CRIP PLANET: 21ST CENTURY ECOPOETIC METHODS

By

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ABSTRACT

My work addresses ecopoetry written in the US and Pacific that is specifically attentive to the acceleration of slow violence and climate change, as well as the long histories that have culminated in their disproportionate impacts on disabled people and people of color, disabled and nondisabled alike. I argue that contemporary ecopoetics remains focused on creating or articulating new ways of writing poetics of relation connected to nature which elide the works of authors whose methods work ecologically with a less direct focus on the more-than-human world. *Crip Planet* is a methodological survey of the work of Larry Eigner, JJJJJerome Ellis, Douglas Kearney, Craig Santos Perez, Selina Tusitala Marsh, and Tusiata Avia. With the exception of Perez, these authors are rarely included in ecopoetry anthologies unless they are collections specifically attentive to race, gender, disability status, or other markers of identity; I argue for their inclusion in the field of ecopoetics precisely because their methodologies attend to vast networks of culture, nature, violence, and temporality. These authors disrupt the trend in ecopoetics to frame their writing in "an absolute break with the past," instead bringing attention to long histories that offer contexts. Repeated calls from Black poets and poets at the heart of crip of color critique call for a move from a noun state–what Nathaniel Mackey calls "the confinement to a predetermined status"–to a verb state–the "domain of action and the ability to act." The ecopoets here are actors within a mess, offering critical methods–verbs–for those who have been pushed out of what is considered orderly towards treatment as garbage and those who take the literal and figurative garbage of the present and transform it into a tool for survival. By attending to ecopoetic methods of the present, their places, and how they form connections, I show some ways to build strange affinities with those who have been forced into similar, messy situations. It is a methodological study that looks to poets writing now who utilize temporal care work, mess, and recycling as critical practices for surviving this moment of ecological collapse.

This dissertation is dedicated to Cordelia and Michael Stokes who help me practice love every day and remind me not to eat the moon.

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Introduction

"It is necessary to teach by living and speaking those truths which we believe and know beyond understanding. Because in this way alone we can survive, by taking part in a process of life that is creative and continuing, that is growth"
~ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*

Slowness has always been a part of my life, academic and otherwise. I was diagnosed with a degenerative neuromuscular disease when I was five years old. My kindergarten teacher was worried about how long it took me to go down the stairs. In middle school, kids would count the number of seconds it took me to go up the stairs on the school bus, indignant about the 40 seconds of their lives lost each day to my gait. In the years since, I've accumulated a variety of devices that change my pace. Sometimes I wear ankle foot orthotics that are slow to lace up. Sometimes I wander down hills with my green cane. Sometimes I roll from here to there in my purple wheelchair. All of these embodied practices have their own pace. It may take me half the time to traverse the loop near my house in the wheelchair, but my attention is caught on the uneven sidewalk, the spring flooding making the wheel too slippery to push, and the cracks that might flip the lightweight titanium device. Using my cane leaves me attention to talk with a friend, balance to step over a puddle, and time to listen to conversations outside of the churches and the mosque that line Harrison Road; but our walk ends much later than our wheel would. In considering how to move through my environment on any given day, I need to care about time; I must pay attention to the ways that my choices move me inside or outside of the time of others.

In 2017, Donald Trump's first presidential term arrived, and with it came a barrage of news for the environment: in a February executive order Trump began a process that would lead to the rollback of the Clean Water Rule and he signed a resolution ending the Stream Protection Rule. By that summer, he'd announce his plan to withdraw the US from the Paris agreement (though it would take 3 more years to finalize). Over his first term, he'd roll back nearly 100 environmental

protections while expanding US oil production. In this time of accelerating notifications, I was a graduate student at the University of California, Davis. My students, peers, and professors were speeding up their work in response to the pace of the endless barrage. There were seemingly constant teach-ins and protests to attend. Knowing my own speed, I worked with others on another approach: S L O W.[1]

I partnered with Arielle Estrada Sol, Julian Gatto, and Marbles Jumbo Radio and the HATCH Feminist Art and Science Shop to lead a series of practice-oriented workshops that focused on Slow Reading. As a group of artist-practitioners, we used our own practices from dance to photography to poetry as we returned over and over again to self-described Black lesbian woman warrior poet Audre Lorde's words in *the Cancer Journals*.[2] These workshops early in my graduate career led me to addressing the ecological relationship between methods for creating ecopoetry and the entanglement of language with action. It was our hope that we could work with one another to find ways to resist the constant reorientation towards the new, immediate crisis at any given moment. In our workshop events, we slow read this book from 1980 through embodied research in the present. When describing her cancer diagnosis, Lorde noted the speed of the doctors' move toward one type of action: "'Let's cut you open right now and see what we can do about it.' 'Wait a minute,' I said. 'I need to feel this thing out and see what's going on inside myself first,' I said, needing some time to absorb the shock, time to assay the situation and not act out of panic. Not one of them said, 'I can respect that, but don't take too long about it'" (Lorde 133). We wanted to approach Lorde and her writing without haste. Instead of a press towards a single, unifying practice, we opened up time to feel out the many paces of resistance. Together, we worked to slow down, feel

[1] Aesop and his tortoise would be proud.

[2] Many events took place in the free-to-book Solano Park community building and brought together international student families.

out, and assay Lorde's writing in context.[3] I led a cut-up poetry workshop where we did not cut Lorde's text but instead read through medical journals on tumors of the breast published in the years leading up to Lorde's diagnosis and slowly rendered them into poems responding to Lorde's questions. As we read, we considered the ways that Lorde's personal experience of cancer was connected to broader academic, political, and ideological catastrophes. We considered the relationship between personal health and the health of the systems we navigate. At one of my workshops where many people with a variety of different disabilities gathered, a participant and friend questioned this orientation towards s l o w. She asked, "With my ADHD, slow can be excruciating. How can we accommodate other speeds?" This question led to my notion of temporal care. I began curating slow *spaces* not to enforce one group pace, but to ensure the slowest among us was accommodated while space for many other paces existed alongside it.

Almost four years later, a new election cycle found me in a PhD program at Michigan State University, teaching students who were initially excited about the change of administration. I watched as this excitement turned to horror when the capitol building was assaulted on January 6, 2021. As the administration changed, those who had rushed to resist the previous administration changed their pace, cheering for a return to the Paris Climate Accords. Hopeful notifications about the climate of the country and the climate arrived slower than Trump's tweets had (he averaged 18 per day). When people did tune into environmental news, we learned about policies going into place to protect wildlife from oil drilling and encouraging the transition to electric cars. These hopeful notifications required slower processes behind them. Struggles arrived with supply chains and regulatory processes limiting the speed of felt outcomes of policy changes.

[3] To quote the grant proposal, "Slow reading directly challenges well-established graduate school reading methodologies such as skimming, reading the first, last, and one middle chapter, and other strategies whispered to first year grad students. We choose to foster a space where slowing down stops us from coming to texts only for sentences to use in later conference papers. We want to redress the stigma that casts the slow student as the bad student."

I kept up my slow practices, cofounding the HIVES Research Workshop and Speaker Series–an organization that fosters conversations about disability in relations–with my partner Michael Stokes. We brought in disabled artists imagining slow speculative futures and disabled thinkers writing on their affinities with landscapes that have been disabled by colonialism and US military practices. They led puppetry and writing workshops, gave talks, shared poetry, and joined us in slow conversations.

As my time in graduate school comes to an end, so too do many of the temporary environmental protections established under Biden. Since his inauguration, Trump has signed a flurry of executive orders announcing a US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and encouraging US reliance on oil and gas. There is a pressure to fill this introduction with the disaster of the present. There is a feeling that the moment of disaster is always *now* and that *now* is its own, fully new moment. My work intervenes in climate discourse by making space–or more accurately, making time–to consider alternative responses to ongoing ecological destruction. During the Biden administration, there were still fires, still increasingly intense hurricanes, and there were still long-standing systemic issues disproportionately impacting disabled people and people of color, disabled and nondisabled alike. Responses to ecological destruction and climate change need to be flexible in the timescales across which they operate. I turn attention not to the notifications of the newest "thing" to intervene in climate discourse, but to situated processes in their specific contexts. In my curation of these processes, I turn towards ecopoets disproportionately impacted by climate change for ways of creating in place, utilizing context, and developing sustainable methods for making in the present. Instead of being caught up in the fleeting, momentary distraction of endless notifications, acts of temporal care that move at many paces are models for enduring transformation.

Crip Planet, then, is a series of invitations to open up time for the purpose of making. I do this, instead of cutting the past away, as a way to remain attentive to the ecological connections

between now and what has come before. Frequently, ecopoetry anthologies such as *Ecopoetry: an Introduction*, *Ghost Fishing*, *The Ecopoetry Anthology*, *Black Nature*, *Footprints: an anthology of new ecopoetry*, *Recomposing Ecopoetics*, and the forthcoming *Attached to the Living World: A New Ecopoetry Anthology* become sites around which ecopoetic conversations form–they stake a claim about whose voices are necessary at a given moment and emphasize the 'newest' voices to turn to in the everchanging present. All too often, acts of anthologizing and collecting rely on what can be cut away, a practice antithetical to the pursuit of ecology. For many, to collect is to cut away the chaff or the fluff or the extraneous and to privilege one set of perspectives over others. My aim has been to follow ecopoetic practices in the present, noticing where they offer points of connection to past practices and where they might bring readers not to knowledge, but to their own practice. I don't offer a definitive presentation of ecopoetry now; instead, my project maps ecopoetic methods–practices of making in the present that call readers to join in the doing at whatever pact works for you. The poet-theorists gathered here insist on *doing* in relation and growing relations through writing

In 1977, Lorde stood before the "Lesbian and Literature Panel" at the Modern Language Association conference and delivered a talk entitled "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." She opened with the belief that "what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood" (Lorde 40). At the time of this presentation, Lorde sought to break fear and silence that kept women across identities–Black, childless, mothers, heterosexual, queer, white–from finding language and action to create networks of mutual support within and beyond the academy.[4] Lorde's talk offers a foundational claim about practices of survival in an era of political upheaval and climate collapse, "to survive in the mouth of this dragon we call america, we have had to learn this first and most vital lesson - that we were never

[4] "That we not hide behind the mockeries of separations that have been imposed upon us and which so often we accept as our own" (Lorde 43).

meant to survive" (42). She speaks this lesson about survival first to Black women, before opening it out to anyone in the audience, emphasizing whose survival has not historically been prioritized. Instead, she notes that silence in community means destruction. She exhorts that "we can sit in our corners mute forever while our sisters and our selves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned; we can sit in our safe corners mute as bottles, and we will still be no less afraid" (42). For Lorde, silence is the path towards destruction.[5] The path which disrupts this 'dragon' is that of communication and connection, even flawed, bruised, or distorted. Weaving together environmental destruction, social and societal harm, and a call to protect future generations, Lorde is writing ecologically–forging connections across world, language, and action. In this speech and in her writing, Lorde turns towards the fusion of language, of method, and of ecopoetics in order to connect with other communities in order to survive in a world inimical to her survival and the survival of others. Audre Lorde is a key figure at the intersections of material feminist studies, disability studies, and Black ecopoetry. Lorde's approaches to illness, poetics, and ecology have offered necessary intervention into disability studies.[6] For Lorde, the only way forward in a world bent on the ending of life and the fracturing of community is "to teach by living and speaking those truths which we believe and know beyond understanding. Because in this way alone we can survive, by taking part in a process of life that is creative and continuing, that is growth" (43). Lorde's intervention into this conversation is to remind those who invited her at the last second that their actions in the world matter as part of their politics. She invites her audience to become active participants in the world, doing so through their values. Lorde insists that survival requires turning

[5] "it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence" (44)

[6] Recent intersectional work on disability studies has done a great deal of work to redress the historical focus on disabled white men that was critiqued in Chris Bell's "Introducing White Disability Studies" in 1997. Much of the work of intersectional disability studies including the writing of Jina B. Kim, and Sami Schalk, and Stacey Alaimo places Lorde's *The Cancer Journals* centrally within its approach to the field.

critique into ways of living in the world and having those ways of living offer alternatives to our present.

It's this practice of weaving her present and her future through relation and practice that concerns that Lorde writes of in "What My Child Learns of the Sea." The poem opens with two stanzas that connect Lorde and her daughter through the seasons. Reflecting on her daughter, the speaker of the poem notes that "the riddles that hide in the curve of spring / she will learn in my twilights" (389). Here, she begins a metaphor of seasons which cover the passage of time, and which brings the experience of time into the seasons of the planet. In the final stanza, the poem turns from nurturing and closeness to a break between the mother and daughter. Alongside the metaphor of mirroring that takes place between parents and children, there is an implication that it is not only their relationship, but the changing of the world that interferes with their closeness. The poem closes

> Of the way she will taste her autumns–
> Toast-brittle or warmer than sleep–
> And the words she will use for winter
> I stand already condemned (389)

This passage notes the increasing temperature of the seasons, and implicates the speaker in the process that makes future winters almost unspeakable. The mother is condemned for her part in the seasons to come, when the daughter knows better and has cut the ropes "of sea and thunder and spring" (389). Originally published in 1963, this poem comes in the wake of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. While Lorde has not often been anthologized in ecopoetic collections, this poem in particular appears in the second edition of *The Ecopoetry Anthology*. Lorde has also recently been the focus of several scholars' work to position her within the canon of disability poetics for her work in *The Cancer Journals* and her intersectional writing that touches on medicalization, queerness, Blackness, and poetry. Lorde's work in "the Transformation of Silence into Language and Action" to focus on growth and connectivity and her attentiveness to the present and possible futures in "What My

Child Learns of the Sea" emphasize practices of ecological connection that *Crip Planet: 21st Century Ecopoetic Methods* locates and connects across North America and the Pacific. I argue that disparate writers speak and live practices for navigating ongoing ecological devastation. These practices are not a new way of existing some unfolding crisis, but an accumulation of practices that have offered methods for survival.

I heed Lorde's method of transformation to forge connections across time and communities in order to share methods of survival. I do so through critically taking on the position of disability justice and attention to the ways in which the acceleration of environmental violence disproportionately impacts those already precariously positioned in society through environmental racism, classism, and ableism. In the introduction to *Ghost Fishing: An Eco-Justice Poetry Anthology*, white American poet and cofounder of Split This Rock Melissa Tuckey writes, "It is people of color and low income who live disproportionately in harm's way with regard to environmental crisis, and such voices have been historically underrepresented among nature and eco-poetry collections" (Tuckey 1). In addition to these recognitions, I emphasize the mutual imbrication of disability with these categories, both as arising from disproportionate experience of harm and as similarly being in harm's way. By reading with and across communities, I attempt to hold together the plurality of those surviving eco-injustice. Tuckey emphasizes the importance of "reading widely and wildly" as it provides "the opportunity to think beyond the limits of our own perspective and cultures, to enter human conversation from a deeper and more sustaining place" (5). By folding disabled and crip poetics into ecopoetics, *Crip Planet* moves towards a holistic approach that recognizes embodied precarity while sharing disparate practices to survive. By focusing on ecopoetic methods, *Crip Planet* emphasizes the ways in which multiple futures come into being as an act of shared community. To emphasize Tuckey's argument, "Language creates neural pathways that allow us to imagine the future differently. The act of creating shared meaning is an act of community building at the deepest

level" (11). The ecopoetry of the authors discussed here intentionally make space and time to fold in other participants.

From the turn of the millennium onwards, ecopoetry has been doing the work of making language relevant and making relevance for survival from the stories of those still surviving. I argue that ecopoetry is uniquely situated at the nexus between silence, language, and action as a space in which these poet/practitioners can both participate in methods of literary creation and methods for community support in ways that resist the accelerating harms of climate collapse. Early writing in the field of ecopoetry addresses the ways in which the field has called for a transition from existing as a silent, separate entity, and to instead recognize its place with/in the ecological world. Writing in the introduction to the first volume of *ecopoetics*, published in the winter of 2001, Jonathan Skinner argues for this transformation, in the journal and the field more broadly: "***ecopoetics*** similarly challenges poetics—asking poetry to step down from the 'place apart' its artistic freedoms habitually invoke. Let us ask what viable range of meanings the outside can have in this global age; let us embrace, in the face of shifting borders, an *impure* poetics" (Skinner 7, emphasis in original). Skinner's call for poetry to become entangled and impure echoes Lorde's call for movement into language and action, even at the risk of being bruised and misunderstood. Skinner exhorts readers of *ecopoetics* to become entangled not only in language and action, but within the human and more-than-human communities around them. He writes "'Eco' here signals—no more, no less—the house we share with several million other species, our planet Earth. 'Poetics' is used as *poesis* or making, not necessarily to emphasize the critical over the creative act (nor vice versa). Thus: ecopoetics, a house making" (7). The ecopoets that I bring together are deeply invested in making and doing–they make/do with this crip planet in acts of care and community.

Disabled activists have used mutual aid networks and existing nonprofits[7] to protect people from disasters, including those whose paces weren't planned for by government-led disaster responses. It is these responses and processes that have lasted despite changes in administrations– aid networks that coalesce and respond not out of need to dominate the news cycle but through acts of care and connection. While this immediate relief is desperately necessary in planning for everydays in which disaster is more and more commonplace, so too is the labor of crafting long-term imaginaries of paths toward liberation. "Disability Justice" by Patricia Berne describes disability justice as "a vision and practice of a yet-to-be, a map that we create with our ancestors and our great grandchildren onward" (Berne).[8] Disability justice as described and enacted by Berne and others relies on moving differently, on re-orienting one's relationship to time by cripping, by moving with the variety of bodies and rhythms that don't follow a progressive, accelerating arc. I argue that this focus on holding open space to move at a variety of paces is necessary to enter into methods for addressing the crip planet.

Writers and theorists have struggled with the problem of imagination posed by climate change. In my work as an educator, I frequently come to the point of climate exhaustion with students. We look at histories of environmental racism in America, at industrial practices stretching back centuries, and at the ways writers have tried to discuss 'the future' in fiction and nonfiction texts. While all of these practices are informative, they stall when coming to the point of imagining what can be done. The need is so great, and the timeline of action so long, that the issue becomes something many consider beyond their individual capacity. In his 2016 book, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, Indian novelist and literary theorist Amitav Ghosh argues that

[7] As I was writing this introduction, Hurricane Helene hit North Carolina impacting poor and disabled people at higher rates (Marshall et. al), and leaving need for both mutual aid (Albert) and structural responses (Hayba).
[8] Berne's experience with disability justice has its origins in community theater through the organization Sins Invalid. The performances, social work, and publications of this organization have been instrumental to the development of intersectional disability justice. For more information, visit: https://sinsinvalid.org/category/disability-justice/

contemporary literature is ill-equipped to consider the massive scale and complexity of climate change. He points out that the contemporary novel, with its attention to moral concerns of an individual life, is unsuited to this time where problems of mass scale emerge. Responding to this, white American poet and professor Margaret Ronda argues that "poetry's representational capacities—its modes of parataxis, scale-shift, address, compression and expansion, and temporal play—are particularly equipped for such explorations [as responding to climate change]" (404). In my work with ecopoetry, I have found authors who are equipped to fold together the shifting scales of time to address disaster in the moment alongside the long histories that have led to the immediate disaster. The intentional practice of opening outwards for connection in practice makes space to move from the objective perspective of the critic and into practice. *Crip Planet* leans into this capacity, tracing methods for answering the problem of imagination posed by climate change, with poetry as testimony, protest, and as a call to think with our crip planet.

I focus on methods and practice *in denses res*–in the thick of things. In the thickness, it seeks to hold together multiple ways forward rather than to anthologize 'new' ways to approach the future. As I sought out voices to learn from, I repeatedly looked towards anthologies of ecoliterature as connective spaces. However, what I came to find, instead of a series of invitations, were a series of bounded collections. Each anthology–be it of geopoetics, ecopoetics, eco-justice, curated by Penguin publishing house, etc–was inherently invested in staking a new claim and creating a new space. While most of these anthologies had a meta-awareness of the fraughtness of the act of anthologizing, they still offer a set of names as *the* names to recognize, according to bounds of discipline, criteria of inclusion, and even the newness of the interventions their authors make. The act of anthologizing forecloses the act of inviting other voices into conversation and engaging in practice. By its nature, the anthology bounds a series of writing and practices in disconnection to other writing. Each grouping of these texts implies a fixedness that *Crip Planet* resists. I hope to

refuse the closures of the anthology offering a set of invitations to practice and ending with a coda where I share my own ongoing processes grounded in this work. In this process, I attend to methods and practices of authors who are often overlooked in anthologies of ecopoetics and whose ecological practices are overlooked in the anthologies where they are included. In his article "Beyond the Norton: Anthologizing Innovation in Contemporary Black Poetics" Joshua Lam notes that "all anthologies… make[] a historical argument. Anthologies are backward-looking in nature" (173). The work I do tries to remain oriented toward ongoing practices while contextualizing those practices. I lean into the ecological connections to feel through the historical contexts and locations that inform present disaster–in this way, I feel through the potentials being offered at this thick present moment. In doing so, I locate practices that have existed and continue to exist beyond the scope of one presidential term. In "The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies," Valerie Traub unpacks the conflicts inherent in periodization and abandoning making claims in time. She draws on Kathleen Davis' commentary to address how "[i]t has become common to refer to the act of periodization as 'not simply the drawing of an arbitrary line through time, but a complex practice of conceptualizing categories, which are posited as homogenous and retroactively validated by the designation of a period divide" (Davis qtd. Traub 32). In my invocation of crip time, I recognize that the present and its many ways of moving have not yet closed–in point of fact the poets I work with actively find ways to open the present. In that sense, I find myself working in queer temporality, "a mode of inhabiting time that is attentive to the recursive eddies and back-to-the-future loops that often pass undetected or uncherished beneath the official narrations of the linear sequence that is taken to structure normative life" (Jagose 158). Traub notes that "Queer or not, we remain in many respects *in time*. Analytics dedicated to charting time's cultural logics can be organized through lines, curves, mash-ups, and juxtapositions" (32) and that "What we remember, what we forget, what we retain, what we omit, and what we finally acknowledge as our debts — these are no less than history in the

making" (36). The history *Crip Planet* is engaged in making is a methodological study of those who are surviving and modeling ways to continue to do so.

In "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time," Ellen Samuels quotes her friend and fellow crip theorist Alison Kafer: "rather than bend disabled bodies and minds to meet the clock, crip time bends the clock to meet disabled bodies and minds" (Kafer qtd. Samuels). *Crip Planet*'s intervention into ecopoetry is its bending of time away from the new, from the now, from the notification into longer-standing, ongoing practices that move at a plurality of paces. Samuels and Kafer argue that a critical re-orientation towards process relies on moving through space and time differently, attentive not to the requirements of the system that watches the clock, but to the people moving. An everyday example clarifies for me a small part of what crip time means. A few of my doctors have policies where they cancel my appointment if I'm 15 minutes late. Those same doctors have left me waiting for 2 hours or more. Crip time means being attentive to whose time is valued–a doctor can wait only fifteen minutes, but my time on their clock is worthless. Crip time in relation to ecopoetics means attending to the long and short timelines on which a world that is increasingly described as disabled operates on. If we are to consider the world as a patient, on whose timeline do we operate in acts of care? Those who profit from cancelling on the world after fifteen minutes, or those who are willing to put in the hours to stay with the planet and find ways to care for its ills?

Crip time offers the opportunity to re-frame the conversation about the temporality of climate change and to question who is harmed and who might benefit from the continuous re-frame of climate change as it is repeatedly reframed as a 'new' problem. On March 1, 2010, Oak Ridge National Laboratory Researchers Stan D. Wullschleger and Maya Strahl address the difference between controlled and uncontrolled experimentation on global climate in "Climate Change: A Controlled Experiment." In their piece, they note how a majority of knowledge about the impact of carbon dioxide on global climate change comes from observation of trends, but some scientists have

been conducting controlled experiments, albeit "most investigations have been conducted at middle latitudes and mostly in the U.S. and Europe" (Wullschleger and Strahl). In framing this discussion, they turn to observations offered in 1977, drawing on Charles F. Baes' description of ongoing greenhouse gas emissions as an "uncontrolled experiment" (Wullschleger and Strahl). Following this citational chain backwards to 1990, Wilfred M. Post, Tsung-Hung Peng, William R. Emanuel, Anthony W. King, Virginia H. Dale and Donald L. DeAngelis hold Baes' comments together with work done twenty years before Baes: Roger Revelle's and Hans E. Suess' as they address "this unplanned and uncontrolled experiment" of the release of carbon dioxide (Post et. al 310). In their work, "Carbon Dioxide Exchange Between Atmosphere and Ocean and the Question of an Increase of Atmospheric CO, during the Past Decades," Roger Revelle and Hans E. Suess draw on the work of Guy Stewart Callendar twenty years before themselves in 1938 when they argue that "human beings are now carrying out a large scale geophysical experiment" (Revelle and Suess 19). They also point out that Callendar himself was continuing work on a hypothesis posed in 1899 by Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin that "climatic changes may be related to fluctuations in the carbon dioxide content of the air" (Revelle and Suess 18). In this particular scientific discourse, climate change has been framed as something new again and again over a century. I crunch and condense this century-plus of forgetting and rediscovering climate change as an example of the thickening of time and the crisis of the now/new/notification. The catastrophe, while it is *now*, is certainly not *new*. In order to address it, we must operate on scales that move beyond twenty year frames. From Chamberlain to Callendar to Revelle and Suess to Baes to Post (et. al) to Wullschleger and Strahl, changes in global climate have been hypothesized upon, observed, and described as an experiment carried out by all of humanity. At the same time, every twenty or so years the problem is returned to with this language of newness, as one that is newly relevant and newly critical.

Such conversations, while sometimes pointing out the site specific limitations of their global claims, still often fail to attend to power within the experiment they describe: who enacts this experiment through ongoing and amplified use of resources, who is disproportionately impacted by this experiment, and how are these parties collapsed in this framing? Wullschlegar and Strahl begin to gesture towards this dynamic when discussing how the work they analyze largely comes from the U.S. and Europe. Colonial and industrial powers attempt to seek 'global' solutions without solving their localized contributions to the issues at hand as they continue overconsumption and exploitation. Even promises of 'global solutions' that will attend to the disproportionate impacts of climate change, such as the Copenhagen summit's 100 billion dollar adaptation pledge to nations most impacted by wealthy nations' caprice, have gone undelivered.

How then does literary studies frame timelines in ecopoetics to analyze the ecologies of power in which this poetry is composed? In her book *Recomposing Ecopoetics*, Lynn Keller chooses a timeline starting in the year 2000 to define what she calls the "self-conscious Anthropocene" in which the poets she studies are writing. For Keller, the self-conscious Anthropocene (the time period in which humans become aware of our impact on climate) could have many beginnings: from Oppenheimer's quote of the Bhagavad-Gita to the publication date of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. However, Keller chooses 2000 as the moment human awareness of human impact on climate becomes pervasive across multiple levels: from pollution to radioactivity to atmospheric harms. In their introduction to a focus section on "Writing the Anthropocene" published in the *Minnesota Review,* Tobias Boes and Kate Marshall explain what has been so compelling about conversations of the *when* of the Anthropocene: "Unlike...earlier movements, however, all theories of the Anthropocene are premised on the historicist notion of an absolute break with the past: a hypothetical point in time when the human condition irrevocably changed. They can thus be more properly described as post- rather than antihumanist, and it is a matter of more than incidental

significance that so much discussion over the past decade has been devoted to when the Anthropocene (and thus also our putative posthuman condition) actually began" (62). Unbroken though, the aforementioned chain of citation seems to indicate the uncontrolled experiment of global climate change has been remarked on repeatedly every twenty years since the nineteenth century.

I approach twenty-first century ecopoetics as a set of nodes, capaciously moving from thickly informed locus to locus, navigating a network of specific knowledges, specific apocalypses, and specific practices for existing and continuing to exist. Ecopoetry is uniquely suitable to this endeavor because of these authors' intentional attentiveness to their complex subjecthood *in relation.* Contemporary ecopoets attend to their encounters with plastics in an ultrasound wand and later in their child's seemingly ever accumulating diapers. They linger with the violences cut into them by notions of the proper subject and they write ways around and through these cuts leaving the mess of relations on the page in a dense thicket of ecology: linking butterflies, broken CDs, and the abuse of women in word and practice. While the exact whens of the Anthropocene and the self-conscious Anthropocene remain up for discussion, Keller, Boes, and Marshall agree that: "knowing and articulating species-being within a reflexively produced era of geological time requires…novel modes of articulation that are appropriate to these complex forms of mediation" (66). They turn to poetics and the literary in search of some of these new methods for defining what it means to be human or posthuman in this moment of self-knowledge of the impacts of human activity. As I turn to these poets, I seek not their novelty but their attention to the interdependence and ongoing practices for survival. In the poetic utterance, these poets create flows of attention that hold prior knowledges and model their applicability to community formation in response to climate catastrophe.

The increased focus on disability justice as it intersects ecology and ecoliterature insists on an attentiveness to practice, process, and performance. It is these practices that I collect: a poetics of

being in and making the world survivable through the movement from silence into action. Crip time is one of several practices originating in the disability community referred to as 'cripping.' A reorientation towards time requires critical attention to the systems that have determined how time operates–colonial progress narratives, capitalist frameworks of time as money, and the acceleration of environmental harm. In *Keywords for Disability Studies*, white, disabled, American professor Victoria Ann Lewis emphasizes the relationship between cripping and queering as ways to "spin mainstream representations or practices to reveal dominant assumptions and exclusionary effects" (Lewis 47). Their relationship as a practice is meant to draw attention to the forces which stigmatize, exclude, and negatively impact queer and/or disabled people. Drawing on white, queer disability scholar Robert McRuer, she emphasizes the importance of this critical process, noting that "only by 'cripping' the human condition, economically, culturally, and geographically… will progressive social movements be able to 'remake the material world'" (Lewis 47). This turn towards critically addressing how the material world becomes disabled is a rising consideration in disability studies. In *Rituals for Climate Change: A Crip Struggle for Ecojustice,* proud disabled, Mestize (Indigenous/ Latinx/ White) poet and activist Naomi Ortiz chronicles her experience as a disabled person living on the edge of the desert.[9] In these rituals, essays, and poems, Ortiz emphasizes the importance of blending disabled experience with ecojustice. Taken together, the collection articulates that "disabled people know how to adapt to a world that is ever changing without considering them" (Ortiz, back cover). Alongside Ortiz's collection, Sunaura Taylor's second book, *Disabled Ecologies*, tells the story of a contaminated aquifer beneath Tucson, Arizona and the impacts that the contamination had on the primarily Mexican American community that drank from it. Around these full texts are the collected essays of critical figures in disability/eco-justice contained in *Disability Studies and the Environmental*

[9] In a celebration of the release of *Rituals for Climate Change: A Crip Struggle for Ecojustice* with the HIVES Research Workshop and Speaker series, Ortiz offers insight into their experiences, the artwork of the book, and offers vibrant responses to participant questions. The talk is available here: https://behives.org/recordings/

Humanities: Toward an Eco-Crip Theory: Mel Chen, Alison Kafer, Eli Clare, Kim Q. Hall, Jina B. Kim, David Mitchell, Sharon Snyder, and others. In addition to formal and literary approaches to the intersections of disability and ecology, ongoing practices of performing and moving together in crip ecologies are being undertaken by scholar/performers like Petra Kuppers. These engagements take the form of group performances like the *Salamander Project* and through the work of Turtle Disco.[10]

Crip Planet addresses ecopoetry written in the US and Pacific that is specifically attentive to the acceleration of slow violence and climate change, as well as the long histories that have culminated in their disproportionate impacts on disabled people and people of color, disabled and nondisabled alike. Here, I turn to the work of Rob Nixon in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* to address the ways in which harm accumulates slowly over time and disproportionately impacts low-income groups. Nixon points to slowly unfolding violence and catastrophe as being unaddressed, calling these "the long dyings—the staggered and staggeringly discounted casualties, both human and ecological that result from war's toxic aftermaths or climate change… underrepresented in strategic planning as well as in human memory" (Nixon 2-3). This lack of attention because of slipping timescale emphasizes the need to rethink time and attention–holding together both human time and ecological time. To do this, I intervene in the pace of ecopoetry as a way to hold onto history while also working in the present. The monolithic *Ecopoetry Anthology* and oft-cited *Recomposing Ecopoetics* argue that ecopoetry separates itself from nature poetry and environmental poetry in its tendency to "look strange and wild on the page; it is often described as experimental… [and] think in self-reflexive ways about how poems can be ecological or somehow enact ecology" (Fisher-Wirth xxxi). I argue that contemporary ecopoetics remains focused on creating or articulating *new* ways of writing poetics of relation connected to nature which elide the

[10] In addition to these performance elements, Kuppers also writes academically about crip eco-performance in *Eco Soma: Pain and Joy in Speculative Performance Encounters* and crip ecopoetics in *Gut Botany*.

works of authors whose methods work ecologically within spaces that are still focused on humans and humanity. In order to hold together these practices, while being attentive to the communities, contexts, and traditions from which they originate, I argue that these writers are doing the work of ecology in spaces that are often overlooked as being anthropocentric. *Crip Planet* is a methodological survey of the work of Larry Eigner, JJJJJerome Ellis, Douglas Kearney, Craig Santos Perez, Selina Tusitala Marsh, and Tusiata Avia. As such, I observe and narrate their use of temporal care, mess, and recycling as invitations to action. The action advocated is not an extractive attempt to encapsulate what is written and move it elsewhere without change, but instead, I document the site-specific, contextualized practices of ecological connection these poets take up and invite others to transform those practices by upholding commitments to the place and space of those practices. With the exception of Perez, these authors are rarely included in ecopoetry anthologies unless they are collections specifically attentive to race, gender, disability status, or other markers of identity; I argue for their inclusion in the field of ecopoetics precisely because their methodologies attend to vast networks of culture, nature, violence, and temporality. All of the poets I discuss, except Eigner, are living and publishing presently, and Eigner is the subject of recent and ongoing disability poetic reclamations. These authors actively include deep histories within their methodologies that refuse to "make it new!" or to offer novel modes of articulation. These authors disrupt the trend in ecopoetics to frame their writing in "an absolute break with the past," instead bringing attention to long histories that offer contexts.

The authors here work from the present to thicken time, to hold the now in all its relations. They don't frame themselves as the first writers on climate disaster, nor the last; even as they live through apocalypses, they know relations who lived through ends before them and who might need to experience the now in their aftermath. Their poetics interweave the present with other timelines that undergird and are simultaneously buttressed through their poetic practice. Avia's *Bloodclot*

emphasizes and lingers in the *Va*–the in-between–that swells the timescape of the automythographic work; Perez folds earlier ecopoets into eco-friendly yet oh so Impossible™ burgers (finding utopia in the questionably flavored present); and Kearney revisits cities' foundations–recycled times and lives–when he writes "those swords and bones, gypsum, gems, trauma: / a torn time recycled, a body" (Kearney *Automaton* 84). Each of these gestures returns readers to process. Readers are invited into the space between lines, to taste the fake meat of now and reflect on the legacy of William Carlos Williams, or to embody a city built, rebuilt, and recycled from rubble.

These authors, rather than cutting away to define a particular time or place, rely on messiness, imperfection, and community formation. These *doings* invite readers in the present to consider how they are connected across time. The works of these authors attempt to weave patches around time and place as they collapse into a monolithic 'new.' This turn to multiplicity aligns with calls for recognizing that climate change is not a new phenomenon. Indigenous scholar Kyle Powys Whyte writes, "anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change is an intensification of environmental change imposed on Indigenous peoples by colonialism" (Whyte 153). In other words, environmental degradation caused by few and impacting the many has a long history. I turn to ecopoets writing in the mess of the present moment, yet remain attentive to agencies, actors, and ways of knowing that destabilize colonial notions of time, particularly those hinged on narratives of progress. I argue that the ecopoetics here offer critical crip methodologies for thinking and working interdependently. The ecopoets discussed here, disabled writers and writers of color, disabled and nondisabled alike, model such practices.

Considering the ways in which contemporary authors engage with ecology in poetry–recognizing and integrating broader webs of connection in composition–I offer the works of authors composing ecopoetry in communities and ways that seem 'strange and wild.' An illustrative example of these practices is the work of white Canadian poets Stephen Collis and Jordan Scott,

whose book *decomp* directly addresses the ways in which human language and writing and the more-than-human world interact to decompose and recompose poetry. To arrange and circulate *decomp*, Collis and Scott placed copies of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in "five distinct ecosystems in British Columbia" for one year, during which time "each ecosystem allowed nature to recompose the texts" (Collis and Scott back cover). The authors then used these recompositions to assemble a manuscript of poems and notes that document the ecopoetic collaboration with the nature of British Columbia. Jonathan Skinner's forward to the text deftly sums up the significance of poetry to understanding ecology; quoting Blanchot, he argues "poetry de-creates. It opens the way to what is not and never can be" (Skinner 6). Ecopoetry and ecopoetic methods are pathways to protean and seemingly impossible futures. It is through language that these methods help to shape the world that is yet-to-be. Along with poems, the pages of the text feature side-by-side co-compositions that consist of "THE READABLE," a transcription of the altered words from *On the Origin of Species* that was found and "GLOSS," the authors' interpretations of the de/re/composition of the text.

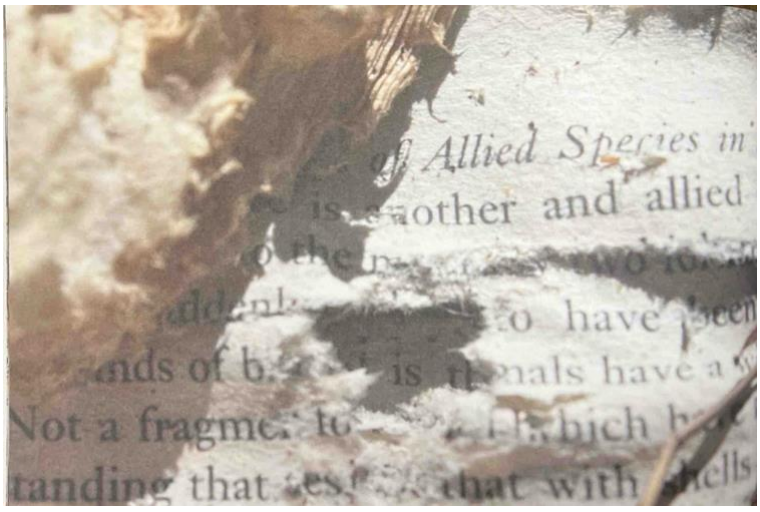

Figure I: a picture of a weathered page from Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (Collis and Scott 40)

Collis and Scott go into great detail to document the place[11] and more-than-human collaborators that shape each part of *decomp*, emphasizing "the first book, where it was left–under birches near spruce and partly covered by a log…heavy with moisture, bugs, leaves, and twigs… mosquitoes all over as we lie on the ground to write and photograph" (40). Through their cataloguing and recognition, Collis and Scott attempt to hold on to the many ways that their work is interconnected with place, animals, weather, and time. This interdependence of life and actors is essential to Jordan Scott's recognition of ecological connectivity and the ways in which it shapes his poetics. In the conclusion, he notes "In the forest, trees are often leaning on each other. The dead will prop themselves against the trunks of the living and go on standing there for decades" (127). This mutual support and standing is a critical recognition of the ways in which the living and dead–trees, words, ideas, ideals–are mutually imbricated.

I show how ecopoetry offers necessary methods to approach the challenge of thinking and writing relationally. Rather than seeking a radical break in time, my work stays with the process, leaning into the repeated calls from Black poets and poets at the heart of crip of color critique to move from a noun state–what Nathaniel Mackey calls "the confinement to a predetermined status"–to a verb state–the "domain of action and the ability to act." The ecopoets here are actors within a mess, offering critical methods for those who have been pushed out of what is considered orderly towards treatment as garbage and those who take the literal and figurative garbage of the present and transform it into a tool for survival. By attending to ecopoetic methods of the present, their places, and how they form connections, I use *Crip Planet* to show some ways to build strange affinities with those who have been forced into similar, messy situations. It is a methodological study

[11] Each climate zone is documented (e.g. "Sub-boreal/Englemann Spruce Zone, Prince George" for the sample image), and the exact latitude and longitude of each book's placement is charted (e.g. 53°53'562"N / 122°50'390"W for the example image). Collis and Scott note some of the troubling implications the history of this cartography: "our classification by biogeoclimatic zones is the work of the provincial government forestry ministry, under a logic of resource extraction. It is a division according to dominant and thus harvestable tree species. This is a map made by capital." (31)

that looks to poets writing now who utilize temporal refusal, mess, and recycling as critical practices for surviving this moment of collapse.

Focusing on the practices of these poets, situated in an ecological recognition of their contexts allows me to lean into ecopoetic practices that open up relations across authors and locations. "In Radical Landscapes: experiment and environment in contemporary poetry," white British poet Harriet Tarlo connects poetics as practice with poetry as language. She notes that poetry, and especially ecopoety, moves beyond the silence of criticism and into language and action when she draws on the work of Rachel DuPlessis, stating "poetry, unlike critical thought, is adept at performing 'both/and/and' in its linguistic acrobatics" (Tarlo). This articulation emphasizes the importance of poetic practice as one form of mobilizing community and action through the deployment of language. Building on this focus on poetics as practice, Tarlo goes on to develop the understanding that poetry is capable of moving from specific, local effect to broader goals, arguing that ecopoems are "distinguished by their intimate sense of the locality around them, relating to place in terms of flora, fauna, geology, place names and history of human use and exploitation. Their philosophies are, however, often global and they move constantly between the micro and macro" (Tarlo). Ecopoetic methods especially work to find connections across time, space, and place. These forms of writing, which Tarlo describes as 'experimental practice,' "goes beyond debate into a form of linguistic action which dares to imagine more recklessly than most" (Tarlo). I task readers with reckless imagination, with a willingness to read widely and wildly, to engage with method, language, and action, even at the risk of metaphorical bruising.

Crip Planet consists of an interrogation of three sustaining ecopoetic methods that have been integral to the survival of their practitioners: Temporal Care Work, Mess, and Recycling. In curating these works, I have structured them with temporal care. May *Crip Planet* offer a s l o w space to encounter many paces of making in the midst of ecological destruction. At the outset, I introduce

Eigner and Ellis–two poets, one with cerebral palsy and the other a self-described stutterer–writing in radically different times with radically different notions of disability who nonetheless have strange affinities in their relationship to the page as a space for thinking about the environment and time. Their writing models what it is to live and work in crip time and Ellis's approach to temporal care allows space for sitting him at the table with Eigner.[12] Through historicization, contextualization, and attention to process, I offer an invitation to s l o w down with them both and imagine sustainable responses to disaster that don't just rely on the new. Following this expansion of time to offer space, I move into the work of Kearney, writing in the mess. Kearney's work is attentive to the immediacy of the disaster–crisis always exists in the *now,* the new name of the fire and the hurricane, the immediate need for resources; however Kearney's methods for messing with the mess allows him to address disaster across time. In his writing, he recognizes the time scale of the fire immediately down the road from where he lives while acknowledging its ecological connection to the war in Vietnam and to limited access to nutrition that makes metformin a necessary medical intervention for Black Americans. He moves outside of the singular by bringing readers into the mess with him, destabilizing the singularity of time and perspective. Kearney's work with the mess thickens time to work with the present crises while showing its histories; in so doing, he expands the moment of disaster outside of the singular now. Finally, I turn to recycling as a way to address slower disasters. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is an immediate issue with a long term cause. It is the accumulation of harm over decades. To linger with the garbage patch means taking on the risks of contaminated space and contaminated rhetorics. Moving between the transformation of literal garbage and rhetorical garbage, the Indigenous Pacific Island poets, Perez, Marsh, and Avia, whose voices I turn to model the transformation that takes place in the act of recycling. They are attentive

[12] This is despite Eigner writing as a disabled man before the disability rights movement and contemporary discourse on crip time.

to what is lost and transformed in the re/making using waste–this process then becomes a long form act of hope that moves not from moment to moment, but across generations. By doing so, these authors contract time around themselves, holding together geologic scales and bringing them into conversation with the present. It is the expansion and contraction of time that I use in my own work–addressing the necessity of having more than one scale across which to operate. *Crip Planet* ends with my own attempts to invite participants into the act of doing through my collaboration with Anuj Vaidya. Our work, "resurrecting Jatayu" is meant to offer a way for participants to consider what it means to *do something* while situating themselves in the historical contexts of their present crises. It is our intent that attention to the thickness of time reorients away from criticism and collapse into a capacious practice of creation in community.

Chapter one, "Temporal Care Work: Slowness, Opening, and Refusal As Crip Stewardship In The Poetry of Larry Eigner and JJJJJerome Ellis" offers a foundational understanding of what it means to re-orient around time, it is this reorientation towards holding together more than one approach to time that I refer to as care. Beginning with Eigner's work as an ecological writer, I argue Eigner's approach to writing, grounded in ecology and relation, offers a way to hold together ecocriticism's fascination with time alongside a reading of crip genealogies of slowness. Eigner's crip ecopoetics, which predate the disability justice movement, model care and attention to the passage of time as a means to offer care to a plurality of ways of existing in the world. In *Care Work*, queer, non-binary, disabled Canadian-American poet and activist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha discusses the ways in which disability justice necessitates "collective care." These practices of disability justice necessitate creating spaces which offer multiple forms of engagement, something that is of increasing necessity as climate change amplifies the barriers that exist for activists, disabled and nondisabled alike. To demonstrate ecopoetry's need for a crip intervention, I address the fascination that ecopoetry has with time in pursuit of newness and novelty. I conclude with a

reading of the work of nonbinary Black disabled poet, musician and scholar JJJJJerome Ellis. Ellis' multi-media work opens up time in acts of what I call "temporal care work" by encouraging multiple paces through poetic engagement. Ellis' writing, music, and scholarship use slowness not as a pace but as a critical crip methodology to create space for multiple ways of existing in time. Ellis' work is grounded in an ecological web of queer studies, Black studies, disability studies, and Indigenous knowledges. In their work, Ellis opens time through embodied practice of the stutter–using the clearings that his lived experience makes to form connections and to refuse normative time. Taken together, the move through Eigner to Ellis argues that slowness as a crip methodology is a necessary intervention into ecopoetics.

Chapter two, "'What Have We Made???!!!': Mess as Method in Douglas Kearney's Ecopoetics" turns from time to the risk of metaphorical and physical collapse that arises from being forced into the mess while offering insight on how to survive in it. I pause for deep breaths during fire season in the Western United States, showing the mess humans have made of things and its disproportionate impacts. What does it mean to work from the mess and use its tools? I turn to Kearney, who has historically been elided from discussions of ecopoetry despite his work's direct attention to ecological destruction, and his approach to performative typography that makes the page an ecology of its own. His question "What have we made???!!!"" calls attention to the strange affinities and histories at play when making in the mess. It brings the reader out of a coherent self and into a *we* that is always already imbricated in the cultural violence Kearney writes within. Kearney doesn't shy away from the violences of the mess, but attends to them. The mess is not a good place to be, it is a collapse of contexts and supports. His work is attentive not only to the the violence "out there" in the world, but in his own position as a Black man living in a country with deeply rooted racism and ongoing racist and colonial violences: this is not a relationship framed one directionally but held in complex relations as a target of violence, a benefactor of violence, and a

perpetrator of violence. He messes with the relationship between Blackness and disability that emerges from long histories of environmental racism and disabled ecologies in his approach to fragmentation.

Chapter three, "Recycling: Making do with Litter-ature in the Pacific" turns to the work of Indigenous and Pacific Island poets to address the material and linguistic spread of American literature and poetics in the Pacific. I follow the litter of the Western United States to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and the poets intervening there. When mess gets cleaned up, where does the garbage go and who is asked to recycle it? In her work on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, Alice Te Punga Somerville offers a critical response to Western conceptions of the Pacific as a space of nothingness, absenting trash and Indigenous peoples alike. Instead, Somerville's work offers a method for attending to the vast somethingness that is the Pacific, its peoples, and its garbage patch. I turn to poets Perez, Marsh, and Avia, who refuse colonial logics of binarism and containment that have been used to elide the mobility of Indigenous people and the ongoing harms of colonial garbage. I begin with a reading of the poetry of Perez in *Habitat Threshold*, where he takes popular, Western litter-ature and recycles it to address the material impacts of garbage in the Pacific. Through use of a capacious cartography in the titular poem of *Fast Talking PI*, Marsh offers a multiplicity of ways Indigenous and allied scholars and poets offer conceptions of the Pacific that do not align with colonial articulations of binarism and containment. I end with Avia's automythographical work in *bloodclot*, which looks to narratives that predate colonial presence in the Pacific while troubling narratives that isolate Indigenous people in time through attention to colonial waste and its impact on Avia's autobiographical Nafanua born in Christchurch. This re-cycling of Nafanua alongside a longed-for used sanitary pad and tourist garbage on Waikiki insists on the mobility of Indigenous peoples–often cut from Western conceptions of the now–and the lack of isolation of colonial garbage–that is overlooked as it moves through the Pacific. These conceptions do not run counter

to colonial articulations, as they are more multiplicitous than such enclosures would allow and their lengthy histories only recently and occasionally intersect with colonial occupation. This transformation offers a critical intervention into the relationship between material garbage and rhetorical garbage (e.g recycling Dr. Seuss to make "One fish, Two fish, Plastics, Dead fish" or turning "This is Just to Say" into a poem about Impossible™ burgers). These ecopoetic transformations expose the logics of garbage and engage in acts of restoration and recycling.

Crip Planet ends with a coda that offers one among many answers to the question that my students most frequently bring to me after they are introduced to the sometimes-stifling reach of ecocriticism: "Well, what can we *do*?" In this coda, I discuss my ongoing work with queer, disabled Indian artist, educator, and curator Anuj Vaidya. Together, Anuj and I have created a role-playing game and scene from the never-to-be made film *Forest Tales*, an experimental take on eco-cinema that plays with the knowledge that the most ecological film is the one that is never made. In this scene, Anuj and I recycle the south Asian epic the *Ramayana* in order to re-think the fate of one character: Jatayu. Drawing on work published from the project,

> The vulture Jatayu is known for his courage and loyalty. When Ravana abducts Sita and whisks her away to Lanka in his flying chariot, it is the fearless Jatayu who tries to stop him. An aerial battle ensues, but Ravana eventually prevails, chopping off Jatayu's wing, disabling him from flight and fight and eventually from life itself. Rama performs last rites for the vulture, making kin across species—a line that is more often transgressed in the context of Hinduism than of caste or religion. In this episode of the speculative cinema project Forest Tales, Jatayu is resurrected with a prosthetic wing, only to face the extinction of his kind in the present. Our reanimated protagonist sets off in search of Sita, who is now SITA: Sanctuary in Terra Autonoma—an autonomous forest zone that holds the seeds for human and vulture survival. She is a vision of the future in the present, a queer utopia forged through a practice of reciprocity, where the struggle pulses with life and love and laughter. Will you help Jatayu unearth the queer utopias that are latent in our impaired landscapes and disabled ecologies, so that they may reach towards an alter-future? (Vaidya and Stokes)

This collaborative, cinematic performance introduces participants to a role-playing game that pressures them to act, knowing full well that these actions will have intended and unintended

consequences. The coda outlines practices for understanding and modelling ways to take action in a moment when becoming lost solely in criticism can lead to silence and inaction.

I demonstrate that approaches to engaging and transforming our crip planet can only ever be partial, but engagement is what is most necessary. The poet/theorists invited to comingle on these pages model necessary methods from temporal care to mess to recycling for redressing ecopoetry and imagining care for the planet itself. They constitute efforts to sustain multiple ways of surviving in a world that is increasingly becoming inimical to survival. Through their methodological approach to poetics, they model what Aimee Bahng reads into the Unregulated Zone in *Salt Fish Girl*, where "improvisational life-forms and experimental practices form ad hoc community networks and resistance movements that coalesce spontaneously and ephemerally, on the fly, on the run, and cobbled together from recycled and repurposed materials" (Bahng 165). Bahng's book, *Migrant Futures: Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times*, offers multiple processes towards a plurality of futures. Within the book, she discusses in detail the ways that the future has become commodified and how stories about the future are traded for profit. Bahng attempts to bring about more and varied futures through her analysis of "a promiscuous set of cultural texts, often paired in ways that highlight a tension between fortune-telling in the service of capitalism and migrant futures that dare to imagine a world beyond it" (xi). Instead of leaning into the many stories that limit the future to a capitalist, ecologically degraded one full of white, nondisabled people, Bahng argues in favor of stories and storytelling that move many forms of present bodies and cultures into the future. In the chapter "Salt Fish Futures: The irradiated Transpacific and the Financialization of the Human Genome Project," Bahng's work moves into the Pacfic, much as *Crip Planet* will in "Recycling.". In this speculative space, Bahng reads into the book *Salt Fish Girl*–which follows an ageless shapeshifter–between past and future, attending to the improbable ways that humans continue to survive pollution, radiation, and dehumanizing capitalist logics. In so doing, she argues for practices

that transform rather than restore, for variation rather than homogeneity. She reads into *Salt Fish Girl* practices for "a politics of mutation rather than regeneration. Whereas regeneration's aim is to restore a body to an original or normative state, mutation finds its expression in changing the materiality of a thing, likely in ways that alter conceptualizations of bodies, differentiation, origins, and copies" (151). I seek out methods that mutate and adapt–that take on the messes in which humanity finds itself and improvise from there.

The poet/theorists and their more than human collaborators collected here improvise ways of forming strange affinities while forced into the mess, they offer care across time by making space for stutters, and they recycle the seemingly impossible to get rid of litter-ature that tries to submerge and contain Indigenous mobility. "Resurrecting Jatayu" braids these three strands of practice into one project that encourages participants in ecopoetry to better understand what they can do now, and how to begin doing it.

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Chapter One: Temporal Care Work

Slowness, Opening, and Refusal As Crip Stewardship In The Poetry of Larry Eigner and JJJJJerome Ellis

In the spring of 2024, I was invited to Eastern Tennessee State University by one of the former participants of the S L O W reading group to lead a workshop on cut-up poetry for the Rehearsing Care Lab. I almost didn't make it: the trip was disrupted due to weather, illness passing through my family, and a car breakdown. Plane travel for one became a family road trip as myself and my partner traded off turns behind the wheel, going as fast as our recently no-longer feverish bodies would allow, and with plenty of breaks. This workshop and its itinerary was a reminder of the need for multiple paces. After far too long, we made it to a nature reserve outside of town, where my partner's glasses promptly broke–reminding us of the precarity of the items we use every day. We worked as an interdependent unit to hold them together while the superglue dried, trying ourselves not to become glued to the glasses at the points of contact.

My workshop "Speculative Sutured Selves" focused on our points of contact between self understanding and the language of medical journals and diagnostic handbooks. Participants came in close contact with these texts, cutting them up and rearranging them into poems. Thinking about the limits that had informed my travel, I encouraged participants to reimagine and speculate on what could be done with the limitations they encountered in their available word choice for self and community description. One group of students from the clinical psychology program chose to use their oh-so-dense *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* as the limiting factor, creating poems that questioned the practice of diagnosis as they meditated on how they could open the "'field' of psychology" to wider relations.

The Thick of Things

I begin *in denses res*–in the thick of things. I do so because naming a beginning of the climate crisis is a fraught exercise even as it is important to recognize the multiple timescales on which the climate crisis unfolds, from the immediacy of the disaster to slower accumulation of violence. In framing this broad, slow approach to time, I turn to Patty Berne's writing on disability justice, where she defines the process as "a vision and practice of a yet-to-be, a map that we create with our ancestors and our great grandchildren onward" (Berne). The map that Berne lays out bends and thickens the present moment, putting it in conversation with what has been and what is yet to be. There are no easy restarts, no utter investment in the new at the cost of understanding now. Instead, Berne offers a chronology that holds the threads of what has come before in its foundation and is attentive to the practices it offers to the future.

I consider queer, crip, and C__P__ approaches to time as a plurality of approaches to navigate the now. This process is not meant to flatten through simplifying comparison, but to thicken understandings of situated time through direct engagement with multiple approaches. My motions through time are intentional, following the recursive eddies of theory and loops of speculation that are shared and/or refused in queer, crip, and C__P__ time. The authors I discuss practice ways of being in the present and approaching the yet-to-be with an awareness of responsibility to both progenitors and successors. Following this network requires time, effort, and specificity. As such, I draw on what Elizabeth Freeman calls her "queerest commitment" to her own work, "close reading: the decision to unfold slowly a small number of imaginative texts rather than amass a weighty archive of or around texts, and to treat these texts and their formal work as theories of their own" (xvii). In Freeman's work, she lingers with dense moments of scholarship in order to open up all of the different possibilities they offer. I lean into the adverb of her unfolding as I *slowly*

and with shaky hands unfold the work of two poet-scholars who find strange affinities across time: Larry Eigner and JJJJJerome Ellis.

Focusing on depth rather than breadth, I am able to trace the ways in which Eigner's work–created pre ADA and mostly pre-504 protections–and Ellis' work–created in the present and thinking across the thickness time–connect with one another through their use of the material page as a space for holding crip ephemera. Both authors challenge conventional approaches to time in poetics. Their shared calls for opening time and slowing down offer alternatives to the prevailing trends in ecojustice and the environmental humanities toward acceleration and newness. In so doing, I offer a plurality of approaches to time that model Ellis' ethics and practice of care outlined in their poetics and discussion of time: a practice I will define as temporal care work.

s l o w i s t h e p o e m

" s l o w i s flat wall of the sea
t h e
p o e m and sky "[13]
~Eigner, *calligraphy / typewriter* 90

Eigner was a white disabled poet born in 1927 in Swampscott, Massachusetts.[14] He wrote more than forty volumes of poetry between 1935 and his death in 1996 in California. He is known for his imagery, his typography, and his use of white space. His sparse poetry is particularly descriptive when it comes to place and "s l o w" in its very spacing as it holds together time and place on the page. In the forward to Jennifer Bartlett's biography of Eigner, *Sustaining Air*, white US-American

[13] When quoting Eigner's poetry, this manuscript attempts to maintain Eigner's "typewriter's equivalent spacing, to reproduce and preserve Eigner's meticulous vertical and horizontal settings of letters" (Faville and Grenier xiii) while recognizing such acts of citation and preservation result in skewed re-productions of the original work. Hopefully with as much caprice as the originals. In recognition of the wholeness of the page that Eigner's works occupy, quotation marks are included as close as possible to the margins.

[14] In her Eigner biography, Jennifer Bartlett's *Sustaining Air,* she details the depth and breadth of Eigner's experiences with family, at camp, and with other poets. She upends myths about his disability. She writes of the materiality of his life. The care work that he was enmeshed in and the various mobility devices he used–roller skates, an improvised walker, wheelchairs, and more–

Professor of English George Hart situates Eigner within and transforming three histories of poetry– as a postmodern nature poet, as part of the New American Poets (alongside Corman, Creely, and Olson), and later the Language poets of both the East and West coasts (Through Robert Genier and Barrett Watten). Eigner's impact on contemporary poetry is woefully underrecognized, despite his inclusion in Donald Hall's *The New American Poetry: 1945-1960,* the impact he had on Language poetry, and his publication of more than forty poetry collections. In recent years, Jennifer Bartlett and George Hart have written analyses of his work and a biography which positions him as one of the forebears of disability poetry positioning him historically as a disabled poet who lived through the independent housing movement before the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Given his cerebral palsy, Eigner's writing practice involved using only "right index finger and thumb, working on his 1940 Royal portable typewriter" (Faville and Grenier xiii). Eigner's reading practice involved "a serious engagement with scientific literature and media, including Rachel Carson's seminal *Silent Spring*" (Hart *Finding The Weight Of Things* [back cover]). His slow approach to the poetics of place and his attention to place in relation offer an ecological poetry capable of addressing cascades of ecosystem loss with precision. His ecological approach is also visible on the page as he leaves the ephemera of the process of each poem's slow creation there. I argue that a critical, crip approach to ecopoetics moves beyond the act of composition and into processes of documenting the ephemera of creation. Queer, Cuban-American scholar José Esteban Muñoz makes a compelling argument in his work *Cruising Utopia* for the case of "ephemera," a form of "residue that looks to understand the wake of performance" (71). Focusing on queer performance and embodiment, Muñoz pushes back against the assumption that performance is something that only takes place in the moment of action by stating that what remains can be similarly participatory, arguing that "ephemera are the remains that are often embedded in queer acts, in both stories we tell one another and communicative physical gestures" (Muñoz 65). In making the argument for

ephemera, Muñoz turns to the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop, and in particular the poem "One Art." "One Art" is a villanelle, that uses repetition to insist"The art of losing isn't hard to master." The speaker of the poem tracks a series of accelerating losses: keys, names, places, a continent, and ultimately–you. All of these losses add up and entangle with the rhyme until losing looks like "disaster" despite the poem's repeated insistence it isn't hard. The speaker or perhaps the author turns to italics and parentheticals to urge on the composition of the last line "(*write* it!)" (Bishop qtd. Muñoz 71). Muñoz notes that "this command to write is a command to save the ephemeral thing by committing it to memory, to word, to language" (71). The disabled poets here do the same, committing disabled embodied poetics 'to memory, to word, to language.' While Eigner rarely wrote of his own lived existence with cerebral palsy, the ephemera of his ways of moving through the world remain on the page and in recordings of him reading his work. Attention to crip poetics follows the ephemera of disability as it moves from embodied writing practice to the page. Considering the ways a writer with CP strikes and mis-strikes a typewriter or the way a poet with a stutter plays with time shifts composition from stasis into a perpetual act of becoming–communicative gestures of kinship that connect across time rather than in a single moment. I address the crip ecopoetic method of slowness as a formal aesthetic practice of disability poetics and as an embodied approach to environmental justice.

The field of ecopoetics finds itself in the cultural and conceptual slipstream of acceleration towards newness and the novel as it defines its potential practices of resistance. Linear narratives of progress, newness, and exploitation impart an inertia in which ecocriticism broadly and ecopoetry specifically are caught within. In responding to a press towards the new and novel, these conversations articulate their resistance as one meant to match or exceed this velocity in order to

redress the tireless push towards the exploitable future.[15] It is in this timeframe that ecopoetics simultaneously advocates for slowness while being caught in the push towards new/novel practices. I resist pressure for endless output as I slow down with the work of two poets writing over half a century apart. Learning from the methods of two ecological poets across time, I disrupt narratives of the newness of the now in environmental humanities and offer these pages a slow space to accommodate many paces in imagining the temporal care work necessary to respond to the acceleration of environmental crises.

In the "Provocations" section of *Environmental Humanities*, Hannes Bergthaller, Rob Emmett, Adeline Johns-Putra, Agnes Kneitz, Susanna Lidström, Shane McCorristine, Isabel Pérez Ramos, Dana Phillips, Kate Rigby, and Libby Robin make a case for slowness and slow scholarship at the intersections of ecocriticism, environmental history, and the environmental humanities. They point out the not-newness of contemporary climate crisis, noting that "the ecological crisis is not only a crisis of the physical environment but also a crisis of the cultural and social environment—of the systems of representation and of the institutional structures through which contemporary society understands and responds to environmental change (or fails to do so: hence the crisis)" (262). In response to these failures, Bergthaller et. al. instead propose a shift in social and cultural approaches to the environment and environmental sciences. They argue that "The value of the environmental humanities… lies precisely in their resistance to such bottom-line imperatives and to the allure of the 'cutting edge'... 'Slow scholarship' is not mere dalliance, bourgeois self-indulgence, or belletrism. It opposes the 'attention regime' of the news media, particularly in their current digital incarnation" (266). This jointly-assembled provocation is one that advocates for an active resistance to practices that press, constantly, for attention, action, and new procedures. Rather than aligning with current

[15]For a detailed discussion on the exploitability of the future, consider Aimee Bahng's *Migrant Futures: Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times*.

temporal practices, these authors argue that "in order to understand such issues [as climate change], our thinking needs to run on a different clock, one calibrated to novel and innovative time scales" (267). The language of the novel slips in once again, aligned with the innovation that propels linear, progressive understandings of time. The article then concludes with 'the spirit of experimentation,' an exhortation that "we therefore need to try out new forms of dialogue, new varieties of collaborative research, new channels of communication, and new ways of disseminating the results of our efforts" (273). In the end, then, the desire to follow the new into the future pulls even those arguing for slow scholarship along.

Holding together these ecopoetic approaches to time and chronology, I argue that slow scholarship and slow poetics intervene in onward and accelerating progress towards the new. This necessary articulation shapes both a disability studies informed approach to time, but an understanding how the entanglements of time are critical to ecopoetry specifically and literary studies more broadly. In "Of Other Spaces," white, French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault argues that one of the primary focuses of contemporary scholarship is the delineation of spaces.[16] Using ecological terminology, he argues that "we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another" (23). This series of connections and the sites which surround them drive scholarship and the humanist understanding of networks of power and control. To that end, he points out that such focuses move outside, or alongside, previous fascination with time, meaning that "time appears to us as only one of the various distributive operations that are possible for the elements that are spread out in space" (23). I argue that slowness provides an engagement with time that allows concurrent engagement with multiple spaces. Slowness reorients the interface between time and spaces, allowing for more than one interaction with writing, repetition, writing, repetition, and poetic articulation.

[16] The term Foucault uses is "obsessions."

Beginning with Eigner's work as an ecological writer, I argue that Eigner's approach to writing, grounded in ecology and relation, offers a way to hold together ecocriticism's fascination with time alongside a reading of crip genealogies of slowness. To demonstrate ecopoetry's need for a crip intervention, I address the fascination that ecopoetry has with time, especially its pursuit of newness and novelty. Eigner's crip ecopoetics, which predate the disability justice movement, model care and attention to the passage of time. In doing so, Eigner resists the singularity of a linear, progressive time that insists on efficiency and reduction–instead, Eigner insists on more than one, forward-oriented time; Instead, he holds open the way for tripping, slurring, stumbling across time and the page.

In *Care Work*, queer, non-binary, disabled Canadian-American poet and activist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha discusses the ways in which disability justice necessitates "collective care," which she defines as "shifting our organizations to be ones where people feel fine if they get sick, cry, have needs, start late because the bus broke down, move slower, ones where there's food at meetings, people work from home—and these aren't things we apologize for" (Piepzna-Samarasinha 80). These practices of disability justice necessitate creating spaces which offer multiple forms of engagement–the speed of getting batteries for a CPAP to someone in a building that has lost power; the slowness of marching for climate justice with those using canes, walkers, and other mobility devices; and the acceleration of the need for such considerations as climate change amplifies the barriers that exist for activists, disabled and nondisabled alike. The space shaped through collective care models the processes that queer, disabled, crip-of-color Asian-American scholar Jina B. Kim calls for in her work "Towards a Crip-of-Color Critique." In this article, Kim insists on the need of opening up scholarship and activist work via "a mode of analysis that urges us to hold racism, illness, and disability together, to see them as antagonists in a shared struggle, and to generate a poetics of survival from that nexus" (Kim). I then turn to crip genealogies to discuss the place that

slowness has held as a crip practice. While Eigner did not perceive himself to be an activist and actively resisted positioning himself among other disabled people, he repeatedly found himself within hotspots of the disability rights movement, including the independent housing movement and attending Camp Jened, where "ten years after Eigner attended, the early disability rights movement was born" (Bartlett 43). The work that Eigner accomplishes is not direct activist work, but necessary acts of cultural production. In the same era that Eigner sinks into the literature of *Scientific American*, he documents his experience as a disabled poet composing in a moment before legal protection, independent housing movements, and interdependent crip support could be possible. In this sense, Eigner chronicles a critical moment of crip of embodied experience through his writing. By eschewing an identity-first approach to his CP, Eigner instead models crip practices and methods–writing from the need for s l o w, the need for full pages, and the need for support.[17] Writing from this method's perspective allows readers to understand that his work begins not from a *place* of identifying as disabled, but from the *process* of writing as a disabled poet.

Eigner's attention to environmental activism contemporary with his writing places him within a mode of social and communal poetry that abuts current disability activism. As one who cared for the environment, Eigner tried to limit the amount of paper he used and was attentive to the ways in which his writing practice could be one of environmental stewardship. In *Social Poetics*, Mark Nowak argues for the importance of language as one part of community formation and doing, noting how poetry makes space to "recreate and rewrite our pasts, especially those brief, often fleeting moments when a more utopian idea for our futures might be glimpsed in our earlier actions" (122). By rewriting a narrative of Eigner that folds together his ephemeral approach to disabled embodiment with his environmentally conscious, intentional composition, I will work to

[17] From his brothers to enter a plane (Bartlett 42), counselors at Camp Jened (44), and the group home he called "The Cornerstone House" (120).

create a social justice approach to poetics that allows an extension of care to people and place across time. To put this in conversation with Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work* would be to turn it into an act of care across time, one that notes how "remembering" can appear as "a time-limited process," but which can be expanded upon and utilized to convey knowledge (143). Returning to Eigner's work from a distance makes sense to better convey the ways in which slowness is a shared crip/environmentalist necessity, addressing its intersectional potential as it both appears on the page and is intentionally incorporated into writing.

Building on this entanglement of ecopoetry, time, and slowness, I conclude with a reading of Ellis. Ellis situates themself in a thicket of Black musical and literary traditions as well as through disability studies and culture. Among the connections they make directly, they hail themself as a Black, disabled animal, part of the ongoing U.S. occupation of Indigenous lands. In their academic writing and poetry, they cite themselves as connected to Sound poetry (through Craig Dworkin, Jay Dolmage, and others), to Black sound studies (through Moten and Aretha Franklin), to disability culture, and, through poetics of relation, their own enslaved ancestors. Working across time and disability, I hold Eigner and Ellis side-by side through their shared attentiveness to the page as a place to hold disabled ephemera. Both authors use their poetry as a way to hold their embodied experience. While Eigner's pages hold the calligraphy of the typewriter and the luxurious possibilities of the spacebar's size as they offer opportunities to s l o w d o w n, Ellis' pages slow the reader down with repetition, time stamps, and the visual possibilities of marking the stutter on the page. Both authors use the page to hold time open and to disrupt easy, quick, or simple explanations of writing that risk negating or obfuscating their embodied approaches.

Ellis' multi-media work opens up time in an act of what I call "temporal care work." Ellis' writing, music, and scholarship use slowness not as a pace but as a critical crip methodology to

create space for multiple ways of existing in time.[18] Ellis' work is grounded in an ecological web of queer studies, Black studies, disability studies, and Indigenous knowledges. In their work, Ellis opens time through embodied practice of the stutter–using the clearings that their lived experience makes to form connections and to refuse normative time. Taken together, the move through Eigner to Ellis argues that slowness as a crip methodology is a necessary intervention into ecopoetics.

While Ellis and Eigner write in different times and places and contexts, they both embrace shared approaches to slowness and ecology that make for moments of strange and compelling affinities across their work. Having taken the time to linger with these authors' works, I offer their shared slowness as one method for approaching and extending care–to seek and find connection across decades and across the traditions of Black Mountain poetry and Black Sound Poetry. Ellis and Eigner insist upon approaching time differently, and require this of those who engage with their work as well. Each author begins from within, starting from their embodied approach to relation as they compose. Eigner's work begins within his body and moves to the page, a slow process that creates images, sounds, and breath upon and across a page of paper fed through a typewriter.

“ a poem is a
characteristic
length of time ”

(Eigner *calligraphy / typewriter* 123)

In this poem, #119, originally written August 26, 1967, Eigner reflects on the relationship between time and poetry. Through the brevity of this poem (quoted here in its entirety), Eigner plays with units of measure, knowing full well that poems exist somewhere alongside time. For Eigner and his contemporaries, a poem could be as brief as a single letter or an hours-long reading. Instead of

[18] E.g. when Piepzna-Samarasinha insists on only moving “as slowly as the slowest” at a protest.

centering time in this poem, Eigner centers the poem and its process: to exist and to be, to create a poem is the distinguishing unit of time. Ellis' work begins in their body and becomes sound–or is paused as stutter–before being moved to the page. Ellis' first book, *The Clearing* began as an album commissioned by the Poetry Project, which was then transmediated into a book resembling a tome of sheet music, with each page representing one minute of album time. These pages were further transmediated to Youtube videos, bringing motion to the text that holds the breath of the album. In this process, Ellis repeatedly breaks time through the use of creative mobilizations of typography, by scattering moving letters through videos, and by using excess writing to convey visualizations of their sometimes-slippery stutter.[19]

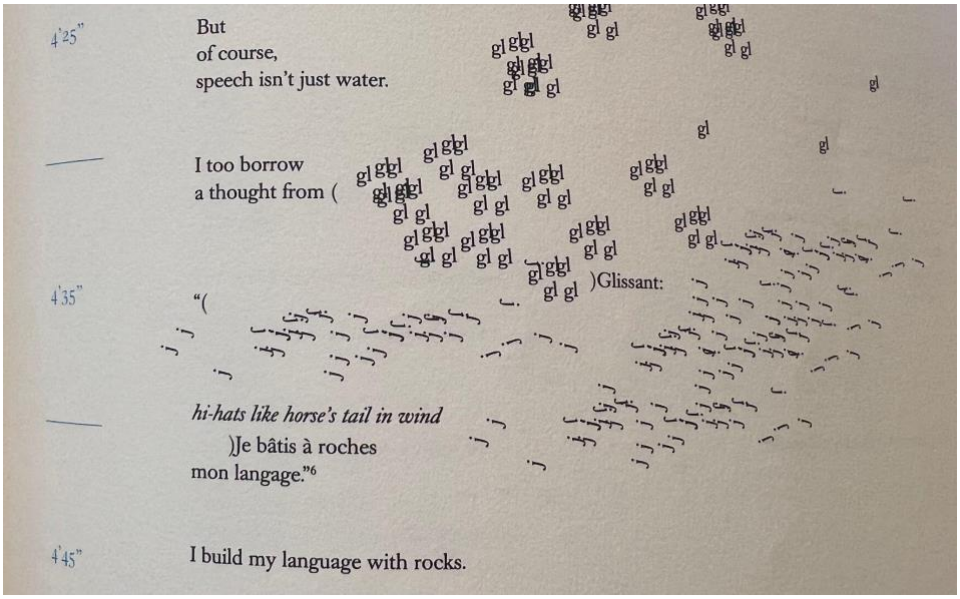

Figure II: A page from *The Clearing* shows waterlike letters alongside formal lines.

In this excerpt from *The Clearing* (as text), twenty seconds mark the singing of the phrase "But of course, speech isn't just water. I too borrow a thought from Glissant: 'Je bâtis à roches mon langage.' I build my language with rocks" (Ellis, *Clearing* 37). In this transmediated, textual version,

[19] Arguments can be made for connection to typewriter art, line-printer art, and the ASCII art that would have been prevalent in Ellis' life.

Ellis' stutter is rendered not as a block of text occupying time, but as fragments of the beginning of Glissant and *Je*, crafting an image that hints at a flock of birds over waves, or as stones splashing into a lake, or many other opaque shapes upon the page. The unspoken italics, "*hi-hats like horse's tails in wind*" describe the accompanying audio, but in language laden with so many signals as to become noise: the name of a flower, the tail of a literal horse, the rocks and fragments Ellis lifts from Glissant, defying a one-to-one correspondence of meaning in favor of one to three (or more).[20]

I will show that Eigner and Ellis write and perform slowly. This slowness begins with their embodied experience as disabled ecopoets–Eigner had cerebral palsy and Ellis stutters. They do not share a sense of identity politics, but they do share the method and process of slowness. Their affinity arises in an insistence that those who engage with their work do so on different temporal terms–readers must be willing to engage with the wholeness of Eigner's pages, typed diligently one letter at a time across the paper just as much as readers must spend time with the fullness of Ellis' pages–which mark time as thoroughly as they break it–and puns. Ellis and Eigner practice slowness as a poetic method, opening and refusing a singular extractivist approach to time and poetry. If, as Eigner argues, the poem is the characteristic length of time, then slow poetics opens time in an act of care to readers and speakers that stutter, fall, and linger outside of the contemporary ecopoetic acceleration towards the new/now. This act of resistance, in turn, advocates for timespace that accommodates those who have historically been pressed out of the flow of time.

Where & When In Eigner: "y o u k n o w w h e r e y o u ' r e g o i n g ?"

" life the placid
time-bomb

how long the
other end of the fuse "
(Eigner *calligraphy / typewriter* 153)

[20] The plant being referenced here, *Equisetum*, makes a reappearance in *Aster of Ceremonies*, as one among many North American plants that was important to both Indigenous communities and enslaved people.

The above lines open Eigner's poem #295, written on March 15, 1969.[21] These stanzas introduce the reader to a central concern: life. It is in this case, a time-bomb–a slow fused danger that presents as calm, unwavering, and perhaps inevitable. Rather than the stressful *tick-tick-tick* of a mechanical explosive, Eigner directs readers' attention to the quietness of biology. The opening stanzas move from the left side of the page to the right, with additional spaces to give them motion while both the content and irregular spacing show the passage of time. This work, like all of Eigner's oeuvre, is deeply entangled in time–in the body of the poet, in the practice of its writing, in the act of its reading, and in its subject matter. This passage opens up the scale of time to that of life. It signals the simultaneity of slowness in the wick of a bomb (not immediate) and the speed with which flame moves across it, a visible indicator of the loss of time.[22] The piece firmly embeds itself in ongoing ecological discourse of population control, global warming, and anthropogenic disaster. In this opening, the poem focuses the reader on the passage of time on a global scale to re/dis/orient the question of how long life and/or planet earth have.

Situated in the world of ecological literature and ecological sciences, y o u k n o w w h e r e y o u ' r e g o i n g ? (#295) was composed seven years after Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* "so profoundly seized the popular imagination that Carson's book led to major policy changes" (Hart *Finding* 43). Through this methodology of thinking through and incorporating scientific and political texts, Eigner's writing takes on the quality of ecopoetry, weaving together multiple strands of thought and considering how the space race, military waste disposal, and incandescent lighting are all entwined. This interconnectedness is the central argument of *Silent Spring* and the central argument

[21] In July of this same year, the United States would commence the Mandrel nuclear tests, a series of 52 tests that would take place mostly in Nevada between July 1969 and June 1970.
[22] This image is not only figurative, but possibly drawn from a eugenic poster advocating for population reduction. See George Hart's *Finding the Weight of Things*, p. 141.

of the poem.[23] Indeed, Eigner had followed Carson's work from early on, mentioning to Cid Corman that he used her 1941 book *Under the Sea Wind* when writing "the music, the rooms" (Bartlett 89). While there isn't evidence of when, precisely Eigner read *Silent Spring*, biographer Jennifer Bartlett traces the impact the book has on Eigner's writing, alongside other key environmental texts like *The Population Bomb* (89). The same month this poem was written, *Scientific American* released "Thermal Pollution and Aquatic Life" and "The Atmospheres of Venus and Mars" (Hart *Finding* 141). Eigner was an avid consumer of media and of scientific knowledge and engaged regularly with *Scientific American*.[24] All of this contextual information is available because the work of Eigner has been re-surfaced as a subject of interest to both ecopoets and disability studies scholars.[25]

The poem continues:

"

earth
coiled up in

how backward running

brake to re-enter

you eat yourself out
for the all ways by the tail
Webbs

"
(153)

[23] Again: (Hart 43).

[24] George Hart's *Finding the Weight of Things: Larry Eigner's Ecrippoetics* draws on the corpus of Eigner's writing, published, unpublished, and in correspondence. It fills in gaps in Eigner's publications and argues for the ways in which Eigner is situated at a dense thicket of argumentation: crip community and ecological activism. Eigner's work argues for different approaches to population and resource circulation, which disrupts eugenic discourse around the amount of resources used to sustain crip life.

[25] In her biography *Sustaining Air: The Life of Larry Eigner*, Jennifer Bartlett brings together correspondence, household records, and family heirlooms to tell the story of Eigner. Because Eigner did not write a great deal of autobiography, Bartlett's work fills in necessary gaps in the record of this author who is being re-integrated into disability studies and disability poetics. Working with Eigner's caregiver of ten years and the massive amount of correspondence available, she works to push back against myths about Eigner: "*He couldn't walk*. He could. *He couldn't write by hand*. He did. *He didn't have any kind of formal education or leave his house until he moved to Berkeley in the late 1970s*. In our research, my dear friend and colleague George Hart and I found these myths to be untrue" (xv).

This passage layers the imagery of the bomb with the coils of Ouroboros, the image of a snake eating its own tail. This image is often associated with cycles of destruction and creation. In this framework, Earth itself becomes part of the time-bomb–it is coiled both as Ouroboros and as the spring that winds a clock bomb. It is always simultaneously winding itself up and winding down to destruction. The proposed solution is a play on language around slowness as disruption–"brake to re-enter"–to break the cycles of destruction requires braking. Near the end of this passage, the poem splits, with a secondary statement near the margins: "for the / Webbs" (153). At the time the poem was written, then-director of NASA James E. Webb was pouring resources into the space race, burning fuel, money, and time to put an American on the moon.[26] According to Neil M. Maher's "Grounding the Space Race," popular opinion of the lunar landing "began waning in the late 1960s and plunged throughout the 1970s" and resulted in protests of the use of federal funding elsewhere, including a demonstration on the day of the Apollo 11 launch, not " to protest the Apollo launch, but instead to demonstrate against the country's distorted sense of national priorities" (141). This demonstration, led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's president Ralph Abernathy, was instrumental in the later re-direction of NASA's funding and research into inner city projects.[27] The split of focus here opens up the poem to consider the webs (uncapitalized, improper, and connecting) that connect the ecology with the Earth and the Webbs (capitalized, extracting) that were moving beyond the worldly ecology. This interaction challenges the reader to consider the friction between NASA's funding and goals, symbolized through Webb, and the fragile webs of connection that hold together life on the planet. The poem continues:

"

it ' s all moving the road
taking you away

the desert side

[26] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goh2x_G0ct4

[27] For more details, see "Grounding the Space Race" doi:10.1017/mah.2017.4

gardens
and all
the flood

earth temperature rises
towards
the boiling point of water

with power plants

cool lighting and fires

or fluorescents could dim ”

(153)

In this reading, the Earth-as-Ouroboros is always moving, winding itself up. At the same time, the Webbs are accelerating this process, pushing the coils harder. In these lines, the poem re-orients the reader towards the land, motion, and time. Bringing the reader onto the moving road, Eigner situates the conversation in the interstices of natural spaces, moving from desert to garden and into disaster. Most of his life, Eigner lived in Swampscott, Massachusetts. At age 11, The Great New England Hurricane of 1938 decimated the land near Eigner's family home. His poetry, coming out of life on the New England shore, is deeply concerned with the weather in the present and future. On the page, the reader is sliding further and further towards the center of the page, merging into a road that waves from side to side. The language simplifies, with punchy single syllables pushing the biblical imagery of beginnings–floods and gardens–and endings–boiling desert and fire. The poem folds this imagery into technology, linking gardens with greenhouse effects and the fires of Revelation to rising temperatures from the carbon dioxide output of power plants, unless other (at the time) green technology were used. The sense is an inexorable push in answer to the question of the title–the poem and the future are going towards a hotter earth unless other options are utilized. The poem continues:

“ Canadian to Australian a
comparative distance

the earth bends

travel ' s a descent or
pulls or a tendency
among the stars

it gets heavy
it grows light

feathers are good for clouds

and rain streaks

the artificial cavern under Denver

the poisoned lake
the shivering land "

(153)

The writing here presses the reader further towards the right margin, dropping down and away from the seeming safety of the earlier left side of the page. On the scale of the world, the poem turns, juxtaposing the distance of the stars and gravity and turning inward. It pulls the reader's gaze from Webb's moon, among the stars, into the Earth itself to reckon with the waste that such an endeavor creates. The poem follows the water of the clouds from the highest atmosphere into the earth. It particularly falls from the sky into water miles deep in the earth– into the reservoir in Denver dug to house neurotoxic waste, and the earthquakes associated with the project.

Eigner's work extends beyond the typographical in this piece, using assonance and consonance to play with reader's perceptions of the interior and exterior. While the poem on the page visually drifts sideways and down, the sound of the piece traces barriers and the ways in which they become permeable. Beginning with "time-bomb," "y o u k n o w w h e r e y o u ' r e g o i n g ?" the poem's "o"s sit round in the mouth, filling the reader with an open slowness that must find its way around life and the earth, shifting with "long" to reach the coils of the world's fuse. This subtle harkening to the unspoken presence of Ouroboros. This is, until the snap of "brake," where the

reader is pulled from worlds and fuses abstractly and into a deeply inhabitable planet in juxtaposition to the swiftly following "for the / Webbs" (153). This abstract boundary between world, fuse, and environment is further interpenetrated in the conclusion of the poem, where the assonance of "distance," "descent," and "Denver" push into the crust, leaving the land "shivering." The poem ends, but the ecology of its question's provocation continues.

In the poem, population is connected to power plants is connected to heating earth is connected to flooding is connected to military chemical disposal is connected to earthquakes. Eigner's interest in environmentalism resulted in a corpus of writing that deeply engaged with the world around him, as evinced in the above poem as well as his later works. I discuss the ways in which slowness and attention to embodiment in ecopoetry is an especially necessary crip methodology for redressing the accelerating violences concurrent with environmental degradation.

Space As Time: "down to 1/8th inch or so of the stamp"[28]

While a significant body of literature locating Eigner at the intersection of disability poetry and ecopoetry exists, thanks in no small part to the labors of Jennifer Bartlett and George Hart with the permission of the Eigner Family, his own writing practices are what most clearly demonstrate the necessity of attending to slowness and disability in ecopoetry. In his introduction to "Six Letters" between Eigner and other Black Mountain and associated poets, George Hart notes that, "Because it was difficult for [Eigner] to insert a piece of paper into the carriage of his typewriter, Eigner tended to use as much of the page as possible before starting another (a habit also motivated by his obsession with saving paper)" (Hart qtd. Eigner "Six Letters" 252). This treatment of the page

[28] When writing a letter to Cid Corman, Eigner typed too close to a stamp, rendering the postcard unmailable: "it has just bopped back: unmailable, the sign signs, though on the rght its postmarked, kosher right over the stamp. Typed text down to 1/8th inch or so of the stamp" (257). Eigner notes that most postcards typed as such still make it through, rendering the 1/8th inch margin something of a liminal space of negotiation–the use of the page versus the arbitrary decision of post office officials.

weaves together Eigner's embodied approach to writing poetry with his environmentalist concerns.[29] The time and effort to use paper made it that much more a resource to be used to the full. This approach situates Eigner's own overlapping practices of attentiveness to his use of space and the page as a writer and the ecological networks that situate the page as place.[30] Eigner's practices as a disabled poet suffuse his writing, even when his disabled existence is rarely the content of his ecopoetry. As such, his writings still resonate with the noise of crip practice and practicality.[31]

In situating Eigner's work at the cusp of crip ecopoetics through explicit practice and in the ephemera, I turn to a series of his bios published in a pamphlet by Wave Books. This pamphlet brings together bios from five of Eigner's works published between 1967 and 1994.[32] I look to these bios as they fuse his history with small poetic utterances that neither hold to the traditional form of the biography nor fully become poetry. In his bio for *ANOTHER TIME IN FRAGMENTS* (1967), Eigner situates his cerebral palsy in terms of labor, noting "Palsied from hard birth, never had a job but got through high school… a toe-hold of application and hope" (1). In this passage of the bio, Eigner moves directly from the biographical information into process–the impact and practice of being disabled being connected to education and possibility.[33] This movement continues into a poetic reflection on his very practices, emphasizing his attention to language, punctuation, and duplicate devices (e.g. both a capital and a period as signifiers of splitting sentences), coming to an end with a very ecological distinction–"as with any other detail, after dispensing with a routine

[29] This material attention to body and page as material objects manifests as a central concern to disability poetry. The craft of a poem exists as the ephemera of the embodied practice of its writer.

[30] This attention to the materiality of paper and the page as an element of creation is amplified by Craig Dworkin's "FACT," a poem that, when exhibited, changes according to what medium holds the poem itself. *The Poetry Foundation* offers digital access to a version about paper here: FACT.

[31] The use of "noise" here is an intentional nod to Nathaniel Mackey's use of the term in *Discrepant Engagement* to refer to "whatever the signifying system, in a particular situation, is not intended to transmit" (20).

[32] #3 in the series.

[33] In *Sustaining Air*, Bartlett also amplifies the relationship between Eigner's early life and the support of his mother. She notes how "her decision to leave her job, get married, and have children was significant; she would end up focusing her tremendous intellectual energy on educating and caring for her eldest son" (10).

duplication device…the availability of the device for vital use in some other connection that may crop up, possibly. Oaks from small acorns. Forests of possibility" (Eigner *Author Bios* 1). As Eigner cultivates forests of possibility, his writing and bio open up to worlds beyond him, seeding conversation and connection until he is engaged in acts of forestation. This practice continues in the bio for *THINGS STIRRING / TOGETHER / OR FAR AWAY* (1974), where once again palsy is foregrounded before the language moves into the ecological. This bio plays with the changes in Swampscott's terrain "where there's less open area and woods than a few decades ago," before playing with time, as Eigner points out "The world opens and closes, discontinuous, various or disparate or round but constantly present all the same" (3). In writing these bios, Eigner opens and closes perspectives and time, linking the transformations of Swampscott around him, holding together discontinuous moments that are noticeable because he is present to observe and draw links. In the third bio of the pamphlet, for *THE WORLD AND ITS STREETS, PLACES* (1977), Eigner pivots, detailing his writing and palsy through the words of Samuel Charters, who he records as saying, "the circumstances of his [Eigner's] life have given a form and shape to his poetry. He is a spastic, and his life has been spent in a glassed-in front porch of a frame house on a side street in a small Massachusetts town" (5). This framing moves from the language of diagnosis (cerebral palsy / palsied from birth) into a contemporary parlance for Eigner's lived experience as "as spastic." The main elements which are maintained through these biographical notes are the place, situated always in relation to other parts of Massachusetts, and Eigner's lived experience of cerebral palsy. While his diagnosis is not part of his writing, it is always a preface to the work to come and initiates his act of poetic creation, moving from self to style to process to world. In the fourth bio, for *WATERS / PLACES / A TIME* (1983), Eigner's cerebral palsy is offset once again, instead of in quotation marks, by parenthesis when he writes, "born in early August 1927 (got cerebral palsy then, is non-

ambulatory)" (7).[34] In the style familiar to the other gathered bios, it moves quickly from the basics into the questions and practices of Eigner's collected poems, reflecting that it's "odd enough too, as puzzles go, that things can be given meaning or realized, by voice, emphasis, physical force" (7). This movement into the process of puzzling out meaning is then opened outward from the puzzle to the world through nodes of interpretation moving from the local and the specific to the global in deft expansions, as "near and far–wide and narrow. Your neighborhood and how much of the world otherwise. Beginning and ending and continuing" (7). In this bio, Eigner uses his position as writing subject to question the interconnectedness of his origins in Swampscott and his move west, all to address and puzzle out the nodes that connect across space and time. In the final bio of the collection, from *WINDOWS / WALLS / YARD / WAYS* (1994) published two years before his death, Eigner's experience of disability moves out of the first paragraph of his bio in order to be the subject of the full second paragraph, here:

> Though even today far from idleness or anyhow boredom, he's never had to work for a living (this partly due to the cerebral palsy he got while being born), and seldom, less and less often thinks how much others may need jobs, able to see more forest than trees he keeps thinking people when/if there's enough should share it, and not produce more, take it easy inside the life-support system, as the biosphere is getting too hot. (9).

This last bio, written after the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, offers a folding of identity and practice together in an utterance that, hearkening back to the bio for *ANOTHER TIME IN FRAGMENTS* moves into the seeds and the forest. It is through his experience as a disabled author, recipient of care, and the alternate timeline on which he has moved and existed–outside of work explicitly, but with the crip slowness that such an outside hearkens to–

[34] Incidentally, this bio is the one that caught George Hart's eye decades ago, according to his forward to *Sustaining Air*, and hooked him into Eigner's writing. He writes, "The book includes a prime example of Eigner's specialty, the author's note. It tells us when he was born (1927) and where ("north of Boston, south of Gloucester," locating him as a New England poet between Robert Frost and Charles Olson), and says that he had cerebral palsy and had moved from the east coast to the west coast in 1978" (Hart qtd. Bartlett ix-x).

that Eigner's writing resonates with and aligns itself with crip poetics and eco justice all at once. To have cerebral palsy for Eigner is part of what leads him to a politics of "enough" and to a slow approach to the environment. Not through intentional activism and claiming of disabled identity, but through practices that crip the page, even of the bio, into a slow poem.

At the time that Eigner's writing was being included in Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry 1945–1960*, Eigner wrote about being particularly surprised that his biographical information and status as disabled were of interest to readers. In a letter to Cid Corman he writes, "I can see Allen's psychological bent in his selection fr my stuff, eg. Surprised to find the biographical matter interesting, but shdnt have bn: the kind of stuff that doesn't come through/too coherently in letters" (Eigner "Letters" 263).[35] In this correspondence, Eigner is surprised, but not too much, that his biographical background comes off as interesting, while other authors are "something of a drag" (263). By his own admission his focus is on his experimentation with and use of the page, as with other so-categorized Black Mountain poets in Allen's collection. For Eigner, the fact of his identity as a disabled white man is secondary to the practice of being disabled and using this as a form of experimentation in his poetry.[36] In writing to Cid Corman especially, Eigner articulates an interest in being read and re-read, slowing the process of poetic transmission. In a poem that predates the letters anthologized in "Six Letters," Eigner writes instructions for reading to C.C.:

"

t o C C

how read it
line after line

given
one look

refresh the eyes

[35] The letters published in *Poetry* maintain Eigner's use of abbreviations, misspellings, and typos. They have, however, "silently corrected" most "mistrikes the keys on his typewriter " which cuts down on the noise of Eigner's hands coming down on unintended keys.
[36] Or further.

against the abyss "

(Eigner *calligraphy / typewriter* 43)

In this poem/letter/instruction, Eigner guides the reader–ostensibly CC–through a process for reading: slowly. From the outset, the buried lead is the act of repetition–doubling. The title of the piece gives the answer to the question of "how read it" by leaving out the second return of "to." In so doing, the title and first line of the poem model the doublings of slowness: the homophone of to/two, the double Cs (which also look like a pair of eyes), and the omitted but ghostly "to/two" omitted from the instruction/question of how *to* read. This structure and its play with speed and repetition models for the reader the importance of reading the space of the poem as much as the words on the page. More than once, the reader must go "line after line" and after one look, "refresh the eyes" with still another. More than simple correspondence, this poem stretches out to other Black Mountain poets and their readers by modeling the importance of repetition, of returning to process more than a final object. In this process, Eigner types letter by letter and exhorts the reader to come along slowly, line by line, as a way to stave off the approaching abyss. In this poem and his letters with Cid Corman, Eigner anchors himself as a practitioner of slow poetics. While not explicitly claiming a crip position, Eigner's practices for typing and articulation of how to be read generate the same tones, echoes, and noise that crip poetics turn upon–recognition of material existence and its ephemera in poetry.

Eigner's use of the page as an environment through which he must navigate and in which he must measure energy shapes his writing as an engagement with disabled existence and the resistant practice of slowness. Eigner himself addresses this practice in relation to fatigue in a letter to Donald Allen where he writes about "the fragmentariness of [his] life" (Eigner "Letters" 260). Eigner frames his own experience of slowness in terms of capacity, especially in moving through social and cultural barriers. He describes finding a balance of what is 'enough'–he explains that "a lifetime of

incoordination (palsy) is no joke.[37] It means a constant struggle to keep getting around limitations mental as well as physical. The reason why I don't read certain things is hardly disapproval, or anything of the sort, but just a slight capacity to absorb" (260). This balance of energy, this insistence on slowness, continues in correspondence, it is largely absent from Eigner's poetry itself. Crip resistance and capacity are closely interrelated, and what Eigner articulates here is the unintentional but real boundaries of crip engagement with the world broadly. While some disability activists use slowness as an act of refusal, this process is drawn from the very real boundaries that exist in life for many disabled people.[38] In "'Enough Defined': Disability, Ecopoetics, and Larry Eigner" George Hart emphasizes that "Although Eigner rarely wrote about traveling in his wheelchair, his radical readjustment of space on the page can be seen as an analogue to Hayes's reconfigured built environments. In fact, Eigner continually plays with the tradition of associating walking with poetry, revising the projectivist composition by field through his disability poetics." (Hart "Enough" 162). In this passage, Hart references Charles Olson's work "The Projective Verse," where Olson argues that a poet, "from the moment he ventures into FIELD COMPOSITION—puts himself in the open—he can go by no track other than the one the poem under hand declares, for itself. Thus he has to behave, and be, instant by instant, aware of some several forces" and that "ONE PERCEPTION MUST IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY LEAD TO A FURTHER PERCEPTION" (Olson). In this argumentation for projectivist writing, Olson brings together a lineage of writers, ecopoets and others, who create poetry that emphasizes walking as part of perception, and emphasis that Eigner in turn pushes back against from his wheelchair. The argumentation that Olson uses and which has been mapped onto Black Mountain poets is a one-to-one correspondence of meanings, that one statement/idea/break moves seamlessly to one other.

[37] Engagement with editorial feedback, engagement with writing, and engagement with tasks in life generally.
[38] See Christine Miserandino's 2003 essay on "spoon theory" as one popular simplification of how capacity is discussed.

Eigner's embodied writing practice, its caprice, and the connections that he draws permits a conceptual slippage from one perception to more than one other. It's in this way that Eigner's writing furthers the field–rather than following a one-and-only path through the field of composition, Eigner instead weaves 'enough' into the field to invite readers, while offering care, time, and space to allow for a plurality of readings.

While Eigner rarely wrote directly about the use of a wheelchair or the clack of a mis-typed key, his work with slowness in ecopoetics influenced Black Mountain poetics through his inclusion of disabled noise, insistence on enough, and use of fragmentation. These poems are allegedly standardized by the spacing of the typewriter, where the line becomes the length of the breath, and where similarity of spacing implies similarity of breathing/speaking. In his description of Olson and other Black Mountain poets, American professor of poetry at University of Washington Brian Reed argues that "Black Mountain poets can more accurately be said to have aimed for frictionless transmediation. They hoped to minimize the divide between written and spoken versions of a poem. Ideally, having heard a poem recited, one should be able to notate it perfectly, and, having read it on the page, one should be able to recite it as its author intended" (279). Eigner's slow, embodied approach to navigating the field of poetry refuses perfection and one-to-one repetition. Eigner's authorial 'intent' is perpetually called into question–editors and critics frequently assess the intent of a space or letter in terms not only of typewritten intent, but the likelihood of accident that Eigner's CP creates in both writing and reading. Eigner, through his writing and speaking of his poetry, destabilizes the projectivist concept that a poet/poem has but one path before them–instead Eigner models the plurality of possibilities for tangent, segue, and slippage in poetics navigated slowly and trippingly.

As an ecopoetic method, slow transforms the nature poetry trope of walking by instead rolling, pausing, and making space on the page. In this way, Eigner prioritizes one element the

projectivist idea of field poetics–"the large area of the whole poem… where all the syllables and all the lines must be managed in their relations to each other" (Olson)–while de-privileging the smoothness of its conceptual mapping. Eigner brings together a field of relations, not as a line of one object in relation to another, but by connecting threads within and without the field–ecologically connecting contexts beyond the poem (e.g. *Scientific American*, *Silent Spring*, house parties, other authors, and Eigner's own body) to its many readings. In this way, Eigner resists the projectivist practice of objectism, the "getting rid of the lyrical interference of the individual as ego, of the 'subject' and his soul, that peculiar presumption by which western man has interposed himself between what he is as a creature of nature (with certain instructions to carry out) and those other creations of nature which we may, with no derogation, call objects" (Olson). Instead, Eigner writes from a position which obfuscates his identity as a disabled writer. In so doing, he privileges process and method, the acts of *being* disabled while navigating a field of connections. Eigner begins with himself as one node in a series of nodes, and from this place traces outwards to find himself in connection–in connection with Webbs and webs, with the clouds in the sky and the rain that pools toxically under Denver. It's through this slow roll from self to world that Eigner pulls readers, tasking them with finding their own anchor points in the ecological connections he traces.

Eigner practices slowness in resistance to the drive for M/more, instead pausing, slowing, and finding something in the time that runs between these poles. Hart argues that Eigner's practices of stopping whenever and wherever, his embrace of something less than an impossible More "may in fact be preferable because of the impossibility of ever knowing enough to do more. His message, then, is that we must be ready to acknowledge when we have had, and have done, enough" (177). A great deal of contemporary ecocriticism insists on a tireless drive to alter the path of current climate crisis; this often manifests in a reflection of capitalist push for new: new ways to resist, new technologies to recycle, and new conversations. This push is antithetical to crip activism, disability

poetics, and disabled existence generally.[39] Eigner's ecopoetics model a time that moves alongside and outside of ecocriticism's push for a fast new solution. His writing advocates for 'enough,' a timeframe in which many disabled writers and activists inhabit and act from. By elucidating on alternative timeframes and the crip methodology of slowness, this writing offers a necessary pause in which slower voices might interject in ongoing climate conversations.

While Eigner's slowness and exhaustion may come through explicitly in letters, it also rests implicitly on the page when the author has had enough. Eigner's ecopoetics come through in the is-struck key, in the additional spaces that slow reading, and ask the reader to rest in the mess that he himself has made of the page. In his reading of Eigner's interjection into ecopoetics, Hart analyzes the poem "Environ s" as a space that defies singularity, instead taking on a dynamic multiplicity– both of authorial intent and embodied caprice of CP–through the collapse of intent and mistake: "The title 'Environ s,' which most likely is a material inscription of Eigner's typing, also plays on both functions of the word, as noun and verb… This punning gives the surroundings both an active and a passive role: the landscape is not static, framed and segmented, but something encircling the subject" (Hart "Enough" 169). For Eigner as well as Hart, the page opens up in a messy field of relations, holding together reader, author, typewriter, and the slippages that may or may not offset a letter from the rest of the title. This change in landscape through pause and caprice opens the poem and the moment for slower reading through its plural possibilities.

The slowness that comes from plurality arises in white, disabled poet and scholar of poetry Hillary Gravendyk's reading of Eigner as well.[40] In "Chronic Poetics," she focuses on Eigner's final,

[39] Environmentalism can be used as a shield. Kind of the "All Lives Matter" of advocacy but true activists know that it requires more than simply recycling plastics or banning straws, but racial, social, economic, and disability justice to make true strides to environmental stewardship. People for whom it is a struggle to live day to day aren't going to invest emotional, financial or logistical resources to thinking about the next 100-200 years. (Barbarin)

[40] Hillary Gravendyk was a Professor of Poetry at Pomona who died of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. Her best-known book of poems, *Harm* (Omnidawn, 2013), was written in the wake of a double lung transplant.

posthumously published book of poetry *readiness / enough / depends / on* to discuss the ecological use of the page as many poems, as layers of intentional and unintentional sound and meaning. As she focuses on the poem "t h e r e ' s / a s e a s o n," Gravendyk argues that "the legible space of the poem shifts to one formed out of the interplay between absence and presence, between competing and equal, but always plural, pressures on our perceptual capacity" (Hart "Chronic Poetics" 4). Gravendyk argues that this poem, the central figure of *readiness / enough / depends / on*, depends on fragmentariness and incompleteness; I argue that this method simultaneously insists on slowness on the part of the reader, who must pick through these pieces to make something with enough of what's there. Gravendyk claims that this poem doesn't require close reading, but reading that is broken: "to be 'aware' in this text is to allow awareness to break itself into a set; one must learn and employ various ways of paying attention, take up various perceptual stances, and embody various positions sometimes all at once" (4). The simultaneity of positions as well as the partial stances slow readers' sensory, cognitive, and imaginative engagement with the poem. It tasks readers with building something that can be appended to their own cognitive and physical relation to the field of the poem and the world it discusses–where do they fit? What spaces are there?

The timescale on which Eigner's poetry is produced and experienced fluctuates across a time, intent, and space. The implication of Eigner's cerebral palsy rests on the page, layered within and beside authorial intent to mess around with how audiences engage the typed word. "t h e r e ' s / a s e a s o n" models the method of spacing out and being aware "enough" that Hart argues is in Eigner's earlier works. The relation of words on the page break apart when one attempts to read them for wholeness. Instead, the page offers multiple contingent ways of reading and being. These ecopoems slow the reader to a crawl. Trying to perceive within a single narrow thread of intent, agency, or time is not possible. As Hart argues in "Larry Eigner's Ecrippoetics," "Eigner's typing oscillates between intention and chance, control and contingency, deliberation and serendipity. The

spacing and indentations depend on the limits of his abilities, but they are also 'painstakingly measured.' His ability to type with only one finger slows the speed at which he can capture 'onrushing' perceptions, but that pace also allows for sensitively marking shifts and changes inside and outside the poet's mind" (Hart "Ecrippoetics").

In a chapter on "Eigner's Mesh," George Hart discusses the ecological connectivity of Eigner's work and its capacity to work across time. Among the many examples that Hart offers for Eigner's practices of interconnected writing, he flags one written on January 31, 1965 as "one of Eigner's best poems indeed" (Hart *Finding* 67).[41] The poem opens:

" Frederick Douglass
Took his chances like
when we fly? "
(67)

The poem weaves Eigner's recent experience of his first flight with Douglass' flight to freedom, holding these passages together with other contexts–Hart lists Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us*, the repatriation movement, and the etymology of the word 'germane'–Hart argues that "Eigner gains a deeper sense of co-existence, not just in space but also through time. Hart's read of this piece of Eigner's is quick to move from simile to enmeshment, emphasizing the importance of the questions that Eigner's speaker asks in the poem itself. Hart uses the contextualization that Eigner works with to draw spatial connections–between Missouri and Maryland through the slave trade and between Eigner in the sky and vertebrates in the sea–while emphasizing the questions that speaker asks in the space of this interconnectedness. The speaker of the poem opens space to question from one set of experiences in the air. The poem ends:

"
no porter what
have I to do with
what I don't see "
(68)

[41] What Hart calls Eigner's "Ecrippoetics" a bringing together of ecology, disability, and formal approaches that Eigner himself describes as a "mesh-effect" (Eigner qtd Hart *Finding* 49).

The speaker of the poem questions the relationship between what is palpably connected and what omissions continue to exist despite efforts to draw connections through enmeshment. In this rhetorical move, Hart finds that the speaker of Eigner's poem reflects on their connection to what cannot be perceived while in the air: "does that mean he is not connected to such things? Eigner's eccripoetics finds endless interconnectedness, so the implied answer to this question is no" (69). In this poem and others, Eigner stretches himself and his speaker to the limits. He questions the relationship between his disabled access to a plane with the flight that Douglass takes from slavery, risking the collapse of the two practices while attempting to find some strange affinity that may exist between the experiences. Beginning from a place of privilege–race and resources–Eigner attempts to open out and trace the relationships that may possibly exist between himself and a formerly enslaved poet. The final question of the piece attempts to re-orient the speaker towards both connection and responsibility. If the implied answer to the question "what have I to do with what I don't see"? is "everything," then this act of seeking kinship in shared flights is one that pushes readers to find their own ways to connect. The distance of time, space, and race do not facilitate a reciprocal connection, but instead insists on possibilities–connections exist if readers are willing to slow down and trace their responsibilities with the people, places, and oceans around them. This capacious opening is demonstrative of the possibilities and limitations of what slowness and time can accomplish.

In ""Toward an Antiracist Ecopoetics Waste and Wasting in the Poetry of Claudia Rankine," Angela Hume weaves together ecopoetry, antiracist writing, and a crip attention to the connections that exist because of ecological racism. In reading a particular practice of Claudia Rankine, that of the 'wasting body,' Hume locates "a figure that, in her [Rankine's] poetry, accounts for how certain bodies are attenuated or made sick under capitalism and the state, while simultaneously being regarded as surplus by these same structures" (169). Hume uses this reading of the wasting body to argue that "her poetry… registers the structural forces and forms of power that both racialize and

subject raced bodies and environments to forms of degradation and violence" (170). Moving between people and landscapes, Hume addresses the disabling practices of capitalism that define the acceleration of slow violence and the rapid crises resulting from ecological degradation. It's this reading of the connection between disability, race, and ecological degradation that Eigner's earlier work hearkens toward–a capacious understanding of disabling practices that act upon disabled people and Black people, disabled and nondisabled alike. Eigner's heralding of Douglass in an act of enmeshment speaks to a similar process–the movement of bodies through time, and the responsibilities shared for this kinship in slow reflection. Ultimately, Hume argues that Rankine's work demonstrates that "thinking beyond the dominant order is predicated on a critical inhabitation of the wasting body" (186). Hume argues that the necessary move outside of dominant time and practice means taking the risk of thinking, reading, and acting environmentally.[42] In this essay, Hume brings together the disabling practices that have accelerated slow violence, articulates the overlaps that at times link ableist and racist forms of ecological violence, and articulates the necessity of moving through these practices of cognition concurrently.

A particularly effective counternarrative to acceleration (of climate change, of violence, of the logics of more, more more) would be to lean into and to re-value slowness. I argue that one especially rich location to address alternative time is through disability poetry and crip poetics. 'Slow time' is an embodied practice for disabled poets that appears in their writing practices, formal innovation, and explicitly as subject matter. Disabled asian American poet and professor Johnson Cheu's "Disabled Child at the Community Pool," originally published *Disability Studies Quarterly* and recently re-released in my curation of Zoeglossia's *Poem of the Week* series offers an open sense of

[42] A phrase the Hume uses to mean what other ecocritics call ecologically–through relationships that trace how power disables land and people.

time as it begins again and again.[43] As a sestina, the piece re-cycles through lines ending in the words "toes," "egg," "womb," "when," "then," and "whole." The poem begins and begins and begins again:

> This is how it begins: ten fingers, ten toes,
> or earlier: fetus, womb,
> earlier still: sperm, egg,
> even earlier: eyes, then lips, then… (Cheu)

The poem disrupts the linear flow of time, moving backwards and forwards in defiance of a singular "when" of disability and disabling. Instead, it begins at multiple points, moving through images of water and family. As an ecological reading, it moves astride normative time into a space shared with many crip poets/scholars/people: pools. The speaker of the poem floats momentarily in a constructed womb, until normative time comes crashing in, "For him, his parents, life's become a succession of when, / though wounds still may crack open, raw as an uncooked egg" (Cheu). The community pool, for the speaker of the poem, becomes a heterotopia that opens up being carried in the womb, the tentative social idea/l of being whole, and the space of home. In its repetition, the sestina challenges readers to move alongside time and into a muddled, slow practice of movement. The closing envoi of the poem re-situates the reader in time, moving from the slow float in the community pool into the onrushing world beyond,

> But this moment isn't about fingers, toes, womb.
> Toweled off, the child bites into the egg, inquires, *after home, then*…
> fashioning his own expectations of when, his world already whole.

Cheu's "Disabled Child at the Community Pool" uses a moment with multiple beginnings to challenge the linearity of 'when' disability comes to be in a progressive timeline. Instead, it refocuses the reader through repetition of processes that create the disabled experience of the speaker through interaction. Instead of a linear if-then, the poem floats in a series of times that connect wombs,

[43] While Eigner may not have been part of the community pool contingent in crip community, his work is singularly important to communities driven to find connection, comfort, and 'enough' together.

homes, and *oikoi* through slow unfolding in form and content.[44] Crip ecopoetry such as this offers alternate ways to perceive time and space.

In "The Ecology of Literary Chronotopes" white German professor of American Studies Timo Müller argues that ecoliterature, and especially poetry, is positioned to complicate ecological readings of Bahktin's chronotropes. In this chapter of the *Handbook of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology* Müller argues that literature contains chronotropes, ways of reading and perceiving time according to social perceptions. He notes that "chronotopes are not mere representations of time and space but epistemological structures that influence our very perception of time and space" (593). In this way, chronotropes site social ideas and ideals that inform and are informed by multiple approaches to time. This definition of chronotropes align with Foucault's heterotopias as slices of time. In addressing chronotropes, Müller addresses how Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bahktin suggests "those who record historical development… contribute to the intertwined advance of literature and society" Müller adds, "it is stunning how badly nonlinear time fares in this view" (598). Indeed, much of Bahktin's writing favors the novel as the repository of knowledge and the articulations of linear time as a means of progress. However, in closely addressing the potentials of Hubert Zapf's model of 'cultural ecology,' Müller addresses the latent potentials that exist in Bakhtin's own writing, noting that ecological patterns and images "provide, in Bakhtin's words, 'the common language used to describe phenomena of nature and the events of human life'" (599). To that end, Müller argues that "an environmental perspective would seek to reverse another preference of Bakhtin's, namely, that of linear over cyclical time. It is the notion of linear progress regardless of the environment in which one progresses that has led to the nature/culture rift in the first place, and many of the ideologemes connected with it (steady economic growth and cultural expansion, for instance) have widened that rift" (600). An ecological approach to time insists on other forms of

[44] Plural form of *oikos*.

engaging and perceiving time that do not move within the slipstream of progress, instead offering other forms of time (alternate heterochronies, chronotropes, or other neologisms that rely on the root -*chrono*). Müller is careful to argue that such approaches are not a novel form of articulation or a new practice, instead, he emphasizes that "while the linear model has been dominant for some time in our culture, there have always been texts that have preserved, adapted, and disseminated alternative chronotopes" (602). In slowing down research and seeking different approaches to time, Müller argues that slowness and other temporal practices have always existed alongside dominant linear time. As in Cheu's above poem, linear time can be side-stepped to reconceive of the spacetime of a community pool.

The focus of Foucault's work is to distinguish utopias from heterotopias. Utopias are fundamentally "sites with no real space… unreal spaces"(24). In contrast to these unreal spaces, Foucault turns to heterotopias, which he gestures towards without a concrete definition. Instead of saying what heterotopia is, he points to what it does: "the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (25). This is to say that for Foucault, a heterotopia is a real place with multiple, often incompatible social ideas and cultural ideals mapped onto them. It is in this vein that I turn to ecopoetry as a means to shape temporal heterotopias that can hold onto the incompatible ideals of slowness and the new simultaneously. In Eigner's writing, he creates poems slowly, using one finger and a typewriter. Layered with this practice is a series of referents that open backwards and forwards through time–by finding kinship with Douglass, Eigner offers new paths towards responsibility and strange affinities to be taken up in my present. While Eigner himself did not participate in disability community in his lifetime and may have been averse to getting in even an accessible pool, his notion of ecological connection across time and space allows me to bring him into the wholeness of the site of the pool of disability poetics and imagine how he's shaped the waters. These methods of interconnectedness

deny both a radical break from the past and a stagnant canon by insisting on process. To be in process with a poem is to read and be read in turn. It is in this incompatibility that slowness functions. Slowness allows temporalized writing to open up to a variety of times and forms of bodymind engagement. As Foucault writes, "heterotopias are most often linked to slices of time–which is to say that they open onto what might be termed… heterochronies" (26). These heterochronies signal temporal engagements that break with traditional time. Indeed, Foucault argues that "heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (26). The break that Foucault describes is not the same break with time that the Anthropocene argues for–a separation. Instead, what Foucault points to is breaking with time as singular experience. In his argumentation, he points to the plurality of 'times' that exist in the cemetery: that of once-religious community (turned bourgeois illness), the living self in the moment of introspection, the chronology and inevitability of death, and the uncertain dissolution of soul and material self into eternity.[45] This is to say, the break with time that Foucault argues is not the separation of time from other considerations, but the holding of multiple, often incompatible, forms of time within one site.

Crip Time(s)

As an embodied experience, disability poetry and crip poetics are keenly aware of the passage of time, both in accordance to clocks and in the subjective passage of time.[46] These experiences have been theorized as inhabiting one of the temporal strands outside of normative time and are held together via loose association under the conception of 'crip time.'[47]

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[45] These examples are drawn from disparate points of conversation that arrive, dissolve, and repeat throughout the piece.
[46] Every disability studies scholar has an anecdote to tell about pain days spent scrolling in dark beds or of hospital waiting rooms or of inaccessible faculty senate meetings or of the months spent waiting for a specialist or…
[47] Crip time is far from the only 'non-normative' time. For other examples of various temporalities, see *Queer Temporalities* or" C P Time"

In "After Crip, Crip Afters," *Feminist Queer Crip* scholar Alison Kafer positions crip time in a space of in-betweenness. Kafer articulates the difficulty, pain, and potential that exist in crip time as a shared act of vulnerability and anticipation. Kafer argues that "this kind of anticipatory stance–preparing for violence to come, preparing for the aftermath of historical and ongoing violence–is reminiscent of the work marginalized people must do to navigate the whiteness, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and ableism of normative spaces. It also calls to mind the work people with environmental illnesses are forced to do by the prevalence of chemicals in our environments. These, too, are experiences of crip time" (431). In articulating these elements of crip time as a form of shared ecology, Kafer opens up time to include as many experiences of slow and not-slow violence as possible. It is worth lingering with Kafer to note that not all slowness, waiting, and existence outside of time is space-holding or liberatory. Time and its fragile, monolithic presentation is also part of ongoing colonial, capitalist, racist, and ableist structures. Kafer cautions, "remember: what came before violence is often other violence. And what comes before disability is often other disabilities" (424). This cyclical understanding of disability situates it in longer cycles of disability, violence, and transformation.

In "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time," crip theorist and educator Ellen Samuels traces some of the ways that crip time as an embodied practice works.[48] Quoting Margaret Price, she notes that disabled people "live our lives with a 'flexible approach to normative time frames' like work schedules, deadlines, or even just waking and sleeping." This flexibility acts in defiance of capitalist schedules that delimit when to sleep, commute, work, and feed. Because of the caprice with which chronic illnesses, disability, and acute illnesses impact existence, schedules and time become much less rigid as an organizing factor. Among the ways of looking at crip time that Samuels offers two perspectives that are especially evident in the crip ecopoetics of authors like Eigner, Leah Lakshmi

[48] Loosely following the legacy of Wallace Stevens activities involving blackbirds.

Piepzna-Samarasinha, Kay Ulanday Barrett, Stephanie Heit, Naomi Ortiz, Petra Kuppers, and others. The first among these is as an exit (willing or unwilling) from normative time. She argues that "*Crip time is time travel.* Disability and illness have the power to extract us from linear, progressive time with its normative life stages and cast us into a wormhole of backward and forward acceleration, jerky stops and starts, tedious intervals and abrupt endings" (Samuels, emphasis in original). She points to her own experience in physical therapy pools, to septuagenarians saying she's 'too young' to be there and gestures out to the other ways in which crip time disrupts the expectation of health and its slow, steady decline. Instead, crip time opens up the chronology of lives and disrupts progress narratives. Crip time opens loops in which one can progress backwards and forwards in health, existence, and the world simultaneously. It is in this capacity that crip time builds into slowness, defying steadiness and leaning into jerks, jumps, and starts. It is in this way that crip time also functions as a method to break time. Samuels notes that "*crip time is broken time*… It forces us to take breaks, even when we don't want to, even when we want to keep going, to move ahead" (Samuels, emphasis in original). Much as Eigner articulated that he reached 'enough' reading, so too does Samuels note that crip time opens up the space and practice to accept the necessity of breaks and brak-/break-ing. Crip time allows for a positionality in time that doesn't require moving ahead.

Writing in *Tikkun*, white, German, disabled community performance artist and professor of disability studies Petra Kuppers traces crip time outside of academic spaces. She looks to Australian author and activist Anne McDonald's discussion of how she "communicate[s] at the rate of 450 words an hour compared to your 150 words in a minute — twenty times as slow" and how "A slow world would be my heaven" (McDonald qtd. Kuppers 29). McDonald's call for an alternate time is a response to the different rates at which people, communities, and conversations move. In her own responses to time, Kuppers and collaborator Neil Marcus focus on 'Helping Dances,'

improvisational experiences that, rather than orienting a norm, orient themselves outside of 'normate' time. Kuppers writes that "In our Helping Dance, no matter what happens, we shift ourselves from our own certainties. We shift from our boundaries, our little selves, and our own heartbeats, into wider rhythm" (30). This expansive approach to time and movement is one of many crip methods.

In these shared approaches to crip time, it is important to emphasize the simultaneous vulnerability of crip poetry as well as the care work that goes into writing and sharing crip time. In "Crip Poetry, Or How I Learned To Love The Limp" disabled poet Jim Ferris discusses some of the finer points of disability poetry as distinct from crip poetry. Ferris argues that "Disability poetry can be characterized by several characteristics: a challenge to stereotypes and an insistence on self-definition; foregrounding of the perspective of people with disabilities; an emphasis on embodiment, especially atypical embodiment; and alternative techniques and poetics" (Ferris). This technically-focused definition offers a series of terms that are helpful in the reading of disability poetry, especially the focus on embodiment, self-definition, and disabled perspectives.[49] In addition to this, Ferris articulates the potential of crip poetics in its doing–

> crip poetry carries in it the potential for an even more radical transformation - a transformation in consciousness, not only the consciousness of the poet and the reader, but the potential to transform the world, to make the world in which we live roomier, not only more transparent and known, but to make more space in the imagination, and so in the culture, for the wide and startling variety of rich and fulfilling ways that real people live and love, work and play in this world (Ferris).

In this set of definitions, crip poetry moves much more ecologically and transformatively. Rather than a set of practices, crip poetry alters the world and culture through its creation of space and, I would argue, time.

[49] It's worth noting that much of Eigner's work, pre-ADA and the Disability Rights Movement, would fall short of much of this definition of disability poetics, save the emphasis on embodiment.

In a discussion about disability poetry and time, Jim Ferris and disabled poet and biographer Jennifer Bartlett trace the ways in which disability impacts poetics. Ferris articulates this impact as one that is demonstrative of a shared vulnerability of those 'on the edge' when he argues that "perhaps it is that we show our human vulnerability without being able to hide it… the vulnerability that is an essential part of being human" (272). This vulnerability is key to ecological reading and writing of poetry, especially as a way to address the impacts of slow violence. Vulnerabile communities are more likely to be able to articulate and share the experience of being impacted by systemic, slow violences and ecological degradation. Bartlett goes on to connect this experience to her own experience of time as a disabled poet when she describes how "my poems are influenced by time, and back then I had a lot of it… my lines changed. They became broken and fragmented, written in fits and starts. Time compressed and so did the line" (282). For Bartlett, who does not often write explicitly about her disability, disability and time became manifest on the page as a material consideration of her writing.

Tracing these histories of crip time in ecopoetics is one part of positioning *Crip Planet* within crip genealogies, as well as opening up crip genealogies to consider other entanglements with time, ecology, and race. In *Crip Genealogies*, Mel Y. Chen, Alison Kafer, Eunjung Kim, and Julie Avril Minich articulate the ways in which crip as practice is inherently ecological. They argue that "the praxis of crip is about being in relation to each other in such a way that risks a falling out with disability studies" (2). In particular, they argue that while disability studies as a field risks falling back into academic power structures, crip "signal[s] our investment in disrupting the established histories and imagined futures of the field. If crip indexes a wide range of positions, orientations, subjects, and acts, not all of them academic, then disability studies hews more closely to notions of academic discipline" (2-3). Much like Ferris uses disability to index clear attributes in disability poetry, these authors position disability as a more discrete set of practices within academia and crip as an

expansive recognition of possibility. It is in this space that crip as method, as practice, and as praxis entangles with ecological writing and thinking.[50] Chen, Kafer, Kim, and Minich note the capacious ways that crip intermingles with other life experiences, noting that "the possibilities, effects, costs, and implications of living with disabilities are deeply entangled with ongoing histories of racism, classism, disenfranchisement, violence, and geopolitics," (8). In their work to bring together a plurality of voices, Chen, Kafer, Kim, and Minich move through multiple timescapes to address the ways that disability overlaps with the disproportionate impacts of extant power structures.

The shared experience of existing somewhere outside of or alongside time connects queer, crip, and CP approaches to alternative temporality. In the event "C__ P__ Time," the first in the series Black Study 2.0 series: Black Is...Black Ain't, from the Center for African American Poetry and Poetics at the University of Pittsburgh, poet and scholar Divya Victor fuses poetry and scholarship in discussing the pluralities of time entangled in a street sign. Opening with a reading from *CURB*, Victor traces the story of the Bagai family through her own experience. Victor weaves: "Kala Bagai was born into a Sikh family in Amritsar, a city where the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place… the city where eight decades later, my own mother would learn how to spell t-i-m-e" (Victor 10:38-10:50).[51] In these lines, Victor weaves the personal–her mother learning the English spelling of time–with the story of Kala Bagai, with the violent colonial history of British India in the early 1900s. This slow attention articulates the potential of re-orienting oneself to time, of tracing ecological connection through lineage to share experience of harm to the seeds of colonial violence sown in another t-i-m-e. Following this enmeshment, Victor follows the Bagai family to the Bay Area of the United States, where Vaishno Das Bagai, Kala Bagai's husband, opened a business in

[50] Among the methods and approaches named in this introduction are Crankiness, Obligation/Disloyalty, Responsibility, Joy, Expansiveness, Complicity, Desire, The Unnamable, Uncategorizable Feelings, Nonalignment/Disidentification, and the Incomplete.

[51]The Jallianwala Bagh massacre describes the killings of hundreds of pro-Indian Independence protestors by the British Indian Army under the command of R. E. H. Dyer.

San Francisco.[52] When the family attempted to move from the city to the suburb of Berkeley, they were physically barred from entering the home they owned. Victor slows down her discussion of San Francisco to add further detail to the place over time, citing it as a space that was unceded by the Chochenyo speaking Ohlone people, descended from the Verona Band of Alameda County. On this unceded land, Victor layers Black theorists–sociologist and author W.E.B. Du Bois and scholar of Black experimental writing Anthony Reed–to consider the pasts and presents held together by and with the Bagai family. Victor notes, "once upon this time three weeks ago in 2021, a century after the Bagais were not offered space, the city of Berkeley voted to rename part of Shattuck Avenue 'Kala Bagai Way.' This is a mark and a milestone that ricochets to and from the future, and one in which the trauma of displacement is named, addressed, stamped, and vindicated a century later" (13:23-13:29). Tracing the historical violence against the Bagai family, the decades of activist work undertaken by Kala Bagai, and the many connections she built over this time, Victor turns to the street sign of Kala Bagai Way as "a visiting card from the past following Du Bois and Anthony Reed, a visiting card which operates in the structure of a promise figuring a time of fulfillment in the future where there is room for our presence in the past" (15:02-15:16). In this reading, Victor denies a linear time that progresses from violence to acceptance. Instead, time is slowed, looped, and transformed backwards and forwards. There is a promise in the street sign that, in a future still beset by violence there will be a turn to the past that acknowledges there had been a space. The promise of a future past similarly insists that there will be a future, built from a deeply entangled presents. For Victor, this approach to C__ P__ time insists on thickets that connect self to mother to Kala Bagai across more than a century.[53] Its this capacious practice that Victor names in the talk-back at the end of the session, emphasizing the diasporic practice she names "Indian Standard Time," which

[52] A term denoting (among other features), the city of Oakland, the suburb of Berkeley, San Francisco, and other regions around the waters of the San Francisco Bay.
[53] Referred to as "Mother India" in *India West's Obituary*. https://www.saada.org/item/20130516-2803

folds together hours of lateness, unspecified arrival times, and an approach to meetings that is anchored in "an infinity of time" (1:11:53). This opening of time to being late, to never arriving, and to promising engagement somewhere in the infinite destabilizes the progressive push of time from the past to the now, moving into moments that move across linear time. Victor emphasizes this importance of time, that "my poetry needs to maintain more than limited time or a kind of infinite time… shaping this idea of belatedness and infinity" (1:12:24-1:12:29). Victor insists on holding time differently, tracing curves and loops of time not-yet-realized in connection with the time that has been. Victor allows time to loop in its infinite practice, encircling Kala Bagai and tracing the moments of her life–birth, migration, denial of a home, and posthumous honor on a street sign. In this encircling, Victor finds her own infinite relations to time–her mother learning to spell t-i-m-e–and the unnamed potential of existing outside of progressive time as a space where there was always already belonging for those Kala Bagai advocated for in Berkeley and elsewhere.

Taken together, CP time and crip time work to incorporate ecopoetry into broader reflections of the world as it is becoming. To return to José Esteban Muñoz, this shaping of time as malleable makes it something that can be looked towards–a horizon that is not fully in the present, but a potential. When discussing queer utopias, Muñoz exhorts readers to "reconsider ideas such as hope and utopia" as the "horizon" as something always approachable and simultaneously not yet here (Muñoz 18). CP time, crip time, and queer time insist on acts of temporal care that mark paths to horizons where belonging will already have been possible. If crip time and crip ecopoetics can model methods for making chronotopes that allow plural real and unreal moments to exist together, then these acts of care can begin to move from the horizon into contemporary language and action. It's this plural approach to time that Eigner's writing and repetitions make space for, and that Ellis actively insists on in their own writing.

The News Of Ecopoetry

C__ P__ time and crip time are a necessary intervention into contemporary practices of ecopoetry. Much of the writing that is attempting to address the state of the world is focused on and fixated upon the immediate present and what is to come–the ongoing collapse of ecosystems and the impending threshold of temperature rise. While attention to these crises is necessary, they overwrite and detract from ecopoetic utterances that emphasize this disaster is not something new, but instead is the acceleration of centuries of slow violence. Re-orienting towards slowness offers a redress to ecopoetics that are locked in a struggle with the ongoing interest in the new and novel.

To emphasize slowness means addressing the timeframes in which ecopoetry and ecocriticism are figured–it's necessary to slow down in order to conceive of the vast scale of time the world exists in and the vast change humanity has wrought in a miniscule amount of time. In "Twenty-First-Century Ecopoetry and the Scalar Challenges of the Anthropocene," Lynn Keller notes that "a fundamental aspect of the concept of the Anthropocene is its bringing together—even into collision—vastly discrepant scales of time and space" (49). The scales on which Keller is arguing move exponentially further back in time than human concepts can fully engage.[54] In articulating this complication, Keller points out the critical attention that comes from environmental humanities as a necessary step to address the failure of present policy, in that "given that environmental scientists have not been successful in generating appropriate behavioral and policy changes, artists and scholars in the environmental humanities are challenged to more effectively advance environmentally sound agendas" (47). To this end, Keller finds that work on the chronology of the Anthropocene (and indeed, human ecological engagement with time *more* broadly)

[54] Some examples of playing with these scales for amusement and cognition are to note that showing a Tyrannosaurus Rex riding an electric unicycle is more accurate than *Fantasia*'s (1940) depiction of a T-Rex fighting a stegosaurus or that humanity figured out the impacts of the Greenhouse Effect closer to the start of the Industrial Revolution than to our present moment.

is necessary to engage with the world beyond the self as a form of literature, as a form of activism, and as a practice of cultural transformation. She points out that time is a fraught component of ecology. This is especially true in terms of policy, and argues that creative endeavors--ecopoetry among them--are a necessary element for anchoring the vastness of ecological destruction in this moment. In her book *Recomposing Ecopoetics*, Keller chooses a timeline starting in the year 2000 to define what she calls the "self-conscious Anthropocene" in which the poets she studies are writing. For Keller, the self-conscious Anthropocene (the time period in which humans become aware of our impact on climate) could have many beginnings: from Oppenheimer's quote of the Bhagavad-Gita to the publication date of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. However, Keller chooses 2000 as the moment human awareness of human impact on climate becomes pervasive across multiple levels: from pollution to radioactivity to atmospheric harms.

In their introduction to a focus section on "Writing the Anthropocene" published in the Minnesota Review, Tobias Boes and Kate Marshall explain what has been so compelling about conversations of the when of the Anthropocene: "Unlike...earlier movements, however, all theories of the Anthropocene are premised on the historicist notion of an absolute break with the past: a hypothetical point in time when the human condition irrevocably changed. They can thus be more properly described as post- rather than antihumanist, and it is a matter of more than incidental significance that so much discussion over the past decade has been devoted to when the Anthropocene (and thus also our putative posthuman condition) actually began" (62). While the exact whens of the Anthropocene and the self-conscious Anthropocene remain up for discussion, Keller, Boes, and Marshall agree that: "knowing and articulating species-being within a reflexively produced era of geological time requires…novel modes of articulation that are appropriate to these complex forms of mediation" (66). They turn to poetics and the literary in search of some of these

new methods for defining what it means to be human or posthuman in this moment of self-knowledge of the impacts of human activity.

Writing in *The News From Poems: Essays on the 21st Century American Poetry of Engagement*, Lynn Keller addresses the difficulty with which ecological time can be approached in ecopoetics. In this article, she draws readers' attention to poems that articulate deep time of geological and archeological scales as a way to reorient reader's perspectives to the present, because "what took nearly a hundred million years to form more than three hundred million years ago [coal] will have been consumed by a single species in less than three hundred years" (55). It's in this absurd disconnect that ecopoetics operates within, a bubble of (less than) three hundred years of writing and action that is consuming and transforming the material world that accumulated over a hundred million years, three hundred million years ago. The work of slow writing is building a mesh of times that can articulate this thickness. Writing in and for the Anthropocene directs energies within the slipstream of accelerating climate change, moving in the same direction despite articulating resistance. If one only writes into the new, it erases the processes that work backwards across time.

Ecocriticism moves faster and faster in its pursuit of new and novel ways to address the speed with which climate is changing. Boes and Marshall argue that this moment calls for "novel modes of articulation" and is defined by "an absolute break with the past." The articulations of time prior to the proposed anthropocene are "the Pliocene, Pleistocene, and Holocene--translate[d] respectively as 'newer time,' 'newest time,' and 'entirely new time' and thus give these seemingly neutral period designators an inexorable orientation toward the present" (Boes and Marshall 62). This constant need to describe a particular moment as new and this constant search for new methods of describing the present erases the work of those trying to slow progress–who are resisting the acceleration of slow violence that accumulates in this reorientation. To move with progress always towards the new and novel denies that there will ever be a time, as Eigner might say,

when there is 'enough.' Going along with progressive time that moves only towards the new gives credence and weight to a system that regards people, plastics, and practices of the past as disposable.

Because resource exploitation, climate chaos, and political upheaval are ever-accelerating, many contemporary authors in the field of ecocriticism argue that practices of addressing them must also press towards the new. However, this practice reinforces and reifies the idea of a complete break from the past in ways that hold with logics of disposal–disposal of plastic, people, and lands–in pursuit of the next new thing. Until ecopoetics slows down to recognize the work of those currently surviving in this accelerating slow violence, ecopoetics of the contemporary moment have not yet sufficiently disrupted the logics of disposability. Writing in *New International Voices in Ecocriticism*, Sarah Nolan puts forth a definition of ecopoetics as method wherein the field thickens and slows through webs of connection. She posits that "ecopoetics becomes a theoretical lens or reading approach that studies the methods by which poets attempt to express the subjective cultural, historical, political, and natural elements of real-world environmental experience through poetic form and language" (88). This approach to ecopoetics situates the conversation in deeply embodied networks through which ecopoetics are written and read. This focus on the multiplicity of ways that identity, environment, and culture intertwine offers a nuanced understanding of the points of connection that make ecopoetry ecological while slowing down the act of reading specifically by drawing on multiple threads. However, the piece still finds itself trapped by the new–"new forms and experimentation with language can work to express these facets of experience as accurately as possible" (88). In *The Handbook of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology,* Aaron Allen argues that "the environmental crisis is not just a crisis of science (failed engineering), but also a crisis of culture (failed thinking), so we need to muster all possible humanistic and scientific resources in order to imagine, understand, and confront it" (647). This insistence that there must be a solution through ecological humanities is a repeated evocation within the field of ecopoetry. Ecopoetry is a site within

ecological humanities that it is possible to expand approaches to the imaginative work of the present with attention to process. I argue that slowness–in writing and reading–is the necessary practice that ecological humanities must work towards. In doing so, it is possible to trace and follow a plurality of methods and times–queer, crip, c_p_–that transform the culture and experience of accelerating climate change in order to then make space for structural changes to occur.

In *The)((Eco(Lang)(uage(Reader))*, authors similarly find themselves arguing in the fast lane against speed. In "Thinking Ecology in Fragments: Walter Benjamin & the Dialectics of (Seeing) Nature," Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands argues that her work in ecopoetics "has been to think through a practice of 'reading' environments and human/more-than-human relationships in a way that not only reveals the power relations informing and reformed by particular intersections of culture and nature… but that also initiates the possibility of finding new ethical--and political--ecological relationships from *within* that constellation of practices" (211). This practice of reading alongside the human and more-than-human world models a practice for attentiveness, slowness, and ecological connection. The web-making of ecopoetry weaves connections between power, its movements, and its impacts. However, the move with this thicket is once again towards the *new*. It is a newness borne of deeper understanding and attention, but continues to reinforce the idea that what is available and what exists in the present is not enough.[55]

S L O W (violence, activism, and poetry)

The history of slow scholarship and slow activism are part of a lineage that traces its roots through Nixon's *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. This text is essential to understanding the ways in which the impacts of climate change have had disproportionate impacts.

[55] The concept of what constitutes 'enough' is itself its own fraught political debate, when there are "enough" vacant houses in the United States for each unhoused person to have twenty-eight each or "enough" food produced to meet the caloric needs of each human presently living.

In his 1972 poem #695, Eigner writes of the smoke and burning of engines outside of a home, connecting it to increasing heat and haze. The poem opens

“ The days the motors burn past
the houses , under the trees

repair smoke your
shingles ”

(Eigner 205)

This observation of the impact of motors burning gasoline moves from the ground up into the atmosphere and down “under the trees” creating a poetic atmosphere of haze. Eigner moves slowly through the impacts of the runaway greenhouse effect. As the poem ends, Eigner folds the smoke and heat into the haze of being by a resort town, moving from maps to calendars until he wonders

“ how
anyone works

in the haze ”

(205).

At a distance, Eigner’s poem offers perspective and slowness. The poem itself wafts across the page, rising up in wisps. In this and other poems, such as the previously mentioned “y o u k n o w w h e r e y o u ’ r e g o i n g ?” Eigner addresses the long-term impacts of climate change: on teachers shepherding fifth graders to the beach and those impacted by earthquakes resulting from the disposal of toxic waste. This attentiveness to who is impacted by anti-environmental practices aligns with the work that Nixon does theoretically in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Nixon carries this conversation further by directly addressing which communities are disproportionately impacted by pollution, toxic waste, and earthquakes. In the introduction to *Slow Violence*, Nixon defines slow violence as “a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (2). It is this series of unnamed and often unapparent violences that have come to be known as environmental racism, disabled ecologies, and other decades-long amassments of

information that demonstrate the disproportionate impacts of political and environmental policies on Indigenous, nonwhite, disabled, and/or queer communities.

In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Nixon addresses the double-bind that writer-activists come up against in trying to engage slow violence. He notes that at the same time violence has played out over decades and centuries, practices for speaking, writing, and acting on these obfuscated practices are often drowned out in accelerating media practices. He points out that "fast is faster than it used to be, and story units have become concomitantly shorter. In this cultural milieu of digitally speeded up time, and foreshortened narrative, the intergenerational aftermath becomes a harder sell" (13). The speed with which information is created and disseminated results in a news cycle that buries what has been unearthed and which obfuscates that which has been illuminated by a flash.

It is in this accelerating cycle that crip activism and crip poetics offer an existing, slow, methodology for answering slow violence. Authors such as Samia Rahimtoola, writing in *ecopoetics: Essays in the Field*, address the ways in which knowledge of slow violence has transformed the practice of reading and writing ecological poetry. Rahimtoola positions slow violence and its acceleration in much the way that Keller discusses coal: "given time, slow violence achieves a scale that retroactively proves the significance of what might once have been but no longer can be overlooked as being next to nothing at all" (206). On the scale of slow violence, Rahimtoola argues, critical attentiveness is absolutely necessary. This slow and careful attentiveness she points out in connection to natural disasters. Rahimtoola argues that "if such alterations call on us to lay down the usual habits we bring to crisis response, they also open up new ways of thinking about environmental remediation by suggesting that repairing damage need not require the recovery of initial conditions" (206). This prescient look at environmental remediation is written absent of disability scholarship, but echoes key argumentation of ecopoet and theorist Eli Clare, whose work

on the illogics of restoration argues precisely this point. Clare discusses the ways in which much conservation work is done in service of an impossible and largely imaginary past that cannot be recovered. The work of ecopoets and ecocritics reading for transformation over slow time rather than a return to a fictitiously better earlier time offer a means to consider what is 'enough' in ecopoetic practice. Rahimtoola marks the ecological necessity of crip poetics in the realm of ecopoetry. It's for these reasons that I turn to crip genealogies and disability poetics to address how slow scholarship and slow scholars exist, and have existed, in ecological conversations separate from the Anthropocene. The slowness and care work of crip poetics holds onto the vulnerabilities that come from accelerating climate degradation and the potentials that exist in moving with a multiplicity of bodies and temporalities.

Temporal Care Work: JJJJJerome Ellis' *The Clearing* and *Aster of Ceremonies*

Ellis self-describes, at various times, and a "blk animal who stutters" and in others they are a "a blk disabled animal, stutterer, and artist."[56] Over time, Ellis' self-description has changed and shifted through webs of relation where they have found themself working; in this way, Ellis recognizes and articulates the points of connection that dis/connect from their own work. They also mark the passage of time and transformation they experience. These descriptions point to a subject position that is unstable and shifting over time. In the *Creative Capital* bio, the stutter is present, but separate from both Ellis and disability–this bio focuses on their connection to Blackness and animality and points to the practice and act of stutter as something over there. In their current website bio, disability is present, and Ellis, for a time, has become stutterer, one who is fused with and connected to stuttering as practice and as an aspect of self. In their poetics, Ellis utilizes

[56] Self description on *Creative Capital* website and self description on personal website and Youtube channel, respectively.

embodied practices of the stutter to insist on slowness. This slowness, in turn, opens up an interactive timeframe for connection with others.

In describing the process of stuttering to *This American Life*'s Sean Cole, Ellis says, "Sometimes I refer to it as 'my stutter,' but sometimes I refer to it as 'the stutter.' Because to me, stuttering is not bound to my body, that it is a phenomenon that occurs between me and whoever I'm speaking to. I like to think of it like it's something that we share." For Ellis, this act of sharing is an intentional, reflective and reflexive process of being a disabled writer. Eigner eschewed connections with/in the disability community, instead modeling a pre-identity practice of leaving the ephemera of disability on the page. Ellis, in turn, takes up the practice of leaving the ephemera on the page with the intent, using the page as a space to build community. Ellis points to the time in which their stutter is experienced as one that is shared. Ellis' particular form of stutter is a glottal block, one that creates pauses in conversation and, rather than filling space with repetition, offers a clearing in which other noise can move into the interaction.[57] In the "preface or prevoice or melismatic palimpsest" of their 2021 book/album *The Clearing*, Ellis uses melisma as a way to question and frame the glottal block, stating "Melisma is sonic investigation into what lies beyond, within, beside the syllable.[58] The slash here indicates the many materialities of *The Clearing*–as a recorded album available digitally or on vinyl and as a book of poems the size and shape of a collection of sheet music.The glottal block finds the silence in the syllable and enters its inner sanctum. Melisma is not just 'an ethos of singing.' It's an ethos of time" (ii). Focusing on their embodied and shared experience of stuttering, Ellis critically and creatively traces the potentials that exist in the clearing of time.

[57] Stutter and stammer are terms used by the designers of the stuttering pride flag; the term gestures broadly to patterns that repeat, prolong, or block speech acts.
[58] "What is melisma? It typically refers to singing more than one note per syllable" (ii) *The Clearing*.

In *The Clearing*, Ellis defines, re-defines, and resists defining the space of the clearing in which they write, sing, and create. In the "Preface or Prevoice or Melismatic Palimpsest," Ellis welcomes readers through a land acknowledgement of the Indigenous land they write from: "Lenapehoking, the traditional territory of the Lenape people" (i). This acknowledgement is repeated eight times in the six pages of the introduction. Ellis is attentive throughout this composition to address the ecological connections of themself, the land from which they write, and the thinkers with whom they conceive of their connection to the clearing. Ellis alternates definitions and perspectives on the clearing, first articulating it as a space where "the enslaved gathered in the woods at night to plan escapes and revolts, to dance, sing and pray" (i). Layering the clearing with recognition to Lenapehoking, the traditional territory of the Lenape people from where they write, Ellis also notes that "the clearing is also the act of clearing native plants and Native peoples" (i). Among the definitions offered, Ellis complicates the clearing with questions, asking "how can clearing, the act of moving toward clarity, betray clarity and in fact invite opacity?" and "Is the clearing a palimpsest?" (i).[59] Ellis does not give one definition of the clearing, but makes of it a palimpsest, scraping and turning and returning to the terms as many spaces across many times. The clearing is violent. The clearing is tender. The clearing is a shared space and invites with that sharing the possibility of kinship, loss, and connection.

Situated within the realm of Black experimental poetry, Ellis' work articulates a politics of Black experimental writing that foregrounds experience and technique. In *Freedom Time*, Anthony Reed notes the trend among critics of avant-garde poetry, "to consider black experimental writing in terms of either race or putatively "raceless" experimental techniques, [although] the two are mutually constitutive" (Reed 3). Here, Reed highlights the ways in which Black poets have often been pushed in an either/or framework of writing about race or writing using technique that is separate from

[59] "A manuscript page where earlier text has been scraped or washed off and later yet more text written on top" (Ellis i)

conversations of race. In order to redress this conception, Reed articulates the ways in which race informs technique. For Ellis, this approach is further complicated at the intersection of race and disability. Ellis' stutter can not be separated from traditions of Black writing, nor from their embodied existence. Instead, Ellis utilizes the stutter as a way to fold Black and crip ecopoetry into a series of time-disrupting practices. In *Freedom Time,* Reed articulates Du Bois' politics of time, "indicting at every turn the uneven division of time and challenging the ways the 'now' of black life is adjunct to the more general or "universal" now" (16). As Reed argues, there are multiple approaches to shared time articulated in Black poetic traditions, and often these pluralities of time are subjected to a universalizing, progressive newness. In order to resist these practices, Reed turns to poetry as a way to insist on a pause, a break, from time: "poetry temporalizes words: suspends them between the retention of past association and anticipation" (31). For Reed, Black experimental poetics offer one space of resistance, among many, to normative, progressive time.

Returning to Ellis' "Preface or Prevoice or Melismatic Palimpsest" as a space of 'unevenly divided time,' emphasizes the possibilities that exist within a transmediated album/book of poems/score/tome of sheet music. Ellis argues for a transformation of time, asking alternately "why is it that the same bell that calls us to prayer and meditation called the enslaved to the field?" and "how can we create gentler, more humane clocks?" (iii). In this act of questioning, Ellis tasks readers with reorienting themselves to the clock and the bell. They invite readers to join them in the clearing–"there's no clock in the forest" (iii). In the former relationship to the bell, Ellis questions the relationship to ordered, orderly time. Who were those that benefitted from keeping some people in church and others in the field? By turning to the forest, Ellis hearkens to an embodied system of timekeeping, one that relies on an ecological connection to day and night, to season, and to the plants and animals that operate on organic practices of measuring moments. In Ellis' writing, they directly challenge the singularity of time and allow so-called 'universal' time to falter and fragment.

I argue that Ellis' attention to time and slowness acts as a form of temporal care work. Through their labors to open the page to readers, to orient around a form of timekeeping that relies more on connection than abstraction to the laws and numbers of a clock, Ellis' work advocates for an interdependent practice of many times. This felt, relational time is the act of enacting temporal care: to feel out and foster the necessary chronotropes to facilitate connection across humans–of many bodies and times–and the more-than-human world. Rather than enforcing one (slower) approach to time meant to accommodate, Ellis' work instead opens normative time to a plurality of chronological approaches. When visiting Michigan State University in 2022 as the keynote speaker for the HIVES Research Workshop and Speaker Series, Ellis spoke on their relationship to time in writing, performing, making music, and in their everyday existence.[60] Discussing the stutter, Ellis emphasizes that "the stutter invites a different kind of rhythm… the word metronome– the *-nome* part of the word refers to law or order– The metronome, order of the meter. The law. I like thinking of the stutter as like an inherently lawless rhythmical force" (Ellis *HIVES* 1:00:17). During this discussion, Ellis notes that the stutter impacts their music, their poetry, and even the way that they walk. For Ellis, the stutter is an embodied practice of moving outside of progressive time, stealing a different way to exist in the world and to extend connection to those similarly moving differently. Ellis continues, "in my music, I often gravitate towards playing not with a steady beat, a metronome beat. I like to play rubato. For those who are not familiar: rubato is a musical term for tempo–in Italian, which means stolen time. It refers to when a musician stretches time as it happens" (1:01:13). For Ellis and through fugitivity, time becomes a pliable, malleable experience. Ellis intentionally uses these aspects of time to extend care, to stretch and steal time for others.

[60] The HIVES Research Workshop and Speaker series was created in 2019 by myself and Michael Stokes as a way to connect MSU graduate students with hives of disability culture and community. The thematic for the year Ellis keynoted was "Disability, Race, and Performance." More information and recorded events can be found at behives.org.

In a conversation with Deaf, Asian-American visual artist Christine Sun Kim, Ellis poses the twinned questions "how can we reimagine time? And how can the clock offer new invitations to relate to time?" (48:03).[61] In her response, Kim gestures to her work currently on display, a clock featuring ASL and the message of taking turns, which she created to convey the sense that "it's kind of foolish or silly to see people who are defining what's normal–being the ones who put the barriers in place–and then they're also the ones telling us to do all the work" (49:35).[62] Directly addressing the barriers of time, Kim adds that the experience of Deaf time is riddled with echoes, loops of messages that repeat through sign, interpreter, spoken word, written word, and captions. These 'echo traps' as she defines them are also mapped onto clocks, "which bring you to a circular experience and that also kind of speaks to what people look and define as normal" (50:34). The echo trap of normalcy is something that both Ellis and Kim bond over and approach through a variety of methods. Ellis brings up a performance of "Amazing Grace" done by Aretha Franklin which, they argue, opens time through melisma. In Franklin's stretching of the syllable, Ellis finds an offering of multiple concurrent times. They find "room for everyone to get what they need in time… whether that's structure or a more fluid sense or of course like I also need both and my needs for time change throughout the day… one of the things I'm craving is like, for everyone to have what they need and for there to be room for multiplicity" (55:51). The multiplicity of slow time that Ellis cultivates through the stutter and reads through melisma is an act of care and hope. Ellis uses the clearing of time as a way to address harms of a standardized, normative time and to offer care in the form of space and openness. This practice arises in Ellis' music, scholarship, and poetics; as they describe it, "one of the things that I'm envisioning is, yeah, a way of taking care of time that somehow enables everyone to get what they need" (57:26). Ellis begins their approach to time

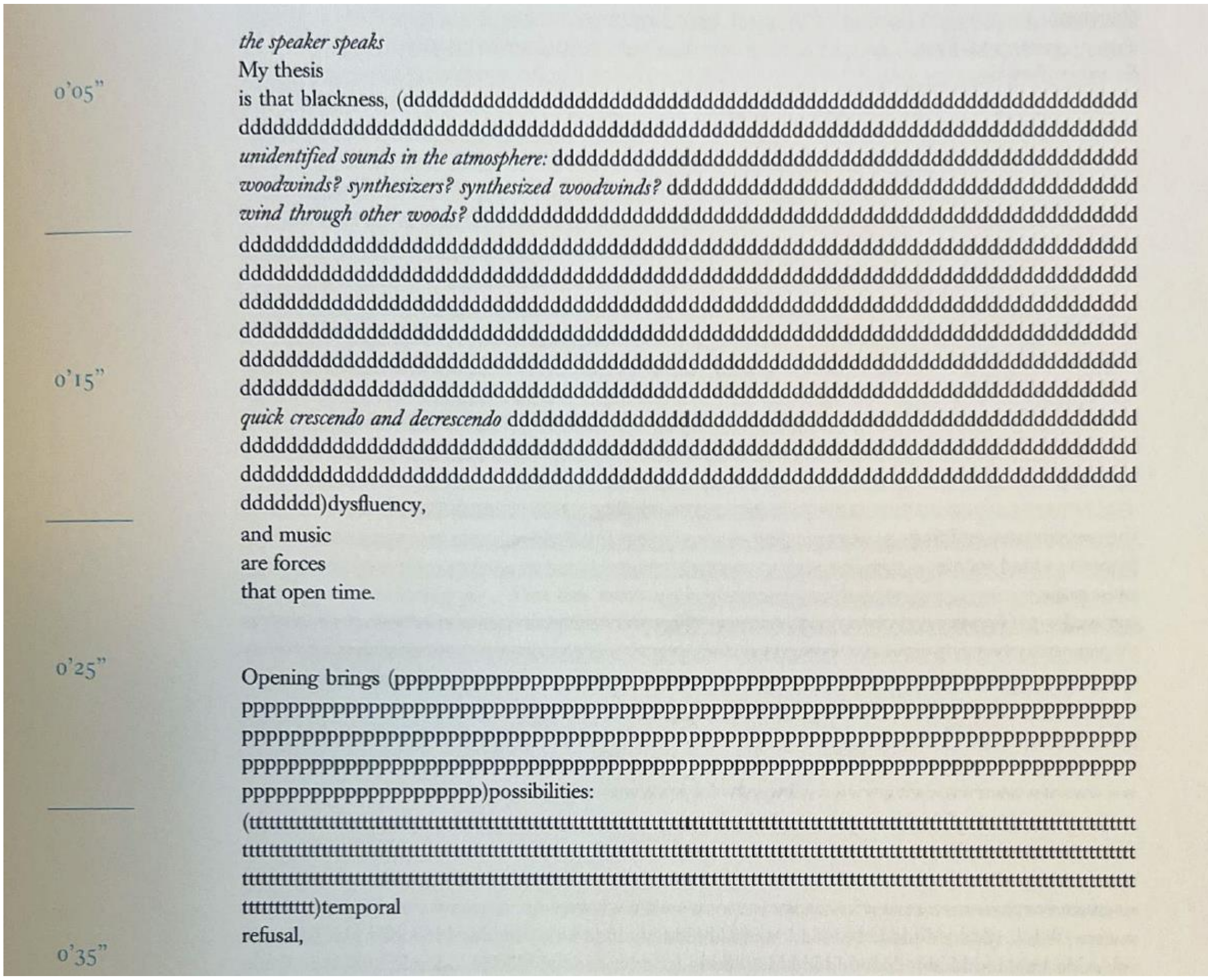
[61] Based in Berlin.
[62] American Sign Language

through the stutter, a deeply embodied practice. From this practice, Ellis opens time for others. The Ellis' stewardship opens time audibly, on the page, and in the margins.

In the album set and book *The Clearing*, Ellis uses the embodied practice of the stutter as a means to opacity and to find kinship across time. *The Clearing* is a hybrid text, layers of theory, of stories, of correspondence, of scores in and outside of time.[63] This is to say that, in addition to page numbers, the book is stamped with measurements of time, each page holding one minute of content as Ellis speaks/sings/performs it. It's through this play with musical time that the text of *The Clearing* stretches towards melisma. Ellis' poem/song "Loops of Retreat" argues for an opening of time explicitly through its use of Blackness, dysfluency, and music. One portion, excerpted here, demonstrates the way in which the book/album is arranged:it refuses and disrupts the act of citation, excerption, or otherwise attempting to replicate any part of it without the whole. The page, arranged according to normative time, deny the citing author the ability to clearly delineate lines with the standard punctuation of " / " as phrases could be of the same line spoken while a great deal of time later.[64]

[63] To borrow from its own note on the text, "*The Clearing* is a trans*cript*ion of an album of the same title… Each chapter corresponds to a track on the album, and each page corresponds to sixty seconds. The roman text corresponds to the spoken and sung "lyrics" of the album. The italic text (excepting book titles and the names of slave ships) is a description of the audio. My stutters–my clearings–are rendered in real time on the page." (Ellis xi, author's emphasis). There is more at play here, where the descriptions of audio become phrases such as "*there is something over yonder / beyond the hillside*" (81) and where timestamps divide the sixty second page into units of "For the reality / of the bell is / you are the / instrument" (91) and "the low tides / and noontide" (92).

[64] For the moment, at least.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that open time.

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Figure III: An image from *The Clearing* shows timestamps and letter repetition.

In the left margin of the piece are timestamps in blue, which break each page into one minute, with roughly ten seconds in each section. Representation of what should be audible~~Sound~~ is layered on the page, with written words and through the repetition of letters–indicating Ellis' glottal block–and italics, which Ellis informs the reader that "the italic text (excepting book titles and the names of slave ships) is a description of the audio" (xi). "Loops of Retreat" is, in addition to its lyrical, audible, and poetic construction, a transformation of published scholarship as well. The 'thesis' referred to in the opening, "my thesis is that blackness, …disfluency, / and music / are forces / that open time," (3) is an abstract of Ellis "The clearing: Music, dysfluency, Blackness and time" published in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies*, where Ellis argues that "dysfluency, music and Blackness,

because of their distinct relationships to time, have the power to forge alternative temporalities and help us heal from 'temporal subjection"' (Ellis, "the clearing" abstract). In this way, *The Clearing*–as an ecological enmeshment of album, essay, and book of poems–is a multimedia assemblage created with the intention to "open time" and enact "temporal / refusal" (3). In this practice, Ellis works towards the envisioned act of temporal care. In an act of citational practice and footnoting, Ellis calls back to Harriet Jacobs' chapter "Loophole of Retreat," which is the center chapter of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. This internal citational and relational hailing of Jacobs complicates time in two ways. First, it cites the hiding place that Jacobs used for seven years to hide, the titular Loophole of Retreat. Second it moves into the argument that this loophole, and other loops are a process of connection to past snares; Ellis writes "black music / like black escape, / is a never-ending activity and never / *snares contribute to the trap* / an achievement" (Ellis 6). The writing self-reflexively argues for an ongoing and enduring act, that loopholes and looping are a practice for opening time. Their work slows down and opens up a multiplicity of ways to engage with poem/song/scholarship in order to hold space for many ways of engagement.[65]

This act of temporal refusal and care is articulated by Ellis and through the act of quotation with their mentor Milta Vega Cardona. By folding in a conversation with their mentor, Ellis broadens the perspective on their process and practice to include how these practices appear from the outside. In "Milta," Ellis transmediates a conversation between themself and Cardona, using a recording of a phone call to read a letter in which Cardona speaks about Ellis and their stutter: "as other-abled, rather than (...)rather than (...)disabled, or at least out of the white time continuum, as in slow motion" (88). This layering of definitions and descriptions fragments not only time, but race and identity as well. In this naming of stutter as "other-abled" rather than disabled, Ellis

[65] This practice is similar to the performance work undertaken by access doula moira williams, whose efforts at the intersection of cross disability access, Indigeneity, and water justice have changed the ways people can engage with NYC waterfronts.

notes/quotes the implications inherent to existing outside "the white time continuum" (89) as historically being considered a form of 'less than.' This positionality assumes there is a progressive time (white time) and that times beyond, alongside, or out of sync with it are less. In Cardona's articulation quoted here, this Black/crip position is a process, an activity that creates potentials outside of and across time. This fragment of conversation appears on the pages of *The Clearing* as taking place adjacent to a fruiting tree formed of free-floating letters: a,d,e,p,t,s,h.

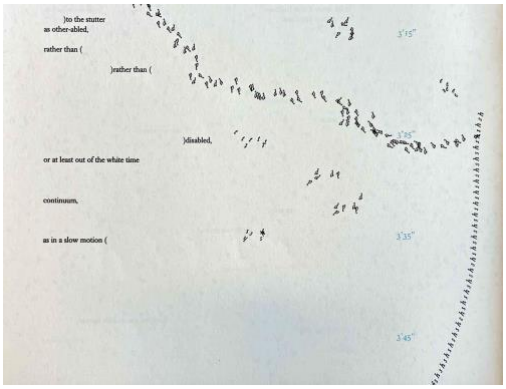

Figure IV: An image from *The Clearing* shows letters taking the shape of a tree.

As the poem continues, Cardona speaks (not as quoted by Ellis) to the importance of the stutter being like breaking glass outside of the white time continuum: "that's / where / this fictitious / barrier / between us / and the / ancestors is… is now / you know / shattered / and there they stand [laughter]" (91). For Cardona, as recorded by Ellis and inscribed to the page, the stutter as method breaks open time like so much glass to put the people of this moment in direct contact with ancestors who have been separated by a fictitious barrier. On the same page that Ellis places these words, the lines that had one delineated units of ten seconds at a time have been altered. Instead of numbers recording time, they have become words: "For the reality of the bell is that you are the instrument, / and you guard the music before the music arrives" (91). In the moment of breaking time, Ellis invites this "you" into the process. Folding together the "you" with the bell–the bell which breaks a glass in slow motion–Ellis positions those willing to come along on both sides of the

glass. If the (you) of the page is the reader as instrument, then that "you" is tasked with being ancestors of the yet-to-be, holding music as much as the bell breaking the fictitious barrier separating ancestors from self from progeny.

It is this cross-continuum connection that Eigner opens himself up for in his Douglass poem, using citational practice and capacious connection to connect himself with pasts admittedly beyond his grasp and into futures similarly nebulous. Eigner orients himself in ecological openness to connection across time, questioning the absences he witnessed while in the sky:

"

no tall dark face in the air
no porter what

have I to do with
what I don't see

"

(Eigner qtd. Hart 67)

This absence and implied connection is an act of temporal care on the part of Eigner, opening up his own relationship to travel and the whiteness of who used and operated air travel at the time of the poem's writing. The implication that he has everything to do with what isn't seen implies a break that must be redressed. Ellis, in turn, utilizes silence and the openness of the page to rhetorically move into the break. In *In the Break: the Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, Fred Moten describes the break as both a stop and a process, one connected to musicality through the caesura–"a musical caesura that demands precisely that immersive lingering that…is a necessary preface to action" (Moten 85). In articulating the break as part of Black radical tradition, Moten insists on beginning with Douglass' writing.[66] Douglass and those who come after must navigate the aesthetic practices of chronicling and re/producing histories of violence against Black people, and it is in the break that these performative practices risk re-enacting such violent acts. In so doing, the break, the pause, the moment of reflection before action becomes that which "interinanimates the body and its ephemeral

[66] "Consulting Frederick Douglass on all of this is mandatory and the best place to consult him is in the moments when he describes and reproduces black performance" (Moten 2).

if productive force, that interarticulates the performance and the reproductive reproduction it always already contains and which contains it" (18). For Ellis, this break arises as an engagement with their stutter, the ephemera that is placed on the pages of *The Clearing,* and the ways in which the text itself re-orients those engaging it to music, poetry (as performance), and poetry (as the page). In *The Clearing* and their other writings, Ellis insists on a process that moves language into the spaces between action in preparation of connection. The stutter, and by extension the break, invites immersion, pause, and connection as a preface to action across time and space.[67] Moten, writing of the work of Amiri Baraka, compares his poetry to the music of Duke Ellington as a way to address the lack of direct correspondence between sound, music, and performance: "the poem as the entire field or saturation, flood or plain, within which the page, sound and meaning, the live, the original, the recording, the score exist as icons or singular aspects of a totality" (Moten 97). In writing about the poem as a totality of multiple experiences, Moten articulates practices of fragmentation that are necessary for understanding the multiplicity of ways that Ellis' *The Clearing*–as poem, as performance, as textbook, as book of poetry, as album, as animated videos on Youtube–break conceptions of poems as either units of reading or units of text alongside time. This breaking, similar to Eigner's own play, modifies the 'field' of writing as described by Olson earlier. While Olson's "Projective Verse" argues for a field that contains an unbroken, wandering chain of meanings, the field that Moten describes becomes partial and fragmented in its movement–a poem on the page articulates some but not all aspects of the field of the poem itself. Instead, the field of the poem becomes an inarticulable wholeness that bears multiple approaches, pathways, and time signatures.

Through the use of slowness and connection, Ellis and Eigner fragment the relationship, earlier articulated by Brian Reed, of 'frictionless transmediation' between written and performed poetry. Writing in *The Sound of Poetry/The Poetry of Sound*, Reed emphasized the infinite reproducibility

[67] or prevoice or melismatic palimpsest.

of a spoken Black Mountain poem from a written Black Mountain poem. He further argues that there is a perceived hierarchy of which version of a poem is better and that the heard version is privileged in this exchange. Reed notes that "Phonocentrism rests on a false and hierarchical ranking of two out of many possible means of communication. The field of poetics must come to terms with this principle and its ramifications. A written text and a live performance are not related in the manner of original and copy" (Brian Reed 278). Both Ellis and Eigner's writing occupy the typewritten page in a way that forecloses a singular approach to reading, instead existing in a break between concrete and sound poetry. Through different crip processes–typing with cerebral palsy for Eigner and transcribing the stutter for Ellis–both authors arrive at written poetry that cannot be reproduced in a singular fashion, even by themselves. Instead, what Ellis and Eiger have created, across time and through a combination of citational practice and caprice, is a practice of temporal care. Instead of foreclosing the edges of their respective fields of composition, they have sunk into them while inviting others to follow.

It is within melismatic moments of the polyvocal that Ellis and their stutter hold worlds. These worlds are heralded by timestamps in the sheet-music sized transcription and convey the scholarly lineage Ellis traces, correspondence with mentor Milta, the piano, the saxophone, and Ellis themself. The second track/poem of the text "*Jede Krankheit ist ein musikalisches Problem*" is a temporal knot that, through polyvocality, opens time to hold a community of dysfluency– Ellis makes the connection: "speakers with… Tourette's…or Down's… or who are… on the autism spectrum" (18-19).[68] In this relation, they open out to other sections of the album/book, where Ellis turns to theorists such as Glissant, Pickens, and Moten to think through what dysfluency, Blackness, and the

[68] Translation of the German: "Every illness is a musical problem." The ellipses here enact an academic violence, a cutting and erasure of the hundreds of ts and dozens of os that cover many inches of page, representing Ellis' stutter.

stutter offer for ways to intentionally be (mis)understood. Ellis closes the track/poem with the articulation that,

> Something I'm interested in here / is the…aural…opacity / of stuttering. / If you can hear me / but you can't see me, / how can you tell / I'm stuttering? / *carry us to the unidentified* / *ocean* / Am I pausing because I'm finished / with my thought? / *unidentified instruments tide unto us* / Am I pausing for effect? / Or am I pausing because I'm caught…in a glottal block. (21-2)[69]

This condensed section resonates with strings across the book/album. From Ellis' citational practices of weaving in concepts such as Edouard Glissant's right to opacity to the oceanic influences of those who write with the gaps and violences of the archive of the trans-Atlantic trade of enslaved people, it opens time to hold the many moments in conversation with their work while intentionally burying the lede.[70]

Ellis and Eigner's work, through their disparate but convergent approaches to the page–and in the case of Ellis, sound–align with the interdisciplinary practices and experimental approaches to composition that arise in Fluxus. In her history of Fluxus, Hannah Higgens addresses the ways in which the movement created "a diverse experiential framework, one characterized by the dissolution of boundaries dear to Western epistemology, including the traditional distinction between subject and object on which much of Western philosophy was historically based." (Higgins 12). In this chronology, Higgens focuses on the ways in which Fluxus worked not to break the world, but the perceived barriers between self and world. Both Ellis and Eigner take very intentional steps to dissolve barriers between self and the world. By breaking these barriers, the typographical and slow interventions of Ellis and Eigner–and the compositional refusal of standard time for Ellis alone–

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[69] In a world where Apple's text-recognition or Scannable's image to text software might hold on to all of the "i"s in the end of this passage, I would include them in the quoted text, as their motion and spaces tell and obscure as much or more than the cited text.

[70] "The opaque is not the obscure, though it is possible for it to be so and be accepted as such. It is that which cannot be reduced, which is the most perennial guarantee of participation and confluence" Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing. (University of Michigan Press, 1997) 191.A few openings into this writing include: *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being,* Christina Sharpe. *Zong!* M. NourbeSe Philip. "Venus in Two Acts" Saidiya Hartman.

create opacity through their refusal to separate from dense networks of ecological connection. While the Fluxus movement bore the hallmarks of unique practices for individual practitioners—John Cage and Yoko Ono among them–, it also modeled disruptive approaches to boundaries through the layering of context and history. Both Ellis and Eigner slow down to the point of becoming irrevocably enmeshed with the worlds they write in, and invite readers to similarly sink into these connections.

One of the examples that Higgens draws reader's attention to is Fluxkits–a Fluxus practice meant to bring readers/participants into the act of creating together. In the creation of the first and subsequent kits, Fluxus artists worked to curate embodied experiencse in the form of Events for those receiving and utilizing the kits. Higgens explains that the first kit

> yield[ed] multisensory, primary information. These include a song, with words and melody (therefore involving sight, motility, and hearing); a napkin, meant to touch hand and mouth (therefore involving tactility and perhaps taste); a medical examination glove, with the look and smell of latex (therefore involving touch—both in and through the glove—sight, and smell); photo portraits, which appeal to the eye; performance and music scores, which involve all senses (and are thus synaesthetic); and visual and sound poems, meant to be read, heard, and performed (which therefore involve the eye, the ear, and the body of the performer). (34)

This kit and its progeny, then, were invitations to engagement as much as they were creative acts themselves. The curation of sense, sound, time, and experience were the focus of this act and the assembled materials. The implied invitation, then, is also to take one's time with the materials. Rather than dictate process, breath, and engagement, the Fluxus practice of the kit opened experience across time to participants. I argue that Ellis and Eigner's approach to slowness are intentional ways of breaking progressive time and its use for distancing the now/new from the past, instead articulating alternative chronotropes for ecopoetry.

Throughout *The Clearing*, Ellis uses questions to weave together disparate but related vignettes in their relationship to Blackness, enslavement, and what sound and silence can mean. When they stutter in the question "Or am I pausing because I'm caught…" they touch on the

violent silences of enslavement, slave catchers, and their modern-day descendents, the American police (22). One of the many points of connection within *The Clearing* that this passage touches on is from the "preface or prevoice or melismatic palimpsest," where they describe being pulled over by a police officer on the way to Kansas City. For much of their interaction, they do not allow the stutter to form between themself and the officer and try to stay out of the clearing. This is until the officer asks where they are going. It is then that Ellis chooses to risk stuttering in conveying the honest response:

> For the first time I avert my eyes as I stutter for maybe three seconds: "kkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkKansas City." I look back at you and search for signs of suspicion now that the Stutter has appeared. I. Cannot. Detect. Suspicion. … This whole time I've been suppressing the Stutter and its clearings as much as I can. For the clearing is also a place of vulnerability for the carrier and steward of the clearing, and I don't feel safe opening it with you. But do you stutter? Are you suppressing clearings of your own?" (v)

In risking the stutter, Ellis creates a vulnerable moment, an opening in which the office can enact the historic violences of the career. Instead, there is no reciprocal suspicion. Ellis uses this clearing as a space of meditation, one in which there's room for a police officer with a stutter, one who can enact community and connection as well as violence. In this moment, Ellis is reaching across tracks/poems to acts of resistance done by enslaved people, who used music to cover the sound of breaking shackles and, in the quiet after, attacked the crew that was transporting them (35). Throughout the act of questioning, Ellis returns to the stutter, its practice, and the opacity that it offers them as poet, person, and performer. The question and the stutter offer more than one chronotrope in which readers can find, be hidden, or slow themselves down to seek their own answers to Ellis' prodding. This approach to the page and the poem creates a heterotopia which obfuscates a singular time in which to respond. The stutter is a performative opacity, a time that opens to other histories,

other presents, and other futures. Ellis utilizes these clearings to find relations in moments of polyvocality and dysfluency across space, time, and tongue.

This practice of self-awarely playing with time and embodied utterances outside of standard meter is part of the recent history of crip/disabled poetics. This movement in disability ecopoetry necessitates recognizing Eigner among early crip writers working on interdependent networks and the ongoing contributions of Ellis. In addition to stuttering poets, the practice of directly engaging language that is transformed by disabled embodiment is taken up by poets with cognitive disability (TBI, aphasia, etc.) and physical disabilities. In "Disability Aesthetics and Poetic Practice," Declan Gould describes the double-bind of disability in poetry. She notes that "disability can be the impetus for generative writing constraints… disability can lead to formal innovation but can also make writing more difficult" (Gould 116). Gould articulates that while disabled experience, through its interaction with ableist expectations of writing production and style, can be made more difficult, it simultaneously generates space and practices that demonstrate innovation.

Like Eigner's previously described typographical innovation, other poets implement these practices in reading. White, Canadian, stuttering poet Jordan Scott emphasizes the friction between body and world in the author's note of the 2008 book *blert.*[71] Here, he states that "the burn and crush in your own mouth is dysfluency - animating the bobble of your tongue's slight erosions… *blert* is written as a threat to coherence" (65). Among the poems in this book are "chomp sets": poems that rub up against Scott's stutter and which challenge readers with unfamiliar words like "crust lithostatic" (22), "fondle felsic" (22), and "moraine kickback" (22).[72] Similarly, in the

[71] Jordan Scott's poetry and children's book *I Talk Like a River* and JJJJJerome Ellis' work are primary citations for the creation of the Stuttering Pride Flag and its aquatic thematics, alongside "the Egyptian hieroglyph for stuttering [which] features a wave-like motif."

[72] Without a dictionary and/or thesaurus, these phrases become sound, but with such tools, they convey a poem that mashes bones and rocks together in the act of speaking dysfluently: an ecological imagining of kisses and necks astride landslides and mouthfuls of pebbles.

introduction to *Beauty is a Verb*, Jennifer Bartlett describes a reading by Norma Cole, who years earlier had a stroke and now "used her temporary aphasia and slurred speech to compose a poem that noted a list of words she could no longer enunciate… Cole laughed at the ridiculous, yet utterly wrenching, situation of a poet losing words, and the audience laughed with her" (15).[73] Like other disabled poets, Cole opens up time through embodied practice and the metaphor of musicality. Cole titles this reading "Speech Production Themes And Variations," stating that "It's like a sonata" (2:07). This invitation brings the audience through the writer/speaker into a plurality of approaches to time. By modeling different timescapes, these disabled poetics don't insist on one time or another, but open multiple temporal spaces in acts of care. When writing about Jordan Scott, white USAmerican poet Craig Dworkin frames the interaction with the stutter as one potential connection between articulation, inarticulation, and the temporal structures that support these terms. He argues that the stutter, "between the embodied individual and the social abstract--offers *one way* to understand the full range of inarticulate effects on display in the writings of the avant-garde and its broad challenge to the ideologies of normalcy, fluency, transparently communicative expository eloquence, and any notion of a dematerialized or disembodied language" (Dworkin 183, my emphasis). In this passage, Dworkin holds together that disabled embodied writing and speaking opens up the poetic utterance as one site of connection between disabled and nondisabled linguistic practices. Similarly, the poets described here offer alternate ways to hold open time as methods for engaging a plurality of experiences.

Taken together, Ellis, Cole, and Scott mark a crip intervention into the creation of sound poetry through their embodied and temporally disruptive practices. In so doing, they articulate the possibilities that exist between disability, music, and sound poetry as described by Nancy Perloff. Writing in *The Sound of Poetry/The Poetry of Sound*, Perloff notes that "sound poetry, while not

[73] "Yet, it wasn't as simple as that. Although the audience laughed, they were also visibly uncomfortable."

constituting music, is a poetic form that works between media" (97). Sound poetry relies on fundamentally altering the relationship between word and articulation, sound and speech. These poets in turn approach sound poetry as a space in which the body itself alters the generation and performance of the sound poem. Each of the authors listed above utilize themselves as instrument in the creation of sound poetry–hearkening back to Ellis' exhortation in "Milta." Through Scott's "Chomp Sets," Cole's "Themes and Variations," and Ellis' *The Clearing*, these disabled creators of poetry blend embodied experience of disability with their writing, modeling what Perloff describes as sound poetry's intervention into the avant-garde, "blurring of the line between sound and noise, and invention of new forms of notation" (124). The new form of notation comes through especially clearly in Ellis' work, where they use musical notation and repetition of letters to move the sound of their poetics onto the page. This practice of crip musicality in sound poetry complicates the relationship between time, body, and poetry.

In *The Clearing*, Ellis opens time by introducing a Bernie Mac joke near the beginning of the book/album and leaving it unresolved; this tension creates a turbulent timeline, one that churns across tracks of the album until even the time scales in the margin wear out. In the time between the joke's introduction and the punchline, *The Clearing* makes an ecological experience of all the joys, sorrows, and discomforts that the clearing offers. *The Clearing* recognizes that ecologies are not happy units, but series of relations that are painful, vicious moments that grow from death and shit, blossom, and re/turn to other moments in cycles.

There's a well-known joke about humor that involves one participant in a joke asking the other "what's the most important part of a joke?" and when the second party begins to respond "I don't know, what–" the comedian interrupts with the word "timing!" This process of setup and interruption is inverted in Ellis' writing, beginning with the setup of a joke that instead goes uninterrupted until the very end of the album/book. Ellis slows the timing of the joke until the joke

becomes a poem. The first track/poem offers multiple beginnings to the album/book, moving through a thesis of temporal refusal (3), a first beginning in "the conversion / narrative of an ex-slave" (9) another beginning in a Bernie Mac Joke (10), another beginning with Ellis' mother (11) and a quotational beginning, Teju Cole's introduction of Fred Moton which begins "by borrowing a thought from…from Glissant" (11). Indeed, this highly sedimentary introduction builds layers of rocks behind which Ellis' work can become opaque. The language Ellis borrows from Cole who borrowed from Glissant uses citational practice to build layers of meaning into the structures of the book/album. The many beginnings to *The Clearing* stagger the communities and conversations that Ellis connects ecologically and chronologically. If Eigner's utterances in "y o u k n o w w h e r e y o u ' r e g o i n g ?" signal readers of *Scientific American*, followers of the space race, and readers of Paul and Anne Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, Ellis' works hold together centuries of participants, spanning the time of USAmerican chattel slavery to the present. Overlapping, interrupting, and supporting one another, the times and beginnings that Ellis writes in become an ecology of surprising relations. In the clearing of the stutter, Bernie Mac and Glissant and the narratives of former enslaved people clamor to relate sorrows, fears, pain, and humor. The Bernie Mac joke that is one of these beginnings tells the story of his nephew on a corner, trying to ask a bus driver a question. Each time the bus arrives and the door opens, Mac impersonates his nephew's stuttering utterance of "uh" for sixteen seconds before "return[ing] to his normal voice" to tell the rest of the joke, wherein the bus driver closes the door and drives away (10). There is no punchline offered in this track/poem. The joke is interrupted by the next beginning. In this way, Ellis crips the joke, moving it into crip time and breaking the formula of setup → punchline.[74] Instead, Ellis opens the time of the joke and fills the clearing with an entire album/book.

[74] Among other thinkers, consider the work of Ellen Samuels in "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time" in *Disability Studies Quarterly*.

Ellis returns to the Bernie Mac joke at the end of *The Clearing*, in the poem/track "Punch Line." By this time in the book, the numbers telling where in the minute each utterance or letter falls have disappeared. The normal structure of time that was presented at the beginning has fallen away to be replaced by other measurements of time. The sections that formerly broke pages into sixty seconds are their own poem-within-a-song, informing the reader that the pace is "each tail a switch / and a prayer. / The anther ruptures / like a river / forever arriving / between two shores" (95). It's in this fractured time, this clearing, that Ellis begins with the end of the Bernie Mac joke. Ellis uses fragmented time to articulate the story of Bernie Mac's nephew, the nephew's mother, and the bus driver as they misunderstand one another.

The joke ends with the nephew's mother surprising the bus driver the following day and demanding an explanation–an explanation that Mac offers with another stuttering impersonation: "'huh' / Ahhhhhhh! / He was teasing / me!' / *Album ends*" (98).[75] Without explanation, citation, or clarification, the album ends with the punchline of Mac's joke. In humor, timing is everything, and so the reader must make something of this ending. The reader/listener is left with opacity of how to react to this punchline. Did the bus driver and the kid become part of some sort of impossible community of stutterers, escaping the time constraints of the world and creating an elsewhere? Do we follow the expected process of the joke and laugh at the misunderstanding that arises from two stutterers reading all-too-common violence in each other's utterances? This moment echoes the earlier interaction of Ellis with a police officer, where they question if the officer stutters as well. In the clearing formed between these silences, Ellis offers openings to consider the worlds that exist alongside time, where sharing the stutter can make moments of connection more so than abandonment.

[75] Though, by this time even the page numbers have fallen away. This citation is made from extrapolation of the following incomplete data: the previous page was number 97.

What Ellis leaves the audience with is a vignette of misunderstanding facilitated by a shared stutter. The bus driver who stutters does not open to connect, but closes the door (literally and metaphorically). The reader and listener are entangled with two Black, disabled people misunderstanding one another, fearing that they are being made into a joke and thereby becoming the joke again and again and… Here, in the space where time has dropped out of the clearing, the reader is left with a final clue in the marginalia; the last fragment of timekeeping poem insists, "even the prom- / ise of com- / mon evening / primrose must / move, must / metamorphose / like music into" (98).[76] Ellis offers no answers, no collapsing, simple, direct answer to the music/poem. Instead, the reader's experience is opened. Like the clearing, the reader is brought out into uncertain time and must navigate their own experience to make the punchline funny, to conspire with others, and to address their responsibility for being part of the settling work that made the clearing.[77] The reader must accept that the time which commenced the experience of the book is metamorphosing into something otherwise, something elsewhere, something elsewhen. In their cripping of Mac's joke and leaving the time of the text unresolved, Ellis charges *The Clearing* with tension and polyvocality, leaving readers in the opacities and possibilities of being unmoored from time.

These practices continue in Ellis' most recent work, *Aster[78] of Ceremonies: Some Notes Performed[79] toward a Ceremony[80], containing several Movements of a Hymn–or a Black, Dysfluent[81] Chant–and an Essay for a Liturgy of the Name, Offered in Devotion to Our Kin[82]; in other words, Some Pages of a Reverence[83]*

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[76] See previous note.
[77] In the preface or prevoice or melismatic palimpsest, Ellis cites these and other implications of the clearing.
[78] Asters are a group of flowering Plants (Ellis).
[79] "I've been concerned for a long time with Black performances as the resistance events of persons denied the capacity to claim normative personhood." -Fred Moten (Ellis)
[80] "That which we have made we can unmake and consciously now remake." -Sylvià Wynter, "Ceremony Found" (Ellis)
[81] "Dysfluent" here refers to forms of disabled or non-normative speech, including stuttering/stammering the two terms are synonomous[sic]), aphasia, Tourette's, and others. (Ellis)
[82] "... our nonhuman kin are sometimes the family members with the greatest fugitive stance for resistance" -Jennell Navarro and Kimberly Robertson, "The Countdown Remix: Why Two Native Feminists Ride with Queen Bey" in *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness* (Ellis)
[83] Thank you, Luisa Black, for showing me the closeness of *reference* and *reverence*. (Ellis)

Book Awaiting to be Gathered[84] *and Sung with other Quires*[85].[86] As is evident in the long form title, Ellis' acts of citation, footnotes, and sound slow the experience of the page to a crawl in order to open spaces of scholarly citation (Moten, Wynter, Gumbs), homophones (synonomous[synonymous], quires[choirs]), and ecological kinship (asters, dysfluency, Navarro & Robertson, Luísa Black). From the outset of the book, Ellis insists on using the page to open acts of reading, shaping space to allow both surface reading, reading by association (for those whose knowledge extends to texts with such dense epigraphs), and scholarly excision. This temporal openness is spoken of directly in the introduction, where Ellis invites their readers to "feel free to read this book however you'd like. Front to back, back to front, tiddlywinking from page to page, slowly, quickly, not at all, forgotten at a friend's" (5).

While *The Clearing* used the embodied space of sharing the stutter to open time through Ellis' lineage, the pages of *Aster of Ceremonies* further extend their crip genealogies and ecological connections by weaving together archives of North American Flowers and the archive of "so-called 'runaway slave' advertisements" (Ellis *Aster* 2).[87] In this enmeshment of archives, Ellis practices a form of devotion to the plants that would have been present, blooming, or otherwise in relation to the Ancestors they write about. Ellis was drawn to these archives when they came across the quote that "some statistics indicate a high incidence of stuttering amongst slaves" (Johnson qtd. Migone qtd. Ellis *Aster* 2). The resultant poems throughout *Aster of Ceremonies* emphasize the connected genealogies of Ellis' Ancestors with plants through the visual cue of magenta letters.

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[84] "if you don't gather them all you will never be free." -Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Dub: Finding Ceremony* (Ellis)

[85] Quires are groups of pages gathered to form a bound book. (Ellis)

[86] The full title of the work, including Ellis' footnotes, is transcribed here.

[87] Traced back matrilineally through the time of USAmerican slavery; the shortened title is offered from here on out in consideration of the ink and time of future readers. Ellis approaches these terms with care, using scare quotes around 'ran away' "to trouble the apparent simplicity of the language used to describe what these enslaved folks were doing" (2).

In the poem/hymn/section "Benediction, Movement 1," Ellis questions the archive of 'runaway' enslaved person advertisements as an act of care for an Ancestor whose recorded name is Adam. In one passage between a triangle of sheet music and a hymn for Asters, Ellis writes, "according to the ad, he 'ran away' on August 4, 1782, likely on or near land and water traditionally stewarded by, among others, the Munsee Lenape and Canarsie peoples… Did you see, touch, smell purple flowers: Elder Smooth Aster (*Symphyotrichum margaritacea*) ?" (68).[88] This passage holds together much of the crip methods of slowing and opening time that exist within Ellis' work.[89] At one level of writing, Ellis conveys factual information–the date of the ad, its location in both contemporary cartography (Queens, NY) and through acknowledgement of Indigenous land stewardship. In another, layer, Ellis connects multiple scales of time through the present (a footnote to Luísa), near-past (1782), geological past–"Plant Elders in the Aster family that flower in August–and have done so long before the concept of August was invented" (68). Through the lens of scholarship, this poem/hymn/song/record engages in the act of Critical Fabulation, a method utilized by Sadiya Hartman (who Ellis cites directly in the introduction) as a way to engage with and redress the gaps in narrative that arise from especially fraught archives like those chronicling USAmerican enslavement. The engagement that Ellis offers here and elsewhere in *Aster of Ceremonies* offer temporal care work, opening the page to multiple points of connection while working across time to connect enslaved Ancestors, the plants that may have aided in their acts of "running away," and contemporary audiences joining Ellis in their pursuit of unknowing.

Eigner's work, through simile, begins to touch on the potential of an ecological approach to connection across time. Ellis' writing enacts forms of temporal care, opening up time and thickening the moment in ways that permit these ecopoets, displaced in time, to speak across one another. Ellis'

[88] This color is analogous to the color used in *Aster of Ceremonies*, as conveyed through using an "eyedropper" tool on a high resolution scan of a page. The color itself may not be a direct citation of the color used in Ellis' text.
[89] But neither all nor even most.

work opens and offers time-as-space for a plurality of imagined readers to engage with one another across temporality through intentional acts of comparison and contextualization. Ellis' embodied writing practice intentionally welcomes the presence of other voices that "stutter, stammer, or otherwise speak dysfluently" (Ellis *Aster* 1). Ellis slows down not in order to insist on the slowest common denominator, but to offer a multiplicity of paces to think, sing, and read through.

Ellis and Eigner write from seemingly disparate positions, separated in time, space, and tradition from one another. Eigner writes from the tradition of Black Mountain Poetry and the shape of Projective Verse, a series of connections that shaped American poetics in the mid-twentieth century, emphasizing breath and replicability. Ellis writes, sings, and performs in communities of crip ecopoetry and Black sound practice–music and poetry alike–that resist capture, emphasizing opacity and improvisation. They similarly write from different relationships to disability. Eigner lived with cerebral palsy and wrote from a wheelchair before the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Ellis is a Black disabled poet who stutters in a United States that has certain rights enshrined in law, but which incredibly undermines their use. Through their own approaches to slowness, Ellis and Eigner offer methods of temporal stewardship, caring for this crip planet together across t i m e.

Oaks from Small Acorns, a Thicket from a Seed

In this slow unfolding of the practices of Eigner and Ellis, I've focused on laying out a plurality of forms of time in order to thicken space for multiple paces of response to the present moment of climate collapse and the acceleration of slow violence. This thickening of time is a recognition of queer utopias, crip time, and C__P__ time, all of which move with their own specificity. These inosculated timescales demonstrate the necessity of care implicit in having a plurality of approaches to time on this crip planet. Eigner and Ellis leave traces of cerebral palsy and stutter, of slowness and clearing on the page. I recognize the ways that many bodies and minds can

grow together and form strange affinities in slow spaces. When trees grow into a thicket some go through the process of inosculation (growing together), first there's friction, each tree loses some of its own bark; callus tissue grows outward, and pressure increases until the trees' vascular tissues connect and they begin to share resources. I offer these approaches to temporal care as one way to grow together on a planet where the pressure keeps increasing. "...if there's enough…share it" (Eigner *Author Bios* 9) By making callused space to slow and open up time, I offer approaches that focus on community connection rather than extractive relation.

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Chapter Two: "What Have We Made???!!!"

Mess as Method in Douglas Kearney's Ecopoetics

"Humans have made a mess of things and nothing but swarm, sheen, shimmy, stagger, and stutter is gonna get us in deep enough to get us out of it"
~ Fred Moten, *Mess and Mess and* back cover.

I was living in Davis, California in 2017 when the smoke of the Atlas Fire drifted into the city and infused the clothes I would hang outside my tiny graduate student apartment with the scent of jerky. Hickory and mesquite overrode the discount, all-natural, eco-friendly soap that my partner bought in bulk. In the year that followed, the County Fire would force friends who were still in the program to live inside for months, filtering their air and wearing masks that were not-yet-ubiquitous in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic changed the landscapes of our faces. For many in the US, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere, fires such as these are the hallmark of climate disaster shifting our everyday practices.

Where There's Smoke

Describing her response to fire-prevention power shutoffs in California in 2019, disability studies professor, researcher on disability in Japan, and disability activist Karen Nakamura says "It has just been such a mess" (Nakamura qtd. Green and Hossaini). She's addressing the lack of planning exhibited by the power company PG&E in implementing massive shutoffs, along with the lack of response by the cities of Oakland and Berkeley in the shutoffs' aftermath (Green and Hossaini). The mess is not a good place to be. The mess is an immediate collapse of contexts and supports. The mess is also the site where interdependence is most necessary in a time where more and more communities are being forced into this state of undifferentiated pressure from bearing the disproportionate impact of climate change.

Navigating this mess means creating a network of interdependent support with other disabled people who rely on electricity to power mobility and breathing devices and/or to refrigerate medication. Existing in the mess humans have made of things in the 21st century demands an ecological approach, feeling out relation and creating coalition. According to Nakamura, "we in the disability community have been telling them [PG&E and the cities of Berkeley and Oakland] for years that they need to prepare for events like this…We live in wildfire and earthquake country — this is just absolutely untenable" (Nakamura qtd. Green and Hossaini). On a day's notice, community activists created and circulated a spreadsheet "to offer neighbors without power everything from outlets and fridge space to a place to spend the night" (Green and Hossaini). They did the untenable and precariously met a need unmet by state and corporate response by wading into the mess and positioning themselves to offer and receive aid from those being forced into circumstances similar to their own.

Current research on California's wildfires traces increasing curves of disaster, in the forms of the fires themselves, their disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities, and their prevention efforts' disproportionate impacts on vulnerable communities. In their work, "Observed Impacts of Anthropogenic Climate Change on Wildfire in California," A. Park Williams, John T. Abatzoglou, Alexander Gershunov, Janin Guzman-Morales, Daniel A. Bishop, Jennifer K. Balch, and Dennis P. Lettenmaier follow the increase in wildfires, noting that "since the early 1970s, California's annual wildfire extent increased fivefold, punctuated by extremely large and destructive wildfires in 2017 and 2018. This trend was mainly due to an eightfold increase in summertime forest-fire area and was very likely driven by drying of fuels promoted by human-induced warming" (Williams et. al. 892). This study follows and extrapolates on data that models locations and seasons of California wildfires. Compounding this threat of increased fires, additional work emphasizes that it's not only the fires themselves that disproportionately impact vulnerable communities, but also methods of fire

prevention. In "When climate change adaptation becomes a 'looming threat' to society," Gabrielle Wong-Parodi follows not only the increase in wildfires, but the disproportionate impacts of preventative measures on vulnerable people.[90] Her research finds that "PSPS [public safety power shutoffs] likely presents [sic] a 'looming threat' that is associated with unintended poor health outcomes made worse by self- reported trauma lingering from previous wildfire experience, especially among the most vulnerable" (Wong-Parodi 8). This research follows the aftermaths of power shutoffs in California, noting they disproportionately impact people without social or material support to navigate the increasing fires in the state. Many have responded to this mess of fires and fire prevention methods that only take a select few into account by creating messy, fragmented networks of mutual aid to attend to the absences in state and corporate response.[91]

How does an ecopoet who finds themself in the immediacy of the smoke and rubble adopt that very mess as a method to respond? I, then, look at practices of mess in ecopoetics. Earlier, I considered temporal care work and slowed down across time with two disabled poets to imagine more sustainable methods of response to ecological destruction. Here, I take on the nowness of mess and the immediate call of the disaster to do work in the present however long the disaster has been brewing. Queer, trans, crip, Filipino poet and cultural strategist Kay Ulanday Barrett writes on the intimate ways in which crip survival and ecopoetics are entangled in "To Hold the Grief & the Growth: On Crip Ecologies." They argue that poetics is more than words on the page, "poetics aren't the stanzas written or said aloud. In fact, it's sometimes how we find connection within our friend circles and extended networks, how we elaborate on care… This rigorous and inventive reality is what makes for some of the most beautiful poetics" (Barrett). It's through inventing and

[90] See Shonkoff et. al's "The climate gap: environmental health and equity implications of climate change and mitigation policies in California—a review of the literature"

[91] "How California Blackouts Are Impacting People With Disabilities" by Tonya Mosley and Allison Hagan offers additional commentary on how disability communities have been creating mutual aid networks while calling for early warnings, infrastructure support, and material aid (like charging stations) since the year 2000.

relating in the mess that Barrett expands notions of ecopoetics. For Barrett, this has meant living in, supporting, and being supported by queer / crip communities. In an interview with the Disability Visibility Project about their second book, *More than Organs*, Barrett offers a methodology for reaching the future as a community project for people whose lives are routinely cut short by the contemporary forces of capitalism, ableism, and climate change: "our future is based on how we will show up for each other– sharing food stamps, accompanying someone to a medical exam, ordering food delivery, creating low stimulation quiet space for friends to quietly co-exist, sitting with someone as they ride out pain, funneling meds and money to get supplies we need" (Disability Visibility Project). There is no clear-cut methodology for enacting a survivable future in the immediacy of the disaster; instead, there is but a series of partial movements, dependent on who one finds themself connected to the mess. Engaging in both extension of and reception of care becomes a poetics of survival. It's through this work that Barrett's work moves beyond the page–they write supported by the poetic care of others and extend their own care through cultural production. Barrett's work holds open necessary spaces for people at the intersections of queerness, race, disability, and transness by creating scholarly essays and poetry that insist on the importance of these nexuses. Writing in the second person in "Eat Good for Me: An Essay on Your Late Mother's Birthday," Barrett brings the reader into a series of precarious positions, weaving their story with the open-ended and invitational 'you.' In so doing, they articulate the difficulty of surviving while poor, trans, brown, and their intersections. In so doing, they bring the reader into a precarious understanding of the fraught practices of American culture. They write, "here's your American dream: consuming everything in public and sobbing, holding the butt of a roasted carrot to prove some point that doesn't really matter because dead people are still dead and you can't eat with them anymore" (Barrett "Eat Good for Me"). As they mourn the loss of their mother, and celebrate her birthday, they bring readers into an uncertain and shared space, speaking directly to the audience. In

so doing, they model the fraught position of loss that they inhabit as not only their experience, but one shared with the anticipated 'you' who comes to the text. This means sharing a world that works mothers to death, mothers who were always "giving money to somebody else—scared and uncertain—who'd just migrated to this country." Barrett's poetry moves between page, essay, and action, messing with the boundaries of story, community, and mutual support.

I begin in the ecological disaster of the California wildfires to introduce Californian poet Douglas Kearney's approach to breathing in and writing from the urgency of the mess. Kearney's ecopoetics include multiple wildfire poems, the first of which is "The Orange Alert" from his first book of poems, *Fear, Some* published in 2006. I'll move through the smoke and ash of this poem into a literature review of Kearney's opus of books–five collections of poems, one collection of lectures, and one self-reflective critical text on his own work. As I do, I'll position this body of work as an ecology that de-centers the author and questions the "singular, coherent self," instead working through a poetics of relation at speed to argue how the mess offers strange affinities and sites of connection that foster multiplicity and a way of connecting to larger histories of harm even in the immediacy of now.

Kearney's extensive body of work offers methods for making connections and building strange affinities within the mess. His poems and self-described practices are attentive to the unintentional webs of relation that result from environmental racism leaving people in the rubble, near the waste bin, and otherwise collapsed together. While his work is not always included in ecopoetic anthologies, I posit that the practices that define Kearney's process are deeply ecological in ways that must be folded into any serious consideration of what ecopoetics does. Kearney's writing attends to process, not eliding his own failures but recognizing his imbrication within structural violences. This positionality holds onto the lingering effects of US racism on the continent and abroad, emphasizing the antiBlack violence the country was founded on as well as its legacies of

policing that have become more and more militarized since the beginning of the 21st century. He recognizes both the threats that loom over Black men in the US while himself being ensnared in the legacies and ongoing practices of US violence abroad in wars waged against communism under the guise of "bringing democracy" or through military action in oil producing countries based upon narratives of US exceptionalism.

As Kearney's poetics wade into the mess of environmental racism, he adopts practices like stutter and stammer on the page. In analyzing these imbricated practices, I weave together Black Southern Californian poet and theorist Nathaniel Mackey's discrepant engagement with disability theory. This approach offers rich coalitional methods to engaging the frictional overlaps of Black cultural production and disability poetics. In turn, I augment this reading practice with a material recognition of the mess through which Kearney writes, a set of relations described by Women & Gender Studies professor Jasbir K. Puar as debility: the recognition of increased likelihood of disability over time for those positioned closest to the mess by racism, classism, and colonialism. In *Right to Maim*, Puar brings together multiple strands of existing scholarship around the concept of "debility" as a way to offer additional perspective. Puar argues that "Debility is thus a crucial complication of the neoliberal transit of Disability rights.[92] Debility addresses injury and bodily exclusion that are endemic rather than epidemic or exceptional, and reflects a need for rethinking overarching structures of working, schooling, and living rather than relying on rights frames to provide accommodationist solutions" (Puar xvii). In this mobilization, Puar addresses the ways in which disability, in the neoliberal state, remains an exclusionary category that often denies rights to those whose bodyminds are harmed or whose livelihoods are negatively impacted as a result of social, cultural, and economic pressures. Delving into and pulling out of Kearney's poetry, I rely on

[92] Puar builds on the term "debility" as first used by Julie Livingston when discussing injured Botswana miners who don't relate to disability in discussing their experiences and Christina Crosby in her work "Disabling Biopolitics."

finding connection in and through the theoretical space of the mess as I discuss how Kearney's ecological use of the mess aligns with Mackey's theories of limp and stutter, Puar's debility, and the ongoing call for a move from noun to verb that exists in crip-of-color critique. This theoretical and poetic weaving starts and starts again in a critical analysis of the stutter as a method of mess for generating multiplicity and opacity. In closing, I wrap up with another fire poem of Kearney's, a decade after "The Orange Alert" – "Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)." Through this process, I return to the importance of the strange affinities one finds or makes in the mess as one critical methodology of what to do now.

Throughout his career as a poet and educator, Kearney has been invested in Black cultural creation, its multiplicity of voices (what he calls Black density/"dinsity"), and the messiness of both culture and cultural creation. In *Mess and Mess and*, Kearney's 2015 book fusing poetics, personal narrative, theory, and history, he writes: "Another mess I fly to is culture. Perhaps humanity's biggest mess, its biggest baddest Motile Mutable, its most fertile shit" (Kearney *Mess* 22). With mess as a critical methodology, Kearney engages fragmentation, failure, polyvocality, and stutter as he sinks into the fraught and generative tensions and associations of disability and race.

Before I began writing my dissertation, I was interested in how Kearney's work aligned with disability studies approaches even though he had not actively identified as disabled. Writing on his coalitional practices at the intersections of Blackness and disability, I published an essay on his work in *AMODERN* in 2020. In the intervening years, Kearney received an ADHD diagnosis which he made public in 2023. As part of PBS' *Art + Medicine* video series, Kearney describes the way that his diagnosis informs his understanding of his poetry, stating

> It was the summer of 2021, I think, that I received my diagnosis, you know, I got my papers for ADHD. At that point, I began to think about how so often in my work I was trying to break a sort of linearity. I was trying to work in a way that I would describe as almost kind of fractal, where if you tell somebody, you can read this poem any way you want to (Kearney "Poet Douglas Kearney: My Mind at Work")

This fractal approach to writing informs my own approach towards discussing Kearney's writing. I've started in different places and come back again and again to the work as new context makes it read otherwise. I begin and begin again, bearing fruit with every magnification on what seems like the boundary of the mess. Much like visualizations of the Mandelbrot set, my writing here is structured by echoes and shifts, opening discussions on cuts and stutters, pausing with theorists who open these spaces, and returning.[93] This structure echoes Kearney's approach to his own mind and poetics, where he points out that "if certain kinds of poems are reflecting a mind at work, that's my mind at work, these poems are my mind at work" (Kearney "Poet Douglas Kearney: My Mind at Work"). Throughout his writing, Kearney draws ecological connections through his own practices of mess, a messodology, as it were. Messodology is a term I use to describe a set of material metaphoric practices taken up by poets responding to the tricky, sometimes painful, often messy overlaps of race and disability produced by state violence and environmental racism. These practices refuse simple delineations between positionality and relations, push back against the cuts enacted by anthologies and archives, and hold (often-contradictory) ideas in tension.[94]

Mess takes many forms as a variety of material objects and ideas. Several of the ways in which I approach mess as a process are through the ways that mess and messes become generative. The OED defines mess alternately as a "portion or serving of liquid or pulpy food," "situation or state of affairs that is confused or presents numerous difficulties," "collection of disordered things," "person who is dirty or untidy in appearance," and "military unit or ship's company… taking their meals together." These many and plural definitions offer a generative starting place for considering what a mess is and how it permits connection. Liquid and pulpy defines the nodes of connection

[93] The Mandelbrot set is known for its repeating, fractal structures that shift, echo, and transform as the boundary of the set is zoomed in upon.

[94] "Anthologies are inherently exclusive. They seek to preserve some authors and texts at the expense of others, usually in safe, marketable ways" (Lam 169)

that work ecologically in poetry, making tendrils of connection across a broad field, until communities and language thickens. Mess has been leveraged against many, a sometimes imagined slight against the norms of ability, cleanliness, and access to the resources to polish one's appearance. The commensality of sharing meals in one space is an enriching practice–I am reminded of the poem "Perhaps the World Ends Here" by Indigenous Muscogee (Creek) Nation poet Joy Harjo. Harjo's poem centers the kitchen table as the starting place and possible ending, opening "The world begins at a kitchen table. No matter what, we must eat to live" and closing "Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite" (Harjo). I'm also reminded of the Black feminist work which took place around spaces for eating; the Kitchen Table Press which published *This Bridge Called My Back* springs to mind. To sit down with in the mess hall is to haul out the more militarist settings of the eating space and to risk becoming messy, getting lost in the pulp, potentially finding strange affinities among the matter out of place. Mess, for many, is not a choice, but a condition of circumstance, to be forced out of the assumed 'order' of existence and to find connections and support instead of being placed in the waste.[95]

Another approach to mess is consider the ways in which it blends and defies separation. One such way is described by Black feminist and disability theorist Sami Schalk as the materiality of metaphor. For Schalk, metaphor is a means to impact and address material existence, and it is material existence which is evoked in metaphor. In *Bodyminds Reimagined*, she uses "the material metaphor" as a way of working through a difficult state of affairs and holding together metaphor and materiality, two contested concepts at the intersection of race and disability. She argues that "disability can take on both metaphorical and material meaning in a text… scholars must read representations of disability in neo-slave narratives as constitutive of both the discursive use of

[95] I'll discuss this distinction later, in conversation with Kearney's work on mess versus garbage.

(dis)ability to justify the enslavement of black people and the physically and mentally disabling repercussions of racism for black subjects in the antebellum period and beyond" (34-5). This mutually substantiating perspective is what allows Schalk to do intersectional readings of disability and race as categories impacted in messy ways, where disability and Blackness are collapsed as precursors to and results of American practices of enslavement.

The ways in which mess allows seemingly contradictory concepts to share space are at work in the writing of disabled trans poet and activist Eli Clare. By fragmenting not only his own subjective experience but also practices of language around disability and cure, Clare builds mosaics of arguments to address the fraught and broken ways 'cure' existing in crip community and theory. Clare's use of "mosaic" as a writing method addresses the simultaneous ways in which cure is a "knot of contradictions. Cure saves lives; cure manipulates lives; cure prioritizes some lives over others; cure makes profits; cure justifies violence; cure promises resolutions to body-mind loss" (xvi). Clare arranges disordered concepts in his mosaic, portioning out arguments that do not easily align in order to navigate the messes of cure which simultaneously harm and support, presenting clashing tiles of ideas side by side without resolution.

Linguist and material feminist Mel Chen navigates their work *Animacies* with a methodology that risks being labeled as dirty or untidy specifically in order to argue for the importance of often overlooked and disregarded participants in existence–disabled people, inanimate objects, and the language that shifts these entities between categories of agency and animacy. Chen's linguistic work posits that the language we use alternately to describe inanimate objects as threats and disabled people as inanimate objects shows the power of language to shape the world in which we exist. Chen describes their book as "thinking and moving ferally;" they know this messy method makes it possible to navigate "unstable terrain" (Chen 18-19). Simultaneously though, it puts them at risk of being labeled feral along with their text. Chen describes their feral approach as one that builds

knowledge through a series of relations across disciplines--emphasizing their approach as "inviting and productive" in its multiplicity. It's a method of messing with disciplinary boundaries that's necessary in unstable ecosystems as well as unstable poetics. These disabled scholars and scholars of disability demonstrate the potential of lingering in the mess as a crip methodology for making connections at the intersection of race and disability.

Practices of mess align with the right to opacity in Edouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*. In this book, Glissant addresses the cut historically enacted between Black poets and nature, insisting on the inherent relations and connections with Black poetics and pushing back against an essentialization of Black writers. Glissant writes about opacity as one route towards a localized, historicized Caribbean culture and identity, a turn in his writing and in the forging of poetics of relation. I carry this intention further to address communities whose shared space and histories are not one of choice, but as the result of forced connection–of being cast out into a shared mess. Glissant articulates one potential method for existing in messy spaces– to not be fully understood nor grasped by another: "To feel in solidarity with him or to build with him or to like what he does, it is not necessary for me to grasp him" (Glissant 193). In this argumentation, Glissant presses for a poetics of relation that recognizes similarities without collapsing them into sameness. The mess is not a site of un-differentiation, but a practice of recognizing parts and fragments that have strange relations–sinking into the mess is a practice that draws attention to already existing connections that can be felt through only by connecting what is already there, not through practices of cutting and stitching together previously unrelated things. Glissant's work on relation holds onto "the possibility for each one at every moment to be both solidary and solitary there" (131), the creation of space to be part of many and one at the same time refuses the cut that brings poetics out of the mess, out of its web of ecological relations. For Glissant, "This is why we stay with poetry… there is still something we now share: this murmur, cloud or rain or peaceful smoke. We know ourselves as part

and as crowd, in an unknown that does not terrify. We cry our cry of poetry" (9). An ecological poetics of relation holds onto the contexts of existing messes, tracing the intimacy and opacities that come with connection.

I offer messodology as a way of studying the practices that emerge from navigating the mess of environmental destruction and climate change. I have already pointed out that the mess is not a good place to be, but with the acceleration of ecological disasters, it is a place more people are starting to find themselves in. This practice models what good might come of this position, especially through the practices of using it as a way to build strange affinities. Without knowing who or what one encounters in messy situations, the mess offers space to practice improvisation, to take action without having a clear model for knowing its impacts, and to maintain connection during moments of violent recontextualization. Kearney uses mess as a way to add multiplicity and meaning to his work; by doing so he makes a singular (read: clean) reading or recognition of his work impossible. Remaining attentive to practices of voice, violence, his own subjecthood, and cultural expectations, Kearney's work displays the necessity of messing around to refuse foreclosure, attend to collapse, and to hold open a plurality of potential connections.

Kearney's "The Orange Alert" anthologized in Melissa Tuckey's *Ghost Fishing: an eco-justice poetry anthology* dives into the acceleration of everyday violence that is part-and-parcel of accelerating climate disaster. The poem opens with an invocation of death, equating the streets of Altadena, CA with an upturned dead millipede. While the speaker is not named, the poem is set in the city where Kearney grew up, offering some potential autobiographical connection. This death is further complicated with the imagery of war, when the speaker notes that there are no birds big enough to carry away the shells, "and vanish / into the sun like dog-fighting MiGs. / War bears litters of similes" (265). The multiple meanings of litter here pile up, as a medical device, as garbage, and as a birth of many offspring. In this line, the messy layers of the poem's comparisons of war, multiply-

personified as animal, as death, as bear, carries stretchers of wounded figurative language while an anthropomorphized war gives birth to litters of language while a figurative icon of war endures the linguistic messiness of similes while… The litter here, the mess of material and language, exists just above the waste bin as garbage: litter is a mess that has moved from order towards (but is not yet) garbage itself. The litter is a site of possibility and potential–it is many things and nothing in the midst of the poem of climate violence.

The fusion of humor and violence here – the teaming of release from and recognition of harm – is a critical mobilization of Kearney's punning. The many messy meanings perform Kearney's use of the pun, "one mess I yen behind is the pun, a mess of message where mess means confusion and excess. Pun teems meaning… the user trope-a-dopes listeners, briar patching their access to the message's multiplicity" (Kearney *Mess* 19). He layers excess meanings and possibilities together until the poem becomes opaque, approachable only through the formation of a "we" who is conditioned to move in the mess and recognize a path through the barbs. As Glissant argues for the right to opacity, Kearney insists on it–the reader must come behind the curtain, or have started behind it, to join Kearney and the speakers of his poem in the mess. Kearney's language creates a dense thicket in which to work, un-apprehended and un-apprehensible in a space that has too many meanings and no meaning whatsoever except for those who can sift through the din. The poem thickens its imagery of violence through world wars, folding smog into mustard gas that fills the ravines downhill from the rich. In this climate war, the rich look down and become "some man – his cigarette, / a full gas-can, an itch" (265). The speaker of the poem folds together everyday violence of smog, with the seasonal shift of the Santa Ana winds and their threat of fires, with the ongoing

acceleration over centuries of slow violence that has accumulated in our present moment of climate disaster disproportionately affects poor people.[96]

The use of the term "violence" here is a very particular enfolding of threats posed by systems of power that function in implied, explicit, and systematic ways.[97] Throughout Kearney's body of work, violence is not only a recurring topic, but a recurring method. Kearney's work is attentive not only to the violence "out there" in the world, but in his own position as a Black man living in a country with deeply rooted racism and ongoing colonial violences: this is not a relationship framed one directionally but held in all its complex relations as a target of violence, a benefactor of violence, and a perpetrator of violence. The page becomes an ecological field, tracing out for readers the ways in which violence is ecological, shifting, and in between nodes of the poem. Instead of a typical left to right reading, Kearney's folding dis/orients the reader so they might notice the violence that exists in the everyday or to perceive a common phrase through a shifted valence. Kearney acknowledges the mess he is in and follows violence across its many levels to destabilize the boundaries of slow and fast climate disaster.

"The Orange Alert" holds together in the mess the violences in the United States and those enacted by the United States elsewhere. Kearney's poetry is not simply a matter of enacting a cut between the "over here" of the speaker and the violence that is happening "over there." Instead, Kearney's poetics are invested in the mess, recognizing the connections that prevent "over there" from isolating itself in time, space, or practice. The attentiveness of "The Orange Alert" to the layers

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[96] "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all." (Nixon 2); "'The poor' is a compendious category subject to almost infinite local variation as well as to fracture along fault lines of ethnicity, gender, race, class, region, religion, and generation. (Nixon 4).

[97] For a greater understanding of networks of power and their disproportionate impact on queer and disabled people of color consider *Social Text 84-5*: "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?", Sami Schalk's *Black Disability Politics*, and/or Alison Kafer's *Feminist Queer Crip*.

of violence (t)here, places Kearney in the midst of multiple systems of violence: from war to ecological destruction.

"The Orange Alert" in its own title is nodding, winking, implying a connection with a defoliant other than the California wildfires. It's moving across the Pacific to address another war and to carry the reader in a litter to another conflict. It names without naming the US use of Agent Orange in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to hold together the implication that Agent Orange and Orange Alert operate simile-similar.[98] The evocation here addresses the loss of forest occurring in both fire and defoliation and the speaker's own positioning within the structures that allow this to occur, as part of the country that so changed the world through conflict that the world is becoming unlivable. Near the end of the poem, the overlap of fire and defoliant come together again as "fire engines and HAZMAT trucks" (266) converge to address the dead millipede in the heart of Altadena. This shifting and folding creates a sense of zooming–zooming into a Mandelbrot and finding traces of the same, displaced in time and space. The forces pouring from the trucks must ask if this burning sickness is flame or toxin, environmental or military. Their mutual imbrication is one of many times that Kearney implies that the distinction is a matter of where one is focusing than a matter of making a cut between the two. This imagery is multiplied through references to dogfights yards full of spent chitins (pronounced: shells), and mustard gas.[99] These monumental violences of war are folded into the economic struggles of the hill–where the rich peer down upon the poor and watch the "natural" Santa Ana winds force toxic gas in the form of mustard gas or smog into lower altitudes. Moving in and out of these scenes are the fires of California, made more likely through the combination of winds, global warming, and socioeconomic positioning.[100]

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[98] And by extension the other, less-named rainbow defoliants.

[99] The kinds not involving planes are also well-known in the Los Angeles area.

[100] Detailed discussion is available in Carolyn Finney's *Black Faces, White Spaces*.

In the haze of smog bordering the lowlands of Altadena in "The Orange Alert" are shapes that are not fully understood, nor entirely surprising. It's a space like Nakamura's own where groups must recognize shared needs, shared harms, and shared responsibility as they have been forced behind a smokescreen or into a power outage. The acceleration of slow violence presses it further and further into the context of continual and everyday violence. Such an increasingly commonplace strangeness is documented through Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement*, where he describes his wildly improbable brush with one of the only tornadoes to ever hit Delhi. This encounter is part of what drove him to write on climate change and its increasing strangeness: "it appears that we are now in an era that will be defined precisely by events that appear, by our current standards of normalcy, highly improbable: flash floods, hundred-year storms, persistent droughts, spells of unprecedented heat, sudden landslides, raging torrents pouring down from breached glacial lakes, and yes, freakish tornadoes" (Ghosh 24). This logic of the improbable, this acceptance of the mess, holds together Ghosh's text–it is a series of relations of things gathered by their strangeness, their unpredictability. The absurdity of things out-of-place and out-of-time enact cuts in the everyday, instead emphasizing the importance of strange affinities that form in the mess as one way of re-orienting and surviving the violence of this messy moment. With the acceleration of climate disaster, increased fires means that such immense acts of violence–the conflux of social structures and weather patterns–become less out of place. More locations and more social structures hide the cuts that make them distinct moments and mire them in the mess.

Relationships in the Mess

Zooming in on the structures of fire and violence and the flames fanned by the Santa Ana winds, I focus on community and disability in acts of queer, crip survival.[101] The ecopoetics of mess

[101] As this writing is revised and re-revised, the Santa Ana winds once again threaten LA in early 2025.

recognizes and relies on a series of unanticipated connections fostered in collapse–of community, of climate–to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the written word with the material world. It is attentiveness to these connections that is poetry itself.[102] In describing an ecological poetry, Barrett writes that

> being disabled and sick means being malleable, means entering forces of the body and the mind, and being interconnected to climate, the land, or wherever we are… The natural world in this case is inexorably precarious. People like me are called to reimagine and improvise in a climate that deploys violence against us and our ability to write anything down. What is more poetic than that? The ultimate free verse poem. (Barrett)[103]

Here, Barrett traces the relationship between ecopoetry and disability justice. As ecological degradation intensifies and as climate violence produces more disabling conditions, the ecopoem may never make it to the page. Nevertheless, it is there in the act of queer crip survival. When ecopoetry does make it to the page, Barrett insists reading it is also part of the act of survival and thus the poem: "survival means just reading the works of sick, depressed, mad, neurodiverse, Deaf, Blind, Black, Indigenous, people of color, and queer disabled people. It means to prioritize the non-normative" (Barrett). It's in the collective of voices that have been forced together in the mess that we might find ways out. As an example of rendering of disabled people who live at the intersections as invisible, Barrett shares the poem, "YOU are SO brave." This poem, title dripping with the condescension of those who usually speak these words, consists of snippets of conversation spoken to or about the speaker, who shares Barrett's intersections of being queer, trans, crip, and asian. On the page, it takes a protean shape, moving from bold typeface to italic and jumping around in spacing and indentation. It layers a plurality of voices that absent the speaker of the poem who is only connected to through the twisted reflections of those being quoted– "What do you mean 'No

[102] In *Optic Subwoof*, Kearney defines poetry just so: "poetry to me is a set of relations, and possibilities, and responses" (Kearney *Subwoof* 183).
[103] This articulation is jointly arrived at in conversation with disabled and transgender poet Jimena Lucero.

thank you"' You don't want my help? Some people are ungrateful, I was helping YOU." (Barrett). In order to trace the boundaries of the voice being subdued, Barrett makes the page a strange and wild place to navigate in search for kinship with the crip, queer, assaulted speaker. In so doing, Barrett pushes readers to think against the grain and find the voices that have been spoken over. Unprecedented but real material conditions threaten both the poem on the page and the living poem created through improvisation in connection. These connections are ecopoetry: the poems Barrett reads and the spread/sheets of support that provided disabled people with access to electricity–not because PG&E or the cities of Berkeley and Oakland planned for it, but because a group of desperate crips wanted to survive.[104]

Because the mess is, by definition, an unpredictable place saturated with partial perspectives, I recognize that it offers only a partial series of connections between ecopoetics and material existence. As such, these are offered as fragments, meant to be approached and understood not definitively as the one way through the mess, but one approach (of many) to its complexities. In her analysis of settler colonialism and the politics of disability Puar attends to the branching methodologies of disability studies as she complicates the state-regulated category of disability as one that forestalls necessary conversations on the production of ableness. She argues instead for an approach grounded in the notion of debility–one that recognizes not only bodymind difference but social/ecological conditions that threaten to cause disability–

> *would not diminish the specificity of disabled embodiment, nor necessarily expand what the term "disability" encompasses*. Rather, this approach connects disability to those who are debilitated, to those whose bodily experiences challenge a disaggregation of an us/them binary in terms of who is seen as able-bodied, and acknowledges the now-regulatory functions of the category of disability. (Puar 74 emphasis in original)

[104] "The day will come when crip world will be the only world that survived. Crips will do anything to survive and that's what they want to deny when they kill us ... our will to live is greater than your ability to get rid of us." Maria R. Palacios, Sins Invalid, *We Love Like Barnacles*.

Such an approach to debility opens up a once-limiting category and expands this reasoning to encompass social structures that have material impacts on lived experience. The example she offers through a rhetorical question is: "is a young black man without a diagnosed disability living in the United States who is statistically much more likely than most to be imprisoned, shot at by police, or killed by the time of adulthood actually a referent for what it means to be able-bodied? (74). This attentiveness, then, holds together multiple strands of disability theory and disability justice. Puar emphasizes the importance of a plurality of approaches to disability pride, celebration, and prevention, when she writes "distinct theoretical, scholarly, and political trajectories… not only are in tension but also lead to and capacitate very different political projects. Further, the tension… is not one of different needs and agendas rubbing up against each other, creating friction, but rather indicative of them being relational supplements to each other, one proliferating through the production of the other" (Puar 88). Rather than privileging pride, Puar advocates for a critical attentiveness to how some forms of disability pride are predicated on affirmation from state structures that in turn create debilitating conditions someplace else. Puar advocates for a relational approach to disability and debility, noting how each is built in relation to the other. For the mess, this means an attentiveness to the fact that if one is rising to its surface, they must be aware of who or what they are standing on.

I model such an approach here, not working to fully apprehend the mess nor to offer perfect clarity, but to attend to the relations created in navigating it. In *Feminist Queer Crip*, Alison Kafer turns to the overlaps that arise in "trans/disability bathroom politics, environmental justice movements, and reproductive justice movements" because "they force our attention to the formation of the identities, positions, and practices we name as feminist and/or as queer and/or as crip" (Kafer 150). These sites of overlap and connection model ways to build community in the mess by negotiating shared experience. Kafer discusses in detail the ways that labor for accessible

bathrooms must and does work alongside trans- and all-gender bathroom reform. This section ends with close attention to a shared protest around health care budget cuts in Oakland in 2009, where disabled activists and union workers shared claims to be both "the mighty, mighty union" and out, loud, disabled, and proud (168). This protest and Kafer's documentation of it recognizes "the overlaps between those communities (many care workers are disabled or will become so)... both groups will benefit in a system that values attendant care and the workers who provide it" (169). In Kafer's writing, openness to unanticipated overlaps and need for mutual support–trans and disabled communities that need access to bathrooms in public spaces, conservation activists and disabled nature lovers, and union labor and disabled care recipients)–drives the ecological and interconnected work that she views as a ramp towards a feminist, queer, crip future.[105] While much of this chapter is laid out in established connections between ecopoetic writing and the social and cultural world beyond, focusing a great deal on the connections between those in the mess–queer people, disabled people, and people of color disabled and nondisabled alike–, it also dips into metaphor from time to time as a way to leave open inchoate points of connection. These metaphors refuse finality and wholeness, they are incomplete imaginings asking the reader to begin their own work to position themselves within the mess and begin making meaningful relations.

It's a plurality of expectation, experience, and possibility that drives Julie Avril Minich, Jina B. Kim, and Sami Schalk in their conversation about crip community across three articles in *Lateral*. In "Enabling Whom? Critical Disability Studies Now," Julie Avril Minich exhorts scholars of disability studies not to make disability a noun, a subject, in process, but to focus on disability as a critical methodology in order to "recommit the field to its origins in social justice work" and "for the liberation of people with bodies and minds that are devalued or pathologized but who do not

[105] In "Bodies of Nature: The Environmental Politics of Disability, Kafer addresses the ways that accessible paths also decrease damage to national parks.

consistently identify (or are not consistently identified) as disabled" (Minich). This call to re-focus disability studies as a critical methodology moves the theoretical framework from one focused on stable and timeless disabled subjects to one that addresses multiple ways frameworks of oppression act upon people of color, disabled and nondisabled alike, Indigenous people, and poor people.

In their responses to Minich's "Enabling Whom?" Jina B. Kim and Sami Schalk enter into a polyvocal conversation on the field of disability studies that spans two years and three authors–an entanglement of idea, process, and potential in the use of disability as critical methodology rather than identity. Kim's work, "Toward a Crip-of-Color Critique" models the potentials of focusing on disability studies as a critical methodology, building on Minich, Kandice Chuh, and other authors' focus on the potentials of subjectless critique. In this assemblage of theory, Kim makes space to "draw out some of the possibilities for coalition between women-of-color / queer-of-color feminist and disability theorizing" via "a mode of analysis that urges us to hold racism, illness, and disability together, to see them as antagonists in a shared struggle, and to generate a poetics of survival from that nexus" (Kim). The move away from rights-based interventions and rigid categorization shifts focus to the ways in which intersectional approaches encourage survival and mutual support. Kim's titular crip-of-color critique, rather than emphasizing disability identity, mobilizes the critic to "consider the ableist reasoning and language underpinning the racialized distribution of violence" (Kim) in ways that open up understandings of the ways in which power structures use rhetorics of disability in colonial and racialized violence. Kearney's work says the quiet part out loud–by fragmenting images and language, Kearney brings to the fore the ways in which reasoning and language disproportionately trend towards the acceleration of slow violence. Thinking with Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Kim notes that "such a poetics refers to the practice of using language and culture to intervene into narratives of expendability, and to instead inscribe an existence for racialized, impoverished, and disabled populations that refuses the violence of the present" (Kim). By focusing

on a critical disability studies methodology in crip-of-color critique, Kim moves between subject positions in order to emphasize and cultivate a coalitional approach, intervening in dominant narratives that act upon a plurality of subjects. Kim's call for a crip-of-color-critique articulates the need to "shift[] disability from noun—an identity one can occupy—to verb: a critical methodology" (Kim).[106] Kearney in turn manifests this critical methodology in the mess, shifting poetry and poetics into an ecological practice of relation that oscillates between excess and absence of meaning. Through the refusal of 'order' and insisting on the significance of the partial that exists in the mess, Kearney shifts the ecological conversation into process, modeling the ways that those not invested in rights-based change and still at risk can signal, through noise and strange affinities, ways of connecting in the mess outside of social order.

Sami Schalk responds to Kim in her piece, "Critical Disability Studies as Methodology" by complicating the relationship between the terms (dis)ability and disability while using historical assemblages and understandings of race as a means to better understand the specificity of what symbols "disability" evokes in certain time periods. Schalk notes how "scholarship in crip theory expands the possibilities of analysis in disability studies by moving away from more strictly medical, legal, and identity-based definitions of disability as an object of analysis" (Schalk). In this framework of crip studies, Schalk emphasizes the significance of operating beyond limiting legal subjectivities by comprehending the systems in which these identities arise and are ascribed value. As an example, Schalk addresses the ways in which enslaved people were conceived to be disabled intellectually and hyper-able physically as a justification for enslavement. Schalk uses this example to demonstrate how a critical disability methodology "can assess how (dis)ability as a social system worked in concert with systems of race during this period in a way that impacted all black people, both disabled and nondisabled" (Schalk). This mobilization of disability as a category is understood specifically within

[106]While Nathaniel Mackey's work is not cited directly, I discuss the connection between these trends later here.

its historical context, while its understanding in longer conversations of (dis)ability frameworks understands the lingering impacts of this understanding on Black people in the present. Kearney's poetry takes up this understanding, teasing apart the fragments that shape Blackness as emblematic of disability and disability as a symbol of non-whiteness. In this shifting language, Kearney's poetics addresses the contexts that his writing operates within: one that leverages interlocking oppressions on Blackness and disability simultaneously.

What arises in the polyvocal discourse between Minich, Kim, and Schalk is an interest in understanding the weblike frameworks in which disability discourse intersects and interconnects with power structures that operate similarly on racialized identities, queer identities, and additional modes of being which have been pathologized. They hold together the potential of crip as a verb and process–a move away from stability and into coalitional work that is similarly attentive to Puar's debility: finding ways to resist overarching power structures that make some people more likely to experience disability in the course of their lives and to resist institutionalized privileging of the category for some.

This is to say that the work of contemporary, intersectional disability studies is moving towards crip models of disability/debility as a more capacious way to understand how people navigate a world that is increasingly likely to cause illness and injury. From the disproportionate impact of storms based on race and socioeconomic status to the increased likelihood of chemical exposure and state violence based on proximity to sources of pollution and city centers, work on the edge of crip coalition and debility opens "disability" beyond a state-approved identity and into a series of connections and intersections from which to build a coalitional politics. By making a mess of the category of disability, it's possible to feel through what other potential relationships grow in crip frameworks.

In her books, *Bodyminds Reimagined* and *Black Disability Politics*, Schalk builds the importance of crip thinking and practice for Black cultural workers. She argues that "crip theory expands and enriches disability studies by 'including within disability communities those who lack a 'proper' (read: medically acceptable, doctor-provided, and insurer-approved) diagnosis for their symptoms' and by 'departing from the social model's assumption that 'disabled' and 'nondisabled' are discreet, self-evident categories, choosing instead to explore the creation of such categories and the moments they fail to hold" (Schalk *Bodyminds Reimagined* 9). For Schalk, the failures of categorizing debility and disability are as productive of spaces, if not moreso, than where disability identities hold. The messiness of bodily categorization of disability in the moments that it brushes up against cultural and political spaces is what drives Schalk to expand and extend Black disability politics into the realm of crip. In a series of interviews with Black disability justice advocates, she comes to recognize that a frequent realization in the turbulent waters where Black liberatory politics and Black disability justice mix is that "white people, disabled and non disabled alike, have socially, medically, and legally defined disability in a way that frequently leaves Black, racialized, poor, and other multiply marginalized experiences of disability unaccounted for and excluded from disability rights political work" (Schalk *Black Disability Politics* 133). It is in this space that often Black community members and cultural producers do not identify as disabled, because such an identity is formulated around exclusionary practices for nonwhite people. Instead, there is a deeper attention paid to the ways in which disability and its evaluation have historically been racialized and mobilized as a way to discount the cultural participation of Black people. In this messy space where Black people are statistically more likely to experience debility in their lives (especially within a US context) but less likely to identify with disability justice, Schalk notes that "When Black cultural workers engage with disability, their approaches tend to be intersectional but race centered, not (necessarily) based in disability identity, contextualized and historicized, and holistic" (Schalk *Black Disability Politics* 12).

Indeed, this is the thematic arrangement of the entirety of *Black Disability Politics*–to demonstrate the depth and detail in which Black cultural workers frame conversations about disability, specifically in connection to race and in ways that do not separate experiences of disability and Blackness, but hold them as integrated experiences. Kearney, in his poetics, begins with this integrated experience and centers it not in terms of identity, but in terms of practice. In so doing, he shifts the conversion in ways that articulate harms rather than operating in the logic of the system of oppression causing harm.

Mess creates a series of relations between those who have been pressed into its poorly defined boundaries that are not agential–the mess is the result of chaos and violence and chance collapsing systems and creating strange company. What does it mean to form coalitions within this company? What arises, then, in this series of non-chosen relations? What exists in the strange intimacy of the mess? To begin to address these questions, I look at the ways in which mess is central to ecopoetry. In their introduction to *The Ecopoetry Anthology*, Ann Fisher-Wirth and Laura-Gray Street emphasize that ecological poetry "is more elusive than [nature and environmental poetry] because it engages questions of form most directly, not only poetic form but also a form historically taken for granted--that of the singular, coherent self… This poetry can look strange and wild on the page; it is often described as experimental; and it tends to think in self-reflexive ways about how poems can be ecological or somehow enact ecology" (xxxi). Ecopoetry turns inward and sideways in order to complicate the taken-for-granted singularity of speaker and reader. Instead of allowing this uncomplicated singularity to stand alone, ecopoetry unfolds the self to read the networks that come together in the 'self,' it elucidates the networks of support and networks of harm that shape the boundaries of self and society in order to emphasize their permeability. In this way, ecopoetry experiments with the presence of everyday support, care, and harm. Mess, in turn, emphasizes the importance of the connection between material support, community action, and the

language that comes from their complication. Within this network of meanings, Kearney is certainly a writer of ecopoems, if not a person whose entire body of work is ecopoetry.

Making in the Mess

To describe Kearney again, he is an interdisciplinary writer, performer, and librettist–this too is to make a cut that stretches toward the failure of fully apprehending the scope of projects that he's taken on: from chapbooks to books of poetry, through a collaborative album and operatic librettos, and into commentary on his own processes and lectures on poetry, voice, and language.[107] He is a living, breathing author of the present and exceedingly prolific, releasing the album *Fodder*, the book of poems */Sho/*, and the book of lectures *Optic Subwoof* all in 2021.[108] Kearney holds together a plurality of places and methods, drawing on his place of birth, Brooklyn, NY, the city in which he was raised, Altadena, CA, and his current post in St. Paul, MN to create works that look through his own mind into many places and relations beyond. His writing folds together the personal and political, moving though himself into an ecological world that he has attuned himself to seeing; in *Optic Subwoof,* Kearney notes the layers of doubling and redoubling in reading a "graffitied wall–bombed/tagged/wildstyled/stickered…" as he layers meanings and violences in describing the aesthetic of graffiti and what happens to bodies after a bomb all at once.[109] The wall itself is not the thing of meaning, but his specific position as a participant in fields of noise, sound, and meaning-making. Kearney time as a Cave Canem fellow came in its early years, prior to its establishment at University of Pittsburgh|Greensburg in 2003, and his work from this time through *Optic Subwoof* has been deeply invested in the multiplicity of Black poetry and Black poetics, without attempting to essentialize or collapse these topics into a singular, apprehendable aesthetic.

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[107] See: *Someone Took They Tongues* (2016) and *Fodder* (2021) ; *Optic Subwoof* (2021); and *Mess and Mess and* 2015, respectively.

[108] He keeps life interesting for a crip author trying to have s l o w approaches to analysis.

[109] "that I might *recognize* such a wall with at least two sets of eyes on that word recognize is less about seeing… it's this rhetorical doubling of *recognize* synesthized and synthesized to an encounter with the page" (Kearney *Subwoof* 29)

Kearney's previously mentioned first book of poems, *Fear, Some* came out in 2006 through Red Hen Press and is a remix of self and world in five parts, layering self-commentary with critiques of blackface with his own imbrication with imperialism and violence in the US. In 2009, his book of poems *The Black Automaton* was chosen as part of the National Poetry Series. *The Black Automaton* marks the widespread recognition of Kearney's use of what he would later term performative typography, a messy method that enfolds visual practices of collage, bracketing, tagging, and otherwise layering poetry and poems that create dense thickets of noise, signal, and both an excess and absence of meaning. These intentional transformations of meaning defy singular readings–when discussing the "That Loud-Assed Colored Silence" series of poems, which use similar performative typography, Kearney refuses to read them aloud out of concern that "it would harm the poem" (Kearney *Subwoof,* 204). This is not to forestall others from giving voice to the same–Kearney recognizes and appreciates the efforts of others to read them and to make them into sound. In this way, Kearney attempts to de-privilege a singular reading of the poem, offering it more like a score than a limited and singular record of how the poem ought to be read. Discussing his third book of poems, *Patter* (2014), with the California Institute of the Arts, Kearney says "I do the more graphic poems when I want particular kinds of tension between messiness and clarity. The poems with performative typography are often trying to get at rhetorical/syntactic relationships without more conventional connective bits… do away with textual ligaments, invite multiple voices and layers to a poem, and make the potential slippages of these ruptures an active component of the poem's experience" (Katzban). *Patter* analyzes representations of miscarriage alongside Kearney's own experience, interrogating the roles and absences of conversations on masculinity, love, and violence.

On the heels of *Patter* came *Mess and Mess and* (2015), an interrogation into the practice of writing, of experiencing poetry and creating poems. *Mess and Mess and* offers readers a glimpse into Kearney's practices and his relationship to mess as liminal space: "mess, like shit, has a protean

quality–mess is shit that can't be fixed, only repaired" (Kearney *Mess and Mess and* 18). This book offers demonstrations of process and thought, absent any conclusion or resolution. *Mess and Mess and* leaves the mess on the page, offering an excess of information and an opacity of meaning to be paired and re-paired with Kearney's other works.[110] It's a process-oriented text that continues, in process, to mess around. *Buck Studies* (2016), extends Kearney's use of performative typography, creating collage in the "That Loud-Assed Colored Silence"series of poems, of holding space for mess in the "No Wake / Too Much of Fucking Everything" series of poems while he also holds up Blackness, masculinity, and violence in order re-cognize the figures of Stagger Lee and of ~~Jesus~~ Brer Rabbit.

Kearney's second book on poems and poetry, *Optic Subwoof* (2021), holds together his lectures given as part of the Bagley Wright Lecture Series. *Optic Subwoof* opens up the concepts of dintelligibility, the act of collage, and delve into the creation of the "That Loud-Assed Colored Silence" poems.[111] In the same year, the album *Fodder* (a collaboration with Val Jeanty) was released, which "splinters the sounds you were looking at on paper into the document you can hear through speakers. &/or vice versa" which was followed less than a month later by the release of */Sho/* (2021), a book of non-performative typographical poems–or more accurately a book of sonic-performative, typographical poems–with the eponymous poem being written in a form that was created by Indigo Weller, a former student of Kearney's, based on a lace weaving pattern.[112]

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[110] See: "Some Terms for Black Study" pp. 12-17 in *Mess and Mess and*

[111] "a phenomenon where what appears as noise in noise to some (thus, insensible but perhaps sensual) is in fact complex contrapuntal signals resulting in a "legible noise," sensible/sensual and sensible through the sensual and vice versa (sensual or sensualble or sensiblesual)" (Kearney *Subwoof*, 27)

[112] "Sho is written in a form called a torchon. Now, torchon is a form that was created by a former student of mine named Indigo Weller for a class that I enjoy teaching, which is a lab and creating new poetic forms. Torchon is the name of a lace weaving pattern I believe. At any rate, the teleuton, sequencing that comes from a sestina, sort of repeated n-word, has been sequenced based upon a lace-weaving pattern because Indigo's grandfather worked in a lace-weaving factory." from *In Between The Covers*.

In these writings and the practices that accompany them, Kearney can be located in a lineage of sound poetry, concrete poetry, and Black poetic innovation. Kearney's attentiveness to the nuance and complexity of Black poetics and visual aesthetics often puts him in conversation with Evie Shockley's writing, whose approach to collage and disruption of received poetic practices aligns with Kearney's own self-reflexive attention to the process of poetics. His writing is attentive to the ways in which language and image are complicit in systems of material power and its abuse. Taken together, these authors weave stories that begin in the everyday–conversational engagements that begin in the shade of southern trees or in the graffitied wall on the way to work–as a way to emphasize the interconnectedness of being with broader experiences of time and culture. For Kearney, this involves writing from a place of situated knowledge deep in the mess in order to press readers to question how they got to where he is from where they are.

He often disorients the reader/listener so that they might examine their complicity from a shifted angle much in the same ways as sound poet Tracie Morris who disorients the listener through dense repetition with tonal shifts that abruptly transform meaning. In her poem, "Blackout 1977" about the NYC power outage caused by lightning strikes that lasted through a summer heatwave, Morris slips one sound into the next in a fractals of disorientation: "A sound – applause? Nope, the cast-iron stove's collected works./…/Now my home's seasoned cast iron skillet's refract echoes. Car horn? The ram gave himself for new years. Mortar crackles the wall" (Morris "Poet of the Week: Tracie Morris"). Sound's uncertainty in the opacity of the blackout builds, applause is a skillet is a car horn is a mortar. The blackout resulted in multiple deaths and far more injuries. Describing its start, Morris writes: "White noise of the freezer, then a rumble, reached its ta-da,/ Went down to kitty sound, sleepy, then silent" (Morris "Poet"). The sounds track meaning: the freezer hums as it's meant to, then the sound shifts and crescendos before leaning into "ow" of down and "kitty sound" as the fridge hissing into seeming soft silence that builds back to the

mortar's violence at the poem's conclusion. In her "Journal, Day Five," Morris articulates the importance of sound and transformation in her writing practice, noting "sound engages with viscera in a way that compels physical interaction. Sound is something that works beyond the 'brain barrier' and directly intersects with the body" (Morris "Journal, Day Five"). Leaning into sense and the sensory, Morris' work argues for the importance of an embodied poetics–a poetry that connects across felt experience and meaning-making. The 1977 blackout is rumored to be the origin story of multiple DJs who may have acquired their equipment in the opacity. In "Improvisation Insurrection: The Sound Poetry Of Tracie Morris," Christine Hume explains how Morris' start at sound poetry began on the street, walking a city block that through echo and refraction became the world. Hume writes, "Sounds pace through the body; the body paces through landscape. Walking makes a single chord of mind-body-world out of which Morris makes oral poetry in tour-de-force performances that send language-as-we- know-it out for a hike." This layered approach to sound and space is reminiscent of Kearney's crescendoing tags.

Both Kearney and Morris utilize an awareness of the interconnected local and global in their work to move from site to specific site through networks of connection.[113] Even as Kearney uses sound to move beyond the letter of the poem, he similarly shapes the space of the page to create meaning. In these ways, his style aligns with concrete and sound poet hbNichol, whose use of the typewriter to transform the page and whose inclusion of brackets, arrows, and indicative parenthesis appear as a proto-form of Kearney's performative typography. Such innovative use of the page can also be traced to poets DeLeon Harrison and Stephen Jonas.[114] DeLeon Harrison is a writer of performance poems grounded in musicology anthologized in *Dices or Black Bones* and *Every Goodbye Ain't Gone*. Stephen Jonas is a Black poet active in Boston in the 50s and 60s influenced by jazz

[113] See Morris' work that moves through Earth, mind, and body in *human/nature poems* (Litmus 2023).
[114] To see one poem which utilizes all of these elements at the same time, see "Switch" from *The Martyrology 5*.

music, the Boston poetry scene, and the Black mountain poetry school. These authors' use of the page as field, attention to sound, and inclusion of rhythm and scoring (as well as DeLeon's diagrammatic arrangements) all share elements of Kearney's approach to experimentation and performative typography.[115]

My engagement with Kearney poems through the lens of ecopoetics follows the experimental in Black cultural production and ecopoetics rather than drawing lines around a particular avant-garde that excises and occludes. In "Delusions of Whiteness in the Avant-Garde," Cathy Park Hong discusses literary and poetic experimentalism and the ways in which authors transform language to reflect their own experiences. She draws attention to the thick history of experimental writing and the ways in which such writings are dependent on Black cultural workers while cutting them out of avant-garde anthologies. Hong states that experimental practices "such as polyvocality, hybridity, collage, stream-of-consciousness writing, and improvisation… were not only used but were first actually inaugurated by African American writers or they were America's early practitioners" (Hong). These practices shaped and continue to shape language used in contemporary ecopoetics. These methods are not held by a narrowly defined collection of individuals, but work together in ways to destabilize and bring a multiplicity of perspectives and voice to the creation of contemporary utterances. Hong emphasizes in this work how Black experimental writing practices and their contribution to the avant-garde have been erased or otherwise occluded.

Engaging with these experimental practices, I follow how these utterances are used as tools for survival. In her work, Hong points to Kearney as one source of the most radical writing of the present moment. She argues that Kearney's voice (among others) is "a matter of survival… speaking in a mélange of offshoots, with multiple entryways and exits through the soaring use of aberrant

[115] As an example, see "Yellow" as published in *Dices or Black Bones: Black Voices of the Seventies*.

vernaculars" (Hong).[116] That Kearney's work is a matter of survival aligns it with similar crip ecopoetry–fusing language and life in a series of opening and expansive connections. Similarly, Hong emphasizes a critical aspect of writing in the mess–holding up 'multiple entries and exits' for access. Kearney's writing articulates the possibilities for connection in the mess because there is not a singular imagined reader or audience, but a radical opening to many audiences in ways that invite mis/recognition. Kearney's ecopoetic writing and performance opens exponentially, refusing to cut himself and his writing down to a singular subject, instead building a "we" through the work with readers. Generating these points of connection necessitates a certain kind of rhetorical and ideological messiness. By insisting on specificity of language, creation of dinsity, and in insistence on opacity, Kearney does not facilitate apprehension in wholeness. Instead, these messy practices recognize relationships with readers that are perhaps unwanted, partial, or still potential in ways that welcome multiple readings.

To foster this open-ended multiplicity, Kearney's work refuses to collapse into a singular meaning, instead always insisting on expected and unexpected ecopoetic connection. This method of coming together through an excess of meaning is exemplified in Kearney's work in *Mess and Mess and,* where he describes the dangers inherent in being "apprehended (comprehension's voracious cousin)" (Kearney *Mess* 22). He notes that "Hiding in plain sight requires a disproportionate distribution of meaning. That is, the fugitive needs 1=0 or 1 ≥2—nonsense or excess sense. But if 1=1, someone's got your number" (*Mess*, 22). The sum of meaning in Kearney's writing must be in excess (or deficit) of its parts. This evocation of nonsense or excess sense aligns with conversations in disability / crip studies that work to keep on the move as a way to refuse the static simplicity of categorization.

[116] Alongside Kearney, Hong also points to the Black Took Collective, Rodrigo Toscano, Bhanu Kapil, Tan Lin, M. NourbeSe Philips, Farid Matuk, Monica De La Torre, David Lau, Divya Victor, and LaTasha Nevada Diggs as sources of the most radical writing of the present moment.

I address the ecological formation of a "we" between the speaker of Kearney's poems and a plurality of readers, particularly through his use of "performative typography" to enact ecopoetry. In an episode of *Between the Covers*, Kearney articulates that performative typography "is about imagining, layering, and interruption at some level sonically…when I think about performative typography, I always think about it as self-consciously drawing attention to itself as tight in a way that I think conventional poems generally don't" (Kearney qtd. Naimon). Performative typography poems use layers of images, texts, fonts, and comic speech bubbles, among other visible elements, to create the layering effect.

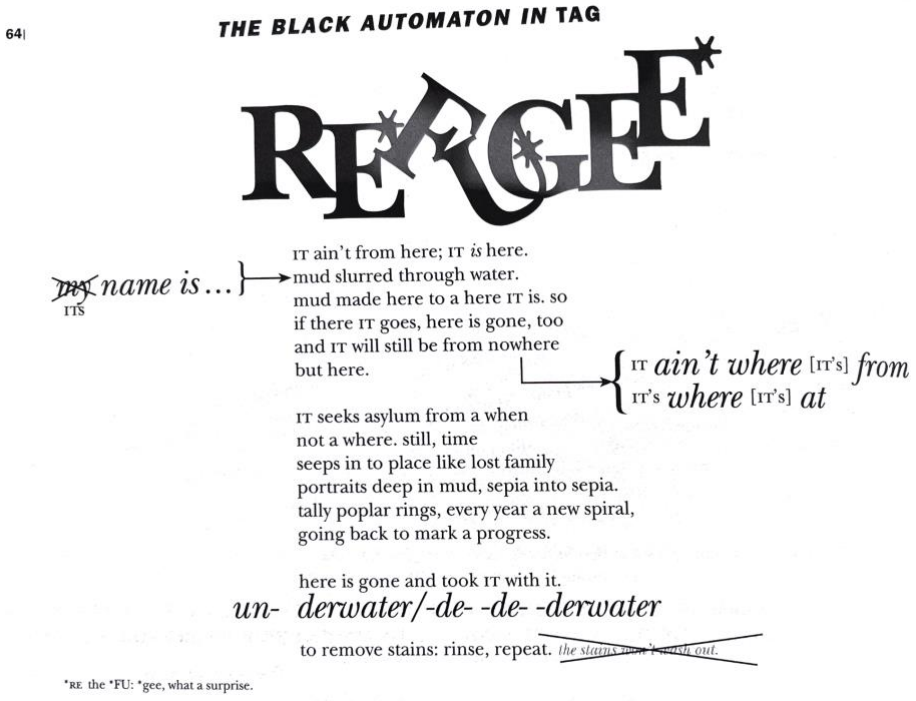

Figure V: an image of "The Black Automaton in Tag: Refugee" showing distinct elements.

"The Black Automaton in Tag: Refugee" comes from *The Black Automaton* and demonstrates some elements of composed performative typography.[117] The poem uses layers of fonts, cross-outs, and

[117] Later, other forms of performative typography, through quote and through collage, will be addressed.

bracketing to segment off and multiply meanings; as such, it brings in both multiplicity and opacity. One of the ways it multiplies is through the compounding bracket, explicating nowhere as both "IT ain't where [IT'S] from," a statement pointing to the displacement of the titular refugee away from a point of origin and "IT's where [IT'S] at" locating the refugee in some new space. The "nowhere" that has been bracketed off similarly becomes opaque. Any precise "where" as a point of origin is not significant to the interpretation–the 'from' is erased as bearing less significance than the recognition that IT is here and not where IT is from.

The performative typographical poem here brings attention to its state as poem, as crafted object, and as a site of conflicted vocality. Rendering crossed-out elements on the page throws conflict into the act of reading aloud. The poem challenges what is said or unsaid: when it strikes through "my" to replace "my" with "IT'S" in the phrase "IT'S name is… }→mud," "The Black Automaton in Tag: Refugee" pulls multiple possible readings into the poem. This substitution directs attention to the removal of agency and subjectivity in the speaker of the poem. The move from 'my' to 'it' places the speaker among others who have been removed or obfuscated through the loss of personhood. It is a strange affinity around loss of subjectivity. With the Primus song lyric "my name is mud!" crossed out and replaced, a US reader aligned with its imperial history, racial politics, or capitalist meritocracy might find themself sinking into the violence of the poem as perpetrator, imbricated in the act of re/naming another as IT. On this bearing, it challenges US readers with self-recognition as once-religious-refugees who came to North America and proceeded to kill Indigenous people and occupy their land. This, then, ties into the "remove stains, rinse, repeat" of such violences. And/or the my name is mud sequence can be addressed towards Black readers aware of the violently racist soap ads of the nineteenth century that conflated Black skin with mud, which then veers into a US history of enslavement and the killing of enslaved people by

drowning them in the Atlantic Ocean.[118] The result of this layering and multiplicity is a shared dehumanization–as perpetrator or recipient–of historical US violence as and toward refugees. It hearkens in multiple directions to generate and situate noise. The poem leaves the subject muddy, enacting an uncomfortable "we" through performative typography that connects perpetrator and recipient through its voicing of violence.

From work in his first book to his most recent, Kearney uses mess to foster strange affinities and to open his poems in ways that decenter him as author. When discussing what he referred to as one of the greatest stories he heard about his writing being taught, he celebrated that classes are "engaging it collectively, which means that I've decentered my voice, which was something I wanted to do, and I've passed on that decentering to the reader, who now is reading a page as a group, which is just dope to me! It allows the poem to become a place of associality" (Kearney *Hyphens*).[119] Kearney is abundantly aware of his subject position within these histories and their ongoing impacts. The mess that exists here is a smokescreen, offering Kearney cover to dive deeper in pursuit of strange affinities that might open up a multiplicity of ways of being in impossible times. Swathed in smoke or tear gas smog, Kearney uses this cover as opacity, but at the cost of comfort and health. The immediate discomfort is compounded by the risk of future disability. The longer one lingers in the mess, the greater the likelihood that pollution, violence, or time wears one down. Working within the mess, however, offers a space to live and work in a poetics of relation, not needing to recognize why someone is on the street next to you extinguishing a canister of tear gas under an orange cone but accepting the strange affinity that you both want to breathe better. Kearney uses these affinities of circumstance and relation to generate an ecological "we" through engagement with his writing. If a reader is engaged with his poems–they're already hooked.

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[118] M. NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!* Offers one poetic record of such an event.

[119] This could be "a sociality" being one unit of social cohesion, or "associality" as an adjective form of association, but not asociality (declining to be social).

In the poem "Fish Hook Lure," Kearney uses metaphorical fishhooks to clue the reader into the material ways that language hooks ecologically. The poem has an "I" as its speaker that steadily weaves its hooks into a "you" and "they" until he has stitched together an ecological "we." The speaker writes about the act of writing and sinking into a culture full of violence in the form of fish hooks: fish hooks he gets paid to sell. After the weekend, the speaker "Put[s] on clothing/ that best suits /a fish hook lure." (Kearney *Automaton* 44). Here the language has multiple meanings. It could be clothing meant "to lure" others to buy fish hooks or clothing that itself is most easily hooked by a "lure" (aka a fish hook). This act of luring places the speaker of the poem in the middle of a cycle, both making and becoming the target(s) of the lure. He is meant to sell this violence with words; yet he's aware of the harmful culture in which he speaks and writes that perhaps sees him as a fish to be hooked or otherwise animalized. The speaker knows how the violent horror that he writes about and within will catch and has caught his bodymind: "Mind and mouth / full of fish hooks." (Kearney *Automaton* 45). What the reader is left with is a question of how ongoing practices of survival and imagining otherwise are possible in spaces of disabling violence, dehumanization, and animalization. As a bodymind "full of fish hooks," the speaker of the poem has obviously been hooked more than once, yet still survives to chase the lure again and survives and chases the lure again and… The reader is left to sort through their relationship as hooked and hooking: to imagine practices that might dislodge the hooks in themselves and to question the ways in which they presently are hooked on and hook others with structural violences designed to hook them.

In *Optic Subwoof*, Kearney teases apart mess and quotation and collage, distinct elements that define process in his work. Each of these elements are connected to the processing they do with context. In the first versions of the "Loud-Assed Colored Silence" poems, Kearney points out that by re-typing the segments he means to cut, "I was not cutting, but quoting. That is, it was not clear that the blooms were *removed* from other fields" (Kearny *subwoof* 30).

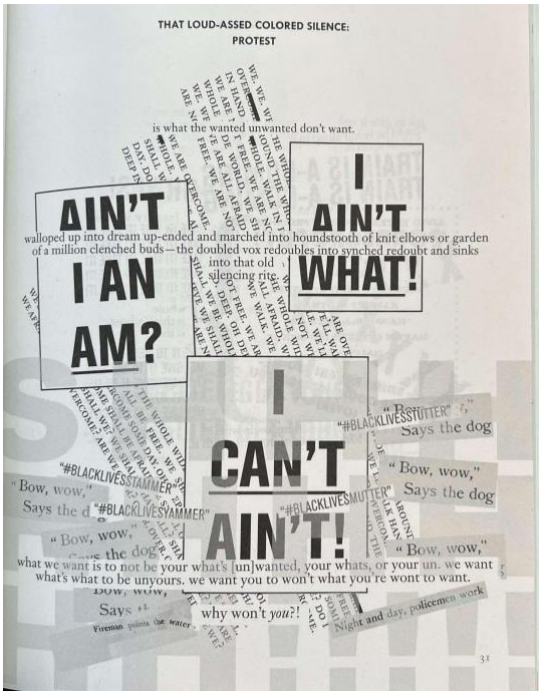

Figure VI: An image of "That Loud-Assed Colored Silence: Protest" showing layers of text and images

"That Loud-Assed Colored Silence: Protest" is an early poem from the cycle that Kearney addresses as not recognizing the removal of meaning from one context to another. In this quotational piece of performance typography, Kearney has taken and transformed language from protest signs and songs. A self-described pitfall of this was that he adjusted the font to align with the other text of *Buck Studies*, rendering the content in-place. According to Kearney, quoting as a process does not recognize the removal of something from its field of relation, only its re-contextualization in a place it was not before.

As a corollary, Kearney argues that "the experience of collage requires that one recognizes two things from different contexts recontextualized into a new, single one" (Kearny *Subwoof* 17).Kearney uses this practice to hold together the historic and implicit violence of collage: it is attentive to its cutting, its transmogrifying, and its practice of taking things from multiple places and moving them into a new place: of displacement. Kearney's writing is deeply attentive to violence and

does not shy away from its reproduction; instead, it offers those who recognize a method for understanding the violence, where it has come from, and what can be done with/despite/in spite of it. This is where mess comes in, as a process of "*reading of a context* and an understanding of the conditions that compose it lest shit go sideways. This relates to 'mess' … the passage between Order and Garbage" (Kearny *subwoof* 31). Collage begins to turn towards mess when the contexts and logics of collage collapse, often under the weight of greater and greater collage. At a certain point, things are no longer recognizable as decontextualized and recontextualized.

Kearney is concerned with the ways those deemed part of the mess, "the so-called out-of-place[,] make space for themselves—a way out of "No Way(!)" He explains that "these methods are often messy" (Kearney, *Mess*, 22). In a review of Kearney's 2014 book of poetry, *Patter*, Stefanie Wortman notes that "Kearney so often experiments with typography [in his poems] that they are difficult to quote."[120] In a description of his own painstaking labors with typography in image editing software, Kearney explains, "I want you to see the cut." (Kearney, "Automatons and Subjects"). He is deeply invested in process: its difficulty and relation to fragmentation; he often uses the size and position of letters to place multiple, frictional voices and interpretations on the page. This material approach to opening the page is one part of Kearney's work to shape a tentative and strained 'we' on the page, preemptively incorporating voices beyond his own. In a description of Kearney's poetry on the back of *The Black Automaton*, Greg Tate writes that it's "not easily parsed if you haven't digested every major hiphop lyric composed between 1979 and 1983 and spent a considerable amount of time backtracking the library stacks stuffed with Zora Neale Hurston and Ishmael Reed's neo/folkloric trails" (Tate, cover). Tate emphasizes the mess of relations that Kearney works in and

[120] Kearney's writing complicates the act of citation. It is nearly impossible to cite with one-to-one accuracy his work without some form of erasure, collapse, or absenting. This practice results in an opacity for him as a writer when exposed to any academic treatment. No author can excerpt and share his work without being both aware of and implicated in the violence of such references.

across; Tate recognizes the sites of cultural criticism and production whose voices Kearney taps, emphasizes, and weaves into his own practices. Kearney's messodology offers a means to wade through polyvocality while attending to fluctuating relationships of power. In Kearney's work, these multiple vocal and historical registers are fragmented and messed with; they repeat and sometimes stutter.

The mess is the space of reading, of locating and creating none or more meanings out of the layers of context and teasing out the deep histories that come to the fore in something collaged.

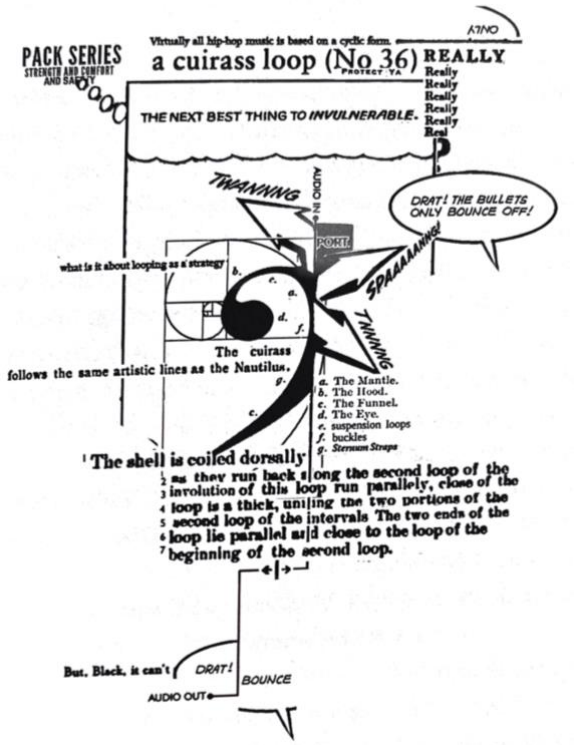

Figure VII: An image of Kearney's performative typography.

In the course of four pages of writing, Kearney demonstrates the potential of the mess by mapping some of the connections of a single collaged element from "But Black, it Can't–" (pictured above) quoted here as the words "a cuirass loop (No 36.)" This line, cut from a book of military history (displaced) and aligned with the field of other collaged elements, such as the quote "hip-hop music is based on a cyclic form" and folded into other loops becomes recontextualized as an allusion to

"Protect Ya Neck" from "Wu-Tang Clan's first album, *Enter the 36 Chambers*" (Kearney *Subwoof* 37). This one approach to reading "But Black, it Can't–" rises to the fore through an alignment of the reader's own experience and attention to the collaged nature, the "veldt," of the poem.

The increase in strange weather phenomena is expected to similarly increase the number of people displaced and recontextualized by climate disaster. In their article "Protecting Climate Refugees: The Case for a Global Protocol" Frank Biermann and Ingrid Boas outline the present and increasing trend of people displaced by climate disaster. They note that "Scientists predict serious impacts of climate change that could compel millions of people to leave their homes beginning sometime in the next decades" (Biermann and Boas 15). In this increasingly apocalyptic future, the contexts of who is from where become further muddled by the mess. Forced migration and flows of refugees lose specific motivators–wars of aggression, water shortage, climate catastrophe–and instead offer sites for recognition that it is not a singular context that has changed, but messy fields of interrelation that are not fully understood but entirely felt. Strange affinities become the unsurprised recognition of the "unfamiliar, abnormal, or exceptional" networks at play that may or may not offer a full apprehensibility of their connections. An increased fire season isn't recontextualized because it has already become accepted; the burn that comes from mustard plants on fires can be mistaken for the burn that comes from "a full gas-can, an itch" (265), and the inability to breathe in the smoke from burning redwoods can fade into choking through swirls of tear gas while peacefully protesting police violence. In the mess, Kearney follows the ways that violences collapse these experiences, demonstrating the strange affinities that become accepted in the everyday–the connections between the militarization of the police and the weaponization of climate disaster.

Kearney's processes of connecting climate and cultural violence cement his position not only as an ecopoet, but one whose work necessitates intentional ecocritical focus in this present moment

of climate collapse. His work, however, is only occasionally located in ecopoetic anthologies. His work does not appear in collections such as *The Ecopoetry Anthology* and is unaddressed in *Recomposing Ecopoetics*, which attempts to locate the transformations of ecopoetry in the twenty first century. Both of these collections make grand calls for exactly the work that Kearney has done throughout his published works, though his writing is absent from them. Keller argues that "nature poetry alone… is an insufficient poetic response to the radical instabilities of the environmental mess in which we find ourselves" (19), and that what is necessary is an ecopoetics that addresses connection rather than an idea of nature as something removed from human intervention. Similarly, Fish-Worth calls for "poetry [that] addresses contemporary problems and issues in ways that are ecocentric and that respect the integrity of the other-than-human world. It challenges the belief that we are meant to have dominion over nature and is skeptical of a hyperrationality that would separate mind from body--and earth and its creatures from human beings" (xxx). Both of these collections seek a sufficiently messy and sufficiently ecological connected poetics. Kearney's work *does* appear in collections that are intentionally intersecting ecopoetry with Blackness and justice–*Black Nature*, *Ghost Fishing: an Eco-Justice Anthology,* and *What Nature*. The field of ecopoetry is committed to the flows and interconnections of being in our contemporary world, but many of the collections that are "only" about ecopoetics cut away critical considerations of cultural production and political relations and end up reifying certain ecologies that are more readily intuited as natural. Using mess as a starting point, and especially Kearney's mobilization of the mess offers the field of ecopoetics a model for addressing truly relational connections within the mess. Through his intentional creating and curating of multiple methods for entering and exiting his work, Kearney builds a radical "we" into the audience of his writing. This building of connection is a necessity for existing in the mess, being open to and soliciting connection across shared material and metaphorical hazards. Kearney's attentiveness to the pathways that link the nautilus shell with the bass clef with covering one's neck

with *Enter the 36 Chambers* models the potential of thinking through the porousness of borders and instead think through the points of relational connection: to strange affinities which already exist in the increasingly ever-present mess.[121]

A Mess of Innovation

Kearney's precise use of language, layering, and performative typography allows his poetry to sink into the mess, to trace connections, and to create a field of knowledge that defies separations and a push for the new which repeatedly arises in the discussion of avant-garde and ecological poetry, especially as it relates to the anthropocene. Despite the interconnectedness of Kearney's ecological writing practice, his work is only sporadically included in ecopoetic collections.[122] I reiterate this to address the ways in which Kerney's practices–read through the lens of avant garde poetics–are often siloed into *either* being ecological and political *or* formal in ways that are innovative. In point of fact, Kearney's work is innovatively formed because of his attention to the ecological webs in which he writes: webs that offer no singular point of entry, and in which, he is always already ensnared. As ecological poetry, his writing is introduced in intersectional work that weaves nature poetry into contemporary political issues, and in avant-garde poetry, his work is hailed for its excessive attention to form and style without the ways that it does ecology. This essentializing and separation, especially in regards to Kearney's performative typography, misses the entanglements Kearney is always working to hold: entanglements made material on the page through the overt use of innovation in languaging and arrangement.

Kearney's poetry becomes, in this framework, a process-oriented network of connections that make a mess of everyday violence and moments of climate disaster. Discussing the avant-garde in *Experimentalism Otherwise*, Benjamin Piekut uses Fred Moten's description as "the very intense

[121] "Place, then, becomes an energetic aggregate of multiple distinct experiences that are nonetheless touching one another, made from the materials of one locale, which turn out to be materials from a vast range of places" (Keller 189)
[122] "The Orange Alert" appears in *Ghost Fishing* and "Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)" appears in *What Nature*

relationship between experimentalism and the everyday" (Moten qtd Piekut 1). Tracing the network of relations that connect experimentation and the everyday follows multiple points of connection in order to better understand how these positions relate to one another. In this way, Piekut addresses the complexity of thinking, writing, and relating in multiple directions simultaneously. While praising relational work, he notes that "a network model is useful because it stresses heterogeneity–networks are never *simply* language, never *simply* sound, never *simply* personal contacts, never *simply* practices and institutions, but rather a messy mix of all types of things" (Piekut 15 emphasis in original text). Bringing together all types of things in the analysis allows Piekut to move through a pulpy mess of music, peoples, and events to shape a cogent and complex discussion of musical experimentalism. This approach "performs not simply a return to daily life but an intensification of it–a peculiar mix of the commonplace and the singular. Kearney's work follows this intensification through repetition and layering–Keareny's work intensifies everyday violence until it becomes evident the singularity of harm that comes from it. It draws from multiple directions in order to offer vectors for readers to think through and connect with; not linearly, but in distributed nodes. Kearney's experimentalism is both ordinary and extraordinary. It is the everyday world around us, as well as the possibility that this world might be otherwise" (Piekut 2). This network model for relating becomes necessary where the improbable and the strange are becoming a more frequent occurrence.

The label of "experimental" is fraught, to say the least. For some, it's interchangeable with "avant-garde" and bounded by a particular type of gate-keeping. It's associated with one generation or another's notion of the new, excising histories of the practices its practitioners appropriate to be deemed new. In the preface to her book, *Experimental*, Natalia Cecire breaks down the mobilization of the term 'experimental' as one that was retroactively applied to a limited number of writers by writer-critics in the decades which followed modernist writers' work–none of whom self-identified as 'experimental' (Cecire ix). Cecire notes that "'Experimental' is a word that still has enormous

power and meaning; it does work. In that sense, it's A Thing… [however] the work "experimental" does is bound up in a series of ideologies about writing, language, aesthetics, politics, knowledge, science, and above all, modernity" (vii). In pushing back against the allegedly extolled virtues of experimentalism, Cecire notes the ways that the term has cut away many authors–so much so that her recovery project of the lineage of experimental writing is "often excruciatingly distinct from feminist, Black, Chicano, and other recovery projects" (ix). For others like Kearney, the label is a different kind of gate. Kearney notes that the label "experimental" is often placed over his writing as a pejorative to gate it away and write it off. It enacts a cut, similar to that of "anthropocene," that recontextualizes time, process, and the thickness of practice.[123] Central to practices of mess and experimentation are resistance to homogenized practices of language used to share narratives that fit within a limited scope of experiences. In her chapter of *)((Eco(Lang)(uage(Reader))*, Jill Magi emphasizes some such experimental practices as "a deep skepticism of traditional grammar, narratives, and 'telling,'" while also noting that ecopoetry ought also to be "wary of the fixity of that aesthetic and conceptual position, recognizing, as feminism and critical race theory has, the necessity of storytelling and the historical fact of artists and intellectuals shaping their texts for distinct political purposes" (248-9). The practices Magi points to here address similar tensions to conversations on disability justice, that there are complex positionalities of language, practice, and experimentation that complicate a simple reading of methodology. Magi especially leverages her understanding of ecopoetry to consider the ways that poetic utterances and writing function as "a subversive element of ecology, resist[ing] the ritualized emptiness of 'efficient' and 'effective' communication in its insistence on individual utterance and on a non-standard performance of language" (246). The space that poetry offers, ecopoetry specifically, is to hone in on the specificity of practices and performances in order to share one position in a field of relations with others while

[123] This cut is expanded upon in the introduction.

refusing to collapse this sharing into a homogenous mass. Kearney's writing style is nothing if not terrifically specific, in one line following a plurality of relations that launch readings of his work in multiple directions at once. Ecopoetry traces specificity and webs of connection through its refusal to be commodified and simplified in the interest of efficiency and clarity.

In "Beyond the Norton: Innovation in Contemporary Black Poetics," scholar Joshua Lam evaluates the collection *What I Say: Innovative Poetry by Black Writers in America* as a necessary intervention into the conversation of avant-garde poetics specifically for its acts of resistance, its deconstruction of the mythology of white modernism, and messy experimentation with language. As he turns to discussion of the collection, he notes that it is "a much-needed historical correction; the incredible range of forms invented and détourned by these poets helps to deconstruct narratives that privilege the poetry of black experience without acknowledging the multiple spheres of influence black aesthetics have wielded over American poetry in general" (173). By turning to these specific practices of Black cultural experimentation, it is possible to follow the methodologies that have in turn shaped contemporary poetics and ecopoetics. Lam insists that "many of the poets use conceptual techniques, appropriation, and polyvocality in order to trouble the notion of 'voice' and challenge its aura of authenticity" (173). Rather than striving for a singular authorial voice or use of language, these Black writers insist on troubling the waters of contemporary writing, challenging whose voice can be authentic for whom. In his own writing on writing in *Optic Subwoof*, Kearney similarly discusses resisting an essentialized or collapsed discussion of Black cultural production, pivoting to address Black practices of recognition, creation, and polyvocality, he evokes the mess repeatedly in this discussion, stating that "a graffitied wall is a mess. Thus it isn't, in essence, Blackness. But Blackfolx the shit at recognizing the message in that shit. The signal in that noise" (Kearney, *Optic Subwoof* 32). This critical attention to language, its use, and its reception undoes a fundamental assumption of the mess–that it is an undifferentiated mass of disposable matter and

meaning. In his process-oriented discussion, Kearney articulates a differentiation between Blackness, mess, shit, signal and noise.[124] To better situate these terms, it is helpful to address the depth and breadth of the mess as it exists in Kearney's extensive body of work.

A Mess of Contexts

Kearney's writing, not including but certainly connected to his other chapbooks, digital publications, lectures, and walks, layers together decades of making, sifting, and existing within the din of Black US cultural production.[125] In the six-page poem "The Voltron Communiqués," Kearney implements fragmentariness, polyvocality, and stutter as a means to address the dust of the rubble and the ways in which linguistic collapse can foster the opacity of hiding in plain sight. The poem is presented with a certain gravitas through its title; a communiqué is "an official announcement or report; *esp.* one delivered at the conclusion of a meeting, conference, etc. (now usually one concerned with diplomacy or international relations)" (communiqué *OED*). Meanwhile, the notes emphasize that Voltron is "a kick-ass anime robot composed of five lion-shaped space crafts" (Kearney, *Automaton*, 92). In its title and notes, this poem uses a polyvocality of perspectives and tones: from the playful description of "kick-ass" Voltron to the formal language used to communicate the message of a diplomatic meeting. The form of the poem itself is also multiple: evocative of the writing of communiqués and screenplays alongside its poetic use of the page. In all caps and bold, the poem's sections begin like a screenplay setting the scene for each lion: one begins, "PAST THE PARAPET, FLURRIES, FEW STARS. ROUNDS EXPLODE ON DISTANT ROCKETS" (Kearney, *Automaton*, 17) But then, the tone changes to communiqué, or is it just a letter? The first section is addressed "ATTN: BLACK LION," the second "BRO. RED LION," the third GREEN LION, the fourth "DEAR YELLOW LION," and the fifth "TO: BLUE LION"

[124] A relationship discussed later in connection to Kearney's work on "dintelligibility."
[125] Kearney describes poetry through walking past a white supremacist rally during a Q&A with Cave Canem in *Optic Subwoof* (183).

(Kearney, *Automaton*, 17-22). Once these scenes and addressees are set, the speaker begins what at first seems like a letter/second person address to each lion. Soon though, a second speaker (the lion being addressed) creeps into each section in italics, with still a third stomping into the "BLUE LION" section in capital letters. The voices do not build to realize a unified whole, instead they create distinctions within the dusty fragments and partial stories being told. In the rubble of Kearney's work with "The Voltron Communiqués," voices rise from ashes and dust that tries to flatten them into single, monovocal instances.

Kearney is not afraid to step into the dangers of a culture that seeks to animalize, dehumanize, objectify, and otherwise cut Black people out of context and violently recontextualize them elsewhere.[126] He articulates he is already in the mess: "always neck deep, where the voicebox is" (Kearney "Automatons and Subjects"). The creation of sound, of language, is always happening in the mess of an anti-Black culture. In this poem, Kearney demonstrates one way to move through the mess: not by ignoring centuries of animalization and dehumanization, but instead messing with them, recognizing the impacts of this violence and by ironizing and writing from the voice of a Black robot lion–Black, Automaton, Animal. He takes the mess of strange connections that have already been placed upon him by US culture, the powdered fragments that hold together Blackness, stutter, and animal and articulates these connections for readers who may be unaware of their lingering presence in popular culture.[127] As he does so, he does not leave Black canonical figures like late-nineteenth century Black poet Paul Laurence Dunbar out of the mess/up on a pedestal. Instead, Kearney swallows him into the method. The speaker notes to the Black lion, "when you change / there's a face in your mouth, you're a circus act gone wrong" (Kearney, *Automaton*, 17).[128] The history of the circus, a place where Black performers were made to perform while billed as animal

[126] Indeed, this is the premise of Kearney's lecture "You Better Hush: Backtracking a Visual Poetics"
[127] That is to say, those who don't have a history of proficiency in finding this particular meaning in the noise.
[128] Referred to with the acronym HNIC, also the title of rapper Prodigy's first album.

and even caged alongside animals, is present in Kearney's signaling here.[129] Instead of stopping after drawing readers' attention to that cultural horror, the Black Lion replies, "I ate Dunbar's mask" (Kearney, *Automaton*, 17). In this passage, Kearney is putting the mask from Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" into the mouth of a Black, automated lion. The mask that the speaker of Dunbar's poem describes as providing its wearers opacity from the world is now inside the lion. This moment offers a mess of signals: from the image of the five lions coming together into Voltron where the Black lion's head holds Voltron's head in its mouth, to Dunbar's poem, to the violence of the circus, to the multiple voices that can exist in one speaker and one poem. It is in this space that the poem queries the relationship between canonical Black writers and contemporary popular culture. The Black lion is claiming that it has swallowed the silence that Dunbar so praised, and the speaker of the poem retorts, "which got you / what /[130] exactly?" as the speaker replies to Black Lion. The repartee between the speaker and the Lion echoes Audre Lorde's work in *The Cancer Journals,* where she discusses the transformation of silence into language and action: "What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence" (Lorde 19). The speaker refuses to allow the act of silence to remain upon a pedestal, instead emphasizing to the Black Lion that "you are here because a million people hollar" (Kearney 17). It's in this space of recontextualization that Kearney puts Lawrence Dunbar, Audre Lorde, and Voltron into communication, especially attending to the multiplicity and physicality of voice. Using Lorde's caution against swallowing tyranny, Kearney upends the privileging of suffering in silence, emphasizing the need to hollar. In "The Voltron Communiqués," all of these dusty fragments and layers of rubble are held in friction

[129] Eli Clare, "Meditations on Natural Worlds, Disabled Bodies, and a Politics of Cure," *Disability Studies Initiative* (Wisconsin University Press, 2014), 20–21.
[130] When entering this into some word processing platforms as a quote, this results in a single line with italicized emphasis: "which got you *what* exactly?"

with bitter humor, acknowledging (among other things) the mess of having to project multiple selves and the necessity of vocalizing as a way to survive anti-Black, dehumanizing, animalizing culture.

To build at least a partial understanding of the plurality of approaches that exist in Kearney's writing, I turn to Nathaniel Mackey's *Discrepant Engagement* as a guide. The titular neologism, discrepant engagement, describes "practices that, in the interest of opening presumably closed orders of identity and signification, accent fissure, fracture, incongruity, the rickety imperfect fit between word and world" (19). Mackey's focus on the drift and imperfection of language and symbol allows a plurality of approaches to poetry and poetics. This willingness to engage the fragmentation that arises in trying to live poetically or to write ecologically allows one to trace the threads that come up in a space that has been fragmented and pushed into the fissure from outside. Here, Mackey turns to the work of Black and other nonwhite writers to follow ways in which words are shaped and reshaped in order to best reflect a plurality of experiences in a world that curtailed the specificity of experience in writing and perhaps thereby reshape the world through language. The authors that Mackey evaluates, including Amiri Baraka and William Carlos Williams, fragment and otherwise break down the use of language to convey a mess of experiences.

Mackey focuses especially on the limitations imposed on Black writers that inhibit and limit their being read beyond race. He argues that "black writers tend to be read racially, primarily at the content level, the noun level, as responding to racism, representing 'the black experience.' That black writers have been experimentally and innovatively engaged with the medium, addressing issues of form as well as issues of content, tends to be ignored" (284). This argument notes that while white authors may be recognized for innovation of form or language "universally," when Black experimental writers engage in alternative forms of creation and utterance, it is immediately confined to interpretation within a limited series of symbols, making their writing "about race" inherently. When Mackey describes this practice of reading Black authors at 'the noun level,' he's referring to a

form of interpretation–indeed, appropriation–of Black creativity in popular culture, where Black literary and musical inventiveness and experimentation is taken over by white cultural actors. It is this move that Kim hearkens to in her call for a crip-of-color critique. In his writing, Mackey notes that "'From verb to noun' means… on the political level, a containment of black mobility, a containment of the economic and social advances that might accrue to black artistic innovation. The domain of action and the ability to act suggested by verb is closed off by the hypostasis, paralysis, and arrest suggested by noun, the confinement to a predetermined status" (266). In this linguistic comparison, Mackey considers the limitations of complete understanding, of stasis, that exists in addressing Blackness as noun. The noun form closes off possibility for change, for connection, for plurality in its singularness; the noun denies a right to opacity. However, the noun form in this linguistic position is not the baseline for cultural creation, it is a limitation placed on the works with which he is engaged, those that are in the act, those that are engaged in making a mess of things and moving towards a plurality of ends as verbs. Mackey turns to Black experimental writing to consider the ways that fragmentation, fracturing, and an openness to improvisation and connection (shared crip and Black methodologies) create practices for sharing symbols in-process.

Turning back to Kearney, I bring attention to the ways that fragmentation enhances polyvocal reading.After moving through the fragmented addresses to and responses from the five lion-parts of Voltron, the final act of the poem is a communiqué from Voltron himself. Voltron is supposedly the unification of the five lions. Unlike the other polyvocal sections that still employ recognizable sentences and familiar line breaks, this communiqué instead is made of fragments and stutters. Slashes indicate line breaks where the line is unbroken and long spaces between words and parts of words multiply meanings while breaking apart language. Within these moments, Voltron articulates his plural self in parts:

" we were in
peaces/ and warring pieces / we couldn't

form/ ulate our bodies."
(Kearney, *Automaton*, 23)

Neither citation nor replication, this arrangement is a transformation of a segment, an approximation of the spaces and slashes that break apart Volton's voice as fragmentary mess. This voice, as a stuttering, fragmented, supposed whole, describes itself: both "warring" and "formulating" but not a "form." This language draws attention to process and potential rather than product. The fragmentary lines and pauses within suggest that Voltron has not come together and been made whole from fragments. The five lions are not unified—not simplified—their fragments continue to exist alongside each other in the poem, still breaking and offering a rubble of possibilities to pick through. This violence, this rubble, hearkens back to the language of war, violence, and climate disaster present in "The Orange Alert." Both poems rely on the use of weather, rockets, and symbols of war to connect the experience of the planet with the images of war–past and present. Kearney's use of recurring themes of violence, partiality, and climate is an intentional articulation of the imbrication of cultural and climate violence that are accelerating in our present moment of climate disaster. While Voltron is not formed, the friction that arises from the fragmentary lions offers methods for surviving in the mess, offers ways to dust off simplifications and become a mess of relations in proximity instead of a sameness. Not violence, but conflict, this plurality of perspectives offers multiplicity in a way that defies singularity. Voltron, in order to offer ways to continue being, cannot be rendered into the 1=1 ratio of a robot/lion/man whose fragments become a comprehensible (and thereby apprehendable) being.

Kearney's attentiveness to the necessity of the mess for relational thinking and the ubiquity of violence aligns closely with work being done in disability studies to better connect political upheaval and climate disaster with permanent, temporary, and potential experiences of disability. In a time of accelerating climate collapse, the mess becomes a space where the re/contextualizing of collage begins to fall down. The shifting of invasive species, the loss of ocean currents, and the

collapse of ecosystems defies contexts that make collage possible. In the mess, this loss of context becomes a process of re-cognition and differentiation.

Returning to the intersections of Puar and Kafer, I focus on the mutual imbrication of disability, race, climate, and disaster to address Kearney's writing in the vortex of these positions. In order to create a more expansive understanding of the ways that bodymind variance acts and is acted upon, Puar makes space for those who experience pain, whose perceptions don't align with neurotypical ideals, and whose lifestyles are stigmatized and therefore carry greater risk of state and social violence. To that end, models of debility move out of state-authorized and/or medical-industrial-complex-approved definitions of disability as something located in the body, and instead focus on "evaluating the violences of biopolitical risk and metrics of health, fertility, longevity, education, and geography" (Puar xix). Puar's work holds together multiple strands of scholarship that look to social models of disability: critiquing systemic racism, violent nationalism, and other biopolitical practices that cause injuries, reduce lifespan, increase the likelihood of disease, or lead to containment in prisons and hospitals.

This work has in turn found its way into crip methodologies and practices for addressing disability and debility in ways that are attentive to social structures as well as bodymind variance. Kafer directly builds on Puar's work as she orients herself towards coalitional work–building "desirably queer/feminist/disabled worlds" (Kafer 23). Kafer does this while keeping in mind that "[t]his kind of personal and theoretical positioning has long been a mainstay of feminist intersectional scholarship, and, as Puar warns, too easily requires 'stabilizing of identity across space and time'" (17). In trying to hold together a plurality of individuals, Kafer (following Puar) warns about the tendency to collapse categories and to assume these categories are stable to begin with. All too often, scholars collapse old and violent rhetorics that use disability to argue for racial hierarchies to mean that Blackness or Brownness in a US context is essentially a disability. Instead, Puar and

Kafer argue that the systems that enact and reenact violence on all disabled people, and nonwhite people, disabled and nondisabled alike, follow similar logics and practices. To that end, a coalitional politics among various bodyminds means having greater resources, ideas, and strategies for navigating debilitating biopolitics.

In order to maintain the plurality of communities in this coalitional work, Kafer outlines how work across feminists, the queer community, and crip culture relies on dissent. Influenced by Audre Lorde, Chantel Mouffe, and Ranu Samantrai, Kafer argues for the "value of dissent in coalitional politics" (150) as a way to maintain specificity and to prevent the collapse of varied and various groups into a homogenous mass. Dissent makes space for "visions of elsewhere:" "thinking through trans/disability bathroom politics, then means, not only accounting for 'disabled people' working alongside 'trans- people,' or even people who are both trans and disabled, but also questioning the very categories of 'disabled people' and 'trans- people'" (151). In this way, Kafer continues to open out the ends of debility to make space for disagreement and difference even to the point of destabilizing categories of being. Rather than relying on state-authorized, rights-based models of disability or stable categories in coalition, Kafer encourages disagreement because "contradictions and discrepancies...are not to be reconciled or synthesized but held together in tension. They are less a sign of wavering intellectual commitment than symptoms of the political impossibility to be on one side or the other" (19). This tension drives the intersectional relationships throughout crip coalitions–the political impossibility of sameness while recognizing the necessity of change to alleviate the pain and reduce the suffering of communities who have histories of being experimented upon. In this space, Kafer advocates for the practice of critically "claiming crip," to align with crip politics and take on the mantle of the term even when one is not themselves disabled. Kafer argues that "to claim crip critically is to recognize the ethical, epistemic, and political responsibilities behind such claims; deconstructing the binary between disabled and able-

bodied/able-minded requires more attention to how different bodies/minds are treated differently, not less" (13). Rather than returning to a binary of disabled and nondisabled, crip coalitional work and claiming crip are processes that encourage participants to become more attentive to the ways in which power structures act differently upon different bodyminds. Both Puar and Kafer attend to systemic violences that produce disability and the threat of disability.

With this attention to systemic practices and the threat of injury, I turn to Kearney's "Floodsongs," from *The Black Automaton,* which thinks through the disproportionate impacts of climate disaster. Kearney's "Floodsongs" recognizes the monumental disaster that was the impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans in 2005. In these poems, Kearney takes on the voices of animals living in and sometimes thriving in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Kearney engages in a calculated risk by trying to alter his subject position. In a post for *The Poetry Foundation*, "COST," Kearney explains, "I had to occupy subject positions I disliked. I had to engage in a kind of cruelty that forced me to acknowledge my own capacity for it. My ability to disregard others' suffering for my benefit." (Kearney "COST"). Once again, Kearney addresses the messes of violence that predate and follow climate disaster. This violence, this disregard of suffering articulates once again Nixon's discussion of the acceleration of slow violence. Discussing Hurricane Katrina, Nixon chronicles how "discrimination predates disaster: in failures to maintain protective infrastructures, failures at pre-emergency hazard mitigation, failures to maintain infrastructure, failures to organize evacuation plans for those who lack private transport, all of which make the poor and racial minorities disproportionately vulnerable to catastrophe" (Nixon 59). Prior to the disaster, non-Black, non-disabled, and wealthy benefitted from evacuation plans and infrastructures that privileged their existence. Discussing the "Floodsongs," Kearney is attentive to the violence of dehumanization by tracking those who benefited after the fact of the storm, animals. In "Floodsong 4: Mosquitoes' Drinking Ditty," the titular bloodsuckers delight in "bite[ing] the survivors– / go

around they are enough!" (Kearney *The Black Automaton* 66). Those left in the mess of the disaster are further preyed upon by the wildlife of New Orleans. Not coincidentally, the "Floodsong" poems are divided in *The Black Automaton* by two other poems–"Swimchant for N***** Mer-Folk" and "The Black Automaton in *tag* [refugee]."[131] These poems expand the temporal context of the "Floodsongs" beyond one moment in 2005, instead evoking the violent recontextualization of enslaved people during the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people and the ongoing refugee crises. Through this arrangement, Kearney focuses on the long-lasting cultural infrastructures that increase the likelihood of death, disability, and misery for people of color, particularly Black people in the United States. Behind the creation of the "Floodsongs" was a particular interest in musicality that underscores and redeploys polyvocality as a messy Black/crip practice.[132]

This entanglement of Black/crip methods is made evident in Mackey's reading of Blackness and musicality in poetry and literature, where he turns to a series of pieces written by William Carlos Williams after attending a performance of New Orleans musician Bunk Johnson and his band. This opening of methods offers connection beyond identity, instead focusing on practice and shared experience. In so doing, Mackey's work thinking through polyvocality is multiply filtered: he is sharing thoughts and evaluations of Black music and the stutter not directly, but through his reading of Williams's reading of Bunk Johnson's music. As Mackey puts it: "Williams's engagement with black music was greatly influenced by his sense of himself as cut off from the literary mainstream… Seeing himself as a victimized poet, Williams celebrated the music of a victimized people. In a gesture that has since been overdone… he saw parallels between their lot and his own" (241). In turn, what arises in this conversation is Mackey's reflection on Black poetics and music through the

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131 There are three "The Black Automaton in *tag*" poems in *The Black Automaton*, this one is distinguished by the tagged word "refugee."

132 Kearney explains that "A chantey is a work song," "'Water moccasin's spiritual' and 'Catfish's bounce' both use found texts and hip hop beat production aesthetics in composition," and "The gull wheels in the sky croaking a madsong. The dog desperately wants to be a part of a duet and is forced to solo." (Kearney "COST").

writing and interpretation of William Carlos William's interpretation of a revival performance of a Black musician.

In reading a poem and novel by Williams, Mackey argues that the stutter is central to both Black music and Black poetic practices in part because of the many and varied strategies it offers for in/articulation. As Mackey reads into William's articulations of the how Black music is poetry through its use of syncopation and beat to echo the "travestied, fractured foot" (241) of the poem–referring to an iamb–Mackey re-orients the reader to Black cultural production by inserting the story of the Fon-Yoruba orisha Legba into the conversation: "Legba walks with a limp because his legs are of unequal lengths, one of them anchored in the world of humans and the other in that of the gods" (Mackey 243).[133] This insertion by Mackey focuses the conversation on other than Western discussions of poetry and poetics, locating the "foot" in another time, place, and set of practices. However, rather than the crippled foot of Western poetic utterances, the unstressed/stressed rhythm that Legba enacts in one that moves between the human and divine–an intentional misstep. Mackey emphasizes that "the master of polyrhythmicity and heterogeneity, he [Legba] suffers not from *deformity* but *multiformity*, a 'defective' capacity in a homogenous order given over to uniform rule. Legba's limp is an emblem of heterogeneous wholeness, the image and outcome of a peculiar remediation." (Mackey 244, my emphasis). The syncopated rhythm of Legba becomes a locus of understanding and cherishing multiformity, more than one homogenized way of being and moving in the world. In the fragmented musicality of the Floodsongs, Kearney turns to the unequal movement between human and animal life in the wake of hurricane Katrina. Kearney leans into the possibility of stumbling over the violent collapse of disabled people and Black people, disabled and

[133] Here, Mackey's work aligns with that of crip poet Jim Ferris in "The Enjambed Body: A Step Toward a Crippled Poetics." Ferris' work here addresses Western poetic theories around disability and poetics, following Wallace, Shapiro, and Beum in their association of poems with disabled bodies, where they argue that "The latin iambus derives from a Greek word meaning 'a cripple'" and "when such a defective foot [anacrusis] occurs it is called a lame foot and suggests disorder."

nondisabled alike in the wake of disaster. In so doing, Kearney offers not so much a corrective of disaster, but a set of accusations that increases the tension of the writing. Mackey's reading of Williams' reading of Johnson acts as a corrective to the limited interpretation of syncopation and iambs as only indicating one history of poetic voice. Instead, Mackey interjects with insight meant to fracture the rhythm, to offer an intentionally incongruous reading of the beat to move into other paths. Indeed, he emphasizes that Legba's movements, and by extension rhythms that echo it, are only defective when forced into a "homogenous order given over to uniform rule." Such motions, such messess, are meant to exist and be celebrated in a heterogeneous way of being and communicating in the world.

Upon his reading of the poetic and musical foot as an intentional multiformity, Mackey builds an argument that the stutter is a significant method and practice of articulation for Black cultural workers. Reading further into what came from Williams' attention to Bunk Johnson, Mackey notes that "the stutter plays a significant role. What better qualification of what can only be a partial victory over incoherence? What limping, staggering, and stumbling are to walking, stuttering and stammering are to speech… stammering and stuttering are perceived as speech im-pedi-ments" (246). Moving from the uneven foot to the uneven foot-in-mouth, Mackey argues that the stutter is a crucial practice and articulation within Black cultural production. There's a forced kinship to be found here in Mackey's reading of the association between limping foot and limping tongue. In the messy collapse of these ways of being, Mackey brings together ways of speaking and moving that exist beyond normative and limiting expectations.

For Kearney, web's of ecological relation get remade in the violence of the mess. He works in the fragments and the rubble. In *Mess and Mess and*, Kearney is engaged over and over again with mess and mess' repetitions and fragments. Kearney emphasizes the partial in his work. He describes his relationship with the words he writes as "becoming a kind of rubble [he] pick[s] through." These

pieces come together without becoming whole as Kearney works them forward and backward in his poems to generate meaning. The multiplicity of readings in Kearney's work are part of mess as method for the poem's craft and for the reader's engagement with the poem.

In his lecture for the *Hyphens* events at Michigan State University, Kearney discusses the multiplicity of ways a poem can be read. In this discussion, he locates the audience/reader in the process of interpretation. While showcasing "Runs: Evening After the Bitter Winter," Kearney introduces the potential that comes from the generative failure of a mondegreen—a mishearing of a lyric that is accepted, and as a result, the listener has "to construct a whole kind of shadow meaning of the song" to make the mis-hearing work (Kearney, "Hyphens") This failure to comprehend a lyric is generative; it creates two songs from one: song and shadow song. Through his fragmentary creations of meaning in poems, Kearney is both using mess as method for his own making as well as a way to make space for the reader's failures and recreations. When discussing his method and methods he appreciates, Kearney articulates that "the poems I write and love to read often dog the fail. When so, writing is picking at the mess" (Kearney, *Mess*, 49). Here, it is not just that Kearney uses the fail, he "follow[s] like a dog on the heels of" failure in his own poetry and in the poetry of others (Kearney, *Mess*, 49). The pursuit of failure, the recognition of collapse, and the thickness of mess is what Kearney is after. In turn, the mess is a multiplicitous method, laden with repetitions, laden with shadows and misunderstandings, laden with the waste of failures to be picked through.

Kearney uses messes and multiple voices to develop meaning and to forge connections across the mess; his willingness to engage in, and document, failure emphasizes the potentials within repetition that resists productivity. Kearney engages mess as a method of making in his poem "Live/Evil" again from his 2006 work *Fear, Some* and in his later description of the poem's process in *Mess and Mess and*. Kearney states, "my failure here was to use a rhetorical strategy (demesnes of metaphor, simile, personification) which equated a human being with an insect and CD packaging"

(Kearney, *Mess* 52).[134] In the process of writing a poem meant to call out Miles Davis' abuse of women, particularly Cicely Tyson, Kearney finds himself using a rhetorical strategy that is ontologically violent. He is writing after heeding Pearl Cleage's call in her essay "Mad at Miles" to destroy physical copies of Davis' music in response to his history of abuse (Kearney, *Mess*, 51). First he destroys his physical CD collection, and then he works to smash those CDs on the page. He describes "a pin's point affixing a butterfly to a collector's box; Davis' fist pummeling his one-time wife, Cicely Tyson; and [his] mallet smashing one of Davis' CDs . . . the acts of violence switch victims, revising and restating the lines" (Kearney, *Mess*, 51). In this shifting violence, Kearney's response to Davis' "pummeling" ends up dehumanizing Tyson. Kearney himself becomes part of the pummeling through his rhetorical destruction of CDs. He finds himself equating "butterflies, CD cases, and Cicely Tyson" (Kearney, *Mess*, 52). This relationship is a fast, unintentional, and non-agential association of voices. Kearney makes a mess of things in his own actions, in connection to insects, and to plastics and Cicely Tyson herself. His rebuttal to Davis through smashing CDs first physically and later rhetorically does not undo past violence. Yet he leaves the mess on the page, "a document of failures" (Kearney, *Mess*, 51). Kearney's messodology here is the return of intent– taking the mess of voices he collapsed and holding this tension on the page. He leans into the messiness of what has been made and emphasizes the series of relations that arise in the collapse. He notes the ways that the rubble made with language has enacted a collapse as he brings the reader into that collapse.

This ontological violence has been continuously wielded against Black people and Black women in particular within the mess of culture in which Kearney treads. Of her work In the Wake: On Blackness and Being, Christina Sharpe writes, "My project looks instead to current quotidian disasters in order to ask what, if anything, survives this insistent Black exclusion, this ontological

[134] Live/Evil" was first published in: Douglas Kearney, *FEAR, SOME*. Red Hen. 2006

negation, and how do literature, performance, and visual culture observe and mediate this un/survival"(Sharpe 18). Kearney, too, is interested in everyday disaster, in failure, and in what to do with the rubble. Rather than "erase the unintended failure and proceed apace," Kearney chooses to sit in the mess of context, intent, and action to remain with the violence of "dehumanization that happens figuratively as a matter of course" in poems, particularly love poems, and to "pick up the pieces" (Kearney, *Mess*, 53). From there, he comes to ask, "what have we made???!!!" (Kearney, *Mess*, 53). This questioning recognizes how he is mired in the violence, the smashing of CDs he himself equated with women. On the page, Kearney makes a practice of recognizing his non-agential and unintentional connection to violences, some of which he shares as a recipient and some he enacts as perpetrator. These are not ones that he collapses or erases, but holds up in his writing. The violence is not just *over there*. Kearney uses his position in the mess to question the relationship between rhetorical violence and domestic violence. Kearney's reaction to his own participation in this violence, his unintended failure, is not to erase or to cover it, but to hold it and display it to readers. Kearney uses his failure within the poem to engage in conversations of collective ontological violence. By doing so, he brings the reader into the "we" that created this violence, a "we" that "didn't exist before [Kearney] realized [his] failure" (Kearney, *Mess*, 53). Kearney does not just sort through mess in his crafting of "Live/Evil," nor just in his book *Mess and Mess and*; he retells this story on his visit to Michigan State University. In *Mess and Mess and* and elsewhere, Kearney engages with mess as method, and as a repetitive method at that.

In his essay, "The Stutter," Kearney locates the stutter in Black musical influences. He notes the ways in which "West African compositional systems valorize the Stutter, its repetition creating a circularity relocating the 'reward' of listening to music from its end to its process" (Kearney, *Mess*, 75) This passage places the stutter in conversation with both crip and Black poetics, hearkening to its act as embodied practice while also addressing its position culturally. While Kearney did not

identify as disabled when he wrote this, his writing and scholarship finds ways in which disability and Blackness overlap and mutually inform one another. Kearney sinks into the mess of culture, particularly into representations of stutter. His willingness to linger in the mess, where violent representations of Blackness can represent the stutter as abject or Mackey's readings can align it as adept practice, allows him to attend to the possibility of a polyvocality that holds abject and adept simultaneously. The Stutter, in Kearney's figuration, is one that disrupts linear expectations of performance; it re-focuses the listener's attention to the process in ways that allow for a multiplicity of re-refocusings.

The fragments and returns in Kearney's work are emphasized in his performances. During his *Hyphens* lecture, Kearney begins a phrase his audience thinks they know the end to: "#blacklives..." Using a delivery style that emphasizes stops and starts, Kearney builds up anticipation of the word "matter" before ending the phrase with the word "stutter" instead (Kearney, "*Hyphens* Performance/Lecture"). A quick disability studies reading of this moment might collapse Kearney's performance of the stutter while not himself having a stutter to one of "cripping up"— appropriating representations of disability by non-disabled people. In "The Visualization of the Twisted Tongue: Portrayals of Stuttering in Film, Television, and Comic Books," Jeffrey K. Johnson writes, "stuttering is often used as a crude formulaic storytelling device that adheres to basic misconceptions about the condition. Stuttering is frequently used as visual shorthand to communicate humor, nervousness, weakness, or unheroic/villainous characters" (245). While there are many reasons to be wary when an author without a stutter takes one on, Kearney's work can't be accounted for solely in terms of trope or appropriation. The 'we' that Kearney brings to the page and to the stage is one that is complicated… messy. While Kearney takes on the stutter especially in terms of Black cultural production, this use is intentional and controlled–an experience antithetical

to the material, embodied stutter. As such, there is a certain amount of artifice to be considered as the stutter is taken on as a method rather than embodied experience.

The matter of the stutter, for Kearney in particular, is one that is necessary to understanding Black experimental poetics. Rather than reading performative typography, Kearney uses it when he can to encourage others to join him in the mess. He notes that this invitation, this making space for others to engage his work. He says that this is "one way of getting my body out of it… I write because I need to write, but I make it public because of y'all" (Kearney *Subwoof* 204-5). Mess makes room for more nuanced engagements with the stutter. Kearney mobilizes the stutter in recognition of its complexly embodied nature. In so doing, he develops narratives of trauma, resistance, and refusal in a linguistic style that fragments meaning into a multiplicity of possibilities. Kearney's navigation of the stutter recognizes the overlapping impacts of historical violence against disabled people and Black people, disabled and nondisabled alike.The potential of repetition in Black and crip poetics is one that is invested in making space, rather than coming to a predetermined end; repetition thickens the space of the process. Christina Sharpe insists, "we must become undisciplined" and in this case, undisciplined methods of poetics (Sharpe 17). Kearney's work opens up representations outside of conventional literary structures (and typeface) and white, nondisabled notions of who has power in language. In his evaluation of the Stutter, Kearney emphasizes its potential for making mess: "the aggressive Stutter breaks English in a way vernacular never can. Conversely, the abject Stutterer seems afflicted, inarticulate, anxious, snared in language . . . The Stutterer is a skipping record and may strike and strike and strike interminably" (Kearney, *Mess*, 75). Here, the Stutter and Stutterer do not engage with language as a transaction. Instead, the end becomes meaningless; focus shifts to the process: the act, the person uttering. The act of stuttering becomes "a *plastic* plaything available to . . . be re-shaped and revised, each repetition of sound an event for another take" (Kearney, *Mess*, 75 author's emphasis). The Stutter allows for repetitions that

do not build or accumulate, instead emphasizing ways in which to alter, to play, and to become malleable in the act. The abject and adept stutter fold together within this opacity of a Black/crip method. It becomes a practice that isn't singular, but plural, once again moving into the un-apprehendable. As a Black/crip experience of poetry, the S/stutter becomes a way not to build to a fantastical next step, but to become attentive to process, to make space in the mess for alternate possibilities.

The plurality of ways that stutter can be mobilized can be traced back to the way Mackey approaches Williams writing on Blackness and musicality. Mackey sees the use of stutter as both a material experience and metaphor for Black utterances, for him it becomes "the most appropriate, self-reflexive feature of an articulation that would appear to be blocked in advance" (247). As Mackey reads the stutter Williams writes into his work as an approximation of Black musical practice, he discusses the ways in which the stutter folds into itself, an utterance blocked in advance that still must come into being. The stutter carries with it physical and cultural hindrances that would–unsuccessfully–stymie its generation.As he further follows the cultural and musical use of the stutter, Mackey builds it into a tool and method for generating incoherence, for refusing to adhere to homogenous cultural practices, and to articulate an intentional inarticulation. Mackey addresses the way that Williams uses the stutter as a witness, one that "symbolizes a need to go beyond the confines of an exclusionary order, while [also] confessing to its at best only limited success at doing so. The impediments to the passage it seeks are acknowledged if not annulled, attested to by exactly the gesture that would overcome them if it could" (249). In this act of witnessing, Mackey reads the stutter as pushing beyond social and cultural hobbles while simultaneously recognizing that it can only ever partially do so. Coming from within the confines of exclusionary social and cultural practices, the stuttering utterance carries with it the heavy histories of silence and partial articulation. In this act of carrying, however, the stutter makes space for moving elsewhere, beyond the space of

hindrance. This is not to say that the stutter ever fully escapes, but that it moves in multiple directions while "it symbolizes a refusal to forget damage done, a critique and a partial rejection of an available but biased coherence" (252). To delineate the damage done to a single experience would once more condense Black cultural production to a noun, forever paused in the field of cultural practices that wound, isolate, and collapse. Instead, the stutter for Mackey is a process, a verb that carries the past with it, uncomfortably but always in process, always verb-ing.

As Mackey wraps up his reading of Williams' work, he emphasizes and once more insists on the importance of the stammer/stutter/limp in Black music and poetry. He points out that while Williams "insist[s] that Bunk Johnson doesn't stammer, the limp he inflicts on the melody is ancestral to the stutter of Monk, Rollins, and others" (252). This insistence is at once a recognition and commendation for the polyvocality evoked in the simultaneous stammer/stutter/limp. Mackey continues this commendation as a practice of resistance, one that pushes back against the violence of being understood completely. Mackey closes out this segment on the stammer/stutter/limp by praising it as an act of genius: "part of the genius of black music is the room it allows for a telling "inarticulacy" a feature consistent with its critique of a predatory coherence, a cannibalistic "plan of living," and the articulacy that upholds it" (252-3). This closing argument ties together the recognition of the violence of normalcy, a process by which a singular, homogenous 'plan of living' or 'way of life' is made into the desired norm, despite its inherent impossibility for many. This predatory coherence acts upon Black cultural actors, disabled and nondisabled alike, as well as queer and disabled nonBlack people. For Mackey, the stutter is one practice among many that foster a resistant inarticulacy; it is a method of resisting articulations that reduce people to nouns.

There's Fire

Introducing the collection of poems in *What Nature*, Timothy Donnelly, Stefania Heim, and BK Fischer emphasize that "what 'nature' is today is a far cry from sanctuary or retreat or any

supposedly tranquil, separate sphere where contemplation might unfold in ease (Donnelly, Heim, and Fischer 9). Nature is no longer a noun that is apprehended or apprehendible as 'sanctuary or retreat.' Instead, because of the ongoing climate experiment, nature itself is resisting–retreating– from the ways in which it has been articulated. In his contribution to the anthology, Kearney offers a poem at the intersection of fire and water: "Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)."[135] Like "The Orange Alert," "Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)" is a liminal poem about a fire in California. The fire named here occurred in the Angeles National Forest near Santa Clarita and the speaker describes what it is to swim and worry as, between dives, the speaker and others watch the first responders fight the fire.[136] "Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)" opens with another turn to the ongoing bouts between human and nature, where "fire made / a boxer's ear of the sky" (136). In this space, Kearney articulates the bodily transformations shared between the sky above the city and the world broadly as an injury of fighting. The "cauliflower" ear of boxers is the result of repeated trauma, physically marking a space regularly battered and bruised. In so doing, Kearney emphasizes that this fire is not limited to the singular event sending a cauliflower-like plume into the air, but a series of repeated, traumatic events transforming the body of the Santa Clarita skyline.[137]

The speaker watches from the poolside as another fire punches towards the ozone and the clouds get a little thicker with soot and smoke. Another voice tells the speaker not to worry while the reader gets the inside scoop, where "my blood, karo / & slick guts: how it is now— / know how far the burning by / how small those first responders fly" (136). The reader is brought into the speaker's twisting guts which are slick with fear and cracking knuckles in preparation. The reader is

[135] Sand Fire (2016), first of its name, was later followed by Sand Fire (2019)
[136] Which, coincidentally, is also bordered by Altadena. This poem, then, takes place 10 years and 33 miles down the road from "The Orange Alert."
[137] During the defense of this writing as a dissertation, less than ten years after "Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)," the Eaton Fire of 2025 has destroyed much of Altadena, and according to the Sierra Club has unseated Hurricane Katrina as the most expensive natural disaster in US history.

pulled into the messy embodiment that folds blood into corn syrup and molasses while the insides are treated with metformin–a diabetes medication whose "glycemic response…may be greater among African American individuals" (Williams et. al.). This movement from the body of the world into the belly of the self implies a connection between the violences being enacted–the system that drives increased fires is imbricated with the system that disproportionately increases illness among Black people. Folded into this fear and into the sugary gut wrenching is an evocation towards other disasters in other summers, while the poem relays the order "*don't breathe* outside for days" (137 emphasis in original). The poem holds a knot of violences both everyday and singular in its intestines, moving between the Sand Fire, the slow violences that increase the likelihood of diabetes and the lack of access to care in Black communities, and to the death of Eric Garner less than two years before the date of the poem.[138]

The internal/external folding of conversation between the speaker and another turns and returns around the cause of the fire. The explanation offered is "you know yellow weather / lights the litter, / spattered oil, common saltwort—" (Kearney "Sand" 136-7). This explanation turns towards the garbage once more; litter reemerges as the combustible from the beginning, spreading to a spill of oil and an invasive plant that is known to create fire hazards.[139] The other voice in the poem talks through fires as "that which *just happens*" (137 emphasis in original) The speaker of the poem sinks into the pool, into the mess to get beneath the smoke of this particular disaster, one that is "*not ours this time*" (137 emphasis in original). By the end, the poem becomes a dense and pulpy node of everyday and singular disasters, voicing while rebuking the increasingly commonplace

[138] "Diabetes disproportionately affects Black Americans, and data suggests they are less likely than their white peers to have access to newer medications that have the potential to dramatically improve their health." In work done after the writing of this poem, researchers have also found that Metformin remains in use more frequently among Black Americans than newer, more effective, more expensive medications because of lack of access to new medication through US healthcare policies according to Sheryl Huggins Salomon writing for *Everyday Heath*. Medically Reviewed by Kacy Church, MD.

[139] "*Salsola tragus*"

attitude that these things just happen. Through its allusions, its side-eye, and punning, the poem holds together the acceleration of no-longer slow violences that make a mess of the present moment. Like "The Orange Alert" that looks back to US exceptionalism, violence abroad, and speaker's enmeshment within toxic ideologies, "Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)" gathers together the ecology of another fire, where access to medication stymies the impact of one form of violence, a pool is a mirage from another, and both act as forms of/critiques of looking away.

"Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)" takes up the fires that had not yet been commonplace and questions what it means that fire, first responders, and plumes of smoke are something that "just happens." The smoke no longer seems out of context in a pool on the edge of Santa Clarita, but has become one among a mess of chemical irritants that is just part of the mess of things flowing into and out of the space. Presenting the matter-of-factness of death, fire, and diabetes emphasizes that their displacement is taken for granted and now a matter of everyday violence rather than singular moments.

In a Q&A with Cave Canem, put into print in *Optic Subwoof*, Kearney offers a definition of poetry broadly the echoes contemporary descriptions of ecopoetry: "poetry to me is a set of relations, and possibilities, and responses" (Kearney *Subwoof* 183). He goes on to complicate this definition with an oh so ecological example: a walk.[140] For Kearney, this walk is past a white supremacist rally and seeing a person holding a sign reading "white superiority" upside down. For Kearney, this description of poetry is a process, it is not something made, but a process of interaction, of messing, and it is deeply attentive to the everyday forms of violence that constitute existence as a Black subject in the United States.

[140] The history of the nature poem often lines up with the history of walks–examples of walks such as Thoreau's, Emerson's and Dworkin's dot nature poetry so much so that disabled writers have written in opposition to this trope. Despite this, walks have steadily been excised from ecopoetry. Much to Jonathan Skinner's frustration in his introduction to the first volume of *ecopoetics*, where he writes, "generally, walks do not make it into the embattled environment of today's best poetry… In any case, at least since Homer poetry has been working hard to lose 'nature.'" (1)

Mess, as Kearney uses it and as it exists in other works, transforms the bounds of ecopoetry, sinking deeper into process and relation and offering, as Moten proposes, one possible way out. Mess is a potential, it is a means in the process between order and garbage that makes space for transformation and reinterpretation of context: "mess, like shit, has a protean quality–mess is shit that can't be fixed, only repaired" (Kearney *Mess* 18). Kearney's reading of the mess aligns with white disabled poet Eli Clare's read of restoration. Clare wrangles with the ideology of cure as it is applied to bodies of humans and bodies of land alike–stretching towards an ideal that did not exist in the past nor cannot exist now.[141] As one example, he turns to the tallgrass prairie of the United States that no longer exists: "the goal isn't to re-create a static landscape somehow frozen in time, but rather to foster dynamic interdependencies, ranging from clods of dirt to towering thunderheads, tiny microbes to herds of bison" (15). Here, Clare recognizes there's no "fix" for the prairie of pre-colonized America, no cure that can bring it back; instead, the objective is re-pairing, tracing interdependent networks through the mess to build a way forward despite ideologies of cure. Such re-orientation towards finding different ways to relate to prairie plants and the transformed world is central to white professor and poet Megan Kaminski's work with prairie plants and the work of proud disabled, Mestize poet Naomi Ortiz in their recent work, *Rituals for Climate Change: A Crip Struggle for Ecojustice*.

I offer messodology as a gathering of practices that provide a means to navigate the litter of contexts on the way from order to garbage or from destruction to restoration. Kearney's poetics delve into the immediacy of the mess to better understand what it means to exist in a space of forced re-contextualization and loss. In the layers of rubble left by structural and ecological

[141] As one example, Clare discusses his own relationship with CP and that there was never an able body to be restored to.

violences, messing around offers the tools of multiplicity and opacity: attending to strange affinities can undo collapse and offer space for coalition.

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Chapter Three: Recycling

Making Do with Litter-ature in the Pacific

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
  Sailed off in a wooden shoe,—
Sailed on a river of crystal light
  Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
  The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring-fish
  That live in this beautiful sea;
~Eugene Field, "Dutch Lullaby"

And if that dust don't heal the ocean,
Daddy's gonna buy you a floating island,
And if this man-made island drowns,
You'll still be the sweetest planet around.
~Craig Santos Perez, "Hush, Little Planet"

I call forth the knotting of star-charts
by sinnet and shell
I call forth the vaka and all manner of vehicle
navigating by our light
into the long safe journey home
into the uncharted night
~Selina Tusitala Marsh, "A Samoan Star-Chant for Matariki"

I grew up hearing the poem my family referred to as Wynken, Blynken, and Nod over and over. The poem was a favorite of my great-great-grandmother who crossed Lake Michigan and built cottages in 1925 in a town called Onekama. The place names in Michigan serve as a reminder over and over again of the land's settler colonial and indigenous histories. When my daughter was one month old, I stood before one of these cottages and recited the poem from memory in a post-partum fugue, fitting as the poem itself is revealed to be a dreamscape in its final stanza. While writing this passage, smoke from the Canadian wildfires of 2023 makes the cottages nearly unvisitable and my thoughts hazy. Without insulation or air conditioning, the permeable cottages are filled with particles that make breathing difficult. 120 miles to the south, I've still had to buy plastic air purifiers for my daughter's room and mine. The air quality on more than one occasion has been so poor that the full moon has been blotted from the night's sky. This absent moon reminds me of a winter memory, once at 18 months, not understanding the distance of the moon, my daughter cried because she couldn't grab and eat it. I was grateful she couldn't actually reach the moon with all her want.

The Patch

In 2019, Benoît Lecomte swam through the Pacific Ocean Gyre and gathered data on trash density and wildlife. This data was later passed along to researchers who have put together an extensive survey on what's living in the waste of the Pacific. Senior study author Rebecca Helm notes in an article published at the end of 2021 that prior to Lecomte's journey, "no one was looking for and documenting the surface life that they found" (Helm qtd. Weisberger). The primary focus of decades of visits were solely focused on the waste of the space and not the life that existed there. The visits that Helm discusses are commonly traced back twenty seven years to 1997, but the legacy of garbage in the Pacific Ocean goes back decades more. Since this early study, other researchers have found that not only is there life in the garbage patch, but that there is an unexpected intermingling of forms of coastal and open-ocean life. In a series of works published in *Nature*, Linsey Haram has documented the variety of life on the "plastisphere" of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and argued that it "may now provide extraordinary new opportunities for coastal species to expand populations into the open ocean and become a permanent part of the pelagic community, fundamentally altering the oceanic communities and ecosystem processes in this environment" (Haram et. al.).[142] This "invasive" presence has become part of an ongoing conversation of what responsibilities humanity possesses in the anthropocene.[143] In an interview with Ira Flatow, Haram argues that "we can't immediately go into a situation [where humans are responsible for one or more invasive species] and deem it to be negative" (Haram qtd. Flatow). Attending to the often ignored

[142] "Emergence of a neopelagic community through the establishment of coastal species on the high seas" from 2021 and "Extent and reproduction of coastal species on plastic debris in the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre" encapsulate much of this work.

[143] "Invasive" is not the universal word for such species. Zapotec and Maya Ch'orti' environmental scientist, Dr. Jessica Hernandez, explains, "So I was always taught as a young girl that they're not invasive species. That they're actually displaced relatives. And I think that goes back to the first question, right? How as Indigenous peoples we view our environments, where our animals and our plants are also our relatives." qtd. In Flatow, Ira. "Indigenous Knowledge Is Central To Climate Solutions" *Science Friday*. 22 April 2022.

ecosystems of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch requires considering the myriad ways human intervention shifts and is shifted by the interdependent web of existence within which it is located.

Floating garbage in the Pacific isn't new. In 1973, researchers from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography sailed through the (now)Great Pacific Garbage Patch, noting a (then) inordinate amount of plastic waste. In their reflection of the journey, they argued that "unless we find adequate means of disposing of our plastic products soon, we can anticipate that the 'Wynkin [sic], Blynkin[sic] and Nod' of our children will set sail into a plastic sea" ("Setting sail into a Plastic Sea"). Their cautionary warning, published in *Nature,* carried with it a call to redress no-deposit, no-return use of plastics in the world. This early warning lay buried in other ecological concerns of the late twentieth century until the area was visited by Charles Moore in 1997.[144] Now, fifty years from the first pass-through, only ten states and the unincorporated territory of Guåhan (Guam) have bottle deposit policies, and the neopelagic ecosystem of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch has taken off as a hot topic on US news outlets such as NPR and CNN.[145]

Unlike the immediacy of the fires of Kearney's writing, the Great Pacific Garbage patch has slowly accumulated. Here, I slow down and open out with ecopoetic responses to our crip planet. I consider a problem of planetary scale with attention to situated methods of response. To take on the planetary scale, I turn to global decolonial scholars whose work advocates for situated and interconnected responses to environmental degradation's disparate impacts. I begin with a literature review of decolonial scholarship that disrupts colonial logics of containment and disposability. These loci provide necessary interdependent approaches that refuse isolated approaches to the pacific. By doing so, I set the stage for an in-depth conversation between three Indigenous scholar-poets whose work ranges from explicitly recycling the Western "cannon" to engaging in the risky practice of

[144]This is the more frequently cited finding and naming of the patch. Daniel Engber. "There Is No Island of Trash in the Pacific" *Slate*.
[145] Literally "new ocean" as coined by Haram et. al. in their publication in *Nature*, December 2021.

making kinship with deeply embodied waste in acts of reclamation. In this way, I trace the practices of recycling that challenge the binaries between asset/waste, between empty and teeming with life, that limit conceptualizations of the Pacific. By bringing in global decolonial scholarship to this oceanic conversation, I offer the possibility of reimagining the method of recycling both at planetary scale and in situated contexts.

I attend to ecopoetics of the Pacific that refuse colonial logics of containment and disposability. Instead, this work considers what exists beyond these limited demarcations and what defies their bounds. The three Pacific poets gathered here demonstrate the possibilities of recycling Western literature and waste through their attention to transformation, plurality–multiplying and moving in defiance of containment, and automythography. First, I'll turn to Craig Santos Perez whose work explicitly recycles as he takes on and repurposes literature-as-trash as a method for redressing colonial practices. Then, Selina Tusitala Marsh opens out as she recycles Anne Waldmen, using partial imaginings to get at the plurality of potentials in Pacific Islander conceptions and for PIs more broadly. I could end there, taking up global decolonial theory and an Aotearoa New Zealand poet quickly recycling Western literature into many global perspectives, but instead, I end with the risky work of Tusiata Avia whose poetics attend most intensely to the dangers of recycling as a method for Pacific Islanders as she challenges the logics of waste in the Pacific at risk of her own collapse. Through close association with waste and her own leaking body, Avia cycles through connections between herself and the divine. I first consider recycling most connected to its material practice in Perez's work as he uses pithy commentary and uneven sound to speculate on what can be made of often harmful narratives placed on the Pacific and Pacific peoples. Then, it opens recycling out through Marsh who twists and layers histories in her refusal of archetypes of the everywoman. Finally, it ends inward as Avia uses her own body as a locus for automythography, going down into the self to open outwards and connect with a goddess and the planet. In this last move, I encourage

the reader to slow down and turn inward to consider their own situated contexts for making and imagining on our crip planet.

The uncertainty of what to do with the mass of plastic and the ecology that has adapted to exist within it pose a unique problem for which colonial logics do not have a clear answer. In the Pacific, the 'cultural bomb' of colonial practices happened alongside the literal irradiation of the Pacific by the U.S (euphemistically described as the "Pacific Proving Grounds") and the polluting of the Pacific via microplastics, creating a vast politics of disposability. The result is a cognitive and metaphorical space–"the Pacific"–that is imagined to be empty, a wastebasket in which radiation and plastics can be disposed of. Kenyan decolonial scholar and novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o discusses imperialist logics in his work, *Decolonising the Mind*. While Ngũgĩ's work speaks directly to language and its role in practices of imperialism in Africa, his concept of the 'cultural bomb' aligns with western imperialist practices in the Pacific as well. Ngũgĩ argues that "the effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland" (3). In terms of the Pacific, the logics came first–the space was empty and capable of being filled with garbage. The people who have existed in the Pacific since long before the use of atomic weapons and the creation of plastics became occupants of the wasteland/wastebasket through this association. The cultural bomb that Ngũgĩ describes is a recognizable pattern in imperialist practice. The logics of colonial discourse argue that the interaction between colonizing Western powers in the Pacific and Indigenous peoples made failure inevitable–Indigenous peoples who stayed in the Pacific, holding onto language and tradition, came to be associated with waste or failed to be 'properly' Indigenous by moving away. In this binary, Indigeneity in a colonizing

framework becomes disposable, it is always already part of the waste. This rhetorical trap is akin to the 'cultural bomb' as enacted through containment.

Turning toward the legacy of decolonial scholarship to inform my writing on ecopoetics, I work to foreground the importance of interconnected writers and concepts while holding on to necessary local context and site-specific practices. Writing in *Feminist Studies*, Chamorro scholar and activist Tiara R. Na'puti and *haole* scholar and activist Judy Rohrer argues for a similar turn towards decolonial scholarship specific to the Pacific.[146] They note that "Decolonial/Indigenous studies corrects for a tendency toward abstraction in postcolonial studies with its attention to the primacy of place and relations (and the interconnections therein) for Indigenous peoples" (540). This turn towards specificity in connections is an essential rebuttal to the cultural (and literal) bombs used in the Pacific. A focus on relation and community denies the leveling of such linguistic and social weaponry. Na'put and Rohrer further posit that as decolonial scholarship is "mobilized and rearticulated, so too are Indigenous epistemologies and cartographies that center movement and cultural values" (541). Rather than linger in a framework that contains Indigenous practices and knowledge, the turn towards decolonial studies re-centers the importance of movement and relation across communities and oceans. For my work, this has meant finding ways to be attentive to methods and practices in place *as well as* how they can relate across time, space, and community.

In order to discuss ecological harms, it is necessary to attend to their interrelated causes and impacts. Some of the most potent thinking about the situated and interconnected has grown out of the work of decolonial geographers considering island networks both in their specific contexts and their transferable lessons. In her work, *Decolonizing Diasporas*, decolonial scholar Dr. Yomaira Figueroa-Vásquez writes about archipelagic thinking in terms of Afro-Atlantic literature. Building on the work of Glissant and Katherine McKittrick, she argues that "radical reimagining of the material

[146] Defined by the authors as "white settlers in Hawai'i"

and geographic through a consideration of affective ties to space dovetails with diasporic patterns, and offers us a new way to map human geography that is both tangible and ephemeral" (19). In this act of reimagining, Figueroa-Vásquez emphasizes the importance of moving beyond geopolitical boundaries to understand the ways in which language, peoples, and ideas circulate while maintaining connection to the places and communities they physically or socially originate from. This practice of re-imagining connection is broadened to consider communities at risk of going into the waste– moved from the mess into the garbage patch. How might this experience, across boundaries, inform practices for recycling? This decolonial push moves outside of national boundaries and into series of relations and storytelling practices that emphasize community and connection across islands, countries, and the oceans that fill the space between them.

By insisting on the capacity of methods and ideas to move, I attempt to honor and encourage thinking in-relation. This practice is meant to encourage radical interconnection to prevent the boxing-off of Indigenous knowledges in particular. In his work on Indigenous peoples and climate injustice, Potawatomi scholar Kyle Powys Whyte offers an overview of containment and the ways in which it is used against Indigenous peoples. In "Is it Colonial Déjà Vu?," Whyte notes how containment "engenders cultural and political institutions designed to inhibit or 'box in' Indigenous" peoples (Whyte 5). These practices of containment function on multiple levels, from literal physical containment on reservation land to legal containment within colonial governmental frameworks. Throughout the text, Whyte addresses "containment strategies, such as removal of Indigenous peoples to reservations or the forced adoption of corporate government structures" (Whyte 9). As a colonial framework, containment serves multiple purposes--from breaking up potential collaborations between groups of Indigenous peoples to limiting the mobility of Indigenous people such as the Potawatomi who have historically been "ecologically mobile (i.e. moved often within and across ecosystems for sustenance" to isolating communities from access to

vaccinations and medical care (Whyte 1-2). In the waste of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a heavily laden metaphor that risks collapse. The garbage patch as metaphor challenges the mobility of trash, its defiance of containment, and its poorly understood and defined boundaries.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a stretch of the Pacific Ocean that, because of rhetorical colonial practice, is defined through presumed absence: its absence of people, of land, and of life. By rendering one third of the planet as wasteland (or wastebasket, or waste-ocean), this move has allowed trash to accumulate, lives to be devalued, and the source of pollution to be obscured. This cultural bomb simultaneously erases peoples of the Pacific awash in waste as well as the US source of the plastics that wash up on beaches and kill fish in the ocean. The rhetorical strategy of discussing the Pacific as absent of people, land, and life is a method of enacting containment on the space, making only a space of waste and not a space of peoples, lands, and animals being disabled by waste. By taking on a decolonial framework, I move outside of the system of binaries: the binary of lifelessness of the open ocean *or* the surprising neopelagic life coming into being in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch; the binary of a stretch of water absent of people and land *or* a people space lost in an endless sea; the binary of Indigenous communities outside of time *or* hopelessly integrated into Western systems. Instead, the global decolonial framework creates space to think globally without collapsing into a universalizing everybody, everywhere. It retains site-specific and location-specific details while working to think ecologically across stretches of time, ocean, and community.

At present, a great deal of Indigenous activism is being done in the Pacific to address colonial impact on lives and history. In her article, "On decoloniality: a view from Oceania" Katerina Teaiwa, a Pacific scholar, artist and teacher of Banaban, I-Kiribati and African American heritage emphasizes the importance of resistance to ongoing social, political, and cultural practices. She notes that "depending on the nature of colonial history, land alienation, cultural loss or maintenance, and degrees of settler colonialism, resistance is expressed through a wide range of acts

of land stewardship, self-determination, sovereignty and creative resilience" in the present moment, gesturing towards the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement and Hawai'ian resistance to the installation of the Thirty Meter Telescope (602). Throughout the article, Teaiwa connects the work being done in Oceania to the decolonial praxis described by Mignolo and Walsh taking place in Latin America. She notes that "Overwhelmingly these movements are not just about protecting peoples' rights against oppressive racial, economic, social and political structures but – similar to movements currently protecting the Amazon rainforest and river systems – are about guarding the environment which is seen to be a crucial component of Pacific existence" (602). This focus on environmental protection and the importance of cultural heritage emphasizes building and maintaining connection between and across Oceania communities. To that end, she draws on the call from Fijian writer and anthropologist Epeli Hau'ofa to maintain both cultural work and resistance to disposability: "We are the sea, we are the ocean. We must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed places, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again and take away our freedom" (Hau'ofa qtd. Teaiwa 603). This call for taking up space insists on the ongoing non-disposability of Pacific writing and activism.

Complicating logics of disposability, I turn to the ways in which such practices enact linguistic forms of containment by attempting to contain some communities in one place or time, thereby disposing of their potential to move (or even exist) in a multiplicity of places and times. Multiplicity offers a framework for understanding and engaging Indigenous knowledges without collapse into singular or binary forms of logic–it exists as a framework that makes space for both-and rather than either-or. While *Crip Planet* contains a lengthier discussion of being out-of-time, this passage focuses specifically on resistance to colonial logics of containment in place and time and

recycling and pluralizing ways those logics are destabilized. I conclude with an overview of contemporary ecopoetic acts of recycling that themselves defy binaries of waste/asset and past/present by transforming their relationships into a focus on process itself.

I demonstrate concurrent practices between disability scholars and activists, long utilized by Indigenous ecopoets, of making the unapparent apparent through embodied, interdependent approaches to ecology. While the poets collected here critique disabling practices, they also recycle harmful narratives of disability as they think with disabled people, disabled animals, and lands that are being disabled by climate change. In the introduction to the anthology *Indigenous Pacific Island Ecoliteratures,* the editors weave together histories of infectious diseases experienced by Pacific islanders with the covid-19 pandemic's lessons on interrelation as they write: "our physical health is intimately connected to the health of the environment, land, and society." The poetry of relation that is utilized by PI poets here is well-equipped to articulate this interconnectedness, undoing the work of the cultural bomb that presents the Pacific as mostly empty and defying the containment such illusory emptiness enacts. Pacific poets have long histories of writing about the absented and unsayable with poetry that attends to absenting of Pacific presence in the US and the absenting of US occupation, waste, and nuclear testing in the Pacific. This embodied and multisensory methodology challenges the timelines of climate and environmental studies, showing how Indigenous ecopoets of the Pacific have a non-new history of navigating human-caused changes to ecology because of extensive experience living in the wake of environmental degradation that impacts climates as it disables peoples and lands and animals. In this way, recycling poetics disrupt the concurrent harms that come from ableist logics of disability being equated with death and colonial logics of containment that equate Indigenous knowledge and history with absence.

I delineate processes of recycling as practices which refute a binary between asset and waste. Material recycling, as it pertains to plastics, takes the form of mechanical recycling. IBM researcher

Jeanette Garcia and Professor of Chemical Engineering Megan Robertson note that "mechanical recycling is the only widely adopted technology for large-scale treatment of plastic solid waste" and that less than half of generated plastic waste is recyclable via these processes. The material process of mechanical recycling takes previously used plastics, melts them down, mixes them with more of the same plastic. It then takes on a new form through recombination of existing and recently manufactured plastic. As an image, this demonstrates the layering that the poets of this chapter are doing to address what already exists alongside their own labors of creation and transformation. Material recycling, as a process, only has limited efficacy, but it is better than allowing plastic to languish and cause further harm. The authors discussed here are similarly taking ideologies and language that has been actively harmful and–knowing it's not going anywhere without sustained effort–twisting it into something workable. The material process relies on recognizing plastic as waste (recovered from oceans, landfills, college fraternity front yards, etc.), washing it, shredding it, and melting it. The limitations of this process are recognized, as only about forty two percent of produced plastics are recyclable, and only eight to thirty percent of this fraction are recovered to be recycled (Garcia and Robinson). While this is only a partial reclamation of plastic waste, it models the understanding and necessity of taking trash–something disposed of that is actively harmful–and using it to create objects that can instead be doing something.

Ecopoetic recycling as a method reflects both the fundamental processes above while also modeling necessary reformations of perspective. Ecopoetic recycling insists on the ongoing potential of that which has been discarded, articulating their ongoing significance in ecological relations. Ideologies of disposability can be addressed, but it is a time-intensive and long-scale project. Through their work, the authors discussed here break down, shred, and melt Western concepts of the Pacific in order to shape it into something workable–the harm remains, but it is put to use mitigating further harm to animal, island, and planet. They actively make new cognitive and linguistic

assets from the trash that has bled into the Pacific Islands. The authors discussed here utilize a citational practice that recognizes Western literature as a production site of waste–a source of materials that have been used and discarded–and works to redress practices of excess waste by remaking those source materials in shifted context. Rather than treating such literature as immutable, the authors here treat nonbiodegradable literature as something worth working to recompose through shredding, heating, and melting as they create something materially or rhetorically useful. To that end, ecopoetic recycling is a process which draws on historic ideas, harms, and practices in order to dilute and redirect them into future practices which mitigate harm and/or offer processes for survival in the face of being treated as disposable.

I argue that an attentive crip practice to addressing time and the crip planet must thoughtfully situate itself in embodied and cultural conversations through a decolonial perspective. Because decolonial scholarship begins outside of practices which collapse ecological webs into binaries, it is a fertile framework in which to notice the connections between personal health and global health. The work being done by the PI poets here offers a series of recycling moves that upend colonial conceptions of disability as they repurpose existing literature, ecological and otherwise, in a set of practices that can be further transformed to align with contexts and histories elsewhere.

Garbage, the Material of Ecopoetic Recycling

In the name Great Pacific Garbage Patch, there is one "where:" the Pacific. This rendering of the source of the garbage invisible is helpful for corporations and for other entities that want to 'focus on the problem' rather than on the cause. In this set of rhetorical moves, the plastic in the ocean becomes a problem *of the ocean,* and the companies working to solve it (who benefitted from the logics of disposability that put it there in the first place) can position themselves as the heroes who have saved it. The presence of trash in the Pacific has been a growing concern and topic for

corporations, especially when recycled ocean plastics are well-received by consumers and as a workable alternative to addressing climate change and overfishing.[147] The illogic of the plastic problem and its solution coming from Western recycling practices again reiterates the logics of colonial practice described by Ngũgĩ, in that "amidst this wasteland which it [imperialism] has created, imperialism presents itself as the cure and demands that the dependent sing hymns of praise with the refrain: 'theft is holy'" (3). This is not to say that removing trash from the ocean and the enterprise of recycling is irrelevant or unnecessary, but the logics that only the enterprise of mechanical recycling can and will create necessary change is overly limited and intentionally cuts out other valid approaches to transforming the physical, cultural, and literary waste of the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, there's an implied assumption that the garbage in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is only ever harmful. Kearney's messodological approach showed the slippages of mess between order and disorder, but once the mess on the counter goes into the waste bin, it is garbage and The rhetorical move, then, is to attempt to clean the Pacific and return it to a pristine state. Descriptions of this cleaning move quickly towards histories of erasing Indigenous peoples from their own lands by declaring them pristine. It's as if the Pacific is imagined returned to an empty state, one where nature–without people–maybe even water–without life–is the ideal, rather than a return to an Indigenous controlled and navigated state. Attention to the life in this space, human, neopelagic, and otherwise, requires an understanding of the ways in which recycling and repurposing differs from reinstating the past. Central to the practices necessary is an understanding of how the discourse around trash in the Pacific often does not address its sources: both physical and cultural. The conversation focuses most often on creating fewer disposable plastics, without addressing the cognitive and social framework of disposability that underlies both the creation of plastics and

[147] Magnier, Lise, Ruth Mugge, and Jan Schoormans. "Turning ocean garbage into products – Consumers' evaluations of products made of recycled ocean plastic" *Journal of Cleaner Production* V 215. 2019.; Stafford, Richard and Peter Jones. "Viewpoint – Ocean plastic pollution: A convenient but distracting truth?" *Marine Policy* V 103. 2019.

microplastics. Pacific Indigenous scholars address the Great Pacific Garbage Patch through practices of recycling and transformation that are attentive to where the trash comes from, why it's there, and what can be done with it, since it's already there. This practice allows for approaches to waste that focus on how to move forward, rather than backwards to a past that, frankly, never was. These methods, instead of re-situating the trash as something contained by a technological fix, address the long histories of the disposability of people and plastics through ecological relation in what that upend colonial logics.

In "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch as Metaphor: The (American) Pacific You Can't See," Māori – Te Āti Awa, Taranaki scholar, poet, and irredentist, Alice Te Punga Somerville, unpacks the many layers of relationship that are interpellated into the Great Pacific Garbage Patch as a metaphor for the often overlooked relationship between the US and the Pacific. Somerville argues that "there is something in the nature or structure of an almost unimaginable stretch of plastic debris in the North Pacific that can, or perhaps might, convey something of the relationship between the Pacific and America, especially in relation to how we think about visibility/invisibility" (324). In this space, Somerville articulates the ways in which US presence and participation in the Pacific is often erased by a focus on land–there is little US land in the Pacific. However, the impacts of policies and logics of disposability has created an archipelagic mass of garbage that is not measurable as mass, but as a series of connections that span the ocean, vast not because of a physical measure but because of a conceptual accumulation of microplastics and systemic logics which render them invisible because of the ways they've been disposed of.

Somerville uses the metaphor of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch to trace the ecological roots between the sometimes-invisible trash in the ocean and the lives whose logics create it. She argues that "it's out there [the Great Pacific Garbage Patch], floating around the pacific: bigger than Texas and with roots not on the ocean floor but in the disposable lives of other people. No, not

people whose lives are deemed disposable but people whose lives are based on disposability" (Somerville 320). The distinction that Somerville offers here is an essential one to not collapse the meaning of disposability. The first category she mentions, people whose lives are deemed disposable, refers to those at risk in broader practices of disposability–for Somerville, Indigenous people specifically, but the logics of the system extend to disabled people, queer people, and Black people, disabled and/or queer and nondisabled/queer alike.[148] The second categorization, lives based on disposability, refers to broader social structures that insist both on the disposability of lives as well as structures that insist on the convenience of plastics and their disposal as a means for efficiency. The roots of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch Somerville traces to three sources, "the deliberately discarded, the result of wrecks, and the overflow of waste" (328) along these streams of waste, Somerville builds knowledge around the ways in which people and objects become visible and substantial in legal, cultural, and ecological conversation through the metaphor of the Garbage Patch.

Ecopoetry in Circulation

The writers discussed here, Perez, Marsh, and Avia, are all Pacific Island poets who have been recognized for their work in the twenty-first century. Marsh and Avia were born in Aotearoa New Zealand; Marsh is an Aotearoa New Zealand poet and academic of Samoan, Tuvalu, English, and French Descent and Avia is Samoan and Aotearoa New Zealand European. Perez is an indigenous Chamorro from the Pacific Island of Guåhan. While coming from different areas of the Pacific Ocean, their writings are situated in broader circulation of ecocritical and academic writing. All three authors have been recognized with high honors in their geographical positions within the Pacific. In back-to-back years, Marsh and Avia were appointed to the Aotearoa New Zealand Order

[148] For greater detail, see Calvin Warren's *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation* and Nirmala Everelles' "Thinking with Disability Studies" in *Disability Studies Quarterly*.

of Merit, an organization that holds those who have significantly contributed to the arts and to Aotearoa New Zealand. Perez was recognized by the Guam Legislature, lauded as "'as an accomplished poet who has been a phenomenal ambassador for our island, eloquently conveying through his words, the beauty and love that is the Chamorro culture"' (Dr. Craig Santos Perez, "About"). Taken together, these authors represent a small fraction of Pacific authors whose writing, activism, and advocacy extend across and beyond the Pacific Ocean.

Perez writes of the absenting of the Pacific island of Guåhan and its people in the poem "*from* aerial roots [off-island Chamorros]."[149] Upon moving from the Marianas islands to California, he recalls his homeroom teacher telling him, "I've never heard of that place. Prove it exists." Perez writes of the experience:

> When I stepped in front of the world map
> on the classroom wall,
> it transformed into a mirror:
> the Pacific Ocean, like my body, split
> in two and flayed to the margins. I
>
> found Australia, the Philippines, Japan.
>
> I pointed to an empty space between
> and said: 'I'm from this invisible archipelago.'
>
> Everyone laughed. (329-30)

Perez writes with such attention to land, body, and self understanding as he reminds us of the violent histories of US boundaries made evident by the continued dense military presence on Guahan even as it is absented on a map.

[149] Chamorro poet Craig Santos Perez is an established ecopoet and former English professor at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, where he also served as Director of the Creative Program and Chair of the Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Islander Board. He has written a series of books of poems that focus on unincorporated US territories and served as editor for multiple collections of Indigenous poetry of the Pacific. He is also one of the co-editors of the eco-justice poetry anthology *Geopoetics in Practice*. His work as poet, literary theorist, and educator has been a necessary intervention into ecopoetics through his intentional incorporation of ecojustice principles.

Perez delves into the plastics of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch in *Habitat Threshold*. *Habitat Threshold* is the fifth full-length book of poems Perez has published with Omnidawn, and the first that is not focused on a single unincorporated territory.[150] In this book, Perez brings the reader into a community that moves across literary canons by recycling the formats of Nature poets, children's poets, and eco-literature. "Age of Plastic," which opens *Habitat Threshold*, is a recognition of the ubiquity of plastic in the speaker's life and in the many processes connected to bringing his daughter into the world. The speaker traces the substance through his young daughter's life: from seeing her through the "plastic probe" of the ultrasound machine to watching her sleep in a "plastic crib." Each use of plastic sits in black font in an otherwise gray poem, reminding the reader of plastic's longevity. The poem interjects facts and speculations about plastic, "how empty plastic must feel / to be birthed, used, then disposed… how free plastic must feel / when it finally arrives to the paradise / of the Pacific gyre" (11). Perez finds empathy and connection with this disposable-yet-permanent substance and finds himself dreaming of something similar for his daughter, "...I dream/that she's composed of plastic,/ so that she, too, will survive/ our wasteful hands." (11). Perez wishes something that is part of the unspeakable, unthinkable present: that the disabling toxin of plastic could so transform his daughter that she can survive in a plastic world.

You could imagine the speaker of the poem reciting an updated Wynken, Blynken, and Nod to his dream child, "Wynken and Blynken are two googly eyes, / Nod is a Barbie's head, / and the wooden shoe that sailed the skies / is a wee one's plastic bed." This poem finds a way to re-cycle through the presence of plastic in everyday existence and to rethink what it is to be disposable and to be permanent. "Age of Plastic" follows Somerville's risky use of garbage, especially the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, as metaphor as a way to find the overlaps of life and plastic, as a means to

[150] Perez's [unincorporated territory] series includes *[hatcha]*, *[saina]*, *[guma']*, *[lukao]*, and [åmot].

move outside a binary of disposable or not.[151] In this twisting of life, plastic, and environmental degradation, Perez transforms narratives of disability that have been placed on Pacific Islanders. Instead of wishing away plastic into some pristine, non disabled future, he dreams of ways for his daughter to survive in this age of plastic. This unsettling of ideals of health aligns with a practice disability scholars term 'cripping.'

To borrow a definition from white, queer, American disability theorist Robert McRuer, "'to crip'... gets at processes that *unsettle*, or processes that make strange or twisted. Cripping also exposes the ways in which able-bodiedness and able-mindedness get naturalized and the ways that bodies, minds, and impairments that should be at the absolute center of a space or issue or discussion get purged from that space or issue or discussion" (my emphasis 23) or as Perez might say "split in two and flayed to the margins." While there are much briefer definitions of cripping, I want to linger with this one which uses the language of "unsettling," as it unintentionally demonstrates the importance of placing cripping practices in conversation with Pacific Indigenous poetics. Unsettling and making known what has been absented are not new practices in disability studies, but practices with deep roots in Indigenous ecopoetics. Centering those impacted yet absented is a crucial political practice for Indigenous and disabled communities alike, especially in their overlaps.

The introduction to *Indigenous Pacific Islander Ecoliteratures*, in discussing the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic encapsulates the relationship between Indigeneity and disability. In writing about the stakes of the pandemic, Kathy Jetn̄il-Kijiner, Leora Kava, and Perez note that "Pacific Islanders who

[151] "In the context of (colonial) discourses about cultural integrity dissolving, rupturing, and being "lost," a metaphor of impossible degeneration feels a little exciting. Finally, to push a little harder on the idea of the great Pacific garbage patch as debris shed into the ocean from land, much of the scholarship that engages the ever-shifting relationship between land and sea falls back on the assumption that the land is always at risk of danger from the sea (erosion, flood, tsunami) rather than the other way around. This reinforces the sanctity of land (usually continental land) and its vulnerability to the ocean, and in turn quietly affirms that the ocean is the place where danger and risk are located. In our garbage patch we find an inversion. Rather than solid land being vulnerable to water, water—the ocean—is vulnerable to the breaking off of matter (solidness, nonliquid, a product of land) from land into the sea. (Somerville 325).

live in California and the continental United States are suffering from disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths… an undercurrent of fear has spread through our communities because so many of us are immunocompromised and afflicted with comorbidities like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer" (xiii). In articulating this disproportionate impact, the editors gesture to a long-standing conflation of Indigeneity and disability as a result of colonial violence, displacement, and environmental degradation. The collection of poems, traditional stories, and essays are dedicated to *kia'i*, protectors of land and peoples as an invocation to continue the work of stewardship the editors have witnessed across the Pacific. Considering practices of environmental justice, the authors look toward a multiplicity of scales, contextualizing "the terms of 'we are all in this together' with specific considerations of our contexts… by operating in the realms of the specific and the global simultaneously" (323). Among the voices the editors turn to is Professor Katerina Teaiwa, a Pacific scholar, artist and teacher of Banaban, I-Kiribati and African American heritage. Her work, "A mediation on pain, solidarity, and 2020" critically interrogates the phrase "We're all in this together." In her poem, she notes that "'in this together' is not possible without equality… is not possible without justice… is not possible unless you make space" (362). The work of Teaiwa and others in the anthology argue for the making of space, of approaching environmental justice, Indigenous justice, and health and wellness with broader consideration. In looking at the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 and other environmental harms, the scholars argue for a closer focus on the health impacts of climate disaster. In a later poem from Marshall Island poet and educator Kathy Jetn̄il-Kijiner, she articulates the lingering cultural and physical impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific. In "Monster," she writes "574–the number of stillbirths and miscarriages after the bombs of 1951. Before the bombs? 52" (381). She emphasizes the tenfold increase in stillbirths and miscarriages in order to fold together the physical impact of nuclear testing in the Pacific with legends of women-demons among Marshallese people and with her own experience of motherhood

and trauma. In this poem, she folds together the lingering impacts of nuclear testing on Marshallese women with the lingering stigma that comes from infertility, noting "In legends lives a woman. Turned monster from loneliness. Turned monster from agony and suns exploding in her chest" (382). In this passage, Jetn̄il-Kijiner holds onto a plurality of violences Marshallese women experienced as she articulates the environmental injustice visited upon the Marshall Islands and their people. The lingering impacts of colonial violence and nuclear testing in the Pacific further emphasize the disproportionate experience of disability among Indigenous communities.

In *Transpacific, Undisciplined*, editors Lily Wong, Christopher B. Patterson, and Chien-ting Lin attempt to open relational understandings of the Pacific that "unsettles the liberalizing management of power by accounting for how various fields–and the methods they use for study–have historically affirmed the liberal discourses of multiculturalism" (3). In so doing, they figure the Pacific relationally and analytically, and in so doing "intimates generative, if unexpected connections and mobilizations of the concept against the fixation on national, disciplinary, or methodological boundaries. It holds space for a 'messiness' of relations, projections, and bodies for study" (3). The broad swath of work they bring together argues for a way beyond the limitations placed on Pacific scholarship that relies on rigid national, scholarly, or practice-based boundaries. Instead, they focus on the ways that movement, both literal and figurative, across and beyond these boundaries allows for more nuanced scholarship, bringing American, Hawai'ian, and Asian perspectives into the flows of power, wealth, and labor through the Pacific.

John T. Ward's collection, *Indigenous Disability Studies*, marks a long-absent and necessary intervention into the field of disability studies: insight into Indigenous experience of disability by Indigenous contributors. Bringing together global Indigenous voices, Ward's collection "allows for a diverse representation of disabilities from so many varied Indigenous perspectives from across the world that join us together as we are all children of the earth" (2). The collection of scholarship

brings together Indigenous knowledges from Australia, Taiwan, the Americas, Kenya, and elsewhere to provide a nuanced understanding of global perspectives on disability. In their chapter, "The importance of Indigenous sign languages on the cultural empowerment of Deaf Indigenous people," Rodney Adams and John Gilroy emphasize the overlapping harms of racism and ableism experienced by Indigenous communities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Turning towards statistical analysis, they demonstrate that the prevalence of disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous peoples is twice that of the non-Aboriginal population, and that nearly half of the community experiences hearing loss (Adams and Gilroy 134). Whereas many Indigenous peoples historically practiced inclusion in their communities, the impacts of colonization have compounded stigmatization of disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Adams and Gilroy term this experience "'racial-ableism,' whereby the hegemony of race operates simultaneously with the hegemony of normative functioning" (138). They argue that overarching structures which impact Indigenous people's health and wellbeing are compounded by their experience of disability as a result of racial stigmatization. In order to unsettle the hegemonic forces which have "spiritual, emotional, and physical impacts," Adams and Gilroy articulate the importance of Indigenous sign languages as one of many ways to "combat colonization, and to provide a common communication pathway" (142). Adams and Gilroy argue for Indigenous sign language as one form of restoration and connection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. While these movements towards intersectional Indigenous and disabled are focused on acts of recycling, Perez's work and the work of other authors aren't attempting to return to or to reinstate a pre-colonial existence. Instead, Perez's ecopoetics are an intentional act of transformation, of recognizing the systems which inflict ongoing harms and to redirect the logics of these systems.

Perez's ecopoetics don't recycle as an act of immediate restoration. Instead, they draw connections between what has been deemed disposable–what has been purged from conversation–and they insist on the immediacy and significance of the fact that disposal does not make something vanish. His work brings the reader into the waste of living: the diapers of children, the tumors of fish, the plastic of the Great Pacific Garbage patch. When dominant narratives would render disability, plastic, and Pacific Islanders invisible, Perez utilizes recycling as a method of maintaining connection. The risks that Somerville describes are the threat of somehow affirming colonial discourses of loss; the close association with waste is a tentative position, putting the speaker and those connected at risk of becoming garbage, if they haven't been conceived of as such already. At the same time, this position offers a way to recoup what had been previously erased through narratives that obscure the wider impacts and relations of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

With the exception of his first book, Perez's poetry is all published with Omnidawn, an independent nonprofit publisher whose mission is to "publish creative works that open readers anew to the myriad ways that language may bring new light, insight, awareness, as well as a heightened respect for and appreciation of differences" (Omnidawn "About"). *from unincorporated territory [hatcha]* was published in 2008 with Tinfish press, a press specifically focused on "Experimental Poetry of the Pacific" (Tinfish "about"). This original publication locates Perez's work within a discourse of experimental poetics located within the geographical boundaries of the Pacific. His later books, and *from unincorporated territory [hatcha]*'s 2017 reprint were published by Omnidawn. Omnidawn does not have a specific theme or focus, but reviewers note that "authors published by Omnidawn… write in a manner that I would describe, for want of a better word, as 'experimental' or 'avant-garde'" (Reiter). The range of authors published by Omnidawn are not contained to a single location or background. Instead, Omnidawn is focused on the new–shedding light in all directions. Among the many authors published by the press include Kamden Ishmael

Hilliard, LM Rivera, Anna Rabinowitz, and Myung Mi Kim. Authors such as these are described as experimental just as quickly as the label "experimental" is described as fraught. In a series of discourses with poet-scholar Divya Victor, Myung Mi Kim aptly addresses a critical crux around the term "experimental": "It's not, for me, a *decision* to 'experiment. But it is an "experiment" simply because it does not coalesce or does not hearken to *what already exists*" (Victor and Kim). There's a very distinct focus on newness, of bringing something into existence that does not already exist, that exists in the assumption of the experimental, both as it is intentionally enacted and in the ways in which it is mapped onto BIPoC authors who are writing in sometimes intentionally opaque sets of relation.

In his use of recycling poems, Perez takes on the Western canon of poetics–both literary and those of Western popular culture–that, like plastic, don't decompose. These method-driven poems privilege temporal assets more than the colonial "new," instead speculating on ecological potentials that linger–as the epigraph of Perez's web of contents in *Habitat Threshold* reads– in "the truly present… as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings" (Haraway qtd. Perez 7). In her work, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith critiques the placement of the "new" as a look towards what can be exploited and discarded: "the imperial imagination enabled European nations to imagine the possibility that new worlds, new wealth and new possessions existed that could be discovered and controlled" (23). In practices that insist on the truly present, Perez instead focuses on persistent and lasting articulations, repurposing them as articulations of climatic relationships through the act of recycling.

Perez's recycling poems explicitly take on the action of transformation in ways that are anything but subtle, and insist on attending to the awkwardness of their repurposing. Among the recycling poems is William Carlos Williams' "This Is Just To Say." In Perez's version of the same name, the pilfered fruits become pilfered Impossible™ meats in the lab, which the speaker assumes

"you were probably / growing / for "burgers"' (Perez *Habitat* 39). This twist on plums for breakfast moves out of the images and contexts of 'nature' that Williams relies on to refocus on where environmentalism is presently being enacted–in laboratories. This refocusing on the *where* of environmental efforts is going plays with the simplicity of the source poem, while also highlighting the techno-scientific interventions taking place in ecological work. Neither for critique nor criticism, this playful jab at impossible meat also emphasizes the trendiness of green movements at the time of writing, ending with the playful adjectives "so heme / and so eco" (39). Here, Perez reflects on the complication of what it is to exist ecologically, when meat is being grown in labs at a time to move away from putting resources inefficiently into animals for burgers–for the moment, the turn towards 'green' is 'in,' but where do the labs go when it is no longer the case? I've taught these and other recycling poems in an ecopoetic methods course, and students regularly point out the ways in which these recycling poems stumble. Students notice they don't have the internal flow of sound and idea that builds the approach to spoken poetry in Perez's other works, nor the flow of the works that Perez recycles.[152] The very artifice of the recycling poem brings readers attention to the friction of transformation–recycling doesn't make something wholly new, but instead makes something that's already lasting (as waste) into something that will last (as a useful tool). In the case of "This Is Just To Say," it's taking the lasting and well-known confession to the theft of plums and twisting into the process of thinking about lab-grown meats and their odd and oh so partial offer of more eco futures.

The pressing of boundaries that Omnidawn enacts in its publishing results in a wide variety of perspectives and voices being amplified. Their intentional move is to create a broad range of entanglements; co-founder Rusty Morrison responds to the question of Omnidawn's existence as an

[152] An excellent example being "Rings of Fire" from *Habitat Threshold*. It's also worth noting that these poems resonate with Kearney's own issues reading his performative typography poems. These explicitly process-driven poems that are doing work and working ecologically are forms that trip, stumble, and stutter.

experimental press by stating, "we don't subscribe to the idea that poetry should be marked by clear boundaries or dividing lines… every poem… is a richly complex experiment in seeing the world of its subject afresh" (Morrison qtd. Reiter). In this framework, Omnidawn puts its emphasis on newness. The name itself as framed as a perpetual pursuit of the new when it breaks down the elements as "'omni' (in all ways and places) and 'dawn' (the first appearance of light)—we publish creative works that open readers anew to the myriad ways that language may bring new light, insight, awareness, as well as a heightened respect for and appreciation of differences" (Omnidawn "About"). In this way, Omnidawn situates Perez among a constellation of authors articulating new life or offering new illumination upon ongoing practices to a readership beyond the communities and traditions of the authors themselves. The "newness" of Omnidawn is about bringing new awareness to existing difference and refusing limited narratives that seek to contain and control a poem's circulation. It is not the newness of imperial logics that seeks to possess nor the newness of capital logics that profit on single-use plastics at the cost of many lifetimes of microplastic waste.

The "newness" that Omnidawn focuses upon is something which Perez's own writing and anthologizing practices mess with. The opening of his first book of poems makes an argument about the preposition 'from' that situates his work geologically and chronologically. *From unincorporated territory [hatcha]* opens "*From* indicates a particular time or place as a starting point; *from* refers to a specific location as the first of two limits; *from* imagines a source, a cause, an agent, or an instrument; *from* marks separation, removal, or exclusion; *from* differentiates borders" (Perez *[hatcha]* 11). This situating claim established the ongoing tension inherent in what it means to be *from* a territory that is 'unincorporated.' If *from* is the starting point in place or time, it immediately puts the situated spacetime into conversation with other related places and times. The situating preposition of *from* insists on the possible pairings of prepositions such as *to* and *with* and *among*. Professor Anne Mai Yee Jansen uses this relationship to discuss Perez's poetry as a form of "affinity poetics," which

she defines as being "about creating that sense of solidarity across identities and across distance for the purpose of advancing a decolonizing agenda" (Jensen 8). Jansen argues that Perez's writing intentionally situates itself in process with readers within and beyond Chamorro communities. Her framework of affinity poetics recognizes that it is intentionally oriented towards creating a reciprocal relationship. She notes that what Perez offers is self-described as a *chenchule*, a gift given at the beginning of a journey or at a special event, and that "the poetry is a gift—sometimes a gift of knowledge, always a gift of art, often a gift of affinity—but it is also a responsibility. With knowledge of injustice comes a responsibility to create change" (Jansen 22). Perez's writing informs readers of their reciprocal responsibility and ecological affinity with the criticism he offers in his work. Similarly, Perez's own work as an editor and anthologizer remains situated in geographically connected conversations, with three volumes focused in Pacific Ocean communities and one on the flows and connections across the globe.

Marsh and Avia's full books of poetry both come from prominent University presses in Aotearoa New Zealand. Avia's works are published with Te Herenga Waka University Press, which bills itself as "Aotearoa's strongest and most vibrant poetry list" (Te Herenga Waka University Press "About Us") and Marsh's books are published via Auckland University Press, which describes itself as "the leading publisher of poetry in New Zealand with a list of some of the most reputed and recognised names in New Zealand poetry" (Auckland University Press "Poetry"). Perez, Avia, and Marsh were recently anthologized together alongside other key Pacific Ecopoets in the collection *No Other Place To Stand: An Anthology Of Climate Change Poetry From Aotearoa New Zealand* released via Auckland University Press in the summer of 2022.

Similar to Perez's recycling poems, Aotearoa New Zealand poet and academic of Samoan, Tuvalu, English, and French Descent, Marsh recycles the narratives of what it means to be "P.I." as a way to reuse and defy the associations of the wastebasket that colonial narratives have placed on

those letters. Marsh takes up the historic devaluing of what PI has meant and transforms it into prism and mirror, reflecting the impacts of colonial harm while offering a spectrum of possibilities for connection across PI and disabled communities, PI and non-PI alike. Marsh has been recognized for both the content and performance of her work, including presenting before Queen Elizabeth II and at the London Olympics in 2012. Marsh is a professor at the University of Auckland and co-chairs the South Pacific Association of Language and Literature. Her work focuses on Māori and Pacific literature and culture, and she runs *Pasifika Poetry*, a website that is a repository of work by Pacific poets. Marsh has been an integral part of moving PI poetics beyond the geographical boundaries, entering into multiplaced conversations and insisting on the influence of Indigenous Pasifika writing.

The poem "Fast Talkin' PI" is a piece of Indigenous scholarship and poetry that conveys overlapping and contradictory conversations that recycle multiple narratives across the interface of Indigenous PI experiences of the Pacific with colonial articulations of the Pacific. "Fast Talkin' PI" refuses to define PI or unpack the acronym, demonstrating the multiplicity of forms into which it can be shaped in its remaking and retelling. The poem which follows, "Acronym," is littered with capital P I arrangements that model this potential, from "Private Investigator" to "Penile Implants" to "Paradigm Infinitum" to "Protocol Interruption" (74-5) without ever taking on the anticipated Pacific Islander. This refusal to collapse PI into a single definition holds in tension many repurposed possible PIs. Through this act, Marsh fractures the binary of PI and non-PI, pressing each reader to locate themselves in relation to shifting and growing definitions. Marsh fosters connection by radically opening what PI is and can mean–this open-endedness challenges a multiplicity of readers to consider their unique relationship to the letters and thereby their responsibility for ethical engagement with the Pacific, its islands, its Islanders, and…

As a hyphenated poet-scholar, Marsh folds together poetic images and metaphor with her scholarship, intentionally defying a singularity of meaning to open up what is said and to whom. In her dissertation, she notes that writing with metaphors is especially necessary, as "the beauty of using metaphors as a critical framework is that its dynamism reflects life" because, according to Greg Dening, "it is usually the outsider who names one meaning, essentialises it, and then categorises it in order to create a model" (Marsh 97). Marsh's writing intentionally moves aside and beyond a singular meaning, opening radically and encompassingly to fold dynamic ecologics into their symbolism. Māori poet, editor, and scholar Robert Sullivan[153] cites Marsh's work as a poet-scholar among his influences for a Moanan (beyond the reef) poetics in his dissertation *Mana Moana: Wayfinding and Five Indigenous Poets*. In this dissertation, Sullivan describes his process to becoming a "'writer-scholar' (*winduo*)" as a process similar to the "wayfinding kaupapa…Wayfinding is used to identify/chart the identity assertions, cultural signs, re-told narratives,linguistic and social references in… poetry" (Sullivan i). This practice of relation, identification, and comparison he terms Moanan, a practice "to occupy and maintain the connections between such transnational and indigenous spaces of relationship, also formulated as the 'vā'" (i). As Sullivan constellates Indigenous Pacific Poets, he intentionally weaves in the ways that Marsh's writing opens up to a plurality of self and audience. He draws on an unpublished conference paper of Marsh's where she discusses the vibrant metaphor of slack water, a fertile material and linguistic space in which " the I/You relationship possesses collective, multiple selving. It draws sustenance as well as orientation and relationships from *te ao mārama*" (114).[154] This reading of slack water and its potential to generate and formulate a plural connection of self with relationships beyond models Marsh's capacious practices of building multiplicity and connection between self and readers. This reading of Marsh's writing practices is

[153] Sullivan was mentored by Marsh, who was also mentor to Grace Teuila Taylor, who thanks both Marsh and Avia in her first poem, "Afastina."
[154] The natural world.

echoed by scholar of Pacific women poets Valérie Baisnée, when she argues that "Marsh re-visits practices of identity politics by multiplying poetic acts that enlarge, reach out, and engage in a non-essentialist way. She renames by breaking stereotypes and using them as counter-discourse, but also turns names into a celebration of multiplicity, and a way of finding her place in a "circle" (Baisnée 116). In her read of *Fast Talking PI* as a decolonial poetic oeuvre, Baisnée turns and re-turns to Marsh's practices of blending and multiplicity as a way to celebrate "cross-cultural mixedness and multiple identities" (Baisnée 108). Such a read of Marsh is further corroborated by Filipina-German scholar of ecology and Indigenous organization Karin Louise Hermes in her work, "The female voice in Pasifika poetry: An exploration of 'hybrid' identities in the Pacific diaspora," where she focuses on Marsh's reclamation of *afakasi* identity. Hermes notes that Marsh, "describes the poem's ["Fast Talkin' PI"] tone and character with its all-encompassing affirmations as a declaration, wherein 'concrete realities are raised, confirmed and celebrated, problematised and complicated'" (Marsh qtd. Hermes 656). Taken together, this body of scholarship recognizes and emphasizes Marsh's practices of multiplicity as an intentional tactic to refrain from being reduced and essentialized while crafting something sprawling and uncontainable.

In *Bloodclot*, Avia refuses to let the Samoan goddess Nafanua be contained by temporality. Māori Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes that, among the practices of containment enacted against Indigenous peoples, the containment of beliefs, knowledges, and mythographies in the past is one way in which Western imperial powers isolate and remove Indigenous knowledge systems. This form of containment enforces a false binary that Indigenous belief and myths only exist and mattered in the past–Avia's work refuses this separation by entwining ancestral stories of Nafanua with her own recent past. Avia's work recycles Indigenous histories by coupling them with her material, everyday existence as an Indigenous ecopoet. Avia articulates the ways in which the goddess accompanies her bodily in the present. The poems of

Bloodclot tell a coupled story of Avia's experience in her own present and stories of warrior / leader Nafanua, a historical figure elevated to a deity following her lived existence. The connections that Avia forges model alternative approaches to existence that are not contained within one space/time, instead moving into the *va*–the everywhere between. Avia is an Aotearoa New Zealand poet of Samoan and Palangi descent. She has published four books of poetry, two children's books, and had her poetry transformed into a stage play with a full ensemble cast. The work that Avia does conveys a deeply personal and feminist account of her lived experience as an Indigenous woman in Aotearoa New Zealand.[155] Avia's *Bloodclot* is positioned in the lineage of work that followed Audre Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* which holds together "the woven nature of myth, cultural history, and the notion of telling one's story" (Geha). This practice of biomythography articulates a plurality of self that recognizes the ecological webs through which the speaker of the poems moves. In my discussion of the relationship between Avia and Lorde's work, I will address the ways in which Avia's automythography moves in a different direction. While biomythography follows life up and out through a psychological expiration of relation, automythography flows down and out through the material of living.

Avia's work enacts an honoring of traditional Samoan stories while holding fast to her autobiographical experience. Central to the themes of *bloodclot* and other writing by Avia is the act of connection, of filling the space between and recognizing it not as a waste of space, but a space rich with connection and the potential for interdependence. This movement is a necessary step towards recognizing the value of archipelagic thinking–valuing the space between as a route towards connection instead of devaluing it as empty–wasted–space. Avia's writing has been the focus of

[155] In a review of Avia's 2020 *The Savage Coloniser Book* that also discusses *Fale Aitu* Selina Tusitala Marsh emphasizes the accuracy of Avia's writing when she says "[Avia's work] hadn't struck me – a fellow Pacific Island woman poet – as especially 'dark', irrevocably 'dark', indulgently, provocatively, ridiculously 'dark'. It is life. Our lives. As experienced from within the body of a brown woman growing up in a 'post' colonial Aotearoa New Zealand."

several literary theorists turning to questions of relationality and violence in Pacific women's writing. In "Samoan Literature and the Wheel of Time: Cartographies of the Vā," American Samoan poet-scholar and environmentalist Caroline Sinavaiana Gabbard notes that in Avia's work, "we hear testament to the breakdown of vā relationality caused by modernity and the long-term effects of colonialism" (Gabbard 47). Gabbard turns to Avia's work to discuss the breakdown of relationality across space in the wake of colonial violence and its ongoing harms. Similarly, Aotearoa New Zealand poet-scholar Airini Beautrais focuses on the ways in which Avia folds together personal experience with the goddess Nafanua in, "'Automythography' In Poetry: Tusiata Avia's *Bloodclot*." Aotearoa New Zealand scholar Chris Prentice writes of Avia's work specifically in discourse on the intersection of gender and colonial violence. She emphasizes that "Avia's… works reveal gendered and sexual bodies and subjectivities of girls and women as defined and policed within a reactionary patriarchy that seeks to (re)secure cultural stability in their own interests" (Prentice 153). These perspectives on Avia frame her writing in a specific decolonial focus on the Pacific, particularly through the lenses of violence in the wake of colonial occupation. In the section "Bleeding Boundaries," I move near the vā with Avia to discuss the ways in which her writing holds open time and space.

Taken together, Perez, Marsh, and Avia model ecopoetic practices that insist upon valuing the potential that exists outside of what is an asset and what is deemed disposable. The purpose of recycling in some Pacific Indigenous ecopoetics is an insistence on the potentials that exist in poetic processes beyond colonial logics that have attempted to discard or contain. Rather than privileging or refusing a particular canon, the poems gathered here rely on practices of plurality, folding the many and the one together through multiplicity, automythography, and recycling. Such practices insist on the presence and presentness of ancestral knowledge alongside floating garbage to address

the material ways these ongoing practices frequently merge in the waves of the Pacific.[156] This reliance on transformation is a radical act that occurs beyond the bounds of containment set by historic and ongoing colonial occupation. It is critically attentive to the genealogies of the moment as a way to cultivate community and connection.

Recycling The Garbage Patch

Thinking through what constitutes the garbage patch and its connectivity between the US and Pacific Islands, Māori – Te Āti Awa, Taranaki scholar, poet, and irredentist, Alice Te Punga Somerville is attentive to the ways in which colonial narratives contain Indigenous people on islands and ignore watery relations. Somerville writes about how colonial extractive practices have defined the ocean as "space of nothingness—a border between 'here' and 'there'" (326). She uses the fraught metaphor of the garbage patch to attend to the ocean as "a particularly dense space of somethingness" (326). Her writing undoes attempts to label the Pacific as a void which have been used to "render[] the Pacific ready (again) for exploration, ownership, first encounters; as if these things had not already happened over and over for five hundred years. (Indeed, the Pacific has been producing Indigenous historians for millennia and Indigenous historians with Western academic training for at least a century)" (321). Containing Pacific Indigeneity to land only overlooks the traditions of mobility and knowledge making that have occurred in travels within the Pacific for millenia.

In her chapter of *Archipelagic American Studies*, Somerville writes about how containment practices focused on limited understandings of land/water divides are unable to account for archipelagic relations in the Pacific. As metaphor thick with the film of complex Pacific relationships that defy binary and containment, Somerville defines the great Pacific Garbage Patch as archipelago,

[156] One of many such examples is the ongoing cleanup of Papahanaumokuakea.

using this definition as a way to recognize the fullness of what is often rendered invisible in the Pacific: the ocean between bodies of land and the impact those bodies of land have on the ocean. Even as she does it, Somerville emphasizes the fraughtness of such a move:

> In the context of the belittling of migrant and Indigenous communities through metaphors of disease and contamination, describing our own people as pollutants is beyond problematic. Indigenous people in the Pacific—including those in the continental United States as well as those all around the region—are descended from divine genealogies, and count scientists, diplomats, politicians, warriors, agriculturalists, navigators, and artists among their ancestors. Surely it is the height of rudeness—and worse—to suggest that such people are trash. And yet, there is something appealing about a metaphor that gives us a way to think about the difference between invisibility and absence. At some point, there is value in attempting these kinds of interrogations as long as we acknowledge the risks involved. In the context of (colonial) discourses about cultural integrity dissolving, rupturing, and being 'lost,' a metaphor of impossible degeneration feels a little exciting. Finally, to push a little harder on the idea of the great Pacific garbage patch as debris shed into the ocean from land, much of the scholarship that engages the ever-shifting relationship between land and sea falls back on the assumption that the land is always at risk of danger from the sea (erosion, flood, tsunami) rather than the other way around. (325)

In this passage, Somerville notes the ways in which metaphorical alignment with the garbage patch carries immense risk as well as immense potential. The metaphor does not function in a single valence (solely in recognition or resistance to colonial narratives of waste), but as a vector towards nuanced and multiple engagements across and within land/sea entanglements. At the same time that it risks collapse into Western discourses that Indigenous/archipelagic existence is disposable (a form of garbage), it reclaims the possibility of waste's ubiquity. Instead of accepting the rhetoric of that which is disposed of deserving to be discarded, it insists on the afterlife and potential that exists in such a state–an alternative and unexpected livelihood like the neopelagic ecosystem of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. As the amount of non-biodegradable plastic waste continues to accumulate, this risky alignment negotiates the dangers of the present by creating and negotiating unexpected but necessary forms of connection.

To consider the place and space of Indigenous peoples of the Pacific as only contained to land is an attempt to erase long histories and practices of movement. As Somerville tracks the mobility of Indigenous peoples of the Pacific, she notes how "Chamorros from Saipan are in Guam, while Chamorros from Guam are in Hawai'i, where they find themselves alongside not only Hawaiians but also American Samoans. An outsider view might simply see Pacific people in their home region of the Pacific, but this mobility between, and presence in, other Pacific places is underpinned and made possible by currents of US imperialism" (330). Lingering in the potential of the metaphor of trash as a way to address the impact of the often invisibilized Indigenous PI in the US, Somerville stays with the mobility that US imperialism writes over in statistical representation of Pacific people through survey and census that fail to address these entangled histories. Indeed, Somerville emphasizes that this mobility is not one defined only in relation to the US, but that "mobility is who we are rather than a departure from who we are" (322). By returning to Indigenous understandings of the fullness of the ocean between Pacific islands, Somerville acknowledges traditions of mobility between islands that exist outside of western narratives of containment. In so doing, she follows multiple histories of movement that intersect with and recognize the pluralities of "somethingness" that exist among the oceanic currents and flow between air, land, and sea.

At the same time that logics of containment limit the mobility of Indigenous peoples, it simultaneously obscures the impacts of the US on the Pacific ocean. In order to defy the containment of plastics that bleed from the West coast of Washington, Oregon, and California, Perez uses recycling poems to emphasize environmental injustice. Perez's recycling poems, floating throughout the text *Habitat Threshold*, draws on poems and styles that would be recognizable to many who grew up in the US and/or studied Western eco/poetry. From Alan Ginsberg to Dr. Seuss to Pablo Neruda to William Carlos Williams, Perez takes utterances that won't seem to break down and

repurposes them to focus on the bleeding ecological impact of US waste and hegemony.[157] By taking a work that is continually reused in Western writing, such as Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," and insisting that it be recycled, Perez deems such utterances as a form of waste in need of transformation in order to cross the threshold of a collapsing environment. Whereas Stevens' nature poem (and its afterlife in nature writing) enumerate a growing list of perspectives on something, Perez uses the unlucky number to begin a countdown until "the last glacier fits / in our warm hands" (20). Perez treats these poems as plastic: they are not going anywhere, nor are they going to decompose on their own without some form of rhetorical intervention. If the plastic phrase/poem/poet remains venerated in repetition, then it cannot change. By declaring this stagnant discourse a part of the waste driving habitat collapse, Perez presses for an intervention and transformation of language. Recycling and reworking them is the only option. Rather than renewing these works with reverence, Perez instead seizes upon what works within the source poem and presses them into recognition of and response to ongoing ecological disasters.

In the recycling poem, "One fish, Two fish, Plastics, Dead fish," Perez takes on the playful, cheery language Dr. Seuss used to celebrate the variety of creatures children might encounter on this earth and in their imaginations (from fish driving cars to six legged creatures) to instead talk about widespread loss of biodiversity. In so doing, he takes the longevity of Seuss' words, as plastic that just won't deteriorate, and puts those words in conversation with literal plastic that just won't deteriorate and is leading to species loss. Perez uses off-rhymes to twist the poem and its aural resonance into an off-kilter sound and existential anxiety. He writes: "From the Pacific to the Atlantic / from the Indian to the Arctic, / from here to there, / dead zones are everywhere!" (35). The speaker lingers in the archipelago of waste to address the ways that which has been deemed

[157] For what is *The Lorax* if not an ecopoem?

disposable has accumulated where Americans have been told not to look. Instead of permitting this isolation and containment of the impact of waste, the speaker instructs readers to look at it directly and to attempt to measure the immeasurable when they insist, "Say! Look at it tumors! One, two, three… / How many tumors do *you* see?" (35, emphasis in original). In a later poem, Perez addresses directly the role of children in eco-literature and the contrast of that role with their material present: "...in most eco-literature, / children represent the vulnerable, hopeful future. yet children in real life / represent the tantrum of the present. I think about thousands of her dirty / diapers that will take 450 years to decompose--outliving us all" (59). Perez's ecopoetics don't recycle as an act of immediate restoration. Instead, they draw connections between what has been deemed disposable, insisting on the immediacy and significance of the fact that disposal does not make something vanish. His work brings the reader into the waste of living, into the diapers of children, into the tumors of fish, into the plastic of the Great Pacific Garbage patch as a method of maintaining connection when practices of containment insist on severance. Perez brings the reader's attention to the life that exists mixed up with the detritus, like Lecompte's swim, the refocus on life transforms the reader's understanding of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

Indigenous Pacific and allied scholars and poets continue to emphasize long traditions of mobility and multiplicity uncontained by western narratives of binarism and containment. Somerville emphasizes the entanglements of knowledge as she brings in Vernice Wineera Pere, a poet of Māoritanga and Polynesian heritage and Samoan poet Albert Wendt to frame her imagining of the Pacific Ocean world as an archipelago. She emphasizes that "the promise of the archipelago is that the island is no longer an isolate" (334). Indeed, she points to Wineera Pere's recognition of the island as an extended volcano below the waves as indicative of Indigenous knowledge that the island is not contained by the sea, but that they are interpellated. Similar to imagining the island beneath the waves, Somerville notes that poet "Albert Wendt also turned to the place of imagination in his

articulation of a decolonized Pacific: 'Only the imagination in free flight can hope—if not to contain her—to grasp some of her shape, plumage, and pain'" (Wendt qtd. Somerville 335). This archipelagic thinking is a necessary site of decolonial language and thought, as articulated in conversations between Édouard Glissant & Hans Ulrich Obrist. In *The Archipelago Conversations*, Glissant notes that "'I can change through exchanging with others, without losing or diluting my sense of self.' This is what archipelagic thinking teaches us" (Glissant and Obrist 13). In this poetics of resistance, Glissant articulates the necessity of both engagement and transformation as a means to engage with a world which sought to contain or dilute nonWestern peoples. In *Think Like an Archipelago*, white Professor of French at the Georgia Institute of Technology Michael Wiedorn describes the practices of relation that were central to Glissant's writing. Writing about relation, he notes the importance of "the state of interconnectedness within diversity that is epitomized by the archipelago form" (9). The combination of specificity and attention to individual people, cultures, and poetics while drawing connections across them are crucial for an archipelagic attention to ecological writing. In so doing, it recognizes the dangers of being associated or contained in a category against one's will while articulating the necessity of specificity to forge nuanced connections in such a space. The poets here similarly insist on recognizing the interpellated existence as one that is nonbinary and uncontained, relying on ecological webs of connection to sustain a multiplicity of ways of valuing, moving, and being.

In "Love in a Time of Climate Change" (26), Perez is attentive to the way that Neruda recycles the objectification of the traditional sonnet which turns the lover into a thing by similarly displacing affection for the ecologically destructive resources of "rare earth metals / conflict diamonds, or reserves of crude oil" (26). The irony in this first stanza juxtaposes two forms of love: that of the object considered to be an asset and that which is treated as disposable–"the most vulnerable species" (26). In holding these two loves side by side, Perez is drawing attention to logics

of disposability that makes assets of smartphones and green technology while deeming the ocean, its species diversity, and the laborers disabled by their work as disposable. As "Love in a Time of Climate Change" continues its recycling, it opens affection not just as a metaphor for love between humans, but a love for speculative and potential futures that work across human animals and plants. Where Neruda makes a metaphor of plants in the lines "I love you as the plant that doesn't bloom but carries / the light of those flowers, hidden, within itself" (Neruda), Perez responds with love that comes from desperation, from the recognition of the precarity not only of seeds but also of community: "I love you as one loves the last seed saved / within a vault, gestating the heritage of our roots" (26). The poem closes with an inversion of Neruda's disembodiment, of being in a state where "I am not nor are you" (Neruda) as a result of closeness. Instead, Perez intentionally opens the bounds of self to connect with land, ocean, and pollution: "we'll only survive / in the nitrogen rich compost of our embrace, / so close that your emissions of carbon are mine, / so close that your sea rises with my heat" (26). This recycling of a disembodied and vanishing love poem blurs the boundaries of body and land in a bittersweet ecological embrace, one that is collapsing/composting and attentive to the shared impacts of multiple bodies. It delves into the waste of compost and holds onto its potential for new growth. The poem frames this cross-body embrace using a lyrical "I" that is attentive to the ways that the only way to survive exists through becoming an ecological network of "we" through a turning and returning to ecological closeness. In this way, Perez demonstrates what Reilly calls "the crisis of the 'lyric I'; the recuperation of cultural, industrial, and political erasures; the dismantling of dichotomies of self/other, nature/culture, Indigenous/alien, and central/peripheral--bringing them all into a larger, trans-species arena of investigation" (Reilly 257). The recycling poems that Perez offers demonstrate through their own style and substance the use and significance of recycling as a critical ecological process.

Recycling Multitudes

Marsh uses her voice to open the complexities of being PI in her book *Fast Talking PI* and its titular poem. "Fast Talkin' PI" refuses to define PI or unpack the acronym, leaving it open to multiplicities. The poem which follows, "Acronym," is littered with capital P I arrangements, from "Private Investigator" to "Penile Implants" to "Paradigm Infinitum" to "Protocol Interruption" (74-5) without ever taking on the anticipated Pacific Islander. This refusal to collapse PI into a single definition holds in tension many possible PIs. "Fast Talkin' PI" is written with the dedication "for Anne Waldman," putting the work in conversation with Waldman's work "Fast Speaking Woman" which has a similar aural quality through compounding repetition, with the phrase "I'm a…" leading most lines in each poem. Waldman describes her poem as being "based upon chants [she] had heard by a woman named Maria Sabina, a Mazatec shaman" (MacLeod 6). In Waldman's poem, her speaker takes on the experience of the "everywoman" by locating and momentarily becoming animal, mountain, foam, and even assuming for her speaker the title of "the aborigene woman." In this practice, Waldman is knowingly "appropriating shamelessly, like poets do" (37). In her curation and creation of the chant, she brings together an assortment of identities into the Everywoman voice she wields within the poem in an attempt to "see beyond boundaries" (36). This work is done to make evident the many ways in which women can both be collapsed and expanded as a community. Forgetting specificity allows for radical connection while risking an oversimplification of these experiences. To that end, Waldman attempts to forge new connections across the places and communities in which she found herself writing. In a way responding to the speaker of "Fast Speaking Woman," the speaker of "Fast Talkin' PI" opens up the experience of PI in order to add necessary detail and complexity to this framework. The speaker lingers in embodied experience and specific, situational moments, forging links between a plurality of PIs, neither collapsing them into a

singularity or diluting them into Everywoman. This plurality refuses to be contained by the letters PI and what is often assumed to be associated with them. It exists in each utterance of PI and beyond.

The speaker in "Fast Talkin' PI" brings forth a list of experiences that defy singularity and individualism of self in relation to gender, land, and being. Throughout the poem / chant, the speaker makes claims about what PI they are in that particular moment, including "I'm a land-based PI / I'm a fanua PI," (67) "I'm a tatau PI / I'm a malu and a pe'a, flying fox let loose PI," (69) and "I'm a fathoming PI / I'm an ocean, I'm the wave, I'm the depths of it PI" (70). Using voices that are easy to hear aloud, the speaker of the poem does not delineate singular, all-encompassing experiences of what it is to be PI, instead moving through island and fanua (land), into ocean and wave, and taking on tatau (tattoos) that are for women (malu) and men (pe'a). While the speaker in "Fast Speaking Woman" claims to be everywoman, the speaker in "Fast Talkin' PI" is calling to multiple experiences of PI, forging connections across communities that span the Pacific. The transformation from fast speaking to fast talking introduces elements of survival–when one is imperiled one must talk fast to save oneself.[158] Rather than taking on Waldman's work in an explicit way–as Perez might have–Marsh instead moves into long-form transformation. She notes the fast talk in the moment and the ways that it offers a plurality of possibilities, instead of focusing on a moment, the moment becomes prismatic, moving in every which way that might evade capture and collapse.

In this fast talkin' poem, Marsh folds together English language, Samoan, and French as a way to refrain from being captured in a singular arrangement of PI. Near the conclusion of the poem, this ecologically linguistic escape act multiplies exponentially through an internal citational practice. For a stanza, "Fast Talkin' PI" frames the speaker as a series of phrases, including "I'm a

[158] The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines the phrase as "to persuade people with a lot of quick, clever, but usually dishonest talk"

where we once belonged / I'm a dream fish floating / I'm a wild dogs under my skirt" (72). These evocative phrases multiply out with the knowledge that each phrase is the title of a book of poems, play, or novel by a Pacific Island author. *Where We Once Belonged* is a novel by Sia Figiel, *Dream Fish Floating* is a collection of poetry by Karlo Mila, and *Wild Dogs Under My Skirt* is Avia's debut poetry collection and stage play. Through this multiplication, Marsh speaks with a plural and uncontainably vast utterance of the multiplicity of PI. In this way, the idiomatic understanding of fast talking as quick, clever, and usually dishonest becomes more complicated: each of these fragments of speech are factually and demonstrably PI, but PI cannot be reduced to one of these elements. In this way, "Fast Talkin' PI" spans a multiplicity of experiences, states, and utterances that are PI (as well as other things) that cannot be gathered, contained, or isolated. Instead, these archipelagic understandings of PI inform one another over through an ecological series of relations and connections.

"Fast Talkin' PI" is neither a refusal of or counter to "Fast Speaking Woman," but a continuation of conversations that go back further than Waldman's writing. In "Fast Talkin' PI," the speaker continues a conversation that predates colonial influences in the Pacific, stating "I'm a marae PI / I'm a living breathing dwelling of my ancestors PI" (67) and "I'm a Nafanua PI / I'm a warrior PI / I'm the breast-kept secret in ancient samoan warfare PI" (71). In this "breast-kept" pun, the speaker of the poem hearkens to details of the story of Samoan goddess of war, Nafanua, whose battles only stopped, in some versions of the story, when her breasts were revealed and the men she was decimating realized they were being beaten by a woman. Through this inclusion of an aural poem that calls to many particular ecosystems and stories of the Pacific, Marsh engages in Pacific environmental ethics that hold together the traditional storytelling and place-based narrative of Nafanua, as explicated in Chamorro poet Perez's description of these ethics as "revolv[ing] around ideas of reverence, respect, and sustainability. Moreover, native islanders believe that

geographies are storied places, and Pacific oral literatures have transmitted these stories across generations" (Perez 5). Through the declaration of being marae, the speaker uses the Māori word for a sacred, communal place alongside invoking the name of Nafanua, Samoan goddess of war. The speaker of "Fast Talkin' PI" holds together multiple Pacific Indigenous traditions and geographies that span millenia and thousands of miles. "Fast Talkin' PI" travels through histories of PI Indigeneity in recognition of the multiplicity of stories that inform and continue in all that it means to be PI. The poem lingers in this between space, in a series of archipelagic relations that value the transitory space between as connection of disparate experiences. Marsh's writing in this transitory space and time is an active resistance to the long-form and ongoing practice of making the Pacific Ocean a wasteland. By stretching outward from the evocation of PI, the speaker instead re-values the open time and open water between arrangements of PI, insisting that space and connection are as valuable as close connection. This act of recycling the space between insists on connection across time, place, and experience.

While Marsh talks quickly, this fast talking allows her to hold multiple histories and tensions of being PI with the impacts of slow violence accumulating in the poem's openings. Throughout the poem, the speaker addresses the disabling impact of colonialism on being PI in ways that also acknowledge the disproportionate ways that colonizing forces use the harm done by colonialism to further exercise power over Indigenous communities. In the poem, the speaker emphasizes that "I'm a buy tinned beef 'cos no more fish in reef PI / I'm a diabetic PI / I'm a heart-diseased PI / I'm a gout-inflated, incubated case study PI" (68). These conversations on disability, disablement, and reduced mobility work on both the material and metaphorical levels as expressions of violence against Indigenous PI through recognizing specific bodily experience of harm. These conversations gesture out to the ways in which colonizing forces use the disabled experiences of Indigenous peoples to further contain them and deny sovereignty.

The poem "Fast Talkin' PI" is Indigenous scholarship that conveys the overlapping and contradictory conversations at the interface of Indigenous PI experiences of the Pacific with colonial articulations of the Pacific. Through use of multiple perspectives and voices on being PI, Marsh is attentive to the ways in which Indigenous and allied scholars and poets offer conceptions of the Pacific that do not align with colonial articulations of binarism and containment. These conceptions do not run counter to colonial articulations, as they are more multiplicitous than such enclosures would allow and their lengthy histories only recently and occasionally intersect with colonial occupation.

Colonial articulations of binarism work on two levels: in the first, binarism is a long standing episteme of being which posits that rigid categories can be held in opposition to one another or as completely distinct from one another (e.g. colonizer and colonized, land and water, nation and wilderness, body and earth etc.); second, this binarism has been mapped onto Indigenous communities in order to suppress decolonial movements. In "A Decolonial Disability Studies?" American Studies scholar from Hawai'i Adria Imada follows the ways in which binaries of ability were used by colonial powers to delegitimize Hawai'i claims to sovereignty. In this analysis, she notes that "the colonized were always already figured and constituted as disabled" for either failing to enact colonial expectations of labor and mannerism or for adopting these expectations and "fail[ing] to maintain the vigor of their 'race'" (Imada). In this example, colonizing powers approach the Hawai'i islands with a binary of Indigenous or European, both sides of which delegitimized the claims of Indigenous Hawai'i people to their land, either by remaining on the Indigenous side of the binary--and thereby being perceived as disabled and unable to exploit land sufficiently well for European aims-- or by not being Indigenous enough, and thereby losing their claim to Indigeneity.

In her work, "Towards an Indigenous Australian Women's Standpoint Theory," Goenpul author of the Quandamooka nation Aileen Moreton-Robinson complicates the positionality of

binarism in standpoint theory as a way to emphasize the importance of Indigenous, decolonial thinking. In her approach to binarism, Moreton-Robinson first delineates the ways in which binaries have operated in western thinking, by setting up an illusion of objectivity and separateness from what is being observed. In her work she specifically notes "the disembodied epistemological privileging of 'validity' and 'objectivity' within western patriarchal knowledge production" (Moreton-Robinson 333). In this western articulation of binarism, there is a split between what is doing the knowing and what is known. In contrast to this, standpoint theory attempts to intervene by recognizing the position of the knower within claims to knowledge; however, Moreton-Robinson notes that binarism remains in standpoint theory, where "as a first-world feminist paradigm, feminist standpoint theory is predicated on a body/earth split discursively positioning women as female humans above other non-human living things through making gender/sex the epistemological a priori within analyses of women's lived experiences and socially situated knowledges" (335). Moreton-Robinson works against this binarism in her approaches to Australian Indigenous standpoint theory, which "is not predicated on the separation of ourselves from our countries, human ancestors, creator beings and all living things" (344). She argues, "Australian Indigenous women's standpoint theory provides one way of exercising our sovereignty as an integral part of our research methodologies" (344). In this way, Moreton-Robinson complicates the binaries standpoint theory leaves in place to recognize a multiplicity of relations that do not separate knower from known. She does not define herself in opposition or as counter to feminist standpoint theory, but instead complicates standpoint theory through attention to one's ontological relationship to country, ancestry, and land.

Marsh's poem "Acronym" speaks directly to the limitations of binarism through continued repetition of PI, now as a series of terms. In the poem, a third person speaker muses on a man's reaction to (because of the publication order in *Fast Talking PI*) "Fast Talkin' PI." The speaker first

recognizes "Fast Talkin' PI" as a divine poem, an aretalogy on the virtues of PI. It then stirs up the experience of the witness by acknowledging his lack of capacity to enter into the "Paradigm Infinitum" (74) the poem presents as its uncontainable reality. The speaker laments, "it's what happens when you get this Parallel Interface / between words and meanings. Some need clear / Parameter Identifiers, or at least a Parameter Indicator, / to know where the meaning boundaries lie" (74). This passage acknowledges the limitations that binarism and containment place on bodies as well as meaning. The utterance that exists without a Parameter Indicator itself opens, invites, and connects in sprawling ecological connections. Attempting to place just such a poetic utterance within bounds, the speaker argues, "risks Personal Injury – to the poem that is" (75). As both poem and articulation of scholarship, "Acronym" offers additional context to what PI can be, connected to "Fast Talkin' PI" or not. The pair of poems models a refusal to delineate between two unified or two distinct poems, instead making for a constellation of poem(s) that exceed a contained unit such as the page. It defies the delineation of PI into discrete binary terms and contained meaning, recognizing the risks that just such acts entail for scholarship that originates absent of these epistemological practices.

In thinking about the ways that colonial structures of knowledge-making and land-control interface with Indigenous ways of knowing, Kanaka Hawai'i cartographer Renee Pualani Louis refuses a binary of Indigenous or western cartography. In *Kanaka Hawai'i Cartography*, Louis, along with Aunty Moana Kahele, notes that "Kanaka Hawai'i cartography is similar to Western cartography in that it is an intimately interactive, dynamic, and contextual process-oriented activity, the main goal of which is to provide a shorthand communication system of understanding spatial phenomenon. It is distinctive in that Kanaka Hawai'i cartography places emphasis on multisensual cognitive abilities, multidimensional symbolic interrelationships, and performance as a primary mode of communication" (12). Rather than divide the practices of cartography, Louis intentionally finds

ways in which the practices merge and diverge through embodied, multisensory practice. In the welina (greetings) of her book, she thanks her professors for introducing her to Manulani Aluli Meyer's work, which upended her previous idea that "Kanaka Hawai'i and Western cartographic practices were dichotomous--natural dualisms of orality and literacy" (xix) and instead shows that "the very thought of situating these two cartographic practices in a dichotomous relationship maintains a Western philosophical context" (xix-xx). Rather than putting her work in opposition, Louis uses a framework that is attentive to how multiple traditions of knowing and mapping can be used in interrelationship. This practice echoes the work of Perez and Marsh as they challenge the primacy of Western writing by intertwining it with Indigenous knowledges and recycle it as waste. In his recycling poems, Perez takes narratives and ideas and twists them into a shape that intersects but exists beyond the canon of Western writing. Similarly, Marsh's "Fast Talkin' PI" echoes but does not amplify the work of Waldman, instead interrelating a plurality of PI narratives. In this way, the poets I discuss weave and interweave Indigenous knowledges with Western canon in ways that acknowledge its existence but prioritize what it can do by being broken down.

Louis' focus on interrelated concepts and practices is informed by Kanaka Hawai'i understandings of relation and significance of sense. When discussing the multi-sensual relationships to cartography she engages in, Louis notes that she pairs "seemingly disparate concepts with an up slash, such as space/time, mind/body, and observer/participant. From a Kanaka Hawai'i cartographic perspective, these concepts are not separate but distinctive" (13). Louis points out that the terms paired by a slash would be considered separate in a western, binary framework. However, in Kanaka Hawai'i language and thought, there is not a separation between these features, but a shift in focus. While mind and body may be distinctive for a moment when one is the subject of discussion, they are always interrelated. Louis' work, and that of other Indigenous Pacific Poets, de-privilege the singularity of sight as the sole means of knowledge. Louis' work brings together

movement, sound, and other approaches to validate multisensory knowledge-making and sharing. Louis' emphasis on language in relation defies a mind/body, body/island, island/ocean separation while allowing a practice that can momentarily attend to one part of a system of relations without severing those relations.

Louis' work builds on a Kanaka Hawai'i epistemology and methodology of ohana that she adapts from Mary Kawena Pukui. In this framework, "*Ohana* 'extends beyond the immediate family… it must be thought of against the background of the whole community of kith and kin, including in-law and adoptive categories'" (Pukui qtd. Louis 22). Louis uses this expansion to think through the relationship between not only human actors in cartography, but the lands, oceans, ancestors, and "all nature" that are sensed in relationships of ohana. This framework denies a binarism of family as in-or-out, stretching though all actors that can be sensed in the relationship. Instead of being contained to a singularity of embodiment or meaning, Louis notes how this framework utilizes "Kanaka Hawai'i... methodological processes known as *kinolau*, many bodies, and *kaona*, multiple meanings" (25). This capacious cartography comes from histories of Hawai'i language and space-making practices that open up the potentials of relations beyond singular modes and methods of sensing into a multiplicity of connections and overlaps that both engage and diverge from western articulations of the Pacific.

At the intersection of binarism and containment is Māori Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's critique of western history's role in modernist and colonial projects. In her critique, Smith addresses the interconnected ideas used in western history to craft binaries of human/nonhuman and self/other that attempt to erase and contain Indigenous histories as prehistories in the shaping of a coherent, supposedly innocent and unbiased progress narrative. She particularly points out the way western frames of history hinge on a binary of history/prehistory and how that binary attempts to contain and erase Indigenous understandings of multiplicitous histories

into a singular narrative. Smith's critique also addresses the ways in which practices of containment and dislocation have been wielded against Indigenous peoples by colonizers and how these practices complicate western articulations of an Indigenous/non-Indigenous binary. In her critique of the modernist history project, Smith argues that, "in order for history to begin there has to be a period of beginning and some criteria for determining when something begins. In terms of history this was often attached to concepts of 'discovery', the development of literacy, or the development of a specific social formation. Everything before that time is designated as prehistorical, belonging to the realm of myths and traditions, 'outside' the domain" (Smith 32). As a western imperial project, the binary of history and prehistory cuts through and denies the contemporaneity of Indigenous peoples, whose existence pre-discovery is placed outside of time. Instead, the western narrativization of time prioritizes "discovery" of islands and people in a way that intentionally erases millenia of Indigenous mobility and interconnectedness prior to colonial invasion and similarly ignores the ocean as a point of connection between these places. By disrupting and displacing the prioritization of discovery and "the new," the authors I discuss defy acts of containment enacted around PI writing and storytelling. These writers are attentive to the ways in which narratives shift and change, holding on to millennia of history as they cycle and recycle Indigenous knowledges alongside Western writing. Putting these literary lineages side by side destabilizes the containing narratives of 'before' and 'after,' instead situating them concurrently.

Recognizing the deleterious impact of colonization, Smith similarly addresses the complexity of containment and dislocation put upon Indigenous peoples by colonizers. In conversation with Fanon and other allied scholars, Smith addresses the seeming binary of "colonizer and colonized. These two categories are not just a simple opposition but consist of several relations, some more clearly oppositional than others" (27). In this juxtaposition, Smith builds on the knowledge of displacement that brought Indigenous people to other places, thereby using the assumed binary to

fold transported Indigenous people into colonial frameworks of power. Smith notes that "Indigenous peoples were transported to various outposts in the same way as interesting plants and animals were reclimatized, in order to fulfil labour requirements" (28). This transportation displaces Indigenous people, separating them from land and community while attempting to hold them closer to colonial productions. Creating separate fragments of Indigenous communities and Isolating Indigenous peoples, Smith argues, "imperialism and colonialism brought complete disorder to colonized peoples, disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, their languages, their social relations and their own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world. It was a process of systematic fragmentation which can still be seen in the disciplinary carve-up of the Indigenous world" (Smith 29). Rather than existing in a binary of colonizer and colonized or container and contained, Smith is attentive to the ways in which this seeming binary supports imperial power. Recognizing the multiple ways in which this fragmentation and isolation served the colonial mission opens up the possibility of relationships that recognize the impacts of settler colonialism as a framework for containment.

In "Recuperating Binarism: A Heretical Introduction," from Patrick Wolfe, a white Australian settler colonial studies scholar, he writes about how in adopting a politics and theory that responds to histories of colonization he has faced accusations of binarism, though not from Indigenous peoples: "I have regularly been accused of binarism–though not once by a Native. Why should it be that the spectre of binarism, so disturbing to nonNative sensibilities, should be less troubling to Natives?" (257). Wolfe's piece goes on to argue that Indigenous peoples are well-aware of their multiplicity and specificity as they form collective political projects: "the problem that emerges is not so much for Indigenous people, who seem untroubled by differences that do not affect the overarching difference separating each of them from their colonisers. Rather, the problem exists for the settler nation-state, which… is incompleteness, a vulnerability not shared by the

Indigenous movement" (273-4). While, as Smith points out, western history has a long trend of using binaries to its political advantage, more recent moves in western scholarship that work to question and destabilize binary histories has also been wielded against Indigenous peoples to contain their collective mobilization through accusations of essentialism and binarism.

Smith discusses the significance of containment strategies leveraged against Aotearoa New Zealand Māori tribes in order to serve the interests of colonizers. She traces how "legislated identities which regulated who was an Indian and who was not, who was a metis, who had lost all status as an Indigenous person, who had the correct fraction of blood quantum, who lived in the regulated spaces of reserves and communities, were all worked out arbitrarily (but systematically), to serve the interests of the colonizing society" (Smith 23). In this way, legal frameworks were mobilized to limit and contain Indigenous sovereignty. By utilizing a settler framework of containment, Smith focuses on the ways that "dissent is controlled… [and] settlements are made… within a more localized discursive field" (23). These practices work to constrain and control Indigenous mobilizations. Whyte, Wolfe, and Smith address the ways in which containment as policies and discursive practices wielded against Indigenous peoples in many contexts limits and attempts to write over long histories of mobility and multiplicity.

Bleeding Boundaries: [Auto]biomythography

Aotearoa New Zealand poet of Samoan and Palangi descent Avia reworks the bleeding boundaries of the Pacific and colonial US through the use of garbage and automythography in her book of poems *Bloodclot*. In writing *Zami*, Audre Lorde describes biomythography as the practice of writing about the multiple, bounded categories of identity that constitute "hyphenated people" such as herself (Rowell 87). For Lorde, this meant that there was no single approach to telling her history, but it necessitated bringing together the strands of women and their perspectives that broadened her perspective on the world. *Zami* opens with a repeating series of questions, pointing out the threads

that Lorde brings together as method–"*to whom do I owe the power behind my voice, what strength I have become…?*" (3), "*to whom do I woe the symbols of my survival?*" (3), "*to whom do I owe the woman I have become*" (4). These questions drive the assemblage of stories that fill *Zami*, a weaving of the ecological threads that have built the questioner and begin to offer answers to the questions. Rather than being an autobiography of herself, it tells the stories of the women in her life and the connections she developed that shaped her existence. Lorde scholar Judy Long describes the biomythography as "messy," meaning "an account[that] make[s] no attempt to streamline the narrative, to corset the subject, to shear the web of connections" (Long 55). Instead, biomythography opens up to the more-than-self through connection, interweaving the plurality of self with the world beyond.

I argue that Avia's *Bloodclot* begins from a similarly woven center, but instead of tracing the lineage backwards through time, opens downward from the self to situate the speaker within worlds, both material and mythological. Where *Zami* and biomythography trace impacts of connection up and out into the universe, Avia's work pushes downward through the self to open outward. *bloodclot* reworks histories of nature poetry's engagement with the sublime and weaves them into the everyday. For Avia, the method of approaching biomythography becomes one of pushing herself outwards through relationships rather than pulling them inwards. Avia casts her essence out into the Vā, inhabiting the space between as a radical methodology of seeking and building connection. Rather than accepting being contained to one self, Avia offers herself through her very body, pouring out as goddess, as bloodclot, as one to be received in the everyday by the common menstrual waste of the sanitary pad. Rather than spend the afternoon catching glimpses of the sublime from a pleasant lea, Avia uses automythography as a method for placing the sublime in the bookstore, in a sanitary pad, in living. Airini Beutrais describes *bloodclot* is an automythographic text, and through this framing, I read into the automythographic's potential as one way among many to

navigate the mess. This folding of myth and experience into one another defies a separation of self, ancestral knowledge, and place.

In a series of poems, Avia brings together two Nafanuas, one a goddess and one an autobiographical self born in Christchurch. As I engage with *bloodclot*, I am repeatedly buffeted between the material speaker of the poems–the Nafanua of Christchurch–and the rearticulation of mythology. In reading these overlapping perspectives, I find myself deeply within Avia's bodily metaphors and the material connections the speaker of *blooclot* offers to readers. In "Nafanua becomes a surgeon for the day," Nafanua dresses a chicken, she "cleanly slits the body open" and fills it with two half onions (54). This 'surgery' folds together a plurality of moments, from the daily act of preparing and cooking dinner to evoking the exceptional experience of actual surgery, namely the act of recovery following a mastectomy, a frequent occurrence in the wake of cancer. These slips between the ordinary and extraordinary open out to the many potential connections that this biological and mythological openness offers. In her analysis of *Bloodclot*, Airini Beutrais discusses the complexity of this dual existence: "Nafanua the goddess shields Nafanua from Christchurch throughout the text, lending the protagonist her name, and via it, her strength" (Beutrais 84). As an act of ecopoetry, *Bloodclot* can exist only in verse. Betrais reasons that "verse form allows the dual narratives of *Bloodclot* to be interwoven, facilitates fluidity between realist and supernatural events and descriptions, and by creating a textual focus beyond the subject matter, frees the poet to explore difficult material" (89). This bleeding of the divine and the self echoes the method put forth in "Fast Talkin' PI" as an Aretalogy for Avia/Nafanua's own life. Far from being only praise, *bloodclot* and its contents praise the everyday and elevate the automythographical experience. As an automythographic series of poems, *Bloodclot* continues an act of storytelling, recognizing the contemporary and ongoing significance of the Indigenous Samoan goddess Nafanua while refusing a narrative of the sublime as contained separately from human experience. In this collection, Avia uses

mythology to tell stories that leak outward from the self into the world, both stories that have the ring of truth and stories that have may yet become true. Avia unifies self with deity in an act of storytelling that doesn't make a binary of human and divine, instead folding them together in the sea, in the coastal city, and in the bookstore.

In her poem, "Nafanua's sister thinks about Nafanua in America," the erotics of the divine and the mundane are intertwined through everyday waste. In thinking about Nafanua, Nafanua's sister yearns for a lover as she sits in a library that holds colonial legacies. In the World War Two library, Nafanua's sister reflects on being surrounded by "old men with live geese under their jackets. / Old men with hair parted like their geese would fly if their geese could fly" (45) while she imagines Nafanua in capitalist markets "where market-men flog pink fluffy numbers / and bunches of plantain and say *Gimme ya numba dwarlin*" (45). While Nafanua's sister lingers in a space defined by World War Two soldiers, in their goose-down bomber jackets, she projects Nafanua's experience in a world of waste and harassment, surrounded by the trappings of consumerism. Soon her mind wanders from Nafanua to imagining a potential lover. Rather than wanting a lover from the markets or the library, she imagines a woman who is "uglier, less exotic, something like / porridge or / mould or / an old sanitary pad. / yes, an old sanitary pad / that is what I wish she was" (45). She longs for a queer lover that is neither sublime nor exoticized, but instead, a lover that is close and viscerally necessary. The speaker refuses narratives of disposability for the lover by valuing and yearning for something that once had and continues to have use and comfort. The sanitary pad is not waste-ful like the market-men, but instead collects blood clots. It holds the very substance the goddess Nafanua was born from. The sanitary pad holds the divine alongside themes of pregnancy loss and anxiety about waste and loss as Avia works to make the corporeal divine and the divine corporeal.

Bringing together the voice of goddess and self in the poem "Nafanua and the New World," Avia uses the biomythography to narrate a teenager/goddess imagining herself as a grandmother and child simultaneously. The poem opens with a reflection on being policed in youth, "Nafanua's old school mates plan to rob the New World /… they don't [pull it off]" (42). Moving from this disjuncture with the New World, Avia/Nafanua emphasizes colonial articulations of the ocean as emptiness and Indigenous community as void when she describes "Nafanua from nowhere driving out into the world" before returning to the culpability of its somethingness: "When her long-dead children ask her, Nafanua, mother, what did you do with our lives?" she answers, "I wrapped each one of you and put you in the sea and you / learned to be red orange blue" (42). In this passage, Nafanua describes caring for and treasuring each loss. Rather than treating her children as disposable, something to be cast into the ocean in Western discourse of waste and garbage, Nafanua treasures, wraps the loss and places them into the transformative gyres of the ocean to become something else, to be recycled into color. Finally, Nafanua "covers the mirrors, pulls out the choke and roars off into the Va" (42) In the text of the book, the va is described as "space in between/void" (94). In "Igniting the Vā," Te Rarawa, Ngä Puhi scholar Hinekura Smith and Falevai Vavaʻu, Tongaleleka Haʻapai, ʻAtataa, Tonga scholar ʻEma Wolfgramm-Foliaki describe the Vā as a space / a void, but one that very specifically carries with it "relational time and space" (15) that exists in the context of what it connects. The Vā in this form is defined by its capacity to bring together and connect through itself. As a term, Vā carries the connotation of being not just in between, but that of being in between but still connected to culture, family, and others. This arrangement of the Vā as a void that connects destabilizes and troubles colonial practices of naming the ocean as void, instead recognizing that it is the space that connects.

It is in this way that I argue Avia moves from deeply embodied writing practice, in the breast and in the blood, and recycles both myth and self into a methodology of interconnection. In this

way, her writing models practices of connection to the sublime to re/make everyday encounters into sites of connection. *bloodclot* ends with "Alualutoto 2," a poem that returns to where the book came from, a bloodclot. In the poem, the speaker passes a bloodclot into the bath and mediates on what could be done from this waste passing from the body. The speaker thinks of the connection between myth and "of how I got here / the ground grew in" (92). In a moment, surrounded by water and blood and their intermixing, the speaker sits with all of the possibilities for connection that yet exist–in ceremony, in gifts, and in seeking others. However, in this final moment of the collection, the speaker returns to the material world– "but no / this goes down the toilet" (92). In an act of closing, the Nafanua of Christchurch returns from holding open the vā intentionally into the everyday. She lets go of the infinite connection and yet that liquid flows outward, through the water of the bath and later the water of the toilet to join ever-confluencing tides in the wetness and the wild. This act itself is an almost divine refusal of the agency in connection–the clot will move and flow regardless of the presence of ceremony. It will join and wash out to sea with other waste and–intentionally or not–become part of the tides in the vā.

The concluding moment of Avia's work sits alongside the end of *Zami* for me as both imagine their own automythography and biomythography respectively. Lorde details her own sexual encounter with the divine in the form of Afrekete. In Zami, this layering puts a divine being on top of the women in Lorde's life and on top of Lorde. Afrekete is "[MawuLisa, thunder, sky, sun, the great mother]'s youngest daughter, the mischievous linguist, trickster, best-beloved, whom we must all become" (Lorde 255). In their interaction, Lorde and Afrekete climb to the top of a tenement and make love under the moon in vivid detail before parting ways for the rest of Lorde's life. She recalls the moment as "com[ing] together like elements erupting into an electric storm, exchanging energy, sharing charge, brief and drenching… reshaping ourselves the better for the exchange" (253). In this exchange , Lorde recognizes the shape and interaction that takes place, it is one that

charges, one that transforms, and one that moves upwards and outwards into the universe. The exchange of energy is woven into the fabric of her being and becomes a fixture of existence. This movement, inwards and upwards, tracks the transformation of energy and brings Lorde closer to recognizing the divine in her life through the material people she associates with. While both Lorde and Avia have a brush with the divine, Lorde's interaction moves through the life of the speaker and upward, tracking the divine back to MawuLisa. Avia's, through the Nafanua of Christchurch, moves through the self and ultimately downwards and outwards, taking the spark of the divine through the self and pushing it into the world and into the connecting vā.

As an act of recycling, Avia's use of Nafanua and the vā models a practice for survival of opening down and outwards through time and connection. This act transforms the space between communities disproportionately impacted by the logics of disposability into an interdependent and connected one. It charges the space between with energy to engage in long-term activism across time, space, and oceans.

Conclusion

Each of these authors recycle, multiply, and automythographitize in ways that refute a colonial binary of waste and asset. Instead, they refuse the disposability of plastics and people by examining the ocean not as wasteland but as a space teeming with life. Similarly, they articulate a plurality of places, spaces, and times that exist outside of a containment that would deny US waste in the Pacific and the presence of Pacific Island peoples in the US. In the poems presented here, Perez takes the enduring plasticity of Neruda and Seuss and twists them, acknowledging their refusal to decompose and utilizing them to instead render visible ongoing ecological collapse that is often pushed beneath the surface. By recycling them, Perez breaks down and remakes their styles into ones that press back against plastic waste and against violent ecological futures. Marsh hearkens to the multiplicity and unboundedness of PI, insisting on the many ways PI navigate a world without

Parameter Indicators. In *Bloodclot*, Avia refuses to leave Samoan goddess Nafanua in the past, instead articulating the ways in which the goddess accompanies her in the present, in flesh and blood. Taken together, these modalities transform an ecopoetic relationship to waste, offering methods for re-valuing and connecting with that which has been discarded.

Beginning and ending with images of life in relation in the garage patch and the toilet, I show recycling as a method allows for a revaluation of the logics of disposability. The authors included here use a plurality of approaches, from humor to fragmentation to everyday myth. They begin from the body as the place that is impacted by logics of disposability and connect outward in acts of care. As I finish writing, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, too, has a possible end in sight. In a press release dated September 6, 2024, The Ocean Cleanup Project states that "the elimination of the GPGP [Great Pacific Garbage Patch] can be done at today's level of performance in 10 years" (Ocean Cleanup Project). While this San-Francisco based project makes great technological strides in taking trash out of the ocean at scale, the necessary work of attending to where that trash will land next can be taken on through acts of recycling, situated in place and opening out.

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Coda

"Well, what can we *do*?"

"literature [is] one of the most sophisticated ways people have to create meaning and explore meaning."
~Paula Moya

Crip Planet

Using the language of disability to describe the environment isn't just relegated to disability studies. I was born in West Michigan where I'd be diagnosed with my own impairment in kindergarten. I returned to the middle of the state to complete my PhD where I'd find the waters were also impaired; the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is required to keep a list of so-called "impaired" waterways in Michigan.[159] This includes two waterways near my childhood home of Grand Rapids, MI; the Grand River and Bass Creek. Moving the scale out from my own experience, the federal regulating body that is the EPA similarly tracks environmental status in terms of "environmental health." This language has gone so far as to conceptually intertwine environmental and embodied health under the moniker "One Health," whose motto, using a circle to imply the interdependence of the concepts, connects "Healthy People → Healthy Environments → Healthy Animals" ("Ecosystem Health Research Milestones"). The turn towards language of impairment and health in relation to the environment itself in regulatory structures, policy language, and practices of research allows for discussion of embodied methodologies for responding to climate change and environmental degradation that echo crip community practices. The shared language between ecopoets and regulating bodies allows for the

[159] Sunaura Taylor reclaims these impaired waterways, particularly one near her own home in Arizona, through a disability justice framework in her talk "Disabled Ecologies: Living with Impaired Landscapes." Impaired waterways can be located using this tool: How's My Waterway?

shared understanding that the health of the planet is directly, ecologically connected to the health of people, animals, and society.[160] The poets and their work collected here model process-based approaches to navigating the entanglement of environmental, social, and personal health.

This project demonstrates that partial, fragmentary poetic approaches can be connected ecologically through temporal care, wading into the mess, and recycling. The poet/theorists held together here are deeply invested in process and creation. They offer alternative ways to navigate the present climate, our embodied relationships to it, and its constant changes. In their acts of speculation, they model "improvisational life-forms and experimental practices [which] form ad hoc community networks and resistance movements that coalesce spontaneously and ephemerally, on the fly, on the run, and cobbled together from recycled and repurposed materials" (Bahng 165).[161] This idealization of community, discussed in the introduction, is what my methods stretch towards– practices that are responsive to moment-by-moment needs, use whatever materials and energies are nearby, and function in interdependent networks. These poet/theorists and their more than human collaborators create temporary, spontaneous, and potentially collapsing systems of ecological relations, articulating in their limited utterances some suitable, effective, or pleasant ways to exist in situations which are difficult, annoying, and/or hard to endure. They offer ways to survive in trying times.

Crip Planet began in a trying time. The year I started writing, I also had to learn how to write again. Writing, for me, had been a communal thing. I loved going to coffee shops or friend's apartment living rooms to make things side by side. But with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus pandemic, so came the practice of social distancing for some.[162] Continuing to write about the ways

[160] And their editors.

[161] What Aimee Bahng reads into the Unregulated Zone in *Salt Fish Girl*.

[162] Social distancing was not a universally accessible practice. Many have written about social distancing as a privilege based on country of origin, type of work, age, class, and race.

ecopoets create in the mess seemed important, and yet, my own writing practice was collapsing without connection. Ad hoc, I began calling all of the people I'd written with before. Anuj Viadya, my dear friend and collaborator, was worried too. We wondered how we might move with one another during the pandemic. Being the queer crip performance artist that he is, he started devising a practice we could each perform separately in space and together across time. He asked what it would mean to move around a small area proximate to our homes as a practice of placement–of working in the networks of our physical existence while so much became digital. In my poem, "Strolling (2020-____)," published in *The Ending Hasn't Happened Yet*, I wrote of our moving:

> "Baby swings covered in caution tape.
> Masks as the most common litter.
> We wanted to grasp walk and roll in one word so we might describe how we moved together
> and for some time stroll rolled off our tongues and held us both
> until its implied leisure
> no longer lapped at what provoked our moving."

The first summer of the COVID-19 pandemic, I rolled my wheelchair in the subdivision behind my apartment complex. Was emplacing ourselves simply meeting masked neighbors by nodding at each other with a necessary distance between us? It didn't seem so. So we kept moving and chatting and navigating making and loss together at a distance. That summer I lost my first pregnancy. That fall I lost my second; the day my dissertation prospectus was approved.

> "Then, an idea of a person began leaking from me
> and perhaps the days of their dripping away
> led us to say goodbye to them at the river
> just past the baby swings.
> There were so many goodbyes then to people we knew as more than ideas
> as hospitals ran out of rooms and we didn't know what to do about any of the swollen grief."

Time kept passing. I kept writing.

> "One day the weather changed enough that we forgot ourselves and strolled back to the river.
> The deer were deer, not stolen friends, not flickers of escape routes, but animals whose home was threatened by us and by the construction of some new university building whose purpose we'd yet to determine.

And we started leaking
all the water and food we'd hoarded as we became preppers
without being prepared for any of this
all the masks we'd bought and made of cloth
all the ideas and people we'd lost."

Part of the walking practice involved going to a river each day. That river, the Red Cedar, is another impaired waterway in Michigan.[163] I rolled and eventually walked my disabled body to the disabled river. The river became a place of memorial, a place to remember our losses from the pandemic, and I wondered if it also might be kin. Anuj, in his walking, was trying to memorialize the loss of animal life during the pandemic. He couldn't keep up with the animals used in testing and the farm animals killed to reduce the spread. He wondered how to mourn across species. He turned his mourning into an impossible attempt to communicate across species as he wrote *Love, Simeon*, a motion picture performance where he began by trying to witness this loss even partially and then created practices for ongoing attempts at interspecies communication. Time passed. I stopped going to the river, Anuj and I chatted less as academic commitments picked up. He started to work on performances around mothering across species and biologies.

The second summer the baby swings no longer had caution tape. Research showed gathering together outside was fairly sage. Still, spring flooding and a humid weather led to almost unendurable mosquito density in the subdivision; I needed a new place to move. I was swollen then, as my child grew inside me, and I didn't want my arms to be as swollen from mosquito bites as my feet were from fluid. I was absurdly cautious, unwilling to apply anything to repel the mosquitoes that might impact my pregnancy and too tired to do the research as to what actually might. Despite my caution, I also wasn't willing to stay inside, to abandon moving. I found myself rolling or limping with cane in hand to a university parking garage. The garage lacked cars due to work from home policies. The garage wasn't empty. Birds overtook it, nesting and hatching in its concrete rafters.

[163] How's My Waterway: Red Cedar River

Those birds were busy making a place without needing our prompting and also kept the mosquitos at bay. I'm grateful to the mosquitoes for feeding the birds and even more grateful to the birds for slowing down the mosquitoes as they fed on us. My child and I weren't the only people who benefitted from the work of the birds. In the parking garage, we met couples with hand weights on power walks, families playing tag, college students in hammocks, college students getting high and finding a high vantage point from which to watch the sunset. The garage became an improvisational community space, a temporary utopia.

When I went into labor that July, I felt called to the garage. I paced it back and forth with cane in hand. It was a humid, rainy day. I felt grateful to have room to move through my contractions away from the mosquitoes. I almost didn't make it to the hospital, I felt too comfortable pacing that concrete forest. Now it's over, perhaps. Even as the pandemic continues, the cars are back. The space has changed again. Anuj and three year old Cordelia walked together unmasked through the parking garage when he came to perform *Love, Simeon* here at MSU. We imagined together how to write a letter to the river and the macaque. We kept moving.

Ecopoetry allows for attention to process in the partial, fleeting communities created with rivers and in parking garages and on the phone. These methods may be messy. They may fail. They may collapse. But we'll keep experimenting: discovering processes for the present again and again.

Crip Planet has repeatedly invoked the potential of these fleeting connections fomented in the act of doing things together. I lean into attention to methodology as an extension of what Black queer feminist theorist Cathy Cohen called for in her work "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens." There she imagined a method toward building resistance movements that was attentive to the uneven distribution of resources across identity groups: "I envision a politics where one's relation to power, and not some homogenized identity, is privileged in determining one's political comrades" (438). What would it mean to imagine political kinship across the ever shifting power

relationships of climate change and environmental degradation? Perez, whose practices recycling tropes of western literature, attending environmental protests, and calling attention to climate impacts in the Pacific bolster my approach to method, writes in his poem, "New Year's Eve and Day in the Chthulucene" from *Habitat Threshold* about the acceleration of the impacts of climate collapse with its disproportionate impacts. Throughout the poem, the speaker introduces juxtapositions: juxtapositions of the old and new year (59-60) juxtapositions of feasts and starving children (59), juxtapositions of New Year's fireworks and war (60). No one likes these juxtapositions, he insists, particularly on social media. At the close of the poem the speaker is in a dream. He rides to a native reserve called "Utopia," where "...a one-eyed salmon floats to the surface and says: / 'your apocalypse began centuries ago. And it's accelerating.' [he] return[s] to / the car but Cthulhu [Oddkin] has disappeared. An AI voice states: 'We all have / unequal uncertain futures'" (Perez 61). The poem's conclusion recognizes the ways in which the apocalypses of the world are neither singular nor impending, but have been and continue to be. Locating himself in the midst of and as kin with Cthulhu, a one-eyed salmon, and an AI, the speaker takes on multiple points of ecological connection, blending with fraught mythology, non-human animals, and technology to recognize the ways these facets reflect an interconnected world.[164] Ecopoetry such as this models the importance of recognizing systemic inequality while also insisting on site-specific knowledge. While the forces that act on the speaker have broad impacts on multiple communities, his recognition in the midst of the Pacific that "At no point / is my life detoxed or plastic- / free" (60) begins from one node of connection in a broader web. It is by moving and thinking along these interconnected strands that ecopoetry offers language and concepts for approaching the challenges of ecological devestation's unequal futures holistically.

[164] As fraught and problematic as H.P. Lovecraft's writing and legacy it is, Indigenous authors like Perez, feminist authors like Donna Haraway, Black authors like Sami Schalk, and disabled authors like Petra Kuppers have taken on the trappings of this legacy to transform it.

Crip Planet takes on the improvisational comradery that comes from making connections and taking action in the mess. Over the course of its argumentation, I have woven together three strands of ecopoetic practice that model how ecopoetry transforms silence into language and action: through acts of temporal care, through utilization of the strange affinities that can be traced through the mess, and through practices of recycling that transform waste into ways to survive.[165] These ecopoetic practices arise as tools for survival, transformation, and continuation while living in a world that is increasingly recognized as disabled. They offer a means for connecting crip embodied practices with poetry. In the introduction to *Indigenous Pacific Island Ecoliteratures*, editors Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, Leora Kava, and Craig Santos Perez deftly encapsulate the relationship between illness of people and land: "our physical health is intimately connected to the health of the environment, land, and society" (xiii). *Crip Planet: 21st Century Ecopoetic Methods* follows the connection between crip practices of community formation and interdependent support and contemporary ecopoetic methods.

Rather than demonstrating the connections between ecopoetic methods and community formation for the sake of homogenizing, I do so to orient readers towards a variety of potential practices. By modeling a multiplicity of approaches, I argue for pursuit of multiple futures. By modeling the importance of shared, sometimes conflicting practices, I articulate the need for action–acts of creation, acts of care, and acts of support–that respond to climate collapse. As a collection of methods, *Crip Planet* draws attention to ecopoetic methods that look strange and wild on the page and whose concepts work ecologically–forging connections across time, through the forced collapse of the mess, and through recycling's simultaneous refusal of the disposability of people, language, and plastic. As existing ecopoetic methods, these poems, communities, and authors model ways to survive in a climate–both ecological and social–that is becoming increasingly inimical to survival;

[165] Thank you, Audre Lorde, for the call to do just this.

here, I offer a review of these methods, their capacity for repetition with difference, and an example of my own collaborative project that begins to offer one answer to the student provocation "well, what can we *do*?"

I argue that, central to considerations of *doing* is an understanding of relations, and to approach relations between communities and the planet requires a turning to the ways that health, environment, and disability become enmeshed. Holding these disparate elements together is not a novel approach, but one that is central to critical disability studies, Indigenous approaches to place, and disability poetics. Renee Pualani Louis, Kanaka ʻŌiwi from the Island of Hawaiʻi scholar of cartography and dance argues that there is an evident overlap of language, body, and place in her book, *Kanaka Hawai'i Cartography Hula, Navigation, and Oratory*. She points out through analysis of language and dance that, "Orientation of the body, island, and planet is a fairly straightforward physiological observation… it is a natural outgrowth of recognizing all entities. Keep in mind this is not the same as anthropomorphizing nature" (167). Not only does she align body and planet, but notes that it is not an endeavor to make the planet a person, but to recognize the entwinement of the human and more-than-human world. With the recognition that people, the world, and their shared health are intertwined, disability studies scholars David Mitchell, Susan Anebi, and Sharon Snyder emphasize the increasing precarity of both homogenous culture and the need for a greater variation of human bodies, minds, and practices. In *The Matter of Disability*, they point out that "as the world grows increasingly toxic, as medical science harbors the capacity to keep more kinds of bodies alive, and as disabled bodies expand their material presence as participatory subjects in exclusionary human-made environments, posthumanist disability theory asks how variation might serve as the foundation for modes of reconfiguring, reimagining, and renavigating the world" (Mitchell, Antebi, and Snyder 19). This mobilization of disability theory tasks participants to deviate from currently homogenizing systems in pursuit of variation of knowledges, practices, and methods

of conceiving the planet This observation is echoed in an interview with white disabled poet and professor Jim Ferris, when he addresses the ways in which disability becomes a site for generative writing and use of language. In an interview with other disabled poets John Lee Clark, Jennifer Bartlett, and Jillian Weise he argues that "Disabled people live closer to the edge. We are more vulnerable, or perhaps it is that we show our human vulnerability without being able to hide it in the ways that nondisabled people can hide and deny the vulnerability that is an essential part of being human" (Ferris 272). The connection of disability, vulnerability, and language articulate the reason that a crip intervention into ecopoetry is necessary, especially at a time when those in already vulnerable positions are becoming disabled. When taken together, these observations support an approach to crip ecopoetry that requires thinking across scales of time, body, and health.

This work is simultaneously taken on by the disability studies as a way to imagine justice for disabled people and the planet. In her work on "Disabled Ecologies," disabled white US activist, artist, and scholar Sunaura Taylor[166] thinks through transcorporeal connections with ecological landscapes in conversations of disability. Taylor follows the impact of toxins released into Arizona's groundwater as part of the military industrial complex that requisitions aircraft through to those who are poisoned, bombed, and otherwise disabled. At the center of Taylor's argument is a recognition of the ways in which narratives of disability are mapped onto landscapes, where she "suggest[s] that metaphors of health are arguably some of the most ubiquitous and impactful ways of talking about environmental harm, and [asks] what critical disability perspectives can make of this" (Taylor). Taylor uses this language as a bridge to consider what responsibilities arise for disabled landscapes– she hopes to "follow and build off of these various ways of thinking with ecological health as a material reality and take seriously the possibility that processes of the ecosystem impairment, illness,

[166] While Taylor is one example of disabled thinkers engaging ecology, other writers such as Sins Invalid (the collective), Naomi Ortiz, Petra Kuppers, Anuj Vaidya, and Eli Clare write in a similar vein.

and mutation are not mere metaphors, but rather could be generatively understood as part of the disability experience" (Taylor)[167]. Folding landscapes into the disability community, Taylor reflects on the potential interdependent networks of support that ecological and disability community thinkers can bring to one another. Much as Perez's writing drew outward from lived experience to systemic inequality, Taylor's work folds together the futures of disabled people and landscapes, asking the question, "how can we support disability in all its forms?"

I begin to answer this provocation by turning to three methods for ecopoetic reading and writing: Temporal Care, Mess, and Recycling.

Temporal Care

Temporal care as a radical act disrupts the assumption that time must flow in a singular, progressive fashion towards the new and novel as quickly as possible. As an act of resistance and care, early in my graduate studies at University of California–Davis Campus, I worked with collaborators to insist on other ways of approaching time than the hustle that academia, capitalism, and progress insist on. Working with the HATCH Feminist Art and Science Shop, I argued for the opportunity to lead a series of practice-based workshops that stretched reading one book into a weeks-long process that was accompanied by time in hammocks and food prepared in slow-cookers. The structure of this workshop was informed by the appeal of Audre Lorde in *The Cancer Journals* to slow down and assay the transformation of silence into language and action. Lorde describes asking her doctors for time to understand the impacts of cancer in her body while being pressed to speed into surgery and chemotherapy. It was this crushing haste and lack of institutional support that undergirds Jina B. Kim's call for alternate timescales for crip-of-color academics, disabled and nondisabled alike. In "Towards a Crip of Color Critique" she calls for "resistance to the relentless

[167] Through HIVES, I was able to bring Sunaura and Anuj together for a conversation on disabled ecologies in November of 2022. Together, they described their creative, scholarly, and political pursuits and described their multimodal approaches to disability in relation.

output and labor often held up as a measure of our professional value, and… in a broader sense, a refusal to equate productivity and work with one's life worth" (Kim). These events in turn served multiple purposes: they moved resources from the university into the communities of students, artists, and their families; they provided material support to vulnerable, underpaid students living in one of the most expensive states of the US; they lead to the creation of performances, scores, poems, and meals; and they created a space for community to form around slowing down and feeling connection in an otherwise alienating push towards completion. It was this focus on slowness and the intentionality of pace that shaped my understanding of the necessity of alternate approaches to time in ecopoetry.

In "Temporal Care Work: Slowness, Opening, and Refusal As Crip Stewardship In The Poetry of Larry Eigner and JJJJJerome Ellis," I demonstrated the significance of approaching time in ways that destabilize linear progress and the new, instead offering care by adjusting for a multiplicity of paces. I begin by recognizing the contributions of Eigner to crip genealogies of slowness, especially in the field of ecopoetry. Eigner's embodied writing practice utilized only his "right index finger and thumb, working on his 1940 Royal portable typewriter" (Faville and Grenier xiii). This embodied practice, connected to his habits of reading literature about science, the environment, climate, history, and society situated Eigner's writing in the midst of multiple conversations, beginning from a place of crip embodiment and opening outwards to consider the ways in which his experience as a wheelchair user with CP fit into larger ecological conversations. While Eigner did not emphasize–or often even articulate–his disability in his writing, his methodological approach to writing comes with crip appreciation for slowness.[168] In a poem/letter/instruction in one of his

[168] Indeed, Eigner wrote about being particularly surprised that his biographical information and status as disabled were of interest to readers. In a letter to Cid Corman he writes, "I can see Allen's psychological bent in his selection fr my stuff, eg. Surprised to find the biographical matter interesting, but shdnt have bn: the kind of stuff that doesn't come through/too coherently in letters" (Eigner "Letters" 263)

letters, Eigner guides the reader–ostensibly Cid Corman–through a process for reading slowly. He exhorts the reader to go "line after line" and after one look, to "refresh the eyes." In these instructions, Eigner folds together slow reading and slow writing, exhorting readers to come along slowly, line by line, as a way to stave off the approaching abyss (Eigner *calligraphy / typewriter* 43).

In his writing, Eigner enacted a radical form of ecopoetic interconnectedness as a way to draw interdependent networks between himself, the world he pulled information from, and the uncertain future that lay ahead. Reading an untitled poem from January 31, 1965, I find that Eigner attempts to open out from his experience as a white disabled man and to trace the relationships between his first flight on a plane and the flight chronicled by Frederick Douglass. This poetic meditation of Eigner's, asks the question "what have I to do with what I don't see"? while implying that the answer is "everything." In this questioning and response, Eigner is tasking readers with slowing down, tracing kinship, and crossing the distance of time, space, and race to understand the ecological strands that make such a meditation possible–that of interdependent connection. This reading of Eigner's work emphasizes the possibilities that exist when treating time differently as an act of care: it insists on possibilities–everything is connected if readers willingly take time to trace their connections with–and thereby responsibilities to–people, land, and water.

Rethinking crip relationships to time is an especially fecund practice in connection to ecopoetry, as the history of slowness and transformation of time in disability communities is enhanced by the potential of ecopoetic practice. While "crip time" traces the factual ways in which disability informs experience of time–from long waits at doctor's offices to short conversations that assume incompetence–it similarly models the ongoing inequity of having a singular, progressive approach to time that serves ecopoetic practices well. White German professor of American Studies Timo Müller argues in "The Ecology of Literary Chronotopes" that ecopoetry is especially well positioned to change relationships to time because of its "epistemological structures that influence

our very perception of time and space" (593). I use this understanding of the ways that crip time and chronotropes function in ecopoetry to argue that slowness and other temporal practices have always existed alongside dominant linear time, and that contemporary ecopoetry needs a crip intervention into its understanding of time to address the incongruity of a perpetual orientation towards the new and novel. I use this approach to time to further emphasize the ways that contemporary ecopoetry must hold multiple, often incompatible, forms of time within its practices as an act of care for those experiencing time differently.

Author, composer, ecopoet, and self-described Black stuttering animal JJJJJerome Ellis models the ways in which such acts of temporal care can act ecologically and reify multiple, incompatible time scales.[169] In the multimedia album/score/book of poetry *The Clearing*, Ellis begins from the embodied experience of their stutter, which they render on the page as occupying both space and time. This is accomplished through the use of a book that is the size of a book of sheet music, and which is separated into ten-second blocks of time. These blocks steadily fall away to be replaced by poetic utterances that are not carefully measured ten-second intervals, but expressions of time felt differently. Where annotations formerly held numbers, language intervenes, forming a poem-within-a-song and informing the reader that the pace follows how "each tail a switch / and a prayer. / The anther ruptures / like a river / forever arriving / between two shores" (95). Instead of foreclosing time to be something carefully measured and ossified, Ellis insists on an opening up to time again and again beyond the metronome, beyond the repeatable measures and into a scale that moves with plants, rivers, and shores.[170] In their musical performance, scholarship, and poetry, Ellis uses alternative approaches to time as a way to redress the harms of standardized, normative

[169] From their website: "I have an ongoing practice of spelling my name JJJJJerome Ellis. I do this because the word I stutter on most frequently is my name."

[170] Ellis emphasizes that "the stutter invites a different kind of rhythm… the word metronome– the *-nome* part of the word refers to law or order– The metronome, order of the meter. The law. I like thinking of the stutter as like an inherently lawless rhythmical force"

chronology, instead enacting an open approach to different rhythms of communication and being. This act of temporal care makes space to hold the geographical time of climate collapse alongside the acceleration of slow violences enacted by disparate experiences of climate change.

The many scales of time woven together at this moment require capacious approaches to speaking, understanding, and navigating time. In ecocriticism, one challenge is to hold together the depth of time that shapes the environment with the speed of change that has come about during the most recent millenia. In their introduction to a focus section on "Writing the Anthropocene" published in the *Minnesota Review,* Tobias Boes and Kate Marshall explain that one of the greater challenges to understanding the impacts of anthropogenic climate change is to think along multiple timescales, one of geological time and one of human-scale time. They argue that "knowing and articulating species-being within a reflexively produced era of geological time requires…novel modes of articulation that are appropriate to these complex forms of mediation" (66). While I argue that crip time, CP time, and Indigenous knowledges are not novel, they do effectively mediate these entwined and multiple time scales. I argue that these knowledges, informed by the disproportionate impact of accelerating climate change, simultaneously articulate the complex time scales of slow violence. In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Nixon describes slow violence as "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (2). Similar to geological time, slow violence occurs and accumulates out of conception until scholars and poets emphasize and articulate the ways in which these violences function. Critical attention to crip time in connection with ecopoetry provides the necessary care to open up time in ways that offers care to stutterers and wheelchair users while articulating the harms accelerating in the environment and in communities.

Mess

In 2018, I made the difficult decision to move from Davis, California to a new PhD program in Michigan. Part of this decision was made to escape the smoke of wildfires. The smoke of fires would, at times, prevent me from attending classes for weeks at a time, and these extended periods were impacting my performance as I studied performance studies. Despite having moved from California to Michigan, smoke found me once again in the summer of 2023. Smoke from the unprecedented wildfires in Canada reminded me of the interconnectedness of all places, and the ways that a weakening jet stream was wafting particles in stranger and further directions. I spent much of the summer huddled next to an air purifier hastily procured from a local supermarket. In between coughing fits and hepa filter replacements, I found myself sifting through the ashes that fell from Kearney's poems "The Orange Alert" and "Sand Fire (or The Pool, 2016)" and wonder if/when he'll take on the absurdity of the 2025 Los Angeles fires.

With the acceleration of slow violence, the increase of global temperature, and the increased likeliness of extreme weather events, it is inevitable that many if not most people will be forced out their present contexts and into some other series of relations. I address this conundrum in, "'What Have We Made???!!!': Mess as Method in Douglas Kearney's Ecopoetics." Mess-as-method–what I term messodology–asks: how does an ecopoet who finds themself in the smoke and rubble adopt that very mess as a method to respond? Messodology offers practices for figuring out what one does with the aftermath of violence and how to forge strange affinities within the mess of ideological and physical collapse. I argued that the corpus of Kearney's work models, through social critique, performative typography, and collage, forms of discrepant engagement that offer opacity as a means to protection for those in the mess. Kearney's work lives up to the exhortation on ecopoetry to appear strange and wild on the page. In an episode of *Between the Covers*, Kearney articulates that performative typography "is about imagining, layering, and interruption at some level…when I think

about performative typography, I always think about it as self-consciously drawing attention to itself as tight in a way that I think conventional poems generally don't" (Kearney qtd. Naimon). The layers that Kearney constructs rely on a series of articulations that must be recognized by readers in order to be interpreted–however there is not a single 'read' of these poems. Each engagement comes about through filtering out noise versus signal, and especially by finding points of connection in the mess of meanings on the page. The mess is the space of reading; Kearney relies on readers' locating and creating none or more meanings from the contexts provided, connecting histories, placement, and embodied knowledge.

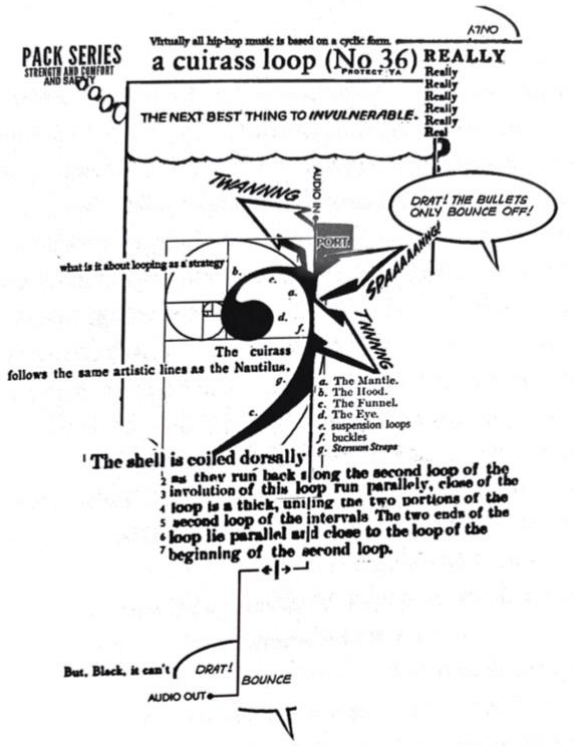

Figure IX: An example of performative typography.

In the above poem, "But Black, it Can't–" Kearney models the potential of mess by offering readers one kernel of connection that might branch out into other readings–he draws attention to the words "a cuirass loop (No 36.)." Cut from a military history book, Kearney layers it with the quote "hip-hop music is based on a cyclic form" and uses these shapes to gesture towards "Protect Ya Neck"

from "Wu-Tang Clan's first album, *Enter the 36 Chambers*" (Kearney *Subwoof* 37). As a creation from and with mess, this performative typographical poem generates obfuscating noise for those 'not in the know' or a point of connection for those who share knowledge. It's this act of seeking and arranging strange affinities within the mess that Kearney's work demonstrates, finding those who can "Protect Ya Neck" while remaining inapprehensible to those who would threaten one's neck. To that end, Kearney's work models ways of making *do* in the mess.

Tracing the edges of Kearney's work, situated in Black cultural production and history, benefits from being entangled with crip ecopoetic practice as a recognition of the shared practices that Black and disabled writing rely on. Both crip ecopoetic practices and the work of Black poets rely on discrepant engagement, described in the titular text by Black American poet and novelist Nathaniel Mackey as "practices that, in the interest of opening presumably closed orders of identity and signification, accent fissure, fracture, incongruity, the rickety imperfect fit between word and world" (19). I argue that the imperfect fit articulated by Mackey when describing discrepant engagement shares the description of crip poetic practices, especially in the transition from content to practice, or as both Mackey and Jina B. Kim describe, the movement from a noun-state (unmoving, passive, comprehensible) to a verb-state (action, process, and critical methodology). It's in this way that I argue that messing around is a practice used by disparate communities, but which fosters strange affinities and shared methods for survival.

Integrating critical disability studies and the methods of crip-of-color critique into discussions of Black ecopoetic work in the mess offers ways to read both out-as-disabled poets and the crip practices of Black non-disabled authors as creating shared affinities for community development and survival in a system that is inimical to the survival of both communities and their overlaps. Nathaniel Mackey turns toward music, poetry, and poetry informed by music to address the ways that crip practices exist in Black cultural production, noting that "the stutter plays a

significant role. What better qualification of what can only be a partial victory over incoherence? What limping, staggering, and stumbling are to walking, stuttering and stammering are to speech… stammering and stuttering are perceived as speech im-pedi-ments" (246). Because of the impossibility of 'fitting into' a system of cultural production that relies on whiteness (or perceived coherence to white audiences), Mackey notes the always uneven movement of being in the mess as a tool for community formation and especially as a means for protection of the stutterer, stammerer, and limper. Mackey closes this argumentation in favor of crip practices, stammer/stutter/limp, praising them as acts of genius: "part of the genius of black music is the room it allows for a telling 'inarticulacy' a feature consistent with its critique of a predatory coherence, a cannibalistic 'plan of living,' and the articulacy that upholds it" (252-3). For Mackey, sinking into the mess and leaning into crip practice is a way of ducking the predation of a society that seeks to apprehend those who move, think, and act on different time scales and in a multiplicity of ways. Indeed, Mackey finds in this kind of multiformity a spark of the divine–to move in a syncopated rhythm implies an understanding and celebration of having alternate ways of being and moving in the world.[171]

Kearney, through both his ecopoetics and his commentary on the writing of poetry, points to the mess as a critical way of opening up the possibility of avoiding apprehension–both as understanding and as arrest. In Kearney's 2015 book fusing poetics, personal narrative, theory, and history, *mess and mess and* he argues that "mess, like shit, has a protean quality–mess is shit that can't be fixed, only repaired" (Kearney *Mess* 18). I use Kearney's focus on this move away from things being fixed—which is to say, returned to a state of wholeness and to be trapped/held in a noun state–towards repair–which is to say combined in functional albeit different arrangements. The

[171] There is an extended description of Legba, the Fon-Yoruba orisha who walks with a limp in "'What Have We Made???!!!':
Mess as Method in Douglas Kearney's Ecopoetics" that details how "the master of polyrhythmicity and heterogeneity, he [Legba] suffers not from *deformity* but *multiformity*, a 'defective' capacity in a homogenous order given over to uniform rule. Legba's limp is an emblem of heterogeneous wholeness, the image and outcome of a peculiar remediation." (Mackey 244, my emphasis).

multiplicity of meaning that Kearney's work both utilizes and must be discussed using insists on open-ended multiplicity. Refusing singularity of meaning, Kearney's ecopoetry insists on either excess or lack of meaning due to the dangers inherent in being "apprehended (comprehension's voracious cousin)" (Kearney *Mess* 22). He argues that "Hiding in plain sight requires a disproportionate distribution of meaning. That is, the fugitive needs 1=0 or 1 ≥2—nonsense or excess sense… if 1=1, someone's got your number" (*Mess*, 22). It is in this space of nonsense and excess sense that the mess becomes a tool. I return to this combination of noise and excess to articulate the necessity of creative practice in the face of collapse in order to live up to the exhortation from Audre Lorde in *Sister Outsider*, that silence must become language and action, as "for every real word spoken, for every attempt I had ever made to speak those truths for which I am still seeking, I had made contact with other women while we examined the words to fit a world in which we all believed, bridging our differences (Lorde 41). To create noise and signal in the mess is to enact a refusal of the systems that would homogenize ecopoetry and cut away the variations of approaches to articulation that forge connections across the planet and across time. In this way, I argue that Kearney's delving into the mess models practices for existing in forced re-contextualization and loss.

Recycling

December 2022 found an odd assortment of participants sitting, eyes closed, in a brightly lit, too-green room on the first floor of the building that houses my graduate student office. A local religious leader, a disability arts nonprofit leader, an undergraduate disability group president, and several others were holding objects recovered from the impaired waterways of New York City. We cradled sponges and branches; they smelled like salt and dirt. Disabled Indigenous access doula moira williams was leading the workshop "Invoking Aqueous Eco Monster Ancestors" for the

intersectional disability studies group I cocurate called HIVES.[172] In this space, we reflected on what it meant to become monstrous as we traced the impacts of what waters have shaped us and which waters we contaminate in our efforts to continue existing. During this meditative practice, we took up a selection of objects recovered from occupied Indigenous land and recycled them into foci for transformation.

In "Recycling: Making Do with Litter-ature in the Pacific," I turn from the conceptual space of the mess to address the logics of containment and disposability that force people and ideas into the mess in the first place. I follow the ways that Indigenous ecopoets argue that people and material are not disposable and that even the things we dispose of are not gone. Using plastic as a structuring metaphor, I address the longevity of plastics within the ocean with the ongoing articulation of Indigenous Pacific ecopoets that they, too, remain despite attempts to dispose of them. These poets transform existing writing through practices of recycling and re-storying to offer practices of survival for this crip planet.

In order to complicate logics of disposability, I turn to the ways in which disposal (of people, of plastic) enacts epistemological containment–attempting to isolate Indigenous communities to one place or time and thereby disposing of their potential to move (or even exist) across places and times. This framework relies on moving outside of a Westernized binary of either-or and into a space in-between, one of both-and. Professor Anne Mai Yee Jansen describes the work Perez as a form of "affinity poetics," which she defines as being "about creating that sense of solidarity across identities and across distance for the purpose of advancing a decolonizing agenda" (Jensen 8). To this end, Perez's ecopoetry does more than convey a single perspective, but creates archipelagic connections across communities by offering a *chenchule*, a gift given at the beginning of a journey or

[172] HIVES is a research workshop and speaker series on disability and relation founded by myself and partner Michael Stokes.

at a special event, emphasizing that "the poetry is a gift—sometimes a gift of knowledge, always a gift of art, often a gift of affinity—but it is also a responsibility. With knowledge of injustice comes a responsibility to create change" (Jansen 22). This onus to orient towards change insists on a fundamental approach of recycling, transforming hostile plastics and hostile language into something that creates change in the Pacific. Utilizing recycling (through the treatment of Western literature and thought as the waste-product), automythography, and plurality–multiplying and moving in defiance of containment–, Perez, Marsh, and Avia intentionally take on and repurpose trash as a method for redressing colonial violence.

One essential practice shared by crip ecopoetics and Pacific Indigenous ecopoetics is the insistence on presence and importance despite the logics of disposability that equate disability with death/disappearance and Indigeneity with being gone from the present moment. In her chapter of *Archipelagic American Studies*, Māori – Te Āti Awa, Taranaki scholar, poet, and irredentist, Alice Te Punga Somerville writes about how containment practices focused on limited understandings of land/water divides are unable to account for archipelagic relations in the Pacific. Somerville writes about how colonial extractive practices have defined the ocean as "space of nothingness—a border between 'here' and 'there'" (326). This 'nothingness' that is mapped onto Indigenous and/or disabled people is part of what allows containment and disposability to de-value multiple forms of existence that do not fall within ableist colonial understandings. Using the Great Pacific Garbage Patch as a metaphor for the disposability of people, Somerville argues that the swirling patch of garbage has "roots not on the ocean floor but in the disposable lives of other people. No, not people whose lives are deemed disposable but people whose lives are based on disposability" (Somerville 320). In this passage, she argues that the plastic originates among those who believe in the disposability of people as well as plastic, referring to those at risk in broader practices of disposability–for Somerville, Indigenous people specifically, but the logics of the system extend to

disabled people, queer people, and Black people, disabled and/or queer and nondisabled/queer alike.[173] By returning to and re-valuing these lives and narratives, the authors discussed here model practices that insist on the continuity of Indigenous knowledges and the vitality of disabled existence.

In the poems presented here, Perez takes the enduring plasticity of Neruda and Seuss and twists them, acknowledging their refusal to decompose and utilizing them to instead render visible ongoing ecological collapse that is often pushed beneath the surface. By recycling them, Perez breaks down and remakes their styles into ones that press back against plastic waste and violent ecological futures. Marsh hearkens to the multiplicity and unboundedness of PI, insisting on the many ways PI navigate a world without Parameter Indicators. In *Bloodclot*, Tusiata Avia refuses to leave Samoan goddess Nafanua in the past, instead articulating the ways in which the goddess accompanies her in the present and as a body. Taken together, these modalities transform an ecopoetic relationship to waste, offering methods for re-valuing and connecting with that which has been discarded.

Resurrecting Jatayu

I offer my own classroom and collaboration as a model of what can be done taking crip ecopoetics as a method for *doing* something beyond criticism. At Michigan State University, I have regularly taught an Integrated Arts and Humanities course titled "(un)Natural Disasters" where students evaluate so-called "natural" disasters, tracking their sometimes human origins and the disproportionate impacts of fires, hurricanes, plastic waste, and pandemics. In this class, we discuss environmental racism and the proclivity of institutions to place waste, landfills, and industrial buildings that produce toxins near areas where people of color live. We focus on the ways that slow

[173] For greater detail, see Calvin Warren's *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation* and Nirmala Everelles' "Thinking with Disability Studies" in *Disability Studies Quarterly*.

violence steadily accumulates in the lives of poor people and people of color, disabled and nondisabled alike. We discuss practices of ecojustice, and who can afford to engage in activism and whose lives depend on less-ecologically friendly practices. The access friction between reduction of plastic use and the absolute necessity of plastic straws for many disabled people generates many sparks for my students. We read news about so-called "natural" disasters and theory on environmental racism and slow violence. One question that often comes my way after my students become equipped at implementing critical theory and thinking about climate injustice at large, is "well, what can I do now?" They've become so skilled at analyzing the problems of our present that they can consider anything they'd make through that same critical lens. I too have this trouble. This is where digital humanities, crip methodology, and collaboration come into play in my own work.

In the classroom, I introduce my students to an interactive roleplaying game, "Resurrecting Jatayu," developed with my friend and collaborator, Anuj Vaidya. The game focuses on the vulture Jatayu, who is disabled in flight. In the creation of this game, Vaidya and myself drew on the methodologies that I have modeled here to structure how such an interactive DH project could be mobilized in a thoughtful, intentional, and intersectional way. As we created gameplay elements and tables, sourced graphics from both open-source repositories and Vaidya's own fieldwork, and planned interactive components, we modeled the approach on the axes of temporal care, mess, and recycling. Using this intentional structure, we invite players to consider their own interdependent connections to the world around them through a shared practice of storytelling.

Through its design as an interactive object, "Resurrecting Jatayu" becomes an exercise in making intentional, ecological choices while not fully knowing the resounding implications of one's choice. The role-playing game exists in the *Feminist Review* and connects users to a one-hour video introduction, a series of slides that guide users through known consequences, and a two-page sheet that details the process and makes space to write and draw wing designs, alongside examples.

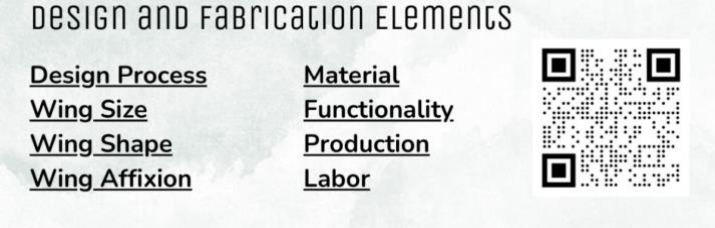

Figure X: A screenshot depicting the categories "Design Process," "Wing Size," "Wing Shape," "Wing Affixion," "Material," "Functionality," "Production," and "Labor." Alongside these categories is a QR code.

This screenshot shows the QR code and eight categories of consideration that players navigate in order to design the wing they think will best suit the situation. As an exercise in decision-making, this game allows users to see some of the impacts of their choices in real-time. The links here connect to a series of slides that inform users of a limited set of options as well as some known consequences, as seen below.

Figure XI: A screenshot of a Google slide with a plane wing and clouds in the background; it offers some of the known impacts of designing Jatayu's wing for Defensive and Combat Maneuvers"

When run as a live experience, they are informed of the "unintended consequences" during a final debrief. When shared asynchronously, users receive an email or letter informing them of the unintended consequences at a future time. The database of consequences, while not shared with

users, contains information about the intended and unintended consequences of choices, as well as links to some of the resources used in determining their impacts.

Reanimation Category	Reanimation Subcategory	Prerequisites	Known or Suspected Outcomes	Unknown or To Be Revealed Outcomes	Source(s) Used
Material					
	Bamboo/Sugar Cane		• Difficuly in transportation of bulk bamboo means that benefits are not wide-reaching. • Bamboo is biodegradeable, resulting in less physical waste over the centuries. • Provides opportunities for community development. • Use of bamboo in place of wood and paper reduces deforestation. • Wing prosthetic project cannot / will not be weaponized.	• Simple harvesting methods spur companies to use under/unpaid labor in the form of itinerant workers, prisoners, or disabled people. • Necessarily diversified industry creates jobs at the level of processing and manufacture. • Utilization of bamboo in place of fossil fuels slows implementation of "green" energy. • Large scale of bamboo development and implementation can causes shifts in deforestation to create new monoculture sites.	•ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF BAMBOO •Environmental impacts of bamboo
	Wood		• Contributions to deforestation continue • Biodegradeable, resulting in less physical waste. • As compared to other nonwood/biomass materials, carbon emissions would be lower. • Wing prosthetic project cannot / will not be weaponized.	• As deforestation continues, key species are lost and necessary biodiversity declines. • Reduction in carbon footprint and drive for use will slightly slow global warming and climate change. • Lowering tarrifs on importing wood shifts environmental impacts to other locations. • Increased utilization of wood promotes use of wood-plastic composites, resulting in increased microplastic residue but fewer nonrenewable elements of some products.	•The Carbon Impacts of Wood Products • India's industrial wood balance • Wood-Plastic Composites—Performance and Environmental Impact

Figure XII: A screenshot of a Google Sheets page, mostly covered in light red with small black and blue text. It lists known and unknown outcomes for making Jatayu's wing from bamboo or wood.

This process, when taken all together, allows users to practice working by themselves or in groups to make decisions that may or may not have the outcomes they desire. What does happen, regardless of the wing designed, is a sustained conversation or reflection on what the transformation of silence into language and action might look like: collaborative negotiation of non-ideal outcomes to accomplish *something*. An example of what this negotiation looks like is available here below.

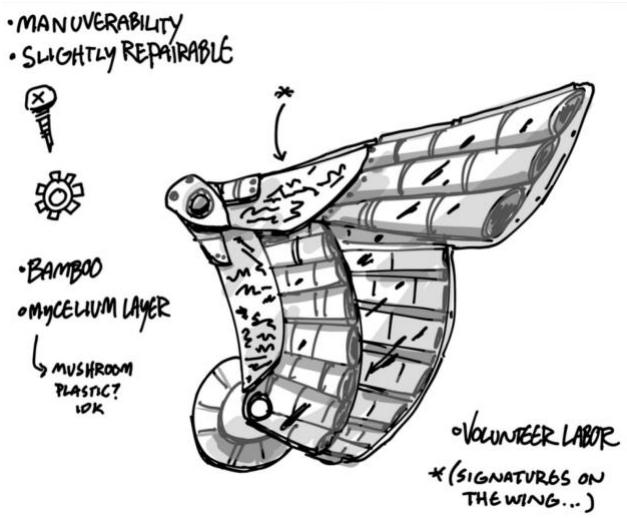

Figure XIII: A black and white drawing of a bamboo wing that has been coated in a reconstituting mycelial layer. The wing has serious cyber/solarpunk vibes. It's covered in volunteer-creator signatures; Image Credit: This illustration was created by Sako Chapman during a game session at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.

Introducing Jatayu to audiences unfamiliar or only partially familiar with the *Ramayana* requires wading into the mess, offering partial perspectives on the story as a whole and allowing players to take fragments of the story with them. At each presentation of the work, Vaidya notes that "there are as many versions of the *Ramayana* as there are grandmothers, or more accurately as there are people to tell it" ("Collaborative Storytelling"). The *Ramayana* is located in a fraught nexus of interpretations–as an ancient text, it has been utilized for religious purposes, for storytelling, and in service of strains of nationalist discourse. In "Ramayana and Political Imagination: A Reprise," Indian academic and writer Ananya Vajpeyi articulates the role that the *Ramayana* has had in the ideology of "*Hindutva*—which seeks to redefine India as a nation of and for Hindus" ("*Ramayana* and Political Imagination"). Wading into this fraught series of relations, Vaidya utilizes the *Ramayana* and its stories as a way to resist singular approaches to the text, queering and cripping the narrative into a feminist eco-cinema project. This project, through its attentiveness to the ways in which the

Ramayana has historically been used returns to process, arguing that the infinite re-storyings of the *Ramayana* can be used in acts of resistance.

The story of Jatayu, as a mess, offers the potential to be recycled as something greater through its associations between the human and more-than-human worlds as well as historical assumptions that have been placed on disability. Jatayu, a vulture, is an exalted character known for his loyalty and courage. In the *Ramayana*, Jatayu attempts to protect Sita as she is abducted by Ravana.[174] In this battle, Jatayu's wing is cut off–it is this disabling moment that "Resurrecting Jatayu" addresses throughout its gameplay. Whereas many narratives equate disability with death (Mitchell and Snyder), the *Ramayana* included, this game instead re-imagines Jatayu as a living disabled vulture in need of a prosthesis. The re-deployment of Jatayu is not something new in this project, indeed Jatayu has seen a great deal of contemporary attention as a tourist attraction and as a symbol for combatting perceived terrorism. It is important for our project to address these fraught mobilizations as "the deployment of Jatayu as a symbol for political and economic ends sits unsettlingly alongside a calamitous decline in India's vulture population, which has seen a 97 per cent drop since the 1990s due to the use of a bovine NSAid painkiller called diclofenac" (Vaidya and Stokes, "Resurrecting"). By complicating Jatayu's position in discourse, the role-playing game allows participants to re-cycle their relationship to disability, nationalism, and kinship with the more-than-human world through care and attention.

In order to redress the mess around Jatayu and the *Ramayana*, the roleplaying game works across timescapes in order to offer temporal care to the literary figure of Jatayu and the vulture population of India that is facing a critical die-off. In order to address the temporal elements of

[174] Sita: Goddess of beauty and devotion and the female protagonist of the *Ramayana*. In "Resurrecting Jatayu," Sita is reimagined as "SITA: Sanctuary in Terra Autonoma—an autonomous forest zone that holds the seeds for human and vulture survival. She is a vision of the future in the present, a queer utopia forged through a practice of reciprocity, where the struggle pulses with life and love and laughter." (Vaidya and Stokes). Ravana: The Rakshasa king and primary antagonist of the *Ramayana*.

Jatayu's existence, the game creates a story that intervenes in the moment of Jatayu's death. A video that accompanies the game, which sets the story and the rules of this episode of *Forest Tales*, we introduce participants to the story of Jatayu and a storytelling device that holds together the long past with the troubled present. Upon the death of Jatayu in the retelling of the *Ramayana*, players we welcomed to "the vortex of latency, where all potential pasts, presents, and futures swim together, reaching for the threshold of becoming" (Vaidya and Stokes, "Re-Storying" 28:08). In this conceptual space, Jatayu is connected to one-winged vultures in a sanctuary visited and photographed by Anuj, where injured vultures can nest, breed, and survive. Folding these spaces together through time allows us to hold the past narrative of Jatayu, the present threat to vulture survival in India, and the potential of our speculations simultaneously.

Beyond the temporal care of the game itself, "Resurrecting Jatayu" offers temporal care in the form of both live and asynchronous engagement. The game has been made available as both a live event and as an asynchronous set of resources in order to allow participants the most opportunities to feel through the implications of how they work to create a prosthesis for Jatayu. "Resurrecting Jatayu" has been played as a live workshop with *HIVES* participants at Michigan State University and with audiences at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. These live sessions hired artists to create visual renderings of the prosthetic wings designed by participants in real-time and had access infrastructure such as ASL interpreters, captions, and image descriptions to ensure that the shared space could be as accessible as possible. In addition to the live workshops, "Resurrecting Jatayu" is available perpetually and open-access through *Feminist Review,*[175] where players can access the introductory video, example wing designs, and the full suite of known and unknown consequences for design choices.

[175] https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/01417789221146563

Through the design process of this game and its implementation in the classroom, in workshops, and in museums, I have turned my scholarship and research from the accumulation of poetics into poetry in motion. The project holds together methods from disparate and intersectional communities in order to model ways forward for students and participants. What remains of the crip planet and the methodologies offered here are a matter for the reader. Instead of an answer, I end with a question:

Well, what will *you* do now?

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