

TRANSCRIPT OF CRIPT TIME – FINDING YOUR OWN RYTHMN

Jak: Welcome to the Guide Gods Digital Collection, I'm Jak Soroka in conversation with Claire Cunningham. You're listening to a series of podcasts created from the interview material collected as part of Claire's show, Guide Gods.

[Violin plays]

[Interview clip]

Julia: As a disabled person I spend a lot of time waiting for other people too, waiting for the bus, waiting for the wheelchair man, waiting for appointments, waiting for bureaucracy, just waiting. And the question of how you wait is something that I've come to understand differently in part from my religious practice, my spiritual practice. To not think of waiting time as wasted time, but really as an opportunity to pay attention to where I am, to how I feel, to what's going on, to really the sense that like, this moment can be, can be a really potent moment. Where ever it is you know. I can't actually make it happen faster, so, as much as often I would like to right? What I can do sometimes is to transform the way I am experiencing the waiting.

Claire: Time, that was something I became really aware of I talked to, when I met an academic called Carrie Sandahl who's based in Chicago, she introduced me to the concept of Crip Time and that being a recognition that disability shifts your relationship to time and notions of normative time, and

that manifests in lots of different ways I guess. That Crip Time begins in some ways from the moment of conception actually because this notion that society tries to put markers on a human body in its development even before it's born and if it doesn't hit that marker of the body should've developed to do this, or look like this, or have this part of the body at this particular stage, then you are already in Crip Time is how that perspective relates. But yeah, in things that, I take longer to do things.

Also as I have come into Crip identity I own the fact that I take longer to do things. And I'm more comfortable with that than I used to be. If I'm paying for something in a shop you know I used to feel very uncomfortable at the fact that I would hold up a queue of people because I didn't move out the way as quickly as everyone else because when you use crutches you don't have your hands free and so there's a whole sort of very honed [laughs] and very clearly defined process that I know exactly what I'm doing in the order I need to do it in.

But that recognition that that takes a bit longer, than the person maybe behind me that has their hands free, and how that instantly puts you up against feeling, you know you're made to feel like you should get out the way and you should move faster, and people try to sort of 'help' you, in inverted commas, or indeed people serve you over the top of my head, that used to happen, and whereas now I would, if that starts to happen then I will absolutely be like "excuse me, do you think you can wait a minute?", whereas before I might have been 'I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry' and try to get out the way, and the more you rush the more you drop things.

Those things of like, whether you would see those as tools or not, but certainly an acknowledgment of an understanding of how I need to work in the world and what I need, and sometimes I need more time, and I will hold that time when it's necessary now in a way that when I was younger I didn't feel confident to.

[Violin plays]

Jak: I think, I think both times that I have, 'cause I've actually listened to all of Julia's interviews twice round, because of transcribing them the first time, and both times particularly the conversation around Crip Time and Shabbat, and this idea of like "it takes the time it takes", and actually that pushes against this capitalist like production line culture that we're in, and both times that I've heard that it's exactly what I needed to hear.

Claire: Yeah [laughs].

[Interview clip]

Julia: Shabbat begins 18 minutes before sundown on Friday night and it lasts for 25 hours, so it carries on from Friday through Saturday night until the first three stars come out. And, is I think one of the most amazing parts of Jewish tradition for me, it's a exquisitely beautiful, peaceful time that is for me an antidote to the hectic, busy, rushed, working world in which I spend so much of my life. The understanding of Shabbat is that for six days God laboured to create the Earth and everything that was in it, and on the seventh day God rested. Jewish tradition understands the rest as the thing which completes creation. Without rest you can't actually have creation.

Jewish tradition I think has a very, interesting relationship with time, and the idea that space is not so much the thing you sanctify, but time. Shabbat is a time that really no matter where you are, no matter, where in the world you are, no matter whether you have a synagogue or if there's a special place, you, you it's the time that counts, the sanctification, the, the recognising sacred time.

You know I've thought a lot about Crip Time, and Disability Time, and willingness to take the time that something needs, and I've not always been good at this. I've sometimes really beaten myself for needing more time, for being slow, for being late, for, making other people late... and, I think in many ways it's through my practice of, my Shabbat practice that I've transformed my own sense of relationship with time. It doesn't matter how long; it takes the time it takes.

[Violin plays]

Shabbat is 25 hours of every week where you're not allowed to perform work. You're not allowed to labour. Now what Jewish law means by 'labour', and what we, what capitalist America thinks of as labour is not entirely the same thing.

So it's not exactly about work and the way we define it but it's such an, it's such a profound challenge to the notion that people are valued on the basis of their ability to produce, 'cause no ones producing. It's a day where the tyranny of production is shut off. You're just not allowed to make anything, and, that is a really, I think it is really liberatory, in terms of a disability perspective, in terms of a disability politic that says we are not valuable just

because of what we can earn, or whether we can work, or whether we can work nine to five. I mean I think of the number of people who have felt their lives to be, who have fought to have their lives recognised as being worth living because they couldn't hold a job. And that's, that's such a desecration of what it means to be alive. The idea that our culture should tell people that, you're worthless 'cause you can't earn a living. What a, what a terrible thing. Yeah, so to the extent that I have come to be able to really, value people in a different way it's because of, it's in part because of Shabbat.

Jak: I definitely consider myself someone that like, has needed slowness or what is considered to be slower time, but particularly in the last few months actually going 'oh no I really might need more time than the normative person' and that's so nice to know that there's people out there that have like got their head round that, and not only accept that they need more time but that that its own form of like rebellion in a great way. Like its own, it's an act in itself against the dominant narrative. Against valuing people just on what they can produce and how efficient they can be.

[Violin plays]

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