Backdating the Crip Technoscience Manifesto: Stephen Dwoskin's digital activism

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BACKDATING THE CRIP TECHNOSCIENCE MANIFESTO: STEPHEN DWOSKIN'S DIGITAL ACTIVISM

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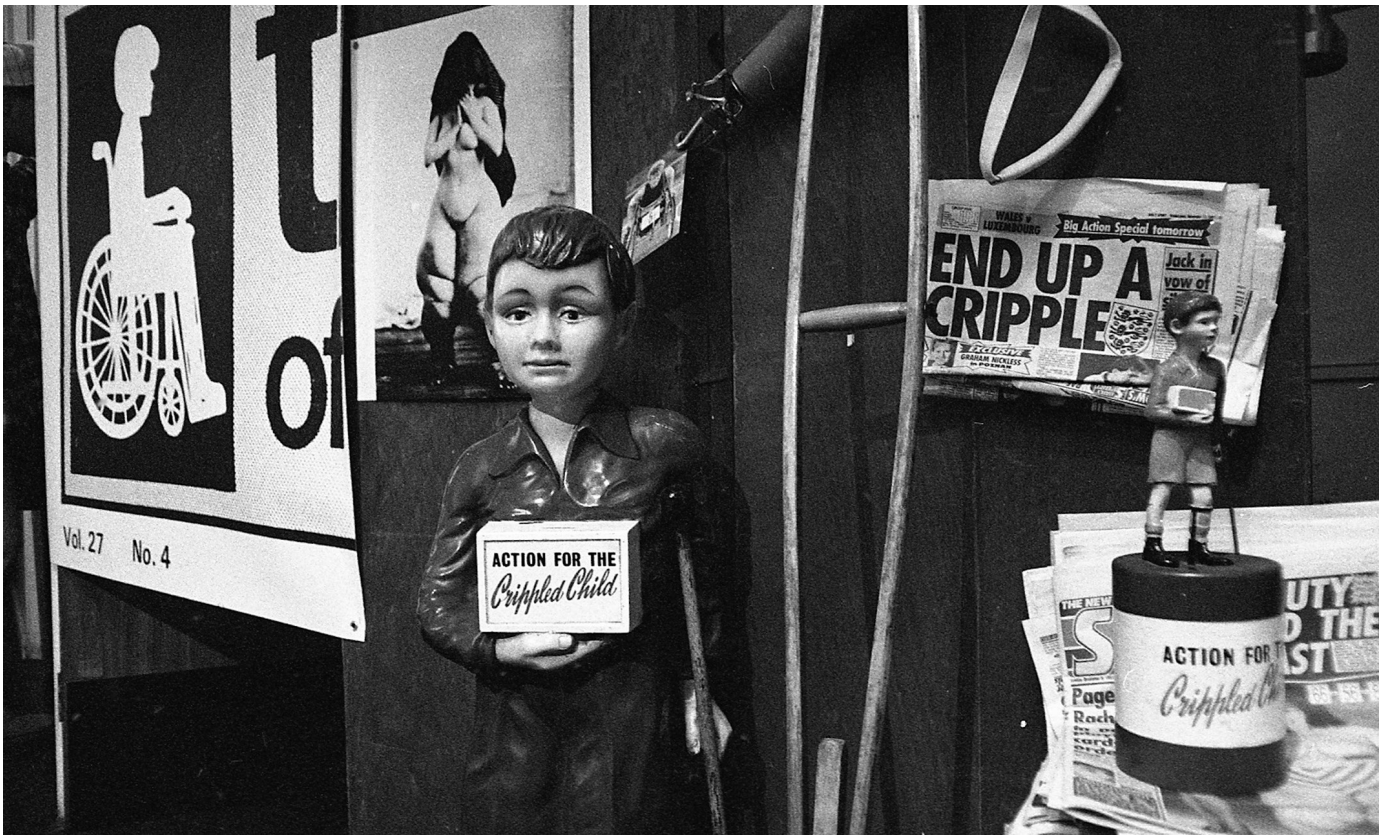

Production still from Steven Dwoskin's *Face of Our Fear*. Courtesy the Estate of Stephen Dwoskin and University of Reading, Special Collections.

Stephen Dwoskin is best known for his provocative, avant-garde, and often sexually explicit filmmaking. A Brooklyn-born member of the East European Jewish diaspora who moved to the United Kingdom in the mid-1960s, Dwoskin has been an acutely understudied filmmaker, despite his work's important legacies for experimental film and media in Europe and North America. Before he left New York in 1964, he worked with Andy Warhol and Jonas Mekas and before that trained at the Parsons School of Design/The New School with Willem de Kooning and Josef Albers.

Once in the United Kingdom, he was instrumental in establishing the London Film-Maker's Co-op (LFMC), modeled after Jonas Mekas's Film-Maker's Cooperative in New York. He was later distanced from the LFMC, partly because his work differed from the structural-formalist work emerging in the 1960s through the 1980s in Britain and partly because of disparaging perceptions of his work in some (but not all) sex-negative feminist circles. Nonetheless,

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from the 1970s through the 2000s his films were celebrated at experimental-film festivals in Knokke and Rotterdam, and he continued to receive commissions from French, German, and British television.

In histories of experimental film, Dwoskin has defied easy categorization: a disabled polymath who left a flourishing career in graphic design in New York for a Fulbright Fellowship that was to enable him to become a filmmaker in London's 1960s underground culture. Despite his prolific film production, which ended only with his death in 2012, his entry into histories of experimental film seems often to stop in the sixties: a footnote to media history, fixed in place in the happenings and radical cultures of New York and London of 1962–69.[1]

Seeing Dwoskin as a disabled filmmaker is also fraught: his intimate style of personal filmmaking did indeed draw on experiences of illness, disability, desire, and recovery. But sexuality, performance, and vulnerability (particularly of the women in front of his camera) also featured prominently, especially in his earlier works *Dyn Amo* (1972), *Girl* (1975), and *Central Bazaar* (1976). He made films about other documentary subjects too: on photography in *Shadows from Light: The Photography of Bill Brandt* (1983) and on black dance in *Ballet Black* (1986). In every identitarian construction there lies the shadow of nominative exclusion as produced by dominant cultures. Dwoskin was all too aware that describing himself as a disabled artist might marginalize him from the realm of art in general and silo his work into the exclusive and excluding frame of disability. He articulated this ambiguity regularly, in both his filmmaking and his curating.

There is a push-me-pull-you dynamic to identity formation and canonical exclusion—between disability as a social (mal)practice of exclusion and the Crip as a contemporary anti-identity—which emerged in the last years of Dwoskin's life. This latter formation—the Crip and crip subjectivity—has been identified by scholars such as Carrie Sandahl and Robert McRuer, and more recently by queer feminist and/or BIPOC scholars such as Alison Kafer and Sami Schalk.[2] Thinking about Dwoskin both as a survivor of polio (who walked using calipers and crutches and then shifted to using a wheelchair in later life) and as an experimental filmmaker (whose substantial archive reveals the range and technological adaptability of his work from 1962 to 2012) calls up a complex temporal dynamic concerning identity, time, and technology.

How to keep bringing the histories of disabled filmmakers to light in an era of shifting historiographies of disability and of media? Discourses of representation often emphasize how disabled artists have been marginalized or their contributions erased. But Dwoskin's work, and the archive of his life's work now catalogued and housed at the Special Collections at the University of Reading, in the United Kingdom, present a newly charged historical problem. Dwoskin's archive provides rich resources—spanning over sixty years of filmmaking practice and lived experience as a disabled filmmaker—that add granular detail to the broader histories of disability and film in the United States and the United Kingdom. At a time when there has been a recent groundswell of visibility in crip art and disability media—such as the landmark *Crip Time* group exhibition at Frankfurt's Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK), which ran from September 2021 through January 2022—it becomes all the more important to seek out the deeper archival histories that support new waves of disabled creative practice.

In the case of Dwoskin, the issue is not any absence or lack of data, but rather pertains to a new methodology: how to reveal the productive specificities of Dwoskin's creative activity as active tactics of technological adaptation and crip technoscience? The analog and digital archives are source materials that bring to light the specific qualities of Dwoskin's digital knowing-making and cinematic world-making. This archive is a political project, challenging neoliberal and ableist discourses of imaginary individuality that consider "disability as an individual experience of impairment rather than a collective political experience of world-building and dismantling."[3] Together with Dwoskin's back catalog of films, the archive also invites a complex reappraisal of the entwined histories of disability, digital filmmaking, crip time, and technoscience—a beginning, not an end, to understanding the complexity of disability's challenge to "normate" worldviews at every level.

Dwoskin's resistance to labeling and categorization did not deter him from making personal films about disability. There is no doubt that personal experiences of impairment and of the cultural and social oppressions of disability were formative for him. Dwoskin was a lifelong advocate for disability rights, with an array of film productions that directly and indirectly present disabled worldviews. Starting in the mid-1970s, Dwoskin became active in disability activist communities. His *Behindert* (1974) stages the rise and fall of a romantic and intimate relationship between a disabled man and an able-bodied woman, as played by Dwoskin and his former partner, Carola Regnier, in a fictionalized reenactment of their earlier love affair.

By the 1980s Dwoskin was increasingly vocal within emerging political discourses on disability rights. In 1981, he released the feature film *Outside In*, a series of often comical, and sometimes dark, autobiographical vignettes

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CARRY ON CRIPPLE

DISABLEMENT IN FILM

If our title offends your sensibilities, then you need this season. The main aim of the International Year of Disabled People is integration; the NFT, in association with the IYDP, hopes to make a valuable contribution by showing the extent to which the cinema propagates harmful stereotypes.— Clare Kitson.

A common characteristic of oppressed groups is media invisibility: they don't get included simply as people. As two people with disabilities (an epileptic and a post-polio), we've programmed this season to show some of the ways in which the makers of fiction films use us for their own ends: to startle or scare, to evoke sympathy or admiration of a kind we can do without.

We've avoided easy targets: all the films in this season are fine pieces of film-making, and most of them contain a lot of truth about the disability in question. But, as Susan Sontag asks in 'On Photography', does a beautiful photograph of a decayed body make the decayed body beautiful? We are asking a similar question. For, in the context of this season, it is the content of the films which is to be examined. The content is *disabilities*: humans displayed as objects, turned into freaks and villains, sexless beings, pitiful bodies, superhuman heroes or just bitter, resentful people. This season considers the point that anything that treats cripples primarily as cripples dehumanises them.

All the films except *Behindert* share one weakness: they were made by able-bodied film-makers for able-bodied audiences. Like male directors' films about women, or white directors' films about blacks, they are based on second-hand experience; they view disability voyeuristically from the outside.

Though we've made a very wide-ranging selection from a vast variety of possible choices, one common attitude stands out: people with disabilities, to be sympathetic characters, must know their place and be passively dependent on the able-bodied – a recurring figure is the able-bodied miracle worker from whom the central character draws the strength to persevere and learn to live a normal life (a dubious ambition at the best of times, but one that we're universally supposed to possess).

And we are continually presented as being isolated, both from each other and from society (which is, by definition, able-bodied); so we often are, but few of these films indicate that any alternative is possible (and especially not one of mutual support); several of them imply that isolation is purely our fault, for not 'coping' – never that isolation may be the result of oppression.

All these attitudes are to be found in this small selection from a wealth of material. But space would not allow such gems as *Frankenstein Created Woman* or *The Ultimate Degenerate* . . . nor, for the children, to perpetuate the myths, 'lovable' Long John Silver and Captain Hook . . . villains and cripples still carrying on!—*Allan T. Sutherland, Steve Dwoskin.*

A leaflet is enclosed with this booklet which gives details of access and facilities for people with disabilities at the NFT. It includes details of sign language interpreters for deaf people for the films in this season.

A seminar relating to the season will be held at the ICA (Nash House, The Mall) on Tuesday 24th February at 7.30 pm.

Mon 2 Feb
6.30
The Men
(Fred Zinnemann)

The Men is probably one of the most honest and sensitive portrayals of disability in film, and one of the few to deal with sexuality. While working hard to avoid the inevitable traces of melodrama, it treats with clarity the situation of the embittered war-wounded paraplegic (Marlon Brando in his film début) who marries his fiancée only to revert to self-pity and return to the hospital, where the other men (most played by real paraplegics) refuse to sympathise. *USA 1950/Dir Fred Zinnemann.*

A flier, a soldier and a sailor try to re-adjust to civilian life after World War II. the sailor has returned disabled. In dealing with the disabled man, the film tends to a self-pitying angle but, because the sailor is played by a real amputee (Harold Russell – and this was his only film) it gains depth as it deals with his struggle against his own inhibitions in trying to re-integrate into society. *USA 1946/Dir William Wyler.* Plus *Diary of a Sergeant* (1945), a documentary on Harold Russell. *Total 192 mins.*

Wed 4 Feb
7.45
The Best Years of Our Lives

Program notes from British Film Institute *Carry on Cripple* season. Courtesy the Estate of Stephen Dwoskin and University of Reading, Special Collections.

restaging moments from his life in which nondisabled interlocutors make flailing, inept, foolish, even dangerous attempts to respond to Dwoskin's disabled body. With Allan T. Sutherland, Dwoskin programmed the first disability film season at the National Film Theatre at BFI Southbank, in London, controversially entitled *Carry On Cripple: Disablement in Film*. Clare Kitson's essay in the opening program notes stated: "If our title offends your sensibilities, then you need this season." The series interrogated tropes of disability in cinematic representation, which Dwoskin later identified in his documentary *Face of Our Fear* (1992) as having done more to entrench stereotyped cultural attitudes to disabled people in one hundred years than literature had in the previous four hundred. During the *Carry On Cripple* season, Dwoskin and Sutherland also took the unprecedented step of supplying accessibility guidelines for screenings, which exponentially increased audience attendance by disabled people.

Dwoskin's own writing in *Disability Arts Magazine* in 1991–93 explicitly addressed the issue of disability stereotypes deployed by mainstream movies, including the frequent use of disabled people as devices for narrative progression, as objects designed to facilitate the able-bodied protagonist's savior complex, and as signifiers of evil or deficiency. In 1991, the United Kingdom's Channel 4 commissioned Dwoskin to produce the first film in their "Disabling World" series. The resulting TV documentary, *Face of Our Fear*, discussed the stigmatization of disability in histories of Anglo-Western cultural representation, as well as the logical and horrifying culmination of such excluding and stigmatizing processes in the Nazi eugenics project. Refusing to be framed exclusively by narratives of death and genocide, *Face of Our Fear* is punctuated by improvised sketches performed by disabled people reading from newspaper cuttings and archival reports. It also incorporates footage of demonstrations and collective action by disabled people staged outside television broadcasting studios against telethons—the televised charitable campaigns of the late 1980s that positioned disabled people as pity cases rather than agents of their own destiny.

Many of the issues identified by Dwoskin in this period have close affinities with disability scholarship undertaken in the same era, including critical appraisals of media and film.[4] Dwoskin's work was, in fact, both part of the emerging discipline of disability studies and a broader moment in disability activism and legal advocacy in the United Kingdom and the United States that culminated in the UK Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 and the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.[5]

At the same time, Dwoskin's increasingly digital process from the early 1990s onward supported him as he

experienced declines in his physical health, which limited his capacity to hold a camera for long periods of time. In particular, his transition from using calipers and crutches in his younger years to using a wheelchair from the mid-1990s onward had significant impacts on the inventiveness of his filmmaking methods—as did the onset of post-polio syndrome, which resulted in a number of hospitalizations in the late 1990s and the 2000s.

Documents from the archive confirm these shifts in his practice. Stills from *Face of Our Fear* show Dwoskin supporting a Hi8 camera on his right shoulder, seated in his chair to film. By September 2003, in an (unsuccessful) application to support his emerging digital filmmaking practice through a fellowship for disabled artists from Artsadmin, a UK organization promoting social and environmental justice in the arts, Dwoskin writes: "[W]hereas earlier I used to explore my subject matter via a 'moving' camera that was in essence my own persona, I now have to find a way to explore relationships from what has become a 'fixed' wheelchair bound position. In this state, my immediate environment changes—spaces, rooms and absences will become more of a subject, I suspect."[6]

Dwoskin expertise with digital filmmaking tools expanded rapidly and early, from Hi8 cameras in *Face of Our Fear* to the expansive possibilities of Final Cut Pro circa 2000, to mini-DV tape recordings, to the digital precision of an iPad toward the end of his life in 2012. Dwoskin also adjusted his process, often collecting material filmed by friends, partners, carers, and coworkers rather than remaining behind the camera.[7] His increased technological agility in the face of deteriorations in his physical health, the evolving shape of his disability rights activism and advocacy in the arts, and the emergence of a new film aesthetic in the late period of his work (1990–2012) are all part of a complex interplay of technological aptitudes and activist impulses.

They also reflect a shift in the focus and aesthetic form of Dwoskin's later autofictional and autobiographical films—*Trying to Kiss the Moon* (1994)*, Pain Is...* (1997), *Intoxicated by My Illness (Parts 1 & 2 "Intensive Care")* (2001), *Some Friends [Apart]* (2002), *The Sun and the Moon* (2008) and *Age Is …* (2012)—which regularly include sequences in Dwoskin's home in Brixton: the sky from his kitchen window, friends who visit, and his home studio with computers and editing suite—all testifying to the integration of home and technological world-making.

At a time when his health was starting to decline, Dwoskin's late period of work was often preoccupied with the spatial and sexual politics of the disabled body. *Intoxicated by My Illness* was controversial at the time of its release for its combination of footage of his periods of temporal and spatial stasis (represented via handheld digital-camera footage of Dwoskin's extended hospital stay in 2000–2001, including depictions of him while unconscious and intubated) with footage of his BDSM practices with sex workers at his home. Ultimately, in these later digital and cusp-of-digital works, Dwoskin's praxis and self-representation blur the logic of normatively embodied desire, illness, and subjectivity, making room for a counterclaim to able-bodied notions of temporality, spatial fluidity, and sexuality.

After 2001, Dwoskin's films reveal a technology of phenomenological exploration: what it is to be a desiring, activist, empathic, periodically well and unwell disabled man. Rather than tell another story of marginalization, Dwoskin's late films demonstrate his immensely adaptive technological and political capacity, examining the lived conditions of an aging body navigating both serious illness and the deteriorations in health linked to his experiences of physical impairment. In addition to *Intoxicated*, these films include *The Sun and the Moon*, *Phone Strip* (2007), and *Age Is...*, with their contemporary insights into living in the margins. *Age Is...* is a collage film developed collectively under the emergent politics of post-2010 austerity. Other films form a series of autobiographical, essayistic reflections, using found footage and home movies that focus on Dwoskin's family and friends, as in *Some Friends [Apart]*, *Grandpère's Pear* (2003), and *Mom* (2008). These later films are invested in a deep mode of knowledge production from the body, including his own as well as the bodies of those who surrounded Dwoskin during his life course, displaying an equally deep investment in his historical and contemporary world.

In his book *Crip Times: Disability, Globalization, and Resistance*, Robert McRuer specifically locates his analysis in the United Kingdom, where austerity politics and its eugenicist effects, as well as radical resistance from disability activists and organizations, have risen to prominence since 2010. This was indeed the country where Stephen Dwoskin made his home beginning in 1964 and in which he experienced ever more complicated and exhausting legal and social battles to receive care that adequately met his needs—the same country in which he died, in 2012, two years after a coalition government introduced savage cuts to health and social care. The crip times that McRuer describes carry "both harshness and potentiality, along with the simple fact that … crip radicalization is the direct result of an age of austerity."[8]

The Dwoskin archive, and especially his late filmography, offer extraordinary insights into both the politics of austerity and the lives of communities considered too

A late portrait of Stephen Dwoskin in his home studio in London, c. 2000s. Courtesy the Estate of Stephen Dwoskin and University of Reading, Special Collections.

marginal to protect. When Dwoskin wrote about disability in published articles or in his treatments for films made and unmade, he wrote about disabled experience as both consistently regular (in terms of the environments and interpersonal situations that regularly created difficulty, obstruction, and, on occasion, humor) and irregular (in relation to the strange hallucinogenic worlds of pain and acute illness), but he also emphasized the imaginative possibilities opened up by an attunement to these temporal shifts.

The strange, shifting temporalities of Dwoskin's work resonate with what disability scholars describe as "crip time." In writer Ellen Samuels's words:

> *Crip time is time travel*. Disability and illness have the power to extract us from linear, progressive time with its normative life stages and cast us into a wormhole of backward and forward acceleration, jerky stops and starts, tedious intervals and abrupt endings.[9]

The surreal nature of crip time, its capacity to create ruptures in the space-time continuum, as well as its latent politically radical potential, are all acutely presented in Dwoskin's filmmaking, especially *Intoxicated by My Illness*. Dwoskin was heavily influenced by surrealism and proto-surrealism, and the work of Alfred Jarry features prominently in his engagements with sexuality and the feminine. Although *Intoxicated*'s hallucinatory qualities may suggest a contemporary instantiation of surrealism, it also produces a very poignant phenomenology of the intensive care unit at the turn of the millennium—its sounds, noises, colors, and textures, all slowed down, repeated, and recycled through a range of digital editing techniques—as well as intense bursts of eroticism and sex acts through explicit sequences of BDSM sexual play back home at Dwoskin's residence. In connecting care (technological and human) in hospital settings to care in sexual settings, *Intoxicated* also reveals historic alliances between disabled people and sex workers in a way that strongly aligns with recent research on sexual citizenship and disability.[10]

This mode of deep, embodied knowledge, which evolved through Dwoskin's filmmaking practice, even when his health was extremely precarious, chimes with recent scholarship in feminist technology studies and critical disability studies—specifically, Aimi Hamraie and Kelly Fritsch's recent "Crip Technoscience Manifesto."[11] Their manifesto asserts the amplitude of "knowing-making" in disability communities, in advancing technological change with and for the individual, and in the collective power of those communities. This pragmatic epistemology of technoscience enables a retrospective analysis of Stephen Dwoskin's practices—in particular, his digital filmmaking.

It is in the Dwoskin archive, both physical and digital, that evidence presents itself for scrutiny as a form of crip technoscience. Data from Dwoskin's hard drives, predominantly from 2006 to 2012, has been recovered by deploying forensic tools to explore their metadata, such as time stamps for file saving and file types; types of files most regularly accessed and stored; even the structures, forms, and frequency of email contacts. Preliminary findings already provide insight into Dwoskin's creative processes as a digital artist.[12]

Sunburst data visualizations of the file structures of Dwoskin's hard drives and of Dwoskin's email networks as spheres of influence (including both those with whom he was in most regular correspondence and those on the peripheries of contact) provide a more comprehensive analysis of Dwoskin's interventions, which in turn might help better understand his processes as a crip technoscientific

agent who worked collaboratively and interdependently to gather and edit film material. Algorithmic content analysis has revealed some preliminary data on Dwoskin's preoccupations with the face and facial expression in *Age Is* . . . , his final, posthumously released film. Digital reconstructions of Dwoskin's workstation, designed by researchers at the University of Glasgow in collaboration with the Special Collections at the University of Reading, are beginning to unearth the complexity of Dwoskin's knowing-making in relation to his editing practices. Indeed, the archive itself—more specifically, the formation of the archive, which began with Dwoskin's safekeeping of the materials of his life and practice and ended with its cataloguing at the University of Reading—is a practice: a technology of knowing-making.

Dwoskin's paper archive, too, is rich in material insights regarding the interaction between technological distribution networks at film festivals and the logistical/technological accessibility requirements necessary for Dwoskin to travel with them. For example, a fax sent in advance of screenings of his *Behindert* and *Outside In* at the first Festival Europeo Cinema Handicap, held forty years ago in Turin, in December 1992, combines clarification of Dwoskin's transportation and accommodation requirements with information on the technological supports required for analog video and film copies of the films. [13]

Digitality and disability are closely affiliated structures for Dwoskin's creative process. The archive shows a clear transformation from his earlier techniques of advocacy and awareness raising in the public sphere, predominantly addressing a normatively able-bodied audience, toward an agile intertwining of digital networked technologies, crip cultural advocacy, and cinematic world-building. Dwoskin's late creative work thus retains aesthetic, social, and cultural influence in his wider environment, while also securing the specific poetics of his image making: a crip technoscientific project of historical importance.

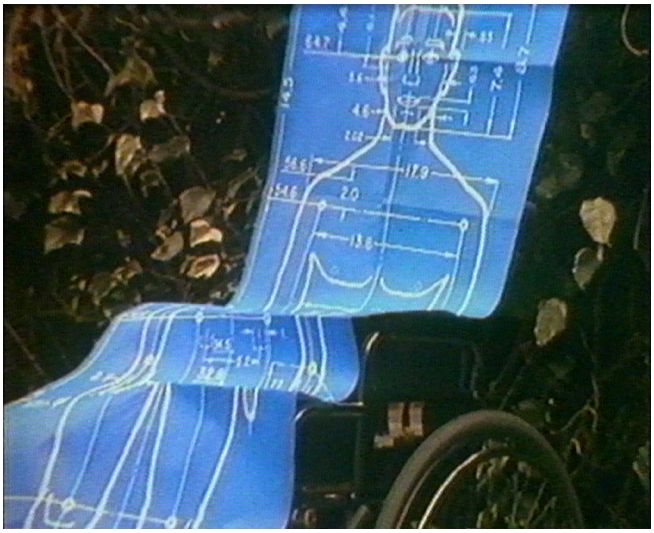
The entwined strands of digital agility, technoscientific adaptation, and the phenomenological explorations of desire, illness, and subjectivity in Dwoskin's work and archive comprise, I would suggest, a "backdated" model of the Crip Technoscience Manifesto upheld by Hamraie and Fritsch. In light of the temporal interruptions that crip time creates, willingly or not, in the linear fabric of capitalist time, it makes sense to rework those temporal loops, to better understand how digital filmmaking and technoscientific world building combine in Dwoskin's work.

And why not? As the late Tobin Siebers describes the term in his wonderfully careful work, "disability aesthetics" revise the temporal directions of histories of art, inflecting the present and the past in mutually reflexive relation.[14] Disability aesthetics respatialize the question of beauty: away from binary or exclusionary concepts of wholeness or perfection and into a holistic framework that claims fragmentation as wholeness, perfection as deformation. Disability aesthetics make strange the illusion of compulsory able-bodiedness—just as Dwoskin, in *Intoxicated by My Illness*, makes strange the illusion of health, the illusory distinction between erotics and care, and the illusory nature of able-bodied, "normate" time (to use Rosemarie Garland-Thompson's term).[15] Dwoskin's filmmaking can thus be seen as constituting both a crip technoscientific project and a model of disability aesthetics.

For Hamraie and Fritsch, crip technoscience combines "the productive and non-innocent entanglement of scientific knowing and technological making" found in feminist technology studies from thinkers such as Donna Haraway and Karen Barad with a "field of research and a practice of critical 'knowing-making' that "highlight[s] the skills, wisdom, resources, and hacks [that] disabled people utilize for navigating and altering inaccessible worlds."[16] In contrast to disability technoscience, with its tendency to focus on assistive technologies designed for disabled people by nondisabled developers, crip technoscience emphasizes "world-building and world-dismantling practices *by* and *with* disabled people and communities that respond to intersectional systems of power, privilege, and oppression."[17]

Hamraie and Fritsch use the term "non-innocent entanglement" to acknowledge technoscience's embedded relationships to the military-industrial complex and capitalist exploitation, but they advocate, following Haraway, for "modest witnessing" that understands the potential for complicity and acknowledges that no transformational process is frictionless.[18] Most importantly, they point out that "disabled peoples' maker practices have not yet been fully considered in the radical political history of disability studies."[19]

In *Face of Our Fear,* Dwoskin was already there: his voice-over discusses the formation of the "typical body," a structure widely adopted in design theory and influenced by industrial designers in the 1960s such as Henry Dreyfuss. In Dreyfuss's design manual *The Measure of Man*, anthropometrics (the use of measurement and percentiles of populations) were used to create design structures that were derived from the "average" body.[20] While this paradigm of design development accounted for distribution differences in populations, including child/adult, gender, and weight, it also presented significant problems for individual embodiment. Since Dreyfuss developed



A Dreyfuss blueprint of a "typical" human body draped over a wheelchair, in *Face of Our Fear*. Courtesy the Estate of Stephen Dwoskin/LUX.

these anthropometric models from US military and population data in the 1960s, his data did not account for ethnic, racial, or geopolitical diversity, or for the impact of global events—like war, famine, and global epidemics—on human bodies. While instances of impairment were acknowledged, they were also generalized and abstracted, and restricted to the use of wheelchairs, or perhaps crutches. The "typical body" substituted for real people, thereby avoiding distinctive and unique patterns of moving through the world. Designing from the template of the "typical body" outward thus assigned disabled or nonnormate bodies to the margins.

As Aimi Hamraie points out, "[F]lexible design for a range of users always referred to standardized forms of knowledge and conceptions of a vulnerable and manipulable body, whose disabilities required elimination through better environmental design."[21] Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell similarly demonstrate how the healthy, productive, environmentally unencumbered able body is aligned with models of neoliberal capital and nationalist body politics. Snyder and Mitchell specifically refer to "ablenationalism" as the "tactic of integrating a privileged minority at the expense of the further abjection of the many."[22]

Dwoskin does not simply identify models of ablenationalism in action, but uses cinematographic means to disrupt the normativities of built environments and engineering design. A short sequence in *Face of Our Fear* depicts travel down a constructed ramp, whose steep sides block from view the London street scene that surrounds it. The ramp is unpeopled: it is only when it reaches street level that an able-bodied person walks past the camera. These sequences are intercut with a paper blueprint of Dreyfuss's "typical" human male body draped over a wheelchair. The chair itself accommodates the blueprint poorly, not simply because of the paper's absence of joints or folds, but also because the outlined figure is clearly larger than the wheelchair's intended user. The historical design of adaptive technologies like the wheelchair still carries the traces of ablenationalist body normativity and its assumptions about the kind of body that should inhabit a chair—one deviant from the "typical body" in size, but paradoxically possessing enough postural strength to remain seated for hours, and certainly of sufficient wealth to acquire successive iterations of wheelchairs according to technological advancement and body and health changes. Dwoskin was tall, broad, and strong; he experienced significant back, shoulder, and digestive pain from the consequences of being folded into a chair insufficiently adapted for his needs.

Filmmaking is itself always a world-building project, given the ontologies and phenomenologies of film. Digital film is also embedded in knotty interactions between the military-industrial complex and models of capitalist exchange,[23] which makes its technologies ripe for intervention under the terms of crip technoscience. Media-arts technologies are highlighted by Hamraie and Fritsch, who cite US collectives like Sins Invalid and draw on the work of Mia Mingus and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha on "access intimacy" and collective access to describe collective and relational networks of activity with a liberatory focus.[24] While this essay is a necessarily brief assessment of the political and the experiential qualities of Dwoskin's films of the 1990s and early 2000s, I am reassured that crip technoscience, crip time(s), and disability aesthetics provide a countervailing evaluative force for experimental moving-image works like Dwoskin's.

A return to historiographies of disability and film is timely: the decade-long effects of austerity politics in the post-2008 era have unquestionably been compounded by the viral times of today. The impacts of COVID-19 have "been unequal, entrenching existing inequalities and widening others…. [T]he groups most likely to be affected by the expected rise in poverty include young people, ethnic minorities, and disabled people, who are already closest to the poverty line."[25] To that, add the effects of long COVID, the symptoms of postviral chronic illness, whereby "an estimated 1.1 million people in private households in the UK reported experiencing long COVID (symptoms persisting more than four weeks after the first suspected coronavirus … episode that are not explained by something else)."[26] With COVID in its third year of contagion, the global increase in people experiencing disability and living with chronic illness is likely to continue to expand.

For many more people, time is going to slow down, not accelerate. The tools and knowledge of disabled forebears are urgently required to navigate the difficulties of the now. By using the slow ungainliness of crip time to unravel what it is (and how) to be human under the biopolitical forces of ablenationalism, Dwoskin's films can be seen to embody crip time's rides and interruptions, not only by dint of will but also because there is no other option. In the form of crip technoscience, political resistance arises from within embodied experience. Presenting that experience on film as it is, entwined with art histories and contemporary politics as well as with the personal lived body, is a radical act.

Author's note

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Notes

1. David Curtis, *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), 249–50, http://books.google.com/books? id=qdNkAAAAMAAJ.
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3. Aimi Hamraie and Kelly Fritsch, "Crip Technoscience Manifesto," *Catalyst*: *Feminism*, *Theory, Technoscience* 5, no. 1 (2019): 12.
4. For example, see Jenny Morris, *Pride against Prejudice: Transforming Attitudes to Disability* (London: Women's Press, 1991); Tom Shakespeare, Kath Gillespie-Sells, and Dominic Davies, *The Sexual Politics of Disability: Untold Desires* (London: Cassell, 1996). For analyses of tropes of disability representation, see David T. Mitchell and Sharon L Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); and Mitchell and Snyder's earlier film *Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back* (1995)
5. In the United Kingdom, the Disability Discrimination Act was superseded by the Equality Act (2010).
6. Stephen Dwoskin, "Application for: Artsadmin Digital Media Fellowship for Disabled Artists 2003," 2003, Stephen Dwoskin Archive, Special Collections, University of Reading.
7. Adrian Martin, "Dwoskin, Centripetal and Centrifugal," *Screen* 57, no. 1 (2016): 74–79.
8. Robert McRuer, *Crip Times: Disability, Globalization, and Resistance* (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 30.
9. Ellen Samuels, "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2017), https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/5824.
10. There is a long-standing and well-documented relationship of mutual support between disabled people and sex workers. See, for instance, Julia Bahner, *Sexual Citizenship and Disability: Understanding Sexual Support in Policy, Practice and Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2019); and Shakespeare, Gillespie-Sells, and Davies, *Sexual Politics of Disability*.
11. Hamraie and Fritsch, "Crip Technoscience Manifesto."
12. Zoe Bartliff, Yunhyong Kim, Frank Hopfgartner, and Guy Baxter, "Leveraging Digital Forensics and Data Exploration to Understand the Creative Work of a Filmmaker: A Case Study of Stephen Dwoskin's Digital Archive,'" *Information Processing & Management* 57, no. 6 (November 2020): 102339, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2020.102339.
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14. Tobin Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.1134097.
15. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*, 20th anniv. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 8.
16. Hamraie and Fritsch, "Crip Technoscience Manifesto," citing Aimi Hamraie, *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 99.

17. Hamraie and Fritsch, 4–5.
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20. Henry Dreyfuss, *The Measure of Man : Human Factors in Design* (Whitney Library of Design: New York, 1960).
21. Hamraie, *Building Access*, 15.
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