Introduction: On Crip Authorship and Disability as Method

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We kept two books nearby while writing this introduction. Two blue books: hospital blue, code blue, wheelchair symbol blue. Blue like the benches installed in galleries and inhospitable public spaces by disability artist Finnegan Shannon, *Do You Want Us Here or Not?* (2018–present) (figure I.1). Two blue softcover books with queer trim sizes. If "blue books" are traditionally almanacs and manuals, we took ours to be guides to crip authorship.

The Clearing by JJJJJerome Ellis is 10" × 13". Big for a paperback and hard to hold in one hand. The book is a transcription of an experimental album: jazz, electronics, and spoken word. Each page equals sixty seconds of playback. The music and other sounds on the album are described in the book with italicized text. When Ellis speaks it is also transcribed, and his stutters are "rendered in real time on the page" (Ellis 2021, xi). Ellis plays with typography to represent stuttering and to design the time of reading. There are two shades of type, dark and light; irregular capitalization and spacing; and repeated letters and words. What happens when we read (with) a stutter?

Ellis says that stuttering and other dysfluencies are ways to pause, expand, and break up time, to resist temporal standardization and regulation. "Dysfluencies are gifts of ellipsis," he writes. "Lacuna. Caesura. Aporia. Opacity" (Ellis 2020, 226). A stutter's "interval of silence" is filled with possibility. Ellis theorizes dysfluency alongside Blackness and music, as forces that "open time." In a context of "temporal subjection"—a defining feature of capitalist society, more or less severely administered among social groups—these forces offer "temporal refusal, temporal escape, temporal dissent" (Ellis 2020, 216). Ellis's typography suggests, but does not dictate, temporality for the reader. We do what we will with the words and the pages, but we meet him in the clearing his voice and typography create.

In the page reproduced in figure I.2, Ellis cites (recites) the eighteenth-century German philosopher Novalis: "Jede Krankheit is ein musikalisches Problem" (Every illness is a musical problem). There is a strand of theory that understands disability to be a creative force, a spur, a method of production. The mismatch between disabled bodyminds and built and social environments leads to particular crip ways of thinking, being, representing, and making. Tobin Siebers explains the connection between disability and method like this: "The disabled

Figure I.1. Finnegan Shannon, *Do You Want Us Here or Not (MMK)*, 2021. Production by Jack Brennon, Julia Eichler, Finnegan Shannon, Mikael Fransson, Patrick Keaveney, Zabotka S. Palm, and Daniel Sarvari. Photo by Axel Schneider for Museum MMK für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main.

Image description: A cushioned bench with big text running across it that reads, "It was hard to get here. Rest here if you agree." The text is hand-painted and a little uneven. White letters in a field of vibrant blue.

body changes the process of representation itself. Blind hands envision faces of old acquaintances. Deaf eyes listen to public television. Tongues touch-type letters home to Mom and Dad. Feet wash the breakfast dishes. Mouths sign autographs. Different bodies require and create new modes of representation" (Siebers 2008, 54).

In "Crip Technoscience Manifesto," Aimi Hamraie and Kelly Fritsch more strongly urge a crip approach to making and unmaking, *crip* referring to "the non-compliant, anti-assimilationist position that disability is a desirable part of the world." In the realm of technical creation, they emphasize "practices of critique, alteration, and reinvention of our material-discursive world" (Hamraie and Fritsch 2019, 2). We start along a similar desire path to consider crip *authorship* as an aesthetic, felt, and performed phenomenon, as well as a media-technical one. *How does disability shape authorship*? This question takes individuals and collectives into account, bodyminds and communities of discourse. Crip authorship, in one register, transgresses the rules of authorship. In another, it refers to crip forms and composition practices. It can be "unpublishable" or it can alter conventions. As important as outcomes and products are disability experiences, the temporalities and affects of authorship.[1]

Is crip authorship always agential, successful? Is it necessarily *creative*—can it accommodate destruction and loss? Our second blue book does not let us forget that there is no crip standard time and no universalizing when it comes to disability. Shulamith Firestone's *Airless Spaces* is almost a pocket book. It was almost

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Figure I.2. JJJJJerome Ellis, page from *The Clearing* (Wendy's Subway, 2021). Courtesy of the artist and Wendy's Subway.

Image description: A page from *The Clearing* transcribing Ellis saying, "Every illness is a musical problem. 'Die Heilung eine musikalische Auflösung.' The healing, treatment, cure, a musical solution. As in all my work, in this project I'm seeking healing." When Ellis stutters, it is represented by a letter (*d*, *e*, *a*) repeating with various spacings across and down the page.

not written. What was written almost did not turn into a book. After Firestone's publication of *The Dialectic of Sex* in 1970, a lightning rod of radical feminism, it would be twenty-eight years until her second and last book came out. During that period she would be diagnosed with "paranoid schizophrenia," she would sometimes be institutionalized, she would sometimes be overmedicated in her apartment in the East Village, she would sometimes be described as a "street person" who "panhandled in trains" (in the words of Lourdes Cintron, her case worker, to whom she dedicated *Airless Spaces*), she would run out of paper, she would throw away her artworks and writing, she would have her work destroyed by others (Cintron, 2021). The cover of this book is plain and blue, her name and the title printed in nondescript tan letters, columns of text barely visible in the background. Without good light, the author's name is difficult for a sighted person to read.

In the acknowledgments, Firestone thanks a group of six people who helped her "with word processing, editing, proofreading, text design, and solicitation of publisher" as well as "making preparation of the manuscript possible" (Firestone 1998, n.p.). Care collectives are familiar to the feminist disability community. They stretch what we know about collective authorship, which already interferes with the "prestige of the individual" in the modern western author, a figure Roland Barthes correlates with "the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology" (Barthes 1977, 143). The artist Park McArthur's care collective, for instance, writes and makes art alongside caregiving. Elemental tasks are transcribed as scores.

> Care collective is a group of 10 people who coordinate Park McArthur's nightly care routine. The basic function of care collective is to assist in changing Park's clothes and to lift Park in and out of the shower and into bed. This routine is often accompanied by other convivial activities, such as making dinner, drinking, talking, reading, watching YouTube videos, massaging limbs, drawing, videotaping, and sharing stories. In June 2011, Park and Tina [Zavitsanos] began using letters, text messages, and text-based art to explore ideas of care and intimacy. In November 2011, Park began a routine of brushing Tina's teeth. In April 2012, Park and Tina began writing scores for lifts and transfers. (McArthur and Zavitsanos 2013)

These scores have circulated far from McArthur's bedroom. They have been printed out, transcriptions of "the banality of care," and pinned to the walls of first-class museums (McArthur and Zavitsanos 2013). Moments of *access intimacy*, tucked between the pages of an exhibition catalog (Mingus 2017).

> SCORE FOR LIFT AND TRANSFER
> "Ready?"
> "Ready."
> Work to deliver your bodies safely from platform to platform,

surface to surface.
Hold yourself; stand.
Stand and hold yourself while holding someone else.
Learn how the you of your body and me of mine work our mutual instability together.
Learn how the instability of holding while moving is a moment.
Learn that to move is to hold a we.
When we are crossing, dressing, lifting, rounding, it reminds me how rarely I share this kind of coordinated, unstable touching, these routine experimentations, with others besides Amalle. What contexts, proximities, and spaces permit the sharing of these simple actions?

Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos (2013)

In putting together this edited collection, we thought about the ways disability parses the throughline of authorship, represented by the sections in this book: crip practices of writing among other forms of composition; feelings about writing; scenes and economies of composition (clearings, airless spaces); the research and invisible labor that sometimes come before writing; acknowledgment and description of disabled subjects; collaboration; crip aesthetics, formats, and hacks; encounters with the bureaucracy of publishing; the media with which we communicate; the technology, capital, access, legal standing, and care networks required to publish. Disability often reorders or disorders "the writing process," Robert McRuer argues, critiquing composition classes that "serve a corporate model of efficiency" (McRuer 2004, 49). He calls instead for *de-composition* as an embodied and critical mode of teaching and learning to write. Disability also sustains attention to media formats, research ethics, and publishing norms that are not always understood to be essential branches and loops in the network that makes an "author." At any of these points, one might experience exclusion or inclusion, or refuse to comply; one might have crip feelings without reference to norms, or develop aesthetic practices grounded in history or linguistic community (rather than access). Cripping authorship can be patchwork or partial.

Authorship has a dictionary meaning and a legal one, as well as many everyday connotations. An author, in the first dictionary sense of the word, is a writer. Especially a writer of books. In the second sense, an author is a creator far beyond the literary sphere: of architecture, software, music, and choreography, among other artworks. Authorship is associated with autonomy, creative genius, originality. It signals and bestows authority.

In the western legal sense, authorship is also a form of property ownership. An author is not only "the creator of the original expression in a work," the author owns its copyright (US Copyright Office, n.d.). Authors might sign

their copyright over to a publisher, as some of us have done in this book, but otherwise they control the reproduction, display, and distribution of the work. Through copyright, the work can become a commodity from which an author and a publisher profit.

Although we had been using *author* and *authorship* in a colloquial way as we began planning this collection—to refer to writing or composition across many fields and formats, along with the publishing process—we quickly ran up against the blockades of the western legal definition. We learned the hard way that copyright is ableist. In the legal sense, crip authorship can seem like an impossibility or, at best, a contradiction in terms. Who is allowed to be an author? To own intellectual property? Who has the right to copyright? When French philosopher Michel Foucault asked, "What is an author?" in 1969, he urged scholars to consider the contexts and "modes of existence" (Foucault 1998, 205) of authorship rather than the psychology or standpoints of individual authors. Ruminating on "the author function," he asked, "Who can appropriate it for himself?" (222). Few (if any) subsequent critics have reckoned with the foundational exclusion of many disabled people from legal authorship.

People with mental and cognitive disabilities who are subject to guardianship—a phenomenon recently brought to widespread attention by pop star Britney Spears—are "stripped of legal personhood," often including property rights (Kohn and Koss 2016). To publish *Crip Authorship*, all of the writers were required to sign standard contracts with New York University Press granting the publisher copyright, among other things. Yet some of our participants did not have the legal right to do this, or even to choose without guardian consent whether to be named as the authors of their own words. We were reminded that some people are permanently excluded, and do not have the choice to oppose assimilation. Other participants could not accept the stipends we offered for their work, and would not have been able to receive royalties, because of Supplemental Security Income restrictions. Some of us are, and are not, *authors*.

Foucault, citing Beckett, also asked in his critique of the author function, "What difference does it make who is speaking?" (1998, 222). Many of the chapters in this collection do not take this question to be rhetorical. They attend to the personal and to particular social and linguistic worlds, if not the "new modes of representation" manifested by disabled bodyminds. Yet we also hold space here for crip anonymity. Not the anonymity imposed by ableist societies that render disabled people invisible, nor the disability anonymity required for passing and assimilation (which are often survival skills), but a desired giving-away of the author function, a calling-in of networks, collectives, crip pseudonyms, fluctuating selves, and impersonality (Cox 2013; see also Hickman, this volume, on nondisclosure).

We further learned that for a work to be copyrighted—for legal authorship to be granted—it must be "fixed in a tangible medium of expression" (US

Copyright Office, n.d.). It must take a form that can be copied: a page, an audiotape, a digital format. Not all crip composition can be accommodated within the commodity version of authorship. When, for instance, does a Protactile work become copyrightable? In other words, *what is a Protactile author?* John Lee Clark, in his chapter, models the translation and description of this DeafBlind language as it moves between media. Protactile can be filmed or transcribed—copyrightable formats—but it cannot truly be "fixed" by a visual medium. Clark's chapter describes a Protactile composition that is *tangible* in a way conventional media are not.

Copyright and the legal definition of authorship have also barred disabled readers. When copyright holders control publication, alteration, and distribution under a for-profit model, formats such as Braille (i.e., for small "markets") are not often produced. The lack of accessible publications is often described as "a book famine," language that marshals development and charity rhetoric to call attention to what should simply be a compliance, if not justice, issue (National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled 2020). The American Library Association (n.d.) points to a "disconnect between the accessibility mandates in federal law and the limits imposed by the copyright law." Even the fair use exception to copyright law only allows a fraction (usually 10 percent) of a book or other work to be adapted and copied without permission from the author or owner of copyright.

In the U.S., the 1997 Chafee Amendment was meant to resolve this disconnect by providing a "disability exception" to copyright, but the American Library Association underscores the amendment's continued inadequacies: "The Chafee Amendment only permits printed books to be translated into certain named specialized formats: Braille, digital text, and audio. Large print, for example, is notably absent from the list of specialized formats. . . . Additionally, the Chafee Amendment provides only for a literal translation of the book, so additional supports that would likely be used for students with learning disabilities (such as abridged versions, prompts, definitions, etc.) would not be permitted" (American Library Association, n.d.). "Certification" of print disability is required for someone to request electronic files or translated or adapted materials from a library, school, or publisher, yet this category is not clearly defined and an ever-growing number of disability groups have petitioned to be included. (Mills, 2012, has called formats that require such certification "prescription media.") Significant delays in obtaining reformatted books and other copyrighted materials also result from strictures on who is allowed to adapt them—namely, a handful of government and nonprofit groups.

Given the topic of *Crip Authorship* and the many reading modes of our own authors, we asked the Press to make an open access (OA) version available along with the print book and eBook. Each digital platform for the paid electronic version, from JSTOR to Kindle, has its own accessibility issues, and certain steps like

Braille Ready file formatting for text-to-Braille translators are often overlooked. It can also take publishers weeks to respond to requests for accessible scans, electronic files, or html alternatives that can be used with Braille or speech output screen readers. Although OA versions aren't instantaneously accessible if web content accessibility guidelines aren't followed, they are immediately free and available online. More than one press quoted $10,000–$15,000 to us as the industry standard for simultaneous OA and commercial editions; hence an additional step or two of grant writing, for OA and Braille Ready publication subventions, is often a feature of crip authorship.[2]

It's no wonder that disability piracy is on the rise. Crip piracy ranges from digital text and sound recordings to assistive technology software itself. Screen readers like JAWS, Priyank Chandra has shown, are themselves proprietary rather than open source, and they are prohibitively expensive for most users, especially in the Global South. From Peru to India, assistive software piracy is "an act of self-making" and a necessary reclamation of control from accessibility tech corporations that in fact erect new barriers for disabled people around the world (Chandra 2020, 1–2). As Kavita Philip argues, the author function is always attended by the pirate function: "At the very historical moment that technological authorship seems to become widely accessible, the law marks off certain authorial spaces as transgressive" (2005, 207).

Unlike *authorship* (and, for that matter, *disability*), *crip* does not have a legal definition; it is not a term under which people make legal or rights-based claims. *Crip* signals community affiliation and political resistance. Although *crip* can indicate disability, as Robert McRuer notes in this volume, crip theory "is also always particularly interested in that which is in *excess* of an able-bodied/disabled binary." In use since the early twentieth century as a shortening of the offensive term *cripple*, *crip* (sometimes spelled with a *k*, as Leroy F. Moore Jr. and Keith Jones discuss in their chapter) has more recently been reclaimed by disability activist and justice communities to indicate people, relationships, and behaviors existing outside bodymind norms within a given society, and connected by those experiences.

As a term gesturing toward a large collective, and sometimes a more deliberate coalition, *crip* does not necessarily index a particular disabled person's (or disabled group's) experiences. In recognition of the vitality of particulars, the authors in this book use many words in addition to *crip* and *authorship* as they discuss the processes of making and communicating, including *blind*, *deaf*, *autistic*, *contingent*, *chronically ill*, and *mad*. They discuss lived experiences including caste (Islam and Jana), gender and gender identity (Awkward-Rich), and violence and injury (Ralph) that have ambivalent relations to disability. Each of these terms is its own internally diverse constellation. Authors in this collection also reckon with translation (McRuer on *disca*); critique English-language imperialism (Nguyen on the transnationalization of western discourse via the

United Nations); and consider Indigenous, Black feminist, and other genealogies for the field of disability studies and its concepts (Deerinwater; Bowen, Kuo, and Mills). They write about writing, but disabled composition has always exceeded writing, and disabled people are sometimes excluded from conventional reading and writing techniques.

Although we alternately use the terms *crip* and *disability* in our introduction, depending on context, we take Aimi Hamraie's counsel that "*crip* is not a synonym for *disability*, nor is it simply a political orientation. Rather, it is a specific commitment to shifting material arrangements" (this volume). The shifting of material arrangements, through being and doing, is directly tied to unjust, inaccessible conditions that need to be understood as part of its context. As Patty Berne, cofounder of Sins Invalid, writes, "Crip life invites us into fierce creativity. Because the world continues to treat us as worthless, creating new worlds is a matter of survival for us. Dreaming is a matter of survival" (Berne 2021, 9).

Crip Authorship is about avenues of that fierce creativity, dreamed and enacted. In some contexts, this work involves celebrating people, experiences, and methods that have been obscured; in others it involves protest and dismantling. It can mean innovating around accessibility and crip worldmaking, or attending to the false starts, dead ends, and failures resulting from misfit and oppression. Often it is all of these / and. We've taken the tensions inherent in the phrase "crip authorship" as provocations to explore the shaping of authorship by disability, whether that has to do with modality, access, language, organization, collaboration, funding, translation, or dissemination. In other words, we take disability as method, beyond content and author function.

Disability scholars began using the phrase "disability as method" across several disciplines in the 2010s, although similar ideas had previously circulated in academic and activist spaces using different language. We convene those theories here. In a 2014 collection published in Slovenia, Arseli Dokumaci asked "whether there could be ways of approaching disability as a methodology; modes of considering the disabled body as something to think with rather than to think about" (108). She followed up in 2018 with an article in *Disability Studies Quarterly* titled "Disability as Method," demonstrating "the new possibilities of media-making informed by blindness gain." In literary and cultural studies, *Lateral* published a conversation in 2016–2017 between Julie Avril Minich, Jina B. Kim, and Sami Schalk in which Minich (2016) asked that scholars reframe disability studies as a methodology rather than a subject, and Kim (2017) replied that disability itself should be shifted "from *noun*—an identity one can occupy—to *verb*: a critical methodology." Also in 2017, Jonathan Sterne and Mara Mills published a coda ("Dismediation") for the anthology *Disability Media Studies* in which they considered the ways "disability as method" was sometimes a formula appropriated by industry: "Dismediation takes disability as method, not simply as content for media studies. . . . We scrutinize the ways disability has

been deployed as a routine, program, or resource in the history of technology. We work toward digital justice, which may take the forms of cripped or minor media or of mainstream access" (368). In other words, disability and disabled people may be enrolled in a wide range of methodological and political pursuits, underscoring the need for the related term, *crip*. Mills first presented this discussion of "disability as method" at the Queer Method conference held at the University of Pennsylvania, a set of conversations grounded in queer theory and transgender studies that influenced her and Sterne's thinking on the topic (Queer Method, 2013).

An understanding of disability as method has recently animated a range of other conversations, including Moya Bailey and Izetta Autumn Mobley's analysis of Black Feminist methodology (2018); Jess Waggoner and Ashley Mog's special issue of the *Journal of Feminist Scholarship*, "Visionary Politics and Methods in Feminist Disability Studies" (2020); a special issue of *Curriculum Inquiry* titled "Disability as Meta Curriculum," edited by Nirmala Erevelles, Elizabeth J. Grace, and Gillian Parekh (2019); and a special issue of the *South Atlantic Quarterly* titled "Disorienting Disability," edited by Michele Friedner and Karen Weingarten (2019). In their introduction to that issue, Friedner and Weingarten note that "disability as method helps to avoid the sedimentation of disability as a category since it allows us to place disability in conversation with other concepts and worlds" (2019, 485). Disability can be a method in situations seemingly remote from disability, as in *Disability Aesthetics* (2010), when Tobin Siebers reads classic sculpture and modern art through a disability lens.

Disability as method is also related to "cripistemology," Merri Lisa Johnson and Robert McRuer's term for disabled ways of thinking, knowing, and telling. Cripistemology "extends *beyond* disability" and makes room for "negativity, failure, hopelessness, and passivity" (Johnson and McRuer 2014, 142, 127).[3] Crip authorship spans knowing, making, style, and media formats, but—keeping cripistemology in mind—it is not always about *making it*. Cripping is not a technical protocol and it does not always "work." Where crip authorship meets media and technology, or publishing and the commodity version of authorship, it encounters the foundation of those tools and industries in the "ideology of ability" (Siebers 2008, 7). Moreover, authorship is durational and has phases (a term we prefer to *stage*), sketched by the sections that follow, each with distinct affective and political registers.

Crip Authorship is organized into five sections that emerged in dialogue with the authors. Many of the chapters serve as expositions of methods for which the authors are known. The chapters have been created in a range of registers and styles reflecting the diversity of disability authorship. They are written by scholars, activists, journalists, artists, librarians, and archivists. Although most of the contributions were written for publication as chapters in this volume, we also include an edited group chat, song lyrics, a description of a Protactile poem,

and examples of crip graphic design (immediately following this introduction). One author, Louise Hickman, theorizes transcription as a crip assemblage that challenges the "will" and visibility of authorship—different kinds of transcripts, from Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) to a transcript of a podcast, appear throughout this volume. Our frontispiece, *Two Spirit Yarning* by Paul Constable-Calcott, is a rendition of an Indigenous Australian storytelling and information-sharing practice (yarning). Each section also contains a chapter previously published online that we preserve here in print (and ebook) form. We have produced a book, but we recognize how much crip authorship exists beyond the market, beyond exchange, as a gift, for a collective, or for an audience of one.

We open with writing, perhaps the most commonly understood sense of authorship, which we take to span numerous modes of composition. This section expands on disability rhetoric (Dolmage, 2014; Yergeau, 2017) to consider the temporality and affect of writing, as well as diction, performance, and labor. Many authors refer to the political economy of writing in K-12 classrooms and universities, from tracking and standardizing to what Travis Chi Wing Lau describes as the ableism of academic "hyper-productivity" (Lau, 2019). The ways we compose language are tied intimately to our bodyminds and cultural norms, from how we arrange words to the styles we choose or invent; from writing in more than one language to counterstorytelling (Padilla, this volume); from the ways we relate to writing partners or collectives to the networks of care, relation, finances, and access that surround us and enable (or don't) writing to take place.

Often it is "writ[ing] for/with each other" that facilitates crip composition, as Mel Y. Chen and Alison Kafer describe it, embedding a coauthored fragment within each other's chapters (see also Isolation Nation and Ginsburg and Rapp, this volume). The authors in this section highlight the logistics of what Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha describes as "time-honored crip creative practice" (2018, 17), the material components necessary for it to occur, and the ways those differ from person to person. They discuss racism, migration, ableism, and education or employment; standards of grammar and rationality (Bruce on "mad black rants," this volume); the power that a slip of writing from a teacher or psychologist can wield over our life chances. Crip writing practices also include practices of not-writing, recognized by Mimi Khúc in the opening chapter.

The next section takes on research methods and politics, specifically the access tools and disability justice–informed methods that scaffold work in disability studies. Chapters examine topics ranging from reading methods to community-based participatory research, with some scholars taking up existing methods and others devising new ones.[4] The authors in this section are trained in literature, social work, history, education, anthropology, sociology, and science and technology studies, each field deserving its own disability methods handbook. With

our focus on authorship, we don't promise to be comprehensive, but we tackle cross-cutting themes such as collaboration, access matters for disabled researchers, and methods informed by decolonial theory.

We are also interested in the politics of "the research subject" for disabled as well as nondisabled researchers. Who participates in authorship and makes it possible beyond the named author? What labor, knowledge, and collaboration are obscured by publishing norms? Who defines disability, and what power do those definitions hold—what happens when "subjects" have understandings of the concept that differ from those of researchers? Our thinking in this section is influenced by Margaret Price and Stephanie Kerschbaum's 2016 article "Stories of Methodology: Interviewing Sideways, Crooked and Crip," in which they combine principles of disability justice with grounded theory, narrative analysis, and critical discourse analysis. Arguing that "disability crips methodology" (20), they ground their qualitative interviewing practice in collective access, flexible timing, and affective presence for disabled researchers and subjects alike.

As *Crip Authorship* goes to press, we note a parallel upswing of attention to terminology and interpretation among historians, especially those working on "disability before disability" or disability in periods when disabled people had little opportunity for writing themselves. In a 2021 call for papers for an edited volume on "cripping the archive," Jenifer Barclay and Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy flag a series of critical issues for disability historiography, including "the paradox of disability as both hypervisible and invisible in the historical record," "the absence of disability in archival finding aids and indexes," "the challenges of locating disability in already contested archives (e.g. slavery, colonialism, etc.)," and "revisiting familiar archival sources through a disability lens" (Barclay and Hunt-Kennedy 2021). Surveying the capaciousness of the word *disability* before the nineteenth century, as well as the constellation of other terms that referred to what we now call disability, Sari Altschuler and Cristobal Silva take a different tack by suggesting that "literary approaches are particularly well suited to tracing intellectual and rhetorical genealogies of concepts like disability through close textual analysis across a range of genres and forms" (Altschuler and Silva 2017, 2). In *Crip Authorship*, concerns about cataloging, indexing, and library classification systems (past and present) are detailed in Stephanie S. Rosen's chapter "Disability in the Library and Librarianship," found in the publishing section. In this section on research, Helen Selsdon, a historian and former archivist at the American Foundation for the Blind, enumerates the steps taken to build an accessible digital archive, foregrounding disabled historians.

Regarding research access, Emily Lim Rogers details the benefits and drawbacks of virtual ethnography for disabled researchers and community members. She and Laura J. Wernick also discuss cross-disability research and collaboration (Rogers, Wernick). Interdependence between collaborators, or between interviewers and interviewees, is a common theme (Mauldin, Ginsburg and Rapp).

Yet other chapters consider friction, failed research, and revised or iterative research (Wool, Ralph). Xuan Thuy Nguyen offers decolonial methods for refusing "damage-centered research" (Tuck 2009) and other western models in disability ethnography, drawing on the example of participatory arts-based research in Vietnam. And some authors emphasize affect, including depression and trauma—neglected or even contested topics in disability research (Awkward-Rich, Mauldin).

The next section explores crip genres and forms. Genre and form are often linked in library catalogs—for instance, in search menus. The Folger Shakespeare Library explains, with reference to its own collection, "Genre/form terms in catalog records describe what an item *is* (or contains), not what it is about. *Genre* corresponds roughly to the intellectual content of what is being described: for example, almanacs, depositions, plays, and poems. *Form* corresponds with physical characteristics: for example, embroidered bindings, imposition errors, manicules, and sammelbands" (2019). *Genre* refers to the style or category of something; *form* references its shape. While form has some overlap with *medium*, the theme of the final section in this volume, it more often gestures at a smaller scale to "characteristics of works with a particular format and/or purpose" (Library of Congress, 2011).

The relationships between forms of making and the human body are entwined in genre's roots. According to the *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, *genre* derives "from the Greek *genos* [γένος] (from *gignesthai* [γίγνεσθαι], 'to be born, become') and its Latin calque *genus*. . . . The biological network is the starting point, as witnessed by the Homeric sense of *genos*: 'race, line'" (Cassin 2014, 384). To return to Patty Berne, there is a direct link between nonnormative bodymind experience and "fierce creativity"; the development of not only new content but new forms of content. The chapters in this section explore the relationships between disability and genre. Some styles or forms have been made different in their encounters with disability: life writing (Islam and Jana), academic writing, metaphor (Ito). Some have been newly developed: public disability scholarship (Virdi), Krip-Hop (Moore and Jones). Others owe an unacknowledged debt to disability: manifesto (Kafer), autotheory (Samuels).

An enormous amount of gatekeeping, which ultimately determines who is formally (and legally) considered an author, takes place in the publishing process. Prestige, authority, circulation, and financial benefits accrue to certain kinds of authors, certified by elite presses. Yet much disability theorizing takes place among disability activists on social media and in community spaces—and it is too often ignored or, worse, appropriated by channels of establishment authorship, as pointed out by Liz Jackson, Rua Williams, and others in their calls for "citational justice" (Williams 2021).

In the section on publishing, chapters examine structural exclusion as a result of ableism—including inaccessible publishing formats—as well as racism and

bias within disability publishing itself (Bowen, Kuo, and Mills). Cynthia Wu outlines the practicalities of launching a disability series with an academic press, and the tacit knowledge as well as technical access required to make publishing more accessible. An often-forgotten yet essential component of disability justice in publishing is found in librarianship, starting with call numbers, metadata, and other classification practices. Stephanie S. Rosen brings this infrastructure to light and offers alternatives from a critical librarianship perspective. Others examine or enact expression, translation, and publication in visual and tactile languages (Burke, Clark). Robert McRuer considers the movement of ideas across languages, via the example of translating one of his own English-language books for republication in Spanish.

Disability also crips the media required for writing, research, and publishing. In our final section, activists and scholars address the spectrum of "media" from digital divides to accessibility tools to "crip making" (Hamraie). Some authors stress the rampant lack of access to internet infrastructure and mainstream media based on class, region, or Indigeneity in conjunction with disability (Deerinwater; Chidemo, Chindimba, and Hara). This lack of access to the fundamental tools of communication is a serious barrier to work, education, and creative authorship. Others examine access techniques like audio description that can be found across mainstream radio and disability podcasting (Kleege), an example of what Graham Pullin calls "resonant design" (2009, 93). At the same time, they highlight disability aesthetics (Kleege) and broader principles of collective access (Bri M). If the phrase "assistive technology" implies "a technological fix that is unconcerned with education, community support, or social change" (Mills 2015, 178), other authors theorize tools like augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) from the perspective of crip mentorship (McLeod), or automated captioning as part of the legacy of past communities of speakers (Hickman). What crip "technical cultures" make authorship possible (Haring 2006)? Aimi Hamraie surveys tactics and styles of crip making, from critical design to "crip technoscience" (Hamraie and Fritsch 2019).

Across each of these phases, this book is a collective exploration of some of the things *crip authorship* means and entails. Critical theory can sometimes seem to pin down definitions and assign ownership to terms, yet every word in the dictionary has multiple senses, arriving through use. We go beyond the dictionary in our openness to signification. We describe crip authorship inductively after thinking across the essays in this collection, and alongside the scholars and activists whom we first gathered for a works-in-progress conference in August 2021. In academic hierarchies and the publishing industry, edited collections are often denigrated (for various reasons, including profitability), but disabled writers like Alice Wong—among many activists—have lauded the essay form for its precision and impact (Wong 2022, xv). We appreciate short essays as an example of "disability minimalism" (Mills and Alexander, 2023), a necessary

economy of energy or material, and we value the edited collection as a repository of disability thought.

Starting with the premise that disability shapes authorship—authorship taken to encompass composition and dissemination—we're interested in how the chapters build on one another and how they pull in different, sometimes productively contrary, directions. *Dissensus* is essential to disability politics, aesthetics, and community (Rancière 2010; Ojrzyńska and Wieczorek 2020). Crip authorship can be revolutionary, like a manifesto (Kafer), or inward and quiet. It can be complex or plain (Chen, Acton). It can be intentional or unintentional. Some set out to crip authorship through activities like hacking (Hamraie). Others enact crip authorship by being themselves and communicating with their communities in their everyday ways (McLeod).

The material intervention of cripping authorship ranges from the critique of digital divides (Deerinwater), to counterstorytelling (Padilla), to the elaboration of new or hybrid genres and styles (Moore and Jones). It can involve access (Acton, Kleege) or the development of new methods and media (Rogers, Burke). These new methods may be appropriated by nondisabled authors or otherwise overbrim the disability community (Samuels). Crip authorship takes place within and beyond the commodity version of authorship, in books and on social media (Bri M, Virdi) and in writing that will never be published. It is often collaborative, even across time and the automation of vast crowd-sourced archives (Hickman). It usually involves friction, including in-community friction such as the "crip refusal" Zoë H. Wool describes regarding the academic research process.

Crip authorship is also an affective relation to composition (Awkward-Rich) and a temporal one (Yergeau on perseveration, Chen on slowness, Bruce on rants). As Louise Hickman notes in her chapter, "Crip authorship is a necessarily incomplete project." Failure—crip failure—might serve the purposes of antiproductivity and rest (Khúc), or it might look like the sheer crip loss indicated by Shulamith Firestone in a passage of *Airless Spaces* where she cannot find any paper for writing: "I fished for my white letter writing pad and then I remembered I had used it up writing a will shortly before entering the hospital" (1998, 63). Loss is always a presence, a shaping force, and as we write this introduction we acknowledge the many absences from this book, the losses personal and in our communities that have stalled and animated our writing over the past three years.

It was hard to get here. Rest here if you agree.

NOTES

1 We think alongside the Sins Invalid statement on language justice (2021), which *describes* disabled modes of communication and also *commits to* a language justice approach in the group's own work: "There are languages created and used specifically by disabled and Deaf people, as our bodyminds inform our means of expression. We use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), American Sign Language (ASL), Lengua de Señas Mexicana (LSM), Black American Sign Language (BASL), ProTactile Communication, with

and through our trachs and our staccato breathing, through our brain fog and aphasia, through pain and pain meds, through masks and voice amplifiers, through text and videos, through our grunts and moans and sounding our worlds, through blinks and blowing through straws and more ways than we can outline . . . Language justice isn't just about access, we strive to flatten hierarchies by creating spaces where each person is respected and where power is shared amongst speakers of all languages."

2 The standard cost is also evidenced by the grants awarded by the Toward and Open Monograph Ecosystem (TOME) initiative, https://www.openmonographs.org/faq/.

3 See Liat Ben-Moshe on the related concept of dis-epistemology, which prompts her to inquire, "How does being disoriented lead one to new knowledge or/and to being humbled (tenderized) about not knowing? How can not knowing aid in liberatory struggles, in alleviating oppression, or even in being in community with like-minded people in an ethical manner?" (2018).

4 By "reading," we refer to *interpretation* in this section on research methods. Exciting work on reading as decoding and meaning-making across a range of symbol systems and media is also taking place in disability studies. For an argument that "reading is overrated," calling instead for more analysis of disabled literacies, see Logan Smilges, "Neuroqueer Literacies; or, Against Able-Reading" (2021).

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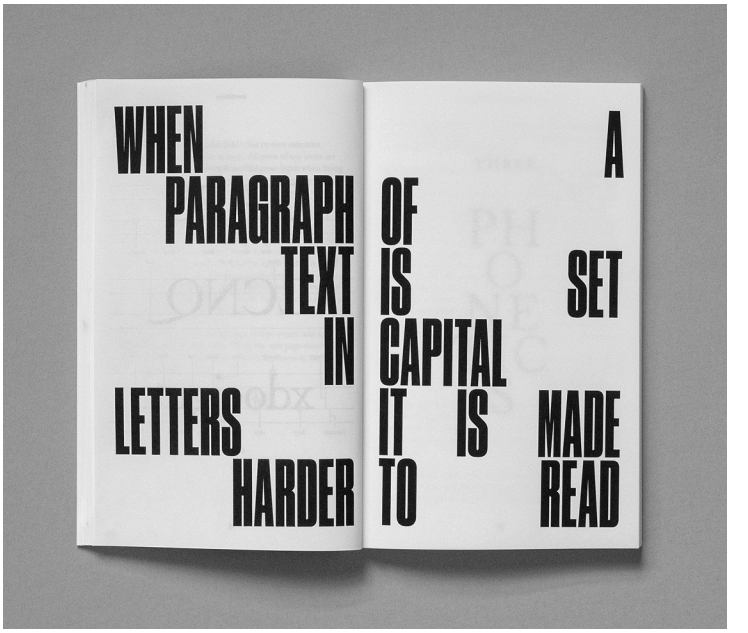

Sam Barclay, a designer based in London, published the first edition of *I Wonder What It's Like to Be Dyslexic?* in 2013. Some pages of the book model more or less accessible typography and the sociotechnical contours of reading. Other pages model dyslexic graphic design, evincing not only Barclay's experience of reading but also the disability aesthetics of unconventional print and even illegibility.

Image description: Sam Barclay, book cover and spread, "When a paragraph of text is set in capital letters it is made harder to read," in *I Wonder What It's Like to Be Dyslexic?*, 3rd ed. (self-published, 2019). Courtesy Sam Barclay, https://www.tobedyslexic.co.uk/.

Black disability graphic design as crip authorship, uniting word and image.

The central symbol, created by disabled designer Jennifer White-Johnson in 2020, combines a black fist—representing protest and solidarity—with the infinity symbol, which Autistic communities use to depict the breadth of autistic experience as well as the larger neurodiversity movement. Arranged around the central image are a number of phrases: "Create More Anti Ableist Spaces," "Advocate Black Autistic Voices Experiences Opinions Lives," "Amplify Black Disabled Lives," "Tu Lucha es Mi Lucha," the letters "BDLM" represented by images of hands forming those letters in ASL, "Let Autistic Kids Play," Black Autistic Lives Matter," and "Autistic Joy." Small inset images of Audre Lorde and James Baldwin are haloed by quotes from those authors. Lorde: "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." Baldwin: "Ignorance allied with power is the most ferocious enemy justice can have."

White-Johnson writes, "In solidarity with my 7-year-old Black Autistic son and in virtual protest with my Black disabled community, I felt compelled to use my art to bring visibility to the facts. More than half of Black/Brown bodies in the US with disabilities will be arrested by the time they reach their late 20s. We don't see many positive stories or acts of #AutisticJoy among Black/Brown bodies because they don't make headlines. 'To Be Pro-Neurodiversity is to be Anti-Racist': this statement carries a lot of truth, which directly influenced the need to create the graphic."

Courtesy Jennifer White-Johnson, https://jenwhitejohnson.com/