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Unruly Salon

Guest Editors' Introduction : Coming to Pride - Joining "The Unruly Salon"
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&
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FORUM

In 2005-2006, following a devastating first-time depression, I found my transparent short-lived unself-conscious or unwitting closet exceedingly small and isolating. It is funny, that is, both strange and wonderful, how memory of certain phrases and mantras returns when least expected as if stored for an unforeseen future time. James Charleton's phrase, taken from the title of his book, "Nothing About Us Without Us" (2000), reached forward in my consciousness as a comfort-force, an imaginary and yet very real soon-to-be-confirmed collective mind-body politic.

Returning to my first passion, the performing arts, I drew up a proposal to an interdisciplinary visiting speakers' series endowment, The Ida and Cecil Green Award, bestowed annually at Green College, the University of British Columbia (UBC). To my great glee, it was enthusiastically received and awarded the largest single amount in the history of the endowment, \$49,500 (CAD). With these funds, I called upon the expertise of Geoff Mc Murchy, Artistic Director for the kickstART Festival, inviting him to collaborate as the Artistic Director for the Unruly Salon series. And I invited Catherine Frazee, co-director of the Ryerson University Disabilities Studies Program in Toronto, Ontario, to launch the series by giving the keynote address, which is included in its entirety in this volume.

Leslie G. Roman

Coming to Pride

The acronym for the Unruly Salon, "US" refers to Charleton's idea that all too often people with disabilities are the subjects of a gaze, which medicalizes, criminalizes or produces objectifying pity. A host of circulating images, signs, and discourses contribute to the sometimes overwhelming sense that people with disabilities do not represent themselves as the active agents of their own self-authorized narratives. The agency of people with disabilities to create culture that defies such understandings is unruly. This mind-body politic is the lifeforce of the global disability arts and culture movement.

As provocateur of conscience and imagination, The Unruly Salon Series combined internationally-regarded scholars of disability studies with professional artists from a range of performing arts (e.g., musicians, painters, actors, dancers, poets), for a series of self and collective disability representations. The event was held at the University of British Columbia and presented at Green College, an interdisciplinary residential college. The Unruly Salon Series, which ran from January 12 until March 29, 2008, consisted of seven performances by professional artists and scholars with disabilities – from renowned comedian, David Roche, who turns facial difference into soulful and biting reflection, to Vancouver-based actress, Victoria Maxwell, who sheds new light on "mental illness" in a solo show about her experience with bipolar disorder. UBC's launch of The Unruly Salon has been a watershed, an inauguration that invited the public to learn and hear the voices of people with disabilities as distinguished artists, scholars and members of our community.

In the following pages, we share a taste of the creative work and scholarship that was presented at the Unruly Salon or emerged from it. We include the opening remarks of President and Vice Chancellor Stephen J. Toope, who graciously and enthusiastically supported the Salon Series, and closing remarks by David Anderson, who shared his reflections as a disabled student, embracing the Salons as emergent, vibrant, yet fragile spaces.

Our opening Salon distinguished panel included celebrated film-maker, Bonnie Klein, whose film, *Shameless: The Art of Disability*, was shown alongside Geoff Mc Murchy's dance film, *Wingspan Three*. The panel staked a claim for space on a campus that had not publicly or formally established a disability studies program at either the undergraduate or graduate levels. Claiming place and space is not merely metaphorical; it is very much a political statement of goals which require public action:

"I dream of creating a place where we can dare to be our most authentic, glorious, outrageous selves. ... a vision of a possible future."

Bonnie S. Klein

Artists and scholars with disabilities are creating authentic images and speaking directly from lived experiences, addressing ideas and subject matter that have never been presented to the public. In both content and form, we are taking risks which only we dare, taking a bite out of entrenched stereotypes of charity, pity, deviancy and criminality.

According to Geoff Mc Murchy, the first kickstART! Celebration staged by the Society for Disability Arts and Culture in Vancouver in 2001 marked Canada's entry into the vibrant, global disability arts and culture movement. The Unruly Salon Series built on kickstART's momentum and pride as UBC presented its first major disability arts and culture series. The Unruly Salon unearthed fresh opportunities for collaborative and transformative disability arts and culture research in which people with disabilities take the lead.

This forum offers a sampling of artistic and scholarly work from the Unruly Salon. We begin with a "generative conversation," harmonizing three Salon voices thinking aloud about disability, arts and scholarship. Here Mc Murchy reminds us that this is an exciting space, "where art morphs into academia and audience becomes activist." His observation segues neatly to an exploration of "the spaces of not-knowingness that make possible new ways of imagining disability," as Christopher Lee recounts his experience of working with the Laser Eagles, negotiating the delicate terrain of authentic individual – yet collaborative – acts of creation.

Lee's examination of the politics and contingencies of translation prepare the ground for Leslie Roman's introduction to the compelling woodcuts of Tania Willard, visual artist from the Secwepemc Nation. Willard's explorations of Aboriginal history and madness inspired Roman et al. to explore the interconnections among medicalization, asylum-making and residential schools for people with disabilities (in press). Are "hidden histories" more or less powerful when exposed to the light of day, treated imaginatively and subjected to critical analysis? One could imagine them as vortexes exerting a strong pull away from social life and political engagement. Or are our "barricaded bunkers," as Lynn Manning suggests in his startlingly evocative poem, actually the source out of which imagination reaches up to arouse the somnambulant mind?

A creative fusion of narrative, ethnography, and scholarship allows Sheena Brown to explore in-depth the notion that "disability is a job" that creates and supports many other jobs in its quotidian

encounters with the regimes that order our lives. And just as Brown excavates Monica's invisible and unaccounted contributions to the Gross National Product, Roman's "Thunderous Ode" gives artful voice to the work of survival -- chronicling struggles ranging from the syllabic to the cosmic. Her poem and their accompanying three paintings fuse unexpected color and the "waking pulses of memory and affect."

Roman's question, "How much more – much more I work to be?" then juxtaposes with Victoria Maxwell's playful riff on the improvisatory work of disclosure. "I think it's quite like an art form," she declares, wryly reminding us that the work of self-representation requires both wit and pluck in generous measure. Her monologue from "Laid," composed in the genre of culinary adventure, offers a fitting desert for the Disability Arts sampler offered up in this issue.

Of course, no Salon would be complete without the pleasures of an after-party, with glasses toasted and lively conversation. David Anderson reminds us that, sites of intellectual and social community spring from engaging, responsive, and nourishing universities. In the spirit of such robust, innovative public spaces, we toast our issue contributors and audience co-creators.

Welcome then, to the Unruly Salon!

References

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- Roman, L. G., Brown, S., Wainer, R. & Young, Alannah, E. (2009). No time for nostalgia! Asylum-making, medicalized colonialism in British Columbia (1859-1897) and artistic praxis for social transformation. *The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. 22(1): 17-63.

Launch of The Unruly Salon Series at the University of British Columbia, Green College, January 12, 2008 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Remarks by Professor Stephen J. Toope President and Vice-Chancellor The University of British Columbia

Members of the global society, the province, the nation, our University and local community, as we enter the traditional territories of the Musqueam people, we acknowledge all our relations.

I am truly pleased to be here today, to play a small role in witnessing the profound growth of the global disability arts, culture, and scholarship movement.

Today, we are here celebrating the launch of The Unruly Salon, and what is, as disability scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson would say, something that is truly “extraordinary” – extraordinary work from the global disability arts, culture, and scholarship movement. The Unruly Salon Series is unprecedented at UBC in its unique combination of internationally renowned disability scholars and artists, in its attempt to challenge our social imaginations and expand our concept of what counts as education, culture, social justice and humans ‘being’. This series is the result of an outstanding collaborative effort, sprung from experiences of people with disabilities in our everyday workplaces, communities and among UBC’s faculty, staff, and students—and even some of our future students. Dr. Leslie Roman, creator of the Unruly Salon and a Board member of the Society for Disability Arts and Culture (or S4DAC), has worked closely with the Society’s Artistic Director, Geoff Mc Murchy, to create this wonderful series, and their combined efforts have attracted the stage presences of world-renowned artists and performers in disability arts and culture.

The Unruly Salon’s acronym, “US”, is an intentional reference to James Charlton’s book, *Nothing About Us Without Us* (Charlton, 2000), from which, I understand, ‘us’ has become a mantra in the disability culture movement,

inspiring people to speak back, stare back and dispel old myths about people with disabilities. The Unruly Salon speaks with the disabilities community to “us” —in the double sense—as an address by people The Unruly Salon with disabilities in their own voices to the broader public—indeed, the question asked by The Unruly Salon is: “Are we listening?”

Yet, the Series also invites a “we” into the project, by inviting all of us to challenge the systemic oppression of people with disabilities for the removal of barriers— be they physical, social, economic, political or cultural.

The removal of these barriers is a priority at UBC, and I am truly pleased to mention that the Unruly Salon’s “invitation” is reflected in UBC’s *Trek 2010* Mission Statement. In that statement, we clearly address our concern for people with disabilities who are members of the University community. The Mission Statement reads that UBC will:

“... [P]rovide its students, faculty, and staff with the best possible resources and conditions for learning and research, and create a working environment dedicated to excellence, equity, and mutual respect... As responsible members of The Unruly Salon Launch society, the graduates of UBC will value diversity, work with and for their communities, and be agents for positive change. They will acknowledge their obligations as global citizens, and strive to secure a sustainable and equitable future for all” (*Trek 2010*).

I am here today as the President and Vice-Chancellor of UBC, but also as one who greatly appreciates the arts. In fact I am pleased to say

that my entire family does, and that some are artists and performers themselves. We truly understand the power of the arts to effect positive change and make an integral contribution to the construction of a truly civil society, and we all applaud you!

Today's launch of *The Unruly Salon* is presented by Green College and would not have been possible without numerous sponsors and contributors— notably, the Faculty of Education, and the widespread support of many UBC Faculties. I thank all of you for your amazing efforts towards this landmark series!

It has been my honour and privilege to join in the launch of the Unruly Salon series. Here is no doubt that it (or “US”) will have a positive impact, having now thrown an added spotlight on disability arts and culture, as well as the significant contribution of Canadians with disabilities.

Thank you for inviting me to share in this wonderful launch. Now, let all of us join the Unruly Salon in common scholarly and artful purpose. As one of my favourite artists, Leonard Cohen, writes in “Anthem”:

“Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in
everything
That's how the light gets In.”

Unleashed and Unruly: Staking Our Claim to Place, Space and Culture

**Keynote Delivered Via Conference Remarks by Catherine Frazee, D.Litt.
Professor of Distinction, School of Disability Studies
Co-Director, Ryerson RBC Institute for Disability Studies**

Let me begin by adding my words of appreciation and congratulation to all who have contributed their ideas, creativity and labours to the Unruly Salon -- to Leslie Roman and Geoff Mc Murchy and all of their team -- the excitement of this inaugural moment is palpable, even from a distance of 4500 km. east!

Congratulations as well to UBC's President Toope and to Professor and Head, Tara Fenwick and her colleagues in the Department of Educational Studies, as well as to Principal Taubeneck and the faculty of Green College for their obvious support of this initiative and for the leap of faith that it represents. Green College, as I understand from its website, is a community of scholars committed to expanding their understanding of the world, whose intellectual pursuits reach across academic boundaries and into the larger, global community.

This event, then, the Unruly Salon at Green College represents the making of a perfect storm

– a convergence of forces generating effects of untold intensity. For when a thoughtful and engaged audience, a roll-up-your sleeves kind of audience, a discerning, working audience, meets with artists who are uncorked and unruly, artists who make no apologies and who take no prisoners, artists who have something utterly new yet profoundly timeless to say, the encounter will spiral outward in great waves of paradigm-shifting consequence.

What I'm describing here is not something that happens on stage. It's something that happens in the spaces all around the stage, in the blurring of lines between performer and audience, in the chemistry of curatorial and critical attention, in what each of us will say and do at intermission, over a drink tonight, at the breakfast table tomorrow, at the office on Monday morning. It's all about what we say in our blogs and at our bridge clubs. The cyclone of disability arts is generated by buzz. In the words of

Virginia Woolf, great “masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice”¹.

This Unruly Salon both celebrates and generates the confident claiming of place, space and culture by a people who will no longer be colonized, sidelined or silenced. At the same time, this Unruly Salon ordains and inducts each of us to pay attention, to make connections, to respond -- in short to contribute to the opening and unfolding of this cultural space.

In short, Salon audience, please unfasten your seatbelts. You – we – are about to create a masterpiece. There will be turbulence and majesty, encounters with the profane and the divine, illuminations that both affirm and unsettle. There will be nervous laughter, gut wrenching howls, pin-drop silence and riotous enthusiasm. There will be bafflement, resonance and revelation. And you will be changed. For disabled artists are not simply participating in the Canadian cultural domain – they are creating it, shaping it, stretching it beyond its tidy established edges.

The artists in this Salon, in a certain sense, have done their piece. Bonnie has directed her film. Geoff has choreographed his dance. I have written my text. Likewise, for the next six Salons. The work has been crafted and rehearsed. So what remains? What exactly is this larger task, the work of creating this new masterpiece?

I shall offer three suggestions. The work of excavation. The work of weaving. And the work of coming to pride. Briefly, I offer a few reflections about each.

Excavation

Not all of Disability Art is explicitly about the disability experience. But all of it, I would suggest, springs from disability experience, and to be fully appreciated, must be seen and heard

with all of its historic and biographical resonances. This is what I mean by the work of excavation.

Allow me to explain by drawing from examples in the larger cultural domain. On December 23rd of last year, our nation stopped in the tracks of its seasonal excesses, and paused to contemplate a great cultural figure. We had lost Oscar Peterson. We stopped to honour the man and the legacy, remembering not only his prodigious musical powers, but equally the deep cultural history invoked by his name – the aspirations of immigration, the invisible lives of train porters, the racist policies of hotels and nightclubs.²

So, similarly, we said farewell last year to Norval Morrisseau, Eastern Woodlands Ojibway artist, remembering not only his powerful expressive canvases, but also the rising up of Aboriginal consciousness in Canada, pushing back against an era of horrific cultural annihilation, of residential schools and the suppression of languages and ritual practices that so deeply damaged First Nations culture.³

And likewise the final respects we paid this year to the memory of Doris Anderson were infused with respect and affinity for brazen women who led the great second wave of feminism in Canada, standing up to patriarchy, to post-war domestication of women, to unequal pay, harassment and discrimination.⁴

Art is far more than a way of decorating our world; it is a way of knowing it. As Margaret Atwood has written, “The arts... are not a frill. They are the heart of the matter, because they are about our hearts, and our [progress in the material world] is generated by our emotions, not by our minds. A society without the arts would have broken its mirror and cut out its heart”⁵.

And so, in our encounters with the Art of Disability, we are called upon to know the heart of the matter, to hold up the mirror, hear the overtones. What social histories are embedded

in the installations of Persimmon Blackbridge? What struggles and exclusions backstage the croonings of Joe Coughlin? What are the defining contours of the universe that Ryan Knighton narrates? Where have our artists come from? What have they endured? What have they survived? These histories, once excavated, enrich every experience of disability art.

Weaving

Our second task, as a working and engaged Disability Arts audience, involves weaving together the threads that may make more apparent, the emergence of what some have called a Disability Aesthetic.

I cannot spell out for you – at least not yet – what I mean when I invoke the notion of a Disability Aesthetic, but let's be having that conversation. A Canadian Disability Arts canon has emerged in recent years and I believe it is incumbent upon us to begin the task of describing its principal features. What are the artistic and aesthetic dialogues, the points of contact between Tania Willard's prints and Bonnie Sherr-Klein's documentary films? In what way does Geoff Mc Murchy's choreography connect with David Roche's storytelling, or Victoria Maxwell's dramaturgy? Is there some shared idiom or logic?

I have only the most preliminary of thoughts here, but in the spirit of creative collaboration, let me suggest that the canon is expressed at least in part by the authenticity and intentionality of voices connected to experience – unsentimental, uncompromising and unflinching voices of artists who work with and not in spite of disability.

To this I would add the markers of fullness and amplitude, characteristics of work produced by artists who assemble a wholeness of self and context, who embody disability and embrace its ways and means.

Thirdly, I would feature the transformative capacity of Disability Art -- work that invariably

moves outward from the particularity of disability experience toward that which is universally human. What is most distinct and important here, I would suggest, is that this transformative work does not claim, sweetly and imploringly, that we are just like you, but rather is work that knows, in some deep and sustaining way, that you are just like us.⁶

As well, I would recognize the spirit of this work's own audacity, its swaggering savvy, its determination to speak back to power, to disrupt comfortable narratives, to confront and reshape conventional accounts of grace, beauty, lyricism, strength, rhythm and form.

It's just a mere stub of a list, and for present purposes it ends here. But it is a work in progress, and I welcome and eagerly await the contributions of Salon weavers in the weeks ahead.

Coming to Pride

Finally, the shared project and the great payback of this masterpiece – coming to pride.

We don't get anywhere without pride. We don't get past the averted stares, the whispered judgments, the shabby offerings, the sorry excuses – without pride.

Before we can begin to push back against injustice and indignity, before we can rise up from the swirl of rage and despair, before we can speak back to a script that casts us as tragic victims and bitter villains, we must have pride.

Pride is where the journey of emancipation begins.

Pride for who we are. It is a deeply personal experience, this casting off of shroud and echo. Yet coming to pride is a delicate alchemy that can only take root in the fertile ground of community. It is our connection to each other that transforms stigma to grace, personal burden to collective struggle, shame to honour.

We know that art has both intrinsic and instrumental worth, that it has value both in and of itself and also as a means to interpret, to understand, to share, to repair. Art brings us together. Good art is both the product and the sustenance of human imagination. And so Art brings us together in ways that invoke moral imagination, summoning us to justice, dignity and all of the great quests of human progress. It is perhaps only through art and its activation of imagination that we can both conceive of, and be moved resolutely toward visions of equality and justice.

**That is how we come to pride,
together.**

And so, with pride, I offer a toast to the Unruly Salon and its unruly actors and protagonists; to our history and resistance; to our creativity and choices; to our place, space and culture.

Endnotes

- ¹ Woolf, V. (1989) *A Room of one's own*. Fort Washington, PA: Harvest Books.
- ² For a compelling reflection upon Peterson's life in its historical and ethnoracial context, see remarks by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, on the occasion of the Oscar Peterson Memorial Concert (12, January 2008, Toronto). Available: <http://www.gg.ca/media/doc.asp?lang=e&DocID=5259>
- ³ For a tribute to Morrisseau's place in Aboriginal Canadian history and culture, see statement by Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine (4, December 2007, Ottawa). Available: <http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=3977>
- ⁴ E.g., Michelle Landsberg's description of Anderson as "one of the key figures in Canada's feminist history", in Doris Anderson, *The Mother of Us All*. Landsberg, M. Chatelaine. Toronto: May 2007. Vol. 80, Iss. 5; p.17.
- ⁵ Atwood, Margaret. "The Art of the Matter", excerpted from the 2004 Kesterton Lecture. *Globe and Mail*, 24 January 2004. A19.
- ⁶ The author is grateful for this insight to moral philosopher Eva Feder Kittay, for her reflections about her daughter Sesha's place in the universe. Feder K. E., & Kittay, L. (2000). *On the expressivity and ethics of selective abortion for disability: Conversations with my son*. In Prenatal Testing and Disability Rights. E. Parens and A. Asch (Eds.), (pp. 165-195). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Opening Generative and Innovative Public Spaces for Disability Arts, Culture and Scholarship

**Geoff Mc Murchy,
Society for Disability Arts and Culture and KickstART
&
Leslie G. Roman, Ph.D.
University of British Columbia
&
Catherine Frazee, D.Litt.
Ryerson University**

"The impact of disability scholarship, while important for contributing to a new way of thinking and talking about disability, is so slow and indirect that it takes a long time to feel as though one is making a difference. I know. I can say this about academic work because I am one [an academic], whereas artists and performers are

able to reach into someone's ribcage and pull their heart out and do something in an immediate way. I envy that" (Roman & Buchan, 2008).

In the wee and the waking hours, over some weeks, kilometers and metaphorical mountains, the unruly trio of Geoff Mc Murchy, Catherine

Frazer, and Leslie Roman exchanged ideas across our locations – separated geographically but shared politically. We created a hybrid common space—one of commitment, imagination and perseverance that thrives best in the collective consciousness of social justice and movement-making.

The following offers some of our reflections from a free-flowing conversation about the Unruly Salon Series and generating further opportunities in the field. Warning: For the academics, this may sound and read like the spoken word and for the artists, well, we hope you will not mind the occasional scholarly license taken.

1. *What enables generative and innovative spaces of disability arts, culture and scholarship to take place?*

Geoff: I'd like to use the descriptors "innovative" and "public" because on an individual level, the urge to express oneself artistically has always run through people with disabilities as much as anyone else. What's key, and provides interesting opportunities for innovation and public engagement, is the combination of this urge to express with a sense of social justice.

The latter sense has been nurtured through the self-help, independent living and disability advocacy movements. These movements, building one upon the other, prepared the ground for a disability arts and culture movement simply by bringing together people with disabilities – some of them artists – and by presenting the challenge of getting a message across to the general public. It would only be a matter of time before the power of "disability art" to reach people on deep, visceral levels would be utilized.

People with disabilities, who in their various states of being embody the question of what it means to be human, are well-situated to offer answers. Their narratives, often potent with raw humanity, can be profoundly moving. The risk that the community runs, though, is that the emotional potency will be exploited by oth-

ers. Thus the importance of the slogan adopted by the Unruly Salon Series: "Nothing about us without us."

I love this quote from Victoria-Ann Lewis, past Director of the Other Voices program of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles: "*It's our turn to tell the story. It's our turn to say who we are, where we come from, what the journey [is] about*" (as cited in Wade, 1998).

Of course, it wasn't only the advocacy movement that enabled disability arts and culture to flourish. Paralympic cultural events and therapeutic art programs, for examples, have also done their parts to bring together and nurture artists with disabilities (a group not inherently self-organizing). Many artists with disabilities have honed their skills alone, isolated either socially or geographically. It's part our jobs as organizers of disability arts festivals, salons and other events, to draw these people out, nurture their development and have their talents recognized.

In more recent years it has been these risk-takers and visionaries who have hastened the development of a disability arts and culture movement in its own right. They have provided a milieu rich with opportunities for cross-fertilization of both artistic practices and various disability perspectives. A cross-disability and multidisciplinary approach is an explosive recipe for innovation. It has followed naturally, because of the very compelling nature of the art itself, that audiences and funding have been drawn to this work.

Leslie: There is a sense that university spaces can be used or claimed by communities outside them. This is, after all, the ideal notion of a public – not an economically-gated community or one full of discriminatory attitudes, inaccessible buildings or unwelcoming environs. An innovative public works for the expansion of whom it includes, speaks with and engages. A radical democratic public examines its own exclusions, margins and centers, and finds ways to challenge whose knowledge and experience matters. It

moves over to make space for the needs and interests of marginalized communities. Such communities then become the domain of the public, for the common good. Such a public works best when it is involved, as Catherine said so well in her opening keynote, as a “roll-up-your-sleeves audience.” It also works best, as David Anderson – staff and student with a visual impairment, who took the disability culture course linked with the Salon Series – spoke at the last Salon, when students with disabilities are “engaged,” as they were during the Salon Series, “not as passive consumers of disability services but as active agents of our own experiences” (Anderson, 2008). I might add: it works best when universities become genuinely public and welcoming places of community and history.

Catherine: In his open letter to our Canadian Prime Minister, published in *Le Devoir* as a reluctant nation stirred itself for a third election in four years, Wajdi Mouawad (2008) wrote:

“... [P]olitics and art have always mirrored one another, each on its own shore, each seeing itself in the other, separated by that river where life and death are weighed at every moment.”

We live in desperately dangerous times, all of us, as our ether churns with the sulphurs of greed and contempt, as our social landscapes pivot on the fulcrum of efficiency, and as men, women and children each day succumb to the great lie that strength is power and that what defies measure has no value. As disabled people, we are seduced to conform, coerced to make do with less than our due, and pressed to make way for the lean, the quick, the fit. And across Mouawad’s metaphoric river, what do we see? The distortions of fear, antipathy and indifference, tableaux in which we are at worst unwelcome and at best unexpected, reflections of selves at the same time reduced and rendered grotesque.

The way I see it, *politics* are what animate disability arts. The politics of our claims to

space and recognition, the politics of our assertions of beauty and grace, the politics of our sexual and spiritual liberation, the politics of our stories, our perspective, our voices -- the politics of our belonging.

How does this happen? It happens under the crushing weight of tired old ideas about what a community needs to flourish—or, a nation, or a civilization, for that matter. New ideas press through the clay.

How can we ensure that more Disability Art happens? Oh, the usual things. Money. Critical attention. Audiences. Opportunities for creative collaboration. Money. A supportive infrastructure. The free flow of ideas and energy. Categories to resist. Walls to push back against. Stares to return. Money. Training and tools. Rigorous standards for accessibility. Documentation. Cross-pollination. Committed insiders and entrepreneurs. Patrons. And did I mention money?

2. *Reflect on your hopes, successes, and expectations for the Unruly Salon.*

Geoff: For me as a co-creator, the success of the Unruly Salon Series was measured largely by audience reactions. Simply put, they were moved, they were excited and they wanted more. Other indicators were the support shown by the academic community – firstly, the generous financial support offered by Green College and second, the attendance by many scholars from various departments at UBC – right up to the President of UBC himself!

One can’t really hope for the gift of a supporter like Green College on an ongoing basis, but I certainly have hopes that ways will be found to cobble together budgets for future series, from other sources.

The long-term hope is that UBC will institute a disability studies program at the graduate and undergraduate levels. I don’t know what’s involved, or how long it will take to achieve that

goal. But if it's just a matter of opening hearts and minds, then we've made a splendid start.

Catherine: I had no role as you two did in organizing the Salons, but as an invited keynote presenter, I suppose that my main hope was that work presented from the Disability Arts frontier would be irresistible to the Salon audience, and indications are that it was. My present hope is that this work will increasingly be taken up by academics of many disciplines, because interdisciplinarity is fertile and academics are good at it: Sifting through material and phenomena in ways that illuminate the hidden layers and complexities, breaking open categories and offering new ways of seeing, reckoning, valuing. This Journal issue is a good sign that that process is underway.

I wasn't physically at the Salon, but I breezed in for the opening, cyborg-style, via video link one night in January. So I'm glad to hear from you a little more of the texture of this successful merger. If you've got happy contributors at the end of the day, that's a good sign. Our artists deserve nothing less than a well-equipped venue packed to the gills with an audience that will follow them to the top of the summit, hell, over the edge of the cliff if need be; an audience that will line up in uneven, untidy rows for tickets and cram themselves in with bodies of every kind and description just because there is something momentous happening and they feel compelled to be part of it. It sounds like everyone got what they deserved.

Leslie: One of the Salons inspired discussion of postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha's (1994) concept of a "third space" and how this concept might be applied to our efforts with the series. Education Faculty member, Bonney Norton, who attended several of our Salons, brought this concept into our working audience discussions. She talked about the Salons as "a third space" in which art and scholarship by people with disabilities representing themselves created a zone of connection and inter-connection with its

audience that directed everyone's engagement to new and different space that performed being human through our differences and not through easily separable or objectifying categories... (Norton, audience reflections, 2008, Salon One).

For me as one of the co-creators and a scholar/artistic presenter, the most exciting thing about the Unruly Salon Series was its reach to the unexpected but hoped for audiences. Each Salon spoke to and with different audiences who came to participate in community that was a melding of arts and scholarship, both reflective and reflexive – a place to belong, to create a new way of imagining and practicing critical disability studies. It was rousing and exciting to have President Toope open the event. Equally important was the appearance of many constituencies who have felt marginalized or out of place speaking about such issues on the campus of UBC, most especially students with disabilities. That speaks of what the Salon Series evoked and how it worked. An invisible act of research is to stimulate not just community outreach but what I will call "community in-reach." Students, faculty and staff who identify with disability, both as persons with disabilities and without, are also a community often overlooked.

At the last Salon, Geoff opened the floor to the audience, as was usual by one or more moderating. It was a stormy, treacherous night to get there, with rain and snow on the roads. Despite that, we still had an audience! I remember one comment from the back of the room; a young woman who had been doing camera work for us through collaboration with Gallery Gachet, an artistic institution started in 1992 which provides a meeting ground for dialog among outsider and dissident artists living with mental health issues in one of Vancouver's hardest hit economically disenfranchised communities downtown. The Gallery offers opportunities to curate, exhibit, perform, read, teach and craft leadership skills to dissident outsider artist (cf. She said something to the effect that were sev-

eral ways to feel about the public responses to people with disabilities: One was to hold your feelings inside and not be heard; another was to get pissed off and regret it later or be misunderstood, and a third was to do what the Salons had, show people who we are and how we feel. I remember that comment for its insight.

Geoff: With regard to the “third space” idea, we did see some blurring of boundaries, in which some presenters were both academics and artists. Some of those considered “purely” academic presenters became more performative in their presentations, and some of the performers offered analyses of their work in a disability culture context, which they normally wouldn’t feel compelled to do.

Leslie: During the audience question and answer period, scholars and artists together answered questions in thoughtful ways, bringing a new synergy of passion, intellect and emotion to a university public space. Unlike conventional scholarly panels, the Unruly Salon series created a terrain where scholarship becomes artful and audiences, performers, and scholars alike communed in a space that is publicly riveting and emotionally engaged. It is a space that is all too rare.

Geoff: This is very interesting terrain, where art morphs into academia and audience becomes activist. I hope that these explorations will continue to find fertile ground, not only at UBC and other educational institutions, but outside their hallowed halls and elsewhere in communities.

3. Do you have tips and considerations for others who may want to explore this terrain, across the locations of community and academic institution?

Catherine: Tips and considerations... Hmm... Where to begin? Okay, a short list from my own experience -- I suspect it resonates with yours. Rule one in my book, is that we must do absolutely everything we can possibly do to honor the work. This includes paying the

artists a professional rate and providing them with the best we can afford in the way of venue, technical support, stage personnel and so on. And if an artist doesn’t ask for much, sing them a line from Leonard Cohen -- “Hey, why not ask for more?” (Cohen, 1994, p. 144). Establish and demand high production values. Lead the way with access, for both performers and audience members. Make sure that the budget set for the event includes state-of-the-art accommodations from the word go – access is not an add-on!! Signal the importance of the work in every tangible way you can, including aggressive promotion and courting of media contacts.

Rule two: understand, appreciate and respect our audience. Expect to host a wide range of publics -- from the initiated and savvy to the curious neophyte. Some are friends, neighbors, teachers, therapists – many of whom have some personal or professional connection to disability. An important few are potential collaborators in disability-culture-making, whether as artists, producers, critics or scholars or a blend of both. Honor them all. Flirt a little. But push them too.

Rule three: be ready to negotiate. Disability culture thrives in contested ground. Many artists tackle controversial subject matter, and the best of them are highly irreverent in their approach. Most of them make an effort to offend the right people and to avoid alienating their allies, but they do tend to tread a fragile line. Producers need to be prepared to stand by their artists, defend their right to cross lines and get in people’s faces. After all, artists generally do get a kick out of sniffing out taboos. It’s part of the interpretive role of curator to recognize and respect these dimensions of disability art, and to accept the challenge of interpretation. Mediator, priest, referee, diplomat, healer, hustler -- a good producer is all of these, and much more.

And Rule four: never lose sight of the goal, and that is social change. It’s not about building empire, or legacy or professional niche. It’s not

about the thrills, the adrenaline, the love affairs, the buzz -- that's all well and good, and none of us would have it any other way. But there's a bigger picture here, and we know it in our core. Disabled people are still struggling, many barely clinging to the hope for decent, meaningful lives. And we want that to change.

Remember Wajdi Mouawad's (2008) closing insight:

“... [I]f it is prime ministers who change the world, it's the artist who will show this to the world.”

Geoff: A few details spring to mind... First, I want to underline Catherine's comments about honoring the work, especially by paying the artists and maintaining the highest production values possible. Of course, there may be trade-offs in production values when creating a smaller “salon space” but when this is clearly understood, many artists welcome the opportunity for more intimate encounters with an audience.

Another aspect of honoring the artist is to stick to the agenda and avoid running overtime. It's important for many performers to build their energy toward their entrance, and not to have to wait in limbo to be “on.” Running overtime also had the detrimental effect of cutting into discussion/reception time, a component of crucial importance to the concept of salon. This is where communities cross over and ideas intermingle; where new storylines and collaborative ideas can be generated.

Admittedly, creating the first Unruly Salon Series was a conscious process of learning for the co-creators, whose experience drew upon different realms representing different communities and cultures – academia and the arts. It was a matter of averaging some differences and being attentive to details, like lecterns for the academics and a green room for the performers.

As a venue, Green College was homey and salon-like but as we added the equipment neces-

sary to fulfill our obligations to accessibility as well as to generate video documentation, it became slightly smaller than ideal. There is a balance to be considered in maintaining an atmosphere of intimacy and critical discussion, while involving enough audience (with their various access needs) to make the work worthwhile.

In our case, with the priority of generating interest in a disability studies program at UBC, it made sense to offer the series on campus (and in fact we were obliged by our primary funding source to use their facilities). The UBC campus, though, is situated at the extreme West side of Vancouver and as such presents a bit of a transportation barrier. With different priorities, I can imagine other creative possibilities for venues, perhaps dispersed throughout the community in different locations appropriate to the theme of each Salon.

Leslie: I agree with Geoff and would like to find ways to expand the work and the perception of university space as versatile public space, by taking the Unruly Salon out into the wider community off-campus, and back and forth. Venues often determine accessibility and speak to who may be included or not. With some versatility and imagination, students and faculty can enjoy the benefits of locating themselves in community venues, and vice versa. It would be great to see UBC build its first-ever fully accessible media-equipped Disability Centre for the Performing Arts for exhibits, plays, dance, music, etc., equipped with universal design features. This could become a Canadian and world-renowned Centre, not only for future Unruly Salons but also for classes held in a disability studies program that form in tandem with such a Centre. Imagine this: you're a high-school student with a disability living in Canada or elsewhere; how attractive would such a Centre at UBC be for your undergraduate or future graduate work? How would such a space attract diverse communities from all over the world into the space of the praxis of global citizenship, of human belonging, and democratic participation? Hal-

lowed halls would become homes away from home, inaccessible buildings would be barrier-free to everyone, including the elderly, parents with strollers, and yes, people with disabilities. This would be a space of life-long learning, community in-reach and community outreach, an arts-based scholarship community of global learning equipped with voice-recognition technologies, Braille signage, interpreter services and flexible wheel-chair-friendly space. And, with all the resources to expand on-line and distance learning, think how cyberspace, new media and digital technologies can be used to extend educational opportunities in such a Centre, for the inclusion of unruly bodies and minds. It is there that the long term and realistic meanings of global citizenship meet with the political will to make social change that benefits all humanity in our splendid variety and creativity.

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Re-Thinking Interdependence, Subjectivity, and Politics Through the Laser Eagles Art Guild

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Abstract: This article considers how a university-based graduate seminar and a disability arts and cultural series interact to create positive combustion and render disability a little less stable in its reading. Inspired by the series entitled the Unruly Salon and the author's own involvement with the Laser Eagles Art Guild, an arts group emphasizing the collaborations of people with disabilities and their able-bodied peers, this article offers a preliminary discussion of the notions of interdependence and translation as they relate to, and problematize, normative understandings of disability and the autonomous subject.

Key Words: interdependence, arts, Unruly Salon

**Editor's Note: This article was anonymously peer reviewed.

Introduction

In January 2008, I was enrolled in a graduate seminar in the University of British Columbia's Educational Studies Department entitled, "The Medicalization of Education and Society: In/visible 'Citizens' in the Unruly Salon Act Up." One of the aims of this course was to examine the social context of disability, as well as to engage with diverse disability studies scholarship and performers by artists with disabilities who could creatively speak different experiences of disability. The seminar was closely integrated with the Unruly Salon series, which was replete with talks and performances revealing a plethora of often-contradictory discourses about disability, in which current notions of disability were challenged, re-affirmed, re-imagined and inevitably rendered just a little less stable. Inspired by the Salons and my involvement with the La-

ser Eagles Art Guild, an arts group emphasizing the collaborations of people with disabilities and their able-bodied peers, this paper offers a preliminary discussion of the notions of interdependence and translation as they relate to, and problematize, normative understandings of disability and the autonomous subject.

As someone who experiences severe depression and has undergone treatment, witnessing the performances in the Salon series was illuminating insofar as it revealed fluidity in the notion of disability. In my life outside graduate studies, where I work in social services supporting people with physical and cognitive disabilities to live independently in the community, I am able to see how disability is a category imposed on individuals. Yet, I have found that these individuals are often denied the opportunity to speak back, to challenge disability as a stable, uncontested construction, as they must rely on negative connotations of disability to secure financial and material supports. What this signals is that the disability experience continually shifts, interacting on a material and conceptual level. Hence disability can be worn with shame or claimed with pride (as exemplified by many performers in the Unruly Salon series).

Reflecting on my own experiences as "invisibly disabled" (a term I did not know at the time of my depression), at times rejecting or claiming this label when it served me, I am intrigued by the ways in which individuals interact to shape how disability is articulated and rearticulated. Moreover, I am struck at how disability is unstable in my everyday relationships with individuals who resolutely deny the existence of disability, even though they are seen by society for the most part as disabled.

Therefore, one of the impetuses for this paper stems from my experiences living in Toronto (2005-2007) working as a personal support worker for Judith Snow, a disability rights advocate and an artist, who has been at the forefront of the inclusion movement in Canada for the past thirty years. Through this relationship, I became involved with the Laser Eagles Art Guild, a group co-founded by Snow, which brings together people with physical and mental disabilities with able-bodied peers to create art. Integral to the art-making processes utilized by the Guild was the idea and act of interdependence, an idea I would argue is crucial for opening up a space to re-think subjectivity, citizenship and community.

By emphasizing interdependence within the context of Laser Eagles, I hope to bring out some of the tensions that arise in the process of translating self-representation. As examined through the lens of the Laser Eagles' art-making process, translation can be seen as an act of interpreting various modes of communication and being. Moreover, translation arises in the interplay of different bodies and minds and is integral to the resulting forms of self-expression and self-representation. Attending to this tension can offer insight into the complex production and re-production of individual and group identities. However, in addressing interdependence, it is important to note the political and ethical implications implied by re-thinking how disability is understood across all facets of society. This paper constitutes an attempt to weave together some of these threads, threads that were on display at the Unruly Salon Series, a display which will hopefully lead to different and creative understandings and expressions of disability.

Expanding Disability – Third Spaces

Throughout the 1900s and 2000s, the field of Disability Studies has been adept at arguing for a “social model” of disability by rejecting “medical model” understandings. The social model places responsibility for disability on the

social environment, arguing that structures fail to adapt to the needs and requirements of people with disabilities, rather than vice versa. Yet on the other hand, it is also necessary to recognize the effects having a physical and/or mental impairment has on support structures. As disability scholar Tom Shakespeare (2006) notes, “Human beings are not all the same, and do not have the same capabilities and limitations. Need is variable and disabled people are among those who need more from others and from their society” (p. 67). This draws attention to the widespread political importance of thinking about disability within the context of dependence as an ever-arising and fluctuating experience for all individuals. As Alasdair MacIntyre writes:

“A form of political society in which it is taken for granted that disability and dependence on others are something that all of us experience at certain times in our lives and this to unpredictable degrees, and that consequently our interest in how the needs of the disabled are adequately voiced and met is not a special interest, the interest of one political group rather than of others, but rather the interest of the whole political society, an interest that is integral to their conception of the common good” (as cited in Shakespeare, 2006, p. 67).

Yet this notion of disability needs to be expanded. Although it does address the needs of individuals and is broad enough to pay attention to the multitudinous ways in which disabled people require support, it is limiting in that it fails to take into account the fluid manner in which dependence is articulated. Without denying the significance of addressing how society disables people or renders them as “impaired,” it is also important to examine how the impairment as a social process necessitates interaction between individuals. It is not simply a matter of addressing the ways in which material needs are met (thus how certain individuals *depend* on others), but looking more closely at how in-

teractions between individuals create different ways in which interdependence is manifested. In this sense, interdependence can be thought of as moving beyond an articulation of needs, as moving into a space of creativity where meaning individual, cultural and political levels are formulated and re-formulated.

One way to approach this notion of interdependence is to draw upon post-colonial scholar Homi Bhabha's (1994) concept of a "Third Space":

"[A Third Space] constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbols of culture have not primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs of culture can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (p. 37).

Bhabha's (1994) conception of a "third space" reminds us, "We should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (p. 38). In proposing this space in which culture can be imagined anew, Bhabha states he wishes to "elude the politics of polarity" (p. 39) that draw attention to binary modes of thinking that depend on firm distinctions of the self and the other. What emerges is an instability where the self and the other slide and shift, revealing contradictory mechanisms inherent in their production. Similarly, claiming an individual and group identity is also rife with these tensions, tensions Bhabha notes are crucial to grasp:

"What remains to be thought is the *repetitious* desire to recognize ourselves, as, at once, decentered in the solidary processes of the political group, and yet, ourselves as consciously committed, even individualized, agent of change – the bearer of belief" (p. 65).

By attending to the spaces in-between, a political imperative becomes apparent. The repeti-

tion of various identities becomes a form of re-thinking the social and the culture as they necessarily interact. What this requires is a greater understanding of the ways in which categories of difference, such as disability, are produced, and in turn, produce new meaning. As Bhabha states:

"We may have to force the limits of the social as we know it to rediscover a sense of political and personal agency through the unthought within the civic and the psychic realms. This may be no place to end but it may be a place to begin" (p. 65).

Interdependence and Contested Categories in Laser Eagles

With this in mind, I would like to return to the Toronto-based Laser Eagles Art Guild, a group engaged in challenging social constructions of disability through the practice of art. At the same time, the group relies on a process of interdependence that exemplifies a space in which uncertainty is allowed and alternative, contested social and political formations are articulated.

Laser Eagles was established in the fall of 2004 by Judith Snow and Franziska Trauttmann as a non-profit organization dedicated to providing opportunities for people with disabilities to make art, the primary medium of expression being painting. Initial funding came from Clarica/SunLife, grants provided by the Toronto and Ontario Arts Councils, and donations obtained through private donors. Currently, Laser Eagles operates out of two locations – a community health center in South Etobicoke (part of the Greater Toronto Area) and a city-run community arts center in North-Western Toronto.

The approximately thirty artists who are a part of Laser Eagles have varying levels of physical and mental impairment. The one common



Waterlight, acrylic on canvas
(Photo courtesy of Judith Snow).

element among them is the use of wheelchairs; however, some are verbal while others are non-verbal, some have use of their arms while many others do not. In order to paint, the artists rely



Struggle, acrylic on canvas
(Photo courtesy of Judith Snow)

on volunteer “trackers” who are able-bodied people who facilitate each artist’s vision by, in one sense, becoming an extension of their arms. Because each artist requires a different set of supports, the facilitation techniques are individualized. For example, an artist may use a laser pointer affixed to some part of his/her body to indicate a choice of brush, color and texture of paint and style of brush stroke. The laser is pointed at the canvas and the tracker carefully interprets the artist’s intentions. The artists also use other modes of communication to convey their intentions. Some talk or use communication boards or use facial and bodily expressions. In one case, Aaron (a pseudonym), an artist who is non-verbal and whose physical movements are essentially limited to his face, uses the barest of muscle

twitches that guide his trackers who support his hand and paintbrush to move along the canvas.

This process can often be quite painstaking and require great patience on both the artist’s and tracker’s part. Time can also become disjointed insofar as the process asks participants to slow down and ensure that each person is being heard. The need to navigate each other’s mode of communication thus engenders creativity with respect to establishing ways to convey information and learning what to listen for. Although Laser Eagles employs “Master Trackers” who are professional artists, whose role is to train

volunteers for the process of tracking, the real and substantial development occurs in the on going interaction between the artists and their trackers. While the mandate of Laser Eagles is, to further “the opportunity for self-expression and participation through the creation of art,” the Laser Eagles also offers up the following description of its guiding philosophy:



Mountain, acrylic on canvas
(Photo courtesy of Judith Snow)

“All people have contributions to make to each other in community, acts that nurture the individual and the group. Yet, people with limited use of their bodies, those considered to be physically or mentally disabled by some, often lack the resources, structures and relationships necessary to fully express themselves and make their contributions” (Laser Eagles Art Guild, 2008).

Laser Eagles is committed to challenging how disability is understood by creating a space where disabled individuals can be free to not only participate in an activity that might not be readily available to them, but also to engage in relationships with other people. The effects of having access to such a space can be transformative in terms of the artist's ability to express him/herself. Disability is rendered only one facet of identity. As Judith Snow states in an interview on the Laser Eagles (2008) website:

“It's not so much that our bodies are limited – they are limited in their abilities – but what is really limited is what other people say about us and what other people see about us. And so it is the freedom to be seen outside of these limitations and to be known” (<http://www.lasereagles.org/pages/default.asp?catID=2>).

Snow's remarks allude to a socially constructed understanding of disability, which Laser Eagles challenges by placing emphasis on the various contributions that every individual makes, in turn challenging people to acknowledge their contributions. On one level, this can be very conventional. Laser Eagles has actively sought to have its artists' work displayed in “traditional” gallery settings and sold to the general public. Indeed, among its stated goals is to have the “arts community welcome and include Laser artists” (Laser Eagles Art Guild, 2008). This coincides with what Giles Perring (2005) calls a “*normalizing* approach” to art-and-disability projects, particularly where non-disabled artists are involved in a facilitative or collaborative role with people with disabilities that “focus on bringing performers with [disabilities] into mainstream performance discourse, often through the application of mainstream production values and aesthetic criteria” (p.185).

There is indeed an impulse amongst many of the Laser Eagles artists to bring their artistic practice and the works they produce into the broader arts community and have it recog-

nized as valid. Moreover, the fact that there is a concerted effort made by Laser Eagles to have artworks sold, highlights the systematic manner in which essentially each artist, being the recipient of government financial support and thus subject to limitations on how much external income can be made, is excluded from participating in the economic realm. Being able to create a “product” for sale can therefore be read as an act challenging one's limited access to the economy of exchange, while at the same time be indicative of the desire to participate and be seen to have value within the dominant mode of capital exchange.

Spending time at the painting sessions and conversations I shared with Judith Snow revealed that the Laser Eagles artists each have their own motivations for being members of the Guild (J. Snow, personal communication, April 16, 2008). As noted above, the impulse to have their artworks gain access to mainstream venues is a strong one for many of the artists. For some, this coincides with their intention to be viewed as “artists first.” For others, the inclination to be seen primarily as an artist might not be so strong, but there is a sense that painting sessions represent an ideal opportunity to meet with other people and socialize. Whatever the motivation, there is a demand that a dominant reason for participation not be imposed. Laser Eagles stays clear from defining itself in a limiting fashion, especially as a therapeutic enterprise. What is central is the desire for self-expression, underpinned by the act of painting, facilitated through social relationships that make it possible.

Nevertheless, there is an inherent tension in the collaborative process that the Laser Eagle artists utilize, especially in considering questions about the autonomy of the artist and the role that the tracker plays. There is a danger that exists in collaborative endeavors:

“In arts-and-disability projects, the manner in which non-disabled people approach the task of facilitating or collaborating in creative work

by artists with [disabilities] has a crucial bearing on the extent that [disabled] experience and subjectivity is articulated” (Perring, 2005, p. 187).

This rightly draws attention to the situation whereby a tracker can easily usurp the artist’s self-expression and impose his/her own subjectivity onto the canvas. This can occur intentionally or not, especially in cases where verbal expression is limited and the tracker has to be creative in ‘guessing’ (while also attempting to confirm that a guess is correct). How, while making the leap into expression, does one remain faithful to the spirit of the original source?

Translation

Understanding the act of translation allows instability to become apparent. Language, one aspect of the interplay between the artist and tracker, does not necessarily evoke a response readily translated through spoken or written word that results in visual expressions created by placing paint on a canvas. There is slippage in this process, despite the effort to capture and convey the totality of self-expression. As Walter Benjamin (1955/1968) writes:

“In translation the original rises into a higher and purer linguistic air, as it were. It cannot live there permanently, to be sure, and it certainly does not reach it in its entirety. Yet, in a singularity impressive manner, at least it points the way to this region: the predestined hitherto inaccessible realm of reconciliation and fulfillment of languages. The transfer can verb en total, but what reaches this region is that element in a translation that goes beyond transmittal of subject matter. This nucleus is best defined as the element that does not lend itself to translation” (p. 75).

Put into the context of Laser Eagles, Benjamin’s words can be seen to capture the Utopian impulse that exists behind Laser Eagles’ aspirations to create a space and process where

individuals can “fully express themselves” (Laser Eagles Art Guild, 2008). Although the paintings created by Laser Eagle artists serve as an emblem of this goal, they also highlight the way in which the goal of full self-expression appears unattainable. Whatever is read into them will necessarily fall short of encompassing the individual and his/her subjectivity. Benjamin’s description of translation also serves a metaphoric purpose in re-conceptualizing the role of subjectivity. The movement from one source to another seems to gesture towards the inherent instability of the self-autonomous subject:

“Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest of details, although they need not be alive one another. In the same way, a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original’s mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel” (Benjamin, 1955/1968, p. 75).

However, “[Benjamin] is not saying that the fragments constitute a totality, he says fragments are fragments, and they remain essentially fragmentary” (as cited in Bhabha, 1994, pp. 268-269). As such, the relationship formed between an artist and a tracker does not result in one final and consummate expression of the artist’s subjectivity. Their interdependence can be interpreted variously as achieving the often-contradictory positions that each subject inhabits a fragmentary subject position. It points toward the manner in which subjectivity is produced in conjunction with other social beings, a theme I will attend to in greater detail below.

Destabilizing Self-Autonomy

Disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thompson’s work (1997) offers another way to think about this instability of the self-

autonomous subject in relation to disability. Utilizing Robert Murphy's formation of the "American Ideal" as an exemplar of the "normate" subject, she challenges this ideal by demonstrating how theorizing disability as encompassing an "extraordinary body" disrupts normate or self-autonomous subjectivity. Arguing that the American Ideal is premised on four interlocking ideological principles described as "self-government, self-determination, autonomy and progress" (p. 42). Garland-Thompson draws out parallels between the individual citizen and the (American) nation state. Juxtaposed against the disabled body, notions of the body (and body politic) as a "stable, neutral instrument of the individual will" (p. 42) are ruptured as she exposes that they are premised on the assumption that:

"The principle of self-determination requires a compliant body to secure a place in the fiercely competitive and dynamic socioeconomic realm. The idea of self-determination places tremendous pressure on individuals for their own social stations, economic situations, and relations with others" (Garland-Thompson, 1997, p. 43).

In accentuating the fallacy of self-determination by way of the extraordinary body, Garland-Thompson (1997) also notes the contradictory positions that this entails:

"On the one hand, the disabled figure is a sign for the body that refuses to be governed and cannot carry out the will to self-determination. On the other hand, the extraordinary body is nonconformity incarnate. In a sense then, the disabled figure has the potential to inspire with its irreverent individuality and to threaten with its violation of equality" (p. 44).

This duality reveals the basic instability of the subject position. Moreover, it demonstrates how disability can function as a site that exposes the permeability of boundaries, rendering

subjectivity as at once something excessive and lacking, fragmented and appearing as a greater "vessel."

Echoing the claims Garland-Thompson makes about the mythological status of the American Ideal, Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick (2001) note practices of self-maintenance of the body offer an "illusion of mastery that serves to establish a sense of bounded identity and autonomy" (p. 68). This applies to non-disabled and disabled people alike – it does not deny power relations but it does complicate the location that each person inhabits. As such, the subject's location as being socially and corporeally produced also situates disability within this understanding. Disability is characterized as an element of "embodied subjectivity: which is actively and continuously produced through social interactions with other body-subjects" (p. 63). Price and Shildrick moreover argue "the body is materialized *through* discourse – which we understand as both text and practice – and it becomes present to us not as a stable entity but as something that is always in process" (p. 63). In this sense, disability, as well as identity, can be seen as being produced through bodily and social interaction. Neither disability nor identity, however, can be claimed in a totalizing manner. That is to say, bounded identity and autonomy, as well as any singular form of disability, are not as straightforward as they are often initially assumed. Language, rights and interests, bodily interactions, and power relations collide in a messy constellation that is recognized as the self. Vital to this process is the interaction between individuals:

"The disruption of the notion of a unified self-present individual brings more clearly into focus the question of our relationships with others as they are enacted, not simply through social relations, but through the interactions of our bodies and their mutually constitutive effects on one another" (p. 63)

Paying attention to the processes of interaction that Price and Shildrick emphasize leads to a place in which identity can be questioned and its asymmetries made evident. Moreover, it opens up a space of uncertainty in which interdependence signifies a breaking down of simple dichotomies. Price and Shildrick (2001) attempt to represent this by way of drawing attention to their collaboration in writing, in which yielding singular ownership of the text “parallels the willingness to give up ownership of ‘my’ body” (p. 65). This should not imply that one disowns the experience of one’s body, but it does mean attending to the way one’s embodied subjectivity is produced in conjunction with others:

“Put very simply, as one of us changes, so does the other... The significance is not that we think there is anything extraordinary about our particular interaction, but that the coming together of anomalous and normative embodiment can stand for a limit case for all relationships between self and other” (p. 64).

New Directions

The notion of ethics suggested by Price and Shildrick is poignant with regards to Laser Eagles. If the process of translation is one marked by fragments, and if the production of identity and self-representation is construed in terms of a continual encounter with slippage, then an impossible imperative not to rush to impose meaning upon the other emerges. This is made clear in the responsibilities of the Laser Eagle trackers, who, when confronted someone who can barely speak and move, have to learn how to exist in a place of “not-knowingness.” This place, or space, is also one of interdependence, for it would be dangerous to suggest that responsibility is one-sided. Instead, it can be seen as an asymmetrical relation, in which bodies, minds, language, and paint, come together to produce new meanings. The mission statement of Laser Eagles, “We will bring people together to passionately reveal all that is in their hearts and to

contribute their creativity and insight to the world” (Laser Eagles Art Guild, 2008), encapsulates the necessity of interdependence and suggests the creative and transformative potential that exists in paying attention to this dynamic.

Not only can attending to interdependence open up new ways of thinking about how disability is enacted in the world (what does it mean to live in conjunction with other bodies and minds), it provides inspiration to rethink current structures of interaction on a broader level. Unruly Salon presenter Tanya Titchkosky (2008) makes the salient point that “it is difficult to imagine how images of disability will ever stop signifying the normalcy of regarding disabled people as contingent, as maybes, as those people that are only partially included in work, leisure, and love.” As I have argued, one way to continue challenging these contingent roles is to look at how bodily and social interactions can disrupt normative discourses of disability. The Laser Eagles Art Guild does this by rebuking notions of disability and countering them with collaborative efforts of creation, in which there is a striving to acknowledge fully the contributions each individual makes. One of the tasks at hand is to make evident how spaces similar to the one fostered by the Laser Eagles are connected to a more widespread re-imagining of the ways in which disability is understood.

In this respect, the Unruly Salon series provided, as disability studies scholar Catherine Frazee (2008) put it in her keynote address, a welcome “weaving together [of] threads that may make more apparent, the emergence of what some have called a ‘disability aesthetic.’” The array of individuals involved in the series – artists, scholars, activists, and the curious – were given the rare opportunity to come together on one stage to explore disability in some of its many facets, as well as celebrate the creative expression that stems from the experience of disability. Determining what a disability aesthetic would constitute is not an easy task, judging by the wide-ranging display of attitudes and ideas

at the Salons. Thus, one question that needs addressing is how interdependence fits into this project, not only on the level of individual relationships, but also in terms of the social, cultural and political dimensions that take into account how emergent forms of knowledge are constituted and the domains in which they circulate. This also brings into focus the sensitivities concerning translation and the manners in which creative expressions of disability are engendered and interact with one another, within and between the academic world, arts communities, and beyond. As such, the Unruly Salons represented an important step in reaching out and bringing different bodies and minds together to facilitate new relationships and collaborations. More importantly, they signaled the necessity to keep moving together into the spaces of not-knowingness that make possible new ways of imagining disability.

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"Making Us Crazy"

Tania Willard

Artist of the Secwepemc Nation

Red Willow Designs

Author's Artistic Statement: The title for the "Crazymaking" exhibit grew out of Tania Willard's thinking about the intergenerational residue of colonization and its impact in the present on the First Nations' communities in terms of substance use, residential schools, and how its effects "abuse all of our 'crazymaking history" (Willard, personal communication, May 12, 2007).



Making us Crazy, woodcut, January, 2007
(Photo courtesy of Tania Willard).
Tania Willard



Magpie Funeral, Lino-cut, 8" x 12", January, 2007
(Photo courtesy of Tania Willard).
Tania Willard



Transformers, Lino-cut, 12" by 12", January, 2007
(Photo courtesy of Tania Willard).
Tania Willard

In The Morning

Lynn Manning

**Editor's Note: This poem has been reprinted with the author's permission. Copyright 2008, Lynn Manning.

It's in the morning,
After the dew of dreams has settled the
previous day's pollutants;
Before the garbage men thunder down the
drive
With their coveted cargo of American Waste;
Before the middle-class separatists mobilize
To move on the city;
Before the freeways hiss
Like overloaded power cords;
Before the dawn comes
Splashing color and confusion all over the
place;

Before the sun rings the sky
With it's spectral alarm,
Waking the piercing chorus of trees,
Sounding the beginning of the race.
It's before the rats climb into the starting blocks
That the mind crawls from its barricaded
bunker,
Eyes wide and unshielded from glare,
Undistracted by color and contrast,
Unified in shadow;
It is then that
The Imagination
Can reach up into itself
And grasp
The Universe.

Back to Normal? Reclaiming Productive Citizenship - A Familiar Conversation

Sheena Brown, M.A.
University of British Columbia

Abstract: "I don't want to be a burden!" is a statement that finds itself at the centre of familiar relationships between social actors as well as in structural relationships that frame disability and normalcy. A mother and daughter respond back, challenging its meaning as a nuanced articulation to demand citizenship rights.

Key Words: motherhood, citizenship, rights

**Editor's Note: This article has been anonymously peer reviewed.

Introduction

"I don't want to be a burden!" is a familiar statement woven into evening news headlines, woven into Western cultural representations of normalcy and disability and woven into the intimate spaces spent with family and friends. These words embrace our material positionality and identities as daughter and sons, as academics and everyday persons moving about the contemporary landscape as social agents engaged in meaning making. While "I don't want to be a burden!" is infused with stinging messages of deficiency and deficit, it is also a far more nuanced articulation that challenges these mean-

ings into a transformative statement demanding rights and respect.

As issues of power and voice are central to any research that attempts to demonstrate how individuals make meaning for themselves, the following has been framed as a conversation between two participants: Alysha (a white, working class woman in her late 20's engaged in graduate studies) and her mother Monica (white, working class woman in her early 50's) who negotiate their multiple roles (daughter, academic, parent, woman, persons with disabilities, heterosexual, working-class, etc) to make sense of both state mechanisms designed to "help" persons with disabilities and meanings of "burden." The narrative below was designed collaboratively with the direct input of the participants who wished to relay the intimacy of their relationship as mother and daughter against structural relationships that frame their voices and agency. They directly respond back, speaking from their positions that do not neatly divide public from private, and academic knowledge from so called "lay wisdom."

Respecting their input that a conversational/narrative mode might foster more flexibility in comparison to highlighted interview passages, which they felt risked the jettison of context, both contributed to this writing. In turn, this process has shaped how they desired to be presented and represented as knowledgeable subjects rather than objects of knowledge. However pseudonyms have been used to protect their confidentiality.

Writing as narrative is meant to directly address the contentious political and ethical negotiations surrounding issues of power and representation. It is a methodological approach meant to speak back to Gesa Kirsch's (1999) question, "Whose story is this anyhow?" As Michael Marker (2003) has argued, research is often driven by the ethnographers' "interests" rather than the actual voices and experiences of the participants. What interests the participants

can become ignored and silenced. If research is to become an emancipatory practice to fuel social change, listening and respecting how participants choose to contribute and desire to be represented is an opportunity for creative challenge. Research must allow for expression that is unafraid to push past conventions that govern and determine what does or does not count as "truth" or even as "real" research.

Narrative writing is in the same vein as work presented by others such as Carolyn Ellis (1995), who blend autobiography with deeper theoretical issues that link the personal and political, not as separate realms to be entered and exited, but as a seamless motion through the everyday. The personal and the political are intertwined and inseparable, the basis for ethnographic research that challenges traditions of truth that rely on impersonal objectivity to construct authority.

The purpose of generating such deeply personal texts is not to indulge in a "confessional tale" (Van Mannen, 1988), nor in a narcissistic moment that only romantizes and reinforces Western modes of story telling (Kelly, 1997). It is also not a "trick" to erase power inequality between researcher and participant. Narrative is a forum that openly engages and respects voice by challenging the conventions and divides that determine the authenticity of experience and truth.

Narrative

Often communicating via the telephone, the participants begin with a familiar statement:

"I don't want to be a burden!" responds Alysha's mother, Monica, over the telephone. Monica's voice cracks and strains with emotion. It is a response Alysha has heard echoed in academic lectures and works, a response woven into the intimate spaces shared with family and friends. Words that rush out with the pain, words that know worth is measured in I.Q. points and pay checks. Anger boils up in Alysha as thick and clean as steam off soup. She wants to pin it

down, wrestle it to the mat, unravel the barbs, to lay out the ideological terrain of hegemonic normalcy and productive citizenship. But the pain disarms her. She fumbles for a speaking voice, fumbles with the impossibility of separating out her multiple selves as a daughter, as a graduate student, as a young, white working class woman struggling to make meaning of her pursuit of middle class credentials. Credentials that make her own disability as a dyslexic look like an ironic joke. “What right do I have to speak up when I ‘pass’ and look so darn ‘normal?’”, she thinks. “How can I comfort without being paternalizing? Can I speak in a way that acknowledges our authority, which recognizes the authenticity of our experiences but still respects our differences? How does disability ‘interrupt’ familiar narratives of mothering and of being a daughter?”

Alysha pauses knowing she cannot “talk school” into Monica’s pain. Her roles as daughter and graduate student seem so distant yet inseparable from each other. There is a tension that cannot cut with a single sentence. How could her mother ever be a burden? It does and doesn’t make any sense. Alysha thinks about her mother’s struggle to get out of bed in the mornings, to dress, to control both her body and mind in a seamless performance of normality. The effort and energy required to demand her humanity never issues a paycheck. She doesn’t have a good answer for her. She is disappointed and discouraged with herself. Days later, like a splash of cold water, it hits her: normalcy is an unrecognized productive labor. Calling Monica back, she blurts out, “Okay, I think I got it Mom!”

“Oh really?” Monica replies skeptically.

“Well not the last word on the matter, but I have been doing some thinking. I’ve been writing down some ideas that maybe you can help me with? Here’s what I’ve got so far: Normalcy as an undervalued and unrecognized labor needs to be fore fronted as the basis of an alternative understanding of productivity in opposition to waged work. It is an important distinction as

waged work often informs neo-liberal understandings of citizenship rights that become embedded within policies aimed at offering services for the ‘disabled.’ These policies, based on an understanding of normalcy as productive, not only construct persons with disabilities against “the good citizen [as] male, white, active, fit and able” (Meekosha & Dowse, 1997, p. 50), but ignore normalcy as embodied effort. This deliberate neglect harmfully separates identities and treats normalcy as a stable and uncontested ideology across time and place, uprooting any material rights-based claim to public space. Although some feminist scholars have made similar arguments regarding women’s unpaid domestic work this argument hasn’t touched upon the pervasive assumptions of normalcy.”

“What policies are you talking about?” Monica replies encouragingly.

“What about the application form you had to fill in for BC disability income assistance (British Columbia Ministry of Human Resources, 2007)? What if we applied Dorothy Smith’s (1987) standpoint epistemological approach (with connects seemingly everyday happenings to their larger structural locations) to the application to see how this document embeds constructions of normalcy? I think the institutional practices behind the document ignore the contributions made by people with disabilities who are anything but burdens. I think that the people who keep telling people with disabilities to “make something of their lives” should learn a little humility and stop teaching humiliation.”

“Yeah okay. I hate that form. What a piece of crap that thing is!”

“Mother! Such language!” Alysha teases, knowing “crap” is as close as Monica will ever get to actually cussing. She continues:

“Well we both know the Persons with Disabilities Designation Application states its purpose is to:

‘Provide information to the ministry about the applicant’s physical or mental impairments associated with diagnosed medical conditions relevant to this application for a Person with Disabilities (PWD) designation. The emphasis is on how the medical conditions and impairment affect the Applicant’s ability to perform Daily Living Activities... [and] is not intended to assess employability or vocational abilities. (Persons with Disabilities Designation Application, 2007, p. 6)’

Split into three sections the application consists of questions asking the applicant to describe the impact of their disability upon their lives, the Physician and Assessor Reports. These sections comprise a long survey of diagnostic codes and questions regarding the ability of the applicant to walk unaided, personal hygiene, housework, financial management, fluency in English, questions regarding housework, financial management, capacity to read and write and ability to maintain interpersonal relationships. Only a medical doctor may fill in the Physician Report and only a Registered Psychologist, Nurse, Psychiatric Nurse, Occupational therapist, Physical Therapist or Social Worker may complete the Assessor Report. While the applicant’s signature is mandatory, only the questions to which the applicant can respond directly are optional.

Don’t you think this medicalizes your relationship with your body? That it is your body doesn’t matter! Your experiences are removed and are not even worth mention! But they do not stop there; removing you is also a consumer relationship. It is the doctor’s knowledge that is worth something, heck the form clearly includes rates doctor’s charge to fill in the form. Don’t you think this assumes a relationship that associates knowledge that matters with waged work?” Alysha storms.

“Okay I know what you’re saying but I like the fact the only section I get to fill in is option-

al. You never know how those doctors of social workers will use what you write. Better to leave it blank. They never listen to anything I have to say anyway. Unless they think its ‘crazy’ and then it’s all about tinkering with my medication again. Better to say nothing at all,” Monica interjects, throwing a curve ball into Alysha’s theorizing.

“Yeah, you’re right, but Mom, I’ve got a few more things to say about the form! Can I get back to that?” she whines.

“Fine Ms. Bossy, just remembered who called whom for help!”

“Okay, okay!”

“I was thinking that although the form is clear that it does not intend to use this information to ‘assess employability or vocational abilities,’ the way it is set up implies the opposite. It implies constructions of productive citizenship and hegemonic normalcy. Merely filling in the form implies an assessment of employability because approval is hinged upon a specific examination of daily living activities to determine the ‘authenticity of one’s ‘inability’ to engage in waged labor.

Heck, the categories used to measure disability (ability to walk unaided, maintaining personal hygiene... etc) based on a definition of disability as ‘... [a] severe mental or physical impairment that [in] the opinion of a medical practitioner is likely to continue for at least 2 years, and significantly restricts the person’s ability to perform daily living activities...’ are way too similar to language used in job wanted ads. For example the form reads:

‘For each item indicate to what degree the applicant’s mental impairment or brain injury restricts or impacts his/her functioning. Emotion, Impulse control, Insight and judgment, attention/concentration and executive skills (e.g., planning, organizing, sequencing, abstract thinking,

problem-solving, calculations' (Persons with Disabilities Designation Application, 2007, p. 16).

The same emphasis on an ability to concentrate, control emotion and apply insight and judgment are echoed get picked up in employment descriptions:

'The successful candidate will provide administrative support to a team of Corporate Finance professionals in a fast paced and dynamic atmosphere. A positive, flexible "can do" attitude and excellent interpersonal and communications skills are required. Your attention to detail and your ability to prioritize and adapt to changing demands and pressures, in order to meet deadlines, will be essential to your success' (David Alpin Recruiting, 2007).

Don't you think it funny that the form concentrates so hard on proving if you can work or not, it ignores that the form provides jobs for other people who are often non-disabled? Remember you telling me how you needed to call a taxi to get to your appointment because you found it too far to walk with your brace? Funny how the form does not leave room for how you employed the taxi driver, or leaves out how the form needs to employ people to publish, print and distribute it. I think that is really ironic that the only income that seems to be supported is anyone but the person who actually has to apply. It's like Sunny Taylor was saying (2004, p. 5), 'People with disabilities are worth more to the Gross Domestic Product when occupying a bed in an institution than when they're living in their own homes.'

I'm also a bit annoyed at how the form used impairment and disability interchangeably. Seems like the only embodiment that matters is a one that produces something for a wage. Thinking and feeling do not even register. It is like it is trying to divide body and mind, to say they do not have any relationship to each other. As if disability is only what you can see! What

about the disabilities that do not photograph? Heck, all this medical jargon totally ignores that people live in a social world where meaning gets made. It individualizes disability as an experience and feminizes it by pushing it into private spaces like the home. So although you have to run around, really work at getting the form filled in, this gets completely ignored! You become the burden!

I think dividing people up like this into disabled verses non-disabled is hurtful for all of us. It ignores how we all have to labor to appear 'normal.' Just like Marilyn Waring (1988) argued about women's unpaid domestic work that the economy would collapse without it or if people started paying for it, what if we all gave up trying to be 'normal?' How come this work does not count? Telling someone they cannot have full rights because they are disabled means the whole idea of having rights is based on rejecting how we really live our lives. It denies many activities we have to engage in everyday.

We really have to start thinking about how normalcy and history share the same history which has an impact on what's happening right now. For instance we know Canada has a history of settlement and displacement. We know that this has had a huge impact on how business is done and who gets to do it. But what about looking at how normalcy is part of this? I mean isn't the idea of colonization based on establishing rules about the normal way to go about doing things, about establishing a normal way to be in the world? Like L. J. Davis' (1995, pp. 26-27) was saying normalcy is a way quite literally of seeing the world that justifies invasion as objective, through morality and scientifically driven Darwinistic assumptions of survival and evolution: 'The average man, the body of the man in the middle, becomes the exemplar of the middle way of life.'

Normalcy as productive gets ignored cause it places itself as the centre from which activity gets defined. Again, like Davis was saying, "The

average man, the body of the man in the middle, becomes the exemplar of the middle way of life' or the basis for an ideological 'hegemony of the middle' that naturalizes middle-class understandings of nation, modernity, masculinity, health and sexuality; it 'justif[ies] the notion of a norm.'"

Alysha stops, listening for a response on the other end of the line eager for Monica's thoughts.

"Well, what do you think, Mom? ... Mom?"

"Huh? What? You done yet? Sorry dear, I was half watching something on TV. Yeah, yeah, I get it. Disability is a job. But nobody sees it this way, cause the world, okay the Western world, is too busy being normal in way that makes it not matter, makes it invisible, which means people with disabilities get read as doing nothing. Why do you gotta be so longwinded?" says Monica, slightly annoyed with Alysha's love of words and tendency to sound like an encyclopedia, yet is also deeply proud of her girl, a girl most figured would never see the inside of a university.

"But I was getting into trying to explain what you were talking about with the doctor

not being interesting in anything you had to say unless it was crazy" Alysha pouts.

"Alright, alright! Let's hear it," Monica encourages, only slightly hoping Alysha would contain herself to the commercial breaks.

Alysha continuing (or is it carries on?):

"Like you were getting at, if you try to say that just because you don't have a job, it doesn't been you don't contribute, you can get pathologized through medical language as 'crazy.' A doctor is more likely to examine your head than examine history or how nations are built or busted. It's like this other person I was reading, Himani Bannerji (2003), says colonization really never leaves Europe cause it's about trying to find itself. It measures everything against itself. You only get to be a full human being depend-

ing on how closely you can literally measure up to some concept of Europe. Normalcy, backed up by colonial ideas about who is or isn't a human being, becomes objective knowledge that doctors can use to determine your credibility. You go in there, shooting down the whole idea of what's normal and what's not, more than a few eyebrows get raised.

But we can't give up on trying to reclaim the idea of productive citizenship or challenging those ideas that give power strength. These ideas are deeper than what it means to have a disability but are about how you get positioned in the world. Hence who is disabled and who isn't has deeper meanings than who's normal and who isn't. It's about a set a privileges that locate everybody. That's why I think you can't call people with disabilities unproductive but are some of the hardest working citizens we have. It's people with disabilities helping out those without disabilities, not the other way around.

But as a strategy, although I'd love to see the look on your doctor's face if you told him that you were going to start charging for your services, we'd have to convince him normalcy isn't doing him any favors either. We'd have to point out the ways it confines who he is and how he can express himself. We'd have to show that people with disabilities demanding their rights isn't about a special interest group but is the ways in which we are all interconnected and depend on each other. It's about acknowledging all those multiple roles and labors we navigate just to get through a day."

"Okay that's a nice idea on paper but hard when I need those benefits to live on and need my doctor to fill in the form. As much as I'd love to tell my doctor to start writing me cheques, I don't think he'd be impressed" replies Monica, further challenging Alysha's book smarts.

"Yeah, okay you're right," responds Alysha, thinking about it and having to agree.

“But,” Monica continues and Alysha can almost see her slow grin, “I didn’t think about how I give other people jobs. The next time some one tells me to get a job; I’ll tell them I create jobs instead.”

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Thunderous Ode

Leslie G. Roman

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1

Inside a sinkhole,
Dark, grasping,
Restless thunder,
Thunderous clouds
Tumble, no scatter, scatter, ska, sca, sku, stutter,

2

My words fall apart, sentences,
Scribbled on a tattered page,
Tumble from the sky,
Fall to earth, scatter, ska, sssca, sku, stutter,
stuck in
My throat, what am I trying to say after all?

3

How much more--much more I work to be?
There will be no chicken soup for me
This time, there will be no harmony,
No relief
Repetition of darkness,
Dark moon,
No hands,
No sky
No horizon,
Just horizontal space,
Not an enviable slumber party
Flat vision, the plains cannot match this flat
sadness

3

A knee fidgets, Oh, dear, you don't say!: "Her
knee fidgets anxiously",
Like a moving pendulum, a steel-like ruler in
the sky

Swings to measure the extraordinary,
The Thunder, the lightning, the bolts that
short circuit

And through excess swallow the body into a
deep cavernous

Sleep without slumber,

A waking pulse that disorganizes memory,

Feeling and affect come apart

Did I mention the thunder?

Ska, scss, scissor, Wish I could scissor out this
bleakness

4

Dear Vincent, Van Gogh, of course,

Please don't insult my intelligence

And tell me that your depression brought you

The Starry Night or the Sun Flowers

It must have been The Potato Eaters

That seared my head in half

Weight 88 lbs. Eat now, die later,

Reach into the survivor backpack,

Pull out the old protein ice cream milkshakes

Till death do us not part

But the scale sings a slightly more weighty
tune.

5

Inside a sinkhole

A small crackle of light,

Criss-crosses the consciousness

Hope rises in the moon

That one hand touches another

To reach the moon

6

Dear Mr. Van Gogh and Ms. Sylvia Plath,
Where there is no Bell Jar,

There is at least art
 A glimmer of moonlight
 Against the dark,
 We author our own books,
 7
 Tumble as they do from the sky to the beach
 below,
 To frolic with the geckos
 Alongside lizards and
 Next to colors which we welcome like modest
 Light
 Tea candles--a different starry night
 Than you imagined, Vincent.

Than imagined you, Vincent.

Author's Artistic Statement: Before her major depression she did not think her art would save her life. Now, she gets asked in disbelief when people see the bright colors in her paintings, "Funny, your paintings don't look like you were depressed" to which she responds: "Why should I have to paint colors that continue to depress me? These paintings are part of series of five entitled "Depression ≠ Work: Faultlines in Productivist Citizenship". Painting is not only a way of being connected to the world, it also a way of being outside the sphere of judgment. Geckos are a symbol of transformation and disability culture is transformative.



Prozak Is Not Prosaic: A Different Starry Night, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 36", 2006 Leslie G. Roman (Photo courtesy of Thomas Buchan)



Sleep without Slumber, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 36", 2006 Leslie G. Roman (Photo courtesy of Thomas Buchan).



Geckos at the Beach: We author our own Books, acrylic on canvas, 39.5" X 28", 2006 Leslie G. Roman (Photo courtesy of Thomas Buchan)

Excerpt from 'LAID'

Victoria Maxwell

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When I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and anxiety and...uh, psychosis – it's not like I suddenly stopped being interested in dating. In fact even in the hospital...well that's a whole other issue.

What I mean, is there are a lot of things to consider. Really, how do you even go about starting to date again? It's not like there's an outpatient program for us: "dating after diagnosis" or "intimacy after insanity".

One time, when I got out of the hospital, about year or so after – I kept running into this guy I liked. I don't think he knew I was alive. I think I must've been invisible. Ewww...don't tell that to your shrink: invisible. Red flag phrase for doctors.

I just mean Sam – that was his name, cute, red hair, bulging biceps. Skinny too, lanky. I just mean this guy, probably had a girlfriend or something and didn't even notice me.

My confidence wasn't exactly at its' peak so it wasn't like I was out there shaking hands and introducing myself as 'available'. I mean you have to be crazy to do that! Anyway...

And then once you start dating, how do you know when it's the right time to tell someone you've got a mental illness? Or...three? God. I wanted to be sexually abused, alcoholic, bulimic! Something traditionally dysfunctional. Something with some sex appeal! Not Jack Nicholson's: Redrum! Redrum! And Tony Hopkins' Silence of the Lambs Fava Beans: Ffffff... Fffff!

This has gotta all be strategically timed, right? Do you wait 'til the fourth date –you know to test the waters out? Or just blurt it out during the first – you know to put all your cards on the table, right up front? And then there are the specifics: after appetizers – but before dessert? Certainly waayyy before you announce the engagement and meet the parents, right?

Maybe it's sort of a "one-disorder-per-dinner-date" kinda thing. You've got to consider the overwhelm factor.

Really, I think it's quite like an art form... telling people, especially when dating...it's like pairing wine with food. You know... you should only disclose bipolar disorder when eating something mild and stabilizing, yet still richly complex...like a classic Fettuccine Alfredo.

Nothing too wild or crazy (poor choice of words). But you know - never with something like ...Wasabi tuna steaks over udon noodles.

And when I let the cat out of the bag about anxiety – make sure it's not with anything too complicated or overpowering - don't wanna add unnecessary pressure.

Nothing too finicky...like a soufflé...or that requires extra cutlery skills – like fondue spears or chopsticks. Something simple, like a hearty hamburger – something that adds strength.

And psychosis...well, just stay away from all flambé dishes.

Really though, how do you break it to someone? Maybe just a casual approach, a haphazard manner to mirror my history:

'Oh, hi. No, I don't eat meat, or smoke, but I do occasionally take Prozac and Lithium.'

Afterward: Celebration, Eulogy, or Pride in Disability Scholarship and Community?

David Anderson, B. A.
University of British Columbia

At the commencement of the Unruly Salon Series, Dr. Catherine Frazee asked us to remember that the “Unruly Salon ordains and inducts each of us to pay attention, to make connections, to respond – in short to contribute to the opening and unfolding of this cultural space” [sic]. Specifically, Dr. Frazee called on us to do the “work of excavation, weaving and coming to pride.”

With these frameworks in mind, I will consider the impact and possible futures (or not) for the Unruly Salon from my perspective as a disabled student.

Excavation of Disability History in One University’s Context

Like other universities in North America, The University of British Columbia (UBC) has not always been a warm or even tepid environment for disabled students. History tells us that it took several court battles, lost by UBC in fantastic ways, before the university realized that it not only had to support and accommodate students with disabilities, but that it should.

In my own experience as a visually impaired student at the University of British Columbia, meeting other students with disabilities over the last six years has been incidental, accidental, and random. Not being able to see meant that I didn’t meet many other blind people unless I literally ran into them. Most of the blind and other disabled people I do know on campus were previous friends and contacts from organizations outside the university (e.g., the Canadian National Institute for the Blind).

As is the case I imagine at many universities, my university does indeed provide services and accommodations to students with disabilities,

support, as it were, to individuals, but it does not overextend itself at all to support communities, advocate or truly promote active engagement or participation of disabled people on all levels. UBC does not provide the infrastructure or environment necessary to encourage the interaction and networking of students with disabilities aside from the odd, start of the year mixer. My fellow disabled students have been cast as passive receivers of services, not active agents of change. There is no US in UBC.

The emergence of the Salon this term and the resultant arrival of artists, academics, community members, politicians, and radicals has created, for the first time, a refreshing sense of a real disability community at UBC.

During the three months of the Salon Series, I have felt like an active agent of dialogue, inquiry, and engagement with a large, unruly and dynamic community that has not often come together on campus in such a powerful and all-inclusive manner.

Weaving

While I did not find much of a disabled community at UBC when I first arrived, I did encounter and fell head first into and head over heels for the queer community here (or LGBT if you prefer). The time I spent engaged with these groups connected me with students, staff and faculty – and a number of other UBC and Vancouver community members – who were just as unruly as the members of these Salons, and they have had a lasting impact on me, fellow students and the campus.

The importance of weaving with the lessons from the Queer community is the recognition that spaces for creative community engagement

are hard won and must be continually nurtured. We need consistent student engagement and an interdisciplinary scholarly program such as Disability Studies, not merely Disability Services, to sustain and grow our citizenship, belonging and intellectual involvement in the University.

Queers worked many long hours to establish permanent (and well-funded!) student groups as well as to foster academic legitimacy, both of which are necessary for community building and for social change at the university level.

Of course, the Faculty Association Ad Hoc Committee on Gay and Lesbian Studies was finally neutered of its “Gay and Lesbian” affiliation by reducing the department title to “Critical Studies in Sexuality,” or “CSIS,” so I shudder to think what may be created in the attempt to establish Disability Studies at UBC. Perhaps we’ll end up with “Critical Investigations in Ability” or “CIA.” We may be inviting too much scrutiny.

All joking aside, however, a Disability Studies department is what we need at UBC. Student groups alone have not remained. “Student Services” supports individuals, not communities. We need an enduring space on campus in which to share, question and learn together and to challenge the current social hegemonies that disallow our active participation and involvement in laying claim to who we are and how we are represented.

Coming to Pride

Speaking of queers, something else we share with this group is the “coming to pride” that Dr. Frazee outlined to us so few months ago. “[C]oming to pride,” she explained to us. “Is a delicate alchemy that can only take root in the fertile ground of community. It is our connection to each other that transforms stigma to grace, personal burden to collective struggle, shame to honour.” I believe in these Salons we have come to pride, but how will we continue to do so without an established and flourishing

community that goes beyond passive receivers of service?

So what have the Salons achieved? They have reminded me of the power of community, and in that community, the Salons have created an opportunity for active and creative engagement with ideas and people. They have reminded me of my own power and creativity, and that I am indeed part of something greater than my own personal struggles, achievements, and failings in the dark.

And in that revelation of finding me implicated in a greater community, I am reminded of the responsibilities of students to ask questions and challenge! Radical bodies do not negotiate bureaucratic spaces well, literally or symbolically, and it seems strange to operate on the limited level of bureaucratic administration and not as an engaged community or at least a critical and unruly receiver. We require spaces like the Salons to thrive and to create community on all levels: academically, personally, creatively, and socially. The magic created by events such as the Salons affords us a glimpse of the possible. Unfortunately, if the Salons are temporary, then, my remarks become a eulogy as they as much as they are an acknowledgement and a celebration. The creation of a permanent community requires considerable time, effort, and institutional support – and the support and active involvement of disabled students, as well as faculty and staff.

In this last Salon of the Series, Mr. Stephen Honisch drew our attention through music to the “fragile spaces between impairment and disability”, and I would argue that these very Salons themselves are “fragile spaces” - ones we should cherish for their suspension of labels and constraints and their rampant ambiguity, and recognizing their value and infrequent occurrences, work to produce more of them

The Salons remind us to take pride in the achievements of the past and the work of the

Series today, and to make a commitment to the ongoing work that lies ahead.

References

Honisch, S. (2008, March). *The road to marginalization is paved with good intentions: In pursuit of the rehumanization of physically impaired musicians*. Paper presented at the Unruly Salon Series at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver: Canada.

Biographical Statements for Contributors to the Unruly Salon Series Highlighted in This Issue of the Review of Disability Studies

David Anderson graduated with a BA (major in English Literature, minor in Critical Studies in Sexuality) at the University of British Columbia. He also holds a Certificate in Intercultural Communication. Currently, he is a program coordinator at the University of British Columbia's Continuing Studies, Centre for Intercultural Communication. David's scholarly interests concern the interplay between sexuality and disability, especially the preoccupation of North American gay male culture with the visual in contrast with visual impairment and blindness. He is a passionate supporter of activism and activist scholarship and is an ardent facilitator and educator. David has been visually impaired his whole life.

Sheena Brown is a recent MA graduate from the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. Her graduate work explored meanings post secondary students, who had previously been identified as special educational students made of disability, normalcy and education. She is currently interested in the links between disability and constructions of "productive citizenship."

Catherine Frazee is a writer, an educator, and an activist. These three identities come

together for her at Ryerson University in Toronto, where she happily indulges activist inclinations and curiosities about disability rights, disability culture, and disability resistance. As Professor of Distinction in Ryerson Disability Studies program and Co-director of its Institute for Disability Studies Research and Education, her writing and teaching draw from a lifetime of experience as a disabled person and many years of leadership in the equality struggles of marginalized groups in Canada.

Christopher A. Lee spent two years in Toronto working with Judith Snow as one of her personal assistants. He is currently pursuing a Masters degree within the Educational Studies Department at the University of British Columbia, with a focus on disability studies. He also works as a program manager at a non-profit social service agency in Vancouver that supports people who are labeled disabled living in the community.

Lynn Manning is an award winning poet, playwright, actor, and former world champion of blind judo. In 1996, the Los Angeles-based artist co-founded Watts Village Theater Company. He is currently president of The FireHouse Theater Company. Lynn's autobiographical solo play, *Weights*, most recently received a Fringe Review Theatre Award for "Excellence In Theatre" at the 2008 Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Since its premier in 2000, Lynn has performed *Weights* from Chicago to Off Broadway and from Croatia to the United Kingdom. Lynn's very first play, *Shoot*, is included in the groundbreaking collection, *Beyond Victims and Villains* (contemporary plays by disabled playwrights).

Victoria Maxwell is an actress, playwright, performer, and is *Crazy for Life*. *Crazy For Life* is a tour-de-force one-woman show of Victoria Maxwell's roller coaster ride with bipolar disorder. A brave, funny, and compelling look at experiencing, surviving, and coming to

terms with mental illness, actress, motivational speaker, writer, and educator Victoria Maxwell takes us around the bend, and back again: from meditation groups to hospital psych wards, from black depressions to manic highs, and psychedelic psychoses. Her most memorable moment is joyfully running down the street... naked... in posh Point Grey, playing hide-n'-seek with the Divine. In Toronto, she performed to sold out audiences and rave reviews. Last September, she "hit the boards" in England and continues to tour throughout North America and Europe, being translated into both Japanese and Spanish. An award-winning actress and playwright with over 15 years experience, Victoria has worked alongside David Duchovny, John Travolta, and Johnny Depp, among others, and appears on stages and in films across North America.

Geoff Mc Murchy is a dancer, choreographer, and sculptor. He is also the Artistic Director of the Society for Disability Arts and Culture (S4DAC) in British Columbia and one of the five artists featured in the Bonnie Sherr Klein film "Shameless: The Art of Disability." S4DAC was the first to take up the challenge of creating a "disability arts movement" in Canada, a movement that has gained strength and respect around the globe. The Society's signature event, the kickstART Festival of Disability Arts and Culture in Vancouver (2001, 2004), was Canada's first international festival of disability arts.

Leslie G. Roman is a painter, poet and Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. She publishes widely in and bridges disability studies, cultural studies, and anti-colonial feminism. She co-created with Geoff Mc Murchy the groundbreaking Unruly Salon Series and is currently completing a SSHRC-funded project that explores the interconnections among asylum-making, residential schools for people with disabilities and medicalized colonialism in the case of

the Woodlands School in British Columbia, entitled: 'The Burden of Imperfection: Querying British Columbia's Participation in the Eugenic Atlantic;', (1878-1996). Her work appears in *Educational Theory, Discourse: The Cultural Politics of Education*, *The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, among others. She co-edited *Dangerous Territories: Struggles for Difference and Equality* (Routledge), *Views Beyond the 'Border Country': Raymond Williams and Cultural Politics* (Routledge) and the award-winning, *Becoming Feminine: The Politics of Popular Culture*, (The Falmer Press). Her book, *Contested Knowledge* will appear shortly (Rowman & Littlefield) and takes up questions about unruly body/mind politics.

Judith Snow is an inspirational speaker, writer, collaborator, artist, and organizer. She is a leading advocate on social policy, particularly as it affects people labeled "disabled." Her accomplishments include developing Canada's first service to support students with disabilities in post-secondary education. She is credited with inventing the support circle model of building relationship-based assistance for people with intellectual disabilities, and with piloting individualized funding for personal assistance – a model of support that makes full participation in life available for people with extensive physical and intellectual challenges. Her books include: *The Inclusion Papers* and *What's Really Worth Doing and How to Do It*.

Stephen J. Toope is Professor and the 12th President and Vice Chancellor of The University of British Columbia. His five-year term began in July 2006. An International Law scholar, who represented Western Europe and North America on the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances from 2002-2007, Professor Toope's academic interests include public international law, legal theory, human rights, international dispute resolution, and family law. Professor Toope is currently Vice-Chair,

World University Services Canada, Director of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, Member of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and member of the Research Council of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research.

Tania Willard, of Red Willow Designs, is an artist, woodcutter, and designer from the Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation in the Interior of British Columbia. She works with narrative and story in the arts, media, and advocacy to share First Nations' history and experiences in the struggle for social justice. Tania Willard recently collaborated with the Gallery

Gachet to produce the hard-hitting and powerful exhibit entitled, "Crazymaking." "Crazymaking" depicts the historical traumas that frame mental health issues for First Nations people, particularly those that are hidden or erased such as stories about "Indian Insane Asylums, Mohawk Saints and Native Veterans." The artwork of Tania Willard featured here interconnects with the disability studies research that will appear in *The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* Jan.- Feb., 2009), 21-22.. This invited issue claims space for other key works from the Unruly Salon Series.



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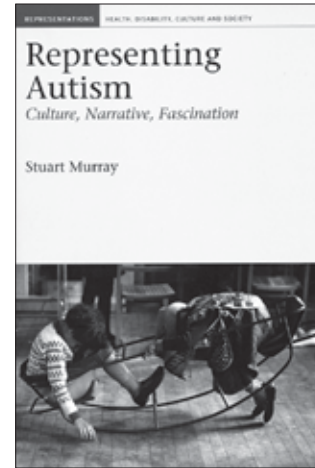
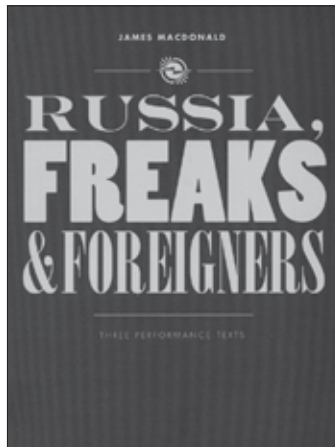
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“This is a thought-provoking, deeply empathetic and engaging book, which is clearly informed by Murray’s own experiences of sharing life with his two sons on the autistic spectrum. It is groundbreaking in its contribution to our understanding of autism and how it might function in the world. Its subject matter is important, not least because of the potential for the neurotypical majority view of autism to have an impact on how those on the spectrum make sense of themselves.”

—*Times Higher Education*

Paper \$35.00

The University of Chicago Press www.press.uchicago.edu

Book Review

Title: *The Unheard: A Memoir of Deafness and Africa*

Author: Josh Swiller

Publisher: New York: Henry Holt, 2007

Paperback, ISBN: 0-8050-8210-7, 288 pages

Cost: \$14.00 USD

Reviewer: Stephen Laracuenté

This is an excellent book for the average person to read. It has something for everyone and it includes something rarely, if ever, included in books – a look into the mind of a Deaf person. This story is told from the perspective of a person who is Deaf and trying to make sense of what he sees, rather than what he hears. This perspective turns out to be as human as any one of us who is fortunate to pick up this book and read it. One important theme that runs through this book is we are all brothers. We need to communicate well, so we can understand each other better in terms of needs, wants and dreams. If we do this, we can care for each other better and the world will be a better place. The Deaf perspective is totally and brutally honest. Nothing is held back, covered up or glossed over. What you see is what you get. The author also shows hearing folks how they perceive the Deaf. Josh Swiller describes how he is treated by hearing people and how other Deaf are treated and perceived – in Africa, of all places.

In a desperate attempt to find himself and his place in the world, Swiller decides to join the Peace Corps. He finds peace and beauty, but he also finds extreme violence, despair and frustration. Swiller opens his heart, mind and soul with this book and allows the reader an intimate look at his thoughts and emotions as he attempts to negotiate the journey of his life, in Africa, as a person who is Deaf.

The story was compelling and this reviewer, who normally cannot sit still long enough to read a book, let alone stay awake, had difficulty putting the book down. Very little is known about Deaf people and very little research has been done or books written that include information about the Deaf. This very personal, specific account provides valuable insight into the mind, heart and soul of a Deaf person who grew up speaking, lipreading and using a hearing aid. Contrary to popular myth, there are not many Deaf people like Josh Swiller, or the reviewer of this book, who can speak, lipread and use the hearing aid (also read and write) well enough to fool hearing people. The majority of Deaf people depend on a sign language to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings.

This reviewer was able to identify completely with all of the experiences related with growing up Deaf and dealing with a hearing world as a Deaf person. If you are curious what it feels like to be Deaf and deal with beauty and peaceful bliss, as well as traumatic, horrific and shocking situations (and still persevere), read this book. If you just want to read a good book guaranteed not to put you to sleep, read this book.

Book Review

Title: *First Person Plural*

Author: Andrew W.M. Beierle

Publisher: New York: Kensington, 2007

Paperback, ISBN: 0-7582-1970-9, 322 pages

Cost: \$15.00 USD

Reviewer: Patricia Wood

First Person Plural is a novel about conjoined twins Owen and Porter. Told from the perspective of Owen, it describes in a fantastical way their navigation through life, socially and sexually. The crux of the story is Owen is gay and Porter straight. Both wish to pursue their respective identities -- but how do you do that

and stay true to what you believe? How do you compromise in this -- the most intimate and compelling part of being human? Porter, the dominant twin, appears to persevere in spite of Owen's reluctance and preference. But do not be misled into thinking this book is only about sexuality or exploiting a disability that at once fascinates and repels. This story is a captivating study of what makes us different and how we grapple with the duality present in all of us. It entertains the questions: What is normal? How do we comply and fit in? What strategies do we humans employ to find love?

It was difficult at first for me to fully identify and have sympathy for either twin. There was an element of distance that made caring about each character difficult, even with the first person point of view utilized. This was not due to the author, whose prose was flowing and remarkably tender and insightful. Difficulty with creating this sympathy lay rather in the realm of the reader, whose closely held and hidden prejudices needed to be taken out and examined before a part could be found that had commonality with Owen or Porter.

The book causes one to reflect upon personal choices and feelings and it is in this area where the book clearly shines. Is a person's perceived preferred sexuality more profound than a perceived disaster of birth? Do we all struggle in some way with this duality?

This novel is utterly thought provoking. I recommend *First Person Plural* to readers who wish to challenge their closely held beliefs about what constitutes either a disability or normal sexuality. It would be an excellent book for a classroom discussion both in high school and college.

With respect to accessibility, there is at this time neither an audio book nor a large print edition available.

When I finished this book, I was bereft and discomfited. Not with the story, but with myself.

I discovered something in me lacking. It was as if I gazed into a funhouse mirror that showed OwenPorter, a spectacular beautiful vision, and me standing alongside--the one distorted.

Patricia Wood was a PhD student in education and disability studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. She is now an author. Her debut novel, *Lottery*, was published by Putnam in August, 2007.

Music Review

Title: *Lend Us Your Ears*

Author: Various Artists

Publisher: Angryfish Records, 2007.

Cost: Send £10 or \$20 (inclusive of postage) via PayPal to angryfish@angryfish.co.uk

Reviewer: Steven E. Brown

Robin Surgeoner, or Angryfish, is an artist-entrepreneur. He is the force behind the compilation of 17 songs on *Lend Us Your Ears* by 10 diverse artists, all of whom focus on themes of disability. I have been carrying the CD with me for months now and listening to it on my computer and iPod as well. The first song that caught my attention was Lindsey Carter's "Useless Eaters." I've already used it several times in presentations. One thing I quickly learned is my audiences did not know the derivation of the term. So, if only for that reason, it has been a learning experience. Carter's lyrics some of which are re-printed below may seem crude unless you know "useless eater" was a Nazi term applied to those with disabilities:

Since the sperm hits the egg

The hunt's on, they're after us

If just one gene's out of wack

They're looking to abort us

The politicians and the scientists
don't want us

In the way
They call us useless eaters
With fucked up DNA

Carter's chorus is the determined phrase, "We're not going to let you wipe us out." Another of her songs on the compilation, "Sweet Family," also addresses how we fit in, or don't, with the families we are born into.

Many of the songs have similar themes to that of the above, including Clair Lewis's "Terri Schiavo" and Julie McNamara's "Fly Like an Eagle." All of these songs are sung in folk style. Very different in style are contributions from Casa Jay and Parafenalia. The latter's "Weekend Anarchist," demands:

Got a wasp in my head, buzzing
like a school reunion
Got to get me to the Doctor.
Give me Prozac, give me Vodka.
Don't be selfish, bloody selfish.
Just want our own space, want
our own space
Where we can live out our
adventures.
Not the ones told by the
presenters.

The transition song in the midst of the CD is Jon Turner's "Fences" which plaintively asks why we need so many de-fenses? It is a hauntingly beautiful rendition. Different still is Jack Fletcher's "Schoolboy Politics" which states:

Don't want the world to be a playground
World leaders chasing childhood dreams
Don't want them playing with our livelihood
But they're not listening to our screams.

This collection has something for everyone and would be an excellent addition to any disability studies or disability culture collection. Angryfish, who like the rest of us, has many roles gets the last word in a plea for his son:

There has got to be a time when everybody smiled
There has got to be a year when terrorists take a break from promoting fear
I've got to believe that there will be a place, a place for my son to be safe.

Steven E. Brown, PhD., Associate Professor, is *RDS* Media Reviews Editor.

Disability Studies Dissertation Abstracts

** Editor's Note: This is a new section of RDS courtesy of Jonathan Erlen of the University of Pittsburgh. Abstracts listed below are selected from a full list of disability-related dissertation abstracts updated quarterly. The full list is available at: http://www.hsls.pitt.edu/guides/histmed/researchresources/dissertations/index_.html.

A narrative inquiry into the experience of women seeking professional help with severe chronic migraines

Taylor, Sharon Diane. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0351, Part 0569 331 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. Canada: University of Alberta (Canada); 2007. Publication Number: AAT NR33077.

Attitudes of Portuguese students towards behavioral disabilities: Preferences and attributions

Ribas, Ana Cristina Lopes. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0091, Part 0451 105 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Illinois: Illinois Institute of Technology; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3279457.

College students' attitudes toward individuals with autism

Mahoney, David. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0153, Part 0451 96 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- North Carolina: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3289131.

Meanings underlying parent narratives of living with and caring for their preadolescent child with cerebral palsy

Rodrigues, Nicola Dominique. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0130, Part 0529 181 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Minnesota: University of

Minnesota; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3287829.

Overcoming the obstacles: Life stories of scientists with learning disabilities

Force, Crista Marie. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0803, Part 0529 159 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Texas: Texas A&M University; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3281058.

Pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching reading to students with and without specific learning disabilities

Narkon, Willa Drue. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0085, Part 0524 244 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Hawaii: University of Hawai'i at Manoa; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3288123.

Psychosocial and disability identity development among college students with disabilities

Buggie-Hunt, Tabitha. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0656, Part 0529 157 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- New York: State University of New York at Buffalo; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3282934.

Psychosocial challenges of college students with a learning disability or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

Kettmann, Julie Jenks. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0096, Part 0525 114 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Iowa: The University of Iowa; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3281373.

Secondary level special education teachers' perspectives and self-reported practices related to the self-determination skills of high school students with disabilities

Malone, Beverly E.. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0092, Part 0529 128 pages; [Ed.D. dissertation]. United States -- Illinois: Illinois State University; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3280906.

Sibling relationships and family dynamics in families with a child with Tourette Syndrome

Maleki-Tehrani, Marjan. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 1141, Part 0451 178 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. Canada: University of Waterloo (Canada); 2007. Publication Number: AAT NR34525.

Talking about infertility: A conceptual model

Bute, Jennifer J.. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0090, Part 0347 205 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3290188.

The blind heroine in cinema history: Film and the not-visual

Salerno, Abigail Lauren. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0066, Part 0295 225 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- North Carolina: Duke University; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3284297.

The experience of parents self-directing the care of their children with developmental disabilities: A hermeneutic phenomenological study

Nebeker, Gerald J.. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 1351, Part 0620 169 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Minnesota: Capella University; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3277661.

The influence of psychosocial factors on the disablement process in women with multiple sclerosis and women with fibromyalgia syndrome

Phillips, Lorraine June. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 0227, Part 0453 243 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Texas: The University of Texas at Austin; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3277616.

The relationship among spirituality, self-efficacy, and quality of life in adults with sickle cell disease

Adegbola, Maxine A.. Proquest Dissertations And Theses 2007. Section 2502, Part 0569 169 pages; [Ph.D. dissertation]. United States -- Texas: The University of Texas at Arlington; 2007. Publication Number: AAT 3289109.

The same and different: A grounded theory of the experiences of college students who have a sibling with a developmental disability

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