CRIP DATA STUDIES:

DIGITAL ARTICULATIONS OF DISABILITY, POWER, AND CULTURAL

PRODUCTION

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Lay Abstract

This thesis introduces crip data studies as a theoretical practice that challenges how dominant Western, Eurocentric conceptualizations of disability and race inform governance and cultural production on digital social platforms. I invoke crip, a subversive reclamation that reframes disability as a political and cultural identity, to disrupt the erasure and devaluation of disability within digital platforms. Through theorizing crip data, I reconfigure the disabled user and creator to investigate the significance of technological bias in shaping platform economies, politics, and creative engagement. The thesis project has two goals. First, crip data reveals how offline biases animate a platform's algorithmic infrastructure and user interactions. Crip data also amplifies the creative, strategic practices shaping digital disability cultural production on social sharing and content creation platforms. In doing so, the manuscript demonstrates how crip data offers potentialities for intersectional readings beyond platformed mediations of ableism, racism, and coloniality.

Abstract

This sandwich thesis initiates a dialogue to examine connections and departures between new media studies, platform studies, critical digital race studies, critical disability studies, and feminist data studies. The manuscript presents four research papers that traverse issues regarding ableist platform governance, algorithmic visibility, and crip/neuroqueer digital cultural production. My theorizing of crip data seeks to interrupt hegemonic Western and Eurocentric conceptualizations of what is (not) valued and who (does not) holds power within platform spaces. Moreover, an intersectional focus on disability and race interrogates the ways technoableism (Shew, 2020) and algorithmic oppression (Noble, 2018) collectively animate the creation, development, and use of platforms and other new media technologies.

I introduce crip data studies as an interdisciplinary academic and activist theoretical framework that counters the dominance of Western and Eurocentric ideologies that inform a digital platform's algorithmic infrastructure, governance, and cultural production. I utilize the sandwich thesis model to examine the ways crip data can support critical/cultural investigations about platforms, power, disability, race, and culture through various case studies. In Chapter 1, I assess the relationship between race, disability, and bias in platform content moderation. Chapter 2 proposes neuroqueer practices for new media production and disability engagement that do not reproduce techno-solutionist measures in mediating neuroqueer self-expression and digital relationality. Chapters 3 and 4 communicate the generative departures of crip and neuroqueer platform use as a mode of hosting cultural production. In sum, this thesis engages with enmeshed inquiries regarding disability, race, and ideological value to respond to the following provocation: Is another platform– one beyond ableist, racist, and colonial bias– possible?

Acknowledgements

I dedicate this project to my mother, Maureen Rauchberg z" l, who died on May 26th, 2022. Maureen was one of my fiercest advocates. I was one of Maureen's caregivers in the last year of her life, and so much of that experience shaped the political framings about disability for this project. I hope I made you proud, Mom. Thank you for teaching me what it means to fight.

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Declaration of Academic Achievement

All chapters in this dissertation were written by Jessica Sage Rauchberg. Previously published material (Chapter 2) has been reprinted with permission from *Studies in Social Justice.*

Introduction:

"Too much and not enough": Disability, race, and difference on digital platforms

> "Culture is… the societal machinery with which a particular society or group symbolically codes its sense of self."
> -Sylvia Wynter, "We Know Where We Are From" (1977, p. 4)

Authenticating Disabled Data on Digital Platforms

Before starting my Ph.D. program in 2019, I created @disabledphd, a public-facing, "academic-ish" Instagram account. Separate from my personal profile, @disabledphd served as a digital diary documenting my experiences as a disabled person in the academy.[1] I was particularly keen on posting about my experiences as a graduate student with learning disabilities and chronic illness; ableism is particularly haunting in North American higher education (Dolmage, 2017; currie & Hubrig, 2022; Krebs, 2019), and I encountered my fair share of intellectual ableism while applying for graduate programs.[2] However, the account quickly became more than a digital archive of my doctoral degree as I expanded it to share my research on disability, race, and popular media.

One morning, I received a direct message from another creator, whom I will call Max, about Taylor,[3] a shared mutual contact and a white chronically ill queer health advocate.[4] Max's message indicated they had seen several posts about Taylor on the Reddit page r/IllnessFakers, a community of 128,000 users determined to investigate and prove that "chronic illness influencers… may be… feigning their illnesses and medical crises for attention and/or profit" (r/IllnessFakers, 2022). In my viewings of r/IllnessFakers, I noticed that "grifter" speculations regarding Black and brown creators'

disability content contained harsher tones, as racism shaped the Redditors' surveillance of

Black and brown disabled creators' social media presence. [5] My time spent investigating

the nexus of racism and ableism on r/IllnessFakers resulted in my ongoing inquiry

regarding the relationship between disability, data, and digital platforms. Why was

disabled people's data framed as less valuable (especially Black and brown disabled

people's user-generated data)? Furthermore, my browsing on r/IllnessFakers revealed the

data-creation practices disabled creators relied on to mediate their disabilities as

authentic, or a creator's portrayal of a genuine-appearing relationship with their audience

(see Dubrofsky, 2022, p. 1; Hund, 2023). I observed that disabled creators encountered

what Brooke Erin Duffy and Emily Hund (2019) name as "authenticity binds"— in my

experience as a creator, I found myself to be simultaneously too disabled for the platform,

yet not disabled enough for my followers. In this way, I felt pressure to "perform" my

disabilities in a certain way that would help me to accumulate more likes and visibility for

my page. I eventually deactivated @disabledphd in October 2021, feeling constrained and

conflicted about how I was supposed to "mediate" my disabilities to my few thousand

followers.

Nevertheless, I have experienced that there are also opportunities for community-

led data creation within these disability platform enclaves. For instance, through

Instagram, I learned about the Critical Design Lab's Remote Access Parties (Gotkin et al.,

2020) for mediating crip remote nightlife, and I participated in many Zoom gatherings

emphasizing disability community play and togetherness during the ongoing COVID-19

pandemic. Furthermore, while I still worked as an Instagram creator, I received many

messages from strangers and friends alike thanking me for my infographics and posts to

help them advocate in the classroom or think differently about neurodivergence. Digital

platforms are indispensable tools that provide access to community, storytelling, and

organizing within social movements, including building survival skills.

However, digital platforms, creative economies, and the affordances they provide

for disabled creators are entangled with the reproduction of offline biases. Many

platforms feature technoableist design, or the idea that (assistive) technology can cure,

erase, and rehabilitate disability (Shew, 2020). Likewise, platforms may also integrate

technoableism through algorithmic suppression of disabled users and their data. For

instance, the social sharing platform Instagram, often used by disability communities for

distributing social justice advocacy materials, censors Black, disabled, queer, trans, and

fat users' content, even if they have significant followings. The marking of these accounts

as a "violation" of community standards on a social platform reflects cultural practices of

systemic oppression operating through algorithmic governance, colloquially referred to as

shadowbanning (see Myers West, 2018; Nicholas, 2022; Rauchberg, 2022c).

Shadowbanning techniques rely on algorithmic infrastructure to imagine platforms where

disabled users do not exist, which I have argued is a form of digital eugenics, a term I

have introduced elsewhere and build upon in this dissertation project (Rauchberg, 2020;

Rauchberg, 2022c). By eugenics, I refer to "the 'science' of who controls who lives, who

procreates, who thrives, and who dies, based on flawed ideas about our genetic makeup"

(Dolmage, 2017, p. 11). I suggest that digital eugenics are insidious and create complex

barriers for disabled social media users' data (especially disabled creators who are also Black, brown, and Indigenous, queer, or trans).

Throughout my dissertation, I examine how eugenicist ideologies animate governance choices that support the formation of ableist platform economies and content moderation practices. Here, I refer to Robert Gorwa's (2019) explanation that platform governance consists of "layers of governance relationships structuring interactions between key parties… addressing the political effects of digital platforms… as well as the complex challenges that the governance of platform companies creates" (p. 855). A user's curation of authentic mediation can result, particularly for marginalized creators, in mass smear campaigns that threaten the creators on and offline safety, resulting in negative visibility (Duffy & Hund, 2019; Karizat et al., 2021). Some accounts receive followers simply because they are "disliked" by other creators on the platform; racist, ableist, or misogynistic beliefs often fuel hate or distrust of a creator. I consider these challenging circumstances throughout my dissertation to analyze how ableism, racism, and other forms of marginality shape the ways marginalized users' data is (not) valued on social media and content creation platforms.

Platform Power and Resistance

A central aim of *Crip data studies* is to examine how platforms devalue, exclude, and delegitimize disabled users' user-generated data and digital cultural production. As I prepared my dissertation, presenting early versions of various chapters at conferences and summer institutes, I was often asked, "Why don't disabled people just log off?" or "Can't disabled people make their own platform?" (I will return to these very questions in my

concluding chapter.) I do not think there is an easy answer or solution to biased platforms. However, I think there is significance in disability communities remaining, building, and working on these platforms. Such moves from disability communities respond to the growing ubiquity of platforms and the ways their increasing power organizes economic and political life in our contemporary moment. By power, I am referring to Michel Foucault's analysis of modes of subjectivation through various realms of Western and Eurocentric knowledge production across three major realms: the making of modern science, the making of social difference (e.g., saneness versus madness), and the making of self-subjectivation (e.g., how do humans learn to recognize themselves as "sexual" subjects?) (Foucault, 1982, pp. 777-8). Foucault adamantly argues that power is neither a universal object nor a tangible theory that exists independently from the economic, political, and cultural systems it emerges in. Instead, a Foucauldian notion of power implies that its constant conceptualization only exists in relation to understanding the significance of how particular social forms and historical structures shape subjectivation (Foucault, p. 778). Through this critical lens, I assess how disabled creators, activists, artists, influencers, cultural workers, and other social media users respond to the enactment of hegemonic power on digital platforms. Moreover, I consider socio-historical contexts that inform how contemporary digital cultural production enact modes of political and economic power through ableist, racist, and otherwise marginalizing practices of governance and how such enactments of power animate the making of digital subjectivities.

Conversely, I highlight how disabled users' data-generation resists and responds to such oppressive structures of digital power. My understanding of resistance is informed by Mahuya Pal and Mohan J. Dutta's (2008) writing on dialogic resistance and globalization, which they define as "communicative processes that [actively] seek to counter dominant and [Western] structures of power… to challenge the dominant structures of power that create and sustain conditions of marginalization… and silence from powerful actors" (p. 42). Informed by postcolonial studies of organization and management, Pal and Dutta's thinking guides my writing about disability, race, data, and digital platforms because it emphasizes how global systems of economics, politics, and culture arise from socio-historical formations of ideology and power.

A theory of dialogic resistance supports my overarching investigation of disabled creators and users who continue to use digital platforms despite their technoableist biases. For instance, after Elon Musk acquired Twitter in November 2022 for 44 billion USD, Musk engaged in a broad sweep of Twitter's employee list, swiftly eliminating the platform's content moderation and accessibility teams. Thousands of users migrated to Mastodon, a decentralized micro-blogging platform hosted across many servers. However, many #DisabilityTwitter (and #BlackTwitter users) declined the move to Mastodon, which later came under critique for ableist and racist moderation practices (Hendrix & Flowers, 2022). I maintain that these critics should not be hyperfocused on making a separate platform for disabled users but on the creative cultural and communicative strategies disabled users practice as they continue to use platforms. As digital platforms become increasingly ubiquitous in economic, political, and cultural life,

I turn toward disabled creators, activists, cultural workers, and users to inquire about the

possibilities encoded in their user-generated data to unsettle norms about value and digital

belonging.

Theorizing Crip Data Studies

This dissertation project introduces the concept of crip data studies to challenge

how data is ideologically shaped by the enmeshment of ableism and racism. With a focus

on digital social media and content creation platforms, my four chapters provide case

studies which investigate how offline discourses inform technoableist content moderation

and eugenicist algorithms. Moreover, I examine how disabled people's user-generated

data responds to the reification of these oppressive ideologies through their subversive

crip cultural production. By *crip* or *cripping*, I refer to activist and academic insights

originating from crip theory,[6] a subset of critical disability studies that discuss the former

with queer theory. Crip theory rejects pathologizing, clinicalizing, and ableist discourses

that dominate (mass-mediated) cultural representations of disability as an individual

failure that needs repair in the form of cure, rehabilitation, or erasure (Kafer, 2013;

McRuer, 2013; McRuer, 2018; Clare, 2017; Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018). I especially

emphasize Alison Kafer's (2013) political-relational model redefines disability as a fluid

political and cultural identity that is always in flux with race, class, nationality, gender,

sexuality, age, and size (p. 25).

Likewise, I position *data* to acknowledge that digital platforms extract profit from

user-generated content (see Puschmann & Burgess, 2014, p. 1963). Drawing from critical

and feminist data studies, I prioritize a socio-historical analysis to demonstrate how the

reproduction of ableist, racist, and colonial biases shape value within platform systems and cultures. Indeed, the counting, quantification, and collective institutional organization of information historically played an important role in Western, Eurocentric cultures, particularly in the era of colonization, when the first uses of the word "data" were recorded in English (see Wynter, 2010; Appadurai, 1993; Wernimont, 2019; Puschmann & Burgess, 2014). As I discuss further on in the Introductory chapter and throughout the dissertation case studies, such organization of information reinforces ableist, racist, and colonial ideas about what is valued and, conversely, what is deviant. Throughout my dissertation project, I discuss various crip user-generated data production. I refer to examples such as care work, neuroqueer[7] technoscience, and shitposting to show how crip data generation offers possibilities to change the ways platforms and other computing systems understand data beyond ableist and racist biases. In sum, my introduction of crip data proposes possibilities beyond platforms and computing systems reading disabled people's data as less-valuable sub-data. Throughout my dissertation, and particularly in this Introductory chapter, I discuss the complicated relationships between disability, race, difference, and data, seeking to understand how these structures and cultural forms interact within digital platforms.

Drawing from humanistic and critical qualitative methods, such as critical/cultural close reading, ideological analysis, and critical autoethnography, this sandwich dissertation interrogates how ableism and racism inform ideological perceptions of data on digital platforms. In turn, I also highlight the subversive data-generation practices disabled users' produce to make their data visible. My theoretical framework

acknowledges the complex power structures that inform platform production. I develop the concept of crip data studies not merely to name the interlocking biases informing data suppression, but also to begin unsettling the ways digital platforms rely on networks of racist, colonial, and ableist/sanist technologies to determine whose data counts, and whose does not belong. I follow scholars of algorithmic bias, such as Safiya Noble's (2018) monumental work on algorithmic oppression, which clarifies the pervasive influence of offline racist and misogynistic ideological structures in the programming of algorithmic systems, such as search engines. I extend the conversation that Noble catalyzes through an investigation of the ways racism is animated by ableism on digital platforms. A platform design "embedded" with these biases tend to reinforce ableist and racist outcomes within its computing system (Brown et al., 2023, p. 6). For instance, Lydia X.Z. Brown and colleagues (2023) offer the example of a tenant screening platform, which might consider an applicant's past evictions, credit score, or criminal records. These information sets are historically used to discriminate against poor and disabled people of color in the housing system. The rise of platformed screening systems demonstrate how such new media technologies continue surveillance mechanisms that reinforce ableist, racist, and classist readings of data (see Brown et al., pp. 6-7). Though *Crip data studies'* focus is on social media and content creation platforms, not screening tools, I provide the above example to demonstrate the salience of how marginalized social media users' data is less likely to benefit from algorithmic privilege because of the "basis of their identities" (Karizat et al., 2021, p. 1). Throughout *Crip data studies,* algorithmic privilege frames my approach to understanding how disabled (and other marginalized)

users are doubly impacted by biased platform technologies and the offline networks of

oppression that inform the creation of algorithmic infrastructures.

Within this project's four case studies— the main chapters of this sandwich-style

dissertation — I demonstrate how a crip data approach draws attention to the ways ableist

biases inform a platform's organization of social, economic, and cultural value derived

from user-generated data. I am particularly concerned with how technoableist ideologies

(Shew, 2020) influence the design and programming of algorithmic infrastructures and

user interfaces. I am additionally interested in the ways disabled social media users'

subversive cultural production offers possibilities for platforms to reconfigure (Suchman,

2007) data hierarchies beyond ableist, racist, and colonial biases. Nomy Bitman's (2023)

qualitative study of disability and social media presence reveals that technoableist

algorithmic infrastructure requires disabled users to navigate platforms in savvy and

strategic ways. For instance, digital disability activists must constantly adapt their

storytelling practices to fit the ever-changing terrains of social and content creation

platforms (p. 631). Moreover, a platform's hierarchal prioritization of certain types of

content over others (e.g., Instagram's algorithmic preference for Reels over photo posts)

result in some disabled content creators choosing creative practices in order to be "seen"

by the algorithm (e.g., a non- or semi-speaking autistic person might utilize an AI voice

over to make an Instagram reel that would increase chances for algorithmic visibility.)

Such micro-tactics also inform the dynamic processes disabled users rely on to

reconfigure their data and platform use. I draw my idea of micro-tactics from Michel de

Certeau's (1984) theory of tactics as small steps workers can take to disrupt capitalism.

Additionally, this thinking takes cues from Arseli Dokumacı's (2019; 2023) concept of "microactivist affordances." Dokumacı draws from James Gibson's (1979) work on affordances to explain the various tactics to build reciprocity with their environment. In doing so, disabled users "*make up* and at the same time *make up for* whatever affordances they are not readily provided with" (Dokumacı, 2019, p. 493). Though Dokumacı focuses on non-digital mobility technologies, such as prosthetic devices or ramps, her theorization is important for conceptualizing the resistive potentialities of crip data studies. Within my dissertation, I engage with Dokumacı's critique to consider how microactivist affordances highlight the tension between ableist platform governance and the crip creation of subversive data.

To support these discussions of digital crip and neuroqueer microactivist data reconfigurations as a cultural practice, I concentrate on the communicative processes of power and resistance regarding digital platforms, guided by feminist philosophers such as Sara Ahmed. Ahmed's phenomenological analysis names the ways power is informed by economic and political structures, and how everyday people experience and challenge power's prevalence. Her thinking supports a careful positioning to the study of digital crip and neuroqueer data reconfigurations, departing from westernized, neoliberal logics of commoditization and colonial discovery (Ahmed, 2012, p. 163). Influenced by Ahmed, crip data studies trace new lifelines of possibility that "help us to rethink the relationship between inheritance… and reproduction… 'a lifeline' can also be an expression for something that saves us" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 17). Moreover, lifelines demonstrate how we organize everyday life around particular genealogies and modes of expression (pp. 17-

18). My research is especially interested in how Ahmed simultaneously presents the lifeline as a possibility for (un)reproduction: we do not have to merely "reproduce what we inherit," particularly when we are receiving ideologies of oppression, such as racism, ableism, and coloniality (see Ahmed, p. 17). In the case of crip data studies as a conceptual framework, I position technoableism and the omission of critical disability work in Communication and Media Studies as a problematic, limiting inheritance that I deliberately choose to move away from (see Ellcessor, 2017). I do not believe disabled people or disabled epistemologies must conform to nondisabled notions of assimilation or erasure. Instead, I follow a different path in this project that aims to reconcile with the ableist lacuna of critical disability critique in Communication and Media Studies through demonstrating the ways crip data subversively counters encoded platform bias.

Here, I am not claiming that all previous inquiries into disability and digital media ignored crip critiques. For instance, crip technoscience practices taken up by disabled technologists, artists, and creators offer anti-assimilationist and subversive engagements with using new media technologies to facilitate access-making (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019; Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018). In contrast, my invocation of lifelines as a conceptual framework proposes that these conversations are not foregrounded or prioritized in mainstream North American academic Communication and Media Studies research; for example, this framework suggests that emotions, beliefs, and feelings that trouble ableism and other forms of oppressive platform governance will lead to new ways of creation and engagement both on and offline for disabled users. As I mention further on in this chapter, I often veer from a strict engagement with Communication and Media Studies

scholarship. Though my dissertation is undoubtedly grounded in these areas, I turn to other nodes of academic inquiry to inform my analysis: Black studies, critical disability studies, critical race studies, feminist and gender studies, human-computer interaction, information studies, queer theory, and science and technology studies.

I liken Ahmed's lifelines to Jonathan Sterne's (2022b) theorization of impairment phenomenology, which he defines as a political phenomenology that presents moments for embodied departure, disrupture, and writing about the un/accountable experiences of the disabled body-mind to offer new modes of orienting consciousness and subjectivity, often departing from nondisabled chronologies of orientation (pp. 10-13). I understand impairment as a set of generative possibilities that lead to platformed potentialities beyond technoableism and technoracism. Following Sterne's suggests that a phenomenology of impairment is "undisciplined" (p. 12), I engage with autoethnographic writing throughout the project —specifically in the chapter introductory notes. Moreover, autoethnography also guides my methodological investigations in Chapter 4 and the concluding chapter to disrupt neurotypical styles of producing knowledge. In doing so, I consider my own physical and cognitive impairments as generative sites of sense-making and political practice that reflect the relationships between disability, race, and marginality. By drawing upon my own lived experience with disability, I offer a self-reflexive framing for the economic, political, and cultural ideologies of digital platforms and the data emerging from these spaces.

My theorization of crip data studies as a conceptual framework is also informed by Sylvia Wynter's (2003) writing on descriptive statements and the overrepresentation of

Man. Wynter critically examines how Western, Eurocentric logic has continuously been used to equate white Christian Europe with humanness. Her work, grounded in Black studies and anticolonial critique, challenges the dominant narrativization of the Western, Eurocentric Christian man as the hegemonic figure of power. She argues that the idea of Man shifts over centuries based on economic, political, and cultural flows (see Wynter, 2003; McKittrick, 2015; Ambroise, 2018; Weheliye, 2014). Wynter identifies certain epistemological turns that inform understandings of Man since the colonial Europe's encounter with the Americas in 1492. For instance, the waning power of the Catholic Church gave way to Enlightenment thinking and rational thought, which led to the narrativization of Man1 (*homo politicus*). Meanwhile, major global economic transitions from chattel slavery to industrial capitalism and the biological sciences "… dually reinforce[ed] the Western-bourgeois and purely biocentric… terms" of Man2 (*homo economicus/homo sapiens*) (see Ambroise, p. 848). Ultimately, Wynter situates these iterations of Man within what she terms the Third Event or the "origins of purely specific human life" (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, pp. 30-32), where inherited understandings of Man shape all feelings, behaviors, and values about being human. The Third Event is positioned as a potential site for disruption— to imagine the possibilities beyond Man. In particular, Wynter's articulation of *homo narrans* (the human as storyteller), offers a moment of intellectual rupture that imagines the human beyond Eurocentric Man, chattel enslavement, and the afterlives of coloniality (see Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, pp. 25-27; Alagraa, 2018, p. 166; Fanon, 1967). *Homo narrans* is not deterministic: if Man1/Man2 are narrativized and enforced, they can be disrupted and made anew through new

storytelling forms. In this way, a Wynterian approach offers richly complex and

anticolonial insights for interrogating the stories we share about data and platforms.

Whose data creation imagines the pathways for alternative humanness (see Ambroise, p.

854; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015; Alagraa, 2018)? And where do disability and platforms

enter that conversation?

My project engages with these questions by assessing the relationship between

race, disability, and the digital mediation of Man. While Wynter's work neither explicitly

investigates the relationship between race and disability nor their mediation on digital

platforms, I find critical value in analyzing disability through her theorizations of Man1

and Man2 as "powerful knowledge systems and origin stories that explain who/what we

are… [and] how these systems and stories produce the lived and racialized categories of

the rational and irrational… as asymmetrical naturalized racial-sexual human groupings

that… signal the processes of" human subordination (Wynter & McKittrick, p. 10).[8]

Similarly, as I discussed earlier, Jonathan Sterne's (2022b) political phenomenology of

impairment also offers possibilities for understanding the mediation of sound, disability,

and illness beyond the Western, Christian liberal humanist voice. I follow Wynter and

Sterne's respective inquiries to understand how disability is informed by Eurocentric

structures of racism and coloniality. In this way, I extend Wynter's thinking toward

disability and the digital to assess how Western, Eurocentric humanism permeates the

production of digital culture and the encoding of value and power in user-generated data.

To query how a Wynterian analysis of Man offers a generative disruption to the

mediation of disability/ableism and race/racism on digital platforms, I place Wynter in

conversation with disability critical race studies (DisCrit) scholarship. Subini Ancy

Annamma and colleagues (2013) introduce DisCrit, an interdisciplinary field grounded in

Education research that creates connections between critical race and critical disability

studies. Their historical analyses elucidate the rise of race science and eugenics in the

United States, where white scientists aimed to "objectively prove" that Black and African

American people had inferior mental capacities compared to white Americans (Annamma

et al., 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, Nirmala Erevelles and Andrea Minear (2010) emphasize

that intersectional analyses of disability are not a politics of addition; instead, such a

focus addresses the material violence that emerges between interactions of racism and

ableism for Black disabled people (pp. 128-132, ref. Crenshaw, 1990). In my dissertation

project, I amplify DisCrit practices to address disability and race as mediated forms of

social difference that inform how individuals move through institutional structures in the

United States (see Erevelles & Minear, p. 141; Annamma et al., 2013; Erevelles, 2014a;

Erevelles, 2015).

Moreover, I complement my engagement of DisCrit framings with Sami Schalk's

(2022) theory of Black disability politics, which offers "intersectional but race-centered"

analyses that "[are] most connected with the material impact of racism" and its

interactions with disability and ableism (p. 12). Schalk challenges critical disability

studies' failures to engage with the ways ableism interacts with and informs race and

racism in the U.S., noting that networks of racially motivated material violence, such as

chattel enslavement or the school-to-prison-pipeline, "inflict" disability onto poor Black

people (pp. 1-2). Though Schalk's does not focus on digital media and platform systems,

her conceptualization of Black disability politics deepens my analysis throughout *Crip data studies* as Schalk shows how race complexly shapes disability (and vice versa) in U.S. cultural contexts. As I discuss later in the introduction, I do not use my engagement with Black studies, Black disability studies, and DisCrit to make claims about lived experience of Blackness and disability. Instead, by placing critical perspectives on race in conversation with critical perspectives on disability, my dissertation project generates a discussion that disrupts the reproduction of platformed biases. This orientation allows me to respond to the following questions that guide each case study chapter in *Crip data Studies:* what happens when data actually reflects marginalized user practices? Is crip data *is* valid data? How can we study platforms and user-generated data beyond the entanglement of ableist, racist, and colonial ideologies?

Organizing the Introductory Chapter

The introduction is organized as follows: I begin by discussing how the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic frames my dissertation project. In particular, I discuss what it meant to do this work during a mass disabling and racializing event and how that shaped my understanding of data, platforms, and cultural production. I then transition to a discussion of my project's theoretical foundation in critical/cultural studies—particularly focusing on race, disability, and new media— and outline how crip data studies utilizes critical/cultural critique within digital platform spaces. Next, I identify three areas — Internet Studies, Critical Data Studies, and Platform Studies — that I foresee as points of connection for my dissertation. Throughout these sections, I highlight the significance of crip and critical/cultural analyses and anticipate conversations in the dissertation, such as

the ways crip and neuroqueer perspectives offer alternative potentialities for user-generated data or understanding content moderation practices. Following the literature review, I lay out the crip data methodologies that appear in the four case study chapters. Finally, I conclude with chapter summaries.

Studying Disability, Race, and Platforms in the Age of COVID-19

My understanding of crip data is undoubtedly shaped by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which began in the second term of my Ph.D. program. After my employer, McMaster University, announced its physical closure on March 13, 2020, my personal and professional trajectories were uprooted (McMaster University, 2020). I moved back to my family's home in the United States for nearly seven months as the University and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) haggled over when or if international students could (re)enter the country. (As a white U.S. citizen, I recognize my vast privilege as a Canadian study permit holder.) The pandemic's early days presented economic challenges for many disabled people, and I found myself reading many Twitter threads and subreddits detailing how the pandemic exacerbated the relationship between ableism and austerity. A twenty-first century response to neoliberal capitalism, austerity is "characterized by a lowering of government spending, an increasing of labor hours for workers… and privatization of services… generally wrapped up into a rhetoric of emergency" (McRuer, 2018, p. 16). Drawing from Antonio Gramsci's (2011) work on hegemony, Robert McRuer (2018) warns that neoliberalism and austerity present economic self-sufficiency as a fantasy that will never entirely reach individuals and communities marginalized by a financial system. For example, after the pandemic's

initial onset, I noticed that other disability advocacy content creators began sharing sponsored content and monetizing their Instagram livestreams because creative labor emerged as a safer way to obtain economic support in the pandemic. In this way, I frame crip data studies as an approach that unsettles how monetizing some forms of disability content creation, like advocacy, responds to the onset of twenty-first century neoliberalism and austerity politics.

In addition to the onset of disability-related content creation, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how disability communities organize survival in the wake of economic, political, and social precarity, specifically in hubs for offline organizing, including the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area in Ontario, Canada and the Bay Area in California, USA. These metropolitan areas historically served as sites for monumental disability activism— for instance, San Francisco was the site of the 1977 504 sit-in, while Toronto became home to the Psychiatric Survivor Movement in the early 1990s (later known as Mad Pride). Though both Canada and U.S. have disability supports and protections at the federal and provincial/state levels, such practices often serve as a retrofit and rarely counter the ableism (as well as anti-Blackness, classism, settler-colonialism, transphobia, xenophobia, classism and other networks of oppression) multiply marginalized disabled people experience as they try to access care and survival in a settler-colonial state that was never designed for them, from an economic and social perspective. Disabled people in North America live in precarious financial situations and are put at risk by austerity governance as social supports are eliminated or become increasingly inaccessible. These structural shifts animate my inquiry throughout the

various chapters, as I assess how crip data-generation serves as an online response to mobilize resistance to austere governance.

The pandemic exacerbated shrinkage (Dokumacı, 2023) of our physical worlds— nothing new for disabled, immunocompromised, and chronically ill people who already faced the challenges of inaccessible physical environments. In Ontario, the importance of Internet-hosted technologies and digital devices became increasingly palpable as an initial two-week closure shifted to a nearly two-year lockdown. For many disabled people, digital devices allowed greater accessibility to political, cultural, and public life as workplaces, universities, and events shifted online throughout 2020 and early 2021 to mitigate the deadly and uncertain spread of COVID-19. Perhaps there were (temporary) silver linings to the pandemic: many disabled people who benefitted from greater accessibility hoped that such practices, particularly around remote access, would become a permanent feature.

However, the legacies of eugenics continue to animate economic, political, and cultural structures and everyday lives as the COVID-19 pandemic persists. For example, throughout early pandemic lockdowns, laborers such as grocery clerks, construction workers, plumbers, and public transportation providers— overwhelmingly Black, brown, and Indigenous people— were deemed "essential" continued to work as the virus spread. For instance, in the beginning of the pandemic, Black and Latino American workers faced higher levels of COVID-19 mortality compared to white workers (Rogers et al., 2020). Disability justice activists based in California organized the #NoBodyIsDisposable campaign to address ICUgenics, a portmanteau created by #NoBodyIsDisposable that

informed the policies of Kaiser Permanente, California's largest healthcare provider, and

triage care that prioritized treatments for younger, nondisabled COVID-19 patients over

disabled, immunocompromised, fat, and older adult patients, which activists asserted

suggested and reaffirmed that only "healthy" people's lives hold value

(#NoBodyIsDisposable, 2020). In Canada, Bill C-7 passed through Parliament, permitting

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) as a treatment option for disabled, Mad/mentally

ill, and homeless Canadians instead of investing in healthcare, housing, and other social

safety nets (Linton, 2021).

Moreover, starting in Winter 2021, the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines

provided important health and safety measures for millions of people around the world

from the devastating virus. However, at the same time, rhetorical gestures of so-called

"herd immunity" and "post-COVID" life gloss over the 1.2 million Americans and 1.4

million Canadians who did not die but became permanently disabled from long COVID,

reproducing ableist barriers around work and public life as the world returned to "normal"

(Roberts et al., 2022; Statistics Canada, 2022). As more people experience disability

exacerbated by the onset of long COVID, physical and offline environments become

increasingly inaccessible for disabled people, and many continue to turn toward the

digital as a community, entertainment portal, and workspace.

Recent moves toward austerity measures, coupled with the alleged "end of

COVID-19" (LaFraniere & Weiland, 2023), negatively impact quality of life for multiply

marginalized disabled people and reflect necropolitical attitudes in North America. I refer

to Achille Mbembe's (2003) theorization of a sovereign state's use of power to mark some

populations as existing between life and death (p. 27). Necropolitics serves as a

contemporary extension of biopolitics and biopower, governing technologies emerging in

eighteenth-century Europe that rely on disciplinary measures of health and production to

determine who is worthy of life (see Foucault, 1984a). Instead of facilitating possibilities

for life or death, necropolitics emerges as a technology of slow death where the state

"instrumentaliz[es] human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and

populations" (p. 14). In a necropolitical world, a controlled subject is neither directly

afforded life nor death; their existence is disposable to the sovereign power (Mbembe, p.

14). Settler sovereigns use necropolitical technologies to control a population's access to

necessities like water, food, electricity, and shelter, constraining population movement

and mobility (Mbembe, p. 25; Puar, p. 140; Shildrick, 2019). Such governing choices can

be deliberately used to maim (Puar, 2017) and suppress subjects. Jasbir Puar (2017)

identifies maiming as a settler governing practice that "utterly and systematically…

deprive[s]" colonized or controlled populations of such resources (Puar, 2017). I chart

Mbembe and Puar's theorizations to draw attention to the current (necro)political context

for disabled people in North America as a type of maiming, particularly as "post"-COVID

political decisions further deplete quality of life in devastating ways. For instance, the

loss of COVID-19 protections forces both individuals and advocacy groups to develop

"alternate survival strategies" (Hande & Kelly, 2015, p. 963), where precarity becomes

the dominant tool of necropolitical management (Butler, 2015, p. 119). Situated within

post-COVID austerity, several chapters in my dissertation highlight disabled creators and

social media users' subversive data-generation. I study crip cultural production to

highlight how necropolitical governance in our offline world shrinks disabled people's
social and economic livelihoods.

Theoretical Foundations

Crip Data Studies as Critical/Cultural Practice

I ground *Crip data studies*— the title of my research program and the key concept
animating my dissertation project— within critical/cultural studies to understand the
ideological and discursive relationship between platforms, data, disability, and race.
While critical/cultural perspectives are used to formulate many types of methodological
and theoretical contexts, including ethnography, performance, or political economy, this
broad analytic framework also supports integrated analyses of popular media structures to
"consider the production, circulation, and reception of mediated culture in specific social
and industrial contexts" (Ellcessor et al., 2017; Ono, 2009, pp. 74-5). Throughout my
dissertation, I utilize methods that align with critical/cultural frameworks (e.g., close
reading, ideological analysis, and digital performance autoethnography) to interrogate
crip and neuroqueer data's ideological formation on digital platforms. Critical/cultural
studies' amplification of popular culture texts challenges the separation of high/low
culture and offers important support for the study of Internet-based cultural production,
such as influencing, meme-making, or other forms of creative labor. I envision popular
culture— specifically platform cultures such as Instagram *Succession* shitposting
communities or Twitter-hosted digital disability justice activism — as critical sites of
resistance and meaning-making that materially impact life outside the platform.

I bring a critical/cultural approach to support the ways my analysis makes sense of data and platforms, and the discourses surrounding them. Discourse is a collective view of human conduct as a phenomenon that is always meaningful (Hall, 2017, pp. 31-2). Positioning discourse as a cultural sense-making practice supports my engagement of critical/cultural studies toward broader areas of analysis, such as critical data studies and critical platform studies. A critical/cultural framing of data permits the study of social relations, political resistance, organizational logics, and cultural differences, mainly providing socio-historical analyses for contextualizing the role of "new" media technologies in public life (Ono, p. 74). This interdisciplinary approach embraces the importance of dissecting ideological framings and discourses about data, especially around conversations of disability/ableism and race/racism.

My project's engagement with a critical/cultural studies framework supports the study of digital platforms and data as emerging areas of new media complexly entangled with disability, race, and social difference. Lisa Gitelman's (2006) formative work positions new media as "socially realized structures of communication" (p. 7). In this approach, Gitelman asserts that studying a communication technology's form and associated protocols positions new media as cultural practice. She urges a communicative study of new media that considers an object's social and cultural histories and how powerful institutions narrativize such histories to mediate the materiality of the "new" (p. 10). While digital platforms, devices, and other information technologies may not necessarily be new—instead, they may be emergent and in constant flux— I follow Jonathan Sterne's (2006) contextualization of new media as a genealogy of shared

intellectual tradition used to study "a fairly coherent set of objects" (2006, p. 839., ref.

Manovich, 2001). My crip data approach offers an alternative yet complementary set of

critical/cultural intellectual practices, including "dismediation" (see Mills & Sterne, 2017)

and "neuroqueer technoscience" (see Rauchberg, 2022b and Chapter 2) that generates a

conversation between new media and critical disability studies.

Positioning new media as a research space prompts connections between

critical/cultural studies and critical disability studies and demonstrates a vital need for

interdisciplinary studies of data, disability, and digital platforms (see Ellcessor et al.,

2017, p. 16). For instance, Ellcessor et al. note that disability media studies can offer

critical disability methodologies and epistemologies that depart from textual analysis and

media representation. One potential framing, "dismedia" (Mills & Sterne, 2017), is a

critical/cultural framework encouraging structural and ideological analyses of disability

and technoculture beyond discussions of popular media representation. Positioning

"disability as a constituting dimension of media, and media as a constituting dimension of

disability," Sterne and Mills call for critical/cultural disability media work to interrogate

the relationship between discourses and ideological structures that make resistive

representations possible. I position crip data studies as a key concept that extends Sterne

and Mills' idea of "dismediation" toward digital platforms and user-generated data to

investigate how ideological forms of race and disability influence data creation and digital

cultural production in interconnected and frictive ways. I am interested in how a crip data

approach critically probes the ways platforms and other computing systems understand

and interact with disabled, crip, and neuroqueer data.

Critical/Cultural Studies of Race, Disability, and the Digital

A secondary goal of *Crip data studies* is to analyze the entwined relationship between race and disability as ideological structures that shape cultural conceptions of digital platforms and data. I do not believe *all* critical disability studies work fails to engage with (critical perspectives on) race. Instead, I am identifying significant, overarching moments where the field's critique of oppression and exclusion becomes limited and incomplete by failing to identify, name, and challenge the ways racist, ableist, and eugenicist sentiments animate our contemporary times. Disability critical race theory (DisCrit) scholars address the historical whiteness and coloniality that inform academic work around disability, even within critical scholarship (Schalk, 2022; Annamma et al., 2013; Bailey & Mobley, 2019). Notably, Chris Bell's (2011) frank reading reveals how scholarship conflates disability with whiteness, focusing on the ways white scholars essentialize Blackness and brownness while centering whiteness, eliminating opportunities for Black, brown, and Indigenous scholars to add to disciplinary conversations about race and disability (p. 282). Disability studies, then, becomes associated with being "white." Following the lead of DisCrit scholars, I demonstrate how discourses and ideological structures promulgate disability as a racializing practice (as I discuss throughout this dissertation, but particularly throughout Chapter 1). The growth of critical disability studies subfields such as critical race disability studies (DisCrit) offers generative possibilities beyond the reproduction of whiteness in critical disability scholarship.

Moreover, critical/cultural frameworks help us to understand how racism is disabling. Stuart Hall (2017) explains how differences, such as race, are considered discursive objects that produce racializing knowledge that shapes social and cultural relations. Though Hall does not directly address disability, he notes how racializing discourses "have the power to organize everyday conduct as well as the various practices of groups toward one another… profoundly disfiguring the culture of societies in which they have been operative in" (S. Hall, 2017, p. 68). However, Hall's use of "disfiguring" demonstrates such critiques of racialization that ultimately reaffirm Western, Eurocentric ideas of biological normality, rendering disability as a trope of "disqualification" that disabled people must escape (see Erevelles, 2015, p. 147). Instead of studying race and disability separately, I follow the lead of Black disability scholars such as Sami Schalk (2022), who offers disability politics as Black community-engaged work that departs from mainstream (white) disability scholarship to address the relationship between Blackness, disability, and well-being (p. 11). Noting that Black disability politics are "intersectional but race-centered," Schalk is clear that conversations about race and racism—particularly Blackness and anti-Black racism—cannot be disentangled from their shaping of disability and ableism. Therefore, Black disability politics engages in an intersectional cultural practice that grapples with the "relationship of multiple oppressions" (p. 12). As a white disabled scholar, I believe that writing a dissertation about disability without addressing how race and racism greatly inform dominant Western, Eurocentric ideologies about data's value and social power would egregiously limit the potential of my analysis. I perceive my role is to support, mark, and identify

moments of conversation that offer generative disruptions to maintaining racism and ableism in platform systems and other new media technologies. Throughout *Crip data studies*, I particularly focus on critical/cultural approaches to inform my understanding of ableism and racism on digital platforms. Moreover, I study how racist and ableist ideologies shape user-generated data, such as algospeak (Chapter 1), neuroqueer technoscience (Chapter 2), digital mutual aid (Chapter 3) and shitposting (Chapter 4). Throughout *Crip data studies,* I prioritize DisCrit frameworks that engage with critical ideological analyses of both race and disability in user-generated platform data.

Key Areas of Contribution

Race, Disability, and Internet Studies

A crip data approach allows me to critically analyze the relationship between race, disability, and data on Internet-hosted digital platforms. The Internet is an interconnected, global network which fosters broad communicative interactivity between devices and is designed to connect as many unique users and information production as possible (Poell et al., 2021; Daniels, 2013; Nakamura & Chow-White, 2013; Sandvig, 2013). Digital sharing rapidly increased with the launch of the World Wide Web (Web) in 1991, a mass information system built on top of the Internet. As the Web went through a second wave of development throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s ("Web 2.0"), advancements in computer programming and cultural development transformed economic, political, and cultural communications. Theorized by Tim O'Reilly (2010) as "the participatory web," Web 2.0 emphasizes how everyday users utilize Internet-hosted technologies, like digital platforms, to create their content. Web 2.0 defines itself through several principles to

show how everyday users engage with the Web, including conceptualizing the "web as [a] platform… [with] rich user experiences" (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012, p. 538). Today, the Web and other platforms are digital cultural making tools that connect communities across other platforms and offline.

The rise of digital platforms shifted the ways cultural creators understand the entangled relationship between disability, race, and the Web (Daniels, 2013; Ellcessor, 2017; Brock, 2020). For instance, Jessie Daniels' (2013) review of critical race theory and Internet studies identifies the ways racist ideologies configure the language we use to talk about technology (e.g., the now-outdated Master/Slave model describes asymmetric communications between a central device—"the Master"— that serves as a controlling hub for other devices—"the Slaves.") (Daniels, p. 696). Extending Stuart Hall's (1997) "spectacle of the Other," which indicates how groups form and separate according to differences and racial hierarchies, Daniels challenges the assumptions of the digital divide and the assumptions that Black, brown, and Indigenous users are always "Others" online (p. 708).

Critical digital race studies also address the ways new media industries portray racial minorities outside of the "ideal" user. Eschewing the postracial posturings of digital media as politically neutral, Wendy H.K. Chun (2012) contends that white supremacist ideologies of difference shape new media industries. Amber M. Hamilton (2020) extends this argument toward the tech industry writ large, noting how the digital divide "uses the logic of colorblind racism to focus primarily on the structural issues of access to the Internet, which… frame Black people as deficient subjects in need of technological

remediation" (p. 294). Technologies and ideologies become wielded by programmers, software developers, and media industries as "mapping tools" that attempt to reconfigure origins and boundaries of "invisible difference," naturalizing them (Chun, p. 40). Noting that race is not fully biological, visual, or cultural, Chun's work on race and/as technology seeks to push inquiry toward the *how* of race and the ways its interactions with new media technologies render the invisible visible (p. 38). In doing so, she provides a framework that offers important insights into comprehending socio-historical and contemporary structures of racism and their relations to other social structures and values.

Lisa Nakamura (2002) similarly pushes back on the assumption of the Internet as a postracial space, insisting that race and racism inform the design, governance, and user experiences of Internet-hosted technologies and platforms. To develop this argument, she proposes the concept of cybertypes, or "the distinctive ways the Internet propagates, disseminates, and commodifies race and racism" (p. 3). For instance, Nakamura analyzes the enactment of cybertypes through identity tourism, or instances of white male chatroom users creating East Asian avatars—such as geishas or samurai— to participate within a digital community, revealing how fetishizing racist and imperialist ideologies articulated earlier forms of digital cultural production (see Nakamura, p. 26). Nakamura's cybertype offers salient points for thinking about how postracism informs new media technologies. By postracism, I am referring to the mediation of racism as a problem of the "past" even though racism's insidious violence continues to shape material experiences for Black, brown, and Indigenous people in the United States (see Ono, 2010). Finally, Safiya Noble's (2018) work on algorithmic oppression traces the networking of racism

and misogyny in search engine algorithms. (I discuss Noble's work more extensively in Chapter 1.) Throughout my dissertation, I place these crucial insights from critical digital race studies scholars working in Critical Internet and Platform Studies in conversation with work on disability and digital ableism.

Critical work on disability and new media challenges top-down research design practices regarding accessible data creation and platform use. This scholarship demonstrates how ableist ideas about power and value influence nondisabled research teams to prioritize personal perspectives and ideas about (technology), rendering disability invisible (Ellcessor, 2017, p. 1673; see also Shew, 2020; Williams et al., 2021; Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019; Alper, 2017). Moreover, technologists and programmers portray disability as a solvable problem for computing systems to fix or for nondisabled researchers to extract data from (Wu, 2021). Though not a primary focus of my inquiry, I would be remiss not to mention that technoracism is not always studied alongside technoableism, as earlier studies on the digital divide concentrated on race as an access barrier (Daniels, 2014; Hamilton, 2020). Kerry Dobransky and Eszter Hargittai (2006) introduce the disability divide to consider uneven access among disability demographics, particularly around inaccessible platforms and "reactive" accommodations to previously inaccessible Internet infrastructure. For instance, a screen reader might not be compatible with a device after a software update, reproducing inaccessibility for the user. I offer *Crip data studies* as a space to extend critical conversations about disability, race, and digital cultural production of data. Throughout my dissertation's case study chapters, I investigate the ways subversive crip user engagement, such as digital mutual aid

campaigns (Chapter 3) and algospeak strategies (Chapter 1), challenge ableist and racist assumptions about which data belong on a social media or content creation platform.

Cripping Critical Data Studies: Who Counts?

In this sub-section, I show how *Crip data studies* extends and responds to current conversations within the interdisciplinary field of Critical Data Studies, particularly regarding disability, race, and the organization of Western, Eurocentric value. Through the lenses of race and disability, the different case study chapters analyze how dominant social platforms manipulate user-generated data to support cultural discourses about power, production, and value on digital platforms. For example, Chapter 1's discussion of biased content moderation practices reveals how platform companies rely on ableist and racist ideas from dominant offline discourses to inform how data is prioritized within a digital platform. (e.g., privileging creators and content that are believed to hold more value, while actively hiding those deemed "less" valuable.) Following the cues of critical and feminist data studies scholars, I bring a socio-historical lens to my dissertation project, analyzing how "never fully formed" data are cultural assemblages shaped by historical forces and ideological motivations materially structure modern life (see Posner & Klein, 2017, p. 3; Gitelman, 2006, p. 12). My dissertation aligns with a socio-historical approach to draw connections between the ways contemporary platform companies and colonial powers conceptualize power and value. Here, my analysis does not aim to conflate colonial states with contemporary platform governance. Instead, I offer the comparison to demonstrate how the hierarchization of "good" versus "bad" data is nothing new: colonial powers used quantum media, such as death ledgers, population

tables, and maps to organize information and reinforce hierarchies of cultural value and power (see Wernimont, 2019; Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Ricuarte, 2019; Willmott, 2023). A critical/cultural approach to data demonstrates how current-day biased platform governance, such as content moderation, takes cues from past mass information-sorting practices. Moreover, feminist data studies "recognize that different people experience multiple, overlaying identities, advantages (or disadvantages), privileges, and outlook" (Posner & Klein, p. 4). As Langdon Winner (1980) articulates, embedded political ideologies cannot be extricated from the technology we create and use. For example, in Chapter 4, my digital autoethnographic analysis of cultural production on Instagram highlights how the platform reifies Western, Eurocentric ideas about hygiene, neurotypicality, and human value. I extend Winner's thinking about technology and ideology toward digital data, considering how "the environments of technical systems" (Winner, 1980, p. 131), such as algorithmic infrastructure and content moderation systems, pressure specific responses from users, devices, and the data they manipulate.

Derived from the Latin *datum*, a past participle of *dare* ("to give"), data translates to "something given" (Puschmann & Burgess, 2014, p. 1961). In the eighteenth century, the rise of the biological and natural sciences in Europe shifted dominant cultural perceptions in the Anglophone world to define data as an object determined through experimentation or collection (Rosenberg, 2013). Technological shifts in the twentieth century, particularly regarding the rise of mass media and computing systems in a postwar era, transformed cultural definitions surrounding data once more. By the 1960s, understandings of data stabilized to define the term as "objects that can be manipulated

using a computer rather than generally accepted facts or the outcomes of experimentation and observation" (Puschmann & Burgess, p. 1963). Throughout *Crip data studies*, I understand a platform system's computational alteration of data to hold enormous cultural implications both on and offline through visualization, analytics, and storage. Positioning data as cultural objects, my dissertation interrogates how dominant ideological structures embedded with racism and ableism inform our socio-historical conceptualizations of Western, Eurocentric human value. Moreover, throughout *Crip data studies*, the various case studies demonstrate how platforms and other new media technologies typically position data as a resource to be stolen, extracted, or manipulated.

In this way, I understand the counting and quantification of digital cultural production on platforms reinforces colonial hierarchies and notions of value. Jacqueline Wernimont's (2019) study of colonial quantum media reveals that English colonial ship registers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not initially count the deaths of African and African descendants brought to the American colonies (first as indentured servants, eventually as enslaved people imbricated in the violence of chattel slavery). Enslaved people's deaths were eventually recorded, but only as "insured" property for white, wealthy landowners (Wernimont, p. 57). Quantum media texts such as historical ledgers, registers, and insurance policies reveal how colonial powers and prominent political figures rendered enslaved African people as malleable monetary objects, not human beings (p. 612). Moreover, Sylvia Wynter's (1992) writing on the colonial slave trade's "Pieza Conceptual Framework" reveals a violent relationship that traces coloniality, enslavement, and racialization. To illustrate: a healthy, able-bodied enslaved

person was worth one pieza (piece). But a sick, disabled, or older enslaved person was not

worth one pieza, thus leading enslavers and traders to require the assemblage of multiple

"unworthy" enslaved peoples that result in the equivalence of one total (healthy, young,

and able-bodied) enslaved person (Eudell, 2010, p. 310). (I further discuss the violent

implications of these entangled oppressive ideological beliefs in Chapter 1.) Wernimont's

and Wynter's respective examples predate contemporary understandings of data as

information objects manipulated by computing systems. These colonial examples of data

and classification offer probing insights that demonstrate how data is never neutral and is

often manipulated to reinforce racist and ableist ideas about what belongs on a platform.

Today's platform systems mediate contemporary understandings of political value,

substantiating "arrangements of power and authority [with]in human associations as well

as the activities that take place in those arrangements" (Winner, 1980, p. 123). The

political reverberations of colonial-era quantification systems continue to shape our

current era (see Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Ricuarte, 2019; Wernimont, 2019).

      Throughout the latter half of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first

century, computing systems and accompanying software were designed to collect,

measure, and manipulate large amounts of data, particularly surrounding developments

such as the growing availability of personal computers (PCs), the Web, and the

emergence of Internet Service Providers (ISPs). The emergence of new information and

communication technologies (ICTs) and moves toward mass digitization and automation

of computerized datasets presented simultaneous opportunities for using Big Data to

"cure societal ills" while posing a looming threat of technological determinism (boyd &

Crawford, 2010, p. 3). Here, I understand Big Data as the sociotechnical interplay between technology, analysis, and mythology. To illustrate this idea, danah boyd and Kate Crawford (2010) propose that Big Data is neither merely "good" or "evil." Instead, the authors encourage other researchers to question how Big Data— and the interlocutors, such as platform companies imbued within it— positions knowledge production to an "objective" practice. Cornelius Puschmann and Jean Burgess (2014) similarly probe Big Data's purported neutrality, noting how "[Big Data] centers on the intricacies of handling data rather than [its] relation… to the world, it is assumed to represent" (p. 1961). The mythology of Big Data is mediated through metaphor, which both reveals and obscures truths about technology (Watson, n.d., para. 5). Discursively positioned as an exploitable resource, platform companies, like Meta and Byte Dance, often conceptualize Big Data as something in need of discovery, control, and replenishment, obscuring the ways platform data is generated by everyday users (Puschmann & Burgess, p. 1699). Such platform company discourses emphasize Big Data as a resource to control and extract from in order to profit from user-generated data, suggesting that the colonial past informs our present quantification practices.

Following insights from critical data studies scholars, I position platform companies' data exploitation as a form of data colonialism (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). In their formative work, Nick Couldry and Ulises A. Mejias (2019) consider the material and metaphorical relationship between colonial predatory extraction of natural resources to analyze platform companies' computational quantifications of user datasets. Couldry and Mejias note platform companies based in the global north take resources from users

based in the global south, expanding the insidious parameters of capitalist economies. Platform companies position data colonialism as a "natural process," rendering data as a "'raw' resource that platform companies and the content moderators who work for them use to accelerate the platform's domination and growth (Couldry & Mejias, 2019, pp. 7-9). As platform interaction becomes ubiquitous within quotidian life events, the emergence of Big Data and data colonialism on social media and content creation platforms equally signify that echoes of coloniality extend into our current moment, shaping the ways digital platforms operate and assign "value" for specific user groups over others through datafication. Throughout *Crip data studies,* I examine how the legacies of (data) colonialism shape crip platform practices in the wake of climate emergencies (Chapter 3) and inform hygienic styles of cultural production (Chapter 4). In this way, I investigate how crip (and neuroqueer) data production offers alternate possibilities for which types of data belong on social media and content creation platforms.

Disability's Role in Platform Studies

Defining Platform (Studies).

I position *Crip data studies'* four case study chapters to establish a conversation between platform studies and critical disability studies. Throughout this project, I discuss the relationship between disability, data, and platforms, with a particular focus on the governance and cultural production of crip data. The platform offers multiple entry points for understanding how new media systems shape economic, creative, and cultural production in innovative, interconnected ways (Montfort & Bogost, 2009, p. 1). I follow

Tarleton Gillespie's (2018) definition of digital platforms as "online sites and services

that host, organize, and circulate users' content or shared interactions for them, without

having produced or commissioned (the bulk of) that content, built on an infrastructure,

beneath that circulation of information, for processing data for customer service,

advertising, and profit" (p. 18). Programmers build environments as forms of

computational architecture on which users and audiences alike can engage in "discursive,

creative expression" (Burgess, 2021, p. 26). Therefore, I understand *platform studies* as

critical interrogations of the relationship between software and computing systems that

take on material forms as they are used by people and shape culture (Montfort & Bogost,

p. 2). I am interested in showing how the theoretical framework of crip data studies and

its focus on platforms can enrich and extend critical disability studies' critiques toward

discussions on data, governance, and visibility.

A digital platform's richly layered computational environment includes features

that support a wide array of user-generated content. Content creators (typically referred to

as creators) "commercialize and professionalize" the generation and circulation of their

content through close interactions with digital audiences across major digital platforms, in

addition to offline contexts (Cunningham & Craig, 2021, p. 1). The nature of creative

labor, particularly among disabled creators, can shift across platforms and contexts. For

instance, some creators work as independent contractors, providing service to a brand

through the creation of sponsored content in return for financial compensation (see Duffy

& Sawey, 2021, p. 135). Notwithstanding, compensation for creative labor can lead to

exploitation (e.g., a company may not fully pay the creator for their work) and exacerbate

ableist and racist biases (e.g., Black or disabled creators may not be paid as much as

white or nondisabled creators) that inform platform economies (see Duffy & Meisner,

2023; Glatt, 2022; Peterson-Salahuddin, 2022; Hund, 2023; Duffy & Sawey, 2021; Glatt,

forthcoming). Though not a primary focus in *Crip data studies*, creative work certainly

informs Chapter 4's discussion on shitposting-based content creation and platform

hygiene. (I also discuss influencing and creative labor further on in this section of my

Introduction.)

Crip data studies investigates the ways a platform's affordances relate to

dominant discourses and ideological forms that inform the production of user-generated

content. By affordances, I refer to the "the multifaceted relational structure… that

mediates between a [technological] object and its outcomes" (Davis, 2020, p. 6). Creators

and users may engage with multiple platforms to take advantage of their various

affordances and organizational styles. For instance, "portal platforms," like YouTube,

incorporate video and live-streaming functions that allow users to generate content that

serves as a "front-facing window" that invites a mass audience to interact with a creator's

content. While a "creation platform" such as Twitch may also incorporate video and live-

streaming, content is geared toward a more specified, long-term audience interaction,

such as a creator live-streaming their playing of a particular video game (see Florida,

2022, p. 19). Platform companies increasingly configure their platforms to grow in

popularity through tailored algorithmic user-recommendations shaped by the interactions

between different users' generated data, gamifying choices to integrate users (see Seaver,

2022; Burgess, 2021, p. 26). Throughout Chapter 4 and in the conclusion to Chapter 2, I

also investigate discussions of affordances as a way of access making and disability

culture creation via user-generated data. As platforms integrate more deeply into cultural,

economic, and political practices, studying platforms through a critical/cultural lens

facilitates an understanding of how platforms appeal to multiple potential stakeholders to

create and interact with user-generated data by presenting themselves as "neutral"

intermediaries (see Anable, 2018, p. 135). To that end, *Crip data studies* focuses on

developments originating within digital platforms (when), considering how crip cultural

productions on digital platforms demonstrates distinct modes of creating and producing

within digital environments.

Platformization and Platform Logics in *Crip data studies*.

I contextualize my crip data approach within cultural, economic, and political

shifts catalyzed by platformization, a twenty-first-century phenomenon characterized by

the platform's emergence as a dominant economic and infrastructural model (Helmond,

2015, p. 1). David B. Nieborg and Thomas Poell (2018) describe platformization as a

"penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital

platforms into web and app ecosystems, fundamentally affecting the operations of cultural

industries," such as legacy news and broadcast media (p. 4276). Such transformations

placed content-sharing platforms into digital extensions of physical and public life. For

example, the exponential growth of "platformed" news outlets in the 2010s,

like *Buzzfeed* and *The Huffington Post* (*HuffPo*), experienced new forms of cultural

production and aggregation as they began integrating social media-like metrics into their

business practices. Prioritizing insights from retweets, comments, shares, and comments,

platform companies incorporate user data analytics to inform decisions about what content is profitable and what will maintain or increase the traffic to their site (van Dijk & Poell, p. 24). The critical study of platformization provides essential insights into how Western platform companies facilitate user experiences for the millions of account holders who rely on them to share information, work, and find community.

Across *Crip data studies*, I address the ideological tensions emerging from the platform logics to create affordances that inform user-generated data creation. By platform logics, I am referring to the ways technology companies incorporate rules and guidelines to determine the kind of content that is valued and how the platform measures that value through various (semi)automated protocols that support content moderation, presentation, and curation for a large mass of users (Burgess, 2021, p. 23). In doing so, these companies present their logics as "natural" and apolitical, eschewing their imbrications within larger cultural, political, and economic contexts (see van Dijk & Poell, 2013, pp. 4-5). However, platforms are not always transparent with their users regarding the parameters of governance; this leads users to engage with algorithmic folk theories or user beliefs that attempt to establish a stable narrative on how users should perceive the logic of "the algorithm"—a shorthand referring to a platform's complex data governing practices— and how platform logics often obfuscate how users can create and interact with data (see Karizat et al., 2021; Caplan, 2018; Nicholas, 2022; DeVito et al., 2017; Singh & Sharma, 2019). For instance, some platforms, such as TikTok— the focus of Chapter 1 –claim to promote marginalized creators' content, yet actively used content moderation to suppress the visibility of disabled users' data. In response, many disabled

creators began incorporating strategies such as "algospeak" (Klug et al., 2023) or particular hashtags, such as #neurospicy (neurodivergent) or #panini (COVID-19 pandemic) to make disability-related content visible without inviting censorship.

My dissertation's crip data approach also extends current scholarly conversations interrogating platformization, platform logics, and digital biases. In particular, I show how ableism and other oppressions shape the ways platforms value certain user-generated data. For instance, my previous work (2022c) on the popular micro-vlogging and content creation platform TikTok troubles the platform's promotion of social justice discourses, such as LGBTQ representation, while simultaneously suppressing content from queer, trans, and disabled creators. (I further discuss TikTok's use of content moderation to suppress disabled and Black creators' content in Chapter 1 and the ways digital disability justice groups work to engage in digital activism that extends to offline contexts in Chapter 3.) Throughout *Crip data studies,* I explore such concerns regarding platformization and how it simultaneously dis/empowers disabled users and their data.

The Creative Economy and the Influencer Industry.

Within *Crip data studies*, I consider the ways disabled creators engage in data-generation for employment, community building, and creative practice. As discussed earlier in the Introduction, my interest in crip data stems from my personal experiences as a disability content creator on Instagram. Though I did not monetize my posts, other disabled Instagrammers whom I followed worked as brand ambassadors to make money. Richard Florida (2022) defines the creative economy as "a technological and economic ecosystem in which creators do their work and engage their platforms," citing social

sharing and content creation sites such as Substack, Twitch, and Instagram as critical

nodes for facilitating creative work (p. 3). I understand the influencer industry as a

component of the larger creative economy, which consists of influencers and creators,

marketers, technology companies, sponsors, brands, and platform companies (Hund,

2023, p. 6). Catalyzed by the platformization of digital news outlets, the multi-billion-

dollar influencer industry is characterized by socioeconomic instability, digital

entrepreneurship, and technological advancement (Hund, p. 2; see also Duffy, 2017;

Glatt, forthcoming). In this way, the influencer industry creatively determines *which* data

holds value on social media and content creation platforms.

In the past decade alone, the monetization of remote creative labor drastically

transformed more established media industries, such as film, television, and publishing

(Poell et al., 2022). Beginning before but exacerbated by COVID-19, creative economies

push traditional power hierarchies away from large corporations to creators, who play an

intensified role in the shift toward digital cultural production (Florida, p. 5). For instance,

the rise of specified creation platforms, such as the blogging platform Substack, provides

new options for monetizing writing and other creative practices typically associated with

analog media. Additionally, the creative economy has changed how creators make

money: influencers with brand ambassadorships create sponsored content that promotes a

company's product, gaining revenue for the traffic they attract to that company's website

(see Srnicek, 2017; Hund, 2023). In this way, the rise of platformization reveals how

creators and other workers in the creative economy respond to platform innovations. Nick

Srnicek (2017) identifies the rise of platformization as a reaction to extreme economic

variations and a surge in the information and communication technologies sector

throughout the early twenty-first century (2017, p. 11). Ultimately, digital creative labor

is constituted by different platform markets and the industry's ability to sell goods

through generalized market dependency. Consequently, disabled users and their data are

not necessarily "valued" within platform spaces. My case studies in *Crip data studies*

addresses how crip (and neuroqueer) user-generated data names and challenges the

broader landscape of ableist and biased platforms and data-driven cultures.

Several of *Crip data studies'* case study chapters (particularly Chapters 2 and 4)

show how platformization shapes authentic mediations of disability vis-à-vis crip and

neuroqueer data generation. I understand authenticity as "an inconvertible static

essence… key to [the operation of] media cultures" (Dubrofsky, 2022, p. 1). Authenticity

portrays the creator's relationship with their audience as genuine and individualized.

Here, creators remix and restyle already popular cultural discourses, ideas, and norms to

resonate with a global audience (Dubrofsky, 2022; Rauchberg, 2022a; Banet-Weiser,

2012; Enli, 2015). Authenticity is arguably key to success in the influencer industry:

creators constantly reassess, reevaluate, and redefine what makes an individual or product

influential (Hund, 2023, p. 13). In Chapters 1 and 4 of *Crip data studies*, I examine how

ideological structures of authenticity oppression inform ideas about disability, race, and

the value of marginalized users' data within the larger creative economy. Moreover, in

Chapter 2, I introduce my idea of neuroqueer technoscience (Rauchberg, 2022b) to

grapple with the potentiality of neuroqueer authenticities as a generative disruption to

neurotypical data and platform system creation. As I discuss in Chapter 4, creators must

"game" the algorithm (see Petre et al., 2019; Bishop, 2018) and try out various strategies that will make their data visible while keeping up with platform changes. For disabled creators, these concerns are exacerbated by technoableist platform logics and capitalist dynamics— forces that reproduce networked inequalities and forms of nondisabled cultural production. *Crip data studies'* various case studies engage with concerns of creative labor to examine how hegemonic discourses and ideological structures, such as ableism and racism, shape how data's authenticity and value are mediated within digital platforms and their creative economies.

Platform Governance and Content Moderation.

To articulate my dissertation's engagement with critical studies of disability, race, platforms, and data, the final area of scholarship informing *Crip data studies'* inquiry centers on social media platform company governance and content moderation. I understand platform governance as a series of complex and layered relationships that inform interactions between platforms, users, data and other intermediaries (Gorwa, 2019). Throughout *Crip data studies,* I understand platform (companies) as "political actors" that are indubitably influenced by different forms of governance at local, national, and international levels (Gorwa, p. 857; see also Klonick, 2017).[9] Within the parameters of individual platforms, platform companies set rules that delineate what content is (not) permitted or even amplified by the platform's algorithmic infrastructure (Burgess, 2021, p. 24). I additionally derive my understanding of governance from Michel Foucault (1984b), who conceptualizes this term as an assemblage of techniques, interlocutors, and institutions that organize subjectivity through language—which produces the conduct of

conduct. Governmentality is the nation-state's active engineering of a docile, well-behaved population through social institutions (see Foucault, 1982). I turn to Foucault's thinking to assess how corporate platforms similarly engage in governmentality to reinforce ableist and racist ideas about user-generated data's value and production within platform spaces. I additionally highlight how disabled users create data in unique ways that subvert platform governance and challenge offline networks of disposability and ableism. For instance, Chapter 3's focus on a #PowerToLive, a digital disability mutual aid group, shows how the movement relied on Twitter to organize offline emergency care for disabled people, older adults, and other communities left behind during California's 2019 wildfire season.

Within the four case study chapters, I understand content moderation as a broad custodial set of organizational structures, policies, and practices enforced by a platform to "settle… norms… and enforce… whatever rules they choose to establish" (Gillespie, 2018, p. 5; see also Caplan, 2018 p. 15). I primarily focus on what Robyn Caplan (2018) and other experts refer to as *industrial content moderation*, a practice employed by large platform companies such as Meta, where the company relies on tens of thousands of human moderators to aggregate the types of posts and users a platform desires, while removing "disturbing" data such as dick pics or hate speech (Chen, 2014). In this way, content moderation is not solely dedicated to eliminating undesirable content: platforms often utilize moderation to establish generative boundaries to promote content and invite in users that the platform desires (Caplan, 2018, p. 16; see also S. Roberts, 2019). Moderation emerges as a governing practice to maintain a platform's economic and

cultural health, promoting users and data deemed to hold the most value and profit for the company.

Platforms use a wide array of tools to shape informational flows and mediate discourse between users. Though all platforms incorporate some form content moderation to assist with maintaining data, many platforms target content from particular user groups (Nicholas, 2022; Gillespie, 2022, p. 8; Gerrard, 2018). For instance, I have previously (Rauchberg 2022c) written about the ways TikTok uses content moderation to limit algorithmic visibility for disabled, queer, and trans creators. In Chapter 1 of my dissertation, I continue this conversation, investigating how TikTok's content moderation practices hid disabled creators' profiles and all user-generated content from receiving platform visibility, treating the accounts as if they did not exist. My analyses interrogate how platform companies present their spaces as digital publics, despite platform companies' private interests (Myers West, 2018, p. 4367). Other popular digital platforms, like Instagram and Facebook, have been critiqued for using content moderation to reduce visibility for Black users posting about racial justice (see Peterson-Salahuddin, 2022; Gray & Stein, 2021). In *Crip data studies*, I investigate the biopolitical (Foucault, 1984b) managerial practices informing content moderation as a process to "clean" up undesirable data from a platform while promoting user-generated content that a platform values. Biopower, a series of technologies modern nation-states utilize to enforce valued behaviors and control populations via bodily management, manages large groups (Foucault, 1984b, p. 264). Conceptualizing platform users as a digital iteration of the population and platform companies as sovereigns, I critically examine the discursive

renderings of content moderation to exert some control over disabled users' data by reinforcing users' offline marginalities. For example, Chapters 4 introduces my concept of "platform hygiene" to challenge the ways content moderation reinforces modern-colonial ideas of power, capital, and platform value. Throughout *Crip data studies,* I investigate the ways content moderation emerges as a form of platform governance that reinforces ableism, racism, and other Western, Eurocentric logics to determine data's value.

Methodologies and Ethics

In this section, I highlight *Crip data studies'* methodological and ethical considerations to contextualize choices made in the overall dissertation project and individual chapters. *Crip data studies* is a sandwich-style dissertation: each chapter functions as a separate case study united under a more extensive, comprehensive idea of crip data studies. I engage in various critical humanistic and qualitative methodological strategies appropriate for analyzing the mediation of power and culture (see Craig, 1999). I use critical/cultural close reading (Chapters 1 and 2), ideological analysis (Chapter 3), and digital performance autoethnography (Chapter 4). While this mixed methodology certainly reflects my interdisciplinary training across Communication Studies, New Media Studies, and Cultural Studies, they also trace the multifaceted structures and cultural development of disability, race, difference, and digital platforms.

Moreover, the conceptualization of ethics in the various chapters draws upon my autoethnographic, self-reflexive engagement with my platform use (see Chapters 1, 2, and 4). Because university research ethics boards often treat Internet artifacts such as social

media posts as "public" information that does not necessitate ethics approval, researchers

often lurk within digital spaces created and frequented by marginalized users (cowan &

Rault, 2018, p. 126; Kim & Kim, 2014). These practices risk harming marginalized social

media users, whose unverified, yet public posts are cited without permission, increasing

the risk of surveillance, doxxing, and other forms of cyberharassment (cowan & Rault,

2018; Linabary & Corple, 2019; Chee et al., 2023). Readers will note that I do not engage

with other users' content (except for Chapter 3), where I placed careful parameters around

the referencing of tweets, opting only to directly quote public and (previously) verified

Twitter users such as journalists, local government accounts, or referencing material

sourced in popular press articles. (I discuss these selection decisions further in Chapter

3's methodology section.) In each of the individual case study chapters, I similarly

foreground feminist ethics of care and citation to highlight the intentions I have

embedded within the overall dissertation.

Throughout my dissertation, I understand methodology as a discursive practice

that rejects knowledge creation as apolitical, objective, and absolute. This project engages

with methodology and data collection as a "discursive construction" that is inherently

political, disruptive, and collaborative (Basu, 2008). Throughout the project, I view

methodology as an evolving practice, akin to Alison Kafer's (2013) political-relational

model of disability: cultural contexts and the people occupying them are always already

in flux. In the process of conceptualizing the chapter methodologies, I reflected on my

responsibilities as a researcher. Initially, I had proposed an empirical chapter involving

semi-structured interviews about ableist platform governance with disabled influencers

and creators. As I began drafting my dissertation chapters more in-depth, I experienced an ongoing family crisis that took considerable time away from my project. Moreover, as an international student, I wanted to finish my project before my visa and funding expired. I removed this chapter from the project after realizing the research process would not be compatible with my timeline, especially considering the difficulties of conducting such research during COVID-19 lockdowns, which complicated traditional data collection from March 2020 to 2022. Throughout *Crip data studies,* and particularly in the chapter introductions, I engage in critical, reflexive autoethnography (see Boylorn & Orbe, 2020) to interrogate my enmeshed role as a member of disabled creator communities, a white academic researcher in North America, and the frictive tensions generating from such relationships. I hope there is something here in this dissertation for disabled programmers, streamers, technologists, self-advocates, influencers, activists, cultural workers, and other digital communities.

As platforms and political events developed, I adjusted my methodological framings and ethical practices accordingly. I understand that digital platforms are emerging and dynamic. When drafting this introductory chapter in late February/March 2023, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerburg silently closed the Metaverse project (see Olinga, 2023). Clearly, digital platforms— and the data produced within platform spaces —are not permanent. However, I am optimistic about my approach's transformative potentials for offering new, lasting ideas about the ways crip and neuroqueer data can interrupt how ableism and racism inform a platform system's valuation of user-generated data. I hope

this manuscript reimagines the ways digital platforms and computing systems read

disabled people's data: as legitimate, valuable data.

Chapter Summaries

The following section provides summaries for the following chapters in *Crip data*

studies. Following McMaster University's requirements for sandwich-style dissertations

(see McMaster University, 2021), each chapter is preceded by a brief introduction that

engages in critical autoethnographic reflection to understand relevant political, economic,

and cultural nodes. The introductory notes also demonstrate connections between each

chapter to situate *Crip data studies* as a larger project.

Chapter 1, "TikTok's algorithmic ableism: A Wynterian unprogramming of AutoR

content moderation," interrogates how ableist ideologies inform content moderation and

readings of disabled users' data on the popular micro-vlogging app TikTok. The app's

AutoR algorithmic infrastructure—which determines whether a user's video reaches the

coveted #ForYou feature page and goes viral— is programmed to erase the visibility of

certain groups —specifically disabled, queer, and trans users. I suggest that TikTok's

algorithmic infrastructure promotes a digital space for openness and creation while also

using shadowbanning to imagine a platform where disabled users' data does not exist. I

bring Sylvia Wynter's (2003) anticolonial theorization of "master codes" and "descriptive

statements" in conversation with crip theory. I examine the AutoR content moderation

function and TikTok's Terms of Service to extend Wynter's theorization of Man (as an

embodiment of the white, Christian bourgeois ethnoclass) into the digital age by

introducing the emergence of Man3. Extending Wynter's framework into the twenty-first

century, I name "Man3" as a new genre: the ideal user whose data is always valued and

does not experience content suppression across digital platforms. Through a

critical/cultural close reading of whistleblower documents leaked by *Netzpolitik* and *The*

Intercept, TikTok's terms of service, community guideline removal reports, and popular

press articles, I examine how algorithmic ableism informs TikTok's content moderation

practices. The chapter also threads a conversation between crip data and critical algorithm

studies to challenge the biased ideological framings of content moderation and user-

generated data on TikTok. This framing challenges TikTok's use of shadowbanning to

delineate who is "human" enough to belong on the app. A key question driving this

chapter is: How does TikTok's use of content moderation contribute to algorithmic

ableism and the dehumanization of disabled users' data?

In Chapter 2, "Imagining a neuroqueer technoscience," I introduce neuroqueer

technoscience as a transformative possibility that prioritizes neurodivergent data's agency

and expertise in the development of assistive technologies. My introduction of

"neuroqueer technoscience" imagines possibilities where autistic and neurodivergent

subjectivities are honored in new media production. I ground my inquiry in crip

technoscience, which imagines critical disability "political practices of non-compliant

knowing-making: world-building and world-dismantling practices *by* and *with* disabled

people and communities that respond to intersectional systems of power, privilege, and

oppression by working within and around them" (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019, pp. 4-5).

Similarly, I position my conceptualization of a neuroqueer technoscience as engaging

digitally mediated practices of world-making that are concerned with user-generated

digital subjectivity and agency. This chapter presents neuroqueer technoscience as an extension of crip technoscience and data justice (Costanza-Chock, 2020) that introduces new styles of relationality, self-expression, and communication practices within information and communication technologies (ICTs) development, with a particular focus on digital platforms. Using an interdisciplinary framework informed by crip technoscience and human-computer interaction research, I present three tenets for mediating neuroqueer subjectivities via digital platforms. This chapter was originally published in *Studies in Social Justice*, vol. 16, no. 2, in March 2022.

Chapter 3, "The crip resilience of digital care work: Disability justice and disposability in the climate crisis," demonstrates how online disability justice movements generate data on social media platforms to make environmental ableism visible and challenge disposability of multiply marginalized disabled people during California's 2019 wildfire season. The chapter focuses on #PowerToLive, an online mutual aid moment that used social media platforms and Google Drive to connect hundreds of vulnerable, power-dependent people with emergency care from October to December 2019. Using #PowerToLive's digital care work data as a case study, I engage in an ideological analysis to introduce a framework of crip resilience. Broadly, crip resilience is polysemous ways of organizing, transforming, and creating worlds where disabled futures are always prioritized. To do this, I extend Patrice M. Buzzanell's (2010) theory of communicative resilience by analyzing #PowerToLive's public resources, social media posts, and popular press articles about the movement. In addition, I frame a crip data approach to resilience through background areas such as disposability, disability justice, care work, and hashtag

activism as emergency media. My crip data augmentation of communicative resilience argues that generating crip care work and disability justice data in climate emergencies challenges disposability and necropolitical governance. In sum, my analysis demonstrates how #PowerToLive's crip data offered visibility for the disability justice movement both on and offline.

In Chapter 4, "Shitposting as memetic neuroqueer affordances and cripping academic labor," I engage in digital performance autoethnography to approach Instagram shitposting as a reconfiguratory data-making practice that challenges platform hygiene (see cowan, 2019; Plotnick, 2022). I define shitposting as crass, provocative digital speech acts that rely on multimodal approaches (combination of text, image, and speech) to derail and disturb normative Instagram use, particularly in discourses surrounding disability and health. I note that shitposts are the digital evolution of a "shittext," or styles of public address that involve shitting/speaking in a public, transforming textual relations (Gunn, 2006, p. 82; Johnson & McDonald, 2018, p. 57).[10] In this way, I argue that shitposting is an intimate reconfiguration of Instagram data through its capacity as an abject, diarrheal (see Kristeva, 1980; Gunn, 2006) communicative gesture that inhabits the platform in ways that distinguish shitposting from hygienic data. Instagram is a unique space to shitpost: the platform's user interface and platform vernacular often encourage sanitized and hygienic approaches to data management (see Foucault, 1984a; Xiao et al., 2020). This chapter brings an autoethnographic lens to reconfigure shitposts as resistive crip data that identifies how ableism informs how users self-monitor their uploaded data. I reflect on how working as an Instagram shitposter shaped my

experiences with gastrointestinal disease and working as a precarious laborer in the academic industry. In this way, I suggest shitposting offers neuroqueer and crip approaches to academic labor and data-making that do not necessitate the supercrip trope that presents disability as an individual failure disabled people must overcome (see Schalk, 2016; Clare, 1999).

The Conclusion, "Is another platform possible?" critically reflects on crip data studies as an emerging practice for thinking about the relationship between disability, race, difference, and data on digital platforms. Returning to the question I introduced at the beginning of this chapter—"Should disabled people just make their own platform?"— I imagine with crip and neuroqueer microactivist practices that begin an unsettling and disruption of technoableism and technoracism. The conclusion's proposition offers moments to think through what crip and neuroqueer data offer to challenge the encoding of ableism, racism, and other biases into platform infrastructures and data-driven digital cultures. Together, the four case study chapters and the Conclusion invite readers to think through the entangled relationships between disability, race, and data in digital platform spaces. I envision this project as opening up conversations about the dynamic possibilities of crip data for resisting platform capitalism, biased content moderation, and the futures of data-driven cultural production. I understand the subversive and creative generation of crip data to render another (crip) platform possible, where disabled data is *always* valid.

Notes

1. My use of "disability," "disabled user," or "disabled creator" refers to any Internet user who is disabled. My definition of disability is fluid and expansive, considering (but certainly not limited to): physical disabilities, sensory disabilities, neurodivergency, chronic illness, intellectual/developmental disabilities, Madness/mental illness, and D/deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. I understand that I work from a North American context, which may not carry over across all cultural settings.

2. I follow Talila "T.L". Lewis's (2022) working definition of ableism, which Lewis defines as: "A system of assigning value to people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. This systemic oppression leads to people and society determining people's value based on their… ability to satisfactorily re/produce, 'excel,' and 'behave.' You do not need to be disabled to experience ableism" (Lewis, 2022, para. 4).

3. I use pseudonyms and paraphrasing throughout *Crip data studies* to protect the identities of the people I write about.

4. A mutual follower ("mutual") refers to a followed account that follows a user back (Urban Dictionary, 2017).

5. I follow Stuart Hall's (2017) definition of racism, which he defines as "as a system of meaning, a way of organizing and meaningfully classifying the world… [understanding] why the classificatory order it represents has so powerful a hold on the human imagination" (S. Hall, p. 33). In my dissertation, I seek to show how "classificatory orders" of racialization materially impact our conceptions of human value across disability and race.

6. Akin to the reclamation of "queer," crip is derived from the slur "cripple." Some believe crip should only be used by physically disabled people, while others believe all disabled people benefit from crip ways of knowing (Johnson & McRuer, 2014; Sandahl, 2003). Notably, critiques from Black disabled people trouble the appropriation of crip from the Crips, a U.S.-based street gang (Kafer, 2021). In my personal and professional practice, I utilize crip theory as an academic, cultural, and activist practice to help me think through questions, concerns, and tensions related to disability, new media, and digital platforms.

7. Neuroqueer (or neuroqueerness) refers to queering social and cultural environments in ways that disrupt neuronormativity and accept the fullness of neurodivergence (see Yergeau, 2018; Walker, 2021). I discuss neuroqueerness further in Chapters 2 and 4.

8. Wynter (2013) follows a Fanonian view of the sociogenic principle (1967) and Thomas Nagel's (1974) work on ontology and

phenomenology to explain Blackness as a shift in phenomenological experiences.

9. Though I acknowledge the significant complexities of determining telecommunications across (inter)national contexts, this is not my focus.

10. My use of shit interchangeably refers to both bodily excrement and the use of speech acts to unsettle dominant, sanitizing discourses.

Chapter 1:

TikTok's Algorithmic Ableism: A Wynterian Unprogramming of AutoR Content Moderation

Introductory Note

In December 2019, after my first term as a Ph.D. student, I found myself aimlessly scrolling through Twitter. I had recently joined the platform on the advice of a mentor who was adamant that the platform was an essential publicity tool for any junior academic. At the time, I was actively engaged in content creation as @disabledphd, so I also found my Twitter became a textual extension that complemented my Instagram presence. My Twitter feed was an angsty mix of #AcademicTwitter and #DisabilityTwitter, two enclaves or groups of users connected under shared interests or identities (see Jackson et al., 2020), and I often witnessed overlap between the two communities.

Perhaps my dwelling in these two digital spaces led Twitter's algorithmic infrastructure to feature a tweet that changed the course of my dissertation project. The post in question, published by the German investigative digital publication *Netzpolitik,* read: "TikTok curbed reach for people with disabilities" (Köver & Reuter, 2019). My skin prickled as I began reading the hyperlinked article, part of a bilingual investigative series on ByteDance's (TikTok's parent company) choices regarding platform governance and content moderation for TikTok, shared insights on how the platform employed censorship from a series of expert interviews and allegedly leaked documents. The report on disability revealed that the platform tasked human content moderators

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living in Barcelona, Beijing, and Berlin to train its platform's AutoR infrastructure to
suppress content from "vulnerable" users, particularly disabled people (Köver & Reuter,
2019). After moderators tagged these accounts with special indications suppressing their
content – ByteDance claimed they were preventing disabled users from potential
cyberbullying and harassment – account holders could no longer reach mass virality and
visibility.

My concern here is neither with TikTok's use of industrial content moderation
(see Caplan, 2018), nor with the practices that large platform companies, like ByteDance,
employ to remove content a platform does not want while simultaneously encouraging or
privileging posts that will draw traffic for the platform and generate profit (Gillespie,
2018; S. Roberts, 2019). All platforms enforce some sort of moderation strategy: it is
used to successfully run a platform. Here, my apprehension lies with *how* TikTok
instructed moderators to remove content and *whose* content was disposable enough to be
suppressed or hidden from other accounts. The *Netzpolitik* investigation revealed the
moderation practices targeted so-called "vulnerable" users, such as disabled people, fat
people, queer people, and trans people. Moreover, I was struck by the opacity of TikTok's
governance strategies, as the platform did not notify users that their accounts had been
suppressed: a form of content moderation colloquially referred to as shadowbanning (see
Myers West, 2018; Are, 2021; Nicholas, 2022). Shadowbanning is an algorithmic folk
theory, or a user-generated belief, shared by creators on the platform to make sense of
obfuscated guidelines about how a platform's infrastructures (such as content moderation
algorithms) work, and how these technical systems impact the sharing of information and

users' cultural production (see DeVito et al., 2017). As I repeatedly returned to the article, my gut was consumed by the intentionality of this content moderation tactic. It was as if TikTok – and effectively, ByteDance – imagined a platform where disabled users' data did not exist.

Moreover, following the *Netzpolitik* report, stories surfaced about TikTok also suppressing Black creators, especially if users posted about racial justice or racist discrimination on the platform (see Peterson-Salahuddin, 2022; Rauchberg, 2022; Sobande, 2020). Here, I note earlier work on technoracism, mainly Safiya Noble's (2018) writing on algorithmic oppression, Moya Bailey's and Trudy's [2] (2018) collaborative scholarship on digital misogynoir, and Ruha Benjamin's (2019) theorization of the "New Jim Code," all three of which signal an emphasis on intersectional analyses of race and technological bias. In their respective research, Noble, Bailey, Trudy, and Benjamin offer socio-historical analyses of how racism and misogyny animate new media technologies, demonstrating the relationship between technological structure and the social interaction that these systems catalyze. In Chapter 1, I seek to understand how racism and ableism inform a platform's algorithmic organization tools. How did these ideologies and discourses fuse on digital platforms, like TikTok?

In this chapter, I introduce my concept of *algorithmic ableism* to analyze how TikTok's platform governance reinforces offline hierarchies of social exclusion that reproduce Western, Eurocentric discourses, and structures of power and omission in TikTok's platform system. I define algorithmic ableism as the encoding of ableist ideological practices, attitudes, and values into a digital platform's algorithmic

infrastructure, thus reinforcing enmeshed discourses and structures of violence, such as racism and coloniality, inter-inform how user-generated data is (de)valued. I engage with the Jamaican anti-colonial philosopher Sylvia Wynter's (2003) later work – particularly her writing on descriptive statements and the overrepresentation of Man – to trace the networked relationship between racism and ableism in platform governance and content moderation practices. Though Wynter does not directly address disability (as I discuss in the introduction to this project and throughout Chapter 1's main text), her conceptualization of Man offers important insights to name and disrupt the proliferation of social exclusion and economic marginalization that contextualized the colonial era and continues to shape our current, digital platforms through algorithmic systems. Through a critical/cultural close reading of documents, including two whistleblower reports that share documents that outline ableist content moderation strategies, TikTok's terms of service (ToS), Community Guideline Reinforcement Reports, and various investigative essays, I ask questions about the co-constitutive relationship between ableism and racism on digital platforms, suggesting that their enmeshment is inevitable, particularly within platform spaces.

I do not want to use the introductory note for this chapter to merely reiterate ideas, arguments, or definitions that appear in *Crip data studies*' introduction and the main text of Chapter 1. Instead, I want to reflect on theoretical and methodological decisions I made drafting this chapter, in addition to addressing limitations and areas for future research related to Chapter 1's insights. The first section of the introductory note will offer connections between Wynter's theories on Man and platform governance. I then

conclude with a brief coda on disability in Chinese culture, naming limitations of my project and tracing insights for future research.

Extending Sylvia Wynter's Later Oeuvre to the Digital Platform[3]

This chapter investigates how a platform mediates algorithmic ableism through an analysis of TikTok's alleged use of shadowbanning as a form of content moderation. I offer this chapter as a companion to empirical and social scientific scholarship on platform governance and data suppression. I am neither the first academic to write about shadowbanning as a form of platform moderation, nor the only one to address TikTok's penchant for the practice. Recent scholarship attempts to measure the material impacts of platform shadowbans on marginalized users and creator responses to algorithmic bias (see Are 2020; Are, 2021; Peterson-Salahuddin, 2022; Jaidka et al., 2023). Some studies, including articles by Kelley Cotter (2021) and Laura Savolainen (2022), draw from empirical scholarship to delineate the ontological nature of shadowbanning from creator and user perspectives: as the title of Cotter's (2021) article suggests— "Shadowbanning is not a thing"— some users doubt the "realness" of this alleged content moderation practice. As I reiterate in Chapter 1's main text, I am not trying to prove whether shadowbanning is real. This endeavor would be challenging, given ByteDance's lack of transparency. However, the epistemological and methodological choices I made in the drafting and design of Chapter 1 offer a humanistic extension to empiricist studies I did not ask questions about measurement or how users experience shadowbanning. Instead, I wanted to inquire into the relationship between ideology and the governance of user-generated data: indeed, these shadowbanning initiatives were neither glitches nor bugs,

but an intentional decision made by the humans designing, programming, and training the platform's infrastructure to promote some users while hiding others. Following Nick Seaver's (2017) call to approach algorithms as cultural artifacts, I sought to understand how TikTok's content moderation practices were informed by socio-historical discourses of racism and ableism, thus reprogramming these dominant, offline beliefs into digital platforms.

To answer these queries, I turned to Sylvia Wynter's philosophical interrogations on the making and proliferation of Western, Eurocentric ostensibly secular culture. I engaged with Wynter's writing to support a critical interrogation of algorithmic culture, platform governance, and content moderation that revealed how the relationship between ableism and racism is not siloed, but profoundly entangled. Wynter's work spans the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries; though these periods are interconnected and build on one another, I mostly inform my argument in Chapter 1 from her later work (1990s-present) on "the entire intellectual architecture of the West… and the nature of the concept of Man" (Bogues, 2006, p. xv). Wynter (2000) is clear that her theorization of Man is *not* synonymous with the human— though these words are often equated, Wynter fashions Man as a "specific, local-cultural conceptualization of the human, of the Judeo-Christian West, in its now purely secularized form" (2000, p. 25). I turned to Wynter's Man to understand how these ideological perceptions are continually narrativized in our contemporary cultural moment, informing the programming of organizational structures such as a prominent platform company's algorithmic infrastructure. Wynter's critique, which moves between and also departs from humanistic and (social) scientific inquiry,

additionally makes it possible for me to develop significant insights into alternative forms

of knowledge production on disability, race, and platforms, namely the relationship

between algorithmic ableism and algorithmic oppression (see Noble, 2018).

Consequently, Wynter's work makes insightful, interdisciplinary connections, and is not

dependent on Western, Eurocentric ways of conceptualizing disciplinary lines to engage

in intellectual thought (see also Alagraa, 2023).

I draw from Wynter's (2000) work on "After Man" to imagine the possibility of

platform systems that do not hinge upon colonial, Eurocentric conceptualizations of

hierarchy, power, and value, and instead push back against liberal humanist perspectives

that equate representation with resistance.[4] I am less interested in how platform systems

and their algorithmic infrastructure can make marginalized creators, particularly disabled

creators, *more* visible. Wynter's philosophical turn is indispensable to my crip data

approach. Akin to Wynter's articulation of "After Man," crip data's insistence on crip and

neuroqueer user-generated data as valid also disrupts the narrativization of

crip/neuroqueer data as Other on platforms and other computing systems. Instead, I

understand crip data *as* data.

I do not know where an alternative Otherness will take us. However, I believe

disabled social media users' microactivist (see Dokumacı, 2023) data-making practices

and cultural production can ultimately reconfigure biased computational environments,

like TikTok, to read crip data *as* data.[5] Another platform is possible.

Coda: A Note on Chinese Conceptualizations about Disability

I want to use the end of this introductory note to address a limitation of Chapter 1: what I candidly refer to as "The ByteDance problem." As I discuss in the chapter's main text, TikTok's parent company, the powerful entertainment and content creation platform company ByteDance, is based in China. Though ByteDance launched TikTok for an international (read: Western) audience in September 2018, there are inconsistencies in how the company differentiates between TikTok and its Chinese predecessor, Douyin (see Marwick, 2022, p. 401). Here, I am less concerned about privacy and data breaches and instead turn my attention to questions about algorithmic ableism and platform governance, asking: Are there distinctions between Western and Chinese conceptions of ableism? How might Chinese platform companies' ideologies of ableism inform TikTok's platform governance and content moderation practices? I believe answering these questions would necessitate an utterly separate dissertation project. Moreover, my main focus in Chapter 1 is investigating my concept of algorithmic ableism *within* the context of TikTok as a case study. Therefore, I use the remainder of the introductory note to briefly discuss Chinese conceptualizations of disability and mark areas for further discussion.

Within China, disability is legislatively defined as a physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychiatric difference (see Fisher & Jing, 2008), Approximately 6.34 percent— or 83 million people —of China's population is disabled (Campbell & Uren, 2011).[6] Though China passed its first disability law in 1990— the same year as the Americans with Disabilities Act —Confucian and Buddhist superstitions may organize social values that

portray disability as an individual fault or karmic retribution (Campbell & Uren, p. 17). Traditionally, disabled people encounter severe economic and social barriers, with 80 percent of China's 30 million people living below the poverty line identified as having a disability (p. 13). Economic marginalization shapes ableist cultural practices: one term for disabled people, "canfei," translates to useless (see Chiang & Hadadian, 2010).

The twenty-first century catalyzed substantial changes for disabled Chinese people. For instance, the advent of Internet-hosted platforms and other new media technologies offered nodes of connection, visibility, and community. Non-governmental organizations highlighted the importance of digital media for supporting disabled people's economic and social well-being: digital inclusion was marked as a key form of social inclusion, especially for disabled people living in rural areas (Lin et al., 2018, pp. 4434-5). While I cannot clearly show how Chinese conceptualizations of disability and ableism influence TikTok's platform governance and content moderation strategies, I offer these preliminary insights as another layer through which readers may approach engaging with Chapter 1. Moreover, I hope this coda invites other scholars to further pursue cross-cultural research on disability and platform governance.

Notes

1. Trudy (@thetrudz) is a Black feminist digital activist who publishes under a mononym.

2. By oeuvre, I am referring to an approach of literary analysis where a writer's full works are considered together as parts of a larger, encompassing whole.

3. Wynter is not the only scholar whose perspective critiques the creation and representations of Western, liberal humanism. For further reading, see: Coráñez Bolton, 2023; Erevelles, 2014; Kim, 2021; Mignolo, 2007; Mohanty, 1988; Quijano, 2007; Singh, 2018; Weheliye, 2014.

4. As I note elsewhere in *Crip data studies,* Dokumacı's (2023) work focuses on non-digital technologies, such as ramps or prosthetics. My crip data approach extends her thinking toward digital and computational contexts.

5. I imagine these numbers are significantly larger now as these statistics are over a decade old. Additionally, the dataset predates COVID-19's onset, which I name as a mass disabling event in *Crip data studies'* Introductory chapter.

TikTok's Algorithmic Ableism: A Wynterian Unprogramming of AutoR Content Moderation[1]

Introduction: Shadowbanned

Since its international launch in 2018, the content creation platform TikTok has hosted over one billion users and is central to global curiosity, culture, and celebrity discourses. TikTok's popularity lies in its viral[2] video trends and the individual user's ability to manipulate, produce, and tinker with their user-generated data. Users infuse visual and aural elements together through short-form videos ranging up to 3 minutes, facilitating a uniquely multimodal platform experience (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). Furthermore, TikTok users do not open the app to see accounts they already follow. Instead, they are greeted by the #ForYou page (#FYP): curated by the human content moderators who monitor the platform's AutoR infrastructure. Human content moderators input tags and guidelines to shape AutoR, which uses advanced machine learning to curate an expertly tailored experience for a particular user through tags that serve as an algorithmic input for the #FYP. For many, creating content that reaches the #ForYou page is essential to "going viral" and gaining platform stardom (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). In addition, through its various Creator Funds and a series of multi-billion-dollar mentorship programs that support emerging Black, brown, Indigenous, queer, and trans content producers (Pappas, 2021), TikTok positions itself as a platform promoting visibility and representation.

However, TikTok's rise in popularity is not without controversy. A 2019 whistleblower report from *Netzpolitik*, a German publication reporting on digital freedom,

revealed that TikTok's human content moderators, particularly those located in Beijing, Berlin, and Barcelona, were instructed to flag disability-related content, alerting its algorithmic infrastructure to censor and hide content created by disabled users after a certain number of views (Köver & Reuter, 2019) This practice, designated by the "AutoR" function, aimed to hide content from pre-determined "vulnerable" groups. Another tag informing the AutoR function, "Risk 4," directed moderators to recommend censorship for apparently disabled users' data.[3] Moderators' use of Risk 4 and other tags train AutoR algorithm's machine learning to watch for and remove specific types of content after a certain number of views (Köver & Reuter, 2019). For instance, when the content moderator flags a video that features someone with a facial difference, Down Syndrome, autism, or other apparent disabilities, as "Risk 4," the moderator inputs into the algorithm that the particular TikTok and account should be hidden from the #FYP (Biddle et al., 2020). Once a user's account is flagged into this category, their content will neither be promoted on TikTok's FYP nor visible to users residing outside their country (e.g., a user based in South Korea whose account is flagged as Risk 4 will only be visible to other TikTok accounts also registered in South Korea.)

In January 2020, TikTok's public relations team claimed that its content moderation practices protected "vulnerable" groups from experiencing digital harassment on the platform (Biddle et al., 2020). However, TikTok's concern about cyberbullying only concerned itself with data generated by disabled creators, as several ableist prank-based meme challenge posts were not flagged as offensive data. The prank memes, which feature autism and facial differences as "humorous" plot devices, suggest that the

platform's concern is not ableist harassment, but the visibility of disabled peoples' data

(see Rauchberg, 2022c). The example of these ableist memes offer insights into how

TikTok (de)values marginalized users' data creation. In Chapter 1, I argue that the

ideological positioning of TikTok's content moderation practices invoke shadowbanning,

a user belief [4] describing how automated algorithms are trained to hide a user's content

without formal notification but do not remove their account or specific media artifacts

from the app (Myers West, 2018, p. 4374). Though it is difficult to prove whether

shadowbanning is "intentional," the perception of suppressing disabled creators and

disability-related content materially impacts users and also obfuscates a platform's

transparency around data-generation guidelines (see Nicholas, 2022, p. 19). Disabled and

other marginalized users with substantial followings may find that despite significant

follower accounts, the AutoR function can hide their accounts from being featured on the

#FYP. Marking these accounts as unworthy of promotion on a platform reflects cultural

practices of systemic oppression through algorithmic code. Shadowbanning relies on

algorithmic infrastructure to imagine a platform where the visibility of particular user

groups is actively suppressed and reduced via machine learning and content moderation: a

form of digital eugenics (Rauchberg, 2022c). By eugenics, I am referring to a series of

political practices based on ableist and racist ideologies that inform the control of life,

death, social value, and (re)production (see Dolmage, 2017, p. 11) In this chapter, I

consider the ways offline ableist, racist, and colonial ideologies inform digital content

moderation strategies to explore the following question: How does TikTok's use of

content moderation contribute to algorithmic ableism and the dehumanization of disabled users' data?

Through conceptual work and ideological and textual analysis, this chapter argues that TikTok's shadowbanning of disabled users and other marginalized groups' data are key features of sustaining the platform. My theorizing follows recent scholarship in critical digital race studies (CDRS) and Black studies. I center Sylvia Wynter's (2003) writing on descriptive statements, which critically examine how white supremacist logics are continuously constituted in western world-making since European colonization emerged and have been used to equate white Christian Europe with humanness (p. 264). Likewise, my discussion on TikTok's data-driven algorithmic bias engages Wynter's work on the human by analyzing a set of corporate and investigative textual artifacts. I examine documents such as leaked content moderation playbooks, quarterly community guideline reports, TikTok's terms of service [ToS], and investigative journalism reports. In this way, my crip data analysis foregrounds discussions of how ableist and racist ideologies inform the programming of biased platform moderation systems on TikTok. Moreover, Chapter 1's formulation of crip data additionally dialogues with critical algorithm studies scholarship to demonstrate how algorithmic organization of data also draws from ableist and racist biases and reproduce Western, Eurocentric cultural flows (see Laapotti & Raappana, 2022; Banner, 2018; Phan & Wark, 2021). Ultimately, my interdisciplinary crip data analysis of TikTok's targeted suppression of disabled and marginalized users' content challenges how data moderation systems are informed by ableist and racist ideologies.

Chapter 1's analysis of TikTok's shadowbanning offers a theory of algorithmic ableism, which I name as the encoding of ableism into a digital platform's algorithmic organization of user-generated data, reinforcing the sticky relationalities between ableism and offline white supremacist ideologies, such as racism, in platform systems. My articulation of algorithmic ableism is informed by but distinct from Safiya Noble's (2018) algorithmic oppression, which focuses on the encoding of racial and gender biases in algorithmic systems. Noble's theorization supports my crip data approach because it is also attuned to a critical interrogation of racist ideologies embedded in digital media technologies. As I further discuss in this chapter, my inquiry amplifies other scholars whose work on race, disability, colonialism, and empire name the intersectional overlaps between disabled data, ideology, and bias (see Bailey & Mobley, 2019; Pickens, 2019; Towns, 2020, p. 856). In this way, I probe the relationship between the entanglement of racism and ableism within digital platform spaces.

Through the chapter, my analysis will demonstrate that racist and ableist ideologies inform how shadowbanning infrastructures rely on these beliefs to organize and assign value to user-generated data on a digital platform. Moreover, the forthcoming close reading of corporate documents and investigative reports highlight how disabled and other marginalized users' subversive crip and neuroqueer data-making attempts as a microactivist (Dokumacı, 2019) challenge to algorithmic organization and data hierarchies. Through generating content that directly addresses shadowbanning and other suppressive forms of data governance, disabled TikTokers' continual crip data creation

proposes that disabled data always already holds value to the platform communities who create and share crip data.

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter 1's organization is as follows: I begin with an introduction to Wynter's work on descriptive statements and the overrepresentation of Man, with support from critical disability studies, Black studies, critical algorithm studies, and critical digital race studies. Through tracing these interdisciplinary conversations, I establish a framework committed to a crip data critique that dissects the relationship between TikTok's algorithmic sorting of user data and the biased ideologies, especially ableism and racism, that inform the design of platform content moderation infrastructure. I build upon this theoretical foundation to develop a conceptual critique of algorithmic ableism. Next, paying keen attention to the networked relationship between ableism, racism, and power, I introduce "Man3/*homo datacus,*" the idealized user, as an extension of Wynter's theorizations on Man as a narrativized figure that shifts through its interactions with economic, political, and cultural changes catalyzed by TikTok's ubiquity. I name Man3 as the progression of Man1/*homo politicus* that equivocates the white Christian European man as a symbol of the turn to rationalism and Enlightenment thinking, and Man2/*homo economicus* as a reaction to economic shifts— the replacement of chattel enslavement with industrial capitalism —and the rise of biological sciences. "Man3/*homo datacus,*" then, invites us to think about how Wynter's conceptualizations support an analysis of the practices by which platform companies, datafication, curated user experiences, and attention economies coalesce around "pure" user-generated data that does not experience

the adverse impacts of biased content moderation practices, thus reinforcing ableist and racist ideas about normativity. I then analyze how Man3 shapes understandings of surveillance and data purity on TikTok. Finally, I highlight user-generated data strategies that aim to subvert TikTok's suppression of disabled users' data. Throughout the chapter, I argue that a crip data approach interrogates the ways ableism and racism inform TikTok's algorithmic organization of users' content. I name crip data approaches as microactivist (Dokumacı, 2019) provocations about how the platform's algorithmic infrastructure (de)values disabled users' content.

Unsettling and Unprogramming across Race, Disability, and Data

I derive my notion of "unprogramming" through an engagement with Sylvia Wynter's (2003) anticolonial unsettlings of "genres of the human" and descriptive statements of Man (p. 260). Descriptive statements refer to the dominant association of Man with Western European cultures, used to sustain the power of a "Western, bourgeois ethnoclass," which becomes equated with humanness (p. 260). Wynter refers to how Western definitions of humanity— which have become increasingly universalized with the rise of capitalism, globalization, and neoliberalism— are repeatedly narrativized and performatively enacted into Western and Eurocentric ideologies to shape their definitions of the "human" to acclimate toward contemporary cultural, economic, and political moments (see Eudell, 2010, pp. 322-3). Genres, or prevalent cultural understandings and conventional narrative representations of Man, constitute who has access to various mobilities in Western social institutions both externally (who has political and economic power?) and internally (who is valued and empathized with?). For example, as white

Christian Europeans began the process of colonization, dominant social institutions, such as the Catholic Church, narrativized Man-as-Christian as more valued, rational, and influential (Wynter, 2003, p. 265). Simultaneously, the Church (and later the nation-state and scientists) used the descriptive statement of Man-as-Christian to justify the colonization, enslavement, and genocide of African and Indigenous peoples (and their descendants) because of their presumed rejection of Christianity (see Wynter, 1989, p. 638).

While definitions, events, and technological advancement shifted genres of Man over time, the white Christian European "Man" became naturalized as the only foundational possibility for articulating the human. Wynter marks two iterations of Man: Man1/*homo politicus*, which emerged as the Enlightenment shifted intellectual power in Europe from Church clergy to the laity, positioning Man as a rational being, thus separating him from other species (Wynter, 1989, p. 640; N. Roberts, 2006, p. 160). Conversely, African and Indigenous peoples were narrativized as "irrational" Others. This rhetorical storying justified African and Indigenous cosmologies as "lacking [ing] natural reason" and narrativized them as "natural slaves" (Wynter, 2003, p. 297). Those outside of the white, Christian, Eurocentric Man within the continent's confines (disabled people, Jews, Roma) were also subhuman outcasts, ontologically lacking in comparison to the white Christian, Eurocentric men (see Wynter, 1989, p. 641, ref. Kristeva, 1980; Alagraa, 2018). Man1 was replaced by Man2/*homo economicus* by the turn of the nineteenth century, as the rise of industrial capitalism and Darwinism secularized Man through cultural and economic moves toward secularization. Instead of a divine being created in

God's image, Man2 became an evolutionarily selected organism superior to other forms of biological life because of its ability to produce "culture" (Wynter, 1989, p. 640; see also Foucault, 1994). Each of these iterations over-represents Man as the human, rendering being and value within Western, Eurocentric logics (see N. Roberts, 2006, p. 160).

Wynter's critique of Man demonstrates the ways European colonial powers narrativized economic marginalization and designed social difference in ways that rendered people outside of the autonomous decision-making and agency that reinforced enslaved Africans, Indigenous peoples of the Americas, and disabled populations as perpetual "Others" that colonial powers differentiate themselves from sub-human populations through containment, enslavement, and genocide (see Wynter, 1989, p. 637; Headley, 2006). She suggests that because these descriptive statements and repetition of Man are so ingrained in the West, we cannot imagine beyond it until the networking of the systems and ideologies responsible for facilitating definitions of Man as well as descriptive statements are, as Wynter prefers, "unsettled" (p. 305). Wynter (2003)cautions that, until we disrupt these dominant stories, racism and colonialism will continue to determine who is sinful, irrational, and not quite human (p. 305).

Adapting Wynter's framework for the twenty-first century, I name "Man3/*homo datacus*" as a new hegemonic genre that builds upon Man2: an ideal user whose data generation benefits from algorithmic privilege, suggesting the user and their content are more naturally visible and valuable with a platform's creative economy. Man3 emerges as the ideal account holder, whose data can fully realize the power of algorithmic visibility,

while marginalized users whose accounts and content are suppressed experience a vastly

different perception of a platform. Akin to Man2's connections to Darwinian thought,

Man3's domination in digital spaces also emphasizes "survival of the fittest" logics that

shape the encoding of Eurocentric racial hierarchies and values of cognitive and physical

ability into algorithmic infrastructures and content moderation practices. My crip data

approach offers "unprogramming"— a nod to Wynter's (2003) "unsettling"— to

interrogate how algorithmically ableist data organization builds upon technocolonial and

technoracist structures that "normalize… affective economies of accumulation that

deepen inequities" (McKittrick, 2022, p. 46). Like "Man1" and "Man2," the phase of

"Man3" reveals the direct connections between anti-Blackness, colonization, and ableism;

the networked relationality between these nodes of oppression supports the continuation

of white supremacist logics in the digital age. Wynter's emphasis on genres of the human

requires a total relinquishing of Man (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 31; see also

Weheliye, 2014, p. 22). For Wynter, merely occupying or replacing individual institutions

will not lead to disruption (McKittrick, 2015, p. 2). If "unsettling" is Wynter's strategy

for interrupting the afterlife of coloniality and the reinscription of Man through the

"secularizing… matrix of Judeo-Christian Grand Narrative" (2003, p. 318), I offer

"unprogramming" as a digital disruption of algorithmic ableism and other biases that

devalue disabled users' data.

Algorithms and Data as Culture: Lessons about Ideology in Digital Spaces

I begin bridging Wynter's conceptualization of the human to ideological positions

of social media platforms with a brief foray into critical algorithm and critical digital race

studies. These fields position algorithms and other infrastructures as social concerns that reflect offline ideological beliefs in the cultures they emerge from (see Gillespie, 2014; Hampton, 2021; Noble, 2018; Benjamin, 2019; Cunningham et al., 2023). The study of algorithms as cultural artifacts first surfaced in human-computer interaction (HCI) research in the 1960s. However, it quickly became taken up by communication and media scholars, anthropologists, and HCI researchers with the rise of platforms and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) that rely heavily on algorithms for automated decision-making (Noble, 2018, p. 146). As a result, algorithms reflect our social worlds as "objects of cultural concern… composed of collective human practice" (Seaver, 2017, p. 5). We are not separate from machines but are in constant interaction and communication with them.

By situating algorithms as cultural technologies, critical algorithm studies interrupt the widely accepted assumptions that algorithms (and their interactions with platforms and data) are neutral tools separate from humans and beyond our control (boyd & Crawford, 2012). Platform governance, content moderation, and algorithmic infrastructure hold a political bent that shapes user experiences (see Gillespie, 2018). Algorithmic systems receive input for watching, monitoring, and predicting what users on a social platform may search for or whom they may be most likely to interact with. The collected user data informs the design of home pages, timelines, and feeds around these interests. In doing so, algorithms determine what we know about social and political discourse and how we can come to know it (Gillespie, 2018, p. 1). For example, hashtags are popular multimodal platform tools that convey the hybridity between on and offline

discourses about politics and culture (Kuo, 2018, p. 496). The more a hashtag appears, the more the algorithm will circulate the hashtags and the posts filed under it, (re)distributing content to more users (Gillespie, 2018, p. 13).

This chapter's crip data approach additionally places critical algorithm studies in conversation with critical digital race studies (CDRS) to interrogate the ways racist biases inform how algorithmic infrastructures are programmed to organize and read data. Critical digital race analyses of Internet-hosted platforms allow my crip data framework to probe the relationship between ableism, racism, and the mass organization of digital information. By engaging CDRS alongside critical algorithm studies, I demonstrate how racism animates the development of a platform's algorithmic infrastructure and content moderation practices. For example, Wendy H.K. Chun's (2009) articulation of race and/as technology notes that racist ideologies are encoded into ICTs while, simultaneously, technology promulgates racism and other forms of oppression (see Chun, 2009, p. 8). If ableism, like racism, is an "offline" dominant ideology in late-stage capitalism (e.g., being disabled hinders subjects from total productivity and therefore less valuable) (see Rauchberg, 2022b), then these very beliefs will be encoded into a platform's content moderation system that determines which data deserves visibility.

Western cultures present algorithms as apolitical tools that reflect "logical" and "objective" strategies (see Gillespie, p. 13; Benjamin, 2019; Noble, 2018). However, ideas of logic and rationality are derived from white Eurocentric Enlightenment conceptualizations of human/non-human (Benjamin, 2019; Weheliye, 2014, p. 22), and algorithms play a significant role in facilitating digital discrimination. For example,

surveillance biometric technology algorithms are typically programmed to recognize phenotypically white people and fail to recognize people of color (see Benjamin, 2019; Cunningham et al., 2023). Thus, what is happening on TikTok is a form of algorithmic oppression (Noble, 2018), or a series of algorithmically driven data failures that target marginalized groups online, specifically people of color and women (Noble, 2018, p. 4). I draw upon Noble's definition of algorithmic oppression to explain how algorithms, as organizing technologies, play a key role in the suppression of disabled and other marginalized users' data. In this way, I understand ableist, racist, and other biased platform moderation practices to purposefully hide disabled data because it is not valued.

Reduction is one tool platform governance constantly relies on: algorithms are programmed to dismiss or hide data they think a user will be offended by or choose not to interact with (Gillespie, 2022). Drawing from critical disability studies and DisCrit, algorithmic ableism, then, inquires into how politics of disposability (see Pickens, 2019; Clare, 2017b; Erevelles, 2014a; Kim, 2021; Schalk, 2022) work in conjunction with ableist and racist ideologies in platform spaces. Disposability frameworks help me to understand how the AutoR algorithmic infrastructure is trained to read disabled people's user-generated data as undesirable and unnatural. Similarly, ByteDance's instruction for human moderators to suppress disabled creators through incorporating disability-related tags into AutoR demonstrates how the function's machine learning "cleans" up a user's #FYP by monitoring and automatically flagging content featuring disability, queerness, transness, and fatness (Köver & Reuter, 2019). In this way, I understand the decision to reduce the visibility of disabled users' content to be an algorithmically ableist one. As my

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analysis in the next section will show, AutoR's tagging system represents and reinforces offline cultural values coded into TikTok's infrastructural build by nondisabled data input collected by human content moderators (see Gillespie, 2018). The critical algorithm and CDRS frameworks informing my crip data approach reveal how ableist content moderation practices— often in conjunction with racism – are doubly mobilized as technologies of categorization and surveillance.

Genres of Being (Digitally) Human: TikTok's Algorithmic Infrastructure

Released to an international audience in October 2018 by the Chinese app development company ByteDance, TikTok is a content creation platform prioritizing short-form vlogs and videos with multimodal components.[6] The platform is available in 39 languages and hosts over one billion monthly global users (Bursztynsky, 2021). Earlier vlogging-based mobile apps, such as Vine, or TikTok's predecessors, Douyin and Musical.ly, also experimented with short-form (30 second or less) vlogs, often combining music and sound with images– a significant departure from earlier platforms that solely prioritized text and image, as well as interpersonal connections. TikTok's multimodal approach is channeled through an emphasis on mimesis: the app encourages users to repeat, remix, and restyle previously circulated content to generate a digital imitation public (Zulli & Zulli, 2022, p. 2). Popular viral trends may emerge from dances or (comedy) performances, the reuse of sound or visual content, or sharing of educational "hacks," such as makeup tutorials and recipes.

The platform also hosts enclaves of users who rely on the platform for social justice advocacy and community building (see Rauchberg, 2022; Peterson-Salahuddin,

2022). A quick scroll through TikTok's discover page introduces users to popular

hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter (used 32.3 billion times), #TransVisibilityDay (used

246.2 million times), and #DiverseVoices (used 388.1 million times), which collectively

mediate a commitment to visibility and engagement for marginalized users frequenting

the platform. Through promoting viral hashtags, sounds, and users across racial, gender,

and sexuality groups, TikTok seems to effectively position itself as a platform for social

justice content creation.

TikTok's uniqueness lies in its focus on content and genre. Emphasis on content

creation is facilitated through the crafting and creation processes of TikTok's interface:

users can edit the video's speed and add different sounds. These distinctive video

augmentation features allow new ways of sampling genres and content. For example, in

2020, the platform released a "duet function," allowing users to record a side-by-side

"response" to another user's video. The platform's keen focus on content also provides a

customized user experience. Upon opening the app, users are brought to the #ForYouPage

(#FYP), which is curated by an algorithm that computes what an individual user is most

likely to watch (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). In addition, TikTok's user interface encourages a

communicative and user interaction style that prioritizes content sharing to encourage

community building.

Celebrity, visibility, and communication on TikTok are guarded by the AutoR

function, which determines whether user-generated data will reach the #FYP or instead

become unrecommended. TikTok's most recent Community Guidelines Enforcement

Report for July-September 2022 (released in December 2022) positions TikTok as a

"diverse community." It emphasizes that authenticity and safety are essential for

supporting the ideal TikTok creator (TikTok, 2022). Additionally, the platform's current

Terms of Service (ToS)[6] offer two guidelines regarding cyberharassment and hate

speech:

> You may not… intimidate or harass another, or promote… discrimination based on race, sex, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or age… [You may not] use the Services [to upload]…. Any material that is racist or discriminatory, including discrimination based on someone's race, religion, age, gender, disability, or sexuality … (TikTok, 2019).

Here, TikTok's use of the term "discriminatory" reflects support for human rights based

on (Western, Eurocentric) political identity categories in which there has been historical

oppression or axes of power asymmetries, in an attempt to address networks of hate on

the platform. While I agree that TikTok should provide enforcement to protect user

groups who may be targets of cyberharassment campaigns on the platform, I am

concerned about how these "protective" practices are enacted. For instance, in 2020

alone, two significant TikTok trends hinged upon ableist and eugenicist discourses:

#NewTeacherChallenge and #AutismChallenge. In the #NewTeacherChallenge, parents

recorded themselves pranking their children by showing them a fake FaceTime call with

their "new teacher"— frequently a disabled person of color with facial differences —and

laughing as their young children would scream or cry out in disgust (Rauchberg, 2022c).

Similarly, the #AutismChallenge consisted of allistic users mocking autistic stims, such

as hand-flapping or rocking back and forth. Despite disability activist protests, TikTok

claimed that the trend did not violate its terms of service, allowing the videos to remain

on the platform, despite the previously mentioned anti-discrimination clause in TikTok's ToS.

TikTok's ToS shows a disparity between the narrativization of discrimination protections, on the one hand, and actual disabled creator and user experiences of the platform, on the other. For instance, discrimination has been used to justify the suppression of disabled creators' content. The creation of TikTok's AutoR tagging guidelines flags disabled users' accounts as "vulnerable" and "at risk for harming other users" (Köver & Reuter, 2019). Here, I interrogate how the "genre" of being disabled does not necessarily result in protections on the TikTok platform. I return once more to Wynter's approach on the human to investigate these disparities within TikTok. Specifically, I am interested in "genres of being human" (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 31; Weheliye, 2014, p. 23), which note genres as linguistic technologies used by institutions to narrativize different experiences of the human beyond biology. For instance, Wynter (2003) demonstrates that "genres of being human" are disseminated to narrativize who holds value and power (p. 276). In the case of colonization, references to Christian theology as a justification of what made man "natural" (e.g., white European Christian men with access to money and land) and thus vindicated the violent colonization and enslavement of African and Indigenous peoples, who were positioned in such documents as different genres that differentiated between white European Christians and "Others" (Wynter, 2003, p. 263). Through the binary of Human/Other, the repetitive delineations of who is counted as Human in white Christian Europe developed into "descriptive statements," or what Wynter designates as master codes. These codes,

utilized as governing technologies, are continually narrativized to become an "objective set of facts" (p. 271). In this way, descriptive statement, and binary oppositions have supported the reinforcement and justification of enslavement, genocide, racism, and coloniality.

I extend Wynter's theorization to interrogate TikTok's use of data tagging that reproduces ableist and racist bias. Here, TikTok categorizes a collection of social and political identities (e.g., race, gender, disability, etc.) as reinforcing Western, Eurocentric ideologies that are outside the delineation of acceptable genres of being human online and thus require protection from digital harm. According to *Netzpolitik's* report, TikTok's platform moderators created several "vulnerable" or "at-risk" user groups for the algorithm to track, flag, and hide data. For instance, posts including the hashtag #autism, mentioning autism in their user bio, or "appear" to feature an autistic person, are flagged as "not recommended." Marked data is then immediately placed into the Risk 4 group, resulting in a shadowban (Köver & Reuter, 2019). Additionally, *The Intercept's* documents on TikTok's policy for "unattractive and impoverished users" reveal that the platform justified shadowbanning data with "abnormal" bodies and "ugly facial looks… not limited to… disabilities" (Biddle et al., 2020).[8] Wynter (2003) explains that such master genres "are the foundation of modernity…" and became tools for dominant social institutions to narrativize oppression (p. 287). For a platform that prides itself on authentic data creation, TikTok's not-so subtle shadowbanning signifies how genre functions to distinguish the full user (Man3) from sub-users.

I draw from Wynter's (2003) articulation of the human/subhuman divide to further investigate the ideological bias encoded within the tagging system. Throughout the Enlightenment and the rise of industrial capitalism, Western, Eurocentric cultures utilized biased ideologies to enforce racial categorization as a modern-colonial practice that questioned the humanity of enslaved African people and narrativized their ontological lack of "humanity" as objective fact (see also Bankole, 1998, p. 4). Similarly, inside Europe's geographic boundaries, disabled people, poor people, Jews, and Roma were presented as outside the Western, Eurocentric Christian man (Wynter, 2003, p. 264). Chapter 1 positions this theorization toward the algorithmic organization of data and value within the digital platform's confines. Regarding TikTok's platform governance, I extend Wynter's thinking toward the less-valuable sub-data created by marginalized users hidden from platform visibility. In this way, the AutoR algorithmic infrastructure's devaluation of disabled users' data reproduces marginality on the platform through systematic watching, management, and suppression of undesirable user data, as I discuss in the following section.

Defining and Surveilling the (Digital) Human

AutoR's governance provides visibility for some users' data while instigating suppression or violence for others. My notion of crip data studies grapples with how ableist and racist ideologies are encoded into algorithmic systems, reinforcing categorization and quantification as powerful control and surveillance measures. Here, my understanding of surveillance is "a systematic and focused manner of observing… [and] the internalized systems of discipline by which people come to police themselves…

[and] learn to behave as if they are always already under surveillance" (Dubrofsky &
Magnet, 2015, p. 2). Surveillance is grounded in practices of power, control, and
mundane watching from dominant social institutions and can exacerbate marginality
(Foucault, 1977; Beauchamp, 2019, p. 3). In the case of TikTok, marginalized creators
targeted by data suppression internalize surveillance mechanisms to protect their platform
presence and prevent the possibility of censorship. For instance, Black TikTok creators
who used their platforms for racial justice advocacy in the summer of 2020 noted that
their content appeared hidden after tagging their posts with hashtags like
#BlackLivesMatter or #GeorgeFloyd (see Peterson-Salahuddin, 2022). Though hashtags
commonly serve as community hubs and indexing tools for organizing data and
promoting social justice movements both on and offline, Black creators' subsequent
avoidance of #BlackLivesMatter and other integral hashtags in efforts to evade possible
suppression shows how surveillance shapes marginalized users' data-generation on
TikTok.

Moderators' watching is crucial to the development of algorithmic oppression: for
example, TikTok moderators in specified locations were tasked with watching and
tagging accounts where user data may be more "vulnerable" to cyberharassment and
bullying, though the leaked documents themselves do not mention the word "bullying"
(see Biddle et al., 2020). Flagged accounts are then placed on a "special users" list,
limiting their content to viewers whose accounts are registered in the same country.
Though some marginalized users will engage in subversive and resistive strategies in their
platform use, the awareness of (racialized and ableist) surveillance lingers and continues

to inform how users generate their data (Rauchberg, 2022c; Peterson-Salahuddin, 2022). Chelsea Peterson-Salahuddin (2022) notes that Black TikToker Ziggy Tyler (@ZiggyTyler) used the platform's sound feature to share information about TikTok's racial bias, instructing users on strategies to boost and promote Black creators and circumvent surveillance (p. 7). For Black disabled creators like Imani Barbarin, whose content sits at the nexus of racial and disability justice activism, content creation on TikTok became a daunting practice as attempts to obtain economic support and build community were troubled with the looming threat of data suppression (see Rauchberg, 2020). Though not every disabled, Black, or marginalized creators' data will be censored by the AutoR infrastructure, the threat of algorithmic surveillance suppresses user agency, particularly regarding data-creation.

TikTok's AutoR algorithmic system relies on surveillance to digitally categorize which data violates the prominence of "Man3/*homo datacus*" on the platform. This occurs through the normalization of surveillance techniques, such as data tagging, which help establish and essentialize hierarchies of data value. These processes of watching, power, and control are exacerbated in the digital age. Though all TikTokers are arguably under some level of surveillance, the ableist and racist ideologies informing algorithmic systems dictate whose data has complete visibility, whose content is constrained, and who is under censorship.

Data Purity and Algorithmic Bias as Platform Features

My chapter's introduction of "Man3/*homo datacus*" names how TikTok's algorithmically ableist AutoR content moderation system suppressed disabled users' data

in order to enforce already-existing eugenicist beliefs that conflate data's value with Western, Eurocentric ideas about (racial or ability) purity. I conceptualize data purity as a platform governing tool that encourages the production of "profitable" user-generated data while simultaneously relying on algorithmic infrastructure to suppress content that a platform company believes will "hurt" its chances for accumulating wealth. Here, racist and ableist perceptions shape how an algorithmic system detects which types of data are "fully" or "purely" data and what is less-valuable, impure sub-data (see Benjamin, 2019; Noble, 2018; Banner, 2018). For example, machine learning algorithms used in facial recognition software are often programmed only to recognize phenotypically white features as distinct. Consequently, the same software's algorithmic data collection cannot recognize a Black person's face (see Magnet, 2012; Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018). My crip data approach critically probes how racist and ableist biases influence which types of data algorithmic systems are trained to recognize, and what is prioritized in such design choices: Western, Eurocentric beliefs about value and power.

Such data-driven algorithmic failures are not accidental but instead reflect the dominant biased ideological values that sustain platform economies— particularly as facial recognition software, artificial intelligence, and other new media technologies are framed as innovative and convenient. Ruha Benjamin (2019) coins this practice as the "New Jim Code" or "the employment of new technologies that reflect and reproduce existing inequities but that are promoted or perceived as more objective or progressive than the discriminatory systems of a previous era" (Benjamin, 2019, pp. 5-6). I turn to Benjamin's writing on digital racist biases to demonstrate how other, interrelated forms of

bias, such as ableism, are encoded and inform an algorithmic infrastructure's

"discriminatory design" (see Benjamin, p. 7) vis-à-vis data. For instance, as I further

discuss in Chapter 2, many assistive artificial intelligence technologies are designed to

cure or erase disability from the user—one such technology, the Gradual Electronic

Decelerator (GED), provides punitive shocks to its wearer as a way to instill neurotypical

behaviors (ASAN, 2023; see also Chapter 2 for further reading).

Within my crip data approach, I take cues from Benjamin and Noble to investigate

the entangled encoding of offline oppressions, such as racism and ableism, and how they

are used to enforce ideas about which data must be "devalued." A focus on crip data,

which interrogates the ways ableist and racist ideologies inform how a platform's

algorithmic infrastructure organizes and values data, aligns with Noble's argument to

reject algorithmic oppression as a "glitch in the system" (2018, p. 10). In this section, I

apply Noble's argument to algorithmic ableism to highlight that racism and ableism are

significant framings for how TikTok user data is (de)valued and categorized. For

example, in TikTok's 2022 Quarter 3 Guidelines Report, the platform claims they

removed over 110 million videos from July to September 2022 (TikTok, 2022). One

category, "Harassment and Bullying" (5.9 percent removal rate, which refers to the

amount of flagged material actually deleted from the platform), presents content

moderation as a data-scrubbing practice that supports platform inclusivity. Likewise, a

screengrab of TikTok's AutoR tagging playbook explains that "ugly facial looks" such as

apparent disabilities, fatness, or facial difference are a higher risk for cyberharassment.

Attempts at data purity are facilitated through investments in the surveillance of disabled,

"non-normative" data. Simply put, algorithmic infrastructures that deliberately limit

visibility for disabled and other marginalized users' data imagines a platform experience

where those users (and their data) do not exist.

Perhaps in response to the *Netzpolitik* and *Intercept* reports, TikTok promoted

social justice-related events throughout 2020, such as a virtual Pride webinar (see

Rauchberg, 2022c) and the launch of its Black Creator Incubator fund in 2021 (see

Peterson-Salahuddin, 2022). However, the platform's move toward "diversity and

inclusion" obfuscated the ways ableist and racist biases inform how marginalized user

data is censored and suppressed. For instance, as I (2022c) have written about elsewhere,

white autistic, queer, and trans drag artist and TikTok creator Bailey J. Mills began using

the platform strategically as they balanced visibility with increased cyberharassment and

suppression. In a 2021 interview with the online magazine *Dazed Digital*, Mills noted that

they no longer used TikTok's live feature after other users flagged their stream as

"inappropriate" content. They believed that while "going live" was vital to attaining

platform visibility, it was not worth the risk of probable "shadowbanning" (see

Rauchberg, 2022c, p. 204). Mills' interview demonstrates how biased platform

moderation informs how marginalized users create and distribute data on TikTok. Here,

notions of data purity— like earlier iterations of the "descriptive statement" (Wynter,

2003) —additionally carry over to ideas about disability, data, and value. My crip data

approach notes how shadowbanning (vis-à-vis a platform's algorithmic infrastructure)

effectively delineates which data is valuable enough to belong on TikTok.

Unprogramming Man3 with Microactivist Crip Data

In this section, my crip data approach highlights the significance of disabled and marginalized users continuing to generate disability-related data to disrupt the proliferation of "Man3/*homo datacus*" on TikTok. While digital platforms are rarely designed for disabled users, these spaces also provide disabled people with opportunities for work, community building, organizing, joy, and survival. The intentional practices of disabled creators actively using TikTok disrupt algorithmic purity and "forc[es] consideration of specific arrangements of bodies, technology, culture, and power" across social media platforms— though it does not stop the proliferation of algorithmic discrimination (Ellcessor, 2016, p. 63). However, conceptualizing and (re)making a social platform beyond algorithmic ableism, racism, and other biases is a collaborative endeavor far beyond the scope of a single dissertation chapter. In the interim, I suggest there is much to learn from the already existing crip data generation strategies that allow disabled users to continue creating and sharing content on TikTok despite algorithmic bias.

I inform my understanding of subversive crip data creation on TikTok with Arseli Dokumacı's (2023) framework of "microactivist affordances." Dokumacı's theorization explains the various improvisational tactics disabled people rely on to build reciprocity with an inaccessible and ableist physical environment. In doing so, disabled people "*make up* and at the same time *make up for* whatever affordances they are not readily provided with" (2023, p. 15). While Dokumacı's ethnographic research focuses on non-digital technologies, such as prosthetic devices and ramps, I find her concept indispensable for thinking through marginalized users' subversive TikTok content creation as a crip data

strategy. My concept of crip data extends Dokumacı's thinking to examine how microactivist affordances are enacted in digital platform spaces. In doing so, the examples I share below demonstrate how crip data creation challenges TikTok's algorithmically ableist valuing of user-generated data, while simultaneously creating crip data that supports advocacy, movement building, and economic survival.

My chapter's crip data framework highlights the improvisational reconfigurations of disabled and marginalized TikTokers' data-making that named AutoR's algorithmically ableist organization of disabled data. Disabled and other marginalized TikTokers use the platform's unique features to identify and respond to ableist data suppression. Some disabled creators' content responded directly to platform censorship. For instance, creator Jess Quinn, a white creator and model who uses a prosthetic limb, posted a dancing video in late 2019— shortly after the *Netzpolitik* report surfaced — where she removed her prosthetic. Quinn used the following caption: "Hey TikTok, what's that you say about people with disabilities being shadowbanned to 'protect them?' We're fine, thanks. #AllBodiesWelcomeHere" (see Rauchberg, 2020). Moreover, after Black disabled creator Imani Barbarin suspected that her account shadowbanned in August 2020, she posted a video instructing her followers to engage with different TikTok features, such as dueting, commenting on, or downloading her posts (Rauchberg, 2020). In this way, Barbarin's improvisational reconfiguration attempts to "*make up for*" (Dokumacı, 2023, p. 15) the ways her data is invisibilized by TikTok's ableist AutoR algorithmic organization tool. More recently, disabled TikTok users started to employ disability-specific "algospeak," a TikTok-specific platform vernacular, to evade Auto R-

related suppression (Klug et al., 2023). Though it is unclear if terms like "grippy sock vacation" (a euphemism for psychiatric hospitalization) or "neurospicy" (neurodivergent) bypass moderators and flagging, these examples demonstrate how such critical crip data generation strategizes against ableist and racist algorithmic organization and devaluing of data by insisting disabled data should be valued as legitimate data.

My crip data focus on reading subversive TikTok content creation as "microactivist affordance" (Dokumacı, 2023) also highlights how disabled creators and other marginalized platform users' improvise with various platform features to augment accessibility into their data creation and platform usage. However, the outcomes do not necessarily result in unfettered data visibility. For example, some creators utilize the platform's comment filter feature to approve individual comments to appear on a post or remove comments altogether to prevent cyberharassment and shadowbanning. While this approach may mitigate platformed hate and content suppression, such choices can limit the visibility of user-generated data (Sannon et al., 2023, p. 11). Some disabled creators are focused more on the collective practice of access-making, such as generating posts that incorporate TikTok's closed-caption feature. Creators produce captioned content both as an access-making practice and a strategy to share critical disability data that may otherwise be flagged by content moderators (see Simpson et al., 2023). For instance, Deaf Korean American sound artist Christine Sun Kim creates user-generated content that incorporates captions that describe the visual, aural, and emotional elements of a TikTok to ensure all viewers can engage with the post in meaningful ways (Lerman, 2021). Additionally, hashtag enclaves like #Autizzy, created by Black autistic users to connect

on topics about the lived experience of being Black and autistic, demonstrate how

TikTokers interact with hashtags to organize community data and build conversations,

especially when disability user data typically privileged by a platform moderation system

is overwhelmingly generated by white disabled users (see Alper et al., 2023; Thompson,

2021). In this way, I understand these collectively-driven, digital "microactivist

affordances" (Dokumacı, 2023) to also "*make up*… the affordances they are not readily

provided with" (p. 15) Through closed captions, descriptive video, and creation of

community spaces, disabled TikToker's augmentative and accessible data-making

reconfigure their data as agentic data.

Conclusion: Unprogramming TikTok's Algorithmic Ableism

Chapter 1's case study of TikTok's algorithmically-driven suppression of disabled

and marginalized users' data critically probes how ableist and racist ideologies inform the

design of the platform's powerful AutoR infrastructure, which determines data visibility.

I introduced algorithmic ableism as an extension of my crip data framework to show how

ableist and racist beliefs inform an algorithmic organization system's deliberate

(de)valuation of user-generated data. Such ideas reinforce Western, Eurocentric binaries

amongst the categorization and hierarchization of user data. To complement my

articulation of algorithmic ableism, I informed my engagement with Sylvia Wynter's

(2003) anticolonial writings on "descriptive statements" and "overrepresentation of Man"

(2003, p. 264) to introduce my idea of "Man3/*homo datacus*," the ideal user whose data is

always already valued and visible on a digital platform. (I further discuss my engagement

with Wynter in the following paragraphs.) Moreover, Chapter 1's crip data focus initiated

an interdisciplinary dialogue amongst critical disability studies, Black studies, critical digital race studies (CDRS), and critical algorithm studies to examine the intricate and entangled relationship between user-generated data and algorithmic organization. My interdisciplinary close reading of TikTok's corporate documents and independent investigative reports allowed my crip data framework to interrogate how ableism, racism, and other Western, Eurocentric biases inform how platforms ideologically position data's value, while paying keen detail to the ways algorithmic infrastructures, such as AutoR, reinforce oppression in its categorization and surveillance of user-generated data. Finally, my crip data framework additionally amplified the subversive data generation practices disabled and other marginalized TikTokers engage in to reconfigure their data creation as valid and agentic on a platform whose algorithmic organization system imagines otherwise.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the connections between my crip data framework and Sylvia Wynter's (2003) anticolonial interrogations on "the overrepresentation of Man" (2003, p. 264). To be clear, my reading of Wynter's work is neither an attempt to conflate the violence of ableism with that of racism, nor a claim to theorizing Blackness and lived experience (see Wynter, 2006), which this dissertation does not do. Nevertheless, I turn to Wynter's oeuvre to build my crip data approach because I believe her anti-disciplinary interrogations of race and coloniality (see Alagraa, 2023) help me to examine this chapter's various queries about the relationship between data, value, and algorithmic organization on the TikTok platform. Within my invocation of algorithmic ableism as a data categorization practice enmeshed with algorithmic

oppression (Noble, 2018), I highlight Wynter's (2003) call to challenge "the archipelago of human Otherness" that renders disabled and poor people as ontologically lacking— not unlike enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples —as ontologically lacking in Western, Eurocentric cultures: "…it will be the Poor who will be made to reoccupy earlier proscribed interned places of the Leper and the Mad" (2003, p. 321). Here, Wynter shows how racial Otherness is always already entangled with other discursive and ideological structures which reinforce the negation of Blackness vis-à-vis Western, Eurocentric hierarchies of value.

Moreover, my crip data approach's focus on how ableist and racist ideas inform the value and algorithmic organization of disabled users' data enriches Wynter's conversations about the coloniality of Man, enslavement, and (human) value (see Eudell, 2010). For instance, Wynter's (1992) "Pieza Conceptual Framework" describes categories of exchange used by colonial slave traders. In this system, "… one *pieza* [piece] was a young, healthy male. A… not fully able person would be a partial *pieza…* [needing] combin[ation] with other partial *piezas* to form a whole…" (Eudell, 2010, p. 336). The pieza system example does not equate ableism with anti-Black racism and colonization. Instead, Wynter's (1992) "Pieza Conceptual Framework" demonstrates how colonial categorizations of human value conflate Eurocentric ideas about race and bodily productivity (Eudell, p. 336). Perhaps colonial datafication practices are not ideologically unlike the tagging systems supporting the AutoR function and other forms of content moderation that render disabled users' data as less-valuable sub-data.

Unprogramming the overrepresentation of "Man3/*homo datacus*" in TikTok's AutoR algorithmic organization system demonstrates how a crip data approach articulates alternative forms of data-generation and platform engagement beyond the entangled encoding of racist and ableist biases. Moreover, disabled and marginalized TikTokers' continued subversive content creation as subversive microactivist data-making offers a glimpse into what crip data approaches can provide for TikTok. Crip data approaches imagine platforms beyond the algorithmic devaluation of disabled users' data— instead, they imagine platform futures where crip data counts.

Notes

1. An abstract based on this chapter is currently accepted and in preparation for *the Journal of Gender Studies*. Portions of Chapter 1's conceptual framework were adapted from a term project submitted to Dr. Cal Biruk's ANTHROP 706 seminar ("Anthropologies of Data and Quantification") in Fall 2020. Additional segments were presented or accepted for presentation at the International Communication Association (2022), the National Communication Association (2021), the TikTok Cultures Research Network's "TikTok and Social Movements" Symposium (2021), and the "Algorithms for Her?" meeting (2023). Finally, many thanks to Dr. Vincent N. Pham for his mentorship on this chapter at the 2021 NCA Doctoral Honors Seminar.

2. I draw my understanding of TikTok's virality from "imitation publics," or a platform infrastructure "whose digital connectivity is constituted through the shared ritual content imitation and replication" (Zulli & Zulli, 2022, p. 1882).

3. I follow my and Ryan A. D'Souza's (2020) use of apparency to discuss how analysis of disability can be mediated in ways that do not hinge upon Eurocentric ontologies that equate visual knowledge (i.e., knowing through seeing) as the only possibility for understanding disability (p. 2).

4. User beliefs (also characterized as algorithmic folk theories) are social media account holders' shared beliefs about how a platform works. Though not always accurate, folk theories emerge as user sense-making tools to determine how user-generated data can be visible on the platform. See DeVito et al., 2017; Karizat et al., 2021; Peterson-Salahuddin, 2022.

5. I follow Nadia Karizat and colleagues' (2021) definition, which describes "the privilege held by users who are positioned to benefit from how an algorithm operates on the basis of identity" (p. 3).

6. While all forms of the ToS condemn cyberharassment, my chapter analyzes the U.S. user version (as per my geographical location at the time of revising).

7. *The Intercept* identifies "The Ugly Content" policy as a leaked content moderation playbook that targeted disabled, poor, fat, queer, and trans TikTokers' data (see Biddle et al., 2020). It is unclear if TikTok and ByteDance officially used this name. Notwithstanding, "ugly" invokes sentiments of the "ugly laws," eugenicist ordinances used in the United States that legally suppressed participation in public life for Black, disabled, and poor people. For critical disability work on ugly laws, see: Erevelles, 2014a; Rodrigues & Przybylo, 2018; Schweik, 2009.

Chapter 2: Imagining a Neuroqueer Technoscience

Introductory Note

In 2016, Stanford University student Catalin Voss's Autism Glass wearable device received the prestigious Lemelson-Massachusetts Institute of Technology (LMIT) Cure It! Student Prize for Collegiate Inventors (Patel, 2016). The Autism Glass consists of Google's Glass wearable – eyeglasses with a ubiquitous computing system that the user can manipulate – and the incorporation of Voss's Sension, a facial and emotional recognition software. The Autism Glass, designed for autistic youth (ages 3-17), is used alongside a smartphone app that analyzes data and video collected by the wearable and provides feedback to the user's caregiver or guardian (Patel, 2016). The device intends to train its young, autistic users to "see" emotions to the point where they can engage in interpersonal communication neurotypically without requiring the Autism Glass (NBC, 2016). Autism Glass promotes itself as a "co-design" study, where designers and researchers work alongside targeted users and other stakeholders who are directly impacted by a technological solution (see Steen et al., 2008; Autism Glass Project, 2015), working iteratively to adapt user insights from testing sessions into the device.[1]

The Autism Glass is an example of an assistive technology, a growing communication technologies sector that endeavors to create digital platforms and devices that "solve" a social problem and support users with independence in daily activities (see Bennett et al., 2018, p. 161). While using computing and design techniques to ameliorate social barriers or communication issues is a common practice in the interdisciplinary field of human-computer interaction (HCI), Voss's wearable imagines a world where young

users diminish the significance of autistic behaviors and traits by engaging and learning with data curated from the Autism Glass, presenting autistic subjectivities and communicative relationalities as undesirable and less valuable. The Autism Glass is an example of what disability activist Liz Jackson (2022) names "disability dongles": assistive technology reinforcing ableism through design choices that "cure" or "erase" disability. Jackson explains that disability dongles result in "outcomes which in design or technologies 'for' disabled people garner mainstream attention and accolades, despite valid concerns disabled people have about… [their] mak[ing] a [disabled] subject compatible for a normative system" (Jackson et al., 2022, para. 6). As a disability dongle, the Autism Glass positions autism as a social problem that allistic (non-autistic) designers fix through the intervention of artificial intelligence, wearable devices, mobile applications, and other new media technologies. This chapter seeks to envision technologically mediated futures beyond epistemic violence (Ymous et al., 2020) that position disabled people as never-experts. Instead, I pursue where disabled expertise takes us in producing new media technologies.

Previously published in the interdisciplinary journal *Studies in Social Justice* (Rauchberg, 2022b), Chapter 2 introduces an idea of neuroqueer technoscience that imagines a media and computing design practice that does not erase or rehabilitate autistic and neurodivergent users' subjectivities. Instead, it plays with the possibilities of a neuroqueer technoscientific creation that mediates new styles of relationality, self-expression, and communication practice. Through neuroqueering (or neuroqueer), I turn to a collaboratively created term associated with Nick Walker (2021), who offers a

holistic, multifaceted working definition that broadly addresses the interpersonal,
ideological, and structural practices of queering and subverting neuronormative and
heteronormative expression, embodiment, or cultural practice (see Walker, 2021).
Neuroqueer also considers the significance of queer and neurodivergent cultural identities
and how their convergence catalyzes the potentialities for reframing language and cultural
artifacts (Yergeau, 2018). My notion of neuroqueer technoscience engages emerging
work on crip technoscientific making practices to investigate disabled people's socio-
historical practices that demonstrate co-production of "science, technology, and political
life" (Hamraie & Fritsch, p. 2, ref. Murphy, 2012). I introduce my concept of neuroqueer
technoscience to highlight how crip data offers human-computer interaction (HCI)and
new media design practices new way of creating and data-making that does not hinge
upon technoableist disability dongles (Shew, 2020; Jackson et al., 2022; Williams et al.,
2021). What communicative possibilities emerge from neuroqueer culture-making in
(digitally) mediated spaces?

In this introductory note to the chapter, I offer framing considerations about
neuroqueer technoscience. I want to give readers context regarding the development of
this chapter. Chapter 2 is the only published chapter of my dissertation (a requirement for
completing a sandwich-style thesis), and I worked on it from June 2020 until its
publication in March 2022. Originally intended as an independent article, "Imagining a
neuroqueer technoscience" joined my dissertation project as Chapter 2 in the Winter 2022
term. Therefore, readers may notice that the chapter may not *directly* discuss platforms
and data. Instead, I present Chapter 2 as an extended response to the conclusion of

Chapter 1, where I called attention to the possibilities of alternative and resistive platform

usage. For instance, Chapter 1's conclusion emphasized the creative strategies disabled

and Black TikTok creators use to subvert ableist and racist content moderation strategies.

I show the resistance of crip and neuroqueer data-making in Chapter 2through my

discussion of digital microactivist platform affordances (see Dokumacı, 2019). Here, I

refer to Arseli Dokumacı's (2019) framework that draws from performance theory to

amplify the creative and innovative practices disabled people use to reconfigure

inaccessible physical environments to bend toward their access needs. Throughout *Crip*

data studies, I extend this conceptualization of micro-activist affordances toward the

digital platform. In this way, I highlight the practices disabled people rely on to generate

user data that reconfigures ableist and racist platforms and the biased, data-driven

algorithmic organization tools that sort and categorize user-generated content. I perceive

Chapter 2 to offer a response to the question: "*What* is a platform for?" In this way, I

understand neuroqueer technoscience as a neurodivergent person's individual and

collective interaction with a digital platform system and the unique, creative, and critical

expertise that emerges from constitutive engagement. I am interested in the ways

neuroqueer sense-making practices offer other modes of self-expression, relationality, and

interdependence in data-driven contexts.

This introductory note begins by acknowledging human-computer interaction

(HCI)'s neurodiversity issue, challenging how discourses of inclusion and representation

may reproduce technoableist discourses and structures in the conceptualization and use of

new media technologies. Then, I turn to emerging work in critical disability HCI and crip

technoscience to show how they offer neuroqueer technoscience a critical framing and foundation. Finally, I offer a brief coda about positionality to share a personal and political reflection about the complications of formal diagnosis.

Mediating Cure: HCI's "Neurodiversity" Problem

Chapter 2 responds to the prevalence of neurodiversity design frameworks in human-computer interaction (HCI) research that aims to solve barriers to (digitally mediated) communication. Following Nick Walker (2023), I want to be careful about distinguishing my use of "neurodiversity" in this discussion. I understand that most HCI scholarship addresses neurodiversity as a design paradigm presenting a broad cognitive function spectrum– there is no "normal" or "right" way for a brain to work. In HCI spaces, neurodiversity design paradigms align with the social model of disability, that design for the greater "spectrum of humanity" and "intellectual riches which can be utilized in both practice and research" (Dalton, 2013, pp. 2296-3302).[2] Neurodiversity paradigms ideally encourage neurotypical and nondisabled researchers to consider the unique perspectives and expertise of neurodivergent designers (see Dalton, p. 2302). However, as Jackson (2022) hints, reflexivity is not always practiced in developing assistive technologies.

Recent critiques from autistic, neurodivergent, and disabled[3] scholars and designers within HCI spaces offer a different perspective on neurodiversity paradigms, particularly in participatory and co-design research, a widespread practice where design teams iteratively work alongside stakeholders who specifically benefit from technology (see Steen et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2023). Critical disability readings of the field and

practice interrogate the ways technology is introduced to "fix" and "cure" bodily and

cognitive functioning to make disabled and neurodivergent people more palatable for

Western, capitalist worlds (see Clare, 2017a; Mankoff et al., 2010; Williams, 2018; Sum

et al., 2022; Williams & Gilbert, 2020). Moreover, user-centered design in the realm of

assistive tech often inadvertently exploits disabled testers and other stakeholders as

researchers prioritize their own goals instead of listening to users (see Bennett & Rosner,

2018; Spiel et al., 2019; Gardner et al., 2021). Here, neurodivergent users are devalued in

favor of neurotypical secondary stakeholders, such as parents and researchers.

Instead of designing to support access needs, nondisabled design teams'

prioritization of their expertise over the collective knowledge of disabled users results in

what Ymous et al. (2020) name "epistemic violence," or the dismissal of (disabled)

people as creators of knowledge, communication, and world-making (p. 3). Epistemic

violence saturates the world of neurodiverse HCI production. For instance, Rua M.

Williams and colleagues (2023) reference the ProCom wearable device (Boyd et al.,

2017), another behavioral change system designed to help autistic children perform the

"optimal" physical distance for engaging prosocial nonverbal communication, like

waving to a friend. Though ProCom claimed to be a co-design project, Williams et al.

note that parents' and caregivers' desires for their child to perform neurotypicality were

prioritized instead of autistic children's expertise and experiences with the device until

the design team had created a functional prototype (2023, p. 5). Instead of centering

autistic knowledge and user experience, interventionist technologies engage in

reactionary practices that attempt to solve developmental disability— such as wearables

that teach autistic children how to perform neurotypicality —while exacerbating users'

experiences of ableism (see Williams et al., 2023). Assistive technologies, particularly

devices designed for autistic users, promise access while suppressing autistic and

neurodivergent subjectivities through epistemic violence. For example, clinicians may

program a wearable device's software to recognize user movement in one particular way,

forcing users to configure their body-minds (Clare, 2017a) toward moving, speaking, or

interacting within neurotypical paradigms (see Gardner et al., 2021). The inclusive

promise of the neurodiversity paradigm enforces a design process that ultimately sanitizes

and compromises disabled users' agentic subjectivities.

The growing popularity of designing autism-related technologies through a

neurodiversity framework perpetuates epistemic violence through the guise of

assimilation and intervention (see Williams et al., 2023). Indeed, the Autism Glass is not

the only wearable designed to "erase" autistic subjectivities. As I briefly discuss in

Chapter 2, the Judge Rotenberg Center (JRC), a residential institution for autistic and

intellectually and developmentally disabled (I/DD) people in Canton, Massachusetts,

makes liberal use of wearables called Graduated Electronic Accelerators (GEDs) that are

controlled by facility staff, who can issue shocks to wearers. GEDS trace their influence

to Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), a common intervention controversial amongst

autistic self-advocates and activists because of its punitive measures to encourage

neurotypical behaviors while punishing autistic ones (see Bascomb, 2011; Yergeau,

2018). Though the JRC claims they employ the device to prevent (self-)harm, reports

from autistic and disability advocates reveal otherwise. For instance, the Autistic Self-

Advocacy Network's (ASAN) living webpage about the JRC reveals that staff will issue

shocks on GED wearers for autistic-coded behaviors such as: "hand-flapping… standing

up… [and] noises and movements that they [GED wearers] make because of a disability"

(see ASAN, 2023). Moreover, receiving electrocution through the GED is both physically

and psychologically disabling.

The GED wearable demonstrates the prevalence of technoableism (Shew, 2020) in

the assistive tech industry, which shapes the design and use of so-called disability dongles

(see Jackson et al., 2022). Following Ashley Shew (2020), technoableism demonstrates

how assistive technologies, such as the GED wearable, prioritize design choices that

emphasize cure and rehabilitation for potential users. Many of these technologies are

developed alongside disability models or popular frameworks for understanding how

disability operates within a particular socio-cultural context. For instance, the

neurodiversity paradigm for HCI operates under the social model of disability, which

prioritizes eliminating structural barriers to support disabled people's assimilation and

participation (see Dalton, 2013). Under this model, wearables like the GED or Autism

Glass emerge as an intervention that purports to solve echolalia, hand-flapping, and other

stims indicative of autistic and neurodivergent subjectivities without considering what

outcomes or goals users want from their engagement with technology, instead pressing

users toward the adoption of "neurotypical" social skills (see Williams et al., 2023, p. 3).

Moreover, the Autism Glass Project's public website does not explicitly state the

inclusion of autistic leadership within its research and design team suggests the

pervasiveness of epistemic violence (Ymous et al., 2020) embedded in assistive

technologies, positioning nondisabled researchers and programmers as the only possible experts.

Though I do not equate the physical and psychological violence of the GED wearables to the Autism Glass, both devices invite a similar critique: How do assistive technologies "solve" the problem of autism (or neurodivergence) for allistic and neurotypical researchers (Jackson et al., 2022)? Within curative assistive technologies, technoableism emerges as a discursive response to dominant ideologies that narrativize disabled people as broken, holding less value, and in need of fixing (see Kafer, 2013; Clare, 2017a). Technoableist and curative rhetorics shape ideas about what realities designers create: ones where neurodivergent people can exist, but only if they suppress self-expression.

Neuroqueer Technoscience as Countervention

In the previous section, I addressed the ways human-computer interaction (HCI) scholars and designers engage with a model of "neurodiversity" that aims for inclusion but too often engages in the reactionary, curative rhetorics of technoableism (Shew, 2020), creating assistive technologies without autistic and neurodivergent peoples' expertise. However, I want to be precise in my discussion about assistive technologies. While many forms of assistive technologies are technoableist disability dongles, assistive technology can also offer essential mediations of access. For instance, technologies that support a user's access need without hinging upon cure, or center the leadership and expertise of neurodivergent people, offer something beyond curative solutions. Chapter 2 proposes neuroqueer technoscience as an alternative possibility, another way of design

that collectively and creatively highlights ways to support access needs without erasing users' neurodivergent subjectivities.

One way to frame neuroqueer technoscience is through positioning the practice as a "countervention" or what Rua M. Williams and co-authors (2023) name as a reparative counter to technoableist technology that "intervenes on the practices of interventionist sciences toward critical and liberating insights into new ways of engaging with disabled people" (p. 9). In this way, the countervention exists in the complex space between supporting access needs and cultural presentations of disability that do not equate it with brokenness or neurological flaw. Williams and colleagues derive their understanding of repair from feminist, critical disability, and critical race HCI scholarship to propose countervention as a framework that does not merely hinge upon the logic of addition (e.g., more disabled people work in developing assistive HCI technologies). Instead, they propose a radical rethinking of what it means to design *against* the material, epistemic violence of technoableism, racism, and neoliberalism that currently inform the assistive technology industry (see Williams, p. 3). Akin to Chapter 1's conversation that complicates algorithmic visibility and inclusion versus material algorithmic justice, Chapter 2 grapples with the possibilities of crip (and neuroqueer) data practices as counterventions. Could technologies possibly support quality of life *and* autistic and neurodivergent self-expression without forcing users to assimilate to neurotypical norms?

Counterventions are not new for disability cultures. Chapter 2 importantly turns to crip technoscience's (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019) focus on anti-assimilationist cultural production to frame neuroqueer technoscience as a crip data approach. I understand crip

technoscience through Aimi Hamraie and Kelly Fritsch's (2019) theorization, which

blends feminist science and technology studies with crip artistic and activist practices.

This interdisciplinary theorization shows how anti-assimilationist technological

production and engagement offer resistive and liberatory cultural practices that catalyze

the collective creation of accessible physical environments. In this way, crip

technoscience emerges as a "field of relations, knowledge, and practices that enable the

flourishing of crip ways of producing and engaging the material world" (p. 4). Hamraie

and Fritsch present disabled people's collective relationship to technology as a political

one, noting that crip technoscience honors previous liberatory activist movements related

to disability and health that imagine a radical remaking of the material world, such as the

HIV/AIDS activist group ACT UP's die-ins at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

headquarters in the 1980s and 1990s to push for greater access to live-saving medications

(p. 23). Importantly, crip technoscience is not limited to offline forms of activism:

Hamraie and Fritsch reference autistic self-advocate Mel Baggs' YouTube videos as

essential tools for distributing disability justice. In hir[4] videos, Baggs uses an augmented

and alternative communication (AAC) device to generate spoken language while

verbalizing and self-stimming to challenge the devaluation of autistic and disabled

knowledge production (p. 19). In this way, I understand crip technoscience as a

complementary countervention to neuroqueer technoscience that similarly invites anti-

assimilationist and justice-informed possibilities for media production.

　　　　I do not consider neuroqueer technoscience to exist in tension with crip

technoscience; instead, I position the former as an extension of the latter. While crip

technoscience may be concerned with anti-assimilationist making practices

within *physical, material* environments, I imagine neuroqueer technoscience to expand

these boundaries toward mediating relational practice and agentic self-expression through

the support of digital platforms and other new media technologies. Like crip

technoscience, neuroqueer technoscience eschews the curative instantiations of disability

dongles (Jackson et al., 2022), instead moving toward a technological practice that probes

the possibilities of new media as technologies of liberation.

Notes

1. Critical disability HCI scholars have importantly pushed back on the
   limitations of co-design in practice (see Williams et al., 2023; Bennett et al.,
   2018; Lazar et al., 2017; Sum et al., 2022). I am not inferring that the Autism
   Glass's research and design process is not methodologically sound. However, a
   key component in genuine co-design research, particularly when designing
   with/for disabled communities, is incorporating leadership and expertise from
   targeted user groups (see Ymous et al., 2020). As of my initial drafting of this
   introductory note on May 19, 2023, the Autism Glass Project website does not
   indicate how autistic community expertise is included into the project.

2. Neurodiversity also refers to the eponymous movement started by British
   autistic self-advocates in the late 1990s that disrupts dominant ableist ideas
   that pathologize autistic people as sick, broken, and needing cure. Like Nick
   Walker, I do not believe the neurodiversity paradigm is synonymous with
   neurodiversity movements. Additionally, I am careful not to conflate

neurodiversity with neurodivergence, "someone whose neurocognitive functioning diverges significantly from dominant societal standards of 'normal,'" (Walker, 2023).

3. I use autistic, neurodivergent, and disabled collectively here to reflect on the different ways we come to the language of identity. I understand that researchers working in neurodivergence and HCI spaces come to this work in many ways. Thus, I offer the three terms—autistic, neurodivergent, and disabled—to reflect diversity within research communities.

4. Baggs used all pronouns but preferred sie/hir neopronouns (Baggs, n.d.).

5. To protect Reviewer 2's anonymity, I have paraphrased their original comment.

Imagining a Neuroqueer Technoscience

Introduction: Locating a Neuroqueer Technoscience

I am not an ideal user. By this, I mean bodyminds like mine are not the ones
designers have in mind when prototyping new technologies.[1] All of my electronic devices
use dark mode. My left ear can hear, but processes sound within a defective range, or so a
neuropsychologist once gleefully told me. This difference in audio-processing makes
videos, vlogs, and other multimedia texts challenging to follow. Closed captions or
communication access real-time transcriptions (CART) transformed my relationship with
media texts. I stim between website clicks and phone pickups. I rely on alt text and image
descriptions when a website or post does not use high contrast color combinations. Often
I will use my laptop's accessibility features to read a page aloud to me. These retrofitted
accessibility features make use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for
neurodivergent and disabled users.[2] Cyberspace is a site of possibility. It may not be the
option that everyone desires, but it presents many directions for world-making—if we
want them.

Body-minds like mine are not thought of as using the Internet or other forms of
new media technology. Several human-computer interaction (HCI) and feminist science
and technology studies (STS) scholars have rightfully remarked on the pervasive
imagining of a white cisgender male living in the global north as the consummate target

group for the latest phone or tablet (see Chun, 2011; Nakamura, 2013; Noble, 2018;

Wacjman, 1991). A growing market of neurodivergent-related new media technologies,

such as speech/language supports, artificial intelligence, and gamified physical therapy, is

intended to advance physical, cognitive, and social wellness (Alper, 2017; Gardner et al.,

2021). However, despite the influx of media creation for disabled communities, many

technologists design ICTs with a solutions-based method (Ymous et al., 2020). Such

ICTs, marketed under the guise of therapeutic support, enforce aspects of cure and

rehabilitation, reinstating centuries of the medical and psychiatric-industrial complex's

violence and harm against disabled people (Ymous et al., 2020), which are now

redistributed for the digital age.

These practices typically position neurodivergent people as docile, passive

subjects who veer outside the confines of humanity, and are rarely shown as researchers,

designers, and experts in their own lived experiences (Spiel et al., 2020; Williams &

Gilbert, 2018; Yergeau, 2018). However, what if we were already experts? What if deficit

was never part of the design process, but justice and liberation *were*? Perhaps one way

past rehabilitative and curative technoscience is through neuroqueerness, which positions

autism and other forms of neurodivergency as "a neurologically queer motioning" that

"defies and desires… toward disabled futures" (Yergeau, 2018, pp. 18-19). What does the

addition of neuroqueer provide for media creation?

To answer these questions, this chapter extends recent conversations about crip

design, language, and world-making. More specifically, I derive my analytic stance from

Aimi Hamraie and Kelly Fritsch's (2019) working definition of crip technoscience. This

practice brings feminist science and technology studies into conversation with disability justice to name "practices of critique, alternation, and intervention" that transform social relations and harness frictive political action (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019, p. 1). My thinking is also informed through crip HCI (Williams et al., 2021), which draws from disability justice and critical disability scholarship to acknowledge a more pluralistic conceptualization of cripistemological design, computing, and creation. Finally, I present neuroqueer technoscience as an expansion of *crip* technoscience that reveals how frictive material and structural change can facilitate new possibilities for political-cultural neuroqueer subjectivity in mediated spaces. Building upon crip technoscience's anti-assimilationist commitments to material and structural transformation, I imagine neuroqueer technoscience working within these fluid boundaries to facilitate new possibilities for relationality, self-expression, and communication practices in technology creation. My argument is not that neuroqueer technoscience opposes crip technoscience, or that only neurodivergent people can practice neuroqueer technoscience. Instead, I suggest that both crip and neuroqueer technoscience are interconnected by potential nodes of world-(re)making.

Following these sticky and frictive threads, I propose here an idea of *neuroqueer technoscience*, addressing the ways neurodivergent people were always already creating, making, and engaging with technology. To do this, I amplify the previous work of neurodivergent scholars, cultural workers, and self-advocates (as well as accomplices) who note the exclusion of neurodivergent people from various forms of disability rights activism and organizing (Indigenous Action Media, 2014; Sins Invalid, 2019). By

neuroqueer, I am referring to a collective disidentification by neurodivergent communities from conceptualizations and heteronormative ideas of assimilation to neurotypicality and heteronormativity (Egner, 2018). Furthermore, I use neuroqueer to demarcate neurodivergent-led movements of cultural and media production within crip technoscience that disidentify with mainstream and neurotypical epistemologies for developing ICTs that center the needs and leadership of neurodivergent users. Thus, my notion of neuroqueer technoscience aims to complement crip technoscience (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019) with its direct dissent from compulsory able-mindedness (Kafer, 2013), and amplify neurodivergent-led expertise and creation.

My conceptualization of neuroqueer technoscience is also strongly influenced by my own experiences of being a multiply neurodivergent queer femme.[3] As neuroqueer blogger Ibby Grace (2013) notes, the term neuroqueer is not exclusive. While neuroqueer originates from autistic self-advocacy circles, any neurodivergent person who feels seen or liberated by the term may use it. Neuroqueer is fluid in its tangibility and meanings, its connections to individuals, cultural texts, and communities. Nick Walker (2021) argues that neuroqueerness intends to unsettle "one's cultural conditioning toward conformity and compliance with dominant norms… working to transform social and cultural environments" where a full expression of neurodivergence is "permitted, accepted, and encouraged." Here, I am interested in how neuroqueer logics can be used in conversation with crip technoscience to reassess and collectively transform *what* kinds of disability-related ICTs are designed and *who* is centered in the design process. Like crip technoscience's commitment to anti-assimilationist politics, I envision neuroqueer

technoscience to disrupt networks of oppression beyond ableism and sanism.[4] For instance, if racism, ableism, and classism are dominant norms in mainstream technoscientific creation, how does neuroqueer technoscience work with crip technoscience to disrupt such networks? How does neuroqueerness transform our relationship with media, power, and culture?

Finally, I am interested in the knowledge productions and futures to where a neuroqueer technoscience may lead us. What happens when we take the other path? What happens when we create using stimming, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and other neuroqueer communication styles?[5] This chapter imagines one possibility for what a neuroqueer technoscience *could be*, inviting readers to engage and dialogue. I outline three potential working guidelines for establishing neuroqueer technoscientific practices. In doing so, I hope to carve out a pathway for thinking beyond ableist and sanist discrimination in technology research. I draw primarily from critical/cultural studies, which are concerned with "investigat[ing] discourses of power and knowledge… and resistance in media… and social institutions" (Ono, 2009, p. 74). My framing for a neuroqueer technoscience challenges technoableism and neurotypicality in accessible and assistive technology research while extending critique to imagine a pathway to possibilities beyond.

The essay is organized as follows. I first address common issues of ableism in technology research and interventions from crip and disability justice perspectives in technoscience. I then outline three working tenets of neuroqueer technoscience, drawing from previous projects, conversations, and concepts that embody each guideline. These

tenets are certainly not the only possibilities for scholars, self-advocates, technologists, or

other communities who may benefit from crip and neuroqueer technoscience. However,

these ideas may present transformative opportunities that place neurodivergent people at

the center of the creation, design, and user processes. In conclusion, I address neuroqueer

technoscience's potentialities in theoretical and applied contexts, noting its significant

contributions to the study, creation, and use of ICTs. My understanding of neuroqueer

technoscience is deeply informed by the critical lenses I have learned from autistic and

neurodivergent elders, teachers, friends, colleagues, thinkers, scholars, and community

members. Thank you. This work is for you and for us.

Beyond Technoableism in ICT Design

ICTs provide new possibilities for accessible and assistive media technologies.

For example, the introduction of the tablet computer in the 2010s presented new

opportunities for mobile applications to support learning, communication, and social

accessibility needs for many disabled users, including neurodivergent people (Alper,

2017; Ellcessor, 2016). However, many of these devices and applications center on the

needs and research goals of neurotypical design teams who prioritize rehabilitation and

assimilation to guide technoscientific practice (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019). Additionally,

design teams often take a "top-down" approach to develop technology, and non-disabled

researchers become the agentic experts, while neurodivergent people are treated as

passive users whose only role is to test out proofs of concept (Gardner et al, 2021).

Ashley Shew (2020) designates these practices as forms of technoableism, "a specific

type of ableism around hyped and emerging technology" (p. 41). Technoableism presents

disability as unnatural, unruly, and needing intervention via assimilation; this constrains the agency of disabled people.[6]

Shew (2020) explains that technoableist rhetoric presents curative technology as good for disabled people while recycling ableist tropes (p. 43). Technoableism is not an isolated issue: Meryl Alper (2021) notes that oppressions like technoableism are exacerbated by racism and classism, which determine *who* is a user and *how* access is (not) granted. Akin to the boundary Hamraie and Fritsch (2019) draw between disability technoscience and crip technoscience, Alper makes the vital distinction between mediated autism-friendly spaces and autistic-led cultural spaces, moving away from the idea of accessibility as something universally experienced and practiced (2021, p. 843). Such issues echo throughout HCI and aging studies (e.g., by prioritizing assistive devices for neurodivergent older adults), where neurodivergent users are rarely seen as experts (see Lazar et al., 2017). Akin to autism research on technology, agency, and power, technoableism in this area of ICT creation positions neurodivergent older adults as passive users whose neurotypes can be "cured" by using an app.

Technoableist rhetorics are not accidental: they intentionally reveal interlocking white supremacist networks of power and control in ICT design, demonstrating (techno)ableism's sticky relations to racism, classism, transphobia, homophobia, and other structures of marginalization (see Benjamin, 2019). What is the next step if most ICTs designed to support and assist neurodivergent users discriminate against us? I think neuroqueer technoscience has much to learn from the practices and tactics developed by Black and African American programmers and technologists in the late twentieth century.

In *Black Software,* Charlton McIlwain (2019) offers essential considerations about diversity and representation in the tech industry. McIlwain asks:

> Will our current or future technological tools ever enable us to outrun white supremacy… After all, [white supremacy] is not just our nation's founding principle. It is also the core programming that preceded and animated the birth and development… of computational systems (2019, p. 8).

Noting pushes for tokenizing diversity practices in the 1960s and 1970s, McIlwain (2019) amplifies the work of organizations like AfroNet, as a virtual table with Black technologists and programmers could work away from networks and institutions of white supremacy (pp. 96-97). Networks like AfroNet serve as essential alternatives to mainstream diversity and inclusion efforts that continue to place marginalized communities in structurally dangerous situations.

I am not saying that marginalized people cannot do important work to interrupt racist (and ableist) institutions or that diversity and inclusion are unnecessary. Instead, I use McIlwain's (2019) proposition to create community-led technoscience as a strategy to interrupt the continued public relations campaigns of "diversity and inclusion" that large social institutions (e.g., universities or tech companies) rely on to obfuscate the continuation of racist and ableist design practices. Lelia Marie Hampton (2021) cautions against merely "diversifying" ICT design teams. In their research about Black feminist approaches to studying algorithmic oppression, Hampton notes that merely bringing members from marginalized groups into the tech industry without changing the industry itself does little to remedy how oppressions are distributed amongst sociotechnical networks. Hampton (2021) addresses how the use of diversification in the technology sector as a strategy to address anti-Blackness in the creation and programming of ICTs

"shifts responsibility [away] from 'our technologies are harming people'… [and are] built into the power structures of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy" (pp. 2-3). Placing disabled people on ICT design teams that do not lead to institutions disrupting networks of oppression merely encourages tokenization.

Furthermore, assimilationist media practices fail to challenge the emergence of white supremacy and lead to the (re)production of technoableist rhetorics in assistive tech for neurodivergent people (Shew, 2020; Ymous et al., 2020). Occupying space in an industry sustained by settler-colonial, capitalist, and eugenicist beliefs does not do the work of unsettling and world-(re)making. Neuroqueer approaches to technoscience ask: how do we move beyond these structures? What comes next? Although my particular conceptualization centers on digital technologies, I think neuroqueer technoscience also embraces ideas about cross-movement activist practices as strategies for collective liberation as a form of design justice. Sasha Costanza-Chock (2020) defines this as a "framework for analysis of how design distributes benefits and burdens between various groups of people… explicitly focusing on the ways that design reproduces and/or challenges the matrix of domination (white supremacy)…" (p. 23). As I articulate further on in this essay, neuroqueer technoscience works in conjunction with design justice and crip technoscience to center anti-assimilationist leadership practices, expertise, and goals among neurodivergent users.

Neuroqueer and Crip Technoscience: Connections and Departures

A call for neuroqueer technoscience radically reimagines relational power and agency in *determining* the creation, development, and eventual use of media technologies.

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A neuroqueer approach amplifies the leadership of neurodivergent people and articulates access as an ongoing, relational, and political practice within crip technoscientific pursuits (Chandler et al., 2021). To reimagine technology with a neuroqueer approach, technologists and ICT designers may benefit from the crucial contributions of disability justice, which emphasizes the leadership of Black, brown, Indigenous, and queer and trans disabled people, especially neurodivergent, intellectually and developmentally disabled (I/DD) and Mad people (Sins Invalid, 2019). Disability justice emphasizes that disability cannot be analyzed without understanding how it intersects with other political identities or forms of systemic oppression, such as settler-colonialism, racism, classism, fatphobia, homophobia, and transphobia (Sins Invalid, 2019, p. 25). Cross-movement building is key to disability justice as an engaged theory-practice. Unlike mainstream disability rights movements, which primarily center the needs and goals of white, physically disabled cisgender heterosexual men, disability justice names ableism and other facets of white supremacist logics (e.g., anti-Blackness, racism, colonialism, homophobia, classism, transphobia). Disability justice's commitments to intersectionality help to understand the complex interworking of these systems and facilitate the creation of collective alternatives that allow disability communities to work toward structures of liberation and transformation (Sins Invalid, 2019, p. 13). Finally, disability justice must always be in conversation with other liberation movements because world-(re)making is not a single, but rather a coalitional, struggle.

Neuroqueer technoscience constitutes necessary interventions in crip technoscience, amplifying the polysemous ways disabled people create, hack, code,

tinker, and experiment with technology as access, activism, and survival practices. Crip technoscience draws from feminist science and technology studies and disability justice art and activism to "describe politicized practices of non-compliant knowing-making: world-building and world-dismantling practices *by* and *with* disabled people and communities that respond to intersectional systems of power, privilege, and oppression by working within them and around them" (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019, pp. 45). Instead of asking, "how can we fix or cure neurodivergence or disability?" a neuroqueer technoscientific approach offers an alternative query: by centering the polysemous lived experiences of neurodivergent users, how can we disrupt static hierarchies of ableist and sanist institutional power?

One potential intervention is embedding ongoing accessibility practices into all forms of creative media engagement and relational supports. For example, Arseli Dokumacı (2019) offers microactivist affordances as performative tactics disabled people rely on to reconfigure their environments. Dokumacı's (2019) inquiry focuses on physical disability, but I extend her original use here to consider the ways that neurodivergent users co-engage with ICTs to reconfigure neuroqueer subjectivities. For example, research teams can support neuroqueer styles of media use. Instead of forcing collaborators and stakeholders to assimilate to a device, designers can use their resources to support media reconfiguration with neurodivergent stakeholders, providing low-stim and scent-free environments, allowing for multiple types of communication (e.g., verbal, AAC, text-only, sign language), creating plain language guides, having breaks in focus groups, and honoring neurodivergent stakeholder goals with the use of media technology

and research dissemination (such as including stakeholders as co-authors) (see Gardner et al, 2021; Lazar et al., 2017; Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018; Spiel et al, 2019). In the following sections, I present three working tenets to demonstrate how neuroqueer technoscience engages with crip technoscience-informed practices to present anti-assimilationist technology as tools for relational world-making: neuroqueer technoscience extends crip technoscience to reject curative violence in technology use; neuroqueer technoscience prioritizes technological interdependence; and neuroqueer technoscience reconfigures who can be a creator and user.

Neuroqueer Technoscience Rejects Curative Violence

I offer neuroqueer technoscience as an intervention in crip technoscience's tendency to privilege neurotypicality. Sins Invalid (2019) emphasizes the importance of cross-solidarity movement building between different members of disability communities, including "psych survivors, people with mental health disabilities, neurodiverse people… and people with intellectual or developmental disabilities" (p. 25). However, how are these commitments honored for neurodivergent, Mad, and intellectually and developmentally disabled (I/DD) people? The documentary *Crip Camp* (2020) presents an idyllic retelling of the U.S.-based Independent Living Movement (ILM), where white physically disabled people were (and still are) placed at the top of the disability hierarchy (Lebrecht & Newham, 2020). Yet *Crip Camp* does not show I/DD, Mad, neurodivergent, and disabled people of color (especially Black disabled people) in a similar perspective; for instance, the film presents the leadership of Black Panther member and disability advocate Bradley Lomax as a mere anecdote instead of a

significant cross-movement leader whose expertise was crucial to the 504 sit-in's success (Sedgwick, 2021, para. 21). The tremendous segregation I/DD people face—especially Black, brown, and Indigenous I/DD people—reinforces carceral boundaries at the conjectures of racism, intellectual ableism, and sanism (see Erevelles & Minear, 2010; Sedgwick, 2021).

The digitization of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) demonstrates the legacies of racism and (techno)ableism.[7] ABA often applies panoptic and violent pathological approaches, often targeting non- and semi-speaking people as a way to force verbal language (Bascomb, 2011; Williams, 2018; Yergeau, 2018). Robin Roscigno (2019) suggests ABA actively harms and even maims autistic and neurodivergent people through its intent to erase and contain neurodivergence. In some cases, such as the U.S.-based Judge Rotenberg Center, allistic administrators force autistic, neurodivergent, and intellectually disabled residents to wear electric shock devices, called a graduated electronic decelerator, which "modify" behaviors by delivering shocks up to 41 milliamps (Roscigno, 2019). Since the center's opening in 1971, at least six residents have died from the pervasive levels of shock present in the GED (Brown, 2020; Yergeau, 2018). Autistic self-advocates, cultural workers, and researchers continue to challenge ABA's pathologization.

In this way, ICTs are used to "solve" aspects of disability through curative violence. By using the term curative violence, I am referring to Eunjung Kim's (2017) theorization that rehabilitative technology is used to practice cure, rehabilitation, and progress, while presenting disability as an obstacle to national identity building. For

instance, many autism-related ICT supports focus on artificial enhancements for

verbal/spoken speech through augmentative and alternative communication devices

(AAC). Neuroqueer technoscience asks, is the reasoning behind "giving voice" to non-

and semi-speaking neurodivergent people rooted in ableism? Here, I suggest that ICTs

developed with eugenicist or rehabilitative mindsets position users as "better" than

disabled people who do not use them (Alper, 2017). My thinking follows Joseph

Stramondo's (2019) theory of curative versus assistive technology: the orientation of how

a device is situated around disability delineates its use as "assistive" or "curative," further

substantiating categories such as "disabled" versus "non-disabled." The programming of

curative violence in technology is not always readily apparent: curative violence is often

taken up by obfuscating eugenics, ableism, and neurotypicality with technoableist

rhetorics of "enhancement" and "innovation," as if disabled people—and in particular,

neurodivergent people—are not worthy of life unless they pursue the assimilative

alternations of curative technology (see Kim, 2017).

      Rua M. Williams (2019) proposes a similar critique through their concept of

metaeugenics in so-called "assistive" technology for autistic children. They explain that

metaeugenics are a subtle yet violent network of power that are

> deployed in the justification of curative, normalizing therapies for…
> deviance. Once overt eugenics have failed, or have been deemed
> unpalatable, metaeugenics… take over to ensure purity… while racialized,
> queer, disabled, or otherwise unsightly, unruly… bodies are catalogued,
> captured, quarantined, incarcerated, sanitized, rehabilitated (or not)"
> (Williams, 2019, pp. 65-6).

Stramondo (2019) also offers alternative, resistive, and refusal-based connections to such

technology as a strategy to dispel the prominence of curative violence. Like Dokumacı's

(2019) offering of micro-resistive affordances, such reconfigurations of assistive technology redefine not only who is a user, but what it means to be in relation with technology beyond metaeugenics and curative violence (as I articulate in the final tenet). Through these reconfigurations, neuroqueer technoscience rejects the use of ICTs for the rehabilitation or cure of disability.

Note that my critique is not an outright dismissal of assistive technology—many ICTs, like AAC, can provide necessary support for neurodivergent people with varying access needs (Stramondo, 2019). Nor am I saying that all crip technoscience excludes or privileges neurotypicality. However, I offer neuroqueer technoscience as extending crip technoscience in this realm, reaffirming anti-assimilationist and coalitional transformation by troubling the representation of neurodivergent as deficit (Ymous et al, 2020). Universities and medical institutions are sites of violences such as medical racism and (techno)ableism, placing disabled and neurodivergent people of color and queer and trans people, in concentrated harm (Dolmage, 2017). I argue that neuroqueer technoscience leads us to new possibilities that sustain the wholeness of neurodivergent people and their goals, accessibility needs, or experiences.

Instead of designing for a cure, rehabilitation, or enhancement, a neuroqueer technoscientific approach might work to ensure that the lived experiences, goals, and skills of neuroqueer users are always already centered. Neuroqueer technoscience builds upon crip technoscience's liberatory and anti-assimilationist approaches to reimagine disability as a "set… of innovative skills" (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018, p. 216). For instance, Amanda Lazar and colleagues' (2017) Moments, a digital art-sharing project co-

designed with older adults with dementia, demonstrates the potential of non-curative

neuroqueer relational practices in crip technoscience. Moments' design team used their

resources to facilitate a creative experience that allowed alternative ways of social

engagement and non-verbal communication (e.g., artistic creation such as drawing,

painting, collaging). Most importantly, Moments met users where they were, allowing

diverse gameplay for creating the digital art, and bending towards the user's skill set

(instead of the user assimilating to the technology). Imagining art as a non-verbal

communication practice, the design team centered options that would appeal widely to the

user group, such as scrapbooking or postcard decorating, which could be engaged with by

several participants (Lazar et al., 2017, p. 2150). The project's success demonstrates the

tenacious overlap between crip technoscience (i.e., centering skills, working through

friction arising from clashing access needs, designing for multiple modes of accessibility)

and neuroqueer technoscience (i.e., multiple modes of self-expression, amplifying agentic

production, centering non-neurotypical styles of social interaction and community

building). While disability-centric technoscience may focus on enhancement or

rehabilitation for disabled people, neuroqueer technoscience echoes crip technoscience's

disruption of progressive attempts at "overcoming" or "curing" disability (Hamraie &

Fritsch, 2019). Moreover, these moments hold other allegiances to care work and mutual

aid, positioning ICTs as technologies to facilitate (live-saving) community support.

Neuroqueer Technoscience Emphasizes Technological Interdependence, Not Independence

Noting the prevalence of eugenics in North American health research, neuroqueer technoscience calls for ways of knowing, doing, and making that do not rely on allistic, harmful technologies to stylize neuroqueer communication supports. Why must the "most optimal" forms of communication be rooted in spoken word and eye contact? What possibilities emerge from imagining stimming as a vital part of the communication process or using multiple communication styles (e.g., a mix of both spoken and non-verbal communication)? Is neurodivergent agency contingent on an individual's ability to toilet, speak, or move in ways that conform to neurotypicality and independence (see Williams, 2018)? Cal Montgomery (2001) names this violent privileging of independence over interdependency as an "assumption [to] speak for people with cognitive impairments… [which] assumes the 'care' families provide is always oppressive" (para. 19). Montgomery's powerful theorization disrupts the distinctions between which forms of dependency are valued in mainstream disability communities and which are discarded. Perhaps a better question to ask is: what happens when allistic and neurotypical design teams bend toward the communication needs and goals of neurodivergent bodyminds? A neuroqueer technoscience calls on bringing such communicative practices toward interdependent creation and use of media. Departing from the mainstream prominence of designing media supports as a "solution" to neurodivergency (Alper, 2021, Williams & Gilbert, 2020; Ymous et al., 2020), neuroqueer technoscience instead positions

neuroqueer communication styles as valid and worthy in mediated spaces, regardless of individual access needs.

Neuroqueer technoscience extends crip technoscience by considering technology to support neuroqueer communication styles and relational practices. For instance, the Critical Design Lab's *Remote Access Party Guide* reconfigures technology to support neuroqueer and crip relational practices in a digital world (Gotkin et al., 2020). The *Remote Access Party Guide,* derived from earlier work on crip technoscientific practices for supporting accessible nightlife (see Gotkin, 2019), moves beyond curative modes for digital social engagement. For instance, the open source facilitation guide provides a detailed explanation for how participants can set up a remote access event, what to expect before, during, and after the party, options for participation, and opportunities for engagement, including roles to support accessibility, such as captioners, audio descriptors, and access doulas (Gotkin et al., 2020, p. 6). Here, each participant is essential to the success of creating a digital space of access, love, and community: a remote access party is incomplete without the work and needs of each individual, whether they are a partygoer or providing remote access supports.

By establishing thorough guidelines—with room for working through imperfect technology—the *Remote Access Party Guide* demonstrates how neuroqueer technoscience builds on crip technoscience's anti-assimilationist and collaborative shifting of (digital) social spaces to co-create new ways of being, communication, and relationality. Party attendees are invited to engage in ways that feel right for them: agency to turn on or off one's computer camera or microphone, non-speaking ways to participate

in the space, and control over their participation in the web conferencing call. Gotkin et al.'s (2020) guide does not present itself as a universal solution for technoableism. However, it does provide some crucial possibilities for using ICTs to collectively practice neuroqueer relationalities in anti-assimilationist spaces. Here, technology use does not amplify independence: instead, it shows the various ways neuroqueer (and crip) technoscience reconfigures technologies toward relational independence.

I turn toward interdependence as a micro-resistive turn (see Dokumacı, 2019) for neuroqueer technoscience to program, code, or co-create new forms of subjectivities that depart from concepts of cognitive hierarchies and white supremacist conceptualizations of the ideal user. In a state of interconnected dependence (Sins Invalid, 2019), interdependence challenges Western and neoliberal prioritizations of individuality and self-reliance. Instead, interdependence "sees the liberation of all living systems and the land as integral to the liberation of our communities… we work to meet each other's needs as we build toward liberation" (Sins Invalid, 2019, p. 25). Noting that many Western liberal social institutions position disability and disabled people as passive and apolitical, disability justice always already uses interdependence as a "site of political resistance" through technoscientific measures of hacking, tinkering, and making within disability communities and beyond (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019). Hacking constitutes how disability organizers reimagine through realtering existing material and political arrangements (Hamraie & Fritsch, p. 4). Through centering disabled expertise, activist hacking highlights crip technoscience's commitments to political change and transformation.

Neuroqueer technoscience's commitments to relational interdependence in digital worlds is revealed in the success of disability hashtag activism. In the midst of the 2019 U.S. wildfire season, disability justice activist Stacey Park Milbern and the Disability Justice Culture Club partnered to support the #PowerToLive campaign against discriminatory power shut-offs (Disability Visibility Project, 2019). Additionally, Johanna Hedva's (2022) "Sick Woman Theory" draws from their experiences with chronic illness and neurodivergence to affirm the validity of digital activism through embodiment and radical resistance in a world invisibilizing people of color and disabled people. Although Hedva does not clearly position their theorization as a manifesto, the practice of Sick Woman Theory as a technology of radical survival and digital world-making is significant to the formation of neuroqueer subjectivities. Thus, neuroqueer technoscience does not position disability and ableism as single issues: instead, it address and disrupts how ableism is always in conversation with racism, settler-colonialism, classism, and other oppressive nodes that render multiply marginalized people as invisible, and emphasizes the need for digital technology as a way to create interdependence (Hedva, 2022; Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018). Where crip technoscience may reconfigure disabled people's relationships with social and cultural structures, I position neuroqueer technoscience as a co-collaborative reconfiguration of subjectivity.

Neuroqueer Technoscience Imagines Who is a Creator and User

What does it mean to design neuroqueer futures? Perhaps it begins with troubling the prospects of design(ers). Sasha Costanza-Chock's (2020) design justice offers to counter (techno)ableism and metaeugenics in design research toward new neuroqueer

subjectivities. Partially deriving their conceptualization from disability (justice) activism, Costanza-Chock notes that including the expertise of the most directly-impacted people facilitates new possibilities for experiential innovations that can transform lived experience. Costanza-Chock's design justice may counter the limitations of universal design, a disability-centered practice emerging in the late twentieth century to create environments accessible to any users (Hamraie, 2017). Universal design guidelines have since been adapted as an ethos for technology and ICT design (Bennett & Rosner, 2019). However, as Aimi Hamraie (2017) importantly asks, who is everyone? Namely, are neurodivergent people included within the definitions of everyone (see Goodley et al., 2014)? Are some neurodivergent people considered more worthy and exceptional than others (i.e., is a speaking neurodivergent person considered more worthy of support than a non- or semi-speaking neurodivergent person)? Similarly, Ruha Benjamin (2019) cautions against claims for a generic "design justice," noting that well-intentioned ideas about designing solutions can sanitize and smooth-over systemic oppression with one-size-fits-all approaches. Instead, Benjamin asks what happens when the focus is on "plain old… liberation?" (p. 177). Hamraie (2017) similarly presents their idea of collective access as a necessary intervention, which presents accessibility practices as a material-discursive understanding of relationality and interdependence as a means for social justice.

One way that we might create a neuroqueer future is by supporting the work of disabled and neurodivergent design teams in HCI and mobile communication to meet the user goals and access needs of neurodivergent stakeholders or by stepping away from

designing curative solutions (Ymous et al., 2020). If technoableism promotes rehabilitation and curative violence, then neuroqueer (and crip) technoscience presents neurodivergence as essential for computing and user-experience practices. For instance, Loren Britton and Isabel Paehr's (2021) work as MELT adopts this approach through media arts practice. In particular, MELT's project, "Rituals Against Barriers," is informed by Black feminist thought, feminist HCI, and crip technoscientific practices to embrace a series of neuroqueer rituals as design paradigms. Instead of pathologizing, curing, or rehabilitating, MELT presents neuroqueer design practices such as bad listening (Smilges, 2020), questioning institutions, and tending to the "not perceivable" as generative sites for inquiry and technological creation (Britton & Paehr, 2021). Through various stop-motion video entries and digital archives, MELT's politic of refusal simultaneously "resists" (techno)ableist barriers and "generatively" connects across differences (Britton & Paehr, p. 79) Such (re)fusals extend crip technoscientific paradigms for anti-assimilationist technological and digital artistic practice towards neuroqueer technoscientific creation. By fusing crip technoscientific paradigms for anti-assimilationist commitments to access and removal of structural barriers, MELT's use of digital artistic practice reveals the neuroqueer potentialities of leaning into so-called "deviant" relationalities.

I think that neuroqueer technoscience provides the desired intervention in "what's next" in both the creation and cultural understandings of ICTs. However, I want to be clear in what neuroqueer technoscience is, and what it is not. Neuroqueer technoscience argues that technoableism is tied to larger systems of white supremacy: we cannot talk about algorithmic ableism or designing around neurotypicality without addressing

ableism's networking around anti-Blackness or other racisms, settler-colonialism and data colonialism (Couldry & Mejias, 2019), digital (trans)misogynoir (Bailey, 2021), shadowbanning of disabled content creators and other forms of political violence emerging from the realm of the digital. Nevertheless, neuroqueer technoscience is also a practice of optimism. It is the poetic prose of writing out alt-text for a kick-ass selfie so that our friends with screen readers can partake in slivers of neuroqueer joy. It is imagining neurodivergent people programming, coding, and developing ICTs that support our access needs without humiliating us. It is allowing non- and semi-speaking autistic people to lead conversations on AAC. It is imagining the coalitional collaboration toward something better.

Conclusion: What Does a Neuroqueer Technoscience Look/Feel/Stim Like?

Last year, I posted the following questions on my personal Twitter account: "What would neurodivergent/neuroqueer social networking be like? What would this collaborative process entail? How would we design for this without assuming all access needs are universal?" My questions catalyzed a passionate, collaborative conversation.[8] One suggestion called for a user-driven interface with different options that met the need of individual users. One idea proposed different modes that would allow users to determine how much content they want to see on their page and the importance of customizable color contrast combinations. Many commenters addressed strategies for organizing the network, including tagging systems designed around neurodivergent thinking styles and organization, and options for determining which pages users would want to feature on their accounts. For instance, some accounts mentioned tagging written

text with tone indicators to help other users access a conveyed meaning more readily (e.g., this is sarcastic or genuine) or set more explicit boundaries about availability to talk with other users. This tweet was by no means viral. However, it demonstrated the strong potential of neuroqueer-driven world-(re)making via technology, one where neurodivergent people were always already imagined at its center and would be the driving force behind the expansion and generation of media content. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, this single conversation revealed that neuroqueer technoscience is already happening.

Neuroqueer technoscience presents the possibility for innovative ICTs that facilitate threads of liberation for neurodivergent users. Mainstream new media technologies are designed and framed around technoableism. Social media algorithms program technoableist rhetorics into their codes, determining who truly gets to "belong" on a platform that can provide disabled people with significant social connections. Additionally, technoableist ICTs generate an intent to emphasize dominant allistic and neurotypical styles of communication. Rejecting the notion of creation-as-cure, neuroqueer technoscience takes cues from disability justice and crip technoscience to reroute design leadership to neurodivergent communities, with the intent of supporting neuroqueer styles of communication, leadership, and lived experiences. By promoting these ideals, new media technologies, like mobile applications and smart devices, can embrace neurodivergent users where we are and imagine worlds where we were always already whole.

I want to caution that there is a difference between designing for access and support and designing for enhancement and erasure. Technology should not cure or erase neurodivergency, as Rua M. Williams (2019) importantly notes. Neurodivergent people are tenaciously brilliant thinkers and tinkerers who are engineering our survival through activist technoscience and other forms of world-making (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019). Thus, a neuroqueer technoscience is not a fixed or static one-time practice. Although I anticipate there are many ways neurodivergent people can practice (and already incorporate) neuroqueer technoscience, I imagine that neuroqueer technoscientific engagement amplifies access as a sticky, ongoing relational practice—one that is fluid and conceptualizes many neurodivergent bodyminds coming together to program, hack, and create better (digital) worlds.

Neuroqueer technoscience breaks past the tensions and complexities of technoableism and other forms of (digital) discrimination. By positioning neurodivergent people as experts and leaders, a neuroqueer technoscientific approach to digital creation and activism generates new ways of creating, thinking, and making survival possible, all with the "click" of a share button. I urge us to follow the many pathways collectively forged by neurodivergent and neuroqueer activists, artists, self-advocates, and cultural workers. Neurodivergent people may not be the "ideal" user in a technoableist world; however, as I discuss in this chapter, neuroqueer technoscience rejects the idea of a singular, fixed user who must endure curative violence to be seen as valid. Instead, neuroqueer technoscience presents polysemous and collective ways of creating and engaging media. Allistic and neurotypical researchers may imagine us as flawed, broken,

and needing a fix. Nevertheless, new media and mobile communication technologies can
be transformative and liberatory—neuroqueer technoscience may be one potentiality that
can help us reach there. Join us.

Notes

1. Here I am referring to Eli Clare's (2017) terminology to determine the
   "inextricable relationship between our bodies and our minds" (p. xvi). The
   term "bodymind" is used to counter Cartesian conceptualizations of the
   body/mind divide, which lead to ideologies of curing or erasing disability.
   Thinking about the body and mind as separate from one another and better
   than the other entity (re)produces ideas about ableism.

2. I use *neurodivergent* as a descriptor for individuals whose cognitive
   functioning differs from neurologically typical people (Hughes, 2016). My
   inclusion of neurodivergent centers autism, but also prioritizes learning
   disabilities, intellectual disabilities, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome,
   dementia disorders, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and
   other identities.

3. I have "formal" diagnoses of non-verbal learning disability, visuo-spatial
   impairment, dyscalculia, and ADHD. Like many autistics, I too think of
   NVLD as an autism misdiagnosis. I prefer to use "neurodivergent" or
   "neuroqueer" as a way of embracing the embodied disruption to
   neurotypicality.

4. I follow Talila "T.L." Lewis's (2021) working definition of ableism. They currently define ableism as: "a system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normality, intelligence, desirability, and productivity. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism… leading to… society determining who is valuable and worthy" (Lewis, 2021).

5. Used by non- and semi-speaking people, AAC technologies *augment* already existing communication styles (e.g., gesturing) and offer an *alternative* to spoken speech (Alper, 2017, p. 12). AAC technologies can range from low-tech activity mats to apps utilized through a tablet computer that create synthesized oral speech (p. 14).

6. Technoableism is not necessarily only an issue of representation; lack of disabled and neurodivergent programmers, technologists, and designers, is also a significant issue.

7. Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) refers to a series of therapies intended to "improve" socially significant behaviors such as speech and embodiment. Many autistic and neurodivergent self-advocates have criticized ABA's punitive and rehabilitative approaches (see Bascomb, 2011; Brown, 2020; Sequenzia, 2015; Williams, 2019; Yergeau, 2018).

8. The tweet responses are anonymized and summarized in order to protect the account holders participating in the conversation.

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Chapter 3:

The Crip Resilience of Digital Care Work: Disability Justice and Disposability in the Climate Crisis

Introductory Note

On Friday, February 3, 2023, a freight train derailed on the Norfolk Southern Railway in the small village of East Palestine, Ohio (Riess, 2023). East Palestine is a small, postindustrial community in the American Rust Belt, an hour west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and half an hour south of Youngstown, Ohio. Approximately 4,761 people currently reside in East Palestine (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Almost 90 percent of the village's households are white, and 10 percent live beneath the poverty line (Census Reporter, 2023). Issuing an emergency evacuation of residents living within a one-mile radius of the derailed train, Ohio state officials were tasked with setting the train on fire. It is of note that the train was carrying toxic chemicals such as vinyl chloride, butyl acrylate, ethylene glycol mono butyl ether, and ethyl hexyl acrylate, which released compounds like hydrogen chloride and phosgene into the air. Inhaling or ingesting these substances can devastate wildlife and permanently disable people living in an affected area. The fires lingered for days.

By Sunday, February 5, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced that residents living in a two-mile radius of the derailment to evacuate, and Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro called for residents in northwest Beaver County (which borders East Palestine) to evacuate. Norfolk Southern arranged a control-release burn of the five derailed, chemical-filled cars, releasing vinyl chloride into the air. The chemicals shifted the sky into a dark,

black cloud. Residents in nearby municipalities complained of chemical smells and volatile organic compounds (VOC) in air and tap water sources. On February 8, state and federal workers shared that the chemicals had leaked into the soil. The emergency was lifted on February 9, as toxicants were not detected outside of the evacuation zone— although local water sources and the sky alike remained murky.

I drafted this introductory note 60 miles east of East Palestine, in Pittsburgh, which sources its water from a different distributary (the Allegheny River, not the Ohio). However, in the days following the initial accident, my Twitter Happenings highlight ticker announced different trending moments every day: #OhioChemicalDisaster. East Palestine. #NorfolkSouthern. I combed through threads where verified public health officials and anonymized cartoon avatars debated whether East Palestine was "America's Chernobyl" (Jones, 2023). My Facebook feed was full of paragraphs-long diatribes arguing how Norfolk Southern silenced significant news outlets in the days following the initial derailment. On Wednesday, February 15, about a week and a half after the accident, I aimlessly watched TikTok in bed. I scrolled through dancing dogs, mukbangs, and, unsurprisingly, doomsday prepper influencers who called their questionably sourced East Palestine content creation "journalisming."[1] Then a video created by Imani Barbarin (@crutches_and_spice), a multi-platform creator, communications specialist, and disability justice advocate, appeared in my feed:

> So someone asked me [the] other day what I mean when I say that every single marginalization leads to disability. Unfortunately we have the perfect example with what's going on in East Palestine, OH, right now. According to a tweet I saw from Nina Turner, the average income of someone in East Palestine, Ohio is about 27,000 dollars a year. And with the chemicals being found in groundwater, found

in the air, killing farm animals, killing just birds and fish and wildlife everywhere, it will most certainly disable the population of East Palestine, Ohio. Not only that, but they will be completely unable to leave because their home values will plummet. Every form of marginalization leads to disability" (Barbarin, 2023).

Most of Barbarin's videos have over 50,000 views (if not more). The video on disability and East Palestine only received 23,600 views.[2] The video is part of a playlist called "They will disable you," where Barbarin organizes her videos about how ableism interlocks with other oppressions, such as racism, transphobia, and capitalism.

Within weeks, East Palestine seemed to disappear from news media headlines, which turned their attention to the Kardashian family's rumored exclusion from the 2023 Met Gala (MacDonnell, 2023) and the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank (Griffith et al., 2023)— events which demonstrated the ways (media) industries, such as the financial tech and entertainment sectors, interact and impact each other.[3] My students at a university in Pittsburgh seemed unmoved by the train wreck, despite East Palestine's close proximity. It was back to normal (for us).

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Though Chapter 3 does not focus on East Palestine, the argument in Barbarin's TikTok sits at the heart of this chapter, which asks: what is the relationship between race, class, disposability, and disability within the chaos of the human-engineered climate crisis? By disposability, I am referring to a term crip activist and theorist Eli Clare (2017b) invokes to discuss the enmeshment between the mediation of disability and climate change to signal "abnormality" and "unnaturalness." He importantly names the tensions between disability and climate change as defects: bodily and cognitive differences, like environmental change, are less valuable and generative, "something to

<p align="center">151</p>

eradicate" (p. 244). Nirmala Erevelles (2014b) also links disposability with hierarchies of power, noting that hierarchical structures of value "emancipate some bodies at the disposability of others" (para. 7). Building on the emerging, interdisciplinary field of eco-crip studies (Ray & Sibara, 2017), which places environmental humanities directly in conversation with crip theory, my forthcoming analysis investigates the ways that crip data interrogates how racist and ableist ideologies inform hegemonic responses to the looming climate crisis, such as *who* deserves to survive.[4]

Chapter 3's crip data approach amplifies the subversive data generated by the #PowerToLive movement's digital care work, which mobilized community-supported emergency care for hundreds of disabled Californians during the state's 2019 wildfire season. Notably, this chapter does not directly discuss a climate emergency; I instead investigate how #PowerToLive's data-making responds to the ableist impacts in a major power company's climate crisis mitigation practices. For instance, I name #PowerToLive's dynamic use of Google Forms to organize emergency care as a crip data response to PG&E's corporate disposability during the rolling power shutoffs. Throughout Chapter 3, my analysis will demonstrate how the generation of disability justice data in platform spaces offers moments of offline transformation beyond environmental ableism. In this context, I suggest that #PowerToLive's crip data production disrupts the dominance of disposability in climate emergencies.

A key emphasis of Chapter 3 critically assesses how disability justice mutual aid groups utilize digital platforms to address systemic disposability politics in climate emergencies. I demonstrate how disability justice groups' alternative, strategic generation

of digital data offers important insights on the possibilities for emancipatory cultural production. Following the generative threads of Chapter 2's conclusion—"what would a neuroqueer algorithm look/feel/stim like" —my analysis here of the #PowerToLive mutual aid movement shares a glimpse at the transformative potentials of crip and neuroqueer data creation. In the Introduction to *Crip data studies,* I noted that my project addresses the question, "If platforms are racist and ableist, why should disabled people use them? Shouldn't they make their own platforms?" Chapter 3 responds to this query, as its case study offers insights into how #PowerToLive's data creation—particularly hashtag activism and the building of hybrid care webs – procured platform visibility for the movement's disability justice mobilizing against disposability.

First, as I address in both Chapter 1 and in the conclusion to *Crip data studies*, the suggestion that disabled people must remove themselves from digital platforms and use "disabled only" platforms reinvigorates eugenicist rhetorics of purity and separation, such as segregation and containment. Moreover, platforms are ubiquitous spaces for work, play, entertainment, and civic engagement, especially when the offline, physical world is increasingly inaccessible for many disabled people. In emphasizing platforms as digitally ubiquitous spaces, I refer to Shiv Ganesh and Cynthia Stohl's (2013) articulation that contemporary new media and communications technologies are "woven" into our social environments in ways that dictate and shape the organization of social institutions, cultural production, and communicative practices. Akin to analog technologies such as books, cars, or money, platforms support the proliferation of (crip) user-generated data: communication technologies are increasingly inseparable from living our lives (for better

or for worse). In Chapter 3, my analysis of the #PowerToLive hashtag and digital care

work movement offers a crip data framework for studying digital platforms: as hybrid

spaces for sharing messages and organizing material that ultimately connect online

disability justice movements with offline practices.

Digital platforms are complicated spaces within which to enact accessibility work.

For instance, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, when most

North American municipalities were under lockdown, there were few infrastructures to

protect people from contracting the virus. Consequently, the convenience of on-demand

service platforms, such as the Uber consortium, Instacart, or DoorDash, supported a

needed reorganization of cultural forms and practices as communities recalibrated.[6] On-

demand platforms provided salient support for disabled and other high-risk people

throughout the pandemic, connecting people (virtually) with healthcare, food, and mobile

payment. However, these technologies can also leave disabled people feeling

disenfranchised: though platform companies and their plethora of services clearly offer

important nodes of accessibility for disabled customers, at the same time disabled people

have voiced concerns about Uber drivers canceling or overcharging for ride requests upon

arrival and noticing the rider uses a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair, or is accompanied

by a certified service animal (Dalbey, 2020; Charlton-Dailey, 2021).

Additionally, Chapter 3 addresses the alternative potentialities of crip data

practices by analyzing of #PowerToLive's distinct platform use. Throughout the chapter,

I share how #PowerToLive activists reconfigured different social sharing and cloud-based

storage platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Drive, and Instagram, to organize

emergency care for vulnerable people left behind throughout the 2019 wildfire season.

Nomy Bitman (2022) explains that disabled people often use digital platforms uniquely

and strategically to navigate ableist social barriers encoded in both the online and

physical realms. For example, Facebook is typically envisioned as an interpersonal

networking tool to keep up with family and friends. However, #PowerToLive relied on

the platform to distribute mass communications, video documentation of in-person

demonstrations after wildfire season, and allow activists to connect between events.

Similarly, the services offered through Google Drive's consortium, like Sheets and Docs,

were repurposed for generating a community-supported power shutoff survival guide,

while the Google Forms feature facilitated emergency requests and volunteer intake.

Ultimately, this chapter connects to other case studies in the dissertation project by

illustrating how #PowerToLive's crip data-making invites moments for hybrid social and

cultural transformation beyond environmental ableism and disposability.

Finally, Chapter 3's crip data approach highlights how #PowerToLive's data

generation provided a testimonial bid (Ellcessor, 2022) for making disposability visible.

Here, I am referring to forms of user-generated evidence, such as photos, videos, or audio

clips, that "can challenge the default meaning of emergency as a mediation from

normalcy" (Ellcessor, 2022, p. 119). Elizabeth Ellcessor (2022) notes that mutual aid

movements often reconfigure platform visibility with their data production to support

emergency media. With the support of everyday digital technologies, such as

smartphones and social media platforms, mutual aid movements use testimonial bids to

negotiate and promote emergency to organizational outsiders (p. 138). Through personal

testimony, mutual aid organizations mediate emergency care via digital platforms when there is no safety net or when a situation increasingly becomes dire. Ellcessor notes, "in providing physical and digital spaces dedicated to alternative infrastructures for crises, [mutual aid] builds emergent understandings of what aid– and emergency – can be" (p. 142). While digital platforms are not always accessible, their connective features offer #PowerToLive and other movements' reprieve, support, and belief in a shared future where disabled and high-risk community members count. Chapter 3 shows how cultural flows of disposability, environmental injustice, and care work ultimately shape their movements' user-generated data as crip data. For #PowerToLive, generating crip data interrupts the silent, entangled encoding of ableism, racism, and disposability both on and offline. By rendering disposability visible, crip data ultimately imagines a world where disabled people (and their data) count.

Notes

1. A satirical term within U.S.-based conservative movements used to belittle to reporters with liberal political leanings (see Urban Dictionary, 2020a).

2. This is at the time of my writing (March 16, 2023).

3. This is not to say reporting on East Palestine reduced in coverage in the weeks following the accident, but I observed it was no longer framed as an "emergency," even within local Pittsburgh local news.

4. Here, I mean that the impacts of climate change are already here and will worsen in time.

5. Of course, the reliance on on-demand service platforms is a two-way street. During the early pandemic, the increased labor strain for "essential" workers, mainly Black and brown people, placed them at higher risk for contracting the virus, with little protection (see Rogers et al., 2020).

The Crip Resilience of Digital Care Work: Disability Justice and

Disposability in the Climate Crisis[1]

Introduction: Crip Care in the Climate Crisis

Fall 2019 marked one of the worst wildfire seasons in California's history. As a preventative measure, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), the state's largest energy supplier, decided to issue rolling outages to control the fire throughout October and November 2019. The outages left thousands of Californians without power for up to several days (Ho, 2019). However, PG&E did not support power-dependent customers, people who medically require electricity to support quality of life (Green, 2019).[2] The shutoffs significantly impacted disabled people, Black and brown neighborhoods, and older adults— a common trend in climate emergency mitigation (Hubrig, 2021). For over 35,000 power-dependent households in the Bay Area, this meant disabled, chronically ill, and elderly PG&E customers would be unable to charge their mobility devices, use bilevel positive air pressure (BiPAP) machines, or adequately store their medications (Green & Hossaini, 2019). Knowing that shelters, cities, and other government-run emergency initiatives would likely be unable to accommodate disabled people, Stacey Park Milbern, a queer Korean American disability justice activist, took to Google Docs to organize emergency care.

Using her connections with other local disability justice and fat liberation organizations, Milbern created a mutual aid fund and hashtag, #PowerToLive.[3] A response to eugenicist decisions around emergency evacuations or precarious economic systems, more generally, mutual aid is concerned with interdependence through

community care, from raising monetary funds for a neighbor to providing respite for a family caregiver. Mutual aid efforts "make evident the patriarchal and colonial assemblages that inform current racist, sexist, ableist, and classist expressions of power over dissident bodies" (Savloff, 2022, para. 23). Moreover, they respond to the hegemony of eugenicist disposability discourses that position disabled people as surplus, excess, or waste. Lisa A. Flores (2020) defines disposability as "… the condition of being used and then subject to disposal—lives discarded" (p. 8). Flores notes that disposability rhetorics as a governing strategy are enmeshed in hierarchies of racialization, able-bodiedness, neurotypicality, gender, and sexuality that ultimately articulate human value and capital (p. 9; see Razack, 2016). In climate crises, disposability is further informed by environmental ableism (also likened to eco-ableism) as a "clash of desires" that shapes human-environment relationships and entanglements, marking disabled people as defects that infringe upon the natural world's purity (Wollbring, 2012, p. 80). I draw upon disposability and environmental ableism to highlight how the #PowerToLive movement's data functioned as a response to the lack of state-sanctioned support for disabled, older adults, and other particularly vulnerable power-dependent people in a climate emergency who were treated as disposable in the wake of the California wildfires.

As a digital mutual aid movement, #PowerToLive cared for hundreds of disabled and power-dependent people throughout the remainder of wildfire season and developed a crowd-sourced guide for surviving a blackout (#PowerToLive, 2021). Within hours of the first Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) on October 10, 2019, Milbern and 20 other volunteers created a digital intake form via Google Drive to connect power-dependent

people in need to homes unaffected by a blackout. Organizers also created an extensive, crowd-sourced Google Doc with instructions for surviving a long-term power outage (Green & Hossaini, 2019) and led a physical protest at PG&E's headquarters on December 16, 2019. In a world where neither local governments nor PG&E "imagine[d] disabled futures" (see Kafer, 2013, p. 45) in their climate-related emergency planning, #PowerToLive created their own.

Analyzing #PowerToLive's digital care work data as a case study, this chapter introduces an analytic framework of *crip resilience* to show how generating crip data on digital platforms can expose the complex entanglements of offline ableist and racist disposability. In doing so, I offer crip resilience as an analytic framing of disability justice digital care work movements' crip data-making as an ideological challenge to ableist and racist biases that inform our online and offline worlds. Crip resilience demonstrates how #PowerToLive subversively renders disabled users' data as agentic. I inform my idea of crip resilience as an expansion of communicative resilience, a set of transformative strategies that resist structural inequities as the status quo to imagine new normals (Buzzanell, 2010). In Chapter 3, my analysis of #PowerToLive's crip data-making extends Patrice M. Buzzanell's feminist organizational communication framework toward digital contexts and disability justice perspectives. I argue that the digital care work data generated by #PowerToLive activists and their subversive engagement of everyday digital technologies, such as digital platforms, to negotiate "testimonial bids" (Ellcessor, 2022) which attempt to establish a community emergency as a valid crisis to organizational outsiders, such as politicians, celebrities, and other public figures whose support can

legitimize a mutual aid movement into the mainstream. As my chapter's analysis will show, I frame crip data through the analytic lens of crip resilience to discuss how the visibility of #PowerToLive's crip data highlights ableist and racist disposability while imagining worlds where disabled people survive wildfires. Simply put, crip data's presence catalyzes digital and analog worlds that push past ableist ideologies of value and disposability. In this vein, I anticipate crip data offers community-based and academic intrigue to discuss how disability justice organizing utilizes user-generated data in creative, life-saving ways.

Chapter 3 introduces crip resilience as a crip data augmentation of communicative resilience (Buzzanell, 2010) through an ideological analysis (Foss, 2017) of #PowerToLive's public care work documents and social media posts on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, in addition to local news articles written about the movement. Informed by critical/cultural critique, ideological analysis interrogates the circulation of meanings and representations encoded into popular culture texts to assess how biases, such as ableism and racism, inform how we assign value and meaning to cultural objects, such as mutual aid group discourse (see S. Hall, 1985; Sender & Decherney, 2018). I use a cultural studies-informed ideological analysis to support my critical reading of #PowerToLive's digital documents. My analysis will demonstrate how the disability justice movements' user-generated data make offline entanglements of disposability and environmental ableism visible. In this way, I argue that #PowerToLive's crip resilience renders their data as legitimate data and works to counter the material violences instantiated by PG&E's corporate disposability and environmental ableism. Throughout

Chapter 3, I respond to the following question: how does #PowerToLive's digital disability justice care work demonstrate how crip resilience affirms the agency of disabled users' data?

Reading the Chapter

Here, I summarize Chapter 3's organization. I begin by discussing three conceptual frameworks: disposability, disability justice and care work, and disability social media activism as emergency media. Together, I work through these background areas to set up the framing for my upcoming analysis of #PowerToLive's digital data. Next, I introduce Patrice M. Buzzanell's (2010) theory of communicative resilience as the analytical foundation for crip resilience. This section additionally emphasizes how a crip data augmentation of communicative resilience extends critical organizational communication scholarship towards disability justice and digitally mediated contexts. I then discuss Chapter 3's methodology and data collection before transitioning to my data analysis, where I discuss how my crip data framing of resilience offers new ways of thinking about disability justice, data, and environmental ableism. The analysis section offers valuable findings about crip resilience's digital interrogation of ableist disposability emerging from #PowerToLive's user-generated data: social media posts, crowd-sourced public movement documents, and local news articles written about the movement. I mainly focus on how #PowerToLive's data crafted survival, extended crip agency, and mediated environmental emergency. Finally, I conclude with a discussion on how crip data approaches to resilience and digital care work offer for challenging disposability, both on and offline.[4]

Conceptual Background

Disposability, Racism, and Ableism in the Climate Crisis

Chapter 3's analysis of #PowerToLive's digital care work demonstrates how crip data exposes the ways disabled people are disposable in U.S.-based climate emergencies. I understand disposability as an ideological and material elimination of marginalized populations because their value is insignificant to political powers (see Flores, 2020, pp. 8-9). Notably, Lisa A. Flores (2020) remarks that disposability is complexly entangled with racist, ableist, and eugenicist biases about cultural value and belonging (p. 9). Moreover, eugenicist ideas work with racism and ableism to organize cultural values around power, bodies, and intelligence (see Dolmage, 2017, p. 13). Throughout Chapter 3, I draw from crip and disability justice perspectives to make connections between disposability and ableism in environmental emergencies. For example, Eli Clare's (2017b) crip criticism of disposability suggests that Western, Eurocentric perspectives on "restoring" climate change's adverse environmental impacts mirror ideological biases that position disability as similarly "defective" and in need of rehabilitation (2017b, p. 244). Here, Clare calls to attention to the invisible pervasiveness of racist and ableist ideologies that inform how we talk about climate crises— such as wildfires – and how ableism influences who holds value in our contemporary moment of climate change.

I additionally enrich my crip data critique of disposability through Achille Mbembe's (2003) theorization of necropolitics, or a political sovereign's use of power to mark some populations as existing between life and death (p. 27). Extending past biopower, or the enactment of disciplinary measures of health, life, and production

(Foucault, 1984b), necropolitics emerges as a technology of slow death where the state "instrumentaliz[es] human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 14). In a necropolitical culture, a controlled subject's value is disposable and contingent on generating an economic surplus that ultimately expands the political power of sovereign leaders (Mbembe, p. 14). My forthcoming analysis of #PowerToLive's digital data demonstrates how movement-generated content function as a digital and offline safety net when ableist and racist governing practices rendered disabled and other power-dependent Californians as less-valuable and not worthy of protection during wildfire season. Throughout Chapter 3, I investigate how #PowerToLive's crip data disrupts offline discourses of disposability and necropolitics to obtain live-saving care for disabled and power-dependent people by emphasizing the direness of environmental ableism and racism in digital platform spaces.

Chapter 3's focus on environmental ableism, necropolitics, and disposability importantly address the convergence of ableism and racism present in U.S. responses to climate change (see Schalk, 2022; Hubrig, 2021). Henry A. Giroux (2006) refers to the particular interaction of environmental racism, ableism, and classism as the "new biopolitics of disposability… [where] the poor, especially people of color, not only have to fend for themselves in the face of… tragedy, but are also supposed to do it without being seen by the dominant society. Excommunicated from the sphere of human concern, they have been rendered invisible…" (p. 175). Though I agree with Giroux's discussion of the biopolitical weaponization of disposability politics, I believe his emphasis on "new" is a misnomer. Instead, I offer that disposability politics are historically part and

parcel of longstanding racist ideological structures and dominant governing discourses in the U.S. For example, Mary E. Mendoza's (2017) historical study of post-war Mexican Bracero migrant workers demonstrates the entanglements of racism and ableism. Bracero workers often labored in close, elongated contact with toxic carcinogens such as dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) (Mendoza, 2017, p. 493). Conservative U.S. federal officials worried Mexican laborers would bring in disease, reifying racist beliefs about contamination and racial purity (see Mendoza, p. 493). Mendoza's study reveals how racist disposability is simultaneously disabling, as many Braceros developed seizure disorders after prolonged DDT exposure.

The biopolitical forces of racist and ableist disposability politics shape U.S. political leadership's responses to emergency care and the devaluing of marginalized groups in climate emergencies. For example, disposability informed emergency "responses" after post-Katrina flooding subsided in New Orleans. Throughout the city, dead bodies– overwhelmingly Black and Latino people —resurfaced in the streets. Many people appeared on rooftops seeking emergency evacuation (Giroux, 2006, p. 175). Yet former Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco's tasked soldiers deployed to the area to shoot looters, additionally reinforcing marginality for those most impacted by Katrina (Giroux, p. 176). These disposability discourses indicate the ways antiwelfare rhetorics reinvoke racist and ableist necropolitical structures in the wake of environmental emergencies (Kim, 2021, p. 80). Here, evacuation is positioned as an individual responsibility, obfuscating the socio-economic access people need to secure safety in a climate emergency. This chapter's analysis of #PowerToLive's artifacts shows how the

movement generated data to challenge dominant disposability discourses that suggest disabled people are not worth saving in a wildfire. In the next conceptual section, I identify disability justice and care work as responses to ableist and racist disposability.

Disability Justice and (Digital) Care Work

In Chapter 3, another conceptual area I engage with are disability justice perspectives on care work to frame my analysis of #PowerToLive's digital data and the ways it disrupts disposability. Disability justice is a movement beginning in the mid 2000s that prioritizes intersectional analyses of ableism and the ways it is shaped by racism, coloniality, classism, transphobia, healthism, xenophobia, homophobia, and other axes of oppression (Sins Invalid, 2019). Often referred to as the second wave of disability rights, disability justice traces its origins to early social media platforms, in addition to North American hubs in California's Bay Area, New York City, and Toronto (Sins Invalid, 2019). Collective community liberation sustains the movement, as disability justice prioritizes leadership and expertise by those most impacted by systemic racism, sexism, ableism, and classism. For instance, collective liberation is central to disability justice's commitment to "leaving no body/mind behind" (Berne et al., 2018, p. 228). Here, disabled leadership and expertise, especially from multiply marginalized disabled people, are prioritized as imperative toward achieving a collective liberation grounded in "real-world problems" (Sins Invalid, 2019, p. 23). In this way, disability justice activist practices imagine worlds where all people hold value.

Moreover, disability justice addresses the limitations of earlier disability rights frameworks, such as the social model of disability, which emphasizes accommodations

and legal protections to enhance disabled people's quality of life and remove ableist barriers that support ableist assimilation (see UCSF, 2018; Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019; Clare, 2017; Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018). However, the social disability model typically presents ableism as an isolated issue, failing to critique ableism's interactions with racism and classism (see Schalk, 2022; Bennett, 2022; Chen et al., 2023). For example, early U.S.-based disability advocate movements did not always acknowledge the leadership of Black, brown, Indigenous, queer, trans, and intellectually/developmentally disabled people, who were often pushed to the margins of activist spaces (see Sedgwick, 2021). My prioritization of disability justice does not outright dismiss the social model, which provides important moves toward challenging ableist devaluations of disabled people. While I acknowledge the social model's value, Chapter 3 works within a disability justice perspective to demonstrate how #PowerToLive's user-generated data identifies how ableist and racist ideologies inform the devaluation of disabled people as disposable during a climate emergency.[5] Following disability justice activist organizations, including #PowerToLive, this chapter is committed to an ideological analysis of #PowerToLive's crip data that highlights how disability justice movements offer forms of community care that challenge interlocking structures of ableism and racism.

In this way, my analysis of #PowerToLive's digital disability justice data-generation shows how organizers mobilized emergency community care both on and offline. I identify care work as (in)formal, community care that responds to growing North American austerity cuts to federally funded services, such as subsidized personal care attendants (see Martin et al., 2016, p. 630; Hande & Kelly, 2015; Piepzna-

Samarasinha, 2018, p. 41). As a result, hybrid online-offline "care webs" (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018, p. 34) emerged as interdependent survival networks for multiply marginalized disabled people, connecting self-sustaining communities— kin, friends, coworkers, and strangers —across platforms and in their physical environments. Care webs emphasize the importance of hybridity by bridging digital care to physical connections, particularly in times of crisis.

In Chapter 3, I investigate how #PowerToLive's care web collectively built a dynamic, mutual relationship that challenged the role of disposability in disabled Californian's lives. Within disability justice networks, care work is, first and foremost, a dynamic, ongoing collective process where mutual aid initiatives meet each person's needs, regardless of what those needs are. For instance, a care web facilitates possibilities for online mutual aid fundraising (and redistribution), organize accessible transportation for community members, and provide respite care (see Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018, p. 37). In place of local services, care webs like #PowerToLive rely on digital platforms and offline communication infrastructures to identify accessible transportation, do-it-yourself (DIY) strategies for mitigating smoke inhalation, and spotlight the care web's resources for those in need. By distinguishing their care web from "traditional" services, which often reproduce systems of oppression, my ideological analysis of #PowerToLive's artifacts demonstrate social media platforms' role in generating crip data. I note how crip data reconfiguring these digital systems' ideological bends toward crip and disability justice-informed technocultural production to challenge disposability. In the following

background section, I focus on disability justice movements use social media activism as a testimonial bid.

Disability Social Media Activism as Emergency Media

The final background area, disability social media activism, supports my forthcoming analysis of #PowerToLive's care work data as "emergency media" (Ellcessor, 2022, p. 13) that exposes offline disposability and makes disabled people (and their data) visible. In Chapter 3, I follow Elizabeth Ellcessor's definition (2022) of emergency media as a series of communication technologies that movements turn to "in order to express, justify, and enable the affective experiences and concrete actions that belong to the intensified 'here and now' of emergency" (Ellcessor, 2022, pp. 13-14). Ellcessor's theorization helps me to present #PowerToLive's crip resilient data-generation and platform use as a disability justice-led community response to environmental ableism, racism, and disposability. Moving away from the belief that an authority or institutional figure must verify an emergency, Ellcessor describes how individuals and collectives use accessible media technologies—for example, a smartphone – to share experiences, articulate organizational goals, and generate support from a larger public who may not share the same power as an authorized institution. For instance, though not the "mainstream" experts, #PowerToLive organizers used their unique positionalities to succeed in facilitating emergency care for power-dependent Californians through their innovative use of social sharing and cloud storage platforms.

Moreover, the "bid" of emergency is not necessarily guaranteed (p. 119). Because there are often no dominant authorities involved in the mediation of testimony, there

remains a possibility that those producing the testimony will be unsuccessful (p. 122). While there is risk in engaging in testimonial emergency media, Ellcessor notably remarks that the performativity of testimony draws attention to acts of violence or crisis that are "normalized," such as anti-Black police violence, as "an emergency worthy of action" (p. 121). In Chapter 3, my analysis of #PowerToLive's crip data-making critically accounts for how the disability justice movement used social media platforms and other new media technologies in response to PG&E and other institutions' treatment of power-dependent Californians as disposable populations. As I discussed in the previous section, hybrid disability justice care webs utilize online platforms and offline communications networks to design radical care infrastructures that make emergencies— like rolling power shutoffs – visible (see Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2023; Mingus, 2015). In this way, care webs like #PowerToLive respond to how racism, ableism, and classism inform hierarchies of support in climate emergencies, insisting that disabled and power-dependent people deserve care and are worthy of survival.

One prominent platform for supporting care webs' testimonial bids is Twitter, a text-based micro-blogging site with over 330 million global users (Jackson et al., 2020). Twitter's political and cultural impact is supported by its function as a space for hashtag activism, especially at the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender (Brock, 2020; Kuo, 2018; Jackson et al., 2020). Enclaves, or users united by shared identities, ideologies, or cultural perspectives, "democratiz[e] discourse" via reframing dominant socio-cultural conversations, exposing injustices, and promoting policy change through viral hashtags (Kuo, p. 496). For instance, feminist Twitter enclaves use hashtag activism to address

"feminist-identified issues" through discourse, storytelling, and critique (Linabary et al., 2020, p. 1828; Jackson et al., 2020). By shifting political conversations through storytelling and other communicative strategies, social movement enclaves "challenge oppressive rhetoric or create new imaginaries of what it means to be" (Chávez, 2011, p. 3). Furthermore, social media activism also addresses participation barriers that too often render physical forms of activism inaccessible for disabled people, such as marches, sit-ins, and other forms of physical protest (see Hedva, 2015). In this way, I understand disability justice movements like #PowerToLive to render ableist disposability visible through its unique use of platform features, such as hashtags.

Disability Justice Hashtag Activism.

A key focus of #PowerToLive pays keen detail to how the movement utilizes Twitter's hashtag feature to obtain visibility in a climate emergency and enact hybrid care networks. Formed by the # key, hashtags can increase the visibility of a user's tweets—often with a short, memorable phrase or keyword (Jackson et al., 2020). Hashtags shape a conversation's political direction and serve as a hybrid indexing tool "connecting offline with online" and serve as reliable indexing tools for information sharing and community-building (Kuo, 2018, p. 496; see also Brock, 2012; Gerarrd, 2018; Duguay et al., 2020). Through Twitter's algorithm, hashtags become organized and linked together. Based on high levels of user interaction, hashtags can become more visible, or "trend," which indicates a particular hashtag or topic has reached a viral level of platform popularity (Kuo, p. 496). The more a hashtag is used or shared, the more likely it is prioritized in Twitter's algorithm. Throughout Chapter 3, I understand disability justice hashtag

activism as a collective, strategic use of hashtags and other platform features to "make political contentions about politics that advocate for social change, identify redefinition, and political inclusion… leading to material effects in the digital and physical world" (Jackson et al., 2020, p. xviii; see also Linabary et al., 2020; Mann, 2018; Kuo, 2018, Bitman, 2023). Notably, disability justice hashtag activist movements often use hashtag activism with other offline strategies, such as phone blasts, physical protests, and community education. In this way, movement leaders distinguish disability justice hashtag activism from superficial performative allyship (see Kalina, 2020; Wellman, 2021). A disability justice approach to hashtag activism catalyzes community building and visibility for the movement that extends to hybrid, offline political transformation.

Previous disability justice activist hashtags demonstrate how organizers use hashtags to connect movement members across platforms and hybrid on/offline contexts. One such hashtag movement, #CripTheVote, centered on voting and political engagement for disabled U.S. citizens (see Mann, 2018). A non-partisan, national online movement co-created by disability activists Alice Wong, Gregg Beretan, and Andrew Pulrang in 2016, #CripTheVote addressed voter (in)accessibility and political education for disabled people and used online platforms as a space to engage challenges to offline ableism in voting and civic participation (Beratan, Wong & Pulrang, 2016; Wong, 2021; Mann, 2018, p. 606). For instance, the #CripTheVote hashtag evolved into a repository space where disabled voters could share stories about inaccessible polling stations and share selfies that encouraged other disabled Americans to vote and engage in other offline forms of civic participation that collectively challenged systemic racism and ableism. As

a disability justice hashtag movement, #CripTheVote demonstrated the significance of

using hashtags and other Twitter features to catalyze crip political transformation on and

offline. Here, the strategic use of disability justice activist hashtags "circumvent mass

communication institutions," such as major news networks, by promulgating political

concerns about ableism and other systemic oppressions to a large, global audience,

allowing those most impacted to lead the conversation (see Pal & Dutta, 2012, p. 240).

In focusing on disability justice hashtag activism and hashtag movements, I do not

a claim that this is the only "valid" form of emergency media or that it is more significant

than other forms of activism. Instead, my analysis positions #PowerToLive's hashtag

activist data as a necessary—but not the only – strategy for making the emergency of

disposability apparent to individuals not impacted by environmental ableism and racism.

Moreover, disability justice hashtag activist movements' data-generation offers care webs

further reach and visibility. In sum, disability hashtag activism offers alternative modes of

mass information-sharing and community building that hold important implications for

disability activists, local and national policy makers, and social media researchers. By

using the digital platform to catalyze organizational change, disability social media

activism brings that change to offline spaces, creating moments for political, social, and

cultural transformation.

In the next section, I introduce my crip data augmentation of communicative

resilience (Buzzanell, 2010) to demonstrate how I analyze #PowerToLive's subversive

care web data through ideological analysis. I suggest that #PowerToLive's data-making

challenges ableist and racist ideologies on data visibility through testimonial bids that

push back against disposability politics in the 2019 California wildfire season.

Introducing the Framework: Cripping Communicative Resilience

In this section, I introduce crip resilience as the primary framework for analyzing

#PowerToLive's data. Crip resilience, or the collective generation of crip data on digital

platforms that aims to identify offline ideologies of disposability, is a crip data

augmentation of Patrice M. Buzzanell's (2010) theory of communicative resilience,

which pays sharp attention to the critical transformative potentialities of applying

communication practices to advocate for "new normal," or forms of social organizations

that adequately address trauma and crisis (p. 2). I am interested in how communicative

practices, such as social media activism, are enacted in digital platform spaces to advance

disability justice social movements' transformative contributions into physical offline

spaces for disabled and power-dependent people. Moreover, my crip reading of

communicative resilience allows my ideological analysis of #PowerToLive's data to

address the ableist and racist ideological biases that animate disposability in climate

emergencies.

Grounded in critical and feminist organizational communication perspectives,

Buzzanell (2010) introduces five interconnected tenets to demonstrate how communities

enact resilience to enact cultural change. The first, "Crafting Normalcy," describes how

communities talk to orient a collective mobilization toward "returning to normal"

(Buzzanell, p. 3). The next tenet, "Affirming Identity Anchors," demonstrates how

individuals come together as a community to organize their response to crisis through

"Maintaining Communication Networks" with anchor members (pp. 4-6). Organizations engage the fourth tenet, "Putting Alternative Logics to Work," in order reframe situations of crisis (p. 6). Such innovative reframing help communities process trauma and adverse while mobilizing transformation through the fifth and final tenet, "Legitimizing Negative Feelings While Foregrounding Positive Action" (p. 7). Together, these working tenets produce Buzzanell's valuable framework that supports a critical probing of how organizations enact communication strategies in innovative, dynamic ways to address social marginalizations brought on by structural inequities or the impacts of disaster and crisis.

Throughout Chapter 3, I engage and extend Buzzanell's framework toward digital and disability justice frameworks to introduce my crip data augmentation of communicative resilience. My analysis engages with Buzzanell's (2010) initial framing with disability justice and crip data approaches to more adequately addresses the ways PG&E's disposability failed disabled and power-dependent customers during the 2019 wildfire season. Moreover, my analysis of #PowerToLive's user-generated data follows recent critical organizational communication framings of resilience that examine the use of multimodal communication— both digital and non-digital —strategies to "bounce forward" in climate crises that are only getting worse (see Buzzanell, 2018; Spialek et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020). Ultimately, critical perspectives on communicative resilience support my interrogation of crip resilience as a data-making practice that simultaneously names ableism and racism as informing environmental disposability while enacting hybrid political transformation for disability justice-based mutual aid movements, both on

and offline. In the following section, I discuss how my crip augmentation of communicative resilience framed my collection and analysis of the #PowerToLive hashtag movement's user-generated data.

Methodology and Data Collection

To support my analysis of #PowerToLive's user-generated data, I engage an ideological reading informed by communicative resilience (Buzzanell, 2010) to critically probe how #PowerToLive's activist data present evidence of offline disposability and catalyzes emergency care webs that enact political transformation, both on and offline. Sonja K. Foss (2017) notes that cultural studies-based approaches to ideological analysis and criticism track "the beliefs, values, and assumptions" embedded into a cultural artifact or object (Foss, 2017, p. 237). As a critical/cultural practice, ideological analysis helps me to interpret how power is encoded into a cultural artifact or object, thereby reproducing (a dominant) ideology (see S. Hall, 1985; Sender & Decherney, 2018). By framing culture as an "everyday, discursive practice" (Foss, 2017, p. 241), ideological analysis supports critical studies of popular culture texts (e.g., social media posts) because such objects are sites of collective struggles for meaning-making, power, and resistance. I engage my ideological analysis with communicative resilience (Buzzanell, 2010) to interrogate the disability justice sense-making practices encoded in #PowerToLive's digital documents and data-making. In doing so, I extend Buzzanell's original theory to new understandings of resilience and digital culture-making that emerge from #PowerToLive's crip data creation. My analysis produces an ideological interrogation of how #PowerToLive's user-generated data – social media posts, crowd-sourced public

documents, and articles written about the movement –challenged hegemonic offline networks of ableist and racist ideological biases that inform PG&E's disposable devaluation of disabled customers. Moreover, I argue that #PowerToLive's care work data's organized valuable, productive connections that allowed the organization and enactment of emergency supports between online and offline contexts. In this way, my analysis demonstrates how crip resilient media imagines new normals that position disabled people (and their data) as deserving of care and survival in climate emergencies. In this way, #PowerToLive's crip data-making changes U.S.-based cultural conversations that represent disabled people as expandable, resource-draining burdens. A crip data framing demonstrates how #PowerToLive, as a disability justice movement and care web, narrates an interdependent world where communities work together (on and offline) to create worlds beyond environmental ableism, racism, and corporate disposability.

Chapter 3's data analysis examines the public #PowerToLive crowd-sourced survival guide, a promotional YouTube video, social media posts shared by movement leaders and verified accounts[5] involved with #PowerToLive, in addition to local news articles reporting about their organizing. In Spring 2020, I used Twitter's advanced search algorithm to locate tweets from verified users with public-facing accounts (meaning the tweets were not private) that mentioned the hashtags #PowerToLive or #PSPS. I then refined my search to cover the dates between October 11, 2019— the date of Pacific Gas and Electric's (PG&E) first Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) in Northern California— to December 20, 2019, four days after #PowerToLive's in-person protest at PG&E's San Francisco headquarters. I also consulted these hashtags to find links to relevant

#PowerToLive documents. These documents included: a crowd-sourced survival guide curated on Google Docs, mutual aid sign-up forms offered by #PowerToLive organizers through Google Forms, public posts sharing #PowerToLive updates from Disability Justice Culture Club's Facebook page, and popular press articles about #PowerToLive's digital care work efforts.[6]

In order to query how #PowerToLive's data disrupted offline ideologies of disposability, I selected tweets that included messages that embodied crip resilience tenets (crafting normalcy, affirming identity anchors, maintaining and using communication networks, putting alternative logics to work, and legitimizing negative feelings to foreground positive actions) to assess how disability justice hashtag movements, like #PowerToLive, interrupt the convergence of ableist and racist biases. As I selected artifacts, I aimed to choose social media posts or articles that showed how Buzzanell's original tenets worked together or expanded her thinking through a crip lens. Throughout my analysis of each artifact, I focused on the relationship between text and image. Adopting this approach helped me to study how the #PowerToLive movement enacted a crip resilience critique in their naming of disposability. For instance, I would identify tweets posted by PG&E or municipal government accounts and examine the quoted tweets and replies to an original message to examine how disability activists responded to misinformation or ableist safety guidelines that failed to consider power-dependent people's needs during a power outage. My analysis of #PowerToLive's activist data produced three distinct themes demonstrating a crip resilience framework: *crafting survival, extending crip agency,* and *mediating environmental emergency.*

Analysis

In this section, I share my analysis of the #PowerToLive movement's activist data. This section introduces and discusses the three themes: *crafting survival, extending crip agency,* and *mediating environmental emergency*. Throughout the analysis, I demonstrate how these three themes inter-inform one another to articulate my crip data augmentation of communicative resilience (Buzzanell, 2010). Each theme section introduces with an example from the data collection and is followed by ideological analysis. My findings reveal how #PowerToLive's distinctive disability justice hashtag activism connected disabled and power-dependent Californians with emergency care offline. Moreover, my tracking of the movement's user-generated data suggests that by making emergency visible, #PowerToLive's content and activism offer crip critiques of ableist and racist disposability politics. Ultimately, I argue that crip resilience as a subversive data-generating practice that rejects eugenicist ideas about who holds value and invites possibilities for crip data-making as a community practice that offers tangible, interdependent care for power-dependent people, reframing ableist ideological conceptions of human value.

Crafting Survival

Crafting survival, the first theme informing my articulation of crip resilience, addresses the significance of #PowerToLive's strategically-generated user data to bring attention to the emergencies of environmental ableism and disposability. In early October 2019 (the beginning of #PowerToLive's organizing), different disabled and power-dependent interlocutors used social media platforms, such as Twitter, to share their lived

experiences with climate change and ableist disposability. As a theme, crafting survival highlights how #PowerToLive organized the lived experience data to make offline survival possible for disabled and power-dependent Californians. For example, during the October 26 Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS), Alice Wong, a disabled Asian American activist and founder of the Disability Visibility Project (DVP), released a Call for Stories via her social media accounts.[7] The post invites any disabled, fat, poor, queer, or older adult impacted by the PSPS to share their own #PowerToLive story on a social media platform of their choosing (DVP, 2019).Wong (@SFDirewolf) tweeted: "Everyone uses technology, but for some of us, electricity is a life-or-death matter. Why is electricity important to you? Tell your story with #PowerToLive #PSPS" (Wong, 2019a). Jaipreet Virdi (@jaivirdi), a Deaf South Asian scholar, wrote: "For disabled people, losing power signifies much more than just an inconvenience. It can be life-threatening" (Virdi, 2019). Power-dependent Twitter users replied to these tweets sharing their experiences of environmental ableism, racism, and disposability, in addition to narrating the different ways that their survival is contingent on access to electricity.

I chose these examples to suggest that #PowerToLive issued their "Call for Stories" in order to craft crip wildfire season survival strategies in offline, physical contexts. In her theory of communicative resilience, Patrice M. Buzzanell (2010) remarks that successful organizational responses to emergency originate in collective repetition of ritual and talk (see Buzzanell, 2010, p. 4). Likewise, I understand #PowerToLive's success because it built the digital portion of its movement through strategies like hashtag activism, multimodal documentation, and mass distribution of community resources. This

practice provided a shared organizational identity and goal for the different

#PowerToLive participants. Moreover, storytelling is a crucial practice in disability

justice communities, which prioritizes highlighting the leadership and lived experiences

of those most impacted by ableism and its interactions with racism and other oppressions

(Sins Invalid, 2019, p. 25). In particular, storytelling is a crucial survival strategy for

many disabled people to name ableist, eugenicist, and racist ideologies that position

disabled people as less-valuable and less-worthy of care (see Clare, 2017a; Piepzna-

Samarasinha, 2018).

Moreover, a crip data augmentation of resilience supports my understanding of the

ways that #PowerToLive's digital care work drew from the storytelling data to enact

offline care strategies. Here, I am interested in the ways #PowerToLive used the "CALL

FOR STORIES" to organize an extensive, crowd-sourced survival guide that provided

care tips and Do-It-Yourself (DIY) survival strategies for disabled and power-dependent

Californians during power shutoffs. On October 28, 2019, Alice Wong (2019b) tweeted a

link to the Survival Guide with a request for mutual aid donations (Wong, 2019b). A crip

resilience framework suggests the Survival Guide creatively works past PG&E's ableist

disposability in order to imagine disabled and power-dependent survival a power shutoff

or another climate-related emergency. For example, a November 6, 2019 article from

local news station KQED describes the #PowerToLive movement with language

amplifying the significance of #PowerToLive's digital care work and platform use to craft

community survival:

> [Stacey Park] Milbern formed #PowerToLive… on the fly…in the days leading
> up to the October 26 blackout… Approximately 20 volunteers monitored

> submissions to the mutual aid intake forms closely, quickly connecting those in need with rides, places to stay, and extra cash. In some cases, volunteers helped residents seal doors and windows and build makeshift-box purifiers to keep smoke out… (Green, 2019).

Green's article uses language that emphasizes #PowerToLive's flexible and fast-paced approach to organizing in crisis. Phrases like "on the fly" and "quickly" show the fluid tenacity of crip world-making as it was employed to connect people in need. Moreover, the emphasis on improvisation— e.g., "on the fly," "quickly" —reveal how crip resilience's use of collecting and mobilizing user-generated data interrupt ableist ideas about crip temporalities (see Samuels, 2017). Moreover, Buzzanell (2010)'s communicative resilience framework offers "crafting normalcy" as a lengthy, collaborative process sustained by talk that eventually leads to another "perceived desirable outcome" (Buzzanell, 2010, p. 3). For #PowerToLive organizers, who desire safety and care for all disabled and power-dependent people, storytelling becomes an interdependent data-gathering strategy that creates digital connections and catalyzes offline care webs.

Instead of returning to the status quo, crip resilience dedicates digital data-gathering to craft multiple alternative survival strategies— mutual aid fund, to provide access, support, and care for disabled communities. In the next theme, extending crip agency, my analysis argues that crip resilience affirms the agency and expertise of disabled people's hashtag activism and other user-generated data.

Extending Crip Agency

In the second theme, extending crip agency, I illuminate the ways #PowerToLive's activist user-generated data insist on crip agency to enact crip resilience.

Here, I show how #PowerToLive's activist data collection present in the previous theme, crafting survival, additionally highlighted the "crip intelligences" embedded in their hashtag activism and other digital care work (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018, p. 17) that imagine disabled people as experts of their lived experience, primed to uniquely address the convergence of disposability, ableism, and racism. Throughout the 2019 wildfire season, many #PowerToLive activists shared their expertise on social media platforms, such as Twitter, to expose PG&E's disposability and other political failures that position disabled and power-dependent people as disposable. I detail two areas of #PowerToLive's extensions of crip agency: *educating against misinformation* and *highlighting cripistemologies*.

Educating Against Misinformation.

As a movement and activist hashtag, #PowerToLive reimagined Twitter as a platform for dialogue and crip community education where individuals most impacted by the shutoffs lead cultural conversations on disability, ableism, and climate emergencies. For instance, as the shutoffs continued throughout Fall 2019, many disabled and power-dependent Californians began contacting political figureheads on Twitter to ask for evacuation advice. Replying to a user who asked how to charge her powerchair in the event of a blackout, Berkeley, California's official account said: "… We are asking those… [who] are power-dependent to use their resources… or call for transport to an emergency room" (@CityofBerkeley, 2019). Many power-dependent disabled people chastised Berkeley's response, noting that not only were emergency rooms a poor choice for charging (multiple) mobility aids, but most powerchairs would probably not be able to

fit inside medical transport. Though political leaders in Western, Eurocentric, like the

U.S., rarely value disabled people as experts, digital platforms dissolve offline hierarchies

and allow everyday users to communicate with public-facing figures (see Brock, 2012;

Kuo, 2018, Jackson et al., 2020; Mann, 2018). In this way, the platform environment

provided opportunities for #PowerToLive's hashtag activism to enrich and extend their

existing communication network beyond the initial call for storytelling (see Buzzanell,

2010, p. 6; DVP, 2019). A crip resilience framing, however, highlights the maintenance

of their communication networks through their prioritization of sharing crip agency and

providing crip expertise through community education and correction of ableist

misinformation.

Highlighting Cripistemologies.

Furthermore, #PowerToLive's user-generated data demonstrates the significant

crip wisdom of disability justice-informed technological creation to enact crip resilient

care webs and survival strategies. I return to the crowd-sourced Survival Guide to show

how the #PowerToLive movement worked with unique, alternative logics that "reframe…

the situation" (see Buzzanell, 2010, p. 6). For example, the Survival Guide Google Doc

(2023), initially created in October 2019, provides detailed instructions for creating Zeer

Pots, a refrigeration system using a large clay pot and cool, damp towels. The guide walks

users through designing their own DIY evaporative cooling system to safely cool insulin

and other medications requiring refrigeration (pp. 11-12). Moreover, the document offers

clear, direct language that directs individuals on the best ways to charge various mobility

aids during an outage— offering a range of suggestions, such as using airplane mode

settings to conserve the device's charge (p. 1) to recommending realistic guidelines for recharging, letting readers know some devices require ten hours to restore (p. 6).

The document, exclusively resourced by #PowerToLive members, exemplifies user-generated data's crip resilient agency and its ability to structure survival for disabled and power-dependent people. In this way, I understand crip resilience's ability to extend crip agency as a digital "cripistemology" (Johnson & McRuer, 2014). Cripistemologies are embodied ways of knowing, thinking, and sense-making derived from one's experience with disability that inherently fall outside of nondisabled knowledges. In this way, a cripistemological perspective enriches and extends how communicative resilience incorporates "seemingly… contradictory" organizational styles to reframe crisis (Buzzanell, p. 6). In the case of #PowerToLive, the sustained, continued community networks present in creating the Survival Guide and correcting public misinformation demonstrates how #PowerToLive's user-generated data extends crip agency to offline contexts that support disabled people's survival and dare to imagine a world where disabled people survive after the crisis.

Mediating Environmental Emergency

My final analysis section addresses how #PowerToLive's subversive data-generation enacts crip resilience to reveal offline the impacts of ableist and racist disposability as environmental emergency. I track the various hybrid strategies #PowerToLive engages with to expose PG&E's ableist and racist disposability politics during and after the shutoff period to investigate how #PowerToLive brought online disability justice hashtag activism to offline contexts.

During the Shutoffs (October 2019).

#PowerToLive's crip resilience drew upon their online care web data to bring

cripistemological expertise and innovative survival strategies to offline care contexts.

Moreover, activists used the online community to share and promote the movement

outside digital platform spaces. For example, before the October 13, 2019 shutoff,

#PowerToLive organizer Stacey Park Milbern spoke at a Bay Area candlelight vigil and

challenged nondisabled people to support disabled and power-dependent people affected

by the blackouts:

> Disabled queer and trans people band-aiding infrastructure for community
> members is NOT romantic. It is not #activistgoals. It means that the system is
> failing… The idea of trying to stay alive in an [even more inaccessible] world… is
> so overwhelming. But climate crisis and emergency planning for those most
> impacted are what needs doing right now… I love disabled people too much…
> We fight for each other. We go down swinging" (DVP, 2019).

Milbern's speech, later shared on community social media pages and the Disability

Visibility Project blog for those who could not attend the in-person vigil, troubles the

romanticizing of disability justice hashtag activism. Instead, her language choices (e.g.,

"failing system," "the idea of trying to stay alive is overwhelming") focus on the ways

PG&E and Californian political leaders devalue disabled people during the shutoffs,

exacerbating their disposability. Here, Milbern addresses the "complicated, messy

feelings" (see Buzzanell, 2010, p. 9) that come up when enacting positive community

change: loving disabled communities and fighting for their survival on and offline.

Moreover, Milbern names the Bay Area's disability community and

#PowerToLive's collective imagining of survival as "affirming identity anchors"

(Buzzanell, p. 4) that show how organizational groups rely on particular communication

styles to anchor their respective identities. Notably, Milbern positions disabled queer and

trans people as distinct from the general Bay Area community because PG&E and

powerful political figures push them to the margins. However, disabled queer and trans

people's hybrid care webs provide a safety net when political groups leave disabled

people behind. For instance, Milbern notes, "Disabled queer and trans people band-aiding

community infrastructure is… NOT romantic. It is NOT activist goals" (DVP, 2019). In

this way, Milbern's speech reveals how #PowerToLive offers a crip critique of disabled

people's impact in the Bay Area community. Though disabled people are typically

positioned as broken burdens (see Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018; Clare, 2017a),

"reconstructing identity… in times of crisis" can reframe organizational roles. Here,

Milbern identifies how disabled people, represented as powerless yet providing essential

community services, deserve protection and care in a climate emergency, thus redefining

#PowerToLive and the disability community's role. In this way, #PowerToLive's crip

resilience demonstrates how digital data offers unique interventions for disability justice

hashtag activists to extend their advocacy to offline communities and redefine their roles

in agentic ways that extend past immediate crisis.

After the Shutoffs (December 2019).

In my final analytic example, I investigate how #PowerToLive used their digital

care web to mediate PG&E's ableist and racist disposability as a long-standing

emergency impacting disabled and power-dependent Californians past the 2019 wildfire

season. On December 16, 2019, #PowerToLive and other coalitional groups across racial,

economic, and climate justice movements held a "Reclaim Our Power!" gathering at

PG&E's headquarters in Downtown San Francisco. The event demanded to hold PG&E and California Governor Gavin Newsome publicly accountable to create more accessibility guidelines for future wildfires. "Reclaim Our Power!" sparked the attention of local media as it shut down a block of San Francisco's Beale Street to demand systemic changes and climate justice (Green & Federis, 2019). The "Reclaim Our Power!" event featured artistic structures that activists set up in front of PG&E's building: a large, red fire extinguisher surrounded by a sea of cardboard flames read, "Extinguish PG&E! Killing us for profits."

#PowerToLive's testimonial mediations of emergency disrupt the "status quo" of corporate disposability. Elizabeth Ellcessor (2022) explains that grassroots movements often engage in online and offline activism to vouch for testimonies that fail to fit "traditional" crisis narratives (2022, p. 142). I follow Ellcessor's thinking to consider how #PowerToLive documented the event to highlight ableist and racist disposability during the power shutoffs. For example, Ellcessor notes that the increasing presence of live-streaming and other forms of multimodal data capturing "highlight structural emergencies… and demand response… or circulation" from community outsiders (2022, p. 119). By generating attention beyond specialized hashtag enclaves to the platform general public, disability justice care webs like #PowerToLive use everyday technologies such as smartphones or photo-sharing platforms to capture offline disposability data to share "new meanings of emergency" to a digital public (Ellcessor, p.123).

To agitate for visibility, #PowerToLive documented their demonstration and uploaded a short video to YouTube (Fat Rose Ink, 2020), highlighting how crip resilient

data collection can support testimonial bids against PG&E's ableist precarity. For instance, in the video, some protestors wedge their electric scooters and mobility aids between revolving door entrances to prevent movement in and out of the PG&E headquarters. Other attendees chained themselves to manual door handles as the video provides brief, evocative voiceovers of activists involved in leading the event advocating about #PowerToLive's importance. Such practices "defy normal logics" (see Buzzanell, 2010, p. 7) to build worlds where disabled people are not disposable.

The testimonial mediation of crip resilience throughout the "Reclaim Our Power!" action demonstrates the importance #PowerToLive activists placed on disabled people's survival. For example, #PowerToLive activist Jessica Lehman explains the event's significance: "The message is that this is about life and death, that people depend on power for breathing equipment… We are calling on Governor [Gavin] Newsome to… put energy back in the hands of the people" (Fat Rose Ink, 2020). By continuing to show the impact of the climate crisis on disabled and other power-dependent people through community events and the facilitation of emergency work through digital platforms, #PowerToLive disrupts environmental ableism to produce action around the "long-emergency" (Ellcessor, p. 143) of environmental ableism exacerbated by corporate disposability and climate change. In this way, I understand #PowerToLive's hybrid data collection to extend their digital care web to offline spaces, while using in-person actions as digital documentation to share on digital platforms, rejuvenating the movement toward longevity. For #PowerToLive, positioning user-generated activist data as emergency care pathways open up opportunities to interrupt corporate disposability and craft survival

networks that extend from digital platforms to in-person events. The movement engages

crip resilience to ultimately build a new normal where disabled people—and their data –

survive and thrive.

Conclusion: Beyond Disposability

Chapter 3's case study of the #PowerToLive care web introduced crip resilience

as a community collection of crip platform data used by disability justice care webs to

name and disrupt offline ideologies of disposability through social media activism and

offline care networks. My articulation of crip resilience is a crip data augmentation of

Patrice M. Buzzanell's (2010) theory of communicative resilience, which identifies

discursive practices for organizing "new normals" (Buzzanell, p. 1) in the aftermath of a

community crisis. I offer crip resilience's strategic use of care webs and social media

activism as a disability justice response to offline networks of disposability that reproduce

ableist and racist representations of who deserves value and care. My chapter used a

cultural studies-informed ideological analysis (see Foss, 2017; S. Hall, 1985) to engage in

a crip augmentation of Buzzanell's communicative resilience theory, extending her

critical feminist organizational framework toward digital and disability justice contexts.

Ideological analysis helped me to understand how #PowerToLive's digital care work

responded to long-standing biases of environmental racism and ableism that informed

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E)'s corporate disposability of power-dependent

customers, leaving thousands without a safety net throughout the 2019 California wildfire

season. To investigate #PowerToLive's critique of corporate disposability and productive

generation of interdependent care webs that connected online communities with offline

care, I analyzed #PowerToLive's social media posts, community documents, and local news articles publicizing the movement.

After tracking the data, I established three findings of crip resilience in my analysis of #PowerToLive. First, movements using crip resilience rely on online platforms to develop connections and collect community-saving data. This data collection extends the significance of crip agency during climate emergencies as disabled activists and communities offer crip critiques of ableist misinformation on digital platforms while using digital information-sharing to catalyze offline support and survival. Finally, crip resilience's focus on agitating on and offline to mediate the ongoing emergency of environmental ableism and disposability catalyzes digital documentation that catalyzes flows of crip data from platforms to in-person protests. Ultimately, my ideological analysis of #PowerToLive's crip resilience signals the ways subversive data production presents moments for building care and survival networks in the offline world.

I conclude by returning to my crip data approach and its potential for underscoring offline networks of disposability in climate crises. Though Chapters 1 and 2 focused on the ways crip data highlights how offline ableist and racist ideological biases are reproduced within digital platform spaces and assistive technologies, Chapter 3 takes a slightly different approach. Here, I sought to investigate how ideological framings of disability and social value that originate in disability justice care webs influence creating of crip data that offers moments of interruption to offline violences, such as disposability, ableism, and racism, highlighting climate change as an emergency. In sum, my notion of crip resilience underscores how the increasing intensity of adverse climate emergencies

exacerbate disposability for marginalized communities. However, the crip resilience of digital care webs like #PowerToLive, which provide mutual aid, community, and political transformation through generating activist data, may be a strategy for disabled people to build interdependent networks of community care that imagines survival for all disabled people, regardless of their access needs. Moreover, the generation of crip data, such as documenting protests or using common hashtags, supports the fight against corporate disposability discourses. Through critique, organizing, and care work, #PowerToLive collaboratively created worlds where disabled people count: a crip data practice.

Notes

1. Parts of this chapter first appeared as a term project for Dr. Susie O'Brien's CULTRST 762 ("Revolt and Remember: Resilience in the Postcolonial Environmental Humanities") seminar in Winter 2020. Other portions of this project were presented at the National Communication Association (2020), the Organizational Communication Mini-Conference (2022), and the Southern States Communication Association (2023).

2. Some examples of power dependency range from needing electricity to charge a mobility aid to storing insulin or other medications in a refrigerator. Not all power-dependent persons may identify as disabled. Following #PowerToLive, I use power-dependent, and not PG&E's term (medical baseline).

3. I claim crip to align with understanding disability as a contested and minoritized political identity. Crip theory also overlaps with disability justice, prioritizing interdependent networks to study and interrupt ableism as a system

of oppression working alongside and with racism and colonialism. I engage

with a disability justice framework to prioritize coalitional ways of knowing

and being in (digital) disability community (see Kafer, 2013; Sins Invalid,

2019).

4. Disability justice is not necessarily synonymous with crip theory, though they

   overlap. For example, while both disability justice and crip theory amplify the

   importance of understanding disability as "whole" (see Clare, 2017; Berne,

   2020), disability justice is first and foremost an activist practice that generates

   leadership of the most marginalized to cultivate systemic change. Crip theory,

   grounded in critical disability studies and queer theory, presents a more

   academic-facing focus to studying the ways dominant ideological structures

   shape embodiment and culture (see Sandahl, 2003; McRuer, 2006).

5. At the time of my initial data collection (Spring-Summer 2020), Twitter used a

   verification systems to identify journalists, celebrities, and other public

   figures. (The platform has since removed the feature.) To protect the identity

   of previously unverified users, I broadly summarize their posts but do not

   directly quote them.

6. The Disability Justice Culture Clube (DJCC) is a shared activist space for

   queer and trans disabled people of color in the Bay Area. Many members of

   #PowerToLive, including Stacey Park Milbern, were affiliated with the DJCC

   (see Mutual Aid Disaster Relief, 2023).

7. The Disability Visibility Project (DVP) is an online community created by
    disability activist, writer, and media maker Alice Wong. It hosts a podcast, and
    other forms of digital storytelling that provide disability justice community
    perspectives on everyday ableism (see Disability Visibility Project, 2023).

Chapter 4: Shitposting as Crip Data Reconfiguration: Autoethnographic Reflections on Platform Hygiene and Academic Labor

Introductory Note

Before starting my Master's program, I attended an orientation roundtable about graduate student success, where two panelists exchanged sentiments about the privilege of self-care and wellness in graduate school. I looked around the room as the other students nodded intently. Were people *actually* serious about health and well-being, or was this just a performance? I was physically healthy and had no chronic conditions. Even if the stress *did* get to me, it probably would not impact me *that* quickly. I tuned out of the conversation, plotting how to become a successful disabled grad student.

However, by the following semester, I was diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). My mouth felt dry and heavy as the doctor placed a series of glossy paper pamphlets in my hand: A guide to IBS-friendly diets. An infographic on stress and graduate school. A directory for care providers affiliated with the university's healthcare system. I left the clinic in a daze. *I think academia is making me sick.*

***

I began conceptualizing Chapter 4's arguments in the Fall of 2021 and completed the first draft in December 2022 as I finished my first semester on the academic job market. It is also the most personal piece of writing in the dissertation. I investigate my experiences of aspirational academic labor and chronic illness by introducing my concept of "shitposting," or user-generated memetic data that takes on provocative and crass communication styles to resist hygienic, sanitizing platform governance and moderation.

Here, my conception of shitposting is complemented with "platform hygiene," which also takes a crip data approach to probe how offline ableist ideologies inform a digital platform's valuation of "healthy" data. Throughout Chapter 4, I draw comparisons between shitposting and academic labor to examine further what it means to be disabled (or generated disabled data) in spaces where body and cognitive difference is typically devalued. Using critical autoethnography, Chapter 4 interrogates how ableist and racist ideologies conflate hygiene with power in platform and academic spaces. In turn, I offer shitposting as a resistive pushback to both platform hygiene and aspirational academic labor (see Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013; Duffy, 2017; D'Souza et al., 2023). I use critical autoethnography to reflexively sit with my experiences as a chronically ill academic to make sense of shitposting as a resistive approach to generating crip data.

The chapter's introductory note offers contextualizing discussions about aspirational labor and the supercrip, or the portrayal of disabled people as overcoming their disabilities, thus reifying ableist stereotypes (see Clare, 1999; Schalk, 2016), in academic and professional settings. Through my forthcoming autoethnographic reflections, I offer shitposting as a strategy to resist hygienic platform and academic performance.

Academic Labor as Aspirational Labor

An essential thread in Chapter 4's autoethnographic vignettes is my experience of performing academic labor: writing this dissertation and applying to academic positions. Like many Ph.D. candidates, I began to apply for jobs as an All But Dissertation (ABD) candidate in Fall 2022. The practice of applying for academic positions in the social

sciences and humanities is a tedious one, with scholars offering different strategies and tips for "securing" a tenure-track professorship (see Arneson et al., 2008; Hess & Tracy, 2008; Hume, 2016; Rogers, 2020; Vick et al., 2016). Complicated by economic precarity— such as the 2008 recession and consequences rendered by the global COVID-19 pandemic— there is an oversaturation of Ph.Ds. As such, there are not enough tenure-track positions to go around, with many programs acting as "cash cows" that provide inexpensive labor for the university through graduate assistantships (Bousquet, 2008; D'Souza et al., 2023; Duffy, 2017; Sterne, 2008).

Not all, but many, responses to the surplus of Ph.Ds. and dwindling tenure-track professorship openings are reactionary, rendering individual applicants to respond to precarity with logics of resilience and accommodation, where they must aspire to overcome structural, economic barriers (D'Souza, 2021). In my experience as an applicant, mentors encouraged me to "brand" my scholarship within a particular area and anticipate remaining on the job market for multiple cycles. I began preparing for the job market during the second year of my Master's degree, as I knew I had to select a Ph.D. program that would position me well: a program's prestige, connections, and resources play a critical role for an applicant's success (D'Souza et al., p. 9; Hermann, 2012, p. 249). Moreover, as a disabled student, I knew that prestige could counter instances of academic ableism in hiring practices and bolster my application. Once I began my Ph.D., I did everything I could to build my profile. I presented at conferences, accumulated awards, participated in service work at my university and in professional organizations, attended summer institutes (often paying my own way), and published papers in peer-

reviewed journals. Several mentors advised me to maintain a personal website and public-facing Twitter account to build my network. When I was not writing my dissertation project, I curated my digital "brand." Even the 160 characters in my Twitter biography needed to perfectly portray my employability to prospective departments looking to hire a new faculty colleague. Like many prospective applicants, I received no compensation for this extra work.

As I continued to submit applications and interview with committees, I began understanding this particular process of academic labor as aspirational work (Duffy, 2017). Brooke Erin Duffy (2017) defines aspirational work as "a mode of (mostly) uncompensated, independent work that is propelled by the much-venerated idea of *getting paid to do what you love...* dangling the prospect of a career… and one day… compensation for… productivity" (p. 7). Though Duffy's book focuses on the rise of social media content creators in the 2010s, she too uses aspiration to draw comparisons between academia and the creative economy (see p. 230). Moreover, I inform my thinking through Kathleen Kuehn and Thomas F. Corrigan's (2013) conceptualization of "hope labor," which also creates connections between unpaid creative work in digital spaces that expose a worker toward (paid) connections. This is how I approached my time in graduate school: I moved away from the obfuscating rhetorics of academia as a vocational calling (Hermann, 2012); instead, I viewed my Ph.D. as an apprenticeship that might result in eventual employment.

When I began writing Chapter 4, I anticipated the critical autoethnography to be a release and an escape from my "regular" academic work. Although I was not creating

shitposts to gain algorithmic visibility vis-à-vis a typical influencer, I noticed many similarities between the aspirational labor of content creation and applying to academic jobs. As my time on the job cycle extended into Spring 2023 without the success I had hoped for, I realized, like many (un)successful content creators, I had "rationalized" my uncompensated publication and service work as "investments in my future self" (Duffy, p. 232). My experience expresses Rosalind Gill's (2014) observations of creative labor and academic work. Gill notes that major political and economic shifts, such as the 2008 economic recession, resulted in more casualized work in the higher education industry— similar to the "hopeful" labor (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013) of content creation.

Notwithstanding, Gill's outlook is not entirely bleak: through a comparative analysis of academic and creative workers, she suggests laborers employed in higher education can learn from creators to resist dominant ideologies that frame our understandings of the ways we (de)value labor (see Gill, p. 12). Chapter 4's critical autoethnographic inquiry will show how shitposting and subversive user-generated data resists hegemonic hygiene discourses within platforms and other offline spaces, such as the academic job market. In this way, I frame shitposting as a crip data response to aspirational creative and academic labor that erases disabled and neurodivergent cultural production. While I understand shitposting and creative labor as distinct from academic work, Chapter 4 addresses how ableist ideologies inform how cultural and academic industries devalue disabled production as "undesirable." As my autoethnographic findings will show in Chapter 4's main text, shitposting embodies a crip data approach because it names and resists how hygiene discursively shapes disabled and neurodivergent creative

labor as "less valuable." In the following section, I demonstrate how shitposting's insistence on the value of disabled creative labor and user-generated data offers resistive articulations for addressing and disrupting the academic supercrip in the ableist higher education industry.

Resisting the Supercrip through Shitposting

My conceptualization of shitposting as resistive crip data-generation pushes back against the ways that aspirational disabled academic workers must "clean up" their personae to be a valuable hire. Within the different autoethnographic vignettes, Chapter 4 critically reflects on the academic ableism (Dolmage, 2017) I experienced as an applicant for academic positions, particularly as a neurodivergent and chronically ill worker. For example, the narrative I shared at the beginning of Chapter 4's introductory note meditates on ways I learned to make myself both palatable and exceptional. By engaging in aspirational labor that I could add to my curriculum vitae, such as supporting service work, I risked becoming the supercrip, a stereotype mediated in popular culture texts that shows disabled people as extraordinary individuals who inspire nondisabled people by overcoming their disabilities (Schalk, 2016, pp. 72-3; Clare, 1999). Sami Schalk's (2016) complication of the supercrip reveals how the stereotype is simultaneously (dis)empowering for disabled people in that it can open up agentic readings of disability while still invoking ableist ideologies (see Berger, 2008). Though Schalk is critical of how the supercrip trope is used to portray disabled people as aspirational and heroic, she calls for critical disability readings that examine supercrips as a collection of different

narrative mechanisms that shift within their particular context. (e.g., a portrayal of a supercrip in a novel would differ from a documentary.)

Following Schalk's call for nuanced understandings of analyzing the supercrip's mediations, Chapter 4 uses autoethnography to understand how the academy socialized me as a supercrip, and how I sometimes chose to embrace it because I believed would make me more "valuable." For example, in my beginning years of graduate school, I tried on the supercrip to "bolster… my image" (see Duffy, p. 121). At the time, I worked on autoethnographic research about learning disabilities and academic ableism. When I submitted term papers to conferences, feedback would not focus on my theoretical argument, but instead laud my "inspirational" story. When I began creating as @disabledphd in 2019— the Instagram account I discuss in my dissertation's Introductory chapter and later on in Chapter 4— I further "invested" (see Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013, p. 18) in portraying myself as a supercrip because I believed it would make my data visible. The aspirational labor of maintaining the Instagram, albeit briefly, worked: my creative voice as a supercrip became synonymous with my brand (Duffy, p. 136). In this way, being an academic supercrip became more than just a pejorative stereotype: it allowed nondisabled people in my industry to take me seriously.

Over time, I noticed that embracing the supercrip and engaging in sanitized self-curation of my biographic data and professional profile led to pressures that informed Chapter 4's understanding of platform hygiene and the supercrip. For instance, I was invited to participate in conference panels on diversity, not because of my expertise but because organizers wanted a disabled person to ensure their submission was "diverse

enough." Moreover, self-branding my Instagram data production as "supercrip" made me hyperaware of my professional work. When I began working on Chapter 4, I worried that writing an autoethnographic chapter about shitposting and my embodied experiences with a gastrointestinal disease would portray me as unhireable. Would I unravel the foundation of my academic "brand" and diminish the value of my work? I was concerned that a very graphic, autoethnographic chapter discussing excrement and bodily waste would lead to increased surveillance or scrutinization of my work as a disabled scholar. After many discussions with my supervisor, I decided to grapple with these dilemmas reflexively throughout the chapter.

Chapter 4 ultimately contributes to *Crip data studies*' major threads by extending conversations on ableist platform ideologies (Chapter 1), neuroqueer technoscience (Chapter 2), and the political potentials of subversive user-generated data that respond to offline oppressions (Chapter 3). I introduce shitposting as a form of crip data through the chapter's critical autoethnographic reflections. Ultimately, I argue that shitposters' creative and crass user-generated data names and resist the ways ableist ideologies inform ideas about data, value, and power.

Shitposting as Crip Data Reconfiguration: Autoethnographic Reflections on

Platform Hygiene and Academic Labor

"we need more smelly shit! stinky shit! shit that delights and revolts!"
-Josh Gunn, "ShitText" (2006, p. 81)

"Most of the boys won't ever cross this line/
If they all want to die dead broke, that's fine, that's fine/
Everybody's got their limits, nobody's found mine"
-the Mountain Goats, "Choked Out"

"I mean, fuck it, right? Just fucking go nut-nut."
-Kendall Roy, *Succession* (S3E7, "Too Much Birthday")

This is Where I Post From[1] (January 2022)

Fig. 1: A shitpost created in September 2022 on the photo-sharing app Whisper. The photo consists of my unused stool sample kit artfully displayed with makeup.

Scroll. Tap forward. I'm so mepilled,[2] I'm girlcoded.[3] Scroll. Tap backward. I

need to ctrl + alt + delete myself. Spicy nap time![4] Tap. Tap. Tap. How do I

live/laugh/love[5] in these austere conditions?[6] I'm a ten but I cry at my own birthday

party.[7] I girlbossed a bit too close to the sun.[8] You're so femcel, bbgirl.[9] Tap. Tap. Scroll

down. Swipe right. I'm like Kendall Roy/Patrick Bateman/Lacan/Žižek/insert your white

man here but a girl.[10] Swipe left. Meme admin gf, Zucked bf.[11][12] Ah yes, the three

genders. I could fix her. No, I could fix them.[13] You're in her dms, I'm getting removed

for violating community guidelines. We are not the same.[14] Tap. Tap. Tap. Scroll up.

Posting (with the intention of getting Zucked). Pee Pee Poo Poo.[15] Tap. Tap. Swipe up.

Become ungovernable. Become unhireable.[16] In my girlblogger era! (derogatory)[17] Tap.

Swipe left. I'm just a girl with tummy issues. I'm so cringey cause I have girl autism.[18]

Quirked up and esoteric girlblogger.[19] Making meaningless data. Delete my account.

Delete my account. DELETE MY ACCOUNT![20]

Imagine presenting this at a conference with potential employers in the audience. I

have reinvented myself so many times in this "discipline that's not a discipline" (Sterne,

2022a). The stench of a self-imposed ironic capital flows into the sewage that is

Instagram. In this quasi-field, where I could have chosen to write about nearly anything, I

dedicated an entire chapter to making silly Instagram memes. Will that make me a "stand

out" applicant? Does Instagram need to accumulate yet another ironic meme account?

Shit stains: hygienic sanitary algorithms can't wash away the permanence of a shitpost!

We'll just keep posting and posting and posting and posting and posting and posting and

posting and posting and posting and posting and posting and posting and posting and…

I shake the haze from my head and blink slowly… *How long have I been in here?*

Another precious day of writing cut short by my dysfunctional gastrointestinal tract. How

much writing time do I lose to my chronic illness? I smile painfully, almost as if to encourage myself that I have a shot at securing employment in a dying industry where there is less of a chance of finding a permanent position each year (D'Souza et al., 2023). *At the very least, I have the dark, sick, twisted universe in my phone.* I get up. I flush the toilet. I wash my hands. Back to work.

Swiping for the Stink: Shitposting as Crip Data

I have spent much of my last five years in the washroom. This is not because I do my best thinking in the shower, or because I am developing a complex, multi-step skincare routine. I have a gastrointestinal disease and work in a stressful, dying industry. Some weeks, I am horribly bloated for days on end, the heavy pain spreading through my body. Other mornings are spent simply— for lack of a better phrase —shitting my fucking brains out. After developing a mixed case of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (hereafter IBS) during the first year of my Master's program, I no longer understood how to follow the rules of my ever-changing body. On the difficult weeks, I plastered on a smile as sweat slicked my back, pretending all was well as I delivered conference papers or administered exams. You would never know I was racing against the gurgling unpredictability of my bowels, hoping to uphold the façade of a healthy, productive graduate student until the next break. After contracting a mild case of E. coli in August 2021, postviral illness catalyzed sporadic stretches of chronic diarrhea or constipation. During these months, I waited for an appointment to see a specialist to see if I could get a colonoscopy (instead, they instructed me to "relax").

But this is not only a story about my chronic illness, or my relationship with my body. It is, perhaps in a roundabout way, a story about breaking the rules, embracing the absurd, and playing a different game. During a particularly rough flareup in early Fall 2021, I opened up Instagram for distraction-related purposes. While swiping through fitness influencers and sponsored content, I encountered shitposting meme accounts. In Chapter 4, I define "shitposting" as user-generated Instagram data that takes on crass and provocative memetic styles that name and resist ableist ideas about how users should produce "hygienic" and "sanitized" platform data. Emerging from the bowels of the Web, shitposting is a genre of user-generated memetic communication that typically combines digital image with text that allows creators to remix, restyle, or reinvent cultural forms in humorous and innovative ways, reshaping political discourses across platforms (see Davison, 2012; Molina, 2020; Zulli & Zulli, 2022; Zidani, 2021).

Previous work on shitposting as a memetic form tracks its association with white supremacist hate speech and cyberharassment (see Ali, 2021; Mann, 2022) and trolling, a "collective form of harassment perceived as having the malicious intent to provoke another user," particularly around issues of race, gender, and identity (Ortiz, 2020, p. 2; see also: Fichman & Sanfilippo, 2016; Boyce Kay, 2021). Although I do not want to obfuscate the material impacts of digital hate and supremacist ideologies originating in user-generated data, Chapter 4's analysis articulates shitposting as subversive user-generated data that engages memetic communication styles to name and resist the entanglement of offline ideological biases, such as racism and ableism, in platform spaces. In this way, I distinguish Instagram shitposting's engagement with satirical and

ironic communicative practices to "transgress… and expose boundaries" (see Massanari, 2017, p. 4). While traditional trolling may target an individual's sense-making practices about identity in harmful ways (see Fichman & Sanfilippo, 2016; Massanari, 2017; Ortiz, 2020), Instagram shitposters' ironic and provocative user-generated data speaks to more extensive, systemic cultural and economic platform practices. In this way, I understand shitposts to challenge how Instagram— and other platform systems – read crip data. Moreover, shitposts reveal how crip data provides critical disruptions that offer alternative pathways for how users create and share their data.

Next, I discuss how feminist disability critiques of embodiment, platform hygiene, and neuroqueer studies support my articulation of shitposting as crip data. I then summarize the remainder of the chapter's organization.

Introducing Shitposting's Supporting Conceptual Frameworks

Chapter 4's focus on shitposting demonstrates how users enact data-making practices to interrupt dominant ideas about which data maintains a platform's "health." In my analysis, I investigate how shitposting's user-generated data resistively embodies critical disability and crip critique to challenge conceptions about ableism and hygiene in platform spaces. Here, I refer to feminist disability critiques that identify how "disability" (and I will add here, race) is marked as a "deviation… from 'normal human' embodiment… that must be contained or eliminated to maintain the perception of existing social hierarchies as natural and inevitable" within Western, Eurocentric cultures (K. Hall, 2002, p. viii, ref. Garland Thomson, 1997, p. 26). I also inform my understanding of embodiment through disciplinary normalization (see Foucault, 1979), which demonstrates

how Western, Eurocentric perceptions render "health" as a private matter that should not

deviate into public spaces. To critique such framings, feminist disability scholars engage

in personal narrative and creative nonfiction to analyze how embodiment is also shaped

by disability's interaction with economic and political structures (see Cedillo, 2018;

Clare, 2017a; Samuels, 2017; Schalk, 2013; Yergeau, 2018). Chapter 4's critical

autoethnographic reflections, which draw upon my lived experience as an academic

worker with a chronic gastrointestinal disorder, extend feminist disability critiques of

embodiment toward data and platform contexts. For instance, I suggest that user-

generated shitposting embodies diarrheal qualities that breach the boundaries of excretory

(dys)function as private matters (Myers, 2004, p. 259; Ramasawkh, 2021; Vidali, 2010).

Similarly, I understand user-generated shitposting to embody diarrhea's explosive

potentials to challenge mainstream ideas about which Instagram data "counts." Chapter

4's prioritization of embodiment critiques supports my autoethnographic analyses of

shitposting as a crip data approach that names and critiques the pressures of ableist

platform governance and algorithmic infrastructure, professionalism, and self-

management that inform the production of user-generated data.

Throughout Chapter 4, my analysis will additionally work with embodiment to

probe how shitposting unsettles ableist "platform hygiene." I define platform hygiene as a

platform logic derived from offline Western and Eurocentric beliefs about cleanliness,

power, and value that inform platform systems. I suggest social media platforms like

Instagram rely on data-driven algorithmic monitoring systems to render visibility for

"good" data while suppressing "deviant" content. I derive my understanding of platform

hygiene from t.l. cowan's (2019) writing on digital hygiene, which they define as the centuries-long Eurocentric practice of surveilling "healthy" media habits. Feflecting upon the role of hygiene in their interactions and rituals, cowan assesses how platform companies normalize discursive moralization to catalyze particular user behaviors (e.g., by installing the latest mobile update for the Instagram app, I signify my commitment to maintaining a "healthy" platform presence.) Rachel Plotnick's (2022) critical reading of vinyl records and stickiness offers media hygiene as "a set of practices, tools, and ideas devoted to a media device's cleanliness and longevity" that postures an "ideal" media consumer (p. 262). My coinage of "platform hygiene" extends cowan's and Plotnick's initial theorizations to investigate how shitposting as user-generated data "reconfigures" the structural effects of hygienic platform governance (see Xiao et al., 2020, p. 8, ref. Suchman, 2020). Moreover, my understanding of platform hygiene also acknowledges how moralizing modern-colonial discourses of health and social value inform how platforms privilege "healthy" data (see Anderson, 2006; Laporte, 2002; Singh, 2018; Bannerman, 2023; Jin, 2015). Though coloniality and platform governance are not the central focuses throughout Chapter 4, my autoethnographic narratives reflexively interrogate how shitposting reconfigures how platforms rely on Western, Eurocentric ideologies—such as ableism – that inform how platforms assign biased ideas to value user-generated data. In doing so, Chapter 4 asks: how do Instagram shitposts resistively reconfigure platform hygiene?

Organizing the Chapter

Chapter 4 presents findings from my critical autoethnographic study of maintaining an Instagram shitposting account. Following my introduction, sections detail critical autoethnography as method. I also reflect on how I immersed myself in the mundane practice of meme-making to explore the explosive potentials of Instagram shitposting as a form of user-generated crip data. The next analytic section discusses embodied neuroqueer framings for studying the rhetorical value of shit (see Yergeau, 2018; Gunn, 2006) as a communicative disruption to user-generated data and hygienic platform governance. Rhetorical and feminist disability critiques of embodiment support how platform hygiene's authentication of certain user-generated data over others instigates self-monitoring and sanitization in digital cultural production. I then offer three autoethnographic vignettes, accompanied with memes, to interrogate how shitposting, as a crip data practice, reconfigures platform production. These narratives also draw connections between embodiment, academic labor, and chronic illness. Finally, drawing on my previous discussions of shit's embodied value and the ways platform hygiene shapes user-generated data production, I suggest shitposting as crip data reconfiguration that offers possibilities for challenging ableist ideological value in academic and platform contexts. I highlight shitposting as resistive, reconfiguratory crip data that offers new modes of creative labor.

Methodology: Conceptualizing Critical Autoethnography in Digital Contexts

To answer the question I pose in my introduction and generate a more robust and profound understanding of Instagram shitposting as a resistive cultural practice, Chapter 4

uses critical autoethnography. Critical autoethnography's focus on reflexive biographical introspection amplifies the researcher's sense-making of political and economic discourses (Boylorn & Orbe, 2020, p. 20). Moreover, narrative-based methodological practices attune to concerns of embodiment and disability (see Schalk, 2013; Samuels, 2017; Vidali, 2010; Cedillo, 2018; Wong, 2021). Taking cues from intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990) and social justice, critical autoethnography opens up possibilities for cultural and personal critique through culturally-informed storytelling and "exploring the expressive elements of culture" (Hamera, 2012, p. 207). Akin to D. Soyini Madison's (2011) conceptualization of critical ethnography as an inquiry toward cultural responsibility (p. 5), critical autoethnography emerges as a tool to document social processes and more extensive networks of power, injustice, and violence (see Holman-Jones, 2018; Boylorn & Orbe, p. 8). I take cues from critical autoethnographic approaches in Chapter 4 to situate my reflexive cultural sense-making of Instagram shitposting (and crip data, more broadly) as resistive and reconfiguratory responses to offline ableist ideological biases. A critical turn toward autoethnography allows my research to identify structures of relation and power and engage in digital culture making.

As a long-time "lurker" in Instagram shitposting spaces, my critical autoethnographic analysis and meme-making investigate the relationship between how a content creator makes sense of platform bias and the self-management of user-generated data. Ethnographers always perform themselves in the cultural context they investigate through writing acts such as field notes, reflexive observations, or interviewing practices (Denzin, 2018, p. 2). In this way, critical autoethnography invites readers and audiences

to analyze and engage in critical practice that shifts social relations through using personal narrative as a site for reflexive engagement (see Boylorn & Orbe, 2020). Throughout Chapter 4, I use autoethnographic narratives to reflexively break out of "conventional" (and here, I would argue crip and neuroqueer) academic writing formats by integrating theoretical analysis, narrative, and shitposts into my argument, demonstrating how these cultural forms shape my social experience (see Rambo, 1995, p. 395). I found that layered, reflexive introspection produced significant insights on how shitposting similarly disrupts ableist bias and platform norms through its crip data-generation.

Digital ethnographic methods, such as observation and interviewing, are commonly used in creative labor research to analyze critical emerging insights in the mediation of digital cultures and the production of digital culture, particularly surrounding influencer culture and creative economies (see Bishop, 2020; cowan & Rault, 2018; Glatt, 2022; Keller, 2019; Glatt, forthcoming; Miner, 2020; Gibson, 2022; Abidin, 2016b). Moreover, an autoethnographic engagement on Instagram presented opportunities to consider what it meant to implicate my body into (see Spry, 2011) and the production of user-generated data. Therefore, I wanted to probe further into how critical autoethnographic approaches to digital culture research could "blend" lived experience with cultural introspection (see Are, 2022, p. 2009). Therefore, I chose critical autoethnography because it supported analytic connections between my embodied experiences as a disabled academic worker and conceptualizing shitposting's resistive reconfigurations of biased platform hygiene. To bolster my critical autoethnographic

investigation of shitposting as a crip data form, I draw from digital ethnographic work on creative labor, marginality, and platform moderation to assess how user-generated data shift and transform ideas about data, disability, and value on Instagram. The next section discusses how I began my autoethnographic entry into shitposting.

Becoming the Shitposter: Identifying Femcel Meme Accounts

Chapter 4's autoethnographic narratives and analytic sections are deeply informed by my embodied experience curating an Instagram shitpost meme account. As I mentioned Chapter 4's introduction, I was already familiar with Instagram shitposting when I began my formal observation in Winter 2022. In particular, I was interested in the provocative, ironic, and excessive data-generation posted by femcel meme accounts. Femcels ("female incels") refers to groups of women who connect online because of their alleged social abjection that renders their desires for intimacy and sex invisible in contemporary, neoliberal culture (Boyce Kay, 2021, p. 30; Hennefeld & Samon, 2020, p. 4). However, Jilly Boyce Kay (2021) notes that while the incel directly benefits from white supremacy and Western, Eurocentric ideologies, in contrast, the femcel's alleged "unfuckability… threatens the basis, power, and… [re]production of white femininity" (Boyce Kay, 2021, p. 43). Therefore, I understand user-generated femcel shitposts as a departure from the white supremacist violence of incels, because they challenge the individualistic and aspirational visibility politics that situate popular feminism and networked misogyny (see Massanari, 2017; Ling, 2022; Banet-Weiser, 2018). Hazel Bergeron-Stokes's (2023) insightful essay on femcel meme subcultures suggests that femcels rely on crass, tongue-in-cheek, and excessive memetic data-making that

resistively comment on hegemonic masculinity, economic precarity, and mental illness (Bergeron-Stokes, 2023; see also Kreutter, 2022). Many femcel meme accounts take images from popular literary and cultural texts as canvases for their memes, centering on antiheros who are "just" like them. Through embracing "extreme emotional states" through excessive aesthetics (Bergeron-Stokes, 2023, para. 2), femcel shitposts humorously address the embodied convergence of disability, gender, and alienation.

During the observation period, I kept a log of field notes on my iPhone's Notes app to track trends, questions, and reflections. My initial observations showed that many femcel accounts aligned with particular media fandom economies. I mainly followed shitposters active within the *Succession* (HBO, 2018-2023) fandom. *Succession* follows the ultra-wealthy CEO Logan and his adult children as they battle for who will take over Logan's company, Waystar Royco. Instagram femcel shitposters are particularly drawn to the second-oldest son and self-destructive series antihero, Kendall Roy (portrayed by Jeremy Strong), whose aspirations to succeed his father as CEO are continuously foiled by substance abuse, his siblings, and Logan himself. Notably, the series attracts a fanbase of young women who perceive Kendall as "pathetic and unfixable… and the embodiment of… the numerous mentally ill and chronically online *Succession* fans" (Weekman, 2023). I believed making memetic data about Kendall's failing aspirations could help me make connections between platform hygiene, self-monitoring, and my embodied experiences as a meme maker and chronically ill academic worker attempting to enter the academic industry. While many of my memes focused on Kendall and other characters from the *Succession*-verse, I also created content that related to other media fandoms or

topics related to my dissertation research, such as platform labor. (Many *Succession* shitposters, like myself, do not only focus on the *Succession* fandom, and also create content about other interests.) I understood the latter as a tool to help me think through how meme-making and theoretical writing mutually inform each other.

In October 2022, after nearly ten months of anecdotal observation, I began generating and sharing shitposts.

Making the Account

Toward the end of my platform observation (September 2022), I began making memes. Throughout the observational period, I would review my notes to reflect on femcel shitposters. Some questions asked how their user-generated data inhabited Instagram: How were shitposts designed? Did accounts interact with other users? Were shitposts purely reconfiguratory, or did they also reproduce ableist and other Western, Eurocentric biases? Additionally, these reflections also doubled as a canvas to save meme ideas. For instance, I could "workshop" ideas for a shitpost before posting on my account. This strategy helped me to model my account on femcel and Succession shitposters.

In early September 2022, I downloaded two popular photo-sharing and creative photo platforms to generate shitposts: PicsArt, Mematic, and Whisper. During my prior observation, I noted that these particular apps were typically used to generate femcel shitposts. Early memes used personal photos (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 6) that creatively annotated my embodied experiences with gastrointestinal disease. As the chapter's theoretical argument developed, my memes reflected my writing and research process and

became a canvas for thinking through conceptual frameworks, such as psychoanalysis (see Fig. 2).
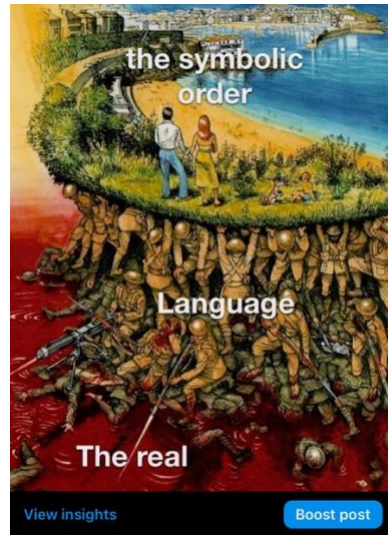

Fig. 2: My October 2022 shitpost referencing the Real, a pre-linguistic state of nature and young infants. The Real threatens social reality, and is a site of desire, pleasure, and pain. The shitpost, made with the Mematic app, demonstrates my use of shitposting to think through more academically-inclined topics, such as psychoanalysis (see Lacan, 1977; Kristeva, 1980).

Additionally, I began posting about the pressures of professionalization, both as a shitposter and chronically ill academic worker searching for a job. I wanted to ask how discourses of self-monitoring and professionalization shaped these identities in entangled, complicated ways. For instance, as my forthcoming reflections will show, I worried that writing a chapter about shit and illness would hurt my chances at employment. As a shitposter, I was simultaneously concerned that creating "abject" (see Kristeva, 1980) content about diarrhea and other taboo bodily ephemera could push the limits of visibility (see Duffy & Hund, 2019; Marwick, 2015; Duffy, 2020) and possibly lead to punishment, such as post removal, from Instagram's data-driven content moderation infrastructure.

Ultimately, the overlapping experiences supported my critical interrogation of hygiene and management in platform and academic spaces.

A few weeks after I began making different memes, I created a separate shitposting account on October 22, 2022. I actively generated my shitposts from October to December 2022 as I drafted the first version of this chapter. While I wanted the flows of my feed to shape the types of memes that I might post, create, and share on the account, I devised a series of brief guidelines that allowed for reflexive, embodied sensemaking as I continued through the process of memetic curation and creation:

- I would not reveal my complete identity on the account, but I would disclose that I was a Ph.D. student based in North America

- I must post weekly

- My focus would be on making shitposts, not gaining followers

In Chapter 4's following section, I turn to feminist disability and rhetorical framings of embodiment and shit to conceptualize how shitposts creatively resist ableist ideologies about data and value.

Shit, Disability, Embodiment: Pressuring Provocations for Platform Data

Chapter 4's supporting framework of embodiment offers opportunities for my analysis to address the relationship between shit, disability, and data. I first pursue this inquiry through a brief discussion of shit and embodiment, before suggesting that shit(posting) reconfigures and resists ableist ideas about value and belonging in platform spaces and elsewhere.

Shitty Stories: Narrativizing Disability, Embodiment, and Agency

To begin my investigation of the shitpost's resistive reconfiguration of platform
hygiene, I turn to feminist disability critiques of embodiment to interrogate the
relationship between shit, ableism, and value in on and offline cultural contexts. In
particular, I am interested in understanding how shit's symbolic narrativization as
"abject" and "taboo" in Western, Eurocentric cultures inter-informs cultural perceptions
and valuations of disability as similarly "deviant" and "impure," ultimately disturbing the
social order (see Kristeva, 1980; Douglas, 2002). If Western, Eurocentric cultures
discursively position shit as an object that "offends against [the social] order," it must be
visibly removed to restore purity (see Douglas, 2002, p. 2). Cleanliness and hygiene, then,
narrativize shit as a deviant object outside of what is socially valued.

Here, I do not conflate all forms of hygiene, such as measures to ensure clean
drinking water, as marginalizing practices. Instead, I am interested in how the same biases
animating narratives about shit similarly inter-inform dominant discourses of disability
and social value (see K. Hall, 2002; LaCom, 2007; Dryden, 2022). For example,
normative ableist ideologies position incontinence, the inability to control the voiding of
urine and feces, as humiliating, shocking, and disgusting (LaCom, para. 2), particularly if
bodily ephemera is released outside a contained private space. Western and Eurocentric
cultures represent incontinence as non-agentic— equating the excretion of bodily waste
as a sign of having agency or control as a sign of human subjectivity —instead of a
medical issue, thus rendering voiding problems as an individual failure (see Lapointe,
2021; Ramawakh, 2021; Yergeau, 2018). Such ableist representations discursively

conflate disability with defilement. In this way, feminist disability critiques allow me to note how ableist ideologies devalue incontinence as an embodied failure that must be rehabilitated or erased.

However, feminist disability embodiment critiques importantly offer resistive narrations of shit as a useful communicative object that reconfigures ableist ideas about disability and value. For instance, M. Remi Yergeau's (2018) biographic reflections on autism engage an embodied, neuroqueer framing to show how medicalizing rhetorics rendered them as "no longer the author of [their] own body" because they smeared shit on themselves as a child. In this way, Yergeau's "poop-throw[ing]…" was effectively reduced to "jaw-dropping symptoms" (Yergeau, 2018, pp. 1-2). As such, so-called ableist "shitty narratives" that story autists as "victims… of faulty neurology… [leave] our shit holding more rhetorical power than we do…" and reifying intellectually ableist ideas that portray autistic people as deviant and non-agentic (pp. 3-4). If dominant narrativizing discourses render shit and disability as "broken" and "less valuable" in offline contexts, what, then, does shit(posting) reconfigure in digital spaces?

Diarrheal Reconfigurations: Re-storying Shit's Communicative Value

In this section, I consider the ways shitposting, as crip data, pushes back against ableist ideas about data's agency by reconfiguring how we discursively shape shit. I argue that shit (and shitposting) embody significant communicative value for crip and neuroqueer (digital) cultural production. In Chapter 4's introduction, I suggested that akin to diarrhea, shitposting is an explosive form of user-generated data that challenges dominant ableist beliefs about value and belonging. I note that shit, like crip data, shares a

potential to disturb and challenge normative ideas about social identity and value (see LaCom, 2007, para. 16). In this way, I approach shit as a communication medium that works to enrich and extend crip and neuroqueer logics. For example, M. Remi Yergeau (2018)'s embodied storytelling reconfigures their childhood shit-smearing as agentic "autistic communication" practice (Yergeau, 2018, p. 17). Building on Yergeau's reconfiguration of shit-smearing as autistic communication, I ask if shitposting— a digital shit-smearing —also provides opportunities for mediating neuroqueer relationalities that offer options for reconfiguring crip data-generation.

A starting point: perhaps shitposting's diarrheal essence demonstrates crip data as a form of scato-power, which Josh Gunn (2006) names as an antithesis to biopower's anti-diarrheal strategies of control (p. 85) Gunn's theorizing challenges the biopolitical public-private divide that structures modern-colonial life in Eurocentric cultures (see Foucault, 1984b), or platform hygiene that informs the ways platform systems separate "good, public" data from "deviant, private" shitposts. Uninterested in hygienic strategies of retention and containment, Gunn (2006) offers his notion of "shittexts" to challenge the surveillance mechanisms that narrativize self-monitoring and management as constipating practices in public life that reaffirm ableist ideological structures (see Gunn, p. 82). To push back against the strain of self-management, Gunn offers diarrhea as an ideological corrective to hygiene that takes on the "pleasure" of destruction and elimination (p. 89). Following Gunn and Yergeau, I offer the shitpost as a creative, embodied discursive restructuring of crip data that insists on occupying platform presence and imagines a platform beyond ableist, hygienic ideas that encourage self-surveillant data management.

Like Yergeau's (2018) proposition that shit-smearing *is* mediated communication, I argue that shitposting *is* (crip) data.

Platform Hygiene: Performing-not-Performing the Visibility Game

This section discusses how platform hygiene emerges as a platform logic (see Burgess, 2021). Here, I am referring to the governing strategies a platform company employs to encourage users to generate and upload desired user-generated data (Burgess, 2021, p. 41). Such logics are often presented as "natural" (see van Dijk & Poell, 2013; Glatt, forthcoming), obfuscating how ableist and other Western, Eurocentric biases inform a creator's sanitizing management of their user-generated data. In doing so, ableist logics suggest to creators and other platform users that "hygienic" data management makes their accounts more valuable. I offer this conversation to contextualize further the significance of shitposting as a crip data form that resists and reconfigures hygienic logics.

To emphasize platform hygiene as a sanitizing logic, I address how "performing not-performing" (Dubrofsky & Ryalls, 2014) shapes how platforms' valuing of hygiene is embedded in authenticity. In my (Rauchberg, 2022a) previous writing about the mediation of authentic content creation, I extended Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Emily D. Ryalls' (2014) framework toward platformed digital production, suggesting within late-stage capitalism and the expansion of digital surveillance technologies, authenticity is curated through a constant conveying of genuine relatability through copious status updates and the affordances of live-streaming, as if the creator is not always already under surveillance (Rauchberg, 2022a, p. 291). Within Instagram's creative economy,

authenticity emerges as an essential key for success, as aspirational media industry workers portray their relationship with audiences and consumers as intimate and individualized (see Hund, 2023; Dubrofsky, 2022; Glatt, forthcoming). I suggest that mediating authenticity is not an effortless practice: the grueling behind-the-sciences work of generating content is rarely conveyed to followers, mediating the assumption that content creation is effortless labor (Petre et al., 2019; Duffy, p. 223; Abidin, 2016b; Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013). Notwithstanding, creators attempt to mediate their relatability to followers through portrayals of "realness" and "uniqueness" that portray their approachability to a digital audience while still maintaining an endearing distinctiveness, such as creating "realistic" posts about mental health, food consumption, or makeup routines, that allow followers to "see themselves" within the influencer's universe (Duffy, 2017, pp. 104-5), thereby shaping the hygienic data management practices of aspirational influencers and everyday platform users.

      As I began my autoethnographic study of Instagram shitposting, I started making connections to how platform logics of hygiene, control, and containment informed the ways I managed and monitored my user-generated platform data. When I first downloaded the mobile app in late 2013, users impulsively uploaded content, even if the image had blurry quality. Within a few years, however, the rise of Influencer content shifted how the platform valued user-generated content (see Hund, 2023). To accrue visibility, everyday users' posts also needed to embody the influencer look: curated, clean, and bright. There was an implicit understanding that the rest of us had to try, but not *too* hard: "performing-not-performing" hygienic poster (see Dubrofsky & Ryalls,

2014). Many visibility strategies emerged from misinformed lore. As a university student, my friends and I would spend hours taking photos, editing the best images, and then wait for the "best" time to post to accumulate as many likes as possible. Essentially, we were "playing the visibility game" (Cotter, 2019) to ensure our user-generated data was valued enough by Instagram's elusive algorithmic infrastructure.

Following hygienic platform logic also meant Instagram users could not show the amount of labor needed to curate a successful post. After all, we needed to be "relatable" and "effortless," blurring the high levels of monitoring we put into maintaining our authentic presence. Likes, comments, shares, and reposts became social capital that offered insight into whether or not our data was "valued" by the algorithmic infrastructure (Cotter, 2019, p. 906). If our selfies appeared to be trying too hard, or if we posted content that made us look "messy" or "bad," the platform would not value our data, and the façade of our easy authenticity would disappear. Failing to correctly self-manage your content meant you were no longer in the Instagram game, or not "real" enough.

Fig. 3: This meme takes on Kelley Cotter's (2019) "playing the visibility game," which discusses how influencers and other Instagram users strategize their content making and curating digital personae. It offers a satirical reaction to being accused of "trying too hard" on one's user-generated data.

Figure 3 (see above) plays with these innate fears through the Stick Figure Violence "Girls when" meme template. Popular amongst *Succession* Instagram shitposters, the meme features a series of stick figures engaged in various violent behaviors with a text-based prompt that the creator customizes. The violent stick figures allude to their relationship to the text. I wrote "Girls when someone says they're gaming the algorithm" to offer satirical, provocative commentary on self-management and sharing user-generated data. As I created the shitpost, I reflected on all of the times I had uploaded and deleted content on my personal account because it did not get a certain amount of likes after I uploaded the image, or if a friend joked that I posted too much and was therefore "trying too hard." I remember feeling angry and frustrated in those moments because it suggested my data creation— and thus, my digital presence – was not authentic enough and, therefore, not valuable.

However, the performing-not-performing of platform hygiene did not necessarily erase earlier forms of impulsive, spontaneous Instagram data. Instead, users channeled these feelings into private, anonymized accounts: the "finsta" (a portmanteau for fake Instagram) in which users— typically young women —create private Instagrams concealing their identities to post "ugly, silly, introspective, and vulnerable content" (Xiao et al., 2020, p. 2; see also Darr & Doss, 2022; Tao & Ellison, 2023). The finsta became a private place for generating and containing random, silly, or vulnerable posts that did not disturb or threaten the value of carefully curated public-facing accounts ("real Instagrams," or rinstas). In many ways, the self-containment and suppression of "deviant data" is informed by modern, Eurocentric hygiene discourses that render the disposal of waste, trash, and bodily ephemera as a *private* matter to be kept out of public spaces (Laporte, 2002, p. 42). Though perhaps a crass comparison, dividing feces, urine, and goo from bones and scraps is not unlike choosing between sorting "rinsta appropriate" content from "finsta" data. Moreover, the use of platform logics encourages users to separate private ("messy" or "deviant") data from public view on the Instagram platform demonstrates how hygiene as a platform logic reinforces the belief that sanitized self-management of data shows how an account's user-generated content is read and prioritized by a platform's algorithmic organization.

Conversely, shitposters ultimately play a different game, where creators do not necessarily conform to "performing-not-performing" (Dubrofsky & Ryalls, 2014) authentic data creation. Purposefully messy, excessively vulnerable, and highly aestheticized (see Bergeron-Stokes, 2023), user-generated shitposts defy hygienic

platform logics that reinforce ableist ideas about data's value on a platform, instead

embracing diarrheal data generation styles that are inherently disturbing, perverse, and

revolting (see Fig. 4). In this way, shitposts catalyze crip reconfigurations that inform

how users buy into the assumption of platform systems sorting data and thereby shaping

user self-management practices.

Fig. 4: A Whisper meme posted in November 2022, musing on shitposting's crip data
reconfigurations of Instagram's sanitizing platform hygiene logics.

Autoethnographic Musings on Memetic Analysis

In this section, I share autoethnographic vignettes and accompanying memes to

reflexively probe shitposting's diarrheal reconfigurations of data, hygiene, and platform

visibility. The three narratives seek to draw embodied connections between shitposting as

a form of crip data generation that challenges ableist ideologies that inform what

"belongs" and holds "value" on a platform. Furthermore, the narratives seek to show the

entangled, embodied relationships between crip data-making, and the management of

disability and aspirational labor in academic and platform contexts. In sum, I argue that

shitposting presents creative reconfigurations for user-generated data and academic

professionalism.

Interlude 1: Assessing Aspirational (Academic) Labor (October 2022)

Fig. 5: A meme I edited on PicsArt. The photo was taken before I gave myself an enema to provide relief from debilitating symptoms. I was interested in if an enema, a private, vulnerable, and embarrassingly coded medical act, would disturb the symbolic nature of Instagram's content moderation policies.

I glance at my watch—12:09 PM, an ideal time for shitposting. I grab my phone,

open up the PicsArt app, and begin testing out profane and provocative shitpost ideas.

Suddenly a bad thought pops into my brain: what would happen if a contact within my

professional network saw my account, even though I've kept my personal identity hidden

on the account. For instance, the meme I made after reading Dominique Laporte's (2002)

History of Shit (see Fig. 5) uses a personal photo I took before giving myself an enema.
Though the meme's text doesn't say anything offensive or profane— it simply includes
an epigraph from the book's introduction –I fear the image of the enema makes me
"unprofessional." Would this account make me a less desirable hire? Conversely, would
other shitposters take me less seriously if my whole identity was exposed? Would they
think I'm defiling their spaces?

I'm conflicted about continuing my shitposts because I am uncertain about how it
impacts my online presence, both professionally and personally. It feels like the rules of
the game are always already changing (Cotter, 2019) and even though Instagram
shitposters are following a different set of rules than the average influencer (or even
aspirational academic), we will never escape from the visibility game: our meme accounts
could still go viral, we could still collect followers, and end up trending on Instagram's
explore tab (Abidin, 2016a; Petre et al., 2019). It's the secret shadow that follows you as
soon as you register an account with a platform: you will seek to fulfill desires of
visibility (even if it's just sharing amongst ten followers).

On my shitposting account, I have begun playing with an idea about meowing and
platform hygiene. It's cringy and embarrassing, even for me. Earlier in Chapter 4, I
proposed the idea that shit holds communicative value (see p. 26). Likewise, my latest
user-generated shitposts delight in the notion that meowing presents a similar resistance
to curating authenticity and defying hygienic platform logics through data generation (see
Fig. 6). This meme intended to show how "meowing" in a (platform) demonstrates how
crip data reconfigures perceptions on *which* data belongs on a platform. They're all about

the coolness of the uncool and the resistance of rules. Cats hold an important role in Internet culture (see Maddox, 2022), particularly in femcel shitposting spaces, where the "poor little meow meow" trope subversively romanticizes male antiheroes in popular media as pathetic, helpless, and in need of saving (yet will never be saved.) (Fanlore, 2023). Unlike the hipsters of the early 2000s, whose coolness is mired in irony (e.g., to be cool, one must not try to be cool), the (un)coolness of the meow meow— and therefore meowing —is a rejection of performing-not-performing authenticity and resisting hygienic platform logics (see Brown, 2021, p. 431; Dubrofsky & Ryalls, 2014).

Fig. 6: A series of text-based memes about meowing and platform hygiene made in November 2022. They are screenshots of an Instagram story I made on the platform's create mode.

As I post the shitposts (see Fig. 6), I hold back nervous giggles as I think about how ridiculous the text is. I'm being strange. I'm being uncool. I'm everything I've trained myself not to be in the neoliberal academy, even though there's no overlap between my shitposting account and my professional social media persona (that I know of). *Should I delete this one?* I don't know if I'm overstepping the line between subversive and ridiculous. But I think this is the point of the account. Moreover, I seek to push the boundaries of posting by provocatively musing about the limits of our social order and the language we use to sustain cultural, political, and economic structures. I return to M. Remi Yergeau (2018): if smearing one's shit is a valuable, communicative act (see Yergeau, p. 17), then making data about meowing— and meowing itself –also insists on the meow's resistive communicative power. In this vein, I insist my user-generated meows are just as agentic and meaningful as other user data. And maybe making memes about meowing disturbs the precarity of platform hygiene, encouraging whoever encounters this post to think about how they, too, don't have to fall into the traps of self-management.

I press "post" and watch as the interface returns back to my feed. I quickly check my main account's profile page, ensuring that the meowing shitposts weren't shared on my carefully curated and sparsely populated main account. Conversely, my shitposts are aesthetically explosive, loud, and frictive. They could easily undo the "authentic truth" of my public-facing Instagram and dismantle my persona as a "palatable" disabled academic worker (see Dubrofsky & Ryalls, 2014; Schalk, 2016). *This is what I get for breaking the*

rules. I refresh my main page and confirm the posts are on my shitposting account. I

haven't transgressed the boundaries of my social expectations with memes, screen grabs,

and create mode posts that I wouldn't dare to post elsewhere. This sudden shock catalyzes

the creation of another shitpost where I reflect on the practices of maintaining a separate

shitposting Instagram account and the fears of posting on my public-facing "real"
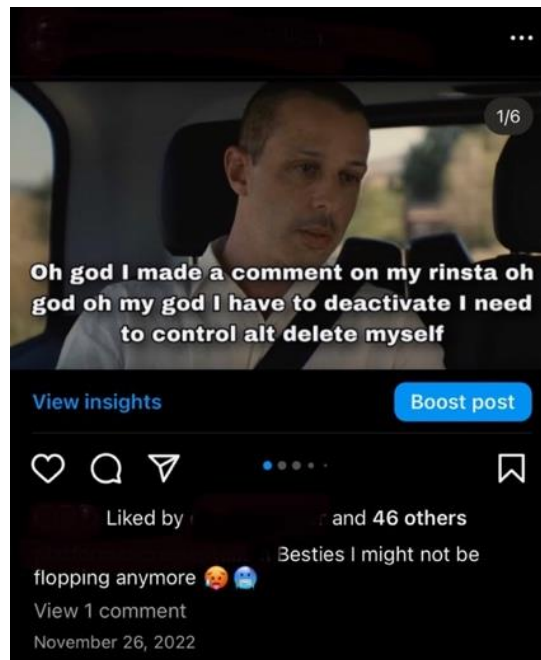
Instagram (rinsta):

Fig. 7: A screenshot of Kendall Roy in Succession Season 3, Episode 9 ("All The Bells Say") (Mylod,
2021). I edited the photo on PicsArt in November 2022.

The meme reflects on the social anxieties of engaging in shitposting practices while

monitoring public and professional profiles (see Kuehn & Corrigan 2013; Duffy, 2017).

Although my personal, non-shitposting Instagram is private, I am connected with

professional contacts on the account. If I posted the meme or made a comment intended

for my shitposting account, would that data appear on my professional contacts' feeds? Would that escalate in further surveillance from potential hiring committees? In the meme, I play with algospeak (see Klug et al., 2023), such as "delete my account" and "control alt delete myself" to provocatively engage with the social pressures that come from failing to perform aspirational academic labor. In this way, I reject the "curated" easy feel of user-generated data that aligns with hygienic platform logics. Instead, I sit with the messiness of my explosive, vulnerable confession. I breathe out, as if releasing something bad from my body. I scroll through my shitposting account's feed for a few seconds, then swipe up and out of the app, and put my phone away, screen-side facing down.

Interlude 2: My New Diagnosis (November 2022)

Between writing sessions, I pick up my cellphone and open Instagram to access my shitposting account. I have a new notification: a comment from a user who does not follow me. They've commented on a post I've made that shares a collection of memes satirically drawing on my experiences as an academic supercrip (Schalk, 2016). The supercrip is a narrative trope that presents disabled people as "extraordinary" and valuable when they "overcome their disabilities" (see Schalk, 2016, p. 73). Within digital contexts, the supercrip is a complicated identity, wherein disabled creators occupy a liminality between invoking the supercrip and imagining new ways of digital embodiment beyond (algorithmic) bias (see Reinke & Todd, 2019; Raun & Christensen-Strynø, 2022; Bitman, 2023). I don't think my shitposting account embodies the supercrip. Instead, I

use explosive and diarrheal user-generated data in a manner that I hope substantiates my idea of crip data.

Lately, I've been feeling the burnout of being pulled into the supercrip trope as an academic worker. Even though I want to be more honest about the frustrating complications of my gastrointestinal disease, I realize that talking about diarrhea, even in a less formal academic setting, will not help me reach my professional goals. In this way, I'm forced to "clean up" and "sterilize" how I embody my disability in ways that fit within nondisabled logics. Shitposting on my meme account has been a way for me to work through the complicated feelings of what it means to contain my chronic illness while still maintaining a professional presence.

I read the comment and feel heat rise in my face: "the second meme is a stupid and chronically online take," the comment reads. I scroll to the second photo (Fig. 8) and stare at it. It's a screengrab of *Succession'*s antihero Kendall Roy (portrayed by Jeremy Strong) from the series' pilot, "Celebration" (McKay, 2018). In this scene, Kendall has a private meltdown in his father's bathroom after he loses a promising job offer, silently screaming into a hand towel. I added paraphrased song lyrics— "nobody cares if youre losing yourself (im losing myself)" – to the shitpost as a way of emphasizing how concealing my disability felt overwhelmingly suffocating. By hiding myself to placate potential employers, I felt like I was "losing myself" (My Chemical Romance, 2004).
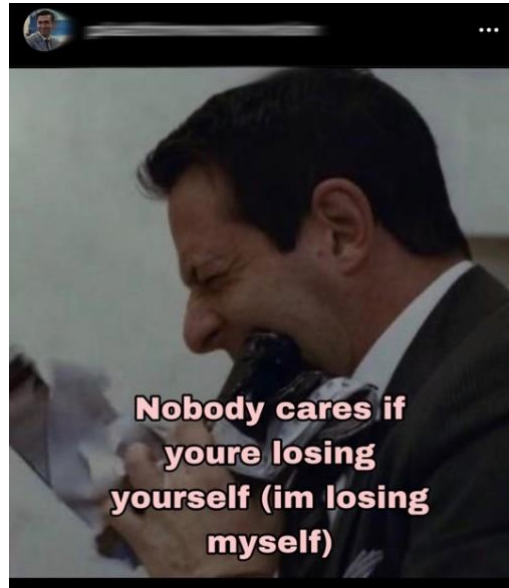
Fig. 8: A Kendall Roy meme made in November 2022 on the photo editing app PicsArt. The text references
My Chemical Romance's (2004) song "You Know What They Do To Guys Like Us In Prison."

I read the comment a few times. Initially, I bristle at the gall of this user and their

candid use of the insult "chronically online," an Internet slang term used to insult

someone for high levels of Web use and interest in very niche Internet culture (Know

Your Meme, 2022p). I remember the feelings I had as a disability advocacy creator (from

2019-2021), where opening up the Instagram app on my phone meant encountering

comments, DMs, and other communications that projected frustrations about what I was

(and was not) posting. It's one of the reasons that I eventually deactivated my advocacy

account in October 2021. *This shouldn't be as serious, right? I'm not in it for the*

followers.

And yet I can't help but think about the comment. Does my shitpost labor have

less value than that of a nondisabled fashion influencer? Is this person simply trolling me?

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Even if this isn't an "acceptable" genre of user-generated data, I don't think it's

inappropriate. I feel an ugly feeling creep through the crevices of my body, and I try to

rationalize it. *Am I being a bad poster? Is my posting too profane and out there, even for*

a shitpost? I try not to conflate the anonymous posters' pathologization of my meme

creation with my (digital) personhood. I remind myself that shitposting—and crip data,

more broadly – are about disrupting hygienic platform logics and challenging ideas about

what kinds of user-generated data belong on Instagram. *I don't have to play the "visibility*

game" (see Cotter, 2019; Duffy & Hund, 2023). *Shitposting and crip data are not about*

gaming algorithms or sharing intimately authentic content. It's not about pleasing other

users. It's about creating user-generated data that challenges sanitizing platform logics.

It's about reframing the shitpost as a valuable communication medium. It's asking how is

crip data data*, and insisting disability holds value.*

I smile to myself.

Interlude 3: When in Doubt, Shit(post) it out (March 2023)

It is a dreary grey morning in early March 2023. My mind wanders back to the

jobs I must apply to this week. As a contingent academic worker with no guaranteed

funding past this academic year, I feel as if I have no choice but to continue sending out

my materials. I often joke that "applying to jobs is a full-time job" (D'Souza, 2021, p.

293), although lately it feels like I'm not joking. I swipe out of Instagram and open my

email app. A new message sits at the top of my inbox: rejected after another campus

interview. I feel numb: later, I will understand that I may have been a diversity

candidate—"we invited a disabled applicant as a finalist!"—or the job went to someone

with better resources and connections (see D'Souza et al., 2023). Tears begin pooling down my face as I review the red flags of the campus visit, including the illegal questions about my disabilities. *I never had a fair shot, did I?* I notice the date on my phone: March 8th. *I can't believe I was rejected for a job on International Women's Day*. I begin to laugh. It feels good. And then, though I haven't routinely posted since December 2022, I get an idea for my shitposting account.

I open up my PicsArt app and get to work. I smirk as I save the meme to my camera roll and open up Instagram, swiping over to my shitposting account to post the photo (Fig. 9):

Fig. 9: A screenshot of the rejection meme posted on my Instagram account in March 2023

The shitpost features a screenshot of Succession's Kendall Roy (portrayed by Jeremy

Strong) in the first season episode, "Prague" (Brown, 2018), where Kendall aspires—

then eventually fails —to secure a lucrative business deal behind his family's back. The

camera pans up on Kendall as he intently looks at his phone on a grey city street. In bold,

soft pink font, I've written, "rejecting me for a job on international woman's day isn't

very feminist of u," with an accompanying caption that says, "Real." Lately, I find myself

increasingly relating to Kendall as I try to secure employment. My meme text is two-fold:

I *just* received a job rejection on International Women's Day— a coincidence, I'm sure,

but I *will* make light of the situation. It's also a nod to Kendall: in *Succession*'s third

season, Kendall rebrands himself as a staunch supporter of women's rights. Many femcel

shitposters' cultural production satirically reveres Kendall as a feminist, which I interpret

as an ironic critique of corporatized, popular feminism that promotes neoliberal notions of

individuality, empowerment, and gender equality as a singular issue (see Banet-Weiser,

2018). Kendall reminds me of how close I've come (again) to a job I really wanted, a way

to make sense of the things I put my body through so I could be hireable enough.

I think about how the academy constrains me into performing supercrip:

disclosing disability on applications, being cornered into answering questions about my

diagnosis, and playing accessibility consultant in campus visits instead of being asked

about my research. In this way, I face the "biographic mediation" of neurodivergence in

the academy (Morrison, 2019), where I must disclose, verify, and story my disabilities in

ways that the university is willing to accommodate, even if it's at the expense of my

dignity (Morrison, p. 694). Moreover, I must always be gracious that a given search

committee is inclusive enough to consider my (disabled) expertise "valuable" enough for them to extend a screening interview or a campus visit. I don't know if meme-making— let alone shitposting— is an acceptable form of performing academic. However, I feel a lightness after I post the meme. I've begun to story my personal experience of disability in academia beyond being unreasonable, beyond being too much (see Morrison, p. 698). In this moment, I don't think about how aspirational academic work is making me sick. In this moment, I don't think at all. What happens if I just… let all that shit go?

Concluding Thoughts: Shitposting as Reconfiguratory Crip Data

Chapter 4's critical autoethnographic case study on Instagram shitposting demonstrates the embodied, networked relationships between hygienic platform logics and aspirational (academic) labor. I introduced shitposting as provocative and profane user-generated data that takes on memetic styles to name and reconfigure offline ableist ideologies shaping how platforms value some user data over others. Moreover, I established how Instagram shitposts creatively reconfigure the platform's sanitizing and hygienic logics that privilege user-generated data, which aligns with the platform's market goals. Distinguishing shitposts from digital hate speech and trolling, I sought to identify shitposting within a crip data framework, noting its crass and diarrheal style as a counter to how shit (and disability) is devalued as a problem that must be hidden and contained. In the introduction, I introduced the question: how do Instagram shitposts resistively reconfigure platform hygiene?

This chapter shared the findings from my critical autoethnographic study of creating shitposts and sharing them on an anonymous Instagram account. I supported my

study with feminist disability critiques of embodiment, which interrogate how Western, Eurocentric cultures portray disability as a social deviance that must be (privately) managed and contained (see K. Hall, 2002; Yergeau, 2018; LaCom, 2007; Cedillo, 2018). A feminist disability framework helped me to ask critical questions about the embodied relationship between shitposting and crip data. I particularly focused on feminist disability critiques of shit to articulate my crip data framing of shitposts as always already holding value on Instagram, despite hygienic platform logics that encourages curated authenticity and containment of undesirable data. Moreover, embodiment's focus on lived experience and disabled agency allowed my autoethnographic narratives to address my personal experiences as a chronically ill, aspirational academic worker and making Instagram shitposts. Throughout the various narratives, I sat with the sticky tensions of hygienic self-management of user-generated data and trusting the embodied reconfigurations of shitposting. I acknowledged how shitposting offered moments of creative resistance both in platform spaces and professional (academic) contexts.

Shitposting emerges as an explosive, excessive, and exciting node of crip data studies. It rejects sanitized containment discourses rooted in ableist ideologies of power, value, and belonging. Furthermore, shitposting reconfigures the design of algorithmic organization tools digital platforms and other computing systems by insisting that "shitty" data holds value and embodied meaning for the users who generate it. Instead of bending towards hygienic platform logics, shitposts eschew ableist self-monitoring of user data, insisting that crip data offers insightful nodes to analyze disability's relationship to creating, making, and sharing user-generated data.

After all, we'll just keep posting and posting and posting and posting and posting
and posting and posting and posting and posting and posting and posting and posting and
posting and…

Notes

1. "This is where I post from" is often paired with depictions of desolate and
    disturbing settings. (e.g., in the meme I include at the beginning of the text, I
    have a photo of a medical hat and biohazard bag which I used to collect a stool
    sample after taking the photo.) (Know Your Meme, 2022n).

2. Derived *The Matrix* (1999, Warner Brothers) and popularized by men's right
    activists on Reddit, "redpilled" (also stylized as redpilling) refers to an
    individual obtaining perspective that allows them to see the disturbing truth
    behind the world's social order. Through "mepilled," I aim to investigate the
    flows of narcissism that structure Instagram's platform labor and creative
    economy (see Know Your Meme, 2022a).

3. Akin to "pilled," I understand coded as a platform vernacular that users rely on
    to show intertextuality between the self and other (new) media sites.

4. Platform vernaculars for suicidal ideation. Control + alt + delete refers to the
    commands on a keyboard to remove an element from a computing device. (see
    Reddit, 2019).

5. A phrase associated with girlboss culture and postfeminist Internet spaces,
    often used ironically or mockingly (see Know Your Meme, 2022jk).

6. I follow Robert McRuer's (2018) conceptualization of austerity as neoliberal capitalism "wrapped up in rhetorics of emergency" (p. 21), signaled by the end of social supports that ultimately substantiate ableist and sanist economic structures. Instead, disabled people must pull themselves up by individual "bootstraps," or die.

7. "He's a 10 but/she's a 10 but" was a 2022 TikTok meme where users would begin their TikTok with the phrase, followed by a statement challenging the original numerical valuation. For instance, "They're an 8, but they don't recycle." (see Know Your Meme, 2022g).

8. Derived from a memetic TikTok sound, this satirically refers to one reflecting on their reckless "girlboss" behavior before realizing the consequences.

9. The "female" version of an involuntary celibate, or incel. Femcel originates from 2000s Reddit, but became popular in the early 2020s on Instagram, where the term is romanticized (see Know Your Meme, 2022e).

10. "I'm like ___ but a girl" refers to a memetic style using images of popular culture antiheros, often *American Psycho* (2000, Lions Gate Films)'s Patrick Bateman and *Succession*'s Kendall Roy (see Know Your Meme, 2022i).

11. The term "meme page admin" is a satirical reference to individuals who run meme accounts on social media platforms (see Know Your Meme, 2022l).

12. "Zucked" or "Zucced" refers to a long-term or permanent ban from a social sharing platform, referencing Meta's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg (see Wikitionary, 2022).

13. "I can fix him" is a parodic text-based meme satirizing popular media tropes where a woman protagonist romanticizes saving a "bad boy" character despite putting herself in danger (see Know Your Meme, 2022h).

14. "We are not the same" falls under the umbrella of satirical, self-deprecating "hustle culture" memes. This text-based meme intends to disrupt and dispel the normativization of neoliberalism (see Know Your Meme, 2022o).

15. Also stylized as Peepeepoopoo, this is a text-based shitpost used to derail discussions (see Know Your Meme, 2022m).

16. A text-based meme popular in theorygram and girlblogger circles drawing from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's (1980) work in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

17. Girbloggers (also associated with femcels, waifs, and female manipulators) are an Internet aesthetic promoting rich, beautiful, self-destructive, and confident young women who embrace mental distress and ugliness, and romanticize intellectualism. Often (but not exclusively) white women, I understand girlbloggers as an aesthetic practice and response to the material impacts of economic austerity measures (see Aesthetic Fandoms Wiki, 2022).

18. Also stylized as "girls with autism," girl autism aesthetics satirize the underrepresentation of autistic women and girls. As discussed in Chapter 2, I was given a placeholder diagnosis of "non-verbal learning disability," which many autistics see as misdiagnosis. (see Know Your Meme, 2022f).

19. "Quirked up" and "esoteric" memes satirize neoliberal girlboss cultures that embrace individualistic rhetorics of visibility and gaining of (social) capital (see Know Your Meme, 2022l).

20. Originating on Twitter in the early 2010s, "delete your account" ranges from an insult (akin to "go kill yourself," equating posting from the account as biopolitical practice) to self-deprecating dark humor (see Know Your Meme, 2022b).

21. "My poor little meow meow" is a text-based meme romanticizing antihero characters who are canonically unlikeable yet sympathetic (Fanlore, 2023).

Conclusion: Is Another Platform Possible?

"Not *who* controls reality, but *what*?"
-Sylvia Wynter, "On Disenchanting Discourse" (1987, p. 237)

"The ghosts that haunt your buildings have been learning how to breathe/
They scan the hallways nightly, vainly searching for a sign/
There must be diamonds somewhere in a place that stinks this bad/
There are brighter things than diamonds coming down the line"
-the Mountain Goats, "The Young Thousands"

In *Crip data studies'* Introduction*,* I reflected upon recurring dissertation feedback

I had received from audience members at academic conferences and other research

presentations about disability, ableism, and platforms. Throughout the preparation of this

project, I often received questions like, "If a platform is bad and reproduces systems of

oppression, should disabled people stop using them? Shouldn't disabled people make

their own platform?" Such discursive structuring reveals how cybercultural research

presents disability as a "narrative prosthesis" (Mitchell & Snyder, 2014), a literary device

that reduces disability into a metaphorical "example" to make a story more compelling

(see Ellcessor, 2017, p. 1763; Kafer, 2013, p. 105). In particular, Internet-supported new

media systems, such as digital platforms, rely on ableist framings of disability to sort and

categorize specific user-generated data and computing devices as "bad" and "in need of

fixing." In this way, devices and infrastructures frame disabled data as a problem that

must be hidden or rehabilitated by new media technologies (Ellcessor, 2017, p. 1762).

Reducing disability to a metaphor or plot device also contributes to the ways disability is

invisibilized or hidden in new media research. Instead, my dissertation extends Elizabeth

Ellcessor's argument that such framings limit disability's potential for enacting

innovative insights into the critical studies of digital cultures (p. 1761). As I elaborate

further in my conclusion, the various case study chapters in my dissertation similarly turn away from invisibilizing framings of disability in new media, data, and platform studies scholarship by insisting on disability's value and contributions to the critical studies of data and platforms.

When viewed through this lens, the suggestion of separating disabled users invokes eugenicist undertones. For instance, recommending a separate platform infers that disabled social media users and their cultural production are less valuable than their nondisabled counterparts. However, I would like to offer a different perspective in my conclusion, one that does not center on the techno-solutionism that permeates conversations about disability and new media technologies, where bodily and cognitive difference are problems in need of fixing— whether that means making separate platforms for disabled users or dismissing the increasing presence of platform usage in disability communities (see Jackson et al., 2022; Constanza-Chock, 2020; Sterne, 2022b). Yet, I also understand these queries as a (perhaps misguided) initial move to consider digital platforms beyond discriminatory data-sorting tools and algorithmic bias.

I will use the dissertation's conclusion to grapple with concerns about digital platforms, discriminatory data-sorting tools, and other infrastructural biases that reinforce ableist and racist ideologies. The conversation also invites a consideration of the potentialities for crip data imaginings of platforms beyond algorithmic bias. To begin, I review salient points from the various case study chapters to draw connections between my crip data studies framework and how it can mutually-inform the study and production of user-generated data, algorithmic organization tools, and platform systems. I also offer a

brief discussion reflecting on various methods used in the case studies. In this way, I

highlight potential nodes of extension and expansion for other scholars who aim to

engage in crip data critique. Finally, I collectively draw on the case study findings to

extend my crip data approach toward two salient conceptual frameworks: "disenchanting

discourse" (Wynter, 1987) and "dismediation" (Mills & Sterne, 2016). I present both

disenchanting discourse and dismediation through a crip data framework to critique the

complicated, entangled relationship between disability, race, and data. Moreover, I

suggest that these frameworks complement my crip data approach and further augment its

potential to disrupt the technoableist and technoracist biases that animate user-generated

data, platform systems, and other new media technologies. In doing so, I present crip data

as an ongoing, collaborative conversation that expand to community settings to frame

public policy, creative digital arts practice, and important intervention in the future

development of platform "inclusion." Furthermore, I anticipate crip data will offer

important, interdisciplinary frames in academic fields like communication and media

studies, human-computer interaction, platform studies, critical data studies, critical digital

race studies, and disability studies. Crip data holds something for all of us.

Crip Data's Case Study Contributions

The main part of my conclusion prioritizes what my project contributes to various

interdisciplinary academic and community settings. Perhaps a fully crip or neuroqueer

platform can support anti-ableist digital cultural production, community-building, and

world-making. But how do we get there? My dissertation introduced crip data studies as a

potential starting point for naming and resisting how offline Western, Eurocentric

oppressions, such as ableism and racism, inform how a digital platform is trained to read data. Notably, crip data studies critically probes how Western, Eurocentric views on disability and race influence how a platform's infrastructure is designed and programmed, shaping how data is generated and perceived by users. Throughout the various case study chapters, I focused on how a crip data approach names the encoding of ableist and racist beliefs in a platform's data valuation system. For instance, Chapter 1's analysis of TikTok's AutoR algorithmic organization system identifies the ways Eurocentric ideological views animate how the platform AutoR works. My critical/close reading of corporate documents and independent investigative reports revealed how the infrastructure reads, categorizes, and hides user-generated data shared by disabled and Black users because it is "less valuable" to the platform. Furthermore, Chapter 1 bends Arseli Dokumacı's (2019) concept of "microactivist affordances" toward digital platform contexts to consider how disabled, Black, and other TikTokers marginalized by data-driven algorithmic discrimination strategically generate content to reconfigure how the platform values their data. Through various examples, I suggested that digital microactivist affordances result in marginalized TikTokers using a platform's features in creative, subversive ways to evade further content suppression, such using algospeak (Klug et al., 2023) in video captions or creating hashtags to organize community information. This case study demonstrates how crip data studies offer critical analytic frameworks to study the relationship between ideological bias, data, and user resistance as a cultural meaning-making practice.

My approach additionally identifies how crip data creatively resists biases in algorithmic sorting to reconfigure how algorithmic systems read and rank user-generated data. In Chapter 4, I offered shitposting, or excessive and crass user-generated memetic data, as a crip data reconfiguration of Instagram's sanitizing platform logics. I assessed how Instagram's platform logics, or a set of governing strategies that instills users to upload specific kinds (read: profitable) user-generated data, invoke ableist beliefs to render some data as "good" and "valuable," while ranking other data as "bad" and "deviant" (see Burgess, 2021; van Dijk & Poell, 2013). Yet, the structural violence of ideological biases, such as racism and ableism, are often blurred by a platform's governing logics and algorithmic organization, hiding the ways Western, Eurocentric valuations of race and disability inform how platform systems understand and sort user-generated data. In this way, ableist and racist ideologies shape our collective understanding of what holds more power and value. Chapter 4 challenges this assumption through its analytic interrogation of the shitpost as a cultural form through feminist disability readings of embodiment (see K. Hall, 2002; Cedillo, 2018; Yergeau, 2018; Samuels, 2017). Embodiment particularly adds an important lens to the critical study of platforms and user-data. Instead of conforming to hygienic practices of self-management and monitoring, Chapter 4's autoethnographic reflections suggest that shitposts' embodiment of crip perspectives reconfigure disability as valuable and insightful. The findings on embodiment discussed in Chapter 4 may offer critical insights to platform companies and technologists by providing alternative procedures for designing and

implementing algorithmic sorting tools that do not inherently devalue disabled users' data.

Additional case study chapters also highlight how crip data pressures platform systems and algorithmic infrastructure value and read data. For example, Chapter 3's ideological analysis of the #PowerToLive movement's user-generated care work data engages in a crip data augmentation of Patrice M. Buzzanell's (2010) communicative theory of resilience. Chapter 3's ideological analysis places Buzzanell's original theorization in conversation with critical disability studies and new media studies to demonstrate how #PowerToLive's hybrid care web used both online and offline infrastructure to push back against corporate disposability and environmental ableism and racism during California's 2019 wildfire season. My ideological analysis (see S. Hall, 1985; Foss, 2017) of #PowerToLive's social media posts, crowd-sourced public care documents, and articles written about the movement, demonstrates the crip significance of how #PowerToLive built community on various social media and cloud-based storage platforms to eventually mobilize social transformation in offline contexts. My crip data reading of Buzzanell's (2010) communicative resilience shows how a crip data expansion creates connections for critical organizational, qualitative, and applied communication scholars how to bring critical disability and new media perspectives to the ongoing study of resilience within communication and related disciplinary areas. Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate how crip data studies catalyze possibilities for justice-informed platforms and data-driven algorithmic infrastructures that do not hinge on ableist and racist ideological structures and discourses.

Moreover, Chapter 2 spotlights crip data's focus on the agency of disabled expertise in the design of platforms, algorithmic infrastructure, and other digital assistive technologies. For instance, my introduction of neuroqueer technoscience presented counterhegemonic and agentic new media design that moves away from technoableism (Shew, 2020) and the encoding of curative violence (see Williams et al., 2023). In this way, my conception of neuroqueer technoscience presents neurodivergence as an agentic, anti-assimilationist asset in the conception, development, and use of new media technologies. I anticipate Chapter 2's contributions will cross academic, community, and industry sectors through its emphasis and outlining of how to prioritize anti-ableist and anti-assimilationist design protocols in the development and use of platforms and other new media technologies that rely on the production of user-generated data.

Methodological Reflections

Throughout my dissertation project, I show how crip data studies, as an emerging methodological framework, imagines alternative and interdisciplinary possibilities for digital platforms that are not contingent upon neurotypical ideas about *what* holds value and power within those contexts. My dissertation's crip data framework is augmented and supported by my case study chapters' humanistic and critical qualitative techniques, such as critical/cultural close reading, ideological analysis, and critical autoethnography. For instance, Chapter 4's investigation of Instagram shitposting used critical autoethnography, an embodied critical qualitative method that calls on the researcher to reflexively shift social relations and cultural introspection by implicating their body into the research context (see Boylorn & Orbe, 2022; Spry, 2011; Rambo, 1995). Extending

my autoethnographic approach toward a digital context also supported my investigation of the embodied relationship between data-making, disability, and hygiene. Moreover, critical autoethnography's focus on culture, sense-making, and embodiment also helped to pressuring the tensions emerging from the duality of researcher/community member and shitposter/academic laborer. Future digital ethnographic research may also consider the significance of critical embodied autoethnographic introspection for the study of disability, data, and platform logics.

Though other chapters' methodological approaches were critical/cultural and text-based in nature, they also encouraged me to ask critical questions about disability, race, and data in digital platform spaces. For instance, Chapters 1 and 2 used critical/cultural close reading, which supports researchers to critically analyze how ideological forms are encoded into cultural texts, objects, and artifacts to assess how they are structured and valued within a particular context. In Chapter 1, this humanistic practice informed my critical reading of TikTok's corporate documents and independent journalistic investigations of TikTok's use of shadowbanning and other forms of data-driven algorithmic discrimination. By critically comparing the corporate reports with the investigative findings alongside critical disability, critical digital race, critical algorithm, and Black studies scholarship to address how Western, Eurocentric narrativizations of the human reinforce ableist and racist beliefs and ultimately inform how algorithmic organization tools render some data as visible while actively suppressing others.

Similarly, Chapter 2's critical/cultural close reading turned to autistic and neurodivergent perspectives on neuroqueer studies, data justice, new media industries,

and human-computer interaction to imagine technoscientific creation that moves away

from cure, enhancement, and rehabilitation. Instead, neuroqueer technoscience positions

interdependence and neurodivergent agency as new design tools for access and

transformation. In that vein, a neuroqueer approach to technoscientific creation expands

past academic critique. My conceptualization of neuroqueer science presents key

methodological applications for technologists, programmers, and designers committed to

creating anti-assimilationist assistive technologies that link agency with supporting access

needs. Importantly, I believe my articulation of neuroqueer technoscience provides crip

data-informed methodological extensions for human-computer interaction scholars,

computer scientists, technologists, and other digital designers to integrate into the design

of assistive technologies, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence.

Finally, Chapter 3, which engaged with an ideological analysis (see S. Hall, 1985;

Foss, 2017) of communicative resilience (see Buzzanell, 2010), was the only section of

my project that directly analyzed other users' content. While my autoethnographic

observations of femcel Instagram meme accounts in Chapter 4 supported how I developed

my meme making practice, Chapter 3 presents a dialogue amongst the various

#PowerToLive social media posts, crowd-sourced community documents, and articles

written about the movement. Using ideological analysis supported Chapter 3's

introduction of crip resilience as an activist user-generated data practice because this

approach interrogates meanings, ideas, and representations encoded into cultural texts,

such as social media posts. My ideological analysis of the #PowerToLive movement's

social media posts and crowd-sourced public documents helped me to address how these

media texts rendered corporate disposability and offline discourses of environmental

ableism and racism visible when multiply marginalized disabled people were left to die

during California's 2019 wildfire season. Furthermore, my use of ideological analysis

demonstrates how a crip data approach broadens existing analytic frameworks. For

instance, my crip data reading of Patrice M. Buzzanell's (2010) theory of communicative

resilience showed how scholars outside of "traditional" organizational and qualitative

research could use the framework, on the one hand, while expressing how crip data

approaches and new media contexts can offer valuable insights to existing

methodological styles of studying of communicative resilience, on the other.

By tracing how my dissertation chapters used critical/cultural close reading,

ideological analysis, and critical autoethnography, I am hopeful that the methodological

choices supporting the dissertation case studies open up possibilities for future critical and

crip data research attuned to humanistic and critical qualitative inquiry. I suggest crip data

approaches invite critical and qualitative scholarship to further probe the entanglements

between disability, race, data and platform systems.

Conceptualizing Crip Data Through Disenchanting Discourse and Dismediation

I now return to the questions I posed at the beginning of the Conclusion: "Should

disabled people stop using platform systems shaped by ableist and racist biases?" "Can't

disabled people just log off, or make their own platforms?" These queries infer that

disabled creators and social media users do not hold value or significance within existing

platform spaces. Our social, economic, and political lives are deeply entangled with

Internet-hosted platforms, including social media networks or live-streaming sites (see

Montfort & Bogost, 2009). To say that disabled people, for instance, should "log off" if a space is inaccessible or encourages ableist discourses within its governance and structure is to imagine a world without disabled people (though I doubt this is typically the intent behind these questions). At the same time, I do not believe that disabled creators and social media users must "put up" with digital discrimination. Instead, my introduction of crip data studies as a theoretical framework invites analyses and ways of inhabiting digital platforms and digital cultural production that do not center ableist or racist ideologies. I also acknowledge the potential to extend crip data's critical approach as a theoretical practice with other existing theoretical frameworks about disability, race, and the possibilities beyond Western, Eurocentric (digital) culture: Sylvia Wynter's (1987) "disenchanting discourse" and Mara Mills' and Jonathan Sterne's (2016) "dismediation." The following sub-sections introduce and discuss both frameworks through engaging select examples from the dissertation case study chapters.

Crip Data as Disenchanting Discourse

The first proposed extension offers crip data studies as a "disenchanting discourse" (Wynter, 1987). Here, I refer to Sylvia Wynter's (1987) anticolonial theoretical framework for disrupting the overrepresentation of Man in Western literary works, such as novels, and cultural critique. Wynter seeks to investigate how hegemonic representations configure Western liberal humanist conceptions of Man as ontological fact (e.g., the white, Christian, nondisabled, and sane man), which cultural and institutional texts utilize to rhetorically mold social behavior and communication practices (Wynter, 1987, p. 224). Wynter asks us *which* beliefs, practices, and behaviors

instantiate and perpetuate the violence of racism and coloniality. Moreover, how do cultural texts, such as novels, reproduce and prioritize majority discourses (see Wynter, pp. 229-37)? Wynter introduces "disenchanting discourse" as a rhetorical move that troubles how Western knowledge systems, institutions, and discourses influence our social actions and reinforce liberal, Eurocentric conceptualizations of whom we assign value to and what holds power. In this way, her framework challenges the ways Blackness is presented as "a negative ontological category" that systemically incites particular discourses and behaviors reproducing the descriptive statement of Man as rational (Man1) to biologically advanced subject (Man2). To interrupt this social order, Wynter calls for a collective "disenchanting" (p. 237).

I meditate on these ideas to consider how crip data studies operate as a disenchanting discourse. Throughout my dissertation project, I offer moments of reflection on how dominant Western, Eurocentric ideological positions are encoded into platform objects— such as user-generated data and algorithmic organization systems – and other digital computing systems. For instance, my crip data framework supports a critical probing that names how ableist and racist belief systems inform how powerful data management systems, such as TikTok's AutoR algorithmic infrastructure, read and rank disabled users' data as "less valuable" (see Chapter 1). Crip data additionally offers moments of platform reconfiguration: Chapter 4's critical autoethnographic interrogation of Instagram shitposting demonstrated how excessive, messy, and provocative user-generated data creatively resist sanitizing and hygienic platform logics to imagine platforms where algorithmic organization systems render crip data *as* data. As a

disenchanting discourse, crip data studies offer critical reconciliations to understanding the encoding of Western, Eurocentric biases, which inform the ways platform and computing systems understand and value user-generated data. Importantly, Wynter's original inquiry discussed questions of race and coloniality before the advent of social media and content creation platforms beginning in the early twentieth century. Within a crip data context, disenchanting discourse is a vital lens to approach how hegemonic ideologies, such as ableism and racism, influence a platform company's desired use of new media technologies to aggregate neurotypical, hygienic cultural production from their users (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 4).

Within my discussion of crip data studies as a disenchanting discourse, I position crip data studies as a response to and an extension of existing critical frameworks addressing the relationship between identity, power, and digital technology. In this vein, I showed how Wynter's conceptualization of Man produces a framework for critically analyzing ableist and racist biases encoded into a platform's algorithmic infrastructure and content moderation practices. To uprogram Man's overrepresentation means engaging in a collective theoretical practice that deliberately disrupts how ableism and racism inform value and power within a platform. As a conceptual framework, unprogramming helps to show how ableist and racist ideologies of human value and power influence the ways the platform's algorithmic infrastructure works to suppress marginalized users' visibility. In this way, I demonstrate how Wynter's anti-colonial framework can support a theoretical interruption of Western, Eurocentric framings of user-generated data that position these categories as "lacking" and "less valuable" within

platform spaces, even though Wynter's original theorization does not directly address

disability.

Crip Data as Dismediation

In addition to Sylvia Wynter's (1987) "disenchanting discourse," I propose crip

data studies expands "dismediation" (Mills & Sterne, 2017). As discussed in the

introductory chapter, Mara Mills and Jonathan Sterne's (2017) proposition for

"dismediation" imagines a critical and creative theoretical practice that names disability

as a "socially realized structure of communication" that inform and shape other media

technologies through interaction (Mills & Sterne, 2017, ref. Gitelman, 2006). However,

dismediation addresses more than hygienic nondisabled communication and information-

sharing practices that reflect Western and Eurocentric hierarchies of value and power.

Instead, dismediation prioritizes the powerful liminality of "glitch," which both

"embraces and refuses" the enmeshed relationship between disability and impaired

technologies (Mills & Sterne, 2016, p. 367; see also Sterne, 2022b). In Chapter 2's

conclusion, I reflected on a social media conversation about what a neuroqueer social

media platform would look, feel, and stim like to emphasize the "glitch" (or stim) as a

design technology that informs crip and neuroqueer styles of data-making and digital

cultural production. The conversation addressed how the design of neuroqueer new media

technologies, such as digital platforms (or data-driven algorithmic infrastructure) must

dismantle industry conversations that present disability or disabled data as "glitching"

mistakes that disrupt how a platform *should* classify and organize data or design

technology as an embodied erasure of disability-as-glitch. In this way, I understand

"glitching" as a dismedia form that provides a nuanced approach that invites

interrogations of ableist new media technologies that support access and communication

needs, while ideologically reconfiguring the glitch as an important conceptual tool that

supports crip data sense-making of disability, data, and platforms.

Through the illuminating framework of dismediation, I understand crip data

studies as a theoretical practice to similarly favor moments of technological disablement

to imagine platforms and algorithmic infrastructures where disabled creators' and users'

expertise is centered. For instance, Chapter 3's analysis of #PowerToLive's digital care

work and hashtag activist data also showed how organizers in the movement worked

outside of "normative" platform logics to connect disabled and other power-dependent

Californians with emergency support when they were left behind during power shutoffs.

Here, #PowerToLive's digital care work aligns with Mills and Sterne's (2017)

proposition of dismediation as a lens to shift the relationship between disability and

media usage away from ontological lack (p. 368). Akin to dismediation, crip data invites

possibilities for transforming disability, platforms, and the mediation of digital

embodiments. (I also discuss embodiment and platform engagement in Chapter 4.)

Moreover, Chapter 2's introduction of neuroqueer technoscience offers a new

media production method that actively rejects forms of technological creation that

emphasize cure, rehabilitation, or erasure of disabled subjectivities. As discussed in the

chapter, neuroqueer technoscience envisions stimming, speaking styles (i.e., semi- and

non-speaking), and other neurodivergent relationalities as opportunities for insightful

expertise that offer opportunities to create technologies that support access needs and

quality of life without erasing the user's disabled subjectivities. In this way, I understand neuroqueer technoscience to be in conversation with dismediation's "demand that we radically expand the methods, sites, and contexts through which disability and media are understood" (Mills & Sterne, p. 367). Crip data studies build upon resistive theoretical and creative practices that imagine alternative possibilities for platform engagement.

Another Platform is Possible

Throughout *Crip data studies,* I have discussed how folk theories, shitposting, neuroqueer technoscience, and the crip resilience of digital mutual aid networks negotiate within the ubiquity of ableist and racist platforms that make community building, economic support, and creative practices sustaining for disabled creators and social media users as we imagine the possibilities of another platform. I believe crip data approaches to producing user-generated content, including but not limited to digital care work, shitposting, neuroqueer technoscience, and digital microactivist affordances, provide a way forward. Perhaps crip data is where the possibilities of another platform sit. In the interim, disabled people will continue to use digitally mediated environments to work, play, live-stream, care for each other, game, chat with friends and strangers, share memes, break hearts, watch porn, escape, unwind, laugh, cry, and mediate possibilities for cultural production that will bring us toward an anti-ableist platform. Crip and neuroqueer digital cultural production collectively create anti-assimilationist imaginings of something else, something better.

After all, another platform is possible.

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