the future for what might be, but it's looking for, sort of, forms of liberation and even revolution that are currently happening. So, where is a decarceral, antipsychiatric mentality working on the ground? How are their communities and groups thinking about alternatives to prisons, and she and many other people working at this particular intersection are adamant about how prisons are part of a sort of archipelago that connects nursing homes and what got called asylums, and other forms of incarceration of people with disabilities. There's some people outside of disability culture who would still be like, ‘Oh, no, no, nursing homes aren't prisons.’ It's like, well, people in disability culture have, for a long time, been thinking about them as such, and so it's important to highlight that those conversations have been going on. So, I used Ben Moshe and others to spotlight that move away from confinement.

So the Mad chapter is really about not containing in multiple ways, whether it's containing in institutions, containing through medication, over medicalization, or even containing the excesses that are generally associated with madness, quote-unquote. So in contrast to a lot of other disabilities, perhaps, madness is seen as improper, poor behavior, excessive when it erupts into the visual or aural fields, and Mad Pride activists, for decades have been suggesting, ‘No, let our voices be heard.’ And again, cripistemologically thinking here, let our voices be heard as voices that have knowledge. So, one of the things that I trace in that chapter, in addition to the work against incarceration, is just how many people in the field of disability studies have, been coming out mad, as it were, in their works.

A very prominent example is La Marr Jurelle Bruce's book, *How to Go Mad Without Losing Your Mind*, which is on Blackness and the radical imagination. It's a great book on various types of madness, and he himself positions himself at the end as a mad scholar writing a book. As I do in *Disability, Revolution* as well. I reflect on how I was assigned my department's course in Madness and Literature, a few years back, and I was told by some people, ‘You should not call it that. You should change the title,’ partly because they were saying, look, madness is so stigmatizing. And I said no. I said no, and turned it into Mad Cultural Studies, and invited La Marr Jurelle Bruce, and Liat Ben Moshe, and Mary Lisa Johnson, and Margaret Price—all people whom I've

mentioned so far in this discussion. I invited them to come and talk with my students over the course of the semester. So, moving it away from a kind of domesticated madness and literature course to a more vibrant examination of madness and culture, or mad cultural studies. The course ended up being amazing, but I reflected on coming out in that, in that class, and found myself thinking about the ironies of how easy it is, especially for someone at a fairly safe space in Washington, D.C. It's pretty easy to be out as a queer body in the classroom at this point. Many of my colleagues in other locations are struggling with that, as their departments and courses are censored. But for me, given the things that I have taught for 3 decades, it's… it's not hard at all. But when I was teaching Mad Cultural Studies, it's like, huh, it's harder, or can be, to talk about one's neuroatypicality, to talk about things like OCD—my own OCD or chronic anxiety. And this is a great example of a class actually educating the professor as much as the students, who are readily coming out all over the place in that class with various things, bipolar or borderline, OCD, and so forth. So the class educated me to thinking about how important it is to articulate one's relationship to madness or mental disability. So, that led me to trace the ways in which many people in the field have been doing that.

I guess the other thing that I haven't talked about that you mentioned is the chapter also looks at anti-psychiatrization. Not all people with mental disabilities are anti-psychiatrization or anti-medication. Sometimes—consumer/survivor/user, or something like that—various acronyms are used to stress that some people do consume, various medications, and that's great. Others see themselves as survivors of a system that over-medicalized them, and so that—I wanted to kind of highlight all of that in my discussion of psychiatry. Regardless of whether one continues to be a consumer or user of medication, I wanted to highlight that, 'Okay, for four decades, the models have been big pharma making lots of money on medication that's been circulated globally.' There's more to say on that. And that's one model, and then the model we've been talking about connected to incarceration. So, Mad Pride and other movements have been resisting those, at least drawing attention to them.

When I say there's more to say about the global movement of big pharma, one of the books that I draw on is Ethan Water's book, *Crazy Like Us*, that looks at the ways in which American psychiatric diagnoses have been exported often in really inappropriate ways, so he looks at after the tsunami in Sri Lanka and India, how American psychiatrists and social workers descended on the location, expecting to find PTSD as we think we know it, and that ended up completely kind of shutting down the ways in which local understandings of mental difference and collectivity were operative. So that's another element of the chapter as well. I think I'm touching on everything.

Oh, the other thing that I do in that chapter is stress Sami Schalk's book*, Black Disability Politics*. It's a great short volume that looks at the history of African American disability politics, and what's great about it is that Schalk makes clear that different communities use different language, and so African American movements, for instance, have been thinking about mental difference and care for people with mental differences for a very long time, but not necessarily using the same language that the

dominant movement puts forward. So, that's an element of that chapter as well, and hopefully you see with that how these things intersect. That is how the chapter that's about race, it's not the only place where I talk about race, but in this chapter as well.

CJ: Awesome, yeah, I know you started this discussion on the mad chapter by talking a little bit about how contested it is with madness and neurodiversity, and just claiming or using these different terms, but I find it very effective to, you know, discuss this within the broader work of disability movements and how these forms of difference are really complicated and nuanced, but also very important for looking at solidarity and coalition building.

So you've alluded to it at different parts throughout the conversation, but I want to turn to the last chapter, where you're talking about global trajectories, where you have, drawn in how these kinds of issues are not just taking place in the US, or the Global North, or the West, but, like, it is, something to be considering across cultures and regions globally. I would love to talk more about that, and how you discuss the challenges to concepts and mobilizations around disability in the Global North by considering the role of colonialism, imperialism, and other regimes that complicate, like, surface-level understandings of disability, even mental health and ableism and sanism and such, which you just mentioned with the example in India and Sri Lanka. Can you share about the importance of these interventions and how they challenge multidimensional disability movements in working towards revolution?

RM: Yeah, there's so much to say about that. My work has pivoted south, over the past decade and a half. After *Crip Theory*, I wrote a book called *Crip Times: Disability, Globalization, and Resistance*. That was largely focused on the UK, but it spun out to multiple other locations, specifically looking at how disabled activists and artists were resisting a sort of global logic of austerity. But beyond that, and speaking Spanish, and Living, being married to a Colombian, and many other reasons. I've been thinking about language for a long time in terms of the disability movement and disability studies, and that… Thinking about language, unfortunately gets me to a point where sometimes I have to note that disability studies itself is a little imperialist, in the sense that the impetus is on people in non-English speaking locations to read everybody who writes in disability studies in English. And that same courtesy is not granted in the other direction, and so one of my projects has been to try to change that, or at least to try to dislodge a bit the hegemony of English in disability studies.

So for me, that's involved speaking and writing in Spanish, and I'm grateful to audiences who've been very receptive in various locations to that work. Far more receptive than most US audiences would be in the other direction, that is, someone whose first language is not English speaking in English in the United States. So I've tried to counter, first and foremost, the imperialism of the field by turning elsewhere, and trying to dislodge a bit the hegemony of English, as I said.

But that chapter also looks at other, kind of imperializing or cultural imperialistic moves that happen in and around disability. So, the chapter's very critical of how American

models of individualism of inclusion into the system as it is, of a focus on work, first and foremost, how those models have been centered around the world as though the US model is the right and only way. And I think that that ends up obscuring the ways that other models have developed in other locations, so individualism, for example, has not been the dominant mode in, say, Spain where thinkers have taken the global watchword, which is nothing about us without us, in Spanish, nada sobre nosotros sin nosotros. In Spain, that notion of nothing about us without us helped ground a movement there that is about seeing all human beings as having a shared vulnerability, very different from the American model of rugged individualism. And it ended up being incredibly generative in Spain, because that nosotros, nada sobre nosotros, si nosotros, was taken up by non-disabled activists against austerity and used as a way of, again, amplifying or spotlighting that shared vulnerability. So, the watchword of anti-austerity in Spain was Notos representan. *They don't represent us*. With the us, they're putting forward, a group of people: vulnerable, precarious, suffering under a project that was hurting, and yet finding back beneath that shared we, or us. That's very different from the main U.S. model. It's not as though that model hasn't had some circulation in the U.S, particularly in feminist disability studies, which has long emphasized interdependency. But the mainstream disability rights movement has been very much about individualism and integration into the capitalist system as it is. A place at the table, as it were.

So, one of the ways in that chapter that I grapple with these questions is through looking at two documentaries. One is very famous. It's the most famous text with the word Crip in the title. It's called *Crip Camp*. Ironically, it's called *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution*. Even though I stress, like, well, it's kind of a reformist text, it's not revolutionary in the ways in which the book is theorizing revolution. *Crip Camp* tells the story of adolescents in the 60s and 70s at a disabled camp, and how disabled identity flourished there, and how the participants in that camp went on to become activists demanding change, in, the system. And particularly the implementation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. That's a lot. What that act simply said was that no entity that was receiving federal funds could discriminate against disabled people. And many of the people in the film associated with the camp ended up being those who demanded that that act be implemented. Five years after it was signed into law, it wasn't implemented, and they were successful. And the film goes from that camp to the activism to the triumph of the Americans with Disabilities Act. And I'm critical of how the film fits a particular genre that requires triumph and heroism and ultimately a certain kind of individualism. And to move beyond that, I turned to a documentary out of Bolivia called *La Lucha* (*The Fight*) that was very different. It is a documentary that depicts the movement in Bolivia, in 2016, when groups of disabled people marched from various places in the country to the capital, La Paz, and tried to occupy, a square. They were forbidden entry, and what they were demanding was a monthly subsidization for all disabled people. So it wasn't about the right to work, it was about shared vulnerability again, and about recognizing that everyone has the right to live with dignity.

Interestingly, in the U.S, the protests that led to the implementation of Section 504 were actually the longest protests in U.S. history, but these protests in Bolivia were the longest history of a disability occupation anywhere, ever. But they're not celebrated as such, in part because models from elsewhere don't get the same privilege that the US models do. And so, in thinking about global trajectories, I want to think about turning towards other places from which we can learn and know and, again, be in solidarity with.

CJ: Awesome, thank you so much. Yeah, I just want to underscore what you're saying here, and just the fact that a lot of times, you know, the American or Euro-American model was imported on other places just to as if that brings clarity and understanding to everything. It also flattens all the difference and, you know, is part of that imperial thrust of Euro-American academia and so on and so forth, but that's a whole thing.

RM: Anglo-American.

CJ: Yes, Anglo, yes.

RM: Because I think a lot of my colleagues and friends and activists on the continent would say, okay, nobody's paying attention to what we're saying in Spanish, or Czech, or Polish, or even German or French. It's really incumbent on those people to learn English and read the disability people in England and Canada and the United States. So yeah, I'm agreeing with you.

CJ: Yes, for sure. Awesome. Well, that kind of takes us through the book. Such an important overview of lots of these different movements. I do want to give you space before we officially wrap up, if there's anything that we haven't gotten a chance to discuss that you want to share about, like, any of the work that you're doing, or kind of the context in which this book is coming out, you know, I want to give space for that.

RM: Yeah, I'm a very hopeful writer, which I sometimes laugh at, because we don't live in very hopeful times, but even the beautiful cover of the book. really resonates hope. So the cover of the book has, two figures, one using a wheelchair and one not, but dancing together, and it's an image that—The books in this series are standardized, they all have a different image, and I was really happy when they came forward with that as a suggested and, as I said, hopeful image. There were a couple they came forward with. One was just an individual in a sort of racing wheelchair, and I was like, ‘No. I do not want something that says competition, that is about triumph or overcoming.’ Though the dance is triumphalist in its own way, I wanted something that was more collaborative and about solidarity, and what they came back with really made me happy. Again, though, I recognize, in speaking to your question about the context of the book, we're in a really bleak moment, and so I think that means that we do need hopeful writing. But it is hopeful writing that comes with a caveat. One-dimensional disability is quite powerful, and often wins in terms of shutting down other ways of thinking. So, we should be hopeful but cautionary about all that this book is stressing.

I do, to kind of… Say one more thing about the image. The dancing image was appropriate in more than one way. I write a little bit about dance in the introduction. And Emma Goldman is credited with saying, ‘If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution.’ She didn't actually say that, that was popularized by a British recording artist, but she did, in her autobiography, put forward something where she was basically slapped on the hand for joy and dance at an event. Another member of the movement came up and said, ‘You can't do this, you're a leader of the movement,’ and she said, ‘I don't want to be in a movement that isn't about joy and happiness and freedom for everyone.’ I linked that moment of Emma Goldman dancing to a lot that's been written in disability culture about, disability dance. The Society for Disability Studies used to have this great dance that all kinds of bodies, and behaviors, emotions, and minds would come together, in this sort of beautiful celebration of, of diversity, embodied diversity. So those two moments of dance are central to concluding the intro on a side of joy and hope.

CJ: Awesome, thank you for sharing that. I think that's kind of the perfect place to wrap up our conversation, and the perfect note to head out on. But thank you so much, Professor McRuer, for joining me today and discussing your great new book, *Disability, Revolution*.

RM: Great, my pleasure.