

Introduction

As I write this introduction, we are anticipating snow in so-called Pennsylvania here on Turtle Island, the land that many know as the United States. Snow removal is, of course, a disability justice issue as many disabled people are kept isolated while our roads and sidewalks remain hazardous for mobility aids and unsteady gaits. I am thinking of snow in the context of our shared climate emergency and how it is being brought to bear on the Global South by the white supremacy and colonialism of the Global North. I am thinking too of the most recent Israeli siege on occupied Palestine and the genocide the people of Gaza are experiencing as they move into the ongoing winter of the COVID-19 pandemic with no access to vaccines or adequate medical care.¹ This is the weather into which this issue emerges.

As Sins Invalid, a disability justice performance project “centralizing artists of color and LGBTQ/gender-variant artists”² reminds us in their “10 Principles of Disability Justice,” “Before the massive colonial project of Western European expansion,

we understood the nature of interdependence within our communities. We see the liberation of all living systems and the land as integral to the liberation of our own communities, as we all share one planet.”³ It is this specificity of individual experience across shared imagining that makes the “yet to be”⁴ of disability justice possible. There is no disability justice without international coalition-building and without recognizing the vital contraction between what we know of each other’s histories and what we have yet to learn. This project is a necessary part of that process. After all, ours is never the only weather.

It is a great honor to be in conversation with the scholars and writers assembled in this journal and with the ways their pieces frame anew many of the pressing questions and tensions of this evergreen moment. The representations of disability they explore are thorny, multifaceted, and, of course, provide no easy answers. These are matters of the bodymind-texts that traverse geography, crip time and propose the possibility of breaking open convention and normativity to embrace

¹ Buttu, “COVID-19 vaccinations.”

² Sins Invalid, “Mission & Vision.”

³ Sins Invalid, “10 Principles.”

⁴ Sins Invalid, “10 Principles.”

disabled hybridity. What does disability mean? What are the stakes of identifying with or feeling kinship alongside that label? How do experimental forms offer the potential of mobilizing against cure and normativity? How are disabled people disappeared from imaginings of nationhood and what does that mean in light of the eugenic history of the nation state? How do disabled and crip poetics involve and conceptualize the bodymind on the page? What are a parent's responsibilities in terms of mobilizing change within an educational institution to better anticipate their disabled child? I feel deeply grateful to have been approached to be a part of this ongoing dialogue and to work alongside my fellow scholars in tending this bounty. Writing about and into disability is always an act of recognizing both abundance and absence. I encourage readers to interrogate those elisions and to ask their own questions in service of continuing to build our collective knowledge and solidarity.

My abiding gratitude goes to the entire *Protagonist*

team for their receptiveness and their generosity in making this issue a reality. The rigorous care with which they have met each piece is exemplary and has been a joy to witness. It is my hope that this is the first of many such entries into this ongoing dialogue. We begin here with the oncoming snow and the shared work ahead.

Onwards.

Jo Bear
January 2024

Bibliography

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