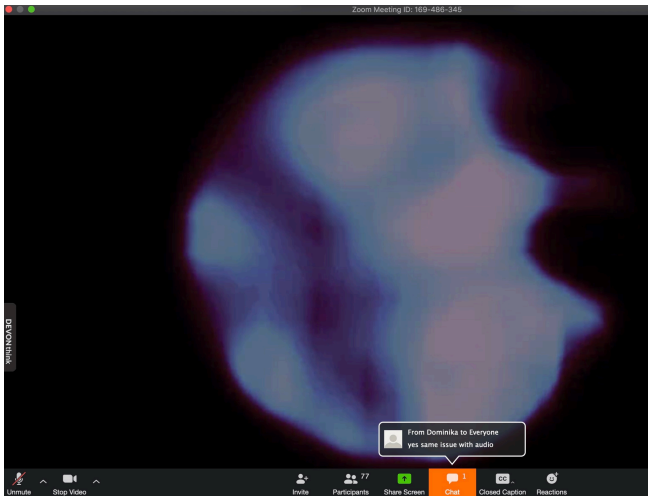


CAVAR

Interview Date: November 21, 2022

Image Description: Text reads “The Remote Access Archive” atop a screenshot of a Zoom shared screen, which shows a work of art by Yo-Yo Lin. The art is a white and grey blob on a black background. The bottom shows a series of grey buttons, along with an orange chat button that is lit up. A speech bubble above it “From Dominika to everyone” says “yes same issue with audio.”

KEYWORDS

autistic community, autism, digital spaces, in-person, Mad politics, Mastodon, online identity formation, pre-COVID remote access, queer, remote socializing, social media, trans and disabled, Tumblr, Twitter

IDENTITIES GIVEN

they/them pronouns, white, genderless person, disabled person

LOCATION

United States

Introductions

Kelsie Acton:
Do you mind starting by giving your name and a brief visual description of yourself.

Cavar:
Yeah. I'm Cavar. I use they/them pronouns. I am a white, genderless person, with short, dirty blonde-light brown hair. I'm wearing large framed glasses and a pink turtleneck, and I have some nice facial piercings.

Kelsie Acton:
And just for the record, I'm Kelsie and I use she/her pronouns. I'm a white woman with brown hair that I've not re-dyed recently so there's a lot of gray in there, and some clear glasses. So, do you identify as a disabled person or a person with a disability?

Cavar:
Yes, disabled person.

Kelsie Acton:
Thank you, and do you consider yourself to be part of disability community or disability culture?

Cavar:
Yes.

Kelsie Acton:
And have you participated in forms of remote participation like Zoom or, which we're talking on right now, or other types of remote access?

Cavar:
Yes.

Tumblr

Kelsie Acton:
Awesome. So today we're going to chat about Tumblr. And you talked about…sorry, I'm just pulling up my notes from the email; you're getting me very, very badly prepared for this.

Cavar:
[laughs] Right.

Kelsie Acton:
Yeah, we wanted to chat with you about Tumblr, and what you've observed about disability culture and remote access on Tumblr. So, I'm wondering if you want to tell me just a little bit about how you're engaging on Tumblr. Maybe how you first started on Tumblr.

Cavar:
Yeah, so Tumblr, I believe, started in 2007, just to historicize my own experience on it. I believe I joined in 2011, so I was 12. I was really young, and I found it through a friend's older sister, who had a Tumblr account and used it to talk about different fandoms and stuff, and so that's how I sort of got on it. For the first couple of years, I was doing mostly just fandom-related stuff. It was very much sort of like nascent early days of a lot of like the SuperWhoLock kind of things. I don't think I ever really watched any of those, but that was sort of the community that really built out Tumblr fandom spaces in the early 2010s.

At the same time, especially around 2013 to 2015, there was like a nascent growing movement of trans people, and specifically xenogender people on Tumblr. 2013 was when a lot of the xenogender discourse began and that was just people identifying both new and resignified ways of doing gender, so thinking about pronouns that were related to states of mind, or objects, or natural phenomena. Genders and pronouns that were related to psychiatric diagnosis or self-identifications. This is when we got terms like autigender and neurogender emerging, and at the same time, more people spreading awareness of using nounself pronouns rather than you know

she, he, or they or even some of the older and maybe less popular now gender-neutral pronouns, like ze and hir, or something similar to that. And by no means was Tumblr like the place where all this began, but I think it's fair to say that it was a place where it gained traction really, really fast. Especially among the sort of younger, and potentially less informed about trans history, user base.

So, I can only speak for myself, but as a young teenager I had not realized that there were really long legacies of gender creation and resignification long before Tumblr was a gleam in anyone's eye. That's just a matter of being, you know, a lot of young trans people being really divorced from trans history for a lot of different, really painful reasons. So that combined with an increasing interest in disability, particularly autistic blogosphere, in the 2010s, sort of brought me into disability community for the first time. Although at the time I don't think I would have identified as disabled; certainly not in a political way.

Just before I got on Tumblr, that's what I sort of found out about like Julia Bascom's work and Mel Baggs's work, and some of those really early and household name level autism bloggers. Obviously Mel had a pretty significant presence on Tumblr as well. I particularly remember coming into disability community around the time that Mel was in the hospital and was being encouraged to choose assisted suicide. And then the anti-assisted suicide organization Not Dead Yet helped organize alongside many other like bloggers, disabled Internet folks, basically barrage this Vermont hospital with calls to advocate for Mel's life. That was, I feel, a really pivotal moment of me understanding the power and significance of disabled online movements and also the ways in which disabled online movements are never exclusively online. And have really important material consequences in the material world.

Yeah, so then around 2014 to 2015, I basically was in a state of really significant crisis. I was institutionalized, forcibly institutionalized. I had a lot of psychiatric stuff going on, and I think, in fact, I know that that experience really radicalized me, the way many prisoners describe being politically radicalized after being in prison. And I think when I returned to Tumblr after

that experience, I had a much firmer grip on myself as a disabled person, as a politically disabled person, as a politically Mad person.

Online Disability and Trans Identity

Cavar:
And so that was when I was around like 15-16, and that was, I think, when I really began throwing my whole self into advocacy in that regard. It was when I was really quickly disabused of the notion that there was this thing called “recovery” that I ought to be aspiring toward. There is this notion of being non-disabled, that I could simply go back to if I tried hard enough, and I think it was realizing that that was not possible that really made being politically disabled a necessity for me. Because otherwise I would just be doomed to considering myself a failed abled person.

Around that same time I really became firm in my trans identity as well, and though I'd come out as trans before that, it was during this time that I really became a lot firmer in demanding people use my pronouns, especially online. But increasingly also with my parents at home. So then, when I was 17, that was when I graduated high school and started undergrad, and that was when my Tumblr really shifted from me consuming a lot of disability content to me making more of it myself. Tumblr became a platform where I had been exposed to a lot of academic discourses that would later become really useful when I went to college and realized that I was ahead of the game because of Tumblr. I began synthesizing my own living experiences with things I was learning in college, and contributing to a larger academic exchange on disability Tumblr.

While that is not an experience universal to all disabled Tumblr users, because there's no one disability community anywhere, the communities that I'm a part of, and have been since the beginning of undergrad, maybe end of high school, have been oriented around I think the redistribution of academic knowledge, the synthesis of lived experiences and theoretical knowledge. They really matured as did the user base, many of whom joined around the same time as me, you know, in their preteen and early teen years.

Now all of us are in our twenties, and thirties, and beyond, and we're really, I think at least trying to take up the mantle of those bloggers like Mel, like Julia, who are now I mean — may Mel's memory be a blessing — either passed away or well into middle age, if not older by now.

So, yeah. And then, there are people still, very young teenagers who are approaching disability in completely different ways. And I'm not 13 anymore, so I'm not really clued into what the 13 year olds are doing. I'm sure they're doing most of it on Tiktok now, honestly, and I don't have Tiktok. So I really don't know what the kids are up to, but from what I've seen sort of in passing on Tumblr, there are new discourses and new norms that younger people are participating in that are sometimes familiar but mostly new to me.

Okay, I hope I hope that was…I tried to give a stage by stage.

Kelsie Acton:
That was great.

Cavar:
Thank you.

IRL and Tumblr

Kelsie Acton:
Yeah, it's actually really fascinating to hear as somebody who has been on and off Tumblr, but never deeply engaged. I feel like one of the threads that I'm picking up is there's this constant relationship between, as much as I hate the phrase, "in real life," and what's happening on Tumblr. I'm wondering if you can say anything more about how you see those two parts of your life relating.

Cavar:
Yeah, so I think this is a really interesting thing to pick up on, because while, I mean Tumblr has always been a part of my real life, I do think it's

useful to make a distinction not between “in real life,” but “IRL,” as its own thing versus Tumblr as its own thing. So IRL, as something distinct from real life as hegemonic understandings try to frame it, because for me, I grew up in a rural, really shitty, conservative Trump-voting area, though I didn't know that it would vote for Trump at the time, obviously. But it was always, you know, it always had that really horrible politics. And I went to Catholic school, and it was just not safe for me to be out in any meaningful way, as queer and certainly not as trans.

Tumblr was really a space in which I was able to explore who I actually meaningfully was while I was not able to live that reality IRL. My identity was a lot real-er and a lot more salient online than it was IRL, you know, up until I was 17. I had to physically leave my hometown in order for that to be the case.

I think something that gets criticized a lot by reactionary forces about Tumblr is the exact same thing that really makes Tumblr a radical space, and is something that I'm actually doing a lot of my dissertation research on now. And that's that the digital space of Tumblr allows for this collective cultivation of new identities, not only taking up identities that previously existed, but there's something particular to Tumblr as a form that facilitates identity innovation really really well. It's a combination of being able to be you know, under a pseudonym mostly. I mean, it's not like Reddit, where oftentimes, you're kind of anonymous. Tumblr, you have a stable identity, but it doesn't have to be your IRL identity.

And the combination of having a static blog page but then also being able to consistently reblog and make new posts, and stay up-to-date on very, very immediate news - there's something about that in the way that your posts, both your original posts and those of others, are kind of archived onto this page that, I don't know. It just makes Tumblr a really really useful space for developing alternative identity.

Identity Assemblage

Cavar:

And yeah, so I certainly made good use of that, you know. I went from being a cis girl to very much not being one, and I was able to sort of compose that alternative, that trans identity in all of its various forms, by reblogging the posts of other people and tagging them with my own experience and then making my own post. I would really create a sort of scrapbook of identity markers and that kind of scrapbooking is simply not possible IRL, even for someone in the most accepting area possible.

It's because, you know, I am a body, not a blog, IRL. But on Tumblr, I can be a blog, and I can assemble all of these pieces of myself in whatever way I want to. I think that that really is a crucial difference as well as Tumblr allowing it to be a pseudonym that's not connected to my IRL identity. I mean, I lived in really immense fear of being ‘discovered’ when I was high school and I was doing stuff on Tumblr. It was really just a, it was a terror that I kind of like, looking back, and I'm not really sure how I made it through that. But in as much as I did have privacy on there, that was crucial for forming an alternative queer and trans identity.

Sharing Academic Knowledge

Kelsie Acton:
I also want to pick up on…you talked about using Tumblr as a space for the redistribution of academic knowledge. Why is that so important?

Cavar:
Yeah, so I mean, there's like a lot of reasons I can speak, you know, for myself. In many ways, I have a lot of financial and academic privilege in that it was always expected that I would simply go to college. That was never seen as a foreclosed possibility for me, so I mean theoretically, I was eventually going to stumble upon this knowledge, right? But I think what made it really useful for me personally is that I desperately needed that academic context earlier than college. I needed it earlier than college, I needed it back when I was in high school and had no institutional exposure to Foucault, whereas I desperately needed to know what he was saying about institutions, about prisons, about asylums and I was only able to access that before college because of Tumblr.

I don't know how I would have made sense of my experiences as an institutionalized teenager if I had not had that early exposure. So there's that element. But then there's also the element for other people who don't have access to college for a variety of other reasons, or in the global South/East and don't have institutional access to global North/Western JSTOR and other publications or just don't have the resources.

And that I mean, it sort of follows the same political project of any other method of liberating paywalled stuff, whether it be Z-library, may she rest in peace, or Sci-hub, or any of these other really, really vital ways of distributing access. And it's the majority of people who, disabled people, who need this stuff will not be able to get it unless we steal it from the academy and open it up to everyone. Tumblr has archived so many papers, commentary, free critical essays, people just like making really extensive and in-depth posts on their own time just because they want to and making them easier for people to access. And that is where so much disability scholarship is happening. And for folks who will never make it into the academy, that's life saving.

Kelsie Acton:
Do you feel like the same structures and mechanisms that make Tumblr really good at identity innovation are also the same things that make it really good at redistributing knowledge?

Cavar:
Oh, yeah. And it's the same. I mean, it’s part of the same system, because ultimately identity formation, if we're even thinking about more into Fricker’s concepts of epistemic injustice and hermeneutical injustice in particular, you need to have the intellectual architectures to even form an identity that's meaningful to you before you're able to do that. So the redistribution of academic knowledge is creating an architecture in which we can become who we are, and that we can change who we are and understand that those are legitimate ways of being and moving through the world.

Kelsie Acton:

Amazing. Thank you. Is there anything that I haven't asked about in this part of our chat that you think I should have asked about, anything else you want to tell the world about Tumblr?

Cavar:
Well, I guess the only other thing I'll say is that I think it's been sort of evident through my — and this wasn't even intentional, but it always happens — that my trans and disabled experiences on Tumblr are inextricable. I can't even really parse between what's what and that's sort of more broadly reflective of my experiences as a trans disabled person, and I increasingly refuse to delineate between those things. Tumblr is really responsible, both for that shared consciousness and that refusal to delineate. Also on a very practical level, the kinds of information I consume and distribute on Tumblr doesn't delineate either.

Kelsie Acton:
Awesome. Want to do a quick check on how you are doing on time and energy?

Cavar:
I'm good.

Kelsie Acton:
Cool? You okay to talk about Mastodon? Briefly?

Cavar:
I know, I have significantly, like this is my dissertation research. So, if I sounded really composed in the last half hour, that's why.

Kelsie Acton:
But it was amazing. I was like wow! I've learned so much! [laughing]

Cavar:
I have this, exactly what I said to you just down pat, because whenever I have to give the elevator pitch for like what I'm doing my PhD in, and why it matters…that's it.

Kelsie Acton:
I'm convinced, I'm sold. I would give you lots and lots of grant money to study that.

Cavar:
Oh, my God, please! You need to get in charge of some grants because they don't think that Tumblr matters at all.

Kelsie Acton:
[still laughing] It so clearly does. Tumblr's so important.

Cavar:
They're like, "Why don't you make us some capitalist money and stop talking about neogenders ?" and I'm like, "No, neogenders are fun and cool, and I'm gonna keep talking about them."

Kelsie Acton:
Yes.

Joining Mastodon

Cavar:
But yes, I can talk about Mastodon, although, as I said, I joined Mastodon exactly ten days ago. [laughs] And before ten days ago, I knew absolutely nothing about it, and I still know very little, but I can try.

Kelsie Acton:
Yeah, I actually think that might be the point of chatting right now is to get your initial impressions and how it feels, as Disability Twitter might not exist by the end of the month which seems really terrible. So, maybe for history's sake tell me about why you joined Mastodon.

Cavar:
So I guess, to explain why I joined Mastodon, I'll have to sort of explain my relationship with Twitter, and my relationship with Twitter is a lot less

emotional and significant than a lot of disabled people I know. I joined Twitter in 2019. I did it primarily to make academic and literary connections, and not to gain disabled community necessarily. I mean, don't get me wrong. I gained a lot of disabled comrades from Twitter, but I also already had a lot, both IRL and on Tumblr. I was not isolated pre-Twitter for a variety of reasons, so Twitter has never been life-sustaining for me, although it has been really convenient just as an early career scholar and writer.

So fast-forwarding to 2022. I am disappointed that Twitter is going away, but I am not devastated, and I think honestly, in many ways, if Twitter does disappear it'll be much better for my productivity. So that's sort of my relationship, so a lot of the tweets that I see, I think I would feel that way maybe if I lost Tumblr, although I don't know. Maybe not anymore. I I feel like I'm in a really different place socially and communally than a lot of the people who rely on Tumblr and Twitter for everything, just because, like, I'm out in real life, and I have a robust trans disabled community around me, and a supportive family, and I'm doing fine. And you know a lot of the people who are most affected by this are affected because they're not doing fine. So I'll put that on the table first.

The reason I joined Mastodon is because well, one I do not feel comfortable giving my time, money, energy to Elon, for very similar reasons as to why I don't use Amazon. I am prepared to continue weaning myself off of Twitter, if only for boycott purposes. Also, I think that there is a very good likelihood that Twitter will become unusable if only because so many of the people who kept it physically working have been fired and are not coming back.

So I wanted to establish myself on Mastodon, especially as an academic and as a writer, so that I can carry that community over and not have to be completely scrambling, if and when Twitter finally disappears. On November fourth, I got on Mastodon. I believe that was right around when Elon officially bought Twitter, when the purchase officially went through, and everybody was joining Mastodon. I'd considered joining when I first heard

about the deal like back in, I think maybe September, October, but it seemed a little bit anticlimactic at that moment, so I didn't.

But with this I was like, “All right. You really just have to bite the bullet and do it,” and I had a little bit of extra time that day so I just was like okay, let me just learn the ropes real quick and see what happens. So I went on it, and my first sort of challenge is to figure out what instance I wanted to be a part of, and that's something that a lot of people complain about in regard to Mastodon, I think for pretty good reason. Although I think there are also advantages to the instance model. Mastodon only is not meant to be like a place where you build a platform, per se. It's a social network where forming a tight-knit community is prioritized over building a following.

Mastodon’s Structure

Cavar:
And I think, honestly not to throw shade, but I guess that I kind of am. I think that's why a lot of “big name” disability organizers are really pissed about the success of Mastodon because they care so much about clout they fundamentally don't understand that the purpose of Mastadon is not that. So the purpose of Mastodon is not to have, like 20K, 30K followers. The purpose is to be in a tight- knit, social group of people and enjoy each other's working company.

And that's why the federatedness of Mastodon is so crucial to its structure, because you have to actively think about what community do I want to be a part of? What do I want to see on my home feed? Because each federation is going to have a different home feed, and you can't just float between them on the same account.

You can follow someone anywhere, regardless of where they're signed up. But what you would consider your Twitter timeline is only going to be the people you follow, but you're also gonna have a timeline that's just your home federation.

Kelsi Acton:

Interesting.

Cavar:
So to give a concrete example. I'm signed up on a federation called Zirk.us, which is just, it's basically for people in sort of the broad humanities - writers, artists, scholars, people at that kind of nexus. And there are other feeds. I follow some people on one called Wandering.shop, which is specifically focused to science fiction and fantasy writers. I follow some on Humanities Commons. That's also kind of a similar setup to Zirk. I follow some on neurodifferent.me, which is a neurodivergence-based one. And then there's disability.social, which is the infamous one that was actually run by a doctor, which is just absolutely fucking ridiculous and not surprising at all. But there's a ton of and then there's bigger ones like Mastodon Social that has tons of users; that's just a really general one. I don't know if that answers your question, or gives you a basic outline.

Kelsie Acton:
No, that's really fascinating.

Cavar:
I guess, does the way I described Mastodon make sense?

Kelsie Acton:
Yeah, I think, it makes more sense to me now when you've described the purpose than any of the discourse I have seen over the past like two weeks.

Cavar:
And I will say, I mean it's kind of like blockchain, where I at least…It's easy, way easier to understand in my head than to try to verbalize it to other people. I think that if you join, if someone actually joins Mastodon and sees how it works, you can pick it up pretty quickly. But a lot of the objections that people have to joining it are just because they see it kind of described by randos on Twitter and it's like trying to describe how breathing works versus actually just breathing. Where it's like, if you let yourself be

intimidated by the weird description process, then it's gonna look super opaque but actually when you do it it's not that bad.

Kelsie Acton:
So what you're saying is don't be scared of the strange names for everything, just sign up and figure it out.

Cavar:
Yeah. Yeah.

Kelsie Acton:
Yeah. I'm really interested in your description of it as a space for community as opposed to clout.

Cavar:
Yeah.

Kelsie Acton:
I know it's a very initial impression, but do you feel like it's succeeding even with the influx of new people?

Cavar:
So, I can't speak to the comparison. I think there are a lot of old timers on Mastodon who believe that the influx of people is actually inhibiting community building. And I think that this is sort of, just kind of, people in Mastodon have spoken about kind of parallels to IRL xenophobia, where it's “Oh, you know all these new people are coming in and bringing their customs and I don't like it,” and that, I think, is sort of inevitable when a group of new people comes and brings a new means of communication with them.

And I think it remains to be seen if and how we as newcomers will integrate or not integrate into old time, you know 2016 to 2022 Mastodon users. That being said, the communities, the very new communities of which I am a part, I already feel quite comfortable with people, and most of the people

that I follow on Mastodon are relative strangers to me. Most of them I have found on Mastodon, and did not follow previously on Twitter.

There are some Twitter people that I have found and reconnected with, but most of the people I've found are completely new to me. Mastodon has also allowed me to follow a lot more people especially within Zirk.us that are not in my same areas of study that I would have absolutely no reason to make contact with if it weren't for Mastodon. Which is so interesting, and I think one of the most underrated parts of Mastodon is that your federation lets you scroll through the feeds of people whose profiles you would never click on if you had the kind of infrastructure of Twitter.

So, for example, if I scroll through the Zirk.us native feed, I will see post by Medievalists and Victorianists and people who are doing really techy sides of the digital humanities like coding and stuff and unless I block them, which I would have no reason to do because they didn’t do anything offensive to me. I can't just curate them out of my feed because they don't do what I do. They're just there, because we're all in Zirk.us together.

Which means that not only do I see their post about their particular fields of study that I know nothing about, but I also see their cat pictures, and their gardens, in their pottery, and their meals because all that stuff is together, and all that is being posted onto the same home feed that we're part of. You know what, Mastodon feels a lot more like wandering into a conference, making random conversation. And I I say this because I'm in between conferences right now, but like wandering into a conference and seeing someone with their little coffee and pastry and sitting down and saying,”Hi.” Whereas Twitter feels so much more like clout chasing, figuring out, okay, which connections are gonna make me more money, which connections are gonna make me more followers. Whereas Mastodon just like sitting around and chatting with random people.

Kelsie Acton:
Wow! I think you've sold me. That actually sounds really lovely.

Cavar:

It really is, it's completely. And don't try to make Mastodon Twitter. It's not Twitter. It doesn't want to be Twitter. It's not gonna replace Twitter, but it's doing something really fun that I like anyway.

Tumblr/Twitter Comparison

Kelsie Acton:
That's awesome. I have to ask what I feel like is the required question by the discourse. You lived through the sale of Tumblr, and now you're living through the sale of Twitter. Are there any analogies? How do they feel different or the same?

Cavar:
Oh, they're completely different. Because Tumblr wasn't about clout in really any meaningful aspect, either. The Tumblr brand, now it literally brands itself, but even before, it unofficially branded itself as being a dumpster fire in a very different way from Twitter. Twitter was a dumpster fire in the sense that people went on with their full names and credentials attached and made the absolute dumbest takes in the history of takes. And they just fucking did that, with their full names! People can see that, and they would just continue to do it.

Whereas on Tumblr, people would say completely wild shit, but they would do it with a shared sense of nudge-wink, none of this is serious. People would make, people would have ridiculous silly discourse and make ridiculous silly memes years before that same stuff would reappear on Twitter, but do it with a lot more of a sense of humor and a sense of irony than Twitter ever could.

Twitter is so suicidally committed to its earnestness that it just breeds a kind of vitriol that I don't know is possible on Tumblr, because no one who's been on Tumblr for any meaningful length of time takes it very seriously. Even if we can and do form very serious relationships and commitments on it. Like Tumblr has simultaneously been life-saving and life-creating, and also it's like, “Oh, my God! You know it's Tumblr.” So I think that the particular attitude that Tumblr users have has allowed it to go through all of

these different iterations and not really change userbases very significantly, and have no one really handwringing so defensively and so earnestly as people do on Twitter because it's just like Tumblr has always been shit.

It's gonna continue being shit until it dies. And perhaps the reason why it hasn't died yet is because we already expect it to be shit. So every time it gets shittier it’s just like well, we have a whole infrastructure of add-ons to make Tumblr usable cause we never assumed Tumblr is going to be usable in its standard form. Whether it be “Missing E” earlier on, or “XKit” now, we have been relying on rando software developers to develop software that allows us to use this platform because the platform sucks so bad. And so it's like our expectations simply weren't high enough to be disappointed.

Whereas Twitter, people expect Twitter to really be like an actual public square, people look at Twitter like they want to look at you know…people walk onto Twitter and I'm gonna use a healthcare analogy here.

People walk onto Tumblr and expect the American healthcare system; what they expect is that you're gonna be completely abandoned and left to rot so you make up your own stuff and you expect absolutely nothing. People roll up to Twitter like they're rolling up to Canada.

Kelsie Acton:
[laughs]
Sorry, I'm laughing because Canada is actually not that great. But yes.

Cavar:
Oh! And that's the whole point, right, because they roll up to Twitter, expecting what Americans think of Canada, and then they actually get there and they're like “Oh, this fucking sucks! How dare they”! And because that expectation is different, it means that the reaction is going to be really disproportionate to what the actual differences are.

Kelsie Acton:
Yeah. That's an amazing analogy.

Cavar:
Being a former Tumblr user, I expected absolutely nothing of Twitter, and maybe that's why I'm not very sad right now.

Kelsie Acton:
That's incredible. This may be like the most fun I've ever had doing an oral history.

Final Thoughts

Kelsie Acton:
Is there anything I've not asked you about Twitter and Mastadon and Tumblr that I should have asked you?

Cavar:
I am heartened by Mastodon's existence because it does not lend itself to people monetizing their identities. I really can't take seriously people who claim to be in disability community on Twitter who are constantly making themselves influencers rather than people. I'm not interested in that. That's not community. I don't want to buy your brand.

And I think that that has set back disability community organizing, as I saw it prior to Twitter or outside of Twitter, in a way that I hope that Mastodon heals at least in some in some ways.

Kelsie Acton:
Okay. I know it's like…but talk to me about what you were seeing in disability organizing before Twitter.

Cavar:
I was seeing conversation for the sake of conversation. I was seeing relationships for the sake of relationships. I still see this on Tumblr and on Mastadon in many cases; people who literally just want to talk about stuff. And there's no underlying, like, this is gonna make me popular. In a monetary or social capital sense. It's literally just people being interested in what other people have to say.

I don't mean to be Pollyannaish about that, cause there's plenty of really gross discourse happening. But even when that gross discourse is happening, it’s still not happening for the purposes of money and clout. It's just people being bitches at each other. And it's like, “God, bring back pure bitchiness”. I'm fine with that, I can be a bitch, too, and it's fine. I'll get into discourse and argue with people but don't do it because you want to make a quick buck off of whoever's watching. Just do it because, I don't know, arguing is fun.

I guess it is, and Twitter took all the fun out of arguing. Because now it's just who can make the bigger dunk and make more money off of it? Whereas, you know, bring me back to the good ole’ days where a dunk is just a fucking dunk.

Kelsie Acton:
Amazing. Is that where we should end, or is there anything else you want to say?

Cavar:
I feel like I said everything unless you need any clarification. But I feel like I said what I needed to say.

Kelsie Acton:
I love it. It was brilliant. Thank you so much for this, and thanks for suggesting the time.

Cavar:
For sure. If you have any other questions about this, or if you just want to talk about being disabled on the Internet, like I mean I'm doing a whole ass PhD in this. So suffice it to say, and like I'm doing a PhD in this as an excuse to get paid, however meagerly, to infodump about things I would infodump on anyway.