



ROUNDTABLE INTRODUCTION

Crip Technoscience Activism, Artistry, and Social Praxis

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As in the historical accounts of crip technoscience found elsewhere in this issue, much of the most significant discourse and praxis surrounding disabled knowing-making occurs in homes, on personal computers, in shared spaces, and in aesthetic opportunities facilitated by disability technologies that, once tinkered with, push back against demands for compulsory able-bodiedness. Thus, in soliciting contributions for this roundtable, I focused on perspectives that academic discussions of disability and technoscience do not typically center: perspectives from disability artistry and nightlife, online activism, and spaces that intersect with but go far beyond the university. I invited contemporary artists and activists to explore what technoscience is coming to mean for crip culture and disability justice. I was particularly interested in the uses of technoscience to pursue accessibility as a source of aesthetic and relational praxis beyond legal compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The artists and activists represented here are part of a wider field that also includes fashion design (such as in the work of Sky Cupacub's

Hamraie, A. (2019). Roundtable introduction: Crip technoscience activism, artistry, and social praxis. *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience*, 5(1), 1-4.

<http://www.catalystjournal.org> | ISSN: 2380-3312

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Rebirth Garments, which Cupacub describes as “gender non-conforming wearables and accessories for people on the full spectrum of gender, size, and ability”), critical architectural and industrial design (such as in the work of design researcher Sara Hendren, whose many projects include *Engineering at and Slope : Intercept*), and performance (such as in the work of Leroy Moore of Krip-Hop Nation, whose foundational disability justice work spans music, performance, public education, and comic book design; and the multidisciplinary contributions of the Sins Invalid performance collective, co-founded by Moore and Patricia Berne, who are leading theoretical and practical discussions surrounding disability justice).

“Start Your Own Good Trouble”

Disability movement leader and social worker Vilissa Thompson examines the role of social media technologies in the disability rights movement, arguing that social media has enabled participation in activism by disabled people whose presence is not often anticipated in public protests, and in turn has made the contemporary disability movement more intersectional. Thompson reflects on her groundbreaking project, *Ramp Your Voice!*, a platform for “Black disabled women/femmes,” and her hashtag #DisabilityTooWhite, arguing that the activist use of hashtags has, for disabled activists, highlighted unacknowledged issues (such as racism within disability movements). In the spirit of non-compliant crip technoscience, Thompson offers that social media activism enables us to “lend...perspective to the current conversations or start your own good trouble,” a methodology at the heart of crip technoscience.

Radical Relationality, Care, and Exploration

Artist, DJ, and scholar-activist Kevin Gotkin delves into the “good trouble” of what he terms “crip nightlife,” a methodology of technological manipulation and disability artistry combined to explore the possibilities of disability culture at the club. Building on the do-it-yourself (DIY) club scene

and histories of co-creation between Deaf people and punk clubs, Gotkin theorizes that crip nightlife could conjure accessible worlds on the dance floor, in the bathroom, and in the playlist itself, ultimately “divin[ing] the truth and complexity of disability history, culture, and resistance” through technoscientific tinkering. As Gotkin notes, tinkering is “already what many nightlife artists understand in their work.” Crip technoscience, as a philosophy for critical nightlife, further contributes the ethos of interdependence, care, and experimentation that pervades disability culture.

“Cultural-Aesthetic Technoscience”

Alice Sheppard’s account of disability technologies and dance performance offers the critical concept of “cultural-aesthetic technoscience,” a term grounded in notions of disability culture as aesthetic possibility. Her essay focuses on three technologies of access, understood otherwise as aesthetic technologies: the GIF, the crutch, and the ramp. Although each of these technologies functions on its own to facilitate understanding and movement, in Sheppard’s practice they are rendered as critical design tools: the GIF (produced in collaboration with producer Lisa Niedermeyer) acts as a “critical story telling device,” the crutch (here, shortened for use only in dance and not for walking) challenges notions of functional accessibility, and the ramp (designed in collaboration with design researchers at Olin College of Engineering) appears as itself a character in Sheppard’s performance *DESCENT*. As Sheppard argues, these manipulations of technologies (such as to render them “non-compliant” with either ableist norms or even the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act) push cultural-aesthetic technoscience into “the tensions of complex accessibility,” ultimately “naming a practice that is rooted in and speaks to the ideas and work of other disabled culture makers.” Here, “good trouble” becomes the basis of critique, conversation, and celebration.

“Suck-It, Ableism”

Activist and movement leader Alice Wong, founder of the Disability Visibility Project, explores the “good trouble” of crip technoscience through an engagement with disability activists’ responses to the contemporary straw ban debate. Juxtaposing speculative fiction with histories of the plastic “bendy” straw, Wong explores the controversy over plastics and marine pollution by pointing to the ways that many disabled people not only need straws to survive, but also the ways that disabled people have adapted and hacked inaccessible worlds to survive present-day apocalypses. Current dystopias are manifest in casual denials of access and care that recapitulate eugenicist notions of disabled lives as not worth living. Wong’s essay suggests that these apocalypses manifest in the material world, and as such can be designed otherwise.

It is my hope that these short pieces will serve as a teachable and even tinkerable archive of crip technoscience in the present moment, marking where this perspective touches other areas of disability activism and scholarship.

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