Mara Mills and Rebecca Sanchez (Eds.), **Crip Authorship: Disability as Method**, New York: New York University Press, 2023, 384 pp., $35.00 (paperback).

Reviewed by
Kuansong Victor Zhuang
Nanyang Technological University
and
Wenqi Tan
The University of Sydney

What does it mean to write a book review? More precisely, how might we write a book review with disability as method? The form of the review necessitates particular structures and conventions. We write in English, in prose, and seek to follow specific aesthetics and conventions according to prescriptive publishing guidelines. We write, one of us in Singapore and the other in Australia, working collaboratively on Google Docs. When reviewing an edited collection, we might expect to spotlight only a number of chapters—and in this form, some authors are heard while others are silenced. How then can we write the book review in a way that shows we "get it"; that we recognize our location within these structures of authorship and commit to what disability scholars and activists would term *access intimacy*? And importantly, how do we do justice to reviewing an edited volume in a way that draws attention to the collective work, interdependencies, care, and labor that goes into its production? As junior scholars, reviewing does not "count" for promotion or tenure, or for getting the tenure-track position. Yet, we believe that it is crucial to highlight approaches to communication studies that critically view the highly normed practices, ideologies, and knowledges that permeate our field. From this vantage point, ***Crip Authorship: Disability as Method*** is an exemplar of how communication can be imagined differently when understood from crip and disability perspectives.
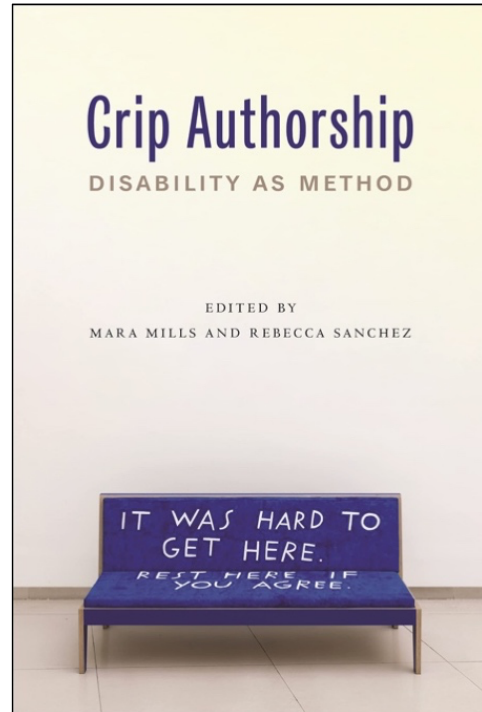
While *Crip Authorship* is not strictly located within communication studies, it exemplifies the field's productive intersections with critical disability work. *Crip Authorship* calls for us to shift our understanding of disability away from simply the object of study but rather to think with disability as a form of critical epistemology and methodology. The collection crips the structures encircling *and* contingent on authorship, the definitional bounds of authorship itself, and the precarious, ableist, and normative ideologies that inhabit communication practices. Moreover, *Crip Authorship* functions as a collective resistance to normative authorship through both its content and production. As pertinently highlighted in the introduction, edited collections are "often denigrated" (p. 14) by the academic hierarchy and the publishing industry (having us consider: what kinds of environments sustain or disable long-form writing and publishing?). We find it most significant when editors Mara Mills and Rebecca Sanchez write that "some of us are, and are not, *authors*" (p. 6). As they explain, in pursuing the standard legal publishing contract, not all contributors of *Crip Authorship* could be legally recognized

as "authors." *Crip Authorship* is thus a poignant and timely contribution to ongoing efforts to trouble normative conventions across some of the most fundamental modes of communication—writing and composition; genres and forms; publishing; media and technology; and research with/by/of disabled people.

The first section on writing emphasizes how authorship is not only located in a disabling and highly normed system but can be itself debilitating—and even more so across intersections of gender, race, and geographies. Each chapter demarcates the rigid boundaries of "what counts" as communication (writing), and by effect, what forms of expression cannot be contained in, expressed through, or transcribed by means of a written manuscript. This section locates writing as a communicative practice, with each chapter offering a distinct modality of crip(ped) communication. Writing is reoriented from the experiences of being adjunct (Mimi Khúc); chronic illness (Mel Y. Chen); perseveration/neurodivergence (M. Remi Yergeau); madness (La Marr Jurelle Bruce); as neurodivergent and developmentally disabled artists (Isolation Nation); and across the intersections of disability, race, and Latinx identities (Alexis Padilla). How disability can reimagine writing is perhaps most apparently typified by the chapter on plain language by Kelsie Acton. Written in 14-point font and the most commonly used words in the English language, Acton highlights how the ways we communicate in writing are already predicated on particular norms of reading and understanding.

The second section on research tackles the ideologies and precarities that echo throughout academia and offers key interventions into how we *do* research with/by/of disability in ways that respect disability rights. Communication scholars who work with disability will find it useful to consider the range of emancipatory methodologies available in research. Emily Lim Rogers spotlights what it means to do virtual ethnography in relation to disabled and chronically ill communities. Laura J. Wernick deploys community-based critical participatory action research as a way to challenge the bounds of who research belongs to and who should be considered the "author" in such research. Xuan Thuy Nguyen notes how disability research in the Global South is predicated on damage-centered narratives and emphasizes the importance of decolonizing these approaches. Other chapters offer critical perspectives on centering disability in research, from trans temporalities and futurities (Cameron Awkward-Rich), to research with, about, and in trauma (Laura Mauldin), to violence and injury in urban Chicago (Laurence Ralph), to feminist interdependencies (Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp), and to practices of care, yielding, and failure (Zoë H. Wool). The closing chapter of this section, Helen Selsdon's ruminations on creating the accessible, digital Helen Keller Archive, foregrounds how accessibility shapes who has the rights to research, knowledge, and information.

The third section brings attention to the genre and form of authorship, and specifically, how the ordering, appearance, and meanings of certain communication modes are themselves articulations of disability as method. Alison Kafer discusses the manifesto, noting that because of its incompleteness, it "provides a place to counter the erasure of some bodies from our collective futures, an erasure that makes possible the ongoing evisceration of bodies in the present" (p. 190). Jaipreet Virdi spotlights public scholarship as a means of enacting disability justice. Ellen Samuels locates the importance of autotheory in research in facilitating disabled people's "right to theorize our own experience" (p. 204). Other chapters center genres and forms that embody and are shaped by disabled experiences: life writing (Mohaiminul Islam and Ujjwal Jana); the music, media, culture, and politics of Krip-Hop Nation (Leroy F. Moore Jr. and Keith Jones); and verbal and nonverbal metaphors (Asa Ito).

Chapters in Section IV tackle publishing—how content (in this case, disability research) is made available for, communicated to, and valued by the public. Cynthia Wu discusses how, as a book series editor with Temple University Press (together with Julie Minich and Nirmala Erevelles), they center disability within their publishing practices. Kristen Bowen, Rachel Kuo, and Mara Mills critique the state of academic publishing in disability studies, unveiling the underrepresentation of scholarship by people of color. Teresa Blankmeyer Burke discusses what it means to undertake ASL-English bilingual publishing and how such work should be conducted. Robert McRuer highlights the importance of crip worldmaking, focusing on what *crip* offers as an analytical term in Latin America, alongside *disca*. Stephanie S. Rosen highlights how public library spaces and collections are infused with histories of ableism and eugenics, and how principles of disability justice are necessary for realizing libraries as sites of care and solidarity. The last chapter of this section by John Lee Clark reminds us of the structural limits of publishing and the privileging of written language through a vivid description of his protactile poem.

The fifth section rounds off the book by discussing media: how various forms of media—information and communication technologies, digital spaces, and "assistive technologies"—can be cripped or leveraged to enact disability justice. Aimi Hamraie discusses what it means to center disability, access, and crip community building in remote connections during the pandemic. Georgina Kleege gives thought to what fiction podcasts can offer to audio descriptions to move this communication and access practice toward "new possibilities of enjoyment" (p. 324). Bri M. continues this thread by focusing on how podcasts can enable disability rights and justice, told through the form of a transcript. Louise Hickman locates crip authorship within the practices and assemblages of Communication Access Realtime Translators. Lateef H. McLeod highlights the importance of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) mentors with lived experiences for building culture and community beneficial for AAC users. The final two chapters spotlight issues of the digital divide during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and the roles of disabled communities in advocating for access: among deaf organizations and individuals in Zimbabwe (Lovemore Chidemo, Agness Chindimba, and Onai Hara) and in the multimodal storytelling practices of indigenous communities in the United States (Jen Deerinwater).

In reading *Crip Authorship*, we were struck by the myriad of possible crip and disabled futures for communication studies—in how, where, and why we write, research, and publish—and were compelled to give pause to other highly normed communicative and creative practices. We thus return to our opening inquiry: What does it mean to "author" a book review with disability as method? In our "patchwork," "partial" (p. 5) process, we remained adherent to, though conscious of, certain normative conventions of the genre while seeking to resist others (for instance, prioritizing the naming of all contributors as an appreciation of their knowledge and labor). But we remain adamant that *Crip Authorship*, with all of its transgressive, nonlinear, digressive, messy, stuttering expressions, is the truest representation of the future(s) we all share.