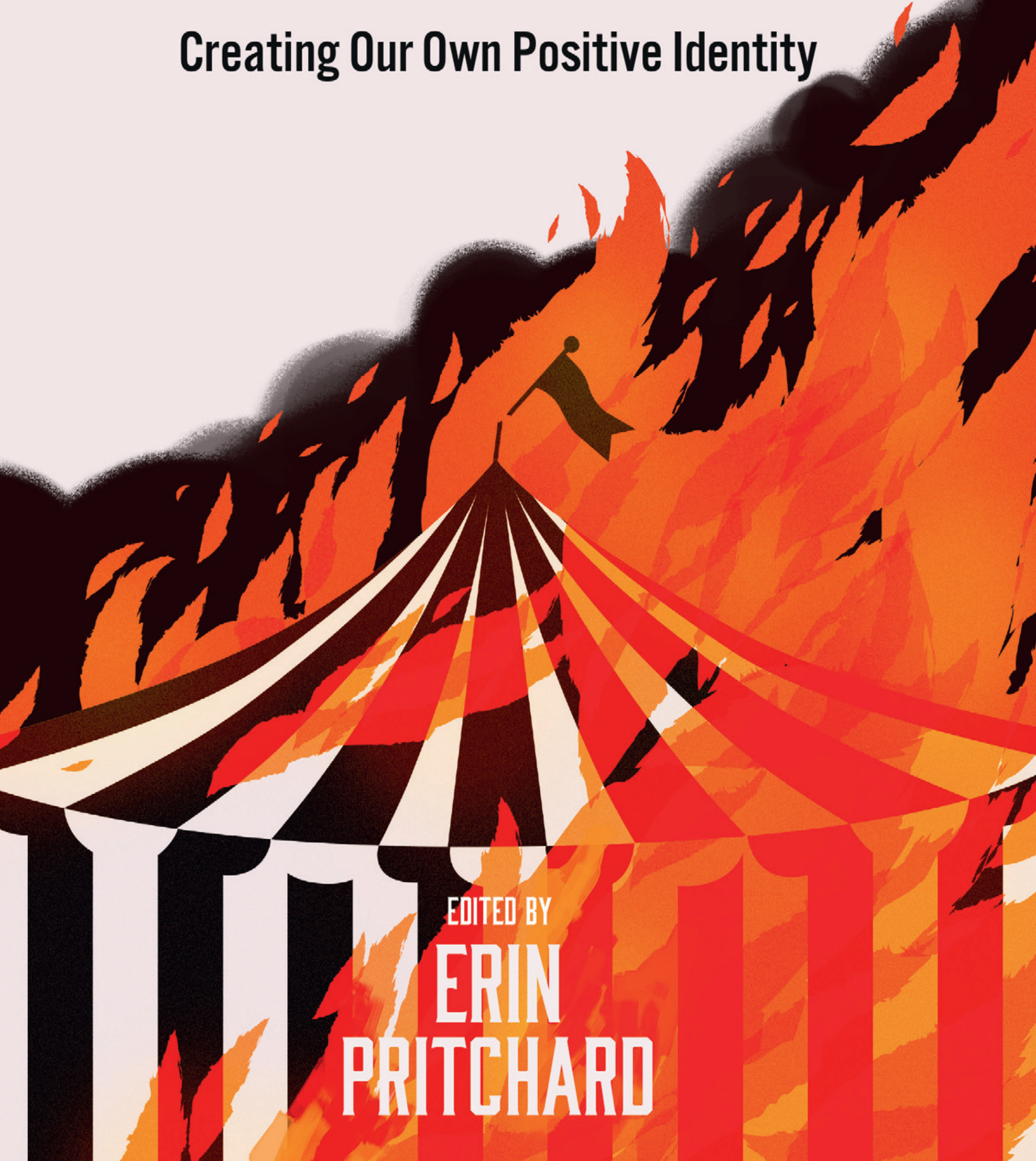
DWARFISM
ARTS AND ADVOCACY

Creating Our Own Positive Identity



EDITED BY
ERIN
PRITCHARD

Dwarfism Arts and Advocacy

With an unequivocal commitment to the creation of new insights which challenge the dynamics of disablism, this collection provides a rare assemblage of insider knowledge on dwarfism, identity, and the arts. Rooted firmly in the initial principles of Disability Studies, with its centering of disabled people's situated knowledges, whilst benefitting from more recent developments in Cultural Disability Studies, Pritchard, a leading figure in studies of dwarfism, has gathered the stories and arguments of an extensive range of people with dwarfism. All these contributors are well-positioned to provide a diverse body of accounts relating to dwarfism, setting personal aspects of life within wider social and cultural structures and contexts. All, together, this wide range of threads weave a rich tapestry, making a compelling statement for change in arts practice and wider cultural attitudes to dwarfism.

—***Alison Wilde*****, author of Film, Comedy, and Disability: Understanding Humour and Genre in Cinematic Constructions of Impairment and Disability**

Dwarfism Arts and Advocacy finally gives voice to the challenges of navigating the entertainment world as an artist with dwarfism. Whether it be in film, television, visual arts or art education, the authors of this collective share insights into the myriad of obstacles that stand in the way of forging a dignified artistic path in an ableist space. Every artist struggles with identity, individuality, and inconceivable odds. However, these artists explain in such vulnerable detail, the challenge of trying to destabilise the historical narrative of the dwarf in art and culture. It's not a pretty past. And the struggle to create new imagery, representation and dignity against centuries of ridicule and contempt is powerful. This is a must read for anyone who believes in the expansion of voices and perspectives in the art world.

—***Mark Povinelli*****, Star of *****Nightmare Alley*****; Past President of Little People of America**

The chapters in this book represent a wide range of voices from artists, performers, writers, advocates, and across diverse platforms including podcasters and bloggers, all within the dwarfism community from around the world. Each contributor shares their view and experience in relation to the challenges, frustrations, and barriers they have faced from society and portrayed within the arts, media, and film industries, each advocating for societal change to challenge the attitudes associated with dwarfism within the arts and media. It's evident that this book aims to bring crucial awareness and understanding to the challenges faced by individuals with dwarfism in life as well as in various industries, particularly in the arts, media, and film. By amplifying their voices and experiences this book has the potential to spark meaningful conversations and drive positive change in how dwarfism is represented and perceived in society. [...] Whether you're a person with dwarfism, friend or family member or a member of the wider community, whoever you are you will benefit from the insights and perspectives shared within these pages. This book is not just an educational resource it's a "call to action" for recognition of the need for greater inclusion, acknowledgement, and true-life representation of people with dwarfism across the arts, media, and film industries.

—***Maree Jenner*****, Vice President, SSPA**

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About the Editor

Erin Pritchard is a Senior Lecturer in Disability Studies at Liverpool Hope University and a core member of the Centre for Culture and Disability Studies. Her recent book, *Midgetism: The Exploitation and Discrimination of People with Dwarfism*, explores problematic representations and societal attitudes associated with dwarfism. Her work centres on how cultural representations of dwarfism influence the social understanding of the condition. She is currently a consultant for Disney, specialising in representations of dwarfism.

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About the Contributors

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Amanda Cachia has an established career profile as a curator, consultant, writer and art historian who specializes in disability art activism. She is the Assistant Professor and Assistant Director of the Masters of Arts in Arts Leadership Graduate Program at the Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts at the University of Houston. She is a 2023 grantee of the Creative Capital | Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant for her second monograph, *Hospital Aesthetics: Rescripting Medical Images of Disability.* Her first book, *The Agency of Access: Contemporary Disability Art and Institutional Critique*, is forthcoming with Temple University Press (2024). Cachia is also the editor of *Curating Access: Disability Art Activism and Creative Accommodation* (2022) published by Routledge, which includes over 40 international contributors. She has a PhD in Art History, Theory & Criticism from the University of California San Diego. Cachia has curated approximately 50 exhibitions, many of which have traveled to cities across the USA, England, Australia and Canada.

Jillian Curwin is a writer, content creator and advocate for dwarfism and disability awareness based in New York City. She has written articles for Betches Media talking about disability representation in fashion and entertainment along with highlighting current events in the disability space. In addition, she has consulted with brands and organisations about disability inclusion. She is the host of the podcast *Always Looking Up* where she talks to little people, disabled people, those that are disabled-adjacent and allies about living in a world that was not necessarily designed for them.

Sam Drummond is a lawyer, author and disability advocate. Sam studied Arts and Law at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. He began his career as a broadcaster and producer on community, commercial and public radio, before moving onto a career in law. His debut book, Broke, is a memoir about navigating the world through disability, downward mobility and unconventional families.

Debra Keenahan is an artist, writer, psychologist and disability advocate. She has a PhD in Psychology on Dehumanisation and another in visual arts on Critical Disability Aesthetics. Having achondroplasia dwarfism, Debra brings lived experience to understanding the dynamics of interactions of exclusion. As a multi-discipline artist, Debra's video work was selected for the Cannes Short Film Festival 2022 and her one-woman theatre work 'Othering', featured in the Sydney Festival 2023. Debra has authored numerous books and articles and has acted as a consultant on disability access to the National Gallery of Australia and NAVA (National Association of Visual Artists).

Alice Lambert is a Performance Artist and Actor as well as a Teacher of Drama and Contemporary Dance. Alice graduated from the University of East Anglia in 2023 with a degree in English Literature and Drama. She has appeared in numerous theatre plays and films, including Mary Poppins Returns (2018). Alice is passionate about raising awareness and challenging stereotypes about dwarfism through her work.

Simon Minty is a disability trainer and consultant. He advises major organisations on disabled people's inclusion in employment and customer interactions; plus broadcasters and creatives on the representation of people with dwarfism and other conditions. He is on the board of the National Theatre and Motability Operations plc. Simon co-hosts the podcast The Way We Roll and is a former co-host of BBC Access All. He co-founded the comedy troupe, Abnormally Funny People. He has a BSc in Philosophy and Sociology and postgraduate diploma in Disability Management at Work, both from City, University of London.

Nic Novicki graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, Temple University Fox School of Business, the school of Film and Television, and UCB Theatre. He is an actor, comedian and producer. He has appeared in numerous television shows including Boardwalk Empire and The Sopranos. He has also appeared in several movies, including Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse. He has produced several feature films, television pilots and web series for companies including Sony and Universal. Nic has also performed stand-up for AXS Gotham Comedy Live. He is the founder of the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge.

Tamm Reynolds is a solo artist also known as Midgitte Bardot (who is the most glamourous coping mechanism in the world). They have been performing across the UK cabaret, live art, drag, theatre and club spaces since 2016. Now, working on a solo show after two previous work-in-progresses (2022 & 2023), alongside starring in Royal Court's Sound of the Underground (written by Travis Alabanza and directed by Debbie Hannan) in a winter run in 2023. In 2023, she featured in a special issue of Vogue.

Steph Robson, aka *Hello, Little Lady*, is a creative practitioner and artist. Since graduating from Sunderland University with an MA in Radio (Production and Management) in 2006, she has been writing and making art to platform and give a voice to the lived experience of people with dwarfism. Her debut photographic exhibition 'You're Just Little' in 2018 revealed the obstacles, challenges and societal assumptions that dwarf people face every day. Her work explores the themes of accessibility, othering and the tensions between disability and society.

Emily Sullivan Sanford is a writer, blogger and speaker specialising in disability, beauty standards, bioethics and intersectional oppressions. Based in Berlin, she leads diversity workshops and collaborates with online platforms that question media representation of minorities. In the United States, she has worked with the Children of Difference Foundation and the Hastings Centre, a bioethics think tank. Her writing has been published by Salon, Feministing, John Hopkins University Press and others. She lives with her family in Berlin.

Angela Muir Van Etten graduated with law degrees from the University of Auckland in New Zealand and the University of Maryland in America. Van Etten retired from a diverse career as a barrister and solicitor, writing and editing law books for Thomson Reuters, writing for a nonprofit Christian organisation, and advocating for people with disabilities. As a dwarf, Van Etten was propelled to serve as national president of dwarfism organisations in New Zealand and the United States, advocate on dwarfism and disability issues and to write a dwarfism memoir trilogy and weekly blog.

Danny Woodburn is a journeyman actor and a graduate of Temple University Theatre and Film with over 150 TV appearances (*Seinfeld, Bookie*) and 30 films (*Watchmen, Death to Smoochy*). As a person with dwarfism, he advocates for all performers with disability (PWD), serving on SAG-AFTRA's PWD Committee, changing contract language, studio DEI policy and shifting the industry to acknowledge disabled performers in inclusion and access practices by launching an awareness campaign in the Huffington Post Op-Ed, 'If You Don't Really Mean Inclusion – Shut the F%&# Up!', *The Ruderman White Paper on Employment of People With Disability in TV, and articles in The Hollywood Reporter, Variety, The Guardian, Forbes, WSJ, The Philadelphia Inquirer.*

Acknowledgements

As the editor, my biggest appreciation goes to all of the authors within this book, not just for their contributions but also for all of the hard work they do in challenging harmful stereotypes of dwarfism.

I would like to thank Professor David Bolt for his support, especially for his valuable feedback. I would also like to thank other colleagues in Disability Studies at Liverpool Hope University, including Ella Houston and Claire Penketh, as well as colleagues outside of the subject, such as Jody Crutchley.

Introduction

Erin Pritchard (Senior Lecturer in Disability Studies)

Liverpool Hope University, UK

When you think of a person with dwarfism, what image springs to mind? Now, hold onto that image and consider how you are expected to respond to it. Is your response laughter, amusement or maybe curiosity? Do you even see them as human or just a novelty for the entertainment of others? For people who have never met a person with dwarfism, and that will be the majority given the rarity of the condition, their point of reference will be a character with dwarfism they have seen in a fairy tale, a film, television show or perhaps someone on social media. A quick Google search of the term 'dwarf' brings up a mixture of numerous images of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and mythical dwarfs complete with long beard, axe and viking helmet. The former characters have been purposely constructed to signify the supposed inferiority of people with dwarfism. The latter images 'combine physical attributes associated with dwarfism and longstanding folk motifs about the supernatural' (Mock, 2020, p. 155). These are not natural or realistic representations of dwarfism but rather are socially and culturally constructed to assume that people with dwarfism are not fully human but rather something different and often amusing. Very few people would question cultural constructions of dwarfism but assume instead that is how we are naturally or that we are accepting to these representations.

How people are represented, particularly minority groups, is important to consider. Representations are an act of power, as they influence how people are perceived and subsequently treated. Dwarfism is a condition that most people know of, yet know very little about. The media reduces people with dwarfism to figures of fun who have to rely on midget entertainment, as their dwarfism somehow makes them incapable of any other form of employment. Growing up, I was only ever exposed to the metanarrative of dwarfism, and yet I knew I was not like the dwarfs I saw in the media. It was in Betty Adelson's (2005b) book, 'The Lives of Dwarfs: Their Journey from Public Curiosity Toward Social Liberation' where I first learnt about a myriad of very successful people with dwarfism, working in numerous occupations. Before this, the only books I saw people with dwarfism in were fairy tales and books about freak shows.

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Throughout history, representations of dwarfism have been controlled by average-sized people, in what Professor David Bolt terms the metanarrative of disability. The metanarrative for disability can be defined as 'the grand story in relation to which people who have impairments often find themselves defined' (Bolt, 2019, p. 114). The metanarrative of dwarfism constructs people with dwarfism as entertaining figures of fun (Pritchard, 2021; Watson, 2020). General society, including children, learn about dwarfism through cultural representations of the condition, popular within the media, including films and television shows (Pritchard, 2023). These representations have created a distorted view of dwarfism which contributes to the abuse people with dwarfism experience within society (Ellis, 2018; Pritchard, 2021; Tan, 2021).

Bolt (2021) points out that the metanarrative of disability is favoured over personal narratives. What is frustrating is that a minority of midget entertainers have aided in perpetuating ableist stereotypes of dwarfism. I have previously reclaimed the word midget to emphasise how some forms of entertainment exploit and reinforce discriminatory representations of dwarfism (See Pritchard, 2023). As a result, people with dwarfism who partake in this form of entertainment are referred to as midget entertainers. What is problematic is that those who continue to partake in derogatory entertainment, including midget tossing, are given a more prominent platform to defend these ableist perceptions of dwarfism (Pritchard, 2023). Thus, we cannot rely on equality to appear; we need to fight for it.

A key aspect of challenging the metanarrative is recognising the importance of disability voice. Allowing those who advocate for a more positive representation of dwarfism to share personal narratives of the work they do aids in challenging long-held beliefs about dwarfism. If we want equality, then the first step is to challenge the metanarrative of dwarfism, which is informed by ableist notions of the condition. What society seems to be unaware of is that there are a growing number of people with dwarfism who are pushing against the metanarrative of dwarfism. They are advocates with dwarfism who are using various platforms to raise awareness.

Disability Arts and Advocacy

Disability arts and the media are important tools in challenging problematic stereotypes of disability, as well as giving disabled people a platform for creating their own representations. Disability arts offer disabled people the opportunity to expose disabling barriers within society (Allan, 2005). While numerous work has exposed and challenged problematic representations of dwarfism (see Ellis, 2018; Haberer, 2010; Mock, 2020; Pritchard, 2021, 2023; Pritchard & Kruse, 2020; Tyrrell, 2020; Watson, 2020), there is limited work exploring the advocacy work being done by people with dwarfism within the arts and media. The aim of this book is to challenge problematic stereotypes and attitudes associated with dwarfism in the arts and media by providing artists and activists with dwarfism a platform to showcase and explain their work.

This book was borne from my frustrations with the lack of representation of dwarfism in disability arts. That is not to say that there were no artists with dwarfism, but that disability arts is dominated by a particular representation. While I knew of some great artists with dwarfism involved in disability arts, I felt that there was a need to provide more of a collective voice to challenge the metanarrative of dwarfism. However, as this book developed, I realised that it was important to include other people with dwarfism who are utilising other forms of media, such as podcasts and blogs, to advocate for a more true-to-life representation of dwarfism.

I choose to only include people with dwarfism whose work does not promote derogatory representations of dwarfism. Forms of derogatory dwarf entertainment include anything which constructs people with dwarfism as inferior. Those who partake in midget entertainment, which I argue is an ableist form of entertainment used to keep people with dwarfism within an inferior place in society, are already given a big enough platform. Because midget entertainers are perpetuating ableist stereotypes of dwarfism, they are often defended and given a voice by mainstream media. For example, I have come across numerous news stories about derogatory midget entertainment, such as hiring out a midget entertainer for a celebratory event. These stories often include extracts from interviews with the midget entertainers, explaining how they enjoy what they do and thus everyone should mind their own business (Pritchard, 2023). For example, Eric Bourne, a midget entertainer who hires himself out, commented, ‘I reckon people should mind their own business and if we are happy, leave us to get on with our lives’ (Hall, 2019). The use of objective pronouns such as ‘us’ and ‘we’ suggests that Eric is speaking on behalf of all people with dwarfism. For centuries, midget entertainers have perpetuated a problematic representation of dwarfism which robs the rest of us of our autonomy in society. However, Watson (2020) demonstrates how representations of dwarfism are slowly changing. Aside from a few midget entertainers, people with dwarfism have been turning their backs on derogatory entertainment decades (Adelson, 2005a).

Going back to your image, perhaps you thought of Tyrion Lannister from *Game of Thrones*, played by Peter Dinklage. When offered the role it is rumoured that Dinklage demanded that there would be ‘no beard, no pointy shoes’ (Schulman, 2019), resisting a stereotypical portrayal of a mythical dwarf. While Dinklage’s attitude has been acknowledged, the entertainment industry still promotes stereotypical depictions of dwarfism (Meeuf, 2014). To make an impact and change society’s perception of dwarfism, it is important to recognise the others that are resisting and challenging the metanarrative of dwarfism. This will help to truly demonstrate to wider society that people with dwarfism are not figures of fun or mythological beings.

Voices for Change

The voices of people with dwarfism are important. Disability art is about being given a voice and about pride (Allan, 2005). As previously mentioned, representations of dwarfism have been constructed by average height people, who deem them subhuman. However, people with dwarfism are starting to challenge these representations and take back control of their autonomy. Therefore, this book gives artists and activists with dwarfism a voice to aid in promoting a more positive identity, which challenges long-held beliefs about dwarfism.

This book brings together a collective voice, which seems missing due to the fractured nature of the advocacy within the dwarfism community. There exist numerous associations for people with dwarfism around the world, including, but not limited to: The Danish Dwarf Association, Little People of America (LPA), Little People of Canada, Little People of Ireland, Little People of New Zealand and Short Statured People of Australia (SSPA). In the United Kingdom alone, there are several associations for people with dwarfism. These include the Dwarfs Sports Association UK (DSAUK), Little People UK (LPUK), Restricted Growth Association (RGA), Short Statured Scotland (SSS) and Walking with Giants. Despite the numerous associations for people with dwarfism, there seems to be limited collective advocacy for people with dwarfism. As a person with dwarfism, who is part of numerous social media groups for people with dwarfism and advocates for equality for people with the condition, I noticed that the fight against ableist conceptions of dwarfism was lacking. There are numerous reasons for this, too many to cover in this introduction. Still, one is that we are often challenged or silenced when attempting to speak out against derogatory forms of entertainment, such as midget tossing and midget wrestling (see Pritchard, 2023). However, as Branfield (1998, p. 144) states, 'we must, if we want to break from our past, be the initiators and designers of our liberation'. In other words, people with dwarfism cannot just wait for change; instead, they must be the voice to fight against derogatory representations of their condition, as opposed to the enablers. It is hoped that this book will encourage people with dwarfism and their allies to become advocates alongside those who already are.

Each chapter is written by or is based on an interview with a person with dwarfism to provide a raw and less nuanced narrative. As the editor, although I have dwarfism, I have tried to have minimal input. I felt that to provide a true voice and empowerment, the chapters needed to be written by people with dwarfism who could share their first-hand experiences of working in the arts and media. However, for numerous reasons, such as time constraints, some contributors were unable to write their own chapters. Instead, I conducted semi-structured interviews with them, and thus, my contribution is noted as 'with' them. After conducting the interview, I edited it and used it as a basis for the chapter. I expanded on parts of their interviews, often with previous research in Disability studies. I also added pseudonyms and removed names of people or organisations where relevant. The chapter was then sent back to the contributor to ensure that I had correctly interpreted their views and experiences.

When interviewing participants, my role was not to dispute their beliefs but rather to get them to expand on them. Authors were encouraged to reflect on the work they do and why. Chapters were sent to the contributors to edit, which included expanding on points and removing anything they no longer wished to include. Each chapter demonstrates that people with dwarfism do not have to abide by ableist stereotypes to work in the arts, i.e. derogatory entertainment which is often framed as 'a job for them' (Pritchard, 2023). It is often implied that actors with non-normative bodies, such as people with dwarfism, should somehow be grateful for roles that are reflective of the freak show discourse (Tyrrell, 2020). The authors offer their thoughts, experiences and importantly recommendations to improve representations of dwarfism and counteract ableist attitudes.

Throughout the book, terms such as dwarf, person with dwarfism and person of short stature appear, as authors have various reasons for adopting specific terms, based on their own sociocultural experiences of dwarfism. There are many terms used to describe someone with dwarfism, including, but not limited to: person with dwarfism, person of short stature, dwarf, little person and person of restricted growth. Most people with dwarfism accept any of these terms, although this can depend on where you are in the world. For example, little person is favoured in the United States; however, it can be met with hostility in the United Kingdom as this term is also used to refer to children. This is problematic for people with dwarfism as other people often infantilise them. Sometimes, the term 'dwarf' is also deemed distasteful by people with dwarfism, due to its connection to particular representations, including within fantasy stories and films. It can be hard to agree on an acceptable term, especially when terms associated with being small are deemed negative (Pritchard, 2023). One term the majority of people with dwarfism detest is 'midget'; however, in this book, some contributors are drawing on the concept of midgetism (see Pritchard, 2023) and reclaiming the word. Thus, in some cases, contributors refer to people with dwarfism who engage in derogatory entertainment as 'midget entertainers'. This is not an acceptance of the word midget to describe a person with dwarfism but rather as action and form of representation.

Outline of the Book

Reading and editing the following chapters and accompanying biographies have filled me with immense pride in dwarfism. I hope that others, especially those with dwarfism, who read the book also feel the same. For anyone who may not be familiar with dwarfism, I hope that you recognise that dwarfism is not a novelty but a condition that is disabling in a society made for the average-sized person. However, people with dwarfism are still capable of success. The next time a newspaper or events manager claims that midget entertainment is somehow a job for people with dwarfism, think of the people in this book. The authors come from various backgrounds, some are from a single parent household and most of them, including myself, have experienced both education and employment discrimination. Thus, if midget entertainment was our only option, this book would not exist.

The book opens with Amanda Cachia, a crip curator of artists and outspoken advocate for contemporary disability art, examining key exhibitions throughout her curating career that chart an evolution of her work towards the disability justice movement. This chapter shows how Cachia has been deploying access in her curatorial practice since 2011 intending to transform reductive interpretations of the disabled body. This chapter offers ways in which disabled people can use the arts to curate their own experiences.

Moving on, but still firmly using art as a medium for change, Debra Keenahan introduces the reader to her work as a sculptor. She argues that to adequately represent her embodied experience through her art requires the representation of the dynamic subjective process of identity formation. Through the sculptural encounter, Keenahan's intention is for viewers to experience the corporeal, spatial and relational dynamics which communicate that a person with dwarfism is an 'Other'. Whereas Keenahan wants to engage viewers not as if they are engaging with her, but rather as if the sculpture is engaging with the viewer as if the viewer is her. That is, Keenahan endeavours to achieve the dynamic of reverse audiencing of the female dwarf through the oppositional gaze.

While the first two chapters demonstrate the importance of art, in Chapter 3, *Where are the Creative Opportunities for People with Dwarfism Lived Experience in Participatory Arts Funding?* Steph Robson argues that there is an urgent need for institutional support, time, funding, development, research and mentorship in creative opportunities for the dwarfism community. She proposes how this can be achieved, primarily through participatory arts, whether as professionals, individuals or as groups. This chapter opens up more forms of engagement with art but demonstrates how there is often a lack of support which can hinder people's engagement with art as a form of advocacy.

The book then moves on to how performers with dwarfism refuse to engage in roles that reinforce stereotypes. In Chapter 4, Alice Lambert, performance artist and actor, takes the reader through her journey in becoming a performer whose work pushes for equality. In the first part, we discuss how she became a performer. While she will openly tell anyone who asks, 'Yes, I have done Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', in this chapter, Lambert unpicks her experience and gives an explanation so that people can understand why she would never do that role ever again. She reflects on how it was promoted as a positive form of employment for people with dwarfism and how activists were constructed negatively by those in the industry. Through time, hard work and perseverance, Alice explains how the narrative which runs through her work has always got some acknowledgement of dwarfism and equal rights.

In Chapter 5, Tamm Reynolds, aka Midgitte Bardot, reflects upon how engaging in drag performances allows them to push for a more positive and realistic dwarf identity through political performances. Reynolds, who can be considered a crip, queer solo performer, believes that having a drag alter ego permits them to do anything with an air of confidence that someone like them is usually not afforded. In this case, it is to be sexy, while exposing the everyday discrimination they face as a person with dwarfism. Referring to herself as a 'political freak', Reynolds demonstrates how she engages in shock performance to raise awareness. In particular, within this chapter, Reynolds includes a poem she recites to audiences to express the psycho-emotional disablism she faces as a result of the actions of one performer who often engages in midget entertainment (Pritchard, 2023).

In Chapter 6, Danny Woodburn, acclaimed actor and disability activist, details how throughout his career he has had to negotiate with writers and producers who have often resorted to engaging with problematic stereotypes of dwarfism in their productions. While Woodburn has an admirable career and starred in many films and television shows, most notably Seinfeld, this chapter demonstrates how his success has not been easy. As a result, Woodburn discusses his role as an activist in the industry, including how he confronts the controversial practice of cripping up through what he terms the Woodburn ratio. This chapter provides an insight into how the film industry is often inaccessible for disabled actors, which can limit opportunities.

In Chapter 7, Simon Minty, founder of Abnormally Funny People and Board Member of the National Theatre, explores the successes and the not-so-positive moments of his career. Keeping with the theme of positive representations, Minty shows how the depictions of people with dwarfism have shifted to start to include more realistic representation and how this can impact an individual's confidence, identity and they are treated. Minty also demonstrates how challenging these depictions can lead to more interesting and creative work.

Further developing the push for more positive representations of dwarfism, in Chapter 8, Nic Novicki, creator of Easterseals Disability Film Challenge, reflects on his career as an actor, writer and producer with dwarfism. Novicki explains how he was able to get work for himself by creating his own projects, which opened up the door for him to play roles that were not defined by his height. As a result, Novicki discusses how he was inspired to create opportunities for other disabled people, including actors and creators with dwarfism, through the creation of the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge – a film-making competition where each film must include a disabled person. Novicki argues that taking your career in your own hands opens up the door for telling authentic stories, and it also leads to opportunities for better representations of dwarfism. This also enables what Nic terms 'dwarf pride', pride that we should have in ourselves as people with dwarfism.

Moving on from performers, the next set of chapters focuses on how other people with dwarfism advocate using different platforms. In Chapter 9 *Dwarfism Advocacy: A Lifetime Appointment [Or] A Life Tenure*, Angela Muir van Etten, lawyer and former president of LPA, gives readers a thorough insight into her life as an activist. In this chapter, van Etten provides a review of how to advocate against negative encounters with the public and is presented with the underlying premise that dwarfs should be accepted as equal contributing members of society. A discussion of systems advocacy against dwarf tossing and environmental barriers is presented within a framework of effective advocacy principles that can be applied to any situation. Van Etten shows that advocacy makes change possible when people care enough to do something, commit to the cause for as long as it takes, collaborate and form coalitions with like-minded people and communicate with honesty and respect.

In Chapter 10, Kara B Ayers reflects on her evolution as both a content creator with dwarfism and a researcher who studies disability portrayals in the media. Ayers specifically explores her intentionality to share glimpses into her life as a mother with dwarfism and a disability advocate. While we need more representations of dwarfism in the media overall, Ayers argues for the priority of quality over quantity given the pitfalls of inspiration porn and similar objectifying portrayals. Ayers offers some recommendations for a more positive representation of dwarfism on social media.

Continuing with how media can be used to challenge misconceptions about dwarfism; Jillian Curwin, founder and owner of the podcast *Always Looking Up*, reflects on her work as a podcast host. She argues that podcasts have become a platform to amplify voices that are not often heard in mainstream media on a wide range of topics. In Chapter 11, Curwin demonstrates how she has used this platform to create and to raise awareness on issues affecting the dwarfism and disabled communities. Specifically, Curwin discusses how the conversations she has had, including with prominent activists within the disability community, have resonated with listeners across the globe. Curwin argues that a podcast episode creates a space for ideas for change to be shared and lessons to be learned. As a result, she argues that organisations such as Little People of America should have their own podcast to inform, educate and advocate because people are listening.

In Chapter 12, Sam Drummond details how he found his 'voice' both on the radio and through writing his memoir *Broke*. Drummond provides readers with an insight into his life as a man with dwarfism, from a single parent family, demonstrating how memoir can be used to showcase the intersectional life of someone with dwarfism. Drummond describes how problematic representations have impacted social encounters throughout his life, which are presented within his memoir. This chapter shows another way for people with dwarfism to challenge problematic representations by showing their real-life impact.

In the last chapter, Emily Sullivan-Sanford presents her experience with limb-lengthening, addressing the enormous social pressure to be normal in appearance, illustrating this pressure with personal, anecdotal and statistical evidence. Height altering treatments are a controversial topic within the dwarfism community. I felt it was important to include the voice of a person with dwarfism who has had limb-lengthening surgery. Sullivan-Sanford recommends that both realistic and idealistic representations of people with dwarfism are required in mainstream media. These goals are the basis of her work with online platforms and the diversity workshops that she leads. This last chapter helps the reader to consider some of the arguments in the previous chapters and how they are constructed by ableist ideas inherent within society.

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