

***Disability Politics in a Global Economy: Essays in Honour of Marta Russell.***  
**Edited by Ravi Malhotra. Routledge: London and New York, 2017, 244 pp. ISBN**  
**978-1-138-59094-6.**

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The diverse essays collected by Ravi Malhotra in *Disability Politics in a Global Economy: Essays in Honour of Marta Russell* explore the tensions, limitations, and possibilities of a disability rights framework for social transformation. Following Marta Russell's lead, these scholars engage with materialist perspectives to address a question at the heart of Russell's work and the burgeoning disability justice movement: why do disabled people continue to face oppression in most arenas of social life even after the passage of seemingly revolutionary civil rights legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? A commitment to Russell's early analysis of the ways in which capitalism both oppresses disabled people and limits the potential of disability rights legislation unites the collection, which expands her work in new directions by exploring such varied topics as jury participation, accommodating addiction in the workplace, special education, and empowerment at segregated summer camps. Importantly, as well as a diverse subject matter, the anthology also contains a range of methodologies, including personal narratives, survey research, legal scholarship, and literary and historical analysis. Thus, the collection speaks to a diverse audience and effectively demonstrates the importance of Russell's work for a variety of scholars and fields. Together, the essays contend that scholarly examinations of disability oppression and real-world social justice strategies must engage with the negative effects of global capitalism on disabled people's lives.

The collection consists of twelve essays, divided into three parts – legal implications, political economy, and the humanities – as well as a reprinting of one of Russell’s articles and a thoughtful foreword by Samuel Bagenstos. Although Bagenstos does not entirely agree with Russell’s critique of the ADA, which she considered a “free market” civil rights law, he seriously engages her argument and discusses the law’s many failings: people with disabilities still face high unemployment rates, are unlikely to win cases under the ADA, experience extreme educational inequalities, and lack basic health care.

In the first essay of the section on legal implications, Malhotra draws on the philosophical work of Corenlius Castoriadis to buoy Russell’s calls for social change. Malhotra argues that Castoriadis’ focus on critical education and new conceptions of independence help sustain Russell’s proposals for universal health care, democratic control of business, living wages and environmentally sustainable development. Malhotra connects this theoretical exploration to the marginalization of service providers and attendants and suggests that their labor will only be valued when disabled people are reimagined as “autonomous and equal citizens capable of making their own choices” (15). Next, Mark Weber presents a defense of SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) in line with Russell’s legacy. Weber reframes the debate over whether rights and benefits conflict (i.e., under the ADA, disabled people can work with reasonable accommodations, while under SSDI disabled people are defined by the inability to work) by arguing that benefits align with a social model perspective when the inability to work is understood to be socially constructed. According to Weber, one creative and concrete

way to move SSDI away from medicalized understandings of disability would be to include the role of stigma in disability determinations.

Drawing on original research and secondary sources, Richard Jochelson and Michelle Bertrand establish the low levels of public support for the participation of people with disabilities, particularly people with mental disabilities, on juries in the North American context. Inspired by Russell and Stewart's writing on the criminalization of people with mental disabilities and the disabling effects of imprisonment, Jochelson and Bertrand demonstrate the need for more research on the participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the criminal justice system. In the final chapter of legal implications, Matthew Smith analyzes the employment discrimination claims of workers who have drug and alcohol addictions and are terminated for behavior connected to their addictions, such as stealing alcohol or drugs. While recognizing the controversy over considering addiction a disability, (an issue which Russell also addressed in *Beyond Ramps: Disability at the End of the Social Contract* (1998)), Smith notes the scientific community's consensus that addiction is complex and often beyond our control and moves on to analyze accommodations, last chance agreements, and relapse. Importantly, Smith contextualizes the workplace experiences of these non-traditionally disabled people within a capitalist economy marked by inequality, ableism, and pressure to limit worker power.

The second section, Marta Russell and political economy, begins with a joint effort by Liat Ben-Moshe and Jean Stewart to update Stewart and Russell's earlier work on disability and imprisonment. Drawing on a wide range of real-world examples, Ben-Moshe and Stewart demonstrate how "carceral logics" remain key in processes of

disablement even with deinstitutionalization. This update includes an analysis of race in disablement and a critique of ostensibly positive aspects of independent living, such as group homes which may reproduce norms and experiences of larger institutions. Next, Nirmala Erevelles examines how race, class, and disability intersect through work in a capitalist society which values work above all else. Erevelles connects these categories through an analysis of traditional race and environmental justice scholarship which implicitly, perhaps unknowingly, employs disability analysis, such as examining how conditions of poverty, disproportionately experienced by people of color, produce disability and how racism has been justified through ableist arguments. Like Russell, Erevelles urges disability studies to examine not just the cultural meanings of disability, but the material uses of this category.

David J. Connor and April B. Coughlin weave personal connections to Russell's work with a discussion of the importance of bringing her analyses into the field of education, in which deficit models are still the norm. In this thoroughly enjoyable essay, the scholars highlight core tenants of disability education studies, which align with Russell's critical perspective, and note the continuing experience of segregation in many disabled students' lives. Connor and Coughlin also demonstrate how Russell's work can be used in graduate curriculum and research not directly tied to her topics of analysis, suggesting the potential for exploring new arenas through her materialist lens. In a case study of Goodwill's sheltered workshops, Jihan Abbas troubles the notion of inclusion, which she skillfully argues has been co-opted by neoliberal forces and interpreted to mean 'normalizing' people in order to move them into the labor force. She shows how the logic of sheltered workshops, which assumes low wages are necessary

for those with intellectual disabilities to be included in the workforce and community, reifies notions of disabled people as dependent without acknowledging that the capitalist economic structure creates this dependency.

The final two pieces in this section highlight the collection's overall diversity of topics and styles while maintaining a strong connection to examining disability oppression within a deeply unequal global structure. Zach Richter's theoretical discussion is a fascinating example of bringing disability into Marxist theory. Richter draws on concepts from Italian Autonomist Marxism, such as the Autonomist tactic of the refusal of work, to highlight the role of the "beggar" in constructing disability. Richter theorizes institutionalization as the capitalist class's response to begging as a potential job through which a class of people could survive without working. However, within the institution, even though workers may refuse to work, capital still makes profit through their value as commodities. In Suzanne Stolz's essay, personal narrative and academic theorizing beautifully combine as she situates her experience as a Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) summer camp attendee and volunteer within Russell's critique of charity-based organizations. She draws parallels to special education studies, historical materialism, and other areas. Like other works in the volume, Stolz's essay recognizes the strange tension at the heart of Russell's work, that although the ADA often fails to meet our material needs, we may still gain symbolic benefits from the law, particularly as it can influence the development of a positive disability identity.

In the concluding section, Marta Russell and the humanities, Emily Perkins intriguingly connects both Deaf and Latinx discrimination to capitalism's valorization of oral-English as a cost-efficient measure. Her work demonstrates the creative and fruitful

potential of applying a historical materialist lens to an array of disability issues. Perkin's literary analysis of *Carry Me like Water* examines the interplay of race, class, and disability "false consciousness" as well as the potential of language-appreciation for revolution. Anne Finger's eloquent analysis of Soviet Union eugenics, the only piece in the collection which specifically addresses a context other than the North American one, encourages historians of science to examine not just the evolution of eugenic thought among scholars, but also its practical effect on disabled people. Her work also points to the need for disability studies to examine the diverse experiences of disabled people around the world. Russian eugenicists, unlike those in the US and Western Europe, focused less on the elimination of "defectives" through sterilization campaigns and more on the creation of a new class of enlightened men aligned with socialist principles of community support and equality. This final section, although shorter than the first two, effectively demonstrates both Russell's importance for a range of scholarly fields and the variety of manifestations of disability, as a socially constructed experience.

Although some chapters are more accessible than others, a background in Marxist theorizing is not necessary for engaging with the anthology as a whole. Important areas for possible expansion of the work include more examinations of disability experiences outside U.S. and Canadian contexts, perhaps bringing gender and sexuality into intersectional analyses, and engaging more explicitly with critical race theory's scholarship on the dilemmas of rights for people of color. Marta Russell's work, and anthologies like this one which expand upon it, remain critical in the current context of austerity and social support cutbacks.

**Reference**

Russell, M. *Beyond Ramps: Disability at the End of the Social Contract: A Warning from an Uppity Crip*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1998.