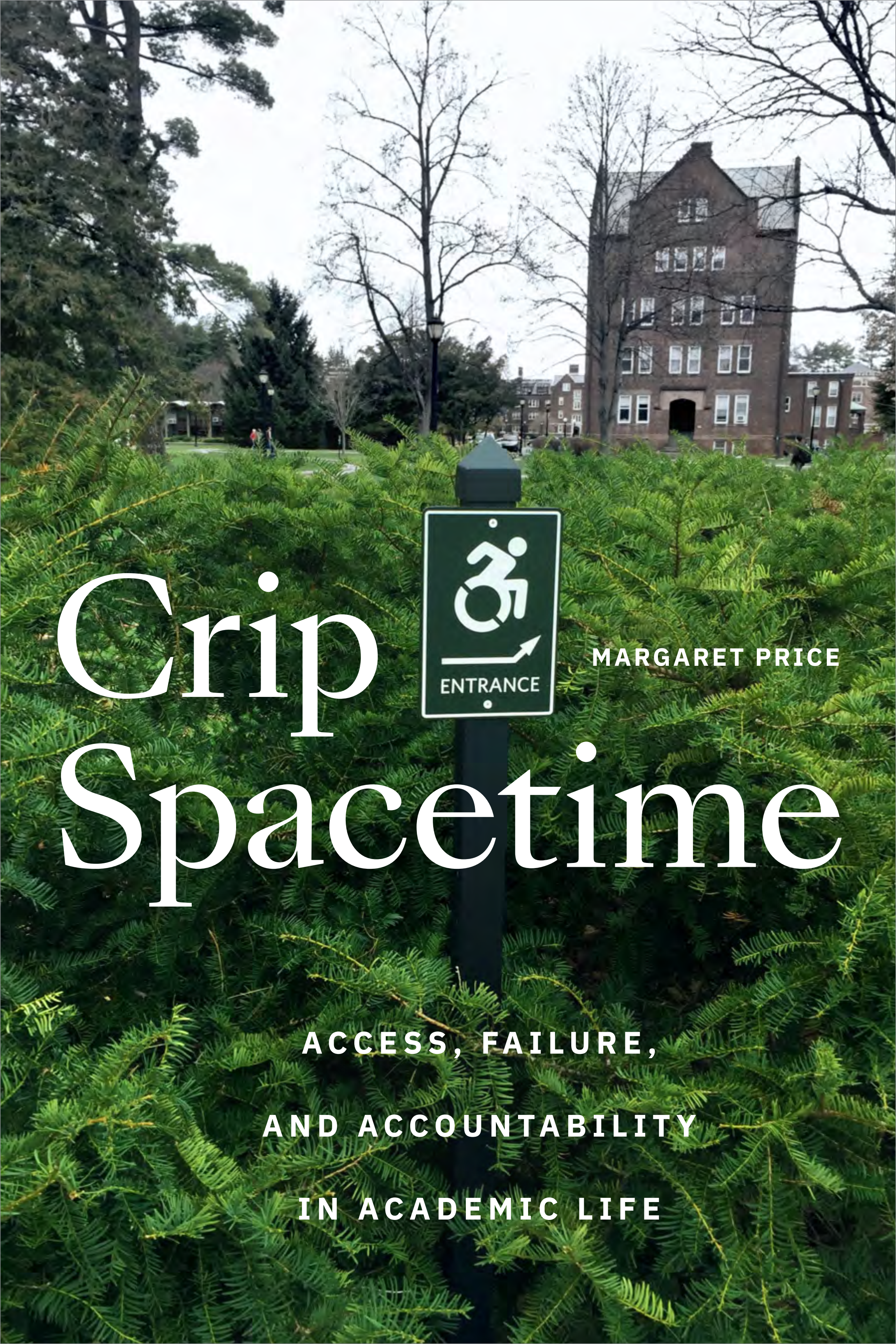


# Crip Spacetime

MARGARET PRICE

## ACCESS, FAILURE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ACADEMIC LIFE

# Crip Spacetime

BUY

# Crip Spacetime

## ACCESS, FAILURE,
## AND ACCOUNTABILITY
## IN ACADEMIC LIFE

**MARGARET PRICE**

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS DURHAM AND LONDON 2024

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Project Editor: Ihsan Taylor
Designed by Matthew Tauch
Typeset in Garamond Premier Pro and IBM Plex Sans by Westchester Publishing Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Price, Margaret, [date] author.
Title: Crip spacetime : access, failure, and accountability in academic life / Margaret Price.
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2024. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2023037237 (print)
LCCN 2023037238 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478030379 (paperback)
ISBN 9781478026136 (hardcover)
ISBN 9781478059370 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478093992 (ebook other)
Subjects: LCSH: Disability studies. | People with disabilities in higher education—United States. | People with disabilities—Education (Higher)—United States. | People with disabilities—Employment—United States. | BISAC: SOCIAL SCIENCE / People with Disabilities | SOCIAL SCIENCE / Activism & Social Justice
Classification: LCC HV1568.2 .P75 2024 (print) | LCC HV1568.2 (ebook) | DDC 362.40973—dc23/eng/20240110
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023037237
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023037238

Cover art: A sign nearly obscured by green shrubbery. The sign bears an access symbol and the word “Entrance,” with an arrow pointing away at an angle. Photo by author.

This book is freely available in an open access edition thanks to TOME (Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem)—a collaboration of the Association of American Universities, the Association of University Presses, and the Association of Research Libraries—and the generous support of The Ohio State University Libraries. Learn more at the TOME website, available at: openmonographs.org.

For my family

# Contents

# Acknowledgments

For many years I've been referring to *Mad at School* as "my first book," partly as a joke, and partly to help will *Crip Spacetime* into being. I've been working on this project for twelve years. It's been hard to give myself the grace that I'd easily grant to a friend or colleague as I slogged through the coding, the writing, the revision, the questioning. *Crip Spacetime* at last exists, finished, because of the many people who have supported and challenged and worked with me along the way.

Chad Duffy and Lezlie Frye, my stalwart Queer Book Group, provided constant check-ins, practical advice, affirmations, care packages, clutch readings, and all the GIFs.

CareLab at Ohio State University (OSU)—Emily Cunningham, Ashley Tschakert Foertmeyer, John Jones, Liz Miller, Christa Teston, Addison Torrence, and Elissa Washuta—provided serious research mentorship and crucial silliness in meetings.

The three schools where *Crip Spacetime* was written—Spelman College, Ohio State University, and the University of Gothenburg—are extraordinary places. I'm grateful to my incredible colleagues at these schools. Working with you has made me better, wiser, quieter, louder, smarter, and humbler, in so many different ways.

Research "assistants" (more like colleagues and co-mentors) on *Crip Spacetime* have been Tess Cumpstone, Ashley Tschakert Foertmeyer, Jess Vazquez Hernandez, Ryan Sheehan, Nate Super, and Addison Torrence. Your brilliance and care enrich this book on every page.

Elizabeth Ault, Ben Kossak, Chad Royal, and Ihsan Taylor at Duke University Press, as well as copyeditor Susan Deeks, are patient, generous, and encouraging—including and especially when I'm flailing. I can't thank you enough for your kindness and sharp expertise. The anonymous readers who responded to the book proposal, and later to the entire manuscript, offered such careful and insightful commentary that *Crip Spacetime* is now vastly different from, and vastly better than, the first draft. All errors and awkwardnesses in the writing are my own.

The following organizations and grants provided support during different stages of the book's development: the Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion, with a grant from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (H133B100037); a Research Initiative Grant from the Conference on College Composition and Communication; a Mellon "Humanities without Walls" grant for the "Building Healthcare Collectives" project; a Faculty Special Assignment from the OSU Department of English; an OSU College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Completion Grant; and a Fulbright Scholar Grant for residency and work at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

I developed ideas such as *ambient uncertainty*, *bodymind event*, and *crip spacetime* while working on essays published over the past several years. I'm especially grateful to the editors of the volumes where those essays appeared—for their feedback and questions and, most of all, for helping me believe in an idea that felt as if any moment it might lose meaning and disappear. The essays are "Un/Shared Space," in *Disability Space Architecture: A Reader* (Boys 2017); "The Precarity of Disability/Studies," in *Precarious Rhetorics* (Hesford et al. 2018); and "Time Harms: Disabled Faculty Navigating the Accommodations Loop," from "Crip Temporalities," a special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly* (2021) edited by Ellen Samuels and Elizabeth Freeman.

Thank you to my beloved communities—crips, disabled folks, academics, activists, neighbors, old friends. The gifts you've offered have been tiny scribbled notes, thoughtful conversations, squeezes of hands or fins, snarky text messages, quick or slow reads of chapters and sections, cartoons, stickers, food, fragrance-free hair products, ice packs, hikes and walks, stories of kids and cats and dogs, pictures of access fails, selfies of morning face. These small things and moments are everything that matters to me. To you: Juliann Anesi, Moya Bailey, Ana Bê, Dev Bose, Jos Boys, Elizabeth Brewer, Lydia X.Z. Brown, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, Jeff Brune, Susan Burch, Angela Carter, Christina Cedillo, Mel Chen, Eli Clare, Ally Day, Amrita Dhar, Jay Dolmage, Patty Douglas, Jane Dunhamn, Julie Passanante Elman, Nirmala Erevelles, Stina Ericsson, Abigail Fagan, Ann Fox, Michele Friedner, Collie Fulford, Aimi Hamraie, Per-Olof Hedvall, Franny Howes, Jo Hsu, Ada Hubrig, Jenell Johnson, Mira Kafantaris, Alison Kafer, Sona Kazemi, Mimi Khúc, Eunjung Kim, Georgina Kleege, Mahnaz Kolaini, Kateřina Kolářová, Annika Konrad, Travis Chi Wing Lau, Daisy Levy, Cindy Lewiecki-Wilson, Kristin Lindgren, Robert McRuer, Mary Martone, Dorothee Marx, Carol Moeller, Cal Montgomery, Andrea Riley Mukavetz, Clare Mullaney, Karen Nakamura, Akemi Nishida, Sarah Orem, Amber O'Shea, Corbett O'Toole, Jessica N. Pabón-Colón, Pushpa Parekh, Aly Patsavas, Tynan Power, Katie Rose Guest Pryal, Matt Rice, Libbie Rifkin, Lauren Rosenberg, Carrie Sandahl, Sami Schalk, Sejal Shah, Ashley Shew, Cole Thaler, Cy Weise, Bess Williamson, Cindy Wu, Remi Yergeau, Sandie (Chun-Shan) Yi, and Irene Yoon.

……

Some specific thanks: Ellen Samuels, you have always felt like my big sister in crip femme life. I'll never not be in awe of you. Jon Henner, may you rest well; thank you for helping me figure out how best to transcribe sign-language interviews (and sharing notes on weight lifting). Ser Jackson, every facet of bodymind is seen and cared for when I work with you. Maurice Stevens, I think of you when I'm trying to remember how to fight with compassion. Hannah Eigerman, you always know how to take care of us. Mark Salzer, I swear I wrote to you first! Thank you for teaching me so much about research, rehabilitation psychology, and kindness. Kennan Ferguson, you've been there for over thirty years, believing in me—a miracle I can still hardly believe. Sara Cole, all I need is for you to make pastel sketches of my nightmares and continue to kick ass for trans kids while also rescuing baby animals. I hope that's not a lot to ask.

Johnna Keller, you thought I could skate eighty-seven miles. You thought we could move to Sweden. You thought we could get another cat (and then another) (and then another dog). You thought we could build a porch with a ramp. You thought we could get married. Thank you for your grand ideas and your tiny songs.

# Introduction

## *Crip Spacetime*

> Sometime soon, we are going to run out of Band-Aids, and we need to start thinking about structural solutions and the meaning of access on a whole different plane. —ELLEN SAMUELS, "Passing, Coming Out, and Other Magical Acts"

Disabled academics know.

We know where the accessible entrance is (not in front). We know if there are cracks or gaps in the sidewalk leading to that entrance. We know if there's no sidewalk at all, but only a lumpy dirt footpath. We know what to do if the door is locked, with a sign on it saying, "Handicap assistance call 555-STFU," and we know what to do if that number leads to voicemail. We know what kind of handle the door has. If the door is unlocked, we know how heavy it will be. We know what the room we're going to looks like, and we know how to ask—with charm and deference—if we need the furniture rearranged, the fluorescent lights turned off, the microphone turned on. We know how much pain it will cost to remain sitting upright for the allotted time. We know how to keep track of the growing pain, or fatigue, or need to urinate (there's no accessible bathroom), and plan our exit with something resembling dignity. We know that no one else will ever know.

What you've just read is a litany—or maybe a rant. I use it for two reasons: first, to remind those who haven't performed that series of calculations that they are an everyday experience for some of us; and second, to call to those for whom the litany, with little adjustment, is painfully familiar. In fact, it's not true that *no one* else will ever know. Disabled academics talk to one another a lot. We talk to our fellow minoritized academics, our families, our communities. We commiserate. We relate. We know.

Disabled workers possess specific knowledge of their workplace and its barriers. Many of those barriers are not easily perceived except by the person being barred—for example, an overheated classroom, a printed handout for a meeting, a hallway lit by fluorescent light. And perceiving those barriers may have nothing to do with ocular vision, geometric space, or in-person presence. Johnson Cheu, for example, writes about an occasion when one of his students said to him, “I don’t know *anyone* with a disability” (Brueggemann et al. 2001, 388). Cheu uses a wheelchair, the student is sighted, and they were together in an in-person classroom at the time. Perception went beyond literal dimensions of time and space. Perhaps the student meant he didn’t know anyone in his personal life with a disability. Or perhaps it was an effort to invoke the popular claim, “I don’t see disability!” Told from Cheu’s point of view, the story does not offer further information about what contributed to the student’s perception. Cheu concludes the story with his own perception: “I had never felt so invisible” (388). Cheu’s account was published in 2001, a time when disability scholars and activists had already been exploring notions of perception, in/visibility, passing, and covering with interest. The topic has become increasingly popular since then.[1] Across this diverse body of work, a common argument emerges: disabled people are both hypervisible and invisible, our experiences and needs garishly obvious yet somehow obscure at the same time.

This paradoxical experience of in/visibility occurs for a number of reasons, always inflected by space, time, costs, and relationality (the four themes that shape this book’s four main chapters). Perhaps the disabled worker has had to plead their case to ten different people, going from office to office and disclosing personal information repeatedly. The worker thus knows they have made the same request, with increasing urgency and frustration (possibly embarrassment), ten times, but each person they visited perceives only one occasion. Perhaps the disabled worker is “pushing through” an event with extreme fatigue or pain, knowing that if they display their pain outwardly, they’ll make everyone else uncomfortable—so they don’t. Perhaps the disabled worker is attending an online lecture and reading captions typed by a live captioner. The host of the event graciously thanks the captioner and proudly announces the presence of live captions but does not acknowledge—maybe doesn’t know about—the hours and emails and persuasive energy invested in requesting, finding funding for, and scheduling the captioner. And then the speaker is speaking rapidly, using specialized language, and no one provided the captioner with information ahead of time—so the captions are almost useless. That, too, is discernible only by some. Only in moments. Only in fragmented and refracted ways.

Who am I, then, telling you about this strange world and the wavering glass between me, writing—disabled, white, genderqueer, gray-haired—and you, reading? Who are you? I don't know. Nevertheless, I am giving you access of a sort. I am inviting you into the hall of mirrors, the haunted house, the wormhole that is crip spacetime.

You may already be familiar with its tricks. You may know that even if you've been using crutches for a year, a colleague will suddenly focus on you during a meeting and ask, "Oh, no, what happened?" You may know that the suggestion "Just drop it in the chat" is not neutral. You may have a running dialogue in your head about why you *need* this form of access, you don't just *prefer* it, because it will allow you to do your job, but it's important to say that it will make you more *productive* on the job. Or you might be a visitor—you may want a guide. I will try to be that guide.

I'm also inviting you into crip spacetime as sacred space. It's not an easy space, and it's often not safe. This may be a difficult book to read. Most people who have read these stories with me, including fellow researchers, anonymous reviewers, and friends offering feedback on chapters, have commented on how painful the reading process is. Sometimes the pain stems from recognition: you may recognize and feel the intersecting oppressions of ableism, racism, sexism, and homophobia. At other times the pain arises from a sense of shock: How can such things happen, and so routinely? Having immersed myself in these stories for years, and as a person who lives with physical and mental disabilities, I recognize that sense of outrage that is somehow both familiar and incredible. Bigotry is both appalling and everyday. Numerous interviewees cried during their interviews, and sometimes I cried with them.

Knowing how much pain is in these pages, I asked trusted friends to help me identify particular topics that might be especially distressing. Interviewees tell detailed stories about being ignored, belittled, and sometimes humiliated in professional settings. They describe traumatic experiences. One interviewee tells a story in which they crawled under their desk and cried; another interviewee tells a story about falling down stairs. Many stories detail experiences of physical and emotional pain. In the pages that follow, I share my own stories along with participants'. My writing voice is sometimes full of anger, sometimes laughter, and always as understandable as I can make it, even when I'm talking about abstract theoretical ideas. I can't tell you that reading these stories will be easy, or safe, or even particularly meaningful for you. But I can tell you that I am here, feeling along with you.

I wrote this book because, as I also said of *Mad at School* (Price 2011b), I could not go any longer without writing it. Educational institutions—specifically in this book, colleges and universities—are, as Akemi Nishida (2022, 124) writes, "built on a bedrock of racial and other interacting social injustices." Yet they also serve as locations for the dismantling of social injustices, as places of gathering, and, at times, as opportunities for what Fred Moten and Stefano Harney (2013) call "study." In an interview published in *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, Moten characterizes study as

> what you do with other people. It's talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three held under the name of speculative practice. . . . What's important is to recognize that *that has been the case*—because that recognition allows you to access a whole, varied, alternative history of thought. (110, emphasis added)

In this statement, Moten strikes two crucial themes. The first is what Moten and Harney call, elsewhere, "hanging out"—just being together, outside or perhaps beyond neoliberal frameworks of productivity. The second theme emphasizes an alternative understanding of time: study "*has been* the case." In other words, it's not a newly discovered theory. It is, rather, recognition of a long-standing and ongoing form of gathering. In the spirit of Moten and Harney's study, then, I've spent twelve years paying attention to the stories told in these pages. My aim is to help dismantle injustices and build forward from the present structures of academe through recognition of what is true now. We must recognize how academic practices of "access" become so destructive, and where we want to go instead. The theory of crip spacetime is my attempt to help explain that difficult question.

## THE INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY: STOP FIXING IT

> Within [its] etymological origins, one can detect tensions between "access" as a kind of attack and "access" as an opportunity enabling contact. . . . The concept's dual inflection as both attack and contact highlights the centrality of boundary work to all forms of political struggle. —KELLY FRITSCH, "Accessible"

Crip spacetime as a theory attempts to explain what it means to be disabled as an academic at this historical moment. I developed this theory by analyzing data from a multiyear project, the Disabled Academics Study. The study draws on a survey with more than 250 disabled respondents (Kerschbaum et al. 2017; Price et al. 2017); in-depth interviews conducted with thirty-eight disabled academics; and published accounts by or about disabled academics. Since the study's launch in 2012, our research team has published numerous academic and practical pieces drawing on its data.[2] *Crip Spacetime* continues that work and goes in a new direction. It continues to ask the questions that started this study, including "What choices lead to academics' disclosing disability?" and "How is disability perceptibility negotiated by disabled academics?" But it also asks a broader question, driven by years-long analysis of the survey and interview data: *"Why doesn't inclusion work?"*

One of the most important findings from the Disabled Academics Study is that access as envisioned and practiced in the contemporary university actually worsens inequity rather than mitigates it. In other words, even when policy makers, scholars, and everyone else involved in the academic enterprise make sincere efforts to "include" disabled people, the disparities between disabled and nondisabled life only get more pronounced—not less. Crip spacetime helps explain why that happens. This theory turns its attention away from individual disabled bodies and the obsession with "accommodating" those bodies, focusing instead on relations, systems, objects, and discourses. Essentially, crip spacetime shows that thinking about disability and access in terms of individual bodies and accommodation not only does an inadequate job of explaining both disability and access, but it tends to exacerbate inequity and block efforts at inclusivity.

Future generations may react to the phrase "accommodating disability" as present generations react to the phrase "tolerating gayness." It's not the worst thing, but it's clearly not the future we would hope for.

In my enthusiasm for imagining different futures, though, I want to emphasize that I am not against accommodation as a present-day, practical measure; nor am I fighting against efforts to define accommodation *or* access through metrics such as the width of a doorway, the presence and quality of an interpreter, or the use of a Quiet Room at a conference. Drawing on Ellen Samuels (2017, 19), although we are running out of Band-Aids—and Band-Aids were not a great solution to start with—I'm still going to use a Band-Aid if I have one. I receive accommodations at my university, and I routinely offer them in the classroom and argue for them on behalf of students and colleagues. What I want to challenge is the *idea* of accommodation, its spatiality and temporality and costs and relationships, as well as its effect on commonly held ideas about disability and what it means. The imaginative logic of using accommodation as a means toward access relies on the assumption that disability is stable and knowable, not only in moments—for example, when confronting a flight of stairs or a time limit or an uncaptioned video—but in *predictive* ways. Accommodation implies (and, in everyday academic life, almost always requires) the ability to say, "I can tell you what I'm going to need—in an hour, in a week, next semester." Thus, disabled people historically have tended to trade on whatever predictability we can muster—or masquerade—to gain access, often citing "rights" as we've done so.[3] Unfortunately, identifying our needs and insisting on the "right" to have those needs met has also enabled the creation of a dividing line. The line takes shape, even against our will, between those whose needs are stable *enough*, predictable *enough*, to benefit from the protections of institutionally sponsored accommodation—and those whose are not.[4]

The system of accommodation in academe turns on being able to predict and fix one's disability. I use the word *fix* here in two senses. The first is *fixing* in terms of "solving a problem through retrofitting" (Dolmage 2013; Yergeau et al. 2013). The second is Stephanie Kerschbaum's (2014, 6) idea of *fixing difference*, which she defines as "treating difference as a stable thing or property that can be identified and fixed in place." Thus, even if we could improve the system of accommodation so that it worked much better, it would always give rise to a multi-tier structure that separates people based on factors such as predictability, identifiability, cost, and temporality. As Dale Katherine Ireland argues, disability is an *uncanny* problem (quoted in Dolmage 2017, 75). As an uncanny problem, disability resists being written into policy and resists being fixed—in both senses. Thus, I'm not arguing that we need *more* predictability in academic life to make it more accessible. Indeed, the effort to cram access into a metric of predictability is part of the problem I'm identifying. Rather, I'm arguing that the spacetime of academe will always be unpredictable in the sense that it will always be "contested and contingent" (Maldonado and Licona 2007, 132). This is why it's crucial to take up a new way of thinking about how disability manifests. In "Slow Death," Lauren Berlant (2007, 757) argues that "we need better ways to talk about activity oriented toward the reproduction of ordinary life: the burdens of compelled will that exhaust people taken up by managing contemporary labor and household pressures, for example." *Crip Spacetime* is an effort to work toward some better ways to talk about, and think about, access in academe. And it's an effort to work toward a better version of academe, period.

The goal of this book is to demonstrate that access, as envisioned and practiced in contemporary US colleges and universities, increases inequity rather than mitigates it. In other words, the current approach to access isn't just ineffective; it's actively making things worse. However, *Crip Spacetime* is not a book about access and inclusivity in a conventional sense. That is, I am not asking, "How can we make the current system of access work better?" Rather, I'm using *access* as a grounding concept to explore crucial problems of equity facing institutions at large, and academe in particular. My aim is partly to show, through empirical data, exactly how and why disabled academics are appallingly underserved by their academic employers, but I also aim to address a more philosophical question. I want to slow down with "access" itself—to analyze, carefully and bit by bit, the textures and shapes of access in academe—so that we can better understand *how* this concept is mobilized to divide workers against one another, and against ourselves. Understanding that process positions us to take collective action, to "imagine possible futures, a place where life could be lived differently" (hooks 1991, 2).

How, then, is *crip spacetime* defined exactly? How does it challenge institutionally defined access? And how might it point us beyond those narrow, institutional definitions toward something that resembles justice?

## DEFINING CRIP SPACETIME

> Whether the reasons for lack of access are judged good or bad, the social activity of people seeking reasons fosters the sensibility that lack of access is reasonable. —TANYA TITCHKOSKY, *The Question of Access*

Crip spacetime is a material-discursive reality experienced by disabled people. It is one of the many ways of being and knowing that make up the pluriverse. Pluriversal politics—that is, thinking of existence as a pluriverse rather than a single reality—is, as Arturo Escobar (2017, xvi) writes, "about the difference that all marginalized and subaltern groups have to live with day in and day out, and that only privileged groups can afford to overlook as they act as if the entire world were, or should be, as they see it." I understand this to mean that existing as part of a pluriverse means recognizing that existence is made up of many realities. Those realities may overlap, compete, or perhaps engage in "horizontal interactions [and] solidarity-based epistemology" (Mignolo 2018, 31). Throughout this book, I continue developing the notion of crip spacetime as pluriversal. For now, I want to mark that it *is* plural and partial—built through interactions and shared stories and grounded in material-discursive ways of knowing. Inhabiting crip spacetime goes beyond simply having a different point of view or different lived experience. Experiencing the material differences of life as part of a subaltern group—including the joys, the surprises, and the harms—constitutes a different reality (Escobar 2017). The importance of materiality becomes clearer when we pay attention to the stories told by interviewees in this volume.

*Material-discursive*, as I use the term, signals my affiliation with feminist and critical theories that seek to incorporate both matter and text into their ways of understanding and acting in the world. The hyphen between *material* and *discursive* is not a tidy dividing line but, rather, an active site of exchange and conflict.[5] For example, disability studies (DS) as a discipline has long underemphasized or outright ignored the role that certain topics, including "fatness, HIV/AIDS, asthma, or diabetes" (Schalk and Kim 2020, 38) might play in DS projects. That avoidance, as Sami Schalk and Jina Kim argue, indicates "the ways in which race and class determine the legibility of such topics within the field" (38). In terms of material-discursive existence, being *legible* as disabled doesn't only affect whether or not particular words are used. It also affects one's access to particular kinds of treatments or medications and whether one is respected as being "really" ill or simply having bad habits or being an immoral person. And it affects whether one is deemed deserving—by one's doctor, one's colleagues, or even one's own family of origin. In disability, as in all matter(s), the material and the discursive cannot be meaningfully separated.

Karen Barad (2007, ix) has famously described material-discursive inseparability as "entanglement," arguing that entanglement indicates "the lack of an independent, self-contained existence." A key point about entanglement, and Barad's overall theory of agential realism, is that it isn't referring to *interaction*. That is, the elements of a situation—such as the label *fat* and a lack of adequate care—do not come into being, *then* get together and affect one another. Rather, Barad emphasizes, the elements constitute one another's very existence (33), a process she calls "intra-activity." When I refer to intra-activity in the following chapters, I'm indicating that coconstitutive and material-discursive process. Intra-activity takes on recognizable shapes with regard to disability. A situation such as seeking a diagnosis—or receiving one unwillingly—is always caught up with bodymind, access to resources (or lack thereof), identities, relations, and time—all elements involved in what Barad calls intra-activity.[6] As Allyson Day (2021, 5) explains, diagnosis is not an inevitable fact, but an operation of power. While I find Barad's theory compelling, I am more inclined to draw on material-discursive theories that center power and privilege, including Nirmala Erevelles's (2011) theory of becoming.

Becoming, as a theory of how reality comes to be, is usually attributed to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987, 1994). I choose to define it more fully by drawing on feminist-of-color and crip-of-color readings, because these theories offer a richer understanding of the ways that historically situated dynamics of power and privilege play into our various realities. Erevelles explains "becoming" in terms of historical materialism, drawing on the history of the Middle Passage and Hortense Spillers's "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" (1987). She argues that race and disability must be understood in terms of each other (they are, in Barad's term, *entangled*), because "it is the materiality of racialized violence that becomes the originary space of difference" (Erevelles 2011, 26). In other words, disability as a construct has become, she argues, not after the Middle Passage or as a consequence of the Middle Passage but *through* the Middle Passage. Although her Middle Passage example is probably the one cited most often from *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts*, Erevelles's theory of becoming moves beyond that historical example to argue more broadly for the becoming of various identities and possibilities:

> [Deleuze and Guattari] flatten out the landscape upon which such becomings occur. . . . The rhizomatic BwO [body without organs] is ripe with violence emerging out of hierarchical social relations that constitute race, class, disability, and gender for social and economic exploitation. . . . All these becomings—becoming black, becoming disabled, becoming enslaved, becoming poor, becoming un-gendered—become because of the deliberate intercorporeal violence produced out of hierarchical social and economic formations. (46–47)

Erevelles's references to the body without organs and "rhizomatic" ways of coming into being point to debates within disability studies and other critical theory disciplines about the role of specific social and political formations (or, to put it more simply, specific lived experiences within specific systems). In other words, Erevelles is calling out theorists who suggest that we can think about being, or becoming, in the absence of attention to particular relations of power at particular moments in history. Alison Kafer's *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (2013) was published close to the same time as *Disability and Difference* and makes related arguments about the importance of recognizing specific political, historical, and material contexts. Erevelles's theory of becoming makes sense to me not only because it acknowledges the role of harm, but also, more important, because it acknowledges the importance of attending to political, social, and historical specifics. My grounded-theory approach to the Disabled Academics Study (detailed later) is another part of that commitment to specificity: I wasn't able to figure out the theory of crip spacetime until I had spent many years dwelling with participants' stories.

A key element foregrounded in interviewees' stories, and reflected in feminist-of-color and crip-of-color readings, is the sense of existing in a reality that is not shared by those who are supposedly "close" in space or time. Michelle Wright's (2015, 4) term *Epiphenomenal time* explains this sense of existential separation. In Epiphenomenal time, Blackness does not progress along a linear timeline through history but, instead, manifests differently across various spaces and times because of the different ways it calls people into being. Wright argues:

> Epiphenomenal time interpellates a single individual as the point at which many collective identities intersect—but that individual does not become the unifying umbrella for those identities. In other words, the individual being interpellated is an intersecting site for a broad variety of other collective epistemologies; in Epiphenomenal spacetime, unlike in linear spacetime, the individual does not then become the dominant representation that subsumes all those collective identities. (30)

I understand this to mean that identities, bodies, and definitions (especially of complex terms such as *Blackness*) are constituted through that process of interpellation. In some ways, that's not very different from Barad's theory of agential realism. But Wright's theory of Epiphenomenal (space)time emphasizes the role of social identity—including harm and violence—for the elements intra-acting and emphasizes that different agents' experiences may constitute entirely different realities. Wright's theory is explicitly intended to theorize Blackness and its becoming beyond

Middle Passage narratives, so I don't claim that it is directly applicable to the situations of participants in the Disabled Academics Study. It has helped me think through two tenets of spacetime as I understand it: First, it is a reality constituted through a constantly unfolding process, which includes harm as one element; and second, it is actually many realities, each constituted differently by and through different agents. Spacetime is not a place, moment, or concept within the universe; spacetime is pluriverses.

What, then, is *crip* spacetime? Why crip? In "The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain," I wrote that *cripping* means "a way of getting things done—moving minds, mountains, or maybe just moving in place (dancing)—by infusing the disruptive potential of disability into normative spaces and interactions" (Price 2015, 269). Like other critical political theories, crip theory works with identity but is primarily methodological rather than identitarian. In other words, its aim is not to shore up rights or representation of bodyminds labeled disabled but, rather, to disrupt ideas that are mediated through bodyminds, including normalcy, fitness, health, and "ability" itself. Carrie Sandahl (2003), Mia Mingus (2010a), Alison Kafer (2013), Merri Lisa Johnson and Robert McRuer (2014), Eli Clare ([1999] 2015, 2017), Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018, 2022), and Allyson Day (2021), among others, have developed crip theory with particular focus on its tendency to "twist" (Kafer 2013, 16) together with theories of gender and race. Sami Schalk and Jina Kim (2020) describe crip theory's association with other critical theories this way:

> Crip theorists shift focus from a politics of disability representation to the violent operations enabled through ideologies of ability, or the implicit and often compulsory favoring of ablebodiedness and able-mindedness. This attention to ideology proves useful for feminist-of-color disability studies. . . . We contend that the methods offered by crip theory can be used for better racial analysis in disability studies, but that does not mean that all crip theory effectively engages with race. (8–9)

As Schalk and Kim emphasize, a key aspect of crip theory, and one that it shares with critical race theory and gender theory, is that it focuses on thinking through the *ideologies of* identitarian politics rather than focusing on the identities themselves. Crip allows attention to the "violent operations enabled through ideologies of ability" (Schalk and Kim, 2020, 39) but also does not abandon the importance of lived bodymind experience.

In recent years, DS has grown (or been pushed) beyond its initial self-image as a discipline, which is beneficial for those of us who have always been marginalized within it. The editors of *Crip Genealogies* (Chen et al. 2023, 2–3) explain their use of *crip* for its disruptive potential to the discipline of DS itself:

> The praxis of crip is about being in relation to each other in such a way that risks a falling out with disability studies. In naming this anthology, we used the word "crip" instead of "disability studies" to signal 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.

For me, one of the advantages of *crip* is its rhetorical fluidity. It doesn't invoke individual bodyminds as insistently as *disability*; nor is it as abstract as *health*. It is itself a material-discursive concept, constantly in motion among language, flesh, environment, and object.

Crip spacetime is generally not perceptible—or may be only intermittently or partially perceptible—to those not experiencing it. It overlaps with, but is not identical to, realities experienced by those in positions constructed through oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Crip spacetime foregrounds questions such as:

- Who can identify their own access needs in a way that is not just understandable, but *understood*? Recognized? Valued?
- Who can predict what sort of accommodation they'll need tomorrow, or next week?
- Who can't?

Throughout this book, I demonstrate how and why crip spacetime is a distinct reality that is often not perceptible to those not experiencing it. Perceptibility is more than simple misunderstanding or omission; it is, as Kerschbaum (2022) explains, an ongoing process of attention and "disattention." The lack of perceptibility, I argue, is a constituent element of precarity. Precarity—being in a position that places one's agency and one's very existence at risk—is composed through three interlocking conditions: the material conditions of vulnerability (e.g., the presence of lead in a public water supply); infrastructures designed to sustain the material conditions of vulnerability (systemic inequities of race, class, and nationality); and *obscurity* surrounding the other two conditions.[7] That obscurity is a necessary part of existing in a pluriverse: it forces one to recognize, live with, and be subject to aspects of reality that, as Escobar (2017, xvi) reminds us, "privileged groups can afford to overlook."

Crip spacetime is precarious not only because it's difficult and often risky to inhabit it, but because it is obscure. Disabled academics' need for access is an ongoing struggle, marked by questions such as, "But why don't you just ask for help?" and "Are you sure you really need that? Or is that just something you prefer?" Responding to these questions is not a matter of achieving logical understanding. One could answer them over and over again (as most disabled people have) and never close the gap of understanding. This is the error in understanding often made by offices of "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI)—a phrase that has become an industry and sometimes a weapon in academe. For instance, DEI is weaponized when the existence of the office is assumed to offer a clear solution to a logical problem. It is also, sometimes, weaponized as a means to potential good that is never realized. To say that something is weaponized in academe doesn't necessarily mean that the weapon is a clearly discernible object, wielded by an easily recognizable person. It may simply mean that the same people keep getting hurt, over and over again. Adding to the painful complexity of "diversity, inclusion, and equity" is that—as I write—these values are under strenuous attack in US education, including in Ohio, where I live and teach. It seems bitterly ironic that universities' approaches to DEI, already problematic and requiring significant revision, are deemed so threatening by conservative political organizations that they have become an excuse for legislative moves such as allowing hate speech in classrooms and banning education about race, gender or sexuality.

Often paired with DEI is the term *welcoming*, as in, "developing a welcoming classroom" or "safe and welcoming schools." But as Sara Ahmed (2012, 43) points out, "To be welcomed is to be positioned as the one who is not at home." In *On Being Included*, Ahmed investigates the conditions attached to diversity for those whose presence signals that diversity. Diversity, she finds, is a commodity, a currency, sometimes an object: "Diversity can be celebrated, consumed, and eaten—as that which can be taken into the body of the university, as well as the bodies of individuals" (69). Difference and diversity are marked by certain metrics—brown skin, for example, or the consistent presence of a mobility device such as a wheelchair—and used as justification for an institution's measurably good intentions. This is, of course, a neoliberal logic; it is also a "whitely" logic

(Fox 2002; Pratt 1984). It's a logic that assumes intentions are equivalent to actions; that structural inequality is "no one's fault"; and that the work of inclusion can be folded into existing institutional norms without changing or doing away with the institutions themselves.

If we take Ahmed's point about positioning a bit further, we might observe that the verbs *to welcome* and *to include* operate transitively. That is, there must be an object to the verb; someone or something must *be* welcomed, *be* included. And yet in institutional rhetoric, these words are often made into other parts of speech (the adjective *inclusive*; the noun *inclusion*) in grammatical moves that specifically hide their objects. To say *welcoming school* or *inclusive classroom* places emphasis on the space itself—the school or classroom—thus eliding the question of who needs to be welcomed, who is doing the welcoming, or why the welcome was deemed necessary in the first place. To say that a school has the *goal of inclusion* similarly elides those who might be subjects in that goal: where will this goal be actualized, when will it occur, who will be shepherding the action, who will be subject to it? Regardless of how well meant efforts toward inclusion may be, the very fact that such gestures are being made means that the distinction between those "in" and those "out" is reified. Moreover, as the efforts and justifications play out, certain bodies are persistently marked as "excludable types" (Titchkosky 2011, 90; see also Titchkosky 2007). The "excludable type" is excluded precisely because they are imagined out of existence or imagined into a different space where they no longer present a concern. This is *not* to suggest that acknowledged exclusions are less violent or intractable, only that they may be perceived and taken up in different ways. In general, and following Ahmed's point, exclusion often operates in such a way that its technologies are difficult to discern by those not experiencing the exclusion.

Justifications such as "Oh, this building was built before access standards were in place" or "But we did the best we could" or "Actually, there is an accessible bathroom, just not on this floor" shift the focus from the excluded disabled person onto those who are "doing their best" or onto the semi- or non-accessible spaces themselves. Titchkosky (2011, 75–76) offers a list of common justifications, each of which places the disabled bodymind either *elsewhere* (they can use that other bathroom; they can come in that other entrance; they can sit in this designated row at the back of the auditorium) or *elsewhen* (maybe they'll show up in the future; maybe they won't show up). These rhetorical moves function to create a paradox of inclusion. Inclusion is approved and valued—just not right now, or not right here. This “paints the radical lack of access in an ordinary hue” (77). It also shifts “the problem” from the inaccessible space to the “problemed” bodymind (Yergeau et al. 2013) and compounds the pain of exclusion with the additional pain of being made to feel, well, crazy. Twenty-one (out of thirty-eight) interviewees in the Disabled Academics Study reported engaging in a process of self-scrutiny—that is, questioning their own access needs or even their disabilities themselves. For example, the interviewee Linh reported that she has both physical and mental disabilities and added that she experiences some “internalized ableism,” especially when trying to gain access for disabilities that are “not as clear as my physical disabilities.” Roger, another interviewee, put it more bluntly: “You find yourself torn between feeling on the one hand, ‘I—I’m entitled to these accommodations.’ And on the other hand, you’re constantly checking yourself to say, ‘But am I—Am I using them?’” Thus, as is well documented in various disciplines, internalized bias and self-governance act as part of the process of exclusion, again making its mechanisms more difficult to perceive. Ahmed’s and Titchkosky’s theories, along with stories such as the ones told by Linh and Roger, help explain why crip spacetime is difficult or impossible to perceive by those not experiencing it. It’s not a matter of “disabled people understand; nondisabled people don’t.” There is no fixed identity that allows one to perceive crip spacetime. The physics of crip spacetime, as Wright (2015) might say, is not a fact; rather, it is always becoming through the agents, objects, and spaces that are constituted through it.

*Crip Spacetime* is my effort to make that precarious space a little less obscure by asking you, the reader, to pay close attention to specific realities described by disabled academics and what happens as they unfold.

Disability studies has often positioned itself as the discipline that will help alleviate the structural inequities of ableism. However, recent scholarship—discussed later in this chapter—argues that perhaps DS is exacerbating problems of inequity more than it is alleviating them. How, then, might we (DS scholars) redirect our work so that it better fulfills the radical mandate it has claimed since the 1980s? Too often, those of us who practice DS, especially those of us who identify as scholar-activists, focus on moves such as “Get everyone in the room. Ensure everyone has adequate means of communication”—and then forget that there is more to consider. Such practical moves are, of course, crucial. I will continue to fight for them, at my own university and at others. But I urge attention to the ways that those moves, if thought of as endpoints, actually *increase* conditions of precarity within DS—and academe as a whole—by encouraging a "rich get richer" dynamic. This is one of the inequities perpetuated within and through the discipline of DS: we tend to take "access" as an automatic good, define it within a particular frame, then enact it in ways that leave out and in fact erase or actively expel many disabled people. *Crip Spacetime* dwells in academe but reaches beyond academic institutions to make larger arguments about power, ontology, justice, and, as Titchkosky (2011) puts it, possibilities for "wondering"—that is, imagining our way into a different kind of world.

## SPEAKING WITH: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

> In a room full of Black women, Blackness does not lose value—in point of fact, its heightened value may be the basis for the gathering—but it changes meaning. Other facets of identity spring to the fore: socioeconomic position, queer identity, gender identification, ability status, faith, educational background, geopolitical origin, size, occupation, political commitments, and the list continues. . . . The intersection is busy. —THERÍ ALYCE PICKENS, *Black Madness :: Mad Blackness*

First, an account of who and what I am trying to speak *with*. The words and ideas in *Crip Spacetime* build on many different approaches, including critical disability studies, crip-of-color critique, and material rhetorics. In this section, I offer an overview of the theories I am working with most closely, both to give a sense of the book's grounding and to make my politics of learning and citation as transparent as possible. When I cite words, stories, or ideas—such as "disability justice" or "relations"—I am learning from those concepts, and I am accountable to those who developed and practice them. *Crip Spacetime* deliberately centers authors and ideas that are often sidelined or tokenized in scholarly conversations, but this move not as simple as "acknowledging" or "drawing on" an idea. Kristin Arola's comments on the politics of citation resonate with me deeply:

> It's not as easy as citational practice, it's also editorial practice, and pedagogical practice. I find myself here, yet again, telling settlers how to behave, when I still have no idea how to behave in this milieu myself. As an Anishinaabekwe cultured to see the world always already in relation, always

> already active, why should I engage in new materialism at all? Do I detach myself fully from my history and my body and pretend this all feels new to me, citing the right, published scholarship in our field so as to be taken seriously? Do I perform an agitator role, reminding people that for many of us these theories are not new, they are lived ways of being for millennia? Or do I tell stories of my culturing, of the networks of relations that surround me in all projects and rhetorical acts, so as to illustrate another path forward? While I'm okay with a mix of agitator and retelling, my track record shows this isn't always the most effective path forward. I have a collection of rejections and R&Rs [revise and resubmits] from journals who like the stories I share, but suggest I cite "the conversation" (and then months later send me manuscripts to review by settler authors who, while working to bring in Indigenous voices, are playing the game the way it's been designed to be played). (Gries et al. 2022, 196)

Arola's statement resonates with me because she outlines so beautifully the complexity and pain involved in trying to address—and *redress*—citational injustice. None of us works from a place of innocence, but we are all accountable for learning and doing better as we work. Some of us, especially white scholars like me, must recognize that practices such as "decentering" do not lend themselves to individual trainings or quick mentions in published work. Living with, practicing, and learning are at the core of a decentering practice. Further, as Cana Uluak Itchuaqiyaq and Breeanne Matheson (2021) argue, doing work that is *in service to* decoloniality is different from claiming that one's work is itself decolonial. The same is true of disability justice.

New materialism, the topic of Arola's statement on citational practice, offers a useful example to those working in disability studies, rhetoric, cultural studies, and other fields relevant to *Crip Spacetime*. While work in these fields often references new materialism, it less often acknowledges that "new" materialism (not necessarily under that label) was core to Indigenous knowledges long before it was recognized by white-centered fields in the twentieth century. Similarly, much work in feminist theory addresses disability, but only rarely acknowledges the feminist-of-color work that has been linking disability, gender, and race for many years (Schalk and Kim 2020). In *Crip Spacetime*, I center the knowledges that have taught me the most about disability and academe, not only through pages of books and articles, but through conversations at workshops, personal talks, social-media posts, and private messages. Citation, in this book, is an effort to listen and learn. At the same time, I anticipate that my own work will sometimes commit the same injustices that I've just identified, and I am accountable for those acts. Reparation and repair look different in every situation, and they are not avoidable—they are part of the process of writing. In "Dreaming Accountability," Mingus (2019) asks, "What if we cherished opportunities to take accountability as precious opportunities to practice liberation? To practice love? To practice the kinds of people, elders-to-be, and souls we want to be?" In the spirit of Mingus's questions, I explain and cite the theoretical grounding of crip spacetime not because I'm going to get it perfect—I'm not—but because I am offering it to you as an account of my own learning. Over the twelve years of writing this book, I've drawn from studies in education, psychology, law, economics, and geography, but its heart comes from critical disability studies, crip-of-color critique, and material rhetorics.

**Critical Disability Studies.** Critical disability studies emerged in response to a version of "disability studies" that emphasized state-sponsored rights and a clear relationship between impairment and built environment. During the development of DS as a discipline, those two factors were often addressed together. For example, if a built environment could be made accessible for those with physical impairments, it was argued, and if that accessibility were mandated and enforced by law, the inequities surrounding disablement would lessen; perhaps, with universally accessible environments, disability would even disappear as a category. That framework is often called "*the* social model," although in fact there are a number of different social models, some of which are attached to particular countries or regions (such the UK social model and the Nordic social model).[8] Almost as soon as it emerged in the 1970s, *the* social model was enriched by critiques. It accounted poorly for chronic illness, mental illness, and other conditions that flare intermittently or are difficult to name (Clare [1999] 2015; Crow 1996; Wendell 2001). It underemphasized or ignored structural disablement through racialized and gendered disparities in health care, everyday discrimination, or deliberate maiming (Bailey 2017; Chen 2012; Forde et al. 2019; Gee et al. 2019; Geronimus et al. 2010; Hartlep and Ball 2019; Puar 2017; Smith et al. 2007; Smith et al. 2011). And, in academe, DS as a discipline tends to celebrate its own flourishing through new journals, programs, and conferences while sidelining the increasing austerity, violence, and death that characterizes most people's experience of disability globally (McRuer 2018; Minich 2016; Russell 2002). The label "disabled" in academe has increasingly come to mean white, securely employed people with conditions that are easily recognized within structures of power (Erevelles 2011; Minich 2016).

What, then, is critical disability studies (CDS)? Critical disability studies attempts to push beyond work that replicates unjust relations of power, instead critiquing the structures of power themselves. For example, CDS is less likely to ask, "How can we get more disabled people into tenured positions?" than to ask, "How can we remake academe so that it's more equitable for all, including disabled people?" It regards disability as part of a larger system that labels some bodies deviant, broken, or subhuman. In other words, according to CDS, disability is not just a quality that characterizes a specific person's body. It is also a construct that sorts bodyminds into categories that have to do with wholeness, brokenness, beauty, and wellness, which in turn supports structural inequities based on those categories. Thus, CDS understands disability as a construct that aids in upholding existing power relations and systems. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance of embodiment, lived experience, and relations from the micro (within bodyminds or between bodyminds) to the macro (institutions, cities, systems) level. Most theories of CDS take a both/and approach to embodied and theoretical knowledge. Crip spacetime relies on that both/and move: individual bodyminds and stories are important but must be recognized simultaneously as part of the structural forces that govern processes of inequity. As my colleague Maurice Stevens says, we must try to think at "all scales, all the time."[9]

Kafer's refiguring of the social model toward a "political-relational model" is a useful explanation of how DS has moved toward CDS. She writes:

> In reading disability futures and imagined disability through a political/relational model, I situate disability squarely within the realm of the political. My goal is to contextualize, historically and politically, the meanings typically attributed to disability, thereby positioning "disability" as a set of practices and associations that can be critiqued, contested, and transformed. Integral to this project is an awareness that ableist discourses circulate widely, and not only in sites marked explicitly as about disability; thus, thinking about disability as political necessitates exploring everything from reproductive practices to environmental philosophy, from bathroom activism to cyberculture. (Kafer 2013, 9)

Here, Kafer argues for centering not the concept of "disability" itself, but the larger political and historical forces that imbue that concept with meaning—and that do so differently across different contexts. Her political-relational model also argues against a clean division of concepts such as "impairment" and "disability," or "medical" and "social." For example, it insists on the importance of critiquing medical practices and discourses while also recognizing the importance that medical care holds for many disabled people. Similarly, it insists on recognizing the many different meanings of disability: a lived experience that is both desirable and undesirable; the source of important cultural affiliation and building relations; a tool for perpetuating unequal relations of power and unjust practices; and a rationale for imagining certain kinds of futures or foreclosing certain possibilities. Like CDS more generally, Kafer's political-relational model emphasizes the need to use but also question terms, including *disability*, *crip*, *feminist*, and *queer*. Finally, it emphasizes the need to recognize the many sites where discourses of disability matter, whether disability is explicitly marked or not. For example, as she illustrates throughout *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, various imaginings of what "the future" might be like often hinge on a concept of disability as the automatically unwanted, a future that is automatically dreaded or avoided.

By now, the term *critical disability studies* has been in use for about twenty years, prompting the question from Helen Meekosha and Russell Shuttleworth, "What's so 'Critical' about Critical Disability Studies?" Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009, 51, 53) note that CDS, like other fields of critical social theory, takes on poststructuralist concerns, including "the crisis of representation" and "globalization," while also "maintain[ing] a critical self-reflexivity toward its own theories and praxis." In disability studies, that self-reflexivity has been concentrated especially in the discipline's early failure to account adequately for its own racism, sexism, and ableism. Efforts to redress these failures have been mixed. Meekosha and Shuttleworth call for "a carnally relevant politics" (56)—that is, a CDS approach that attends to both materiality and discursivity—which many scholars have taken up. However, detailed challenges to the discipline's oppressions have been more recent, with the development of work such as *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts* (Erevelles 2011); *Black Madness :: Mad Blackness* (Pickens 2019); a cluster of articles in *Lateral* on the question "Enabling Whom? Critical Disability Studies Now" (J. Kim 2017; Minich 2016; Schalk 2017); *Curative Violence* (E. Kim 2017); *Black Disability Politics* (Schalk 2022); "Whose Disability (Studies)? Defetishizing Disablement of the Iranian Survivors of the Iran-Iraq War" (Kazemi 2019); and *Crip Genealogies* (Chen et al. 2023). Ongoing work and learning is needed. In particular, established DS scholars, including me, must resist the impulse to react defensively when our early work is criticized. We *should* be learning. When we know better, we should do better.

**Crip-of-Color Critique.** One of the theories emerging from the body of work just mentioned is Jina Kim's "crip-of-color critique." In "Reclaiming the Radical Politics of Self-Care" (2021), Kim and Sami Schalk locate crip-of-color critique at the nexus of feminist of color, queer of color, and disability studies theories. Specifically, they point to crip-of-color critique as prioritizing the inseparability of ableism from racism, classism, and sexism through state power and other structural oppressions:

> A crip-of-color critique . . . highlights how the ableist language of disability, dependency, and laziness has been marshaled by state and extralegal entities to justify the denial of life-sustaining resources to disabled, low-income, immigrant, and black and brown communities, with women, queer, and gender-nonconforming populations often suffering the greatest costs. It further examines how writers, artists, and activists, primarily women and queers of color, generate systems of value, aesthetic practices, and liberatory frameworks that center the realities of disability, illness, and dependency. (327)

Two parts of this definition stand out, in my reading. First, Kim's theory, and Kim and Schalk's explanation of it, center an issue that is often underplayed in CDS: ableism is not only aligned with, but *causally* related to, other axes of oppression, including racism, classism, and sexism. Second, crip-of-color critique does not highlight only that causal relationship; it also highlights counter-stories and counter-knowledges of disability practiced by disabled, queer, low-income Black and brown communities. Crip-of-color critique draws on Black feminist theory, and especially on counter-readings of Audre Lorde, the Combahee River Collective, and other authors who have often been read in reductive, extractive, and white-feminist ways. I've learned a great deal from Kim and Schalk's work, as well as that of other scholars working with/as feminist thinkers of color, whose works are discussed in detail throughout *Crip Spacetime*.

The knowledges leading to crip-of-color theory, and the scholars who have built those knowledges, are critical to understanding crip spacetime, because crip spacetime works explicitly against a version of DS that treats disability as separate from other axes of oppression. If disability is separated from other axes of oppression, any efforts for access that emerge will largely benefit white, cisgender, middle-class people—exactly the situation that currently prevails in most of academe. Scholars working in CDS, especially those of us who are white and in other positions of privilege, experience a constant pull toward business-as-usual, white-centric DS. Pushing against that force must be a continual practice. One such push-and-pull dynamic is the relationship of disability justice to CDS and the potential for cooptation and exploitation that always exists as part of academic projects.

Disability justice (DJ) has many overlaps with academic theories, but it is also worth taking time to recognize ways that it is not synonymous with efforts located mostly within academe. Disability justice is a grassroots movement that was founded by and centers queer and disabled people of color (Sins Invalid 2016). It is often cited as a key concept in DS, and sometimes the two are conflated. I argue for the importance of recognizing DJ as a movement distinct from DS while also recognizing that the two areas' principles and practices may at times overlap. Disability studies is primarily situated in academe, and mostly benefits people affiliated with academic institutions, while DJ is primarily situated within communities not sponsored by or located in academe. This is not to say that no DJ activists are affiliated with academic institutions (some are), or that DS as practiced within a university can never uphold or forward the goals of DJ (it can). However, the position and goals of a majority-white academic discipline such as DS are fundamentally different from the position and goals of a grassroots movement founded, supported, and led by queer and disabled people of color. I don't believe that DS programs should claim to be doing DJ work without much careful thought and accountability to those who are not benefiting from that work—immediately and materially. The phrase "disability justice" (and *justice* itself as a term) have recently become popular in academic genres, including calls for papers, conference theme descriptions, special issues of journals, and scholarly publications. My previous book, *Mad at School*, expressed skepticism about academic topoi (common topics) including *participation*, *presence*, and *productivity*. In the years since that project, I have seen *justice*, along with *inclusion*, *equity*, and many others, become similar topoi—signaling good intentions, at best doing nothing, at worst making false promises that cover up unjust acts and actively cause harm.

**Material Rhetorics.** Material approaches in rhetoric share the aim of moving beyond several modernist assumptions: that the human is the most important agent of knowledge; that Westernized logic, drawn from human senses and the human brain, is the ultimate source and arbiter of knowledge; and that everything nonhuman (objects, animals, environments, time and space themselves) can be reliably observed and understood by human senses and brains. Jennifer Clary-Lemon and David M. Grant (2022, 5) write that, as part of posthumanism, new materialism "allows for the agency and vibrancy of matter—animals, things, forces—to count in rhetorical conversations while working to unseat the Euro-Western commonplace that separates mind from body, culture from nature, logics from affects." As Clary-Lemon and Grant show, treating mind and body, culture and nature, and logic and affect as binaries serves a particular group of humans at the expense of everyone and everything else.[10] My own approach to material rhetoric focuses on its ethical and transformative potential. For example, although a smartphone is interesting in and of itself, I find it most useful to attend explicitly to the ways that power and intersecting oppressions have governed the various meanings a smartphone might make in a specific context. Lavinia Hirsu's article from *Precarious Rhetorics*, which analyzes the discourse and events surrounding smartphones used by Syrian refugees, offers such an approach. She writes, "A rhetoric of material assets hides and misrepresents the refugees' struggles by directing public attention toward a limited set of relations between humans and objects. . . . I argue that smartphones, just like boats, tents, food, and clothes, do not merely support those who own them; they are entangled in discursive and material relations that make the fabric of life" (Hirsu 2018, 147). Hirsu goes beyond simply noting that the smartphone is part of a larger ethical infrastructure. She shows, throughout the article, that smartphones are "entangled" with migrants' bodyminds in ways that can cause those bodyminds to be misunderstood or devalued, sometimes fatally. She also offers a set of guidelines aimed at helping readers think through human-technology relations more ethically—for example, resist the popular discourse that encourages a viewer to use a photograph of an object as representative of a person's wealth or status.

Crip spacetime as a theory relies on material rhetoric because inhabiting crip spacetime means inhabiting a reality whose meaning is made through the relations among words, bodies, objects, technologies, and environments. Jay Dolmage (2014, 3) suggests defining rhetoric as "the strategic study of the circulation of power through communication." Following Dolmage's point, I would extend that to say that material rhetoric is the making of realities within pluriverses—some of which are significantly more harmful than others.

## AN ACCOUNTABLE METHODOLOGY

This section offers an account of how the Disabled Academics Study was carried out. I hope to describe the study in a way that's accessible to readers in many positions—not just those familiar with qualitative research methodologies. For me, it's especially important to explain my methodology in a way that is as *accountable* as possible. My understanding of qualitative research methods follows the definition offered by Amanda R. Tachine and Z Nicolazzo in the introduction to their collection *Weaving an Otherwise: In-Relations Methodological Practice* (2022, 2):

> [We view] qualitative research methods as, at their best, a series of introductions. They are modes through which scholars share names, present themselves with those engaged in close conversations, as well as doorways through which scholars can invite readers into careful community with possibly new (and old) worlds. Qualitative research methods are also action oriented (a verb), creating threads where we recognize and feel more deeply that we are in relations with life and the world around us. Nothing is solitary, and no one is singular; this is a beautiful gift that qualitative research methods can remind us of time and again.

Following Tachine and Nicolazzo's understanding of qualitative research methods, my approach to describing the Disabled Academics Study centers questions such as: Why did I undertake the study in the first place? How did I—along with co-researchers—make decisions about how to recruit interviewees, how to arrange interviews, and which analytical approaches to emphasize? How do I continue to be accountable to and in relation with participants, even years after their interviews have concluded? Any kind of research, but perhaps especially qualitative research, is full of backtracking, rethinking, and, ultimately, knowing that you would do it a little (or a lot) differently next time. This section attempts to tell the story of how the research unfolded, shortcomings and all.

One of the first issues that arose when I began thinking about this study in 2011 was the question of how to find disabled academics to talk to in the first place. At the time, there were almost no large-scale studies of disabled faculty, staff, or graduate students. Large studies that did exist—such as the National Science Foundation's survey of graduating doctoral candidates—didn't look across all disciplines, and didn't include any qualitative data. Qualitative data could be found in small case studies and first-person accounts, but these were few, and there was no larger research picture for them to connect to. Indeed, many of these small-scale or first-person accounts seemed to assume disabled academics were alone in their positions. Rochelle Skogen (2012, 508), for example, describes her story as "one voice calling out to others." However, when I considered the hundreds of thousands of employees in academe, and the millions of disabled people in the United States alone, it was obvious that there must be significant overlap—most likely in the tens of thousands and possibly more. This overlapping group, as the minimal research record indicated, were rarely acknowledged, and individuals within the group tended to be extremely cautious about identifying as disabled at work. Therefore, "recruitment" didn't simply mean sending out emails. It meant considering past harms to disabled people at the hands of researchers; building trust; and thinking deeply about issues of research accessibility. One of the few collections on this topic, Mary Lee Vance's *Disabled Faculty and Staff in a Disabling Society*, details in its introduction how difficult it was to recruit authors for the anthology. Vance (2007, 6) notes that the anthology was originally intended to be a collection by disabled women of color, but so many had to "reluctantly withdraw from the book project" that Vance eventually widened its scope to disabled faculty and staff in general.[11]

Given the "fragmented" nature of existing research across locations, types of disability, and disciplines (Brown and Leigh 2018; Sundar et al. 2018), I designed a two-phase study: an anonymous survey followed by in-depth interviews. The survey was created by Mark Salzer and me, then joined by Stephanie Kerschbaum and Amber O'Shea, with our four-person team analyzing and publishing the survey results collaboratively (Kerschbaum et al. 2017; Price et al. 2017). Stephanie and I, with support from Mark's work at the Temple Collaborative for Community Inclusion, wrote the resource guide *Promoting Supportive Academic Environments for Faculty with Mental Illnesses* (Price and Kerschbaum 2017). Stephanie and I then went on to launch the interview phase of the study. After several years of conducting interviews and trying out initial analyses, we decided to continue working individually, still using the same data set. Because we worked together so closely during the early phases of the study, I say "we" when describing the methodological process we built together, and Stephanie's name appears regularly throughout this book as a valued collaborator.

A number of shifts occurred during the years-long process of designing and carrying out the Disabled Academics Study. One of the biggest shifts occurred early: while the survey included only participants with mental disabilities, the interviews included participants with a wide range of disabilities. Another shift occurred later: after focusing on "disabled faculty" for some years, I concluded that the designation "disabled academics" makes better sense. Initially, the interview sample did not include graduate students, since our research team didn't have the resources to do justice to the unique considerations of graduate students' positions. But after talking with numerous graduate students and staff members who also held part-time faculty positions, I questioned the usefulness of the category "faculty" for this study. Graduate students may simultaneously hold faculty jobs, as in the case of some of our interviewees. Further, "faculty" jobs now include many positions that used to be called "staff" or "administrative" work; about 70 percent of postsecondary instruction is carried out by non-tenure-track instructors, and more and more faculty leave their teaching positions every year while retaining connections to their roles as researchers—or vice versa. It's heartening to note that since 2011, more studies are focusing specifically on disabled graduate students and staff.[12]

For both the survey and interviews, our team strove to make our methods as accessible and interdependent as possible. To achieve our aims of accessibility and interdependence, we worked from a method I conceived in *Mad at School*, which at the time I called an "interdependent qualitative research paradigm" (Price 2011b, 205) and drew on principles outlined in the article "Disability Studies Methodology" (Price 2012). Not only were all our participants disabled, but Stephanie and I are, as well. This dynamic—or rather, set of dynamics—had significant effects on the course of data collection and analysis. Interviews were conducted in many different ways, according to interviewees' and researchers' abilities and preferences, including various combinations of in-person, remote, telephone (both with and without interpreting or captioning), email, instant-message, signing, and oral speech. At times, a participant might have an assistant or interpreter present; my service dog was present at some interviews; and Stephanie worked with captioners or interpreters during some interviews. We've written about this rich combination of modes and locations in two collaborative articles on disability-centered methodologies (Kerschbaum and Price 2017; Price and Kerschbaum 2016), and Stephanie has published a more recent chapter on sign language interviewing in qualitative research (Kerschbaum 2021), as well as a chapter detailing an interview with the participant Tonia (Kerschbaum 2022).

Analyzing this diverse collection of video, audio, and text files was challenging. In a series of compositions and revisions that took years, a detailed transcript was developed for each interview, including descriptions of gestures; detailed notes accompanying sign-language interviews; and observations about any technical issues or interruptions that occurred during interviews. In the chapters that follow, most quotations from interviewees are shared in "near-verbatim" format. "Near-verbatim" omits markers for short pauses, occasional stumbles over words, or vocalizations such as "um" and "uh." The goal of using near-verbatim transcription is to focus on the narrative flow and thematic patterns in participants' stories, rather than to observe micro-moments of interaction (Bezemer 2014; Roulston 2014). Speech patterns that were retained in transcripts included pauses longer than two seconds; words that were started and then interrupted (such as "nev—well almost never"); repeated utterances such as "um" and "like"; and simultaneous communication by interviewer and interviewee (see appendix 1). Details of setting, gestures, and other nonverbal notes were also recorded in transcripts. I completed all transcripts in collaboration with coresearchers, research assistants, and interpreters.[13]

In the following sections, I focus on three issues that have been especially interesting—and challenging—with regard to conducting interdependent accessible research: *language*, *access*, and *representation*.

**Language.** Recruitment materials, both for the survey and for the interview phases of the study, were shared in writing. The introductory email for the survey, and the first page in the online survey itself, read: "For the purposes of this survey, *person with mental disability* means someone who has received mental-health care and/or a mental-health diagnosis. You do not have to identify as 'disabled' to participate in this survey; you may alternatively identify as a mental-health services consumer, a psychiatric survivor, a person with mental illness, a psychocrip, or simply someone with your particular diagnosis." Despite the effort to include as many eligible participants as possible, and to avoid erasing differences or adhering too strictly to any particular disciplinary standard, our language choices presented a problem for some participants throughout the survey. For example, many of the questions used the phrase "mental disability," as was explained in the introductory materials, and in response some participants used the survey's open-ended spaces to clarify and specify their identifications. Some wrote, for example, "Don't feel I have a disability" or "I do not consider myself disabled." Others added nuance—for example, after checking one of the mental-disability options, a participant added the note, "I consider myself in recovery."

Mark and I discussed at length what it would mean to provide content warnings for a survey like this one. The topic of the survey was mental health, and eligibility was based on prior experience with mental-health care or diagnosis. But we both knew, from our lived experiences as well as our research, that specific questions within the broad topic of "mental health" could be especially triggering, including questions about institutionalization or experiences of discrimination at work. For that reason, we included a content note on the survey's first page, telling potential participants that they might encounter topics such as "diagnoses, medication (although we do not ask what specific medications you may take), hospitalizations, relations with co-workers, and experiences of disclosure at work." Participants were encouraged to skip questions as needed or stop taking the survey if they chose. We piloted the survey for usability, including logistical questions (e.g., "Does the progression of questions make sense?") and questions of safety (e.g., "Is the potentially triggering content adequately signposted? Should any questions be phrased differently?").

Because the survey was designed to produce meaningful results for an interdisciplinary audience, *and* to be accessible for a disabled audience, we sometimes struggled to figure out how to organize or phrase questions. For example, after much deliberation, Mark and I decided to ask participants to identify their disabilities based on categories of diagnosis from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, then in its fourth edition. We made that move because we wanted to speak meaningfully to an audience that would be looking for statistically significant and comparable results, with the goal of affecting educational policy. However, we also wanted to hold space for participants to self-identify in ways that were meaningful to them, as well as be mindful of the fact that for some people with mental-illness histories, the diagnostic process itself is traumatic. Thus, we added an open-ended space for this question that began with the prompt, "If you identify your mental health in terms other than, or in addition to, diagnostic labels, please write your identification here." The responses to this open-ended query ranged hugely, including "neuro atypical," "psychiatric abuse survivor," "Multiple Personality Disorder—much more accurate," "mad," "postpartum depression," "normal," and "Suffering from hypertension and stress due to racism."

While conducting interviews, Stephanie and I found similarly that identification was important to participants. Here, I mean identification both in the sense of how one *identifies to* oneself and others and in the sense of how one *is identified through* situations with others. For example, one interviewee, Megan, identified first as blind, but as the interview went on, she deepened that identification through stories to describe a more complex position:

> [Students] don't know how much I can see or not. I write on the board, but I use a cane. I wear dark glasses outside, but inside the classroom I take them off. And I can hear what's going on across the room. And I try not to comment on things like that because I don't want them to think that I'm listening in. But I've heard them talk about me before. I actually wrote a [private] blog about it, probably my first semester. Because they were going, "what can she see, what can she not see?" And I'm thinking, well, you could ask me. I am right here.

In this story, Megan asserts that identifying as "blind" doesn't mean that one exists in a world of total darkness, either literally or metaphorically. Rather, an array of sensory information composes her field of perception, shifting from one context to the next.[14] Moreover, as we can discern from her students' comments ("What can she see?"), her presence as a blind person opens a space for potential inquiry and the development of more nuanced understanding of disability. Notably, in Megan's story, students did not ask directly for information; rather, they speculated aloud in her presence. This is just one aspect of identification as it intersects with disability for academics. Tara Wood (2017, 88), a researcher who interviewed thirty-five disabled students on identity and disclosure, notes that strategies of disclosure should be understood as "agentive rhetorics of risk management." In Megan's case, at the time of her interview she was in her twenties, a woman, and a non-tenure-track faculty member, as well as blind. The choices she made, including actions deliberately not taken (such as choosing not to say, "I can hear you" to the students), as well as the many unfolding elements of her classroom situation, demonstrate what identity management might look like in a specific moment and context. They also demonstrate why I say that crip spacetime is "un/shared": as Megan takes off her dark glasses and writes on the board while holding a white cane, and her students speculate aloud in her presence about her disability, they and she both *are* and *are not* in the same place.

**Access(ible) Research.** The Disabled Academics Study is grounded in traditions of feminist and DS research. Our research team's commitment to shaping an accessible research process for all participants, including ourselves, was built into the study from its earliest moments. Interviews took place in a variety of modes, including in person, videoconference, telephone, instant-message chat, and email. And yet, to quote Charles Moran (1999), throughout the study access remained an "A-word"—that is, a kind of floating sign that was easy to name but difficult to enact. Sometimes it felt impossible to enact. And it was often uncomfortable, sometimes painful. I was grateful to hear these words from Justice A. Fowler at a roundtable at the University of Minnesota in 2017: "Making something accessible doesn't necessarily mean making it comfortable."[15] This is a reminder I need often. When explaining their concept of "critical access studies," Aimi Hamraie (2017, 13) notes that it's important not to valorize access as a "self-evident good." *Access* in its full potential is an unfolding process, attuned to particular bodyminds in particular places, an "interpretive relation between bodies" (Titchkosky 2011, 3) that shifts constantly. Thus, creating an accessible interview space does not mean simply avoiding stairs or ensuring that an interpreter is present (although those accommodations are, of course, important). It also means thinking about subtle questions such as trauma triggers, cross-cultural communication, proximity of bodyminds, and ongoing relationships.

For example, in the spring of 2013 I began talking with a participant named Nicola, who had volunteered to do an interview. She indicated that Skype would be one acceptable approach for our conversation, so after all the introductory work and permissions were completed, we joined each other on Skype at an agreed-on time. The interview proceeded awkwardly. Nicola's internet connection at home was unpredictable, and our signal kept cutting in and out. We began using the typed "chat" box in Skype and concluded together that we wouldn't be able to hold our interview that day. As we began to discuss rescheduling, the following typed exchange occurred:

> MARGARET: Is face to face your preferred modality over others?
>
> NICOLA: DEFINITELY.
>
> MARGARET: Ah! That kind of ices [decides] it for me, then. I'd rather try to find a way to meet up.
>
> NICOLA: That sounds great. It's much easier to talk in person. At least for me.

In the introductory questionnaire, Stephanie and I had offered participants a list of possible modes for interviews and asked them to check the ones that would be preferable to them.[16] However, through our initial conversation, I discovered—and perhaps Nicola was discovering, too—that videoconferencing was simply not accessible for this particular interview, not only in the sense of the digital signal being interrupted, but also in terms of the emerging nature of access. Our conversation demonstrated access *becoming*—through the back-and-forth, the clarifications, our emotional reactions, the backtracking, and the need to try again.

This anecdote is one among many demonstrating that access is an emerging and context-dependent phenomenon, governed in part by structural forces. Nicola, like many adjuncts who work at multiple institutions, did not have the same access to a fast and reliable computer and internet connection that I had as a tenured professor at a liberal arts college. Moreover, when we were finally able to meet in person, it became clear over the course of our two-hour conversation that the stories Nicola wanted to tell were ones that she felt were better told in person. Her accounts of disclosure turned not only on her disability, but also on the intersecting oppressions she experienced as a working-class student working full time while in graduate school; a lesbian whose students interrogated her about her personal life; and as a chronically ill person who knew, as she said, that she might have fewer than five years left in which she would be able to continue working. The interview continued, through text messages and emails, for days after we finished our in-person meeting.

Let me be clear: although in that case, face to face/synchronous was the best and most accessible form of interview modality for both Nicola and me, that's not always the case. The understanding of access I'm arguing for pushes back against the assumptions that tend to prevail in accounts of digital research. In particular, I want to push back against the assumption that a synchronous, orally driven setting is always the most beneficial way to proceed. When that assumption is made, the researcher tends to treat non-oral modes (such as sign language, email, or typed chat) as compensatory, used because of some imagined deficit in the interviewer or interviewee. This attitude emerges in statements like this one:

> [The initial attraction of interviewing online] might not be enough to sustain [participants'] ongoing interest without the impetus of enthusiasm and focus that can be injected in the face-to-face setting by a skilled interviewer who is "firing on all cylinders." On-line, interviewers may not be able to offer enough verbal "dazzle" to compensate for the charm or charisma that can be so effective face-to-face. (Mann and Stewart 2001, 93)

The assumption operating here is that a face-to-face and implicitly oral setting is the one in which it is easiest to "dazzle"—that is, connect with and sustain the interest of an interviewee. But this ignores the fact, documented repeatedly by disabled scholars and activists, that digitally mediated or otherwise unconventional research settings might be the most natural and usable for us. Ironically, although Chris Mann and Fiona Stewart's "Internet Interviewing" is now more than twenty years old, exactly the same attitudes often prevail in opinions about in-person versus remote teaching, or typed chat versus oral comments on Zoom. By contrast, our approach to access was to treat it as a locally specific, participant-centered, interactional process (Kerschbaum and Price 2017; Price and Kerschbaum 2016).

**Representation.** Leading directly from questions of language and access are questions about how people were recruited for the study; how the final group of interviewees was selected from the large group of volunteers; and how the interviewees are represented in these pages.

Stephanie and I sent out a call for interview participants at the same time the survey closed. More than one hundred people volunteered for interviews, and thirty-eight interviews were eventually completed. Since we didn't have resources to interview even half of the potential participants, we decided to select interviewees using a type of purposive sampling called "diversity sampling" or "maximum variation sampling" (Wood 2017, 76). This approach seeks the greatest possible variation in the participant group. Thus, it's very different from representative sampling, which seeks accurate demographic representation of the group being studied. For example, a representative sample of disabled academics should have the same distributions of disability, race, gender, and so on, as in the group as a whole. Maximum variation sampling, by contrast, selects a set of people who don't represent the statistical norm but who can offer information previously unknown or under-recognized by researchers. The key questions for maximum variation sampling include these: "Who is unimagined? What knowledge might be formed—or simply better recognized—if we focus on learning from the unimagined?"[17] Among the thirty-eight people interviewed for the Disabled Academics Study, twelve (32 percent) were people of color; four (11 percent) were trans or nonbinary; twenty-eight (74 percent) were women; and nine (24 percent) worked outside the United States, were on visas, or identified as immigrants.[18] Most were in positions that included teaching, but three were classified as staff, research, or clinical faculty. Six (16 percent) of the interviewees, that I know of, have left academe since their interviews.[19]

Neither representative nor variation sampling is a better way to do research; the two approaches simply have different goals. For example, issues such as systemic health disparities become more evident across groups when representative sampling is used. But maximum variation sampling allows us to focus on stories that might usually be ignored, dismissed, or minimized. It also allows researchers to form questions that otherwise might never have been asked, and those questions can become the basis of both large-scale, representative studies and smaller-scale, detailed and nuanced studies. Some limitations do persist in the sample of people we were able to interview. For example, the great majority (about 80 percent) of our initial volunteer pool self-identified as women, and the final list of interviewees reflects that.

Appendix 2 provides a list of the interviewees' pseudonyms and a very short description of each. All interviewees had the opportunity to revise their descriptions, each of which offers some details about that person's position but also omits identifying information as directed by the interviewee.[20] The question of what details might be "identifying" is a complex one when working with disabled academics. Because disabled academics are severely under-recognized, and because disability, when recognized, tends to be treated as an aberration, just a few demographic details are often enough to identify someone. To offer a made-up example, if I described an interviewee as "a blind woman who teaches political science at a small liberal arts college in the South," those few details alone would probably be enough to identify that person. Thus, the issue of potentially identifying information was discussed with each participant. In cases where I was unsure whether a detail should be included or not, I omitted it. All names given for interviewees are pseudonyms. Some interviewees selected their own pseudonyms; other pseudonyms were assigned by Stephanie and me. In every case, we attempted to select a pseudonym that was congruent with the participant's own name in terms of marking gender, ethnicity, race, or cultural affiliations, unless the interviewee asked us not to.

I'll be honest: representing the participants through the terms in the descriptions feels awkward at best, and downright misleading at worst. Transparency and accountability are crucial values in research, but they are not always easy or comfortable to enact. After much thought and discussion with participants, I decided to include the descriptions because, even in a small study in which each participant tells detailed stories, markers of identity still matter. It *matters* that a Deaf Black woman was asked to place herself in a publicly visible spot as she worked with a sign interpreter during a university-sponsored diversity event (part of Brittany's story). It *matters* that a white trans man struggled to decide whether or not to call attention to the fact the bathroom on his office floor is disability-accessible but not gender-accessible (part of Evan's story). It *matters* that disabled academics must leverage our privileges and guard our vulnerabilities, all the time, every day. There's much more to our stories than labels of race or gender or rank, but those positions matter, too.

## A KALEIDOSCOPE OF DIMENSIONS AND CODES

I coded the interviews using an approach that combines aspects of grounded theory (Charmaz 2006; Corbin and Strauss 1990), discourse analysis (Barton 2002; Fairclough 1993, 2003; Powell 2004), and category construction (Bowen 2016; Merriam 2009; Saldaña 2016). Coding is the process of placing units into categories—much as you might place the larger category of "shirts" into subcategories of "striped, checked, or plain" or "cotton, polyester, or silk." In qualitative research, the units are often of language or images. Through the process of coding, and revising the codes, a researcher is able to discover patterns that would be difficult or impossible to pick out simply by reading closely. Qualitative coding in most forms also leaves room for hunches, intuition, and changes of direction. As Cheryl Geisler (2018, 230) writes in "Coding for Language Complexity," "Coders will always need to draw on their intuitions about what language does and means." Early rounds, called "initial coding" in grounded theory, involve going through the data multiple times and listing any theme that seems as if it might be significant to the project's research questions. For a project with thirty-eight interviews, like this one, it's usual to generate hundreds of initial codes. Some of the initial codes were descriptive—for example, I identified the category "accommodations" and attempted to list every accommodation mentioned by an interviewee. Other initial codes were more interpretive. I marked "vulnerability" early on, then added "exposure" to that category, and ultimately arrived at the code "ambient uncertainty," which is described at more length in chapter 1.

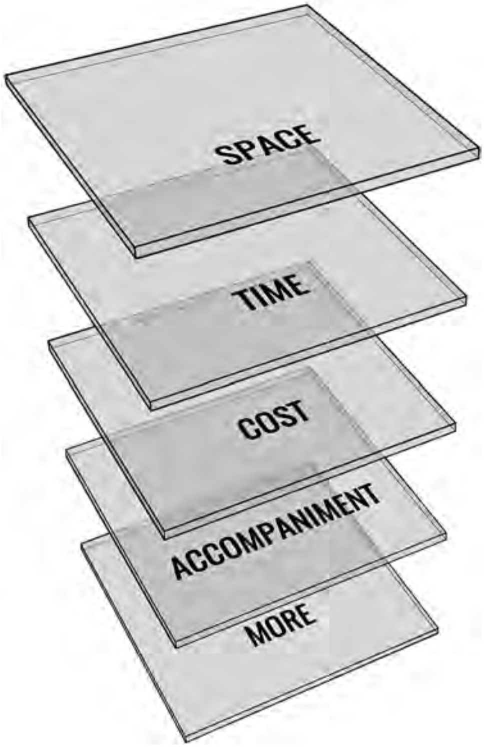
To code effectively, it's useful to have a coding dictionary. This is a record showing each code's name; a clear definition of each code; and a few examples drawn from the data to give a sense of how that definition is applied in the actual practice of analysis. When there are multiple researchers working to code the same data, a coding dictionary is essential. It supports a coding process that is as consistent as possible while also making room for intuition and exceptions. Appendix 3 offers an overview of the coding scheme developed over the course of this study, as well as a more detailed sample from the full coding dictionary.

A coding dictionary typically comes together during the second stage of grounded-theory analysis, which is called axial coding. Axial coding involves going back through all the initial codes and thinking about how they might be grouped or how they might relate to one another. Generally, a researcher will try to stick close to their research questions when forming axial codes, but this stage of coding may bring surprises. At the axial-coding stage, I looked at a long list of initial codes—for example, "Budget"; "Social events"; "Use of personal resources for access"; "T-shirt"; "Exigency for disclosure"—and, through an iterative process of comparison and tentative grouping, determined that most of them fell within the broad themes of *Space*, *Time*, *Cost*, and *Accompaniment*. Each of these broad themes, or dimensions, is made up of more specific codes. For example, within the dimension *Accompaniment*, the initial code "assistance from a person" was eventually split into two codes, one identifying assistance from professionals, such as interpreters or personal assistants, and the other identifying assistance from nonprofessionals, such as a colleague who steps in to help with a situation. This iterative process of reviewing the interviews and revising codes is called a "constant comparative" approach (Cho and Lee 2014; Merriam 2009). It continued as new interviews were conducted and added to the overall data set.

The four dimensions identified through coding constitute my current understanding of crip spacetime. In figure I.1, five translucent, rectangular plates float in a vertical stack, with ample space between. From the top, the plates are labeled with the dimensions of coding from the Disabled Academics Study: *Space*, *Time*, *Cost*, and *Accompaniment*. The fifth plate is labeled *More*, to indicate that the four named dimensions emerged from the analysis in *this* study, but significantly more dimensions could be identified. The dimensions as depicted in the diagram are translucent because each acts as a kind of screen, or layer of light, inflecting the events described by interviewees.[21]

*Crip Spacetime*'s four chapters each center on one of the four dimensions: *Space*, *Time*, *Cost*, and *Accompaniment*. Each chapter recounts participants' stories at length and focuses on a few selected codes. The focal codes and stories were selected for their richness, a concept from Ellen Barton's work in discourse analysis. Barton (2002, 23) defines a "rich feature" as a textual feature that "point[s] to the relation between a text and its context." A rich feature cannot be an isolated moment; rather, it

1.1 Diagram of crip spacetime. Designed by Johnna Keller and Margaret Price. Full description in text.



must appear frequently enough (showing "linguistic integrity") and have a strong enough relationship to the text's overall meaning (showing "contextual value") that it has a demonstrable impact on the meaning overall. Throughout, I've selected the particular stories and quotations that I think best help explain crip spacetime as it is articulated by the thirty-eight interviewees. But quite honestly, I would write a full book about every participant if I could. I am honored by their generosity and hope I do it justice.

## OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 focuses on the dimension *Space*. I begin with space because that's generally the most familiar construct for most people thinking about access, yet it's also one of the most surprising when examined closely. Conversations about access in academe tend to begin and end with geometric approaches to space: the width of a doorway, the size of a room, the steepness of a ramp. But thinking about space a bit more reveals the many ways it manifests beyond geometry, provoking questions about environment, relations, and history. Chapter 1 centers on three codes within the dimension *Space*: "ambient uncertainty," "mobility," and "surveillance." I argue that *harm* is an unavoidable part of the constitution of space in academe—a part often avoided by white-centric theories, including some versions of material rhetorics. Those existing in crip spacetime move through spaces constituted through harm—and constituted through other elements, including relations, histories, objects, and geometries. It is impossible to separate space from its intertwined fellow dimensions of *Time*, *Cost*, and *Accompaniment*. Chapter 1 foregrounds space as its primary theme, but it is, in a sense, just the first turn of a kaleidoscope made up of all four dimensions.

Chapter 2 focuses on the dimension *Time*. Space and time are joined in many traditions (not just Western physics), and their interleaving is complex. Time is usually considered a benefit in academe and is often used as a disability accommodation. Examples include extended time on tests or papers; flexible time to earn a degree; or permission to "stop the clock" at particular points in one's trajectory. However, close study of interviewees' stories demonstrates that time is a multifarious entity, even when offered as a well-meant accommodation. Chapter 2 focuses on codes including "duration of obtaining accommodations," "duration of using accommodations," and "suddenness." It then draws on that analysis to illustrate a process called "the accommodations loop," which is described in paragraphs and in a visual diagram. Research across disciplines shows that institutions of many kinds, including educational ones, engage in insidious practices such as "slow-rolling" (Potter 2017) or requiring extensive "disability admin" (Emens 2021). And temporal harms are often not perceived by anyone except the disabled academic—that is, until a disaster occurs, at which point the discourse of "academe in crisis" is once again reaffirmed.

Chapter 3 focuses on the dimension *Cost*. To think through the role of cost in crip spacetime, I focus on two especially revealing codes: "emotional cost" and "negotiation." Focusing on emotional cost helps illuminate why the affective pitch of living in crip spacetime (discussed later in this introduction) tends to run so high: until you have experienced the level of tension, weariness, rage, or grief brought by trying to deal with access in academic spaces, it can be hard to understand or believe how difficult—and endless—it feels. Negotiation demonstrates the high level of skill required to use the academic system of accommodation in a way that might offer actual benefit. The system of academic accommodation is usually described as if it's fairly simple to use. However, interviewees' stories show that successfully negotiating this system requires knowledge, resources, eloquence, and the ability to think quickly in high-stakes situations. As with emotional cost, the intricate and ongoing nature of these negotiations is difficult to perceive unless one is inhabiting crip spacetime. That lack of perception, in turn, leads to bafflement when a disabled colleague has a meltdown; fails to ask for help even when help is urgently needed; or quits a tenured job with no other prospects. Like anyone else, disabled academics weigh costs and benefits when making decisions. However, without the theory of crip spacetime, it may be difficult or impossible to understand what those costs and benefits actually are.

The dimension *Accompaniment*, the focus of chapter 4, refers to a disabled person's constant "dance" (Manning 2013) with other creatures, objects, and environments. Chapter 4 focuses primarily on the former two (creatures and objects), since I discuss environment at length in chapter 1. *Accompaniment*, as I define it, moves continually among three axes: *embodied technologies* (including hardware and software, prosthetics, medications, canes, wheelchairs, door openers, and furniture); *bodyminds* (including animals, friends, antagonists, family members, ancestors, care providers, interpreters, colleagues, and students); and *environments* (including classrooms, libraries, homes, doorways, land, elevators, and abstract spaces such as "my department"). Drawing on interviewees' stories, I focus on two key codes: "types of accommodation" and "relationships." The enormous number of different accommodations, and the intricacy of relationships with humans, nonhuman animals, and objects, demonstrate that disability must be understood as becoming along with all these other elements—a process that is messy, sometimes harmful, and unpredictable.

The introduction and first four chapters of *Crip Spacetime* are largely devoted to illuminating what crip spacetime is and what it's like—that is, to bring greater understanding to a phenomenon that's usually not recognized. These chapters also make an argument: access, as imagined and practiced in contemporary academic life, does not support justice; it leads us further from justice. In other words, we don't need to fix the system we have. We need a different system. But how? What would the process of dismantling be like? Twelve years of work on the Disabled Academics Study has persuaded me that the only way to achieve sustainable and effective access in academe is through collective accountability. I am certainly not the first to suggest this, and I am not the first to grapple with the difficult question of *how*. In *Crip Spacetime*'s conclusion, I propose moves that might help foster a greater sense of collective accountability in academic workplaces. But I also note that trying to "make" something happen in institutional life is a problematic goal, at best. Thus, I conclude with some thoughts on gathering, a kind of becoming together—acknowledging the inevitability of harm, working through forms of repair, and thinking about what futures might be possible.

## (THE) REASON

Those of us who inhabit crip spacetime tend to live and work at a different affective pitch than our nondisabled colleagues. We are constantly struggling, hitting walls, and being told that the painful and humiliating situations we deal with are "reasonable." Our anger may flare quickly. We might give up or quit in what seem to be sudden decisions. Thus, as I attempt to persuade you to think, with me, toward what *crip spacetime* is and means, I also ask you to rethink what you might usually consider *reasonable*. Reason is a charged concept vis-à-vis disability, especially in the United States, where the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines every accommodation in terms of whether or not it is "reasonable" (Price 2011b). Furthermore, although *Crip Spacetime* does not draw direct comparisons among categories such as race, gender, and disability, it does require attention to the ways that intersecting systems of oppression (Combahee River Collective 1977; Crenshaw 1991) produce intersecting effects. The experience of living and working at a different affective pitch than one's colleagues has been carefully researched with reference to Black academics, women academics, queer academics, and combinations thereof.[22] Inhabiting crip spacetime means experiencing frequent clashes with supposedly more reasonable ways of being. *Why are you so angry? I can't believe you left that meeting! Why didn't you just ask for help*? Those of us who regularly inhabit crip spacetime are used to being considered unreasonable. We are used to *feeling* unreasonable.

In *Complaint!* Ahmed (2021, 117–18) writes:

> Complaints, wherever they go, often end up in filing cabinets, those handy containers. We too can become containers. I talked informally to a woman professor about complaints she did and did not make. . . . After expressing

> her feelings to me, of rage, alienation, disappointment, also of sadness, she says, “You file it under ‘don’t go there.’” We file away what makes it hard to do our work in order that we can do our work. And that is what many of us do: to keep doing our work, we file away what is hardest to handle, creating our own complaint files.

The Disabled Academics Study is an attempt to open those containers full of stories and knowledge, of complaints deferred, of decisions that left no institutional memory because the worker is now gone. Like other, overlapping minoritized groups, disabled people in academe share particular experiences that can be hard to notice from outside—and, in fact, can be very hard even to explain. A seemingly simple assertion, such as “Some days I walk and some days I use my scooter,” can be met with shock. It’s often assumed to be a lie.

When I gave a talk at the University of California, Irvine, in November 2021, I mentioned the reaction of “bafflement” that many disabled academics are used to encountering. *You need that? What for? How could that be?* I intended the remark about bafflement to be a brief aside, but it was brought up several times during the question-and-answer period and then reappeared in follow-up emails from attendees. We all seemed stuck on that word. *Bafflement*. We are baffling. We are tired of baffling. We are tired of being baffles. We are tired, period.

*Crip Spacetime* is an effort to lift just a little bit of the burden of explaining ourselves, again and again, and meeting bafflement yet again. This project is not about disability alone. It is about all experiences of being baffling—and baffled—in academic life. And therefore it’s also about the meaning and future of academic life. In a sense, the question of inclusion is the question of why an educational institution exists in the first place. If you believe the work of education is (at least sometimes) for the good, then we must find better understandings of what that work is. And we must find better ways of working together.

# Notes

## INTRODUCTION

1 Works on this topic include Brueggemann et al. 2001; Dawkins 2012; Harnish 2016; Kerschbaum 2022; Kerschbaum et al. 2017; Montgomery 2001a, 2001b; Pickens 2019; Price 2011b; Samuels 2003; Titchkosky 2011. A literature review of disability-studies work on disclosure, in/visibility, and perception of disability appears in Price et al. 2017.

2 Among the pieces published during the course of the Disabled Academics Study are Kerschbaum 2022; Kerschbaum and Price 2017; Kerschbaum et al. 2017; Price 2017a, 2018, 2021; Price and Kerschbaum 2016, 2017; Price et al. 2017.

3 The "masquerade" concept is from Siebers 2004, 2008.

4 Marta Russell's "What Disability Civil Rights Cannot Do" outlines this same dilemma using economic analyses. Economic inequality, Russell (2002, 126) argues, is "built in to the structure of modern capitalism," because rights-based attempts to redress inequality do not address the fact that "the market transgresses on nearly every liberal right, including the right to a job accommodation" (130).

5 This borrows from Michelle Fine's (1994) conception of "working the hyphens."

6 In *Mad at School* (Price 2011b) and more fully in the article "The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain" (Price 2015), I argue that use of the term *bodymind* signals recognition that body and mind, though conceptually separate, always behave as intertwined entities. In Barad's term, the two are entangled: they do not pre-exist each other, but are mutually constitutive through intra-activity. Elizabeth A. Wilson focuses on the entanglement of body and mind in *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body* (2004), "Organic Empathy" (2008), and *Gut Feminism* (2015).

7 I developed this definition of *precarity* in Price 2018. The idea of "obscurity" is from Andrew Harnish's (2016) work on obscure disabilities.

8 My deepest thanks to Cal Montgomery, who was kind enough to begin a conversation with me about "the social model" in 2007, and from whom I have been learning ever since.

9 Maurice Stevens, personal communication with the author, April 2023.

10 It's not possible to provide a full review of material rhetoric in this introduction, though I would recommend the reviews in Booher and Jung 2018; Cedillo 2022; Shivers-McNair 2018.

11 This story, told by Vance in the book's introduction, is discussed at more length in chapter 3. A second volume of the anthology has also been published (Vance and Harrison 2023).

12 Among the works highlighting the experiences of disabled graduate students and academic staff are Brammer et al. 2020; Carter et al. 2017; Donegan 2021; Fedukovich and Morse 2017; Hubrig and Osorio 2020; Jain et al. 2020; Miller 2022.

13 Special thanks to Dr. Jon Henner, who helped me think through the implications of using video to record interviews, as well as translation and transliteration during the analytical process. I miss you, Jon.

14 Georgina Kleege makes this point in numerous writings, including "Blindness and Visual Culture" (2005) and "Visuality" (2015).

15 Justice A. Fowler, comment from the audience, Imagining Cultures of Access: Race, Disability, and Mental Health on Campus roundtable, University of Minnesota, October 27, 2017.

16 The exact wording of the question is: "What would be your preferred modality(ies) for an interview? Select as many as you would like." It also includes an open-ended response option.

17 I am taking the term *unimagined* as it applies to representation from Titchkosky 2011. Escobar (2017, 68) develops a related idea, that of being "actively produced as nonexistent."

18 In cases where interviewees' situations may have changed, I use the past tense (e.g., "Bea was an assistant professor"). When discussing their stories, I use present tense if the story is told from the point of view of the interviewee (e.g., "In this story, Linh is frustrated yet also thinking strategically").

19 The Disabled Academics Study does not systematically follow participants; however, I stayed in touch with as many participants as I could to ensure I was representing them in ways that still felt comfortable and safe for them. This felt especially important given that we offered participants the opportunity to review transcripts or write-ups if they wished, and that some participants' identifications changed during the course of analysis. The relatively high rate of attrition among the group of thirty-eight, even given that the study's interview and analysis phase lasted years, is striking. (*Note:* I did not count participants who were promoted to emeritus status as having "left" academe.) Research on attrition among academics is urgently needed. An unusual study by from KerryAnn O'Meara, Alexandra Kuvaeva, and Gudrun Nyunt (2016, 270) notes that studying those who have actually left (as opposed to

those who are considering leaving) allows researchers to identify factors that were "pivotal in the departure decisions of those who actually left."

20 In some interview studies, including ones I've conducted, interviewees choose to be identified so that their labor and expertise can be recognized. In this study, no interviewee asked to be identified by name, though some did state that they didn't have a strong preference about confidentiality.

21 Johnna Keller, who codesigned the diagrams, has announced that ze would like to re-create "Dimensions of Coding" as a three-dimensional structure with movable pieces. Stay tuned!

22 Other works on this topic include Bailey 2017, 2021; Cleveland 2004; Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012; Hartlep and Ball 2019; Lourens 2021; Niemann et al. 2020; O'Meara et al. 2017; Schalk and Kim 2020; Vance 2007.

## CHAPTER 1. SPACE

1 See also S. Bear Bergman, *Clearly Marked*, performance at the Center for Sex and Culture, San Francisco, March 13, 2005.

2 Adrian's story is discussed in more detail in chapter 3, which includes an extensive section on parking. As noted in the introduction, many stories resonated across various dimensions, since the four dimensions of *Space*, *Time*, *Cost*, and *Accompaniment* are not sequential but operate more like a kaleidoscope.

3 Further work on conference access includes Hubrig and Osorio 2020; Kerschbaum et al. 2017; Price 2009, 2011b.

4 Biometric screening is a routine aspect of health care at Ohio State University, as detailed on the university's "Your Plan for Health" website. Although the biometric screening is not required, users of OSU health insurance cannot obtain "premium credit" without first going through this screening process. Biometric screening is a form of *biocertification*, a concept developed by Ellen Samuels (2014) to identify various forms of biomedical-social surveillance and discussed in more detail in the next paragraph.

5 "Investigative" and "compelled" are not formal codes within "Surveillance." They're intended as themes to offer easier navigation of the many examples of surveillance shared in interviewees' stories. I didn't test them as codes, although I could have. Most of the codes in the Disabled Academics Study could be further subdivided. (A problem with qualitative research is that sometimes it's hard to know when you've done enough.)