

DISABILITY JUSTICE PRAXIS: SICK, DISABLED, DEAF WOMEN AND NON-BINARY EDUCATORS OF COLOR HOLDING EACH OTHER IN RADICAL LOVE AND ACCESSIBLE KINSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Academic spaces in the United States remain exclusive and toxic for those who embody multiple marginalized identities. There is hope, however, as subversive practices and resistance to systemic oppression and hostility continue to infiltrate academia through the work of socially engaged scholar-activists. In this paper, we—four sick, disabled, and Deaf women and non-binary educators of color—come together to discuss our paths to understanding ourselves and our places within academia. Through the methodology of activist ethnography, we explore the diverse and complex ways we embrace Disability Justice in our teaching, research, scholarship, and activism. Collectively and through interwoven storytelling, we disrupt and challenge ableism, racism, settler colonialism, cis-heterosexism, classism, and other intersecting forms of oppression within academia by (re)centering and amplifying our lived experiences and disabled, Deaf, and chronically ill epistemologies. Simultaneously, through a Disability Justice praxis, we work to imagine and create educational spaces that build and support radical love, accessible kinship, and healing.

KEYWORDS

decolonial imaginaries,
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INTRODUCTION

As a deeply colonial, white supremacist, cis-hetero-patriarchal space, academia centers the perspectives, narratives, and knowledge of cis-hetero, white, non-disabled male settlers. Acting as a site of resistance, this paper is based on a panel discussion at the 3rd International Conference on Disability, Arts, and Education in which we, four sick, mad, neurodivergent, Deaf/disabled, early-career, international, transnational, diasporic, United States-based faculty of color, exposed the impact of interlocking systems of oppression on our lives and work inside and outside the academy. Following the positive reception of our panel discussion, we openly discuss forms of violence not readily perceived as such in the dominant U.S. cultural imagination. It is equally important to highlight the influence of care labor in our work and to write transparently about the binaries we indispose with this intervention—primarily, the one between intellectual work and lived experience in scholarly research. More specifically, we explore the inextricable link between scholarly work and the strategies we employ to survive as academics with multiple minoritized identities. Anecdotally, the saying “there is a time and place for everything” is one we often witness when openly sharing our struggles as Deaf/disabled/mad/chronically ill women and non-binary people of color who are also immigrant, transnational, diasporic, and mixed-race faculty. Referring to a more suitable time and place to name vulnerability and precarity is a performative act at best and a silencing strategy at worst. In fact, there never really is a good time or a place to agreeably name oppression when expecting genuine accountability. In other words, to assign a specific spatial and temporal location to dissent is to obfuscate the materiality of fear, as we harbor it in our bodies and psyches in ways that erode our capacity to educate while resisting the systems that reproduce colonial violence. Fears of expendability and precarity become so deeply rooted within us that they often suffocate our dissenting voices and, with them, claim to the unpaid, invisible care labor we inherently perform as women and non-binary faculty of color. In working collectively to address these realities, we practice *accessible kinship* to sustain each other and our collective labor. In that sense, Accessible kinship is the act of actively cultivating and igniting each other’s voices in ways that honor alternative ways of being and knowing, while simultaneously forging an ethic of love. The late bell hooks (2006)

argued an ethic of love is imperative in “shaping the direction of our political vision and our radical aspirations” (p. 243), which deeply resonates with the #AccessIsLove Movement (Wong, Mingus & Ho, 2019).

#DISABILITYTOOWHITE AND THE MOVEMENT TOWARD DE-CENTERING WHITE-CENTRIC, COLONIAL EPISTEMOLOGIES

The late disability studies scholar Chris Bell (2012; 2016) documented the prevalence of white-centered epistemologies in the scholarly literature of U.S.-based disability studies. Following this legacy, Vilissa Thomson (Disability Intersectionality Summit, 2017), the disability justice activist and critical social worker, created and popularized the growing campaign #DisabilityTooWhite among disabled content creators and advocates on social media. Both interventions reveal a prevailing phenomenon in disability scholarship and grassroots politics—that is, the absence not only of racial and ethnic diversity among scholars and activists with access to platforms for political engagement but also the exclusion of people with other minoritized markers of identity along the lines of nationality, age, gender, sexuality, class, citizenship, and others. These interventions push us to ask, whose scholarship has “legitimate” epistemological value within the canon of Disability Studies? In response, there have been numerous developments in the last few decades in scholarly literature, culture and the arts, disability politics, and activism that reflect the complexity and multifaceted quality of the disability experience. Our intervention builds upon this commitment to a critical, anti-racist, decolonial approach to disability studies (Hall, 2019; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009).

METHODOLOGY: DISABILITY JUSTICE PRAXIS AS ACCESSIBLE KINSHIP

We use interwoven storytelling to inform a counter-narrative against the hegemony of the medical model of disability in both teaching and research and, by extension, the pervasive, one-dimensional understanding and representation of disabled experiences in dominant academic discourses and public rhetoric. Overall, our work endeavors to dismantle white-settler colonial epistemologies in the classroom, the institution, and in our communities of practice. At the macro level, we adopt a Disability Justice approach to praxis and position ourselves against

structural ableism as a tool of white supremacy, cis-hetero-patriarchy, colonialism, and imperialism. At the micro-level, we use collective ethnography to document our strategies against interpersonal ableism and other forms of violence.

Disability Justice, forwarded by grassroots activists Patty Berne, Stacy Park Milbern, Mia Mingus, Leroy Moore, and other queer and trans-disabled people of color¹, envisions the creation of a world grounded in access, care, and love—and free from the violences of settler colonial capitalism, white supremacy, cis-hetero-patriarchy, ableism, and more. Importantly, Disability Justice was created and supported by activists located within radical community spaces, such as Sins Invalid, Disability Justice Culture Club, and Access is Love. Thus, Disability Justice emerges outside of academia—and therefore calls on those of us in education to embrace its activist, social justice, and world-making orientations. Miles, Nishida, and Forber-Pratt (2017) strongly advocate for “critical intersectional disability studies” that support the “advancement of Disability Justice” (para. 2).

Ethnographic research has deep roots in colonial mindsets and practices. Indeed, early ethnographies used in Anthropology were conducted by highly privileged researchers (often Anglo-American, white, cis-heterosexual, non-disabled men) observing communities believed to be “primitive” and thus classified as “exotic”—such as global Indigenous communities. Instead, we employ a decolonial approach to ethnographic research to both turn ethnography on its head and resist the replication of colonialist methods (Deschner & Dorion, 2020). Specifically, we use activist ethnography, an engaged methodology rooted in anti-racist, anti-ableist, de-colonial, plural feminist praxis, to document our personal experiences as disabled scholar-activists embedded in social movement activism. In so doing, our goal is to de-center “view from nowhere” approaches to research and “valorize positionalities and sociopolitical commitments that activists make to social justice and the production of knowledge” (Craven & Davis, 2013, p. xi). As scholar-activists, we seek to demonstrate the liberatory potential of emancipatory research methods. We thus endeavor to unveil and transform positivist approaches that purport to move closer to the “Truth,” but in actuality, move further away from seeking material, sustainable justice for historically marginalized communities.

In what follows, we each (re)examine the tensions and whiplashes we encounter in the academy and how they inform our scholarly activism.

ACCESSIBLE KINSHIP: FORGING AN ETHIC OF LOVE (SARA M. ACEVEDO)

As an autistic Mestiza scholar-activist, I work strategically alongside other scholars of color to destabilize subordinating hierarchies that position us as expendable within the neoliberal educational machine. Together, we open textual and practical spaces of contestation where a newly emerging consciousness forged on accessible kinship, and an ethic of love (hooks, 2006) may take root, grow, and blossom. In the same spirit, we hope to carve liberatory spaces wherein to expand upon this work in conversation with other decolonial imaginaries. Below, I trace the warp and weft of my roots to unravel the steps that led me to this work.

I was born in Colombia. Growing up, I had everything I needed to lead a happy childhood, ready access to all necessities, and a loving family. Yet, being habitually rejected in social situations and exposed to bullying for being “too sensitive, too dramatic, too intense, too overbearing...” left me feeling confused and anxious. I spent my teens mimicking people, wanting to become one of the “popular kids”—a pursuit I now find baffling considering the level of anxiety I experience as I navigate inaccessible social dynamics in a violent and sensory hostile world while also living with chronic illness.

I was (still am) considered “sociable,” “chatty,” and “friendly” by the many health professionals that have evaluated me for disabling anxiety and depression throughout the years. All of them unanimously glossed over the fact that I have little to no understanding of how to establish or protect my personal boundaries, gauge my energy input/output, or regulate my emotions, among many other skills meant to shield me in vulnerable social situations. Considering that the “textbook” autistic archetype—that is, a non-speaking, white, male child—often functions as a monolithic standard and a colonial yardstick for diagnosis, masking is a common occurrence among women and non-binary people who manage to “fly under the radar” and is also a key factor in underdiagnosis and referral bias among women and non-binary people of color (Acevedo, 2020).

I have always known of my neurodivergence, I just didn't have the language to name or explain it until fairly recently—upon receiving a “community diagnosis.” At that time, I sought out an official diagnosis. Far from a need for medical confirmation, my pursuit of a formal diagnosis was a strategy to access the supports I needed to survive the hyperproductive cycles and accelerated pace of late capitalism and its demands on my multiply disabled bodymind. I did not receive these supports until several years after diagnosis and many encounters with gendered, racialized, and ableist-specific violence. As a neurodivergent person, I understand my experiences through the lens of multiplicity and its challenge to “the logic of normative violence” (McGuire, 2006), which is deeply rooted in the colonial power of biomedical diagnostic regimes (Blackmore & Hodgkins, 2012; Foucault, 1988, 2014), and their claim to “truth” over the human experience.

I describe and experience disability through various lenses, yet to de-center dichotomous understandings and representations of disability and debase reductionism I name two here: 1) disability is an embodied experience intimately tethered to what makes us *matter*—pain, joy, pleasure, desire, emotion, vulnerability, and precarity; and 2) disability is a cultural and political category of identity and a site of collective struggle and liberation. Overall, to reclaim the complexity and multiplicity of the disability experience is to resist ideologies, institutions, and practices that profit from “curative violence” (Kim, 2017) and the medicalization of everyday life.

The Neurodiversity framework informs multiple layers of my identity and political inculturation. As a counter-narrative, the Neurodiversity Movement lends depth to my experience as a peripheral knowledge producer and, while I occupy an “outsider within” status (Hill-Collins, 1986), I also benefit from lateral privilege. I thread the “borderlands” (Anzaldúa, 1987) of academia, yet have ready access to knowledge produced therein; I am invited to sit at the table and occasionally build a new one too. I have access to spaces where I can rearticulate autistic subjectivity beyond clinical pathology and claim sovereignty over my own identity while simultaneously bringing attention to the sovereignty of the autistic community and autistic people as autonomous knowledge producers and cultural agents.

As an academic, I, too, am complicit in the reproduction of disability as a profitable “good” within the circuit of cognitive capitalism. As a disabled academic, I use my privilege as a so-called “legitimate” knowledge producer to strategically subvert and interrupt the appropriation of disability grassroots knowledge as well as the careless co-optation of trending topics and buzz words such as “neurodivergent” or “Disability Justice” in the academy, especially the callous erasure of histories of violence undergirding revolutionary epistemologies and decolonial vocabularies.

In the classroom, I enact living utopias by embodying what I hope will be the accessible futures that sustain our “coming communities” (Agamben, 1990). In the same vein, I use a decolonial, plural feminist, anti-capitalist approach to education to resist the neoliberal policies that breed competition and the mindless consumption of knowledge across college classrooms today. Using Freire's (1985) notion of “critical consciousness,” I design curricula aimed at rekindling cooperation and solidarity among learners and help guide rather than dictate their steps as they build socially just, sustainable global communities by and for *all*.

Although it sounds indeed utopic, I don't romanticize the care labor involved in birthing alternative presents and futures in spaces dominated by the (i)logic of late capitalism; quite on the contrary, I permanently grieve as I carry the heavyweight of injustice on my aching bodymind. So, “quitting social justice work” would be ideal, yet it is still impossible—for if not us, then who? If not now, then when?

WE ARE ENOUGH: BEING, RELATING, RESISTING THROUGH DISABILITY JUSTICE (HAILEE YOSHIZAKI-GIBBONS)

Within many contexts, including higher education, to hide is to survive. Those of us with marginalized identities in academia are constantly being pushed to conform, to meet ableist, white supremacist, colonial, patriarchal, and capitalistic standards of “productivity,” to teach from a disembodied, falsely objective framework, to meet the ever-increasing demands of the college or university while simultaneously denying our own needs. We are made to feel alone and forced to hide our whole selves, and this makes us sicker and more tired. Here, I reflect on how my journey to understand and embrace who I am, has led me

to different ways of being, relating, and resisting within higher education.

When I was six years old, I wrote my family a note: “If you need me, I’ll be in my playhouse—running from my misery.” Embracing mad humor, I laugh about this now. But the note signifies the darkness, the unwellness that has followed me much of my life, always threatening to swallow me whole, sometimes coming close but never quite managing to do so. And I kept this unwellness a secret for so long, for decades, because that is what I was taught to do. My Japanese-American father made it clear that mental illness and unwellness were not an issue he would discuss or even tolerate in our family. But truthfully, we all were unwell, perhaps, especially my father. My father was taught we needed to handle issues with silence and strength. To do so was to survive.

But how could we not be unwell? As a mixed-race Japanese and Irish American family born out of war, violence, and U.S. colonial and imperial imaginaries and practices, subject to white supremacy and xenophobia that simultaneously rejected us while pushing us to assimilate. How could we not be unwell?

The message of silence, secrecy, and passing seeped into my life. For years, I struggled to identify differently than I was read by others. As someone who can pass as non-disabled in many contexts, typically passes as white rather than multiracial, and is often read as heterosexual, it took me years—decades even—to claim who I am. I have always been pushed towards the norm, and while being able to pass provides me with privilege, it is also conditional and subject to the dominant groups’ acceptance of me. I always knew I did not truly belong, and this was made clear to me many times. Identity became a site of constant struggle for me—which I rarely voiced, and rarely discussed with others. I viewed it as a burden I had to bear, silently and stoically.

It has taken me a long time to express these feelings, and to share these experiences.

It has taken me a long time to claim unwellness, as Mimi Khúc encourages us to do (Khúc, 2021; Varathan, 2021). It has taken me a long time to understand that the individualistic, independent approach to understanding my place in the world depended on silence, secrecy, and passing and was rooted in ableist, white supremacist, and

colonial frameworks. It has taken me a long time to recognize that this approach was isolating me from queer, disabled, multiracial, and BIPOC communities. It has taken me a long time to voice—this is who I am—and know—this is where I belong.

And I would not have been able to do so without queer, disabled communities of color who have said—

You are enough. *We* are enough.

As a mixed-race, queer disabled white, and Asian-American woman, I am so grateful to those who have come before me and those who continue to show up, reach out, provide care, create scholar/activist spaces, and build communities. Within these spaces and communities, I feel I belong. I can teach, educate, and write with my *whole* self, and that straddling two worlds—part marginalized, part privileged—deepens my understanding and supports my ability to join others in working toward disability justice.

Although I do not believe higher education can be a space of disability justice (for you cannot fix what is not broken), I do value the many ways that disability justice worldviews and practices support us in resisting and dismantling oppressive aspects of the academy. Such as not incorporating attendance or late work policies with a punitive approach, designing syllabi that center on the most marginalized, creating space for students who are told, in various ways, that they do not “belong” in the academy, and teaching about social issues that will guide students in imagining and working toward a more just world.

Additionally, disability justice provides nourishment within the academy. It is a source of replenishment and inspiration, a framework for worldmaking, and a source of connection between us. It allows us to build accessible kinship, a term proposed by Sara Acevedo. To me, accessible kinship is a way of relating to and connecting with one another, grounded in support and care. It is a form of chosen family—both within and beyond academia—that communicates needs, works collectively to meet those needs, honors capacities, explores new ways of being and doing, and re-energizes us to persist and resist together.

QUEER AND CRIP OF COLOR DECOLONIAL AND DISABILITY JUSTICE RESISTANCE: A NIGHTMARE AND A DREAM (PAU ABUSTAN)

For the past nine years, I have taught in the academic fields engaging the critical intersections of disability, race, class, gender, and sexuality. I earned my PhD from a rural and predominantly white institution. I have lived at the intersections of simultaneous disability, race, class, gender, sexuality, systemic oppression, and resistances. Resistance, to me, is both a nightmare and a dream.

Resistance to multiple systemic oppressions is a *nightmare*, especially as I realize most of my life I have been battling to survive at the intersections. Even though I only learned about disability justice during graduate school, my ancestors, family, and communities have been dreaming of decolonial and disability justice worlds of access and care since pre-colonial times.

During the late 1800s, my Pilipinx family's clan resisted Spanish and U.S. colonial violence and, as a result, were systematically murdered by colonizers. My great-grandfather and his brother were the only survivors as they were hidden as young children, taken in by another family, and told never to speak about who they were and where they came from ever again. My great-grandfather kept this trauma buried deep down in his bodymind, psyche, and bones. One hundred years later, this trauma manifests in *my* own bodymind, psyche, and bones. My grandmother and grandfather survived the imperialist atrocities of World War II while hiding and living in the forest after Japanese soldiers burned down their village in Lucban, Philippines. Growing up, my grandma and grandpa would break down in tears when speaking about their experience. Prior to immigrating to the United States, my mother was a medical doctor, and my father was a civil engineer in the Philippines. Due to systemic racism and ableism, my parents' intellect was not viewed as "worthy"—their degrees did not transfer over. My mother worked two jobs to keep my brother, my sister, my disabled dad, my grandparents, and myself alive.

Most of my family, communities, and I have physical health, mental health, and autoimmune disabilities. Although our chronic illness and disabilities make daily living exhausting for us, above

all, it is society and systemic barriers that make access to care, dignity, respect, and rest difficult for us. The way others have treated us due to the color of our skin and the shape of our eyes, the ways in which accessing affordable, affirming, and quality healthcare is near impossible for us and other working-class people of color, and the ways in which we continue to struggle to access care and rest in a world that does not want us alive and thriving, place us at the intersections of multiple systemic oppressions and resistances.

Growing up, my mom shared stories about how her supervisors and co-workers demeaned her because her English and knowledge of U.S. systems were "imperfect." They ridiculed and berated her for her assumed lack of "intelligence," ignoring she was a medical doctor in the Philippines. Now that I have earned a PhD, similar cycles of systemic violence repeat when multiply-privileged colleagues talk *down* or dismiss me. They condescendingly "suggest" I "need to read more" on the foundational concepts of my fields—the foundational concepts I have been teaching for the past nine years and the systemic oppressions and resistances I myself intimately experience and embody.

We dream of worlds of gentleness and care where all listen and learn from all people, especially those most impacted by intersectional oppressions. My ancestors, family, communities, and I have deeply felt the weight of ongoing settler-colonial cis-hetero-sexist-racist-ableism within *our* bodymind, psyches, and bones. Like my ancestors, we continue to resist and dream of worlds where gentleness and care are accessible to all. I remain hopeful and thankful to experience resistance as a *dream*. My queer, crip, and gender-fluid BIPOC self, along with my ancestors, family, friends, and academic communities sustain me. As a professor, I share *our* interconnected histories and stories of resistance with students, staff, faculty, and greater communities. We yearn for decolonial and disability justice worlds (Berne et al., 2018; Kafai, 2021; Kauanui, 2016; Khúc, 2021; Mingus, 2011; Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018; Schalk & Kim, 2020), where care, dignity, and respect for all beings is sustainable. As I navigate academic spaces, I do so with the strength of my ancestors and communities who continue to resist settler colonial cis-hetero-sexist-racist-ableism. We are bringing forth new worlds, honoring interconnectedness. We manifest healing from historical and systemic

violence, practice new systems of gentleness and care, and are re-learning our interdependence and need for each other.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: THIS IS NOT HOW THE GAME IS GOING TO PLAY OUT ANY LONGER (HOLLY PEARSON)

This is my munching moment, a moment to dwell upon a fleeting thought for “x” amount of time as thoughts interweave, fade, and re-emerge at different points—thoughts are not linear. Munching moments are not about establishing a master narrative. Rather, they are an opportunity to grapple with an idea or emotion that has remained cloaked/swept away. Munching moments allow us to revisit and dust off thoughts stored away in a jar and left on a shelf for an indefinite period of time. Munching means gazing at these thoughts, swirling around freely as if with no destination in mind. Some thoughts are heavily cloaked and muddled with residuals, while others are lighter and more transparent. I am choosing to drop the cloak by being open and vulnerable, in particular about academic trauma and violence. This munching moment is both a blur of collective lived experiences and a singular one—mine. Yet it is not meant to be defined by what I share, as I acknowledge and honor the lived experiences of those who have forged a similar lineage and who continue to build upon such pathways. In this piece, I write for myself and with folks who share pain and trauma yet continue to dream of radical love and accessible kinship. Embodying a “f\$@k it” mentality does not mean I no longer care. Rather, it means I repeatedly make the choice to expose the toxicities and abuses I, and others in my position, endure while simultaneously (re)prioritizing and (re)centering my own well-being and journey.

I am done being patient and meeting everyone’s needs at the expense of my time and energy. I am done having to twist and bend to make others comfortable and protect their ego. I am done with relationships that co-opt my existence to others’ advantage. Often when I share, I start with my positionality—a list of identities—Deaf/Disabled, Queer, BIPOC, Transnational adoptee, Alaskan, etc. to ground the context of where I am coming from. Lately, I have been wondering about this practice, especially with folks who do not share similar experiences, pedagogies, or values. In response, I have come to realize that labels

mean nothing if you do not have shared experiences, especially as these labels do not convey the weight of trauma, pain, anguish, and rage that has heavily influenced who I am as a person. These labels do not reflect the implications of existing in a society whose values and beliefs normalize structural and institutional violence against historically multiply marginalized Deaf/disabled folks. Instead, I will share this: I did not think I would see the end of the story. Imagine that—growing up with that mindset. I lived a good portion of my life with the expectation that I would kill myself before seeing the end of the story. This mentality shaped every decision I made, and how I approached life and relationships. Paradoxically, I felt simultaneously disconnected and connected.

May of 2021 was the first time I wanted to see the end of the story. Why? Because 1) dear friends supported, loved, and accepted me as I am, and 2) I realized the cost and toll that constantly trying to cater to everyone’s needs was taking on my bodymind. Encountering folks to whom I do not own an explanation and spaces/places where I can just breathe and not have to be apologetic was a steep learning curve. To name and center my identities and lived experiences is an act of defiance. To assert them is to push back against the eradication of the narratives of disabled folks with multiply marginalized bodyminds. To share/disclose is an act of radical love as we build accessible kinship. To love me as I am, and to learn how to value myself as a complex, imperfect human being, was also about learning how to be patient and compassionate while asserting boundaries. So, I am no longer going to offer my labels for consumption because that is what is expected of me. That is not how the game is going to play out any longer—those who wish to profit off of my identities can work to make sense of who I am. From now on, I expect people to prepare to be uncomfortable, angry, or confused. I have spent my entire life feeling these emotions—figuring them out and myself in a world that was not built for my existence. I am done playing the “forced intimacy” (Mingus, 2017) game. I am done trying not to rock the boat, being grateful for the breadcrumbs, being humble, and avoiding being perceived as a threat or seen as aggressive. Instead, I am choosing to invest time with kindred folks—those who “get it” and continue to dream spaces of collective accountability and relational respect where all bodyminds are welcomed and valued. Kindred folks with whom I strive to cultivate radical love and accessible kinship. Why? Because this is my f@\$king choice.

CONCLUSION

Who is allowed in academia? Who is supported? Who is valued? Who is allowed to create and share knowledge? Our narratives seek to challenge the structures of higher education that maintain power and devalue and dispose of people who share similar embodiments to us—people of color, women and non-binary people, disabled people, immigrants, queer and trans people.

Importantly, our narratives discuss our unique journeys or pathways to understanding ourselves and our place in resisting the oppressive conditions of academia. Despite each of us holding different positions at distinct colleges and universities in the United States, our stories share many common threads—not just of invisibility, dismissal, exploitation, marginalization, and debilitation but also of survival, connection, collectivity, resistance, and wild Disability Justice dreams (Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018).

As scholar-activists committed to Disability Justice praxis, we answer Patty Berne's call to recognize wholeness in ourselves and others. We bring *our whole selves* to our teaching, research, service, and mentoring. Rather than accept the individualistic, independent, siloed structure of colleges and universities, we build "care networks" (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018), support one another, and work collaboratively—we sustain each other through accessible kinship. Accessible kinship is an emergent strategy, a pocket of resistance, which manifests itself in different ways and at different times depending on a variety of factors, including personal dynamics, institutional pressures, bodymind states, cultural contexts, and other external elements. In other words, Accessible Kinship is a call to action in the face of exploitation and commodification of multiple marginalized experiences rather than a blueprint. It is another form of crip resistance resulting from emergent encounters in spaces where other forms of kinship (Kafai, 2021) are amplified through interwoven storytelling.

Using activist ethnography and interwoven storytelling, we have presented four divergent although interrelated narratives. Because we are permanently tired, worn down, and hurting, we have gathered our collective "spoons" (Miserandino, 2010)—our own accessible kinship system—to complete this paper. As Hailee highlights, individual, generational, and collective trauma

have seeped into our bones and psyches. We have absorbed the many violences of academia—rejection, devaluation, isolation, exploitation of our intellectual and emotional labor, and overly harsh and cruel criticism rooted in ableist, white supremacist, western-centric, patriarchal notions of what a professor and scholar should be. Yet, through this, we hold each other—in pain and brilliance. As Sara notes, our disabilities, Deafness, madness, and chronic illnesses are integral to our identities and *matter*—to ourselves and each other; through them, we share vulnerability, bitterness, grief as well as delight, laughter, and pleasure.

We call on others to build on this work and to continue to engage in storytelling and dialogue. As Holly observes, to tell, disclose, and share is a core part of forging an ethic of love, which in turn supports us in nurturing accessible kinship systems. The individualistic, independent, siloed structure of colleges and universities that we refuse to accept still seeks to isolate, divide, and debilitate us. It tells us, sometimes whispering, sometimes shouting, that we are not enough. But we *are* enough, as Hailee emphasizes. It is through connection and storytelling that our voices are nurtured, that we resist and survive, and that we create moments and experiences of radical love and joy.

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ENDNOTES

1 Many activists have contributed extensively to our understanding of Disability Justice in a myriad of ways, such as performance art, poetry, storytelling, organizing, direct action, mutual aid, and other cultural practices that cannot be traced to only one source. For those new to Disability Justice, we recommend reading Sins Invalid's (2019) *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People*, Mia Mingus' blog, Leaving Evidence (<https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/>), Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's (2018) *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, and learning from Leroy Moore's Krip Hop Nation project, and Stacey Park Milbern's organizing campaigns around the dangers of care rationing, the right to be rescued, and coronavirus kit-making in solidarity with BIPOC.