

Hello my name is Miro Griffiths. I am a Disability Studies Scholar and an Executive Editor of the International Journal of Disability and Social Justice. This series is called Meet the Author. The series provides an opportunity to learn more about the work ideas and interests of authors who have published through our journal. In this episode Leah Burch discusses their publication titled "Everyday Hate and Affective Possibility Disabled People's Negotiations of Space, Place and Identity."

Let's start, **please can you introduce yourself?** So my name is Leah Burch, I'm a senior lecturer at Liverpool Hope University. Been here for a few years and I did my PhD and a Master's at the University of Leeds on the kind of broad topic of disability and everyday hate.

What was the inspiration for writing this article?

Some of the the inspiration behind the article actually kind of stems back to when I was doing the PHD research. I came became really interested in different effective responses to hate crime. And how these could be both positive and negative. So I you know wrote extensively about the harms of hate crimes. So those negative long-lasting impacts for victims, which I think is something that you know is much more well known and they're really important to you know keep recognising the different ways that they can be really limiting the way that they can be internalised as well. And actually they're really important in terms of evidencing, you know, for enhanced sentencing as well. But I think what I became really interested in as well is how people actually resist hate crimes within the context of their everyday lives. And these could be really, you know, mundane ways. It could be you know through acts of persistence, so you know continuing to go to certain spaces, or on the contrary to that, it could be actually avoiding certain spaces. So kind of taking control of the spaces that you occupy, when and where, for example. Using comedy to you know either directly challenge instances of everyday hate' or to you know help kind of prevent that internalisation of hate as well So there were lots of individual kind of acts of resistance that people shared with me, but also Collective. Collective assistance and that's kind of a primary focus in this article as well. Is actually how people that have got this shared experience of oppression kind of come together and collaborate in lots of different ways to support each other, to use those experiences to educate other people and to challenge the kind of underpinning attitudes that fuel hate crime towards disabled people

What was the most challenging part of writing this article?

I think one of the most challenging parts was probably bringing together the theoretical framework with the lived experiences that I was talking about. I drew a lot on Affect Theory and the work of Sarah Ahmed and Margaret Weatherell. And in my head I knew that Affects Theory was really, really relevant. And in particular concepts such as Affective Capacity, that actually, that was really relevant to how people were shaped by these experiences; and in terms of again kind of recognising those negative responses. That was you know quite a good fit, but it was probably making sense of Affect Theory ,in terms, of the more positive ways and that people can be shaped by their experiences. And then also go on to shape kinds of encounters that they

have in the future and the different spaces that they occupy. So in the article, I kind of came at a conclusion of Affective Possibility. To recognise that you know, those affects that people have response to hate crime, you know it's about possibility. We don't, we can't determine what those affects will be. But we can acknowledge that there might be harms and, you know, resistance as a response to that. But I think actually bringing you know, really putting that theoretical framework within context of the the lived experiences I think that took quite a while to do.

What do you hope readers will take away from this article?

I hope that readers could take away um an appreciation of the complexity of hate crime and and particularly those effects of hate crime. So again you know, we, we talk quite a lot about um the negative impacts and the harms of hate crime. And we really do need to keep talking about that, we need to keep recognising those harms. That's you know absolutely vital but also in, in encouraging people to think about how people resist those experiences; and how actually you can come to feel empowered by, you know, challenging that experience that someone's had.

And in particularly how people might work together to create these empowering safe spaces where people brought together by this shared lived experience of hate crime. That's something that I found really powerful when I was doing the PhD research; so I would do workshops with groups of disabled people and the just the sense of collectivity within that space was really you know brilliant to be part of. And it was just really obvious how, you know, strong and how powerful that Collective was, in being able to you know not just support one another, but also being able to work towards positive change.

What are you currently working on that do you think would be of interest to Disability Studies Scholars?

I'm actually working on a project that's really quite relevant to this article. So I've, I'm working on a project that brings together two different organisations within the Liverpool area so People's First Merseyside, which is a Disabled People's Organisation and the Comedy Trust. So it's part of a broader partnership between Liverpool Hope University and the Comedy Trust. Which is all about exploring the use of comedy as a tool for social change. Now the project that we're doing is about using comedy as a tool to raise awareness of disability hate crime and to also then challenge some of those negative attitudes that we know can fuel disability hate crime. So it's linked to the article in that it's, you know,

it's about that collective creative response to hate crime. It's about doing something that's

quite empowering quite positive on the back of something that is quite negative. So on the back of those those experiences of hate crime. So there's going to be, we've been doing a number

of workshops, there's going to be a performance on the 25th of October at the Royal Court in Liverpool. It's going to be absolutely brilliant, the you know the members are just hilarious. And

actually what it's really, I think is going to be really powerful in doing

is kind of bringing those the guards that people might have down and getting them to reflect upon their own assumptions, their own experiences. But doing it in a kind of humorous way. So kind of dealing with quite a gloomy topic but within, but using comedy to do that.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of Academia?

So I actually recently had a baby, so my baby boy, Seb is nearly nine months old now um so my hobbies just kind of exist around him. Just being able to you know watch him grow, watch him kind of interact with the things around him is probably my main hobby. I'm absolutely obsessed with him, so I don't really have much for life outside of work and him. That's kind of where I'm investing all my energies in. He's actually in the background here hehehe. So yeah that is probably my main interest and hobby at the moment.

I hope this episode was interesting, useful and enjoyable. Please remember all publications within the International Journal of Disability and Social Justice are open access. This means you can read them in full at no cost to you. Please visit the journal's website to find out more information about the Articles and issues we have published. You can search for the International Journal of Disability and Social Justice through online search engines such as Google or visit [www \[dot\] IJDSJ \[dot\]online](http://www.IJDSJonline). You are welcome to subscribe to our channel, so you can be kept updated about newly released episodes and content. Until next time, Goodbye.