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Toward a Crip Provenance: Centering disability in archives through its absence

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Cover Page Footnote

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TOWARD A CRIP PROVENANCE: CENTERING DISABILITY IN ARCHIVES THROUGH ITS ABSENCE

As I began archival research looking for traces of disabled people within the history of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (WCE), also known as the Chicago World's Fair, I was confronted not only with the lack of evidence of disabled people but also with the messiness of archives that impacted my ability to locate records. Marking four hundred years after Christopher Columbus's colonial voyages, the 1893 World's Fair brought millions of visitors to witness cultural, technological, and biological "wonders" from across the world. Not only would guests be mesmerized by animals such as the wooly mammoth and contemporary architectural feats such as the Ferris wheel, but they could also experience "living museums": exotified cultures and bodies on display.[1] Due to the WCE's heavy emphasis on displaying Indigenous and other non-Western cultures, it is cited as heavily influential to subsequent sideshows and other exhibition pedagogies of difference and deviant bodyminds, laying a foundation for following fairs, such as the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, to explicitly display disabled people.[2]

Disabled people, then, were impacted by the Chicago World's Fair through the ways the fair helped refine display techniques of disabled people and bodily difference, the ways showmen were influenced by the fair's methods of display, and the ways disabled people were explicitly featured in future fairs. However, it remains unclear if disabled people were displayed at this specific fair. This opacity instigated my archival research and subsequent frustration when encountering the messiness of records that might help me to better understand this history and if disabled people were involved.[3] Located at several different archives, the materials that document these histories were created by multiple people (tourists, exhibitors, museum curators, etc.), governing bodies, and entities. Materials are not only dispersed across different sites—all of which have varying levels of accessibility—but are also duplicated, organized according to different schemas, and described in different ways, with varying amounts of detail in finding aids. In other words, the documentation of these events is not in a single (or even a few) "clean" archive(s).

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[1] The Official Guide to the World's Columbian Exposition boasts about the central fairgrounds, the Midway Plaisance, which hosted a number of "living museums": "There are canoes in plenty, and at various points through the lagoons the curious visitor may occasionally see a stray Indian, in aboriginal costume, paddling among the electric launches and gondolas." What is more, guests could get a firsthand look at a "living example of the principal families of native American Indians, who have made their temporary home on the Fairgrounds, living in the exact way their forefathers lived before the white man invaded their hunting grounds." Seven members of the Kwakwaka'wakw from British Columbia lived in a reconstructed village at the fair, where visitors could witness "savage" cultural practices. The Native villages were not limited to the United States and Canada. Guests could look at "savage" cultures on display in villages or reconstructed scenes from around the world. *Official Guide to the World's Columbian Exposition in the City of Chicago . . . May 1 to October 26, 1893* (Chicago: Columbian Guide, 1893), 40; Raibmon, "Theatres of Contact," 57; Johnson, *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition*, 483.

[2] Trent, "Defectives at the World's Fair," 201.

[3] Looking for visible representations of disabled people in history *feels* complicated. As I was researching this history, I was also simultaneously questioning what exactly it was that I was looking for. As I have written elsewhere, "I think about the other records that are not identified as documenting disabled people; records of people who may not appear sick or disabled in legible ways; disabled people who subvert systems and avoid documentation; records that were never made about disabled people; and records that were not deemed worthy to be kept in an archives, all of which impact our access to these narratives." Brilmyer, "Towards Sickness," 32–33.

Confronting the reality of archival material—where materials are dispersed, duplicated, or absent—as well as the lack of archival documentation on disability, I began to think about what archives sometimes cannot give us and the frequency with which fonds are messy or incomplete. As an archival studies scholar, I am trained to think not only about the *contents* of the records—if and how I could perceive disabled people or concepts of disability—but also the *context* of records—how the decisions made in archives impact my experience of records. But what do we do when content is lacking or messy, or is messy in ways that might include wrong, inaccurate, or incomplete documentation? Drawing on archival and disability theories in response to this archival reality, I acknowledge the fragmented and incomplete nature of archives to develop a framework for contextualizing records in new ways to tell this history with disability at the center.

Archival concepts such as the archival bond, *respect des fonds*, provenance, and original order all give context to fonds—records that originate from the same source—by emphasizing the history of records and the decisions made that illuminate how they have arrived in an archive. The concept of the archival bond—what Luciana Duranti defines as "the network of relationships that each record has with the records belonging in the same aggregation"—gives records context and meaning through relationships.[4] Laura Millar defines *respect des fonds* as "the principle that the records of one particular creator are kept together, in their *original order*, as an organic unit. And that unit was defined by its *provenance:* the person or persons, family or families, and corporate body or bodies that created and/or accumulated and used records."[5] Considering the archival bond, provenance, *respect des fonds,* and original order, archivists pay close attention to the history of a record in relation to a fonds, archival processes, and "the development of the activity in which the document participates."[6] So in tracing the history of the WCE I also trace the history of these records—who created them, where they moved, how they came to be where they are today—to draw attention to the archival decision-making that influences how I might understand this history. In confronting this archival reality, I describe the messiness of archival material and the impossibility of constructing a straightforward provenance. However, what this archival reality—or realities—does is serve as a foundation for redefining archival approaches to telling history. As I describe below, it was *because* these materials were dispersed, duplicated, and processed in different ways that I could perceive new relationships of disability to archives and grapple with what might never have been a "complete picture" of disabled people in history.

While archivists have long been aware of the fragmented nature of the fonds, this article draws attention to how archivists may still work to reconcile records that have been moved, rearranged, and dispersed in order to reconstruct the former "whole."[7] Through an attention to such rhetorics, I highlight the curative and rehabilitative orientations of provenance. Put in conversation with disability studies scholarship—which critiques rehabilitating, curing, and restoring—the concept of provenance can be radically refigured, placing less emphasis on "fixing" or reconstructing a fonds (which might have never existed in the first place), and instead addressing the reality of archival material to acknowledge the *new* relationships created *because* they are always already

[4] Duranti, "The Archival Bond"; Society of American Archivists, "Archival Bond."
[5] Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance," 4.
[6] Duranti, "The Archival Bond," 217.
[7] For example, see Horsman, "The Last Dance of the Phoenix"; Lodolini, "The War of Independence of Archivists"; MacNeil, "Archivalterity"; Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance"; and Muller et al., *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*.

fragmented. With this critical lens, this article lays the theoretical scaffolding of a *crip provenance:* a method of resisting a rehabilitative orientation to fonds—trying to reconstruct a straightforward, "clean" archive—by instead meeting archival materials where they are at. Acknowledging archival realities places focus on the new relationships that are established because they are always already dispersed, duplicated, and incomplete, which can facilitate an expansive re-reading of archival absences, partialities, inaccuracies, and biases. Through this lens, I bring together different conversations on relationality—both of archives and disability—in order to expand and reorient provenance, turn it upside down, and resist the normative forms of lineage, hierarchy, ownership, attribution, or authorship that traditional provenance offers.[8] However, I choose to continue to use the word "provenance" to describe this orientation to archival context as a way to build on more expansive notions of provenance and continue to speak to the archival communities where this concept can be applied.

I intentionally use the word "crip," which is defined by Carrie Sandahl as "cripple, like queer is fluid and ever-changing, claimed by those whom it did not originally define."[9] Like the term "queer," "crip" has been reclaimed as a political identity by many disabled people. Nancy Mairs saliently states, "People—crippled or not—wince at the word 'crippled' as they do not at 'handicapped' or 'disabled.' Perhaps I want them to wince."[10] Eli Clare likewise emphasizes this language as "words to shock, words to infuse with pride and self-love, words to resist internalized hatred, words to help forge a politics."[11] My choice to think through the subtleties of disabled people in history is one based in crip theory, which is informed through feminist epistemologies, queer theoretical approaches, and the ways in which other identities intersect and complicate disability.[12] Such a crip theoretical approach to historical materials allows me to think through disability in history where disability intersects with other identities that complicate disabled experiences, where disability might not be named, someone might not identify as disabled but still be impacted by forms of ableism, or disability might be absent altogether.[13]

In this article, I first describe an overview of the records that document the history of the WCE, drawing attention to the varying provenance of the materials and the archives in which they were found. Then I describe how concepts such as provenance, *respect des fonds,* and the archival bond have historically maintained structures of power while simultaneously adding context to records—where they have been and how they have been moved. Next, by foregrounding disability studies literature and paralleling this archival reality, I build on current critiques of provenance and challenge rehabilitative orientations to restoring a fonds. Through this framework, I build toward a *crip provenance*, which meets records where they are at and acknowledges all of the new connections and relations that are created because records are dispersed, duplicated, and partial.

[8] For example, see Anderson and Christen, "Decolonizing Attribution."
[9] Sandahl, "Queering the Crip or Cripping the Queer?" 27.
[10] Mairs, *Plaintext*, 9.
[11] Clare, Spade, and Morales, *Exile and Pride*, 84
[12] McRuer, *Crip Theory;* Schalk, "Critical Disability Studies as Methodology."
[13] Alison Kafer expands a crip theoretical approach to include "those who lack a 'proper' (read: medically acceptable, doctor-provided, and insurer-approved) diagnosis for their symptoms," as well as "people identifying with disability and lacking not only a diagnosis but any 'symptoms' of impairment." Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 12–13.

In doing this work, I do my best in describing the history of the WCE and the records that document it, but this is in no way a complete or objective picture. Instead, I hold the many levels of impossibility of this project at the fore—to grapple with archival erasure is to simultaneously attempt to tell an impossible history while realizing that such efforts will never be complete.[14] Furthermore, this article does not necessarily critique the work of the many archivists, librarians, collections assistants, and other record-keepers at the archives in which the WCE records are currently kept. In fact, it is because of their knowledge, conversations, and generosity that much of this work is possible. Thus, in describing the complex, opaque, and sometimes unknown provenance of the WCE records, I critique established notions of provenance and ground it within the reality of archival work and the difficulties of grappling with provenance.

Records' Reality

I want to first address the reality of the records that document the history of the WCE as a way to illustrate how provenance can or cannot be known in different ways. Archival theory is formed around the practices and policies of archives and archivists—theory and practice are deeply intertwined. Thus, turning to the reality of these records not only grounds the theory I build in practice but also helps me demonstrate that critiquing traditional approaches to provenance might highlight the inevitabilities of archival research and archival work. Tracing the history of the records that document the WCE proved to be a tricky endeavor: records were created by multiple individuals, organizations, or governing bodies; they were duplicated for different purposes; and they were dispersed across different archives with various levels of description as well as documentation of their individual histories. Furthermore, my description of this archival reality is mediated not only through my witnessing records at multiple archives—addressing their *contents*—but also through generous conversations with archivists, who recalled and investigated institutional memory and gave me access to provenance files, facilitating and participating in my understanding of their *context*. In addressing the history of these records, I demonstrate that traditional provenance might be incommensurate with some archival realities—especially around disability—where content and context are often incomplete, and therefore spurring a major question: "How can we tell a history of disability when there is little or no archival evidence or when the evidence that is presented is harmful, violent, or incomplete?"

The materials documenting the WCE were created by a wide array of individuals, organizations, and governing bodies. Visitors to the fair took photographs, sent postcards, and journaled about their experiences at the fair and created multiple types of documentation of their experiences. For example, governing bodies such as the Women's Board documented their exhibits, finances, and participation within the aspects of the fair that they were involved in, and individuals like amateur photographers took photos of exhibits. Charles Dudley Arnold, hired by the fair's director of works, Daniel H. Burnham, was the official photographer of the fair. Arnold documented many buildings, exteriors, iconic structures and sculptures, and waterways through the fair's construction, opening, and closing. These photographs compliment the many maps, brochures, and advertisements that were also produced for the WCE. This historic event was recorded through different lenses, from individuals who had the financial means to photograph their experiences,

[14] This stance is influenced by Emily Drabinski's foundational work of using queer theory to destabilize classification and cataloging systems that disrupt stagnant notions of order, language, and therefore history. Drabinski, "Queering the Catalog."

exhibitors who itemized expenses, and the World's Columbian Exposition Commission, who planned, organized, and documented the fair. Much of the WCE documentation does not exist in singularity; many records were reproduced for multiple purposes, and various people and organizations documented similar aspects, creating almost indistinguishable records. For example, some visitor photographs I looked at were almost identical to those taken by Arnold.

After the fair, fonds were divided, often (but not always) by topic and creator, and materials deemed valuable were accessioned into different archives, libraries, and special collections. Yet addressing the physical location and provenance of fonds created around the WCE is an almost impossible task—even with the extensive knowledge of the archivists, librarians, and collections staff who helped me. Currently, the records that document the fair and the ways it led to the formation of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History are located in various repositories. While I visited seven repositories in Los Angeles and Chicago, several other archives located throughout the United States also contain records on the WCE—arguably too many for one person (namely, one Disabled graduate student who financially and physically could not travel multiple times to multiple cities in the process of writing a dissertation) to visit. Through looking at documentation, personal papers, and provenance files as well as through generous conversations with multiple archivists, I gained a partial understanding of which records went where. Some fonds, such as Arnold's photographs, are dispersed across multiple archives: I looked at hundreds (if not thousands) of his photographs as part of the "Charles Dudley Arnold Photographic Collection" at the Chicago History Museum Research Center and the "C. D. Arnold Photographic Collection" at the Harold Washington Library Special Collections, also in Chicago. Duplicate or similar collections are also housed in the Art Institute of Chicago Archives, University of Chicago Photographic Archives, and Columbia University Libraries Archival Collections in New York, not to mention as part of books, printed as postcards, and duplicated as illustrations elsewhere.

Other creators' papers and personal collections were designated to specific archives based on their profession. For example, the Art Institute of Chicago has much of the architectural- and art-related materials, such as Burnham's papers, which documented some of the WCE buildings as well as his other architectural endeavors. The John Crerar Library, located at the University of Chicago, is the repository for many of the scientific publications, whereas the Chicago Public Library houses materials for public library functions including publications for public use, along with ephemera, which are housed in the Harold Washington Library Special Collections. The Newberry Library was designated for most of the humanities-related materials such as "literary, musical and dramatic history, publishers' and literary reviews and printing," which I learned through provenance files and letters among librarians, archivists, and other record-keepers. Additionally, there are a number of other libraries, archives, and special collections that store individual records, fonds, papers, and ephemera documenting the WCE—such as the Field Museum Library and Archives, the University of California Los Angeles Library Special Collections, the Seaver Center for Western History Research at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, and the University of California San Diego Special Collections and Archives, to name a few—much of which was donated by individuals but others whose origins are unknown to me at this time.

Addressing how all of these records are organized and described is a completely other overwhelming undertaking. Some fonds were kept together as they moved to different archives, while many others were divided or assembled in "artificial collections," often by the topic of the

WCE. These varying organizing schemas highlight the different levels of documentation of provenance: what was originally documented and how records moved, traveled, and were dispersed, discarded, and rearranged. Given this, the materials that represent the WCE have differing levels of accessibility and transparency. Currently, the Field Museum's archival material is documented in a spreadsheet that is not publicly available. Archivist Armand Esai told me he uses "minimal description in an excel spreadsheet" using MARC categories to document the archives' holdings. He, along with Museum Librarian Gretchen Rings and other staff, interns, visiting researchers, and volunteers, also work to generate finding aids, some of which are available online. Other archives that I visited, such as the Chicago History Museum Research Center Archives, have robust online finding aids and databases, documenting some fonds at item-level and others at fonds-level. Although I could access much of this material—through knowledge of navigating online resources, finding aids, and other archival processes—I wonder about all that I haven't. Conducting this research only drew my attention to the archives I have not visited because they *seemed* to only have duplicates of records I have already looked at; because they only have a few folders, which did not justify long-distance travel; or because there is no online documentation of their holdings.

In describing these archival realities, I am doing my best to retell the messiness—and overwhelm—that I experienced in researching this history, while also trying to recount it from my notes, photographs, emails, and memory. It is a flurry of records, stories, provenance files, follow-up emails, rumors, institutional memories, and, importantly, absences. Recognizing the many people, organizations, and bodies that produced, selected, described, organized, and accessed records highlights a constellation of decision-making that impacts and shapes history as well as how I understand it. Moreover, it emphasizes the ways that records are processed at different levels by different people with different values and experiences that they bring to archival materials.[15] And, as María Montenegro complicates, archival displacement is not only the way that records are physically moved or dis*place*d but also how colonial endeavors can enact discursive displacements: "displacements of purpose, use and intention, interpretation, value, and meaning."[16] Therefore, in thinking of tracing a history of disability among these documents, I center the history of these records and next turn to how archivists have grappled with provenance, give records context, and, by attending to records' movements, give new contexts and understanding to materials.

Archival Context and Provenance

I want to delve a little deeper into how archival scholars have defined and utilize provenance as a way to illustrate the history of a record's creation and use over time. Against the background of the archival realities I have already outlined in the context of researching the WCE, I surface the undertones to restore provenance—a desire for a whole, complete historical picture—which is in

[15] This has been described by Ricardo Punzalan as "the complicated nature of dispersed collections." Punzalan, "Archival Diasporas," 327.

[16] Through working with the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians' petition for federal recognition, Montenegro highlights the spatial, temporal, and tribal specificities that illustrate the impacts of archival displacement, stating, "The tensions and contradictions concerning the original intention and context of creation—or provenance—and the tribal-led re-placements of discursive archival displacements—are represented by the many ways in which petitioning tribes are using evidence today." Montenegro, "Re-Placing Evidence."

stark contrast to these (and many) archival realities, when provenance is messy, partial, incomplete, or nonexistent.

At the present moment, as James Lowry highlights, archival theory is "a theory that privileges wholeness," where many work to reconcile how records have been moved, rearranged, and dispersed to reconstruct a fonds. He continues, "This concern for wholeness stems from the fact that archives tell stories through their forms, structures and relations."[17] Along these lines, much literature on provenance carries an undertone that emphasizes original order or an original fonds, a desire for a whole. David B. Gracy echoes that archivists still tend to "lean toward 'restoration' work, toward maintaining, or reestablishing, the files as closely as possible to the order in which they were kept by the creator," giving context to materials to better understand history.[18] Paralleling the work of archivists and archaeologists, Elio Lodolini draws attention to the ways in which reconstructing original order provides "perfect and complete view of the world, period."[19] Laura Millar, while critical of the ability for archivists to restore a fonds "that can never exist," still places emphasis on archival material as the "remains or records of all records created, accumulated, or used by someone. They are the residue, the fragments that have been kept," which gestures at a former complete fonds that once was.[20]

Provenance can promote an orientation toward such a former whole through principles such as *respect des fonds* and original order, which remain central to archival theory and practice. Luke Gilliland-Swetland highlights how advocates for provenance often believe it to be an "'objective' alternative method of description, based upon arrangement, in contrast to the 'subjective' classification schemes."[21] Yet, by challenging the filiopietistic aspects of provenance and original order, scholars have shown how provenance can benefit the archival profession because it foregrounds the *context* of records. Heather MacNeil, for one, argues that "'original order' is simply one of many possible orders a body of records will have over time and, therefore, its privileged status needs to be reconsidered."[22] Emphasizing a "vision of provenance and community that seeks, weighs, and accommodates all the voices of a society," Jeannette Allis Bastian transforms provenance into a tool for community inclusion.[23] Joel Wurl highlights ethnicity as social, relational, dynamic, and mutable—not predetermined or static—which produces a sort of "cultural provenance." Through this lens, custodianship is replaced by stewardship, where archival material is "viewed less as property and more as cultural asset, jointly

[17] James Lowry, "Introduction: Displaced Archives," in Lowry, ed., *Displaced Archives*, 1–9.

[18] Gracy, *Archives and Manuscripts*.

[19] Lodolini, "The War of Independence of Archivists."

[20] Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance," 7. Historically, concepts such as provenance and original order have been constructed to objectively preserve context, evidenced by writings such as the Dutch Manual of 1898 (Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*) and Sir Hilary Jenkinson's *Manual of Archival Administration*, among others. Much of this literature illustrates processes such as provenance and original order as apolitical, where an archivist, unbiased, can make the "right" decisions for records and "ensures that *relevant* documentation survives." Greene, "A Critique of Social Justice as an Archival Imperative," 328; emphasis added. For a historical tracing of provenance, see "Horsman, "The Last Dance of the Phoenix"; Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration;* Norton, *Norton on Archives;* and Schellenberg, *Modern Archives Principles and Techniques*.

[21] Gilliland-Swetland, "The Provenance of a Profession," 161.

[22] MacNeil, "Archivalterity," 24.

[23] Bastian, "Reading Colonial Records through an Archival Lens," 269.

held and invested in by the archive and the community of origin."[24] Along these same lines, Chris Hurley proposes "parallel provenance," where two different claims of the origins of records can be held in tension: one tracing back to colonizers who created the records and one that traces the colonized subjects; in tandem, these claims work together to recognize and complicate history.[25] Correspondingly, Tom Nesmith conceptualizes the "history of the record" as central to provenance as well as the notion of "societal provenance," where "people play a role in *causing* the record we see today to *exist*. Their actions all have societal drivers, contexts and impacts as well."[26] Extending these approaches, Jessica M. Lapp proposes the concept of "provenancial fabulation" as a means of contending with the imaginative and fabulatory acts of records creation occurring in digital archives of feminist materials. Drawing from Saidiya Hartman's "critical fabulation" and Donna Haraway's "speculative fabulation," provenancial fabulation accounts for a multiplicity of record creating contexts and plays with the spatial and temporal boundaries of records and archives.[27] These concepts of provenance each broaden thinking about the context of records and how multiplying contexts can facilitate reckoning with the past.

Expanding provenance facilitates what is considered when thinking about the history of a record—parallel, secondary, imagined, and multiple histories. Yet, scholars have been critical of locating, restoring, and preserving the original organizational structure of a fonds. Jarrett M. Drake, for one, critiques the ways in which archival processes such as provenance are never neutral and risk the preservation of harmful structures. He illuminates provenance as "a blunt, unforgiving, and impatient object that has a predetermined if not precarious path . . . that thrives with the presence of a clear creator or ownership of records and with a hierarchical relationship between entities, both of which reflect the bureaucratic and corporate needs of the Western colonial, capitalist, and imperialist regimes in which archivists have most adhered to the principle."[28] Provenance, as Drake critiques, influences archival descriptions, and colonial, patriarchal, and Western ideals are thus perpetuated instead of addressed. In other words, the original order, provenance, and foundational language of a fonds—developed to serve particular purposes (usually for the benefit of those who have historically had the power to create, preserve, and organize records)—if not addressed, risk merely perpetuating power inequities.

Building off of these critiques, I am skeptical of working toward something that may not only risk reproducing and reinforcing historical power inequities but also not even be possible. While looking at the archival realities of the WCE records, the provenance of different fonds was not always known. Sometimes the provenance of a record was murky, vague, or described (and traced) through multiple letters among record-keepers. For example, Johanna Russ, senior archival specialist at the Harold Washington Library Special Collections, part of Chicago Public Library, gave me access to provenance files for some of the WCE collection, a resource that is usually not available to researchers. Through these provenance files—as well as letters among archivists, secretaries, and the director of the WCE located at both the Special Collections and the Newberry Library—I saw how some WCE materials were designated to go to the Chicago Public Library but

[24] Wurl, "Ethnicity as Provenance," 72.
[25] Hurley, "Parallel Provenance, Part 2," 52.
[26] Nesmith, *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance;* Nesmith, "What's History Got to Do with It?"; Nesmith, "The Concept of Societal Provenance," 359.
[27] Lapp, "'The Only Way We Knew How.'"
[28] Drake, "RadTech Meets RadArch."

then ended up housed in the Chicago History Museum. In other instances, the provenance of a record was constructed through a combination of institutional memory and provenance records. When I asked about the provenance of the Olson-Moore lantern slide collection at the Chicago History Museum Research Center, a fonds that contained WCE images, Reference Librarian Lesley Martin investigated. She consulted with the registrar and dug into electronic and paper records to discover that the Olson-Moore collection was two separate donations, one from a Mae Olson in 1966 and the other from a Tom Moore in 1973. Although deeded at the time of donation, a unique accession number was not assigned until 1987, when these two collections of similar materials were merged and assigned a single accession number, a decision, she noted, "that our current registrar was surprised by—definitely not how this would be handled now." Fortunately, the original provenance of who donated which materials was retained in the records. However, although I sometimes gained access to provenance files that depicted which materials were donated, purchased, or accessioned, at other times the provenance of a fonds was only known through institutional memory, rumors, or not at all.

Critiquing Provenance and the Desire for a Whole

While provenance, when known, can provide context and history surrounding a fonds, provenance can also be messy, partial, incomplete, or nonexistent. Building on Drake's critique, I grapple with this reality and ask not only "What is it we are restoring?" but also "Can a fonds even be restored?" or "Was it ever a whole fonds in the first place?" With this critique in mind, I want to train a critical lens on the *directionality* of provenance and the imagined former whole fonds. By focusing on archival metaphors that draw on bodily experience, I bring in disability studies scholarship to talk about orientations to fixing and curing. By drawing such parallels, I seek to underscore disability studies' productive notions of relationality and then return to provenance to highlight that when emphasis is placed on restoring a former whole, archivists may overlook the impossible: a "complete" fonds may have never existed. When the focus rests on working toward restoring provenance, other ways of contextualizing records might be overlooked, including those that might surface new historical narratives.

Drawing attention to incompleteness, James Lowry begins the introduction to the book *Displaced Archives* by stating, "Archivists speak about the archives as a *body*—a corpus of records." He continues, "From this perspective, the displacement of archives can be conceived of as the *disfiguration* of an organic whole—the removal of a body part."[29] Jessica Lapp highlights how "archivists are forever encountering bodies: bodies of records, bodies of knowledge, the disintegrating bodies of silverfish, bodily matter, bodily impressions, researchers, colleagues, volunteers, managers, rodents."[30] Similarly, Jamie A. Lee imagines archives "as a body (and multiple bodies) of knowledge that, like the human body, is multiply situated with regard to identities, technologies, representations and timescapes." This metaphor functions for Lee to think about archival materials like bodies as they "respond, shift, change, engage and become again and again."[31] Similarly considering actual bodies and bodily metaphors of archives, Zeb Tortorici proposes that "we think metaphorically about archiving as a mode of digestion," whereby we consume archival materials in a similar manner to how we consume "bodies [documented within

[29] James Lowry, "Introduction: Displaced Archives," in Lowry, ed., *Displaced Archives*, 1; emphasis added.
[30] Lapp, "'Handmaidens of History,'" 225.
[31] Lee, "Be/Longing in the Archival Body," 38, 40.

records], emissions, and secretions of humans."[32] And Laura Millar uses the term "dismembered fonds" to emphasize the remnants of a whole archival corpus.[33] While I am critical of this metaphoric use of archives as bodies, it does open space for me to bring in disability studies and complex ways of relating to bodyminds.[34] Sami Schalk, critical of disability as a metaphor, highlights the importance of "the reading of disability metaphors as having multiple literal and figurative meanings, and a crip theoretical expansion of the category of disability as a material and discursive concept."[35] Drawing attention to "archives as a body" facilitates a turn toward disability studies, where I can unpack the concepts of "wholeness" and "rehabilitation," as well as recenter the material realities of disabled people.

Many disability scholars are critical of the prominent orientation toward disabled bodyminds, whereby disability is simplified to a stagnant, medical "problem" with a person, also known as the medical model of disability.[36] Simi Linton states that "the medicalization of disability casts human variation as deviance from the norm, as pathological condition, as deficit, and, significantly, as an individual burden and personal tragedy."[37] When simplified, medicalized, and pathologized as a "problem" or "deficiency," disability can then be met with medicalized responses in an effort to eliminate difference, to rehabilitate and normalize bodyminds. Critical of this stance toward disability, disability studies trains a critical lens on notions of rehabilitation, fixing, and cure. Eli Clare, for one, reflects a sentiment about how people respond to their cerebral palsy, stating how "[people] assume me unnatural, want to make me normal, take for granted the need and desire for cure."[38] Many have pointed out that disabled people may not always desire cures. Describing being at the margins, Mia Mingus states, "I love living out there. There are amazing things and people out there. And it shouldn't be that that's the only place where we can be whole."[39] Rosemarie Garland-Thomson even makes the case for conserving disability, describing "what disabled people-as-they-are contribute to our shared world. . . . The generative work of disability and people with disabilities through their presence in the world . . . refuses the dominant understanding of disability as a deficit to be tolerated and protected and seeks to bring forward the benefit disability brings to the human community."[40] In other words, eliminating disability is not necessarily a desirable goal, which unsettles, as Alison Kafer describes, "this belief that we all desire the same futures."[41] Such works highlight that disabled people may not desire to be fixed; do not need to disavow, rise above, or overcome difference; and moreover may find identity, community, pleasure, and activism in being disabled.

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[32] Tortorici, "Visceral Archives of the Body Consuming the Dead, Digesting the Divine."

[33] Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance," 7.

[34] The use of disability and sickness as metaphors have been critiqued by scholars such as Susan Sontag, Sami Schalk, and myself in order to show how those metaphors both distort lived experiences and reinforce stereotypes of sick and disabled people. Brilmyer, "Towards Sickness"; Schalk, "Interpreting Disability Metaphor"; Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*.

[35] Schalk, "Interpreting Disability Metaphor."

[36] For a longer description of the medical, social, and political/relational models of disability and how they have evolved, see Brilmyer, "Archival Assemblages."

[37] Linton, *Claiming Disability*, 11.

[38] Clare, "Notes on Natural Worlds, Disabled Bodies, and a Politics of Cure," 245.

[39] Mingus, "'Disability Justice' Is Simply Another Term for Love."

[40] Garland-Thomson, "The Case for Conserving Disability," 343.

[41] Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 3.

The rehabilitation of disabled bodyminds, additionally, can be harmful. In their book *Brilliant Imperfection*, Clare highlights the complexity of rehabilitative rhetorics: "Cure saves lives; cure manipulates lives; cure prioritizes some lives over others; cure makes profits; cure justifies violence; cure promises resolution to body-mind loss."[42] Rehabilitation is accessible to those who have financial means and produces profits for medical and pharmaceutical industries who promise the normalization of bodyminds. Eunjung Kim argues that "what is problematic in the drive for medical cure is its narrow, simple focus on the gains and benefits that cure may bring, disregarding its associated harms, risks, and disenabling effects. It also closes off ways to support, in the present, 'untreated' and 'incurable' lives, that is, people who have a disability or an illness, as well as people who refuse or cannot afford treatments." Kim identifies how the endeavor for a cure can enact harm: "Cure carries significant risk of unwanted changes or even death."[43] Rehabilitative rhetorics cast those who do not want or cannot access cures in a negative light, and the very act of curing or fixing can enact its own harm.

While critiquing rehabilitative rhetorics of disability, Clare draws attention to disabled bodyminds, which not only do not always desire a cure but also might not have ever been nondisabled in the first place. Therefore, rehabilitation—"the regaining of skills and abilities that have been lost or impaired"—is not possible "because an original nondisabled state of being doesn't exist." Clare centers their own narrative in how there may never have been a whole, nondisabled bodymind to return to, emphasizing, "First, cure requires damage, locating the harm entirely within individual human body-minds, operating as if each person were their own ecosystem. Second, it grounds itself in an original state of being, relying on a belief that what existed before is superior to what exists currently. And finally, it seeks to return what is damaged to that former state."[44]

Along these lines, Kim identifies a similar direction, that "cure keeps its place as a destination at which one can never arrive."[45] Through a critical attention to the nuances of cure and rehabilitation—that may not be desired, may enact harm, and may not even be possible—disability studies provides frameworks for unsettling assumed desires, orientations, and rhetorics around incompleteness. Drawing attention to a "whole" that might never have existed—that might not be desired—facilitates a refusal of curative return. It decenters focusing on what *might* have existed before and what *could* be restored today in favor of a fragmented present that facilitates an opening toward new possibilities.

Returning to thinking about "archives as a body" and the "dismembered fonds" through this disability studies lens first echoes critiques of traditional provenance as upholding historic inequities. Drake emphasizes the risk of provenance reflecting and maintaining colonial, capitalist, and imperialist regimes, enacting harm for those who are devalued by such systems.[46] Just as disabled people may not desire a cure, many historically marginalized and minoritized communities may not benefit from restoring or maintaining the provenance of a fonds. Kim notes how "cure is always a multifaceted negotiation, often enabling and disabling at the same time, and

[42] Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*, xvi.
[43] Kim, *Curative Violence*, 7, 13.
[44] Ibid., 8; Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*, 15.
[45] Kim, *Curative Violence*, 9.
[46] Drake, "RadTech Meets RadArch."

may be accompanied by pain, loss, or death."[47] Putting these critiques in conversation with archival material and historical hierarchies highlights how traditional provenance, and a rhetoric of restoration and original order, can both maintain particular perspectives within archival material and actively cause harm—to those whose worldviews records do not reflect.

Second, disability studies critiques of restoring emphasize the impossibility of restoring a fonds because records are lost, moved, or never selected to be in an archive. In addition to pointing out the fragmented nature of archives, some scholars have drawn attention to the impossibility of restoring a complete fonds.[48] Millar, for one, articulates, "The intellectual reality of provenance and the physical reality of the records are not equal. One body of records can derive from many creators, and one creator can leave records in many physical locations. Provenance and the fonds are not the same, nor do they represent a constant, one-to-one relationship." The idea that all records that originate from the same source should be kept in the same place is "unreasonable, impractical, and unrealistic" because they can be lost, stolen, or destroyed, and do not enter an archive for various reasons.[49]

The records documenting the WCE, created by multiple people and entities, kept or discarded for different reasons, echo these sentiments. Their multiplicity and partialities highlight how multiple people and entities can create records around a single event, an impossible kaleidoscope of materials, perspectives, and absences. As records were created, they were dispersed across different entities—visitors, photographers, exhibitors, architects, and so on—and they continued to move across space and time, associated with individuals' personal papers, governing boards, and eventually archives.

This case study emphasizes the impossibility of restoring a fonds that was never whole in the first place. Just as Clare demonstrates that their bodymind was never not disabled, so too can we understand archival materials as always already incomplete. Artificial collections, such as the "World's Columbian Exposition Ephemera Collection" at the Harold Washington Library Special Collections, contain maps and other ephemera from the fair, many of which came from different sources and some of which have unknown authors, histories, and provenance. These records illustrate how restoring traditional provenance, or reconstructing a history of a record, may not be possible because of a range of complicating factors including the incorporation of individual records from different creators, the dispersion of records, and incomplete histories of creation and use over time. Drawing from ongoing critiques of provenance, which position provenance and its attending characteristics as maintaining and reifying traditional inequities, and paralleling disability studies critiques, where rehabilitation may not be desired, may cause harm, and may not even be possible, it becomes clear that traditional provenance is incompatible with the distributed nature of many archival realities.

Reorienting toward a Crip Provenance

[47] Kim, *Curative Violence*, 7.
[48] For example, see Muller et al., *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, and Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance."
[49] Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance," 6.

If restoring provenance is not possible or not desirable, what might embracing a new crip orientation toward archival records look like? Thus far I have meandered through the reality of records I found in researching the WCE—created by different people, processed in different ways, and located in multiple archives. I have shown how provenance in reality is messy, incomplete, rumored, and sometimes unknown, and how, when thinking of archives as bodies, we may come to terms with the rhetoric of restoration and cure as we navigate the fonds and desires for the whole. To this point, I have yet to mention disabled people within these records, not because I am avoiding them but because they often were not obviously there. And I am sorry to say that I am not surprised at their absence from the records. Given the dominant ways in which disabled people have been historically documented, I did not expect to find much—if any—explicit documentation of them outside of medical, criminal, and institutional records. Returning to the guiding question of this project—how to tell a history of disability when there is little to no evidence—I propose this expansive framework, a *crip provenance*, as one possible answer.

This section, building off of archival studies and disability studies literature, aims to reorient provenance, to turn it around. Instead of longing for a former whole, this framework encourages us to embrace records' realities—in other words, to meet records where they are at *literally* (dispersed and duplicated in different archives) and *figuratively* (as temporally, spatially, and historically situated yet always already incomplete). In doing so, I not only acknowledge the partial histories of records but also all of the new contexts and connections of records that may facilitate retelling history through a different lens. Evoking disability studies scholarship that centers the relationships created through and because of disability—in relation to other disabled people and histories (through activism and intersectional identities), materials (through technology and assistive devices), attitudes (through discrimination or advocacy), places/spaces (through built environments, accessibility, and place), and power (through the interinformed connections of ableism to other forms of oppression)—a *crip provenance* reorients established notions of provenance. Instead of focusing strictly on the former (often fictitious) whole fonds, it emphasizes the relations created specifically because records are incomplete, dispersed, unknown, and rearranged. This framework does not entirely reject the provenance of records—valuable information can be obtained through an attention to the history of a record and its context of creation—but by fixating on what *has happened*, we miss *what happens because* fonds are always already fragmented, incomplete, and dispersed.

As explained above, when disability is medicalized and individualized, it orients disabled bodyminds in a position to be fixed, rehabilitated, or cured. Many have contested the simplification and individualization of disability (as in the medical model) and have argued "that disability should be understood as a minority identity, not simply as a 'condition' of lack or loss to be pitied or 'overcome.'"[50] The social model of disability, for example, places emphasis less on individual disabled bodyminds and more on the social and architectural constructs that shape disabled people's lives. Alison Kafer tells us how through this model, "the problem of disability is located in inaccessible buildings, discriminatory attitudes, and ideological systems that attribute normalcy and deviance to particular minds and bodies."[51] Building off the attention to societal and cultural constructions of disability, Kafer incorporates feminist and queer critiques of identity to build the political/relational model of disability. By thinking through how bodyminds and identities can shift

[50] McRuer, "Critical Investments," 223.
[51] Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 6.

across time, place, and interactions, her model encompasses the relational and political proximities that comprise disability.

Resisting a curative stance toward provenance and instead embracing a political/relational understanding of disability, as I show, highlights all of the new connections of disability to history, which help to build toward a crip provenance. Just as Kafer states, "The problem of disability is solved . . . through social change and political transformation," so too do archives require less prescriptive and rehabilitative solutions and instead need expansive, political, and creative approaches.[52] I illustrate this framework through one record from the WCE that shows a trace of disabled people: a magazine that describes an exhibit which may not have ever been created.

While at the Seaver Center for Western History Research—an archives at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County—and with the assistance of Collections Manager John M. Cahoon, I sifted through "World's Columbian Exposition Collection, 1893," an artificial collection of four linear feet of an assortment of books, magazines, and other publications on the WCE. I came across the *California's Monthly: World's Fair Magazine*, a magazine "devoted to advancing California's Interests at the Columbian Exposition." It describes many potential contributions that California could provide to the WCE. After flipping through the pages, I noticed an exhibit proposal: "Pigmies [*sic*] for the World's Fair." The five-paragraph proposal outlines how "Lieut. Mason A. Shufeldt, who has spent nine years in Africa . . . will . . . secure a family of Stanley's pigmies from the equatorial forest" in Zanzibar. It outlines the plans for an expedition "to the dark continent" whereby multiple parties would collaborate to bring to the West Coast "a family of twelve or fourteen of the fierce little midgets" and explicitly proposes that they be enslaved upon their arrival. The proposal describes the main participants in the expedition, which "has been given two years and eight months by the commissioners" to be completed, as well as the multiple cities through which they would pass and other materials they set out to collect.

This deeply disturbing record is located in a sea of unknown: I was not able to access any provenance notes on the magazine, to locate the author of this featured section, to find subsequent issues, and more importantly to find any documentation around *if* this expedition occurred or *if* the exhibit had been built for the WCE. In building a crip provenance, I illustrate all of the unknowns about this single record as I describe its details. While I do so, I emphasize all of the ways in which acknowledging all the relationships created by and through disability help me investigate this record. The five short paragraphs of this magazine's featured section—this trace of what *might* be considered disability in history, marked through this ableist identification of bodily difference—illuminate a multiplicity of connections to disability that may be outside traditional forms of evidence.[53]

First, disability studies highlights how disability is in relation to *people*. Through "discriminatory attitudes, and ideological systems that attribute normalcy and deviance to particular minds and bodies," disabled people's lives are impacted through their interactions with other people, which

[52] Ibid.

[53] It is important to note that there is a complexity in naming disability—this space where white, Western notions of normalcy render bodily difference, in this case stature, as something that might be called "disability," whereas such a name/identity might not be applied in other cultural contexts. For example, see Barnartt, "Disability as a Fluid State," and Rott, "Why Does Growth Hurt?"

has been the basis for many antidiscrimination laws.[54] And, as Harlan Han identifies, discrimination can impact "socioeconomic status, family ties, unemployment rates, and related social problems." To the contrary, through community, activism, and cross-disability solidarity, interactions with other disabled people can radically impact disabled people's lives in positive ways. Hahn notes that "for some disabled individuals, including the leadership of the social and political movement of people with disabilities, the effects of this change have been profoundly liberating."[55] Concepts like "interdependence"—which, as Mia Mingus defines it, "moves us away from knowing disability only through 'dependence,' which paints disabled bodies as being a burden to others"—highlight how disabled people are in relation to and shaped through interactions with other people—through discrimination, through activism, through community, and through interwoven networks of relationships.[56]

When embracing such proximities in working toward a crip provenance, I can add context to this record through thinking about all of the people who are interconnected through archives. I can recognize and honor the subjects of this record and the violent impacts of colonization on their lives, as their minimal description could produce what Tonia Sutherland describes as "places of oblivion" that ignore, erase, or silence certain perspectives.[57] I can also recognize the multiple people involved in the construction of the exhibition proposal: Lieutenant Shufeldt, who was proposed to lead the expedition; Tippoo Tib (*sic*), a local guide recruited to "obtain the pigmies by purchase"; California WCE board members and commissioners, who worked to organize and fund exhibitions and exhibits; the people of Zanzibar, Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and other south and central African areas targeted and effected through such an exhibition; and the unknown author who penned this magazine description.

Furthermore, I consider not only all of the people and organizations that were involved in the production of records but also all of the people who have interacted with them since. I have already described some of the interactions, conversations, and emails I have had with archivists throughout this research, and I also think about the ways many archivists, secretaries, record-keepers, and other individuals have actively shaped this historical narrative through the decisions made around these records. Such decision-making regarding how records are processed, accessioned, described, and organized impact how I am able to find, interpret, and experience them. I am also drawn to think about my present-day experiences looking for disabled people in history—the feelings of longing, excitement, sadness, and loss that occur when I search for disabled people in archives. I think about how my experiences in archives are shaped by my experiences with disabled communities—how activism, advocacy, and community have all shaped my identity and my understandings of disability, which inform how I am able to perceive disability in records, how I am forming this theoretical framework, and even how my original research began. There are many people—myself and my communities included—who I consider in proximity to this record as it exists in an archive today.

Second, disability studies emphasizes *systems* of power, how disability is political because it is historically and spatially contingent as well as bound up and deeply intertwined with systems and

[54] Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 6.
[55] Hahn, "The Political Implications of Disability Definitions and Data," 49.
[56] Mingus, "Interdependency."
[57] Sutherland, "Archival Amnesty," 17.

histories of oppression. Disability Justice activist Patty Berne notes, "We cannot comprehend ableism without grasping its interrelations with heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism and capitalism, each system co-creating an ideal bodymind built upon the exclusion and elimination of a subjugated 'other' from whom profits and status are extracted."[58] And those historical politics become embodied in contemporary rhetorics, such as language. For example, Paul Banahene Adjei describes "the myriad of ways in which ableist languages justify classifications of some people as less than human, re-enacting pervasive colonial racist ideologies and practices."[59] Such ways of devaluing bodyminds become embodied within language, classificatory systems, and systems of documentation that are maintained, changed, and experienced today.

Through this lens, I am drawn to think about the interlocking systems that framed and named the Pygmy peoples as "fierce little midgets"—just this trace evokes how racism and ableism are bound up in colonial projects to produce hierarchies of living beings as well as events, such as the WCE, that demonstrate white Western supremacy and productions of knowledge.[60] Moreover, this lens allows me to think not only about the historical systems at work in producing the documentation around the WCE but also about the archival systems that organize, describe, and therefore replicate or alter them. Having navigated multiple archival systems such as finding aids, online databases, and catalogs, I can reflect on how they are organized. As noted earlier, while some archives maintain fonds' previous organization, others have established artificial collections where they gather records and organize them based on specific topics. While some records were kept in original order, which could provide me context, others were out of order or had an unknown order in an artificial collection, each of which has varying levels of description of the contents of records. The fonds description of "Publications from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, the World's Columbian Exposition" does little to draw attention to the problematic nature of the content of a magazine, further obscuring it as well as the legibility of what might be considered disability. Through this lens, I am able to draw attention to such systems and how they are reflected or obscured through language, both in the record itself and in the finding aid.

Third, in developing a crip provenance, I center how disability is not only political through systems but also through *materials*. A political/relational approach to disability emphasizes "how bodies move, meet, commingle, and mesh with technology, architecture, and objects," and how disability is connected to power and politics through materiality.[61] In their introduction to *The Matter of Disability: Materiality, Biopolitics, Crip Affect*, David T. Mitchell, Susan Antebi, and Sharon L. Snyder urge us "to more tangibly recognize the materiality of disability's active participation in the process of meaning-making itself . . . [because] disability provides the evidence of embodiment's shifting, kaleidoscopic, dynamically unfolding agency."[62] Steven L. Kurzman traces politics of the materials which make up his prosthetic leg:

> If I am to be interpellated as a cyborg, it is because my leg cost $11,000 and my HMO paid for it; because I had to get a job to get the health insurance; because I

[58] Berne, "Disability Justice."
[59] Adjei, "The (Em)Bodiment of Blackness in a Visceral Anti-Black Racism and Ableism Context."
[60] "Pygmy" is an anthropological term currently used to describe multiple dispersed tribes.
[61] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 209.
[62] Mitchell, Antebi, and Snyder, "Introduction," 2.

> stand and walk with the irony that the materials and design of my leg are based in the same military technology which has blown the limbs off so many other young men; because the shock absorber in my foot was manufactured by a company which makes shock absorbers for bicycles and motorcycles, and can be read as a product of the post–Cold War explosion of increasingly engineered sports equipment and prostheses; and because the man who built my leg struggles to hold onto his small business in a field rapidly becoming vertically integrated and corporatized.[63]

Therefore in expanding a crip provenance to include materiality as providing context, I can also consider the materials surrounding the exhibition proposal as well as the WCE. In addition to the primary goal of the expedition, the magazine section also outlines how "From Zanzibar, Lieut. Shufeldt will proceed to Natal, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, and the Transvaal. The Cape colonies will be requested to exhibit a diamond mine in operation at the Fair. Chicago will furnish the mine and the colonies will be asked to supply native workmen and crude diamonds." Situated within the WCE, which sought to exhibit materials, scientific technologies, and architectural feats that displayed "progress," the proposed expedition simultaneously emphasized a history of colonization and labor exploitation through proposing an additional exhibit of a diamond mine. Considering the politics of materials also allows for me to foreground the magazine itself and the materials used to preserve paper, prevent mold, and the various preservation practices within archives that can be damaging or hazardous.

Lastly, intertwined with materiality, disability studies has drawn attention to the politics of *space and place*, how physical environments shape disabled people's lives. The social model, central to the disability rights movement, shifts responsibility away from disabled bodyminds and on to "spatial inequality," the ways in which social and architectural barriers can be disabling.[64] Hahn asserts, "Once we begin to realize that disability is in the environment then in order for us to have equal rights, we don't have to change but the environment has to change."[65] Feminist scholar Doreen Massey emphasizes how places—despite attempts "to enclose them, endow them with fixed identities and to claim them for one's own"—are open and porous, imbued with social relationships over time.[66] Likewise, disability studies scholars have emphasized how spaces shape, reshape, and embody concepts (and politics) of bodyminds. From "ugly laws" that prohibited disabled (and other marginalized) people in public spaces, to how "architects came to create buildings and public spaces with particular inhabitants in mind," spaces are historically contingent, value-laden, and political.[67] A crip provenance, like the social and political/relational models of disability, encompasses the ways in which spaces shape disabled peoples' lives and are imbued with politics.

The *California's Monthly: World's Fair Magazine* connects multiple spaces and places that further expand the context of provenance. Perhaps the most immediate connection of disability to space is my experience, as a Disabled person, in navigating the physical archives in which I experienced the magazine. My experience of this record is (quite literally) shaped through physically

[63] Kurzman, "Presence and Prosthesis," 382.
[64] Imrie, "Space," 172.
[65] Harlan Hahn, quoted in McRuer, *Crip Theory*, 52.
[66] Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*.
[67] Hamraie, *Building Access*, 29.

maneuvering the halls of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County to locate the archival space in the basement, sitting in the archives reading room, using a lightbox to view slides, moving materials carefully from table to table while in pain—an embodied experience that I felt working in many archives. An attention to space also connects the digital spaces I navigated such as websites, databases, and digital finding aids, as well as all of the other archival spaces I visited as part of this research. To consider space is also to acknowledge how disabled people experience it—how archives produce context through the spaces in which materials are kept, processed, and organized *and* how multiple archives are connected through my research on this topic.

With this in mind, I also center and acknowledge the land on which I experience this record, Tovaangar, the traditional territory of the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples, as well as the land on which the WCE and current Field Museum are located, the traditional homelands of several tribal nations: the Council of the Three Fires—the Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe Nations; the Illinois Confederacy—the Peoria and Kaskaskia Nations; and the Myaamia, Wea, Thakiwaki, and Meskwaki Nations. The Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Kiikaapoi, and Mascouten Nations also call the region of northeast Illinois home.[68] An attention to place and space allows me to think about the Indigenous people who live, have lived, and/or have been displaced and dispossessed from land through colonialism and settler colonialism, which impact contemporary experiences of place and space in and outside of archives.

Moreover, the many geographies outlined in the small featured section all are connected through a network of colonial endeavors that can give context to the record while also bringing disability to the fore. From London to Zanzibar "to Monrovia, Liberia Free State, and to Sierra Leone, in quest for more exhibits," to Chicago, where these people, materials, and politics confer, each of these geographies hold temporal and spatial specificities and histories. And the spatial impacts of colonialism are inherently tied to disability: Jasbir K. Puar, focusing on the spatial politics of U.S. imperialism and Israel's "project of rehabilitation" of Palestine, teases out a history of disablement. Disability, she shows, is deeply interwoven in histories of exploitation, war, infrastructure, and imperialism, where "maiming thus functions . . . as the end goal in the dual production of permanent disability via the infliction of harm and the attrition of the life support systems that might allow populations to heal from this harm."[69] With this in mind, I can contextualize this record within a global, imperial project that the WCE was to showcase, through which such a project disables, harms, traumatizes, dispossesses, and kills people via colonization, disease, enslavement, and display. Thus, through an attention to the spatial relations of disability, this record is also in proximity to the disabling effects of colonial expeditions and the display of "native workmen and crude diamonds" at the WCE. To consider spatial relations of disability brings in the geographical specificity of colonial endeavors, the disabling impacts of a transnational expedition, the spatial construction of exhibits at the WCE (and subsequently the Field Museum), and the land on which these records are today.

Through this example of an exhibition that I cannot find evidence of ever being made, of a record with very little content and context, of a trace of what might be considered disability in history, I can consider a constellation of new connections that allow me to contend with these traces and absences of disability in history. When considering the records that document the history of the

[68] Goeman, "The Land Introduction."
[69] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 143.

WCE, a crip provenance can facilitate grappling with the partialities not only by focusing on what is in the records and what might be documented about the history of these records but also by meeting them where they are at today. The records created because of the WCE, created by different people, organizations, governing bodies, and individuals—or never created at all—document a piece of disability history. Yet not only is reconstructing a complete provenance impossible but new connections can be made, even through absence, to illuminate a different story with disability at the center. The provenance of these records provides some context—how records have been moved, organized, accessioned, and processed. Nonetheless, recreating the provenance is not only impossible but also may be a misorientation to these records; it might do them a disservice, especially when trying to tell a new history that may lie outside of traditional forms of evidence.

Conclusion

A crip provenance emphasizes *people*—not only creators, subjects, and archivists but also the people who experience, interpret, and are impacted by records across time; *systems*—those that created the record and that influenced the creation of other records, which in turn influenced other systems, legislation, archival processes, etc.; *materials*—those that are present in the record itself as well as the parallel histories and practices that make discussing disability and ableism possible when they are not apparent; and finally *spaces*—the histories of colonialism and the affective ways in which accessibility is interwoven into all of the previous aspects. A crip provenance builds off of concepts like societal provenance by taking into account the societal dimensions that are infused into records as well as the people and mediums that shape records' creation. However, societal provenance, in its desire to incorporate the wider sociocultural context of records, may still demonstrate an orientation toward reconstitution and restoration. Building on provenancial fabulation, which accounts for the ways relationships are created and imaginaries function, but with focused attention to the relationality of disability, crip provenance draws specific attention to absences, messiness, and the impossibility of knowing a complete disability history. By placing emphasis on the people, spaces, materials, and language in relation to the history of the WCE—proximities that occur specifically because records are dispersed, duplicated, and experienced, and specifically because of disability and archives—these records not only expose the trouble with traditional provenance but more so illuminate the new connections that can be made through acknowledging this reality.

This orientation to records allows me to discuss disability even through its absence. However, I also recognize how emphasizing the value in dispersed records might risk undermining decolonial or anticolonial projects such as repatriation. This framework allows for me to imagine around what might not be there—what I might never find—through such new connections, but it in no way means that we (as archivists, archival scholars, and archival users) should do nothing when records, materials, and land need to be repatriated. My hope is that this framework works alongside anticolonial, antiracist, and other antioppressive archival initiatives. For example, by identifying how accessibility is a central component to understanding history, this framework is a call to action for all archives to consider how access shapes (or denies) disabled people's experiences of our own histories. A crip provenance draws attention to place-based violences and can therefore foster coalition building against other ways in which archival spaces cause harm. Furthermore, and importantly, through retelling a partial history with disability at the center, I can identify ableism

as a central tenet of colonial projects: the ways that colonialism brings disease, debility, disability, trauma, and death, as well as how ableism justified the colonization, enslavement, and institutionalization of Native people.[70] It therefore illuminates how ableism laid a foundation for the production of world's fairs that categorized and displayed people of color, disabled people, and other bodyminds as spectacles.

In the process of untangling the complexities of cure, restoration, and rehabilitation, my aim for crip provenance is to place emphasis on the many ongoing impossibilities of archival work, especially around disability, and to center how disabled people want to be remembered and represented in archives. This is an effort not to reinforce a colonial archival practice but to make it evident so we can radically reframe and address it. These efforts work in tandem with other projects that center sick and disabled people and their archival desires. Thinking alongside work such as Marika Cifor's research on activist archiving around HIV/AIDS—work that emphasizes how "archives have an important role to play in developing a more holistic sense of cure"—this framework reimagines how archives, instead of reconstructing historical violences, can be tools for activist responses.[71]

My goal for this project is not to suggest that a complete picture is even possible but to highlight that through grappling with the inevitable partialities of archival representation, we can create more complicated histories and narratives. While this article does not propose any solutions, by reorienting provenance I hope to open up a creative space for archivists to reimagine their work, utilize new tools to connect multiple histories as part of a record's provenance, and question their underlying assumptions of "complete" or "accurate" provenance and the fixity therein. In building this expansive framework for thinking about disability in history, I hope to lay a foundation for others, namely disabled people, to reclaim our stories, to tell our truths in the face of a plethora of records that might claim our inferiority, spectacle, or lack of existence in history. In this way, we might reshape histories, narratives, and the archival processes, people, and spaces that surround them.

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[70] For example, see Burch, *Committed;* Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History"; and Barclay, *The Mark of Slavery*.
[71] Cifor, "An Archival Cure."

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