care at the end of the world

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DREAMING OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN CRIP-OF-COLOR WRITING

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TO LAUREN, WHO TAUGHT ME HOW TO DREAM

Contents

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my honeyed kin
honeyed light
beneath the sky
—Cameron Awkward-Rich, "Cento between the Ending and the End"

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INTRODUCTION

Dreaming of Infrastructure

> What is it like to be stuck, night and day, dreaming of infrastructure?
>
> —Patricia Yaeger, "Introduction: Dreaming of Infrastructure"

> I am dreaming like my life depends on it. Because it does.
>
> —Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, "Cripping the Apocalypse"

When my best friend was diagnosed with stage 4 brain cancer in October 2018, I found myself consumed by dreaming. More than any romantic partner, she was the person to whom I had anchored my life, the one who first modeled for me the art of queer-of-color survival. With her diagnosis, I both dreamed of and mourned the future we would never share. My dreams contended with the lived reality of her illness, too, and with the structures coordinating her medical care: the waiting room, the rehabilitation hospital, the social worker, the insurance labyrinth siphoning her time and energy, her accumulating medical costs. They contended with the troubling dynamic emerging between her and her primary caregiver / long-term romantic partner, who increasingly isolated her from other sources of care and support. And my dreams contended with her repeated insistence that her cancer made her a burden to others and because of this, she should be grateful for any crumb of support she received.

I wanted so much more for her. In my grief, I found myself dreaming of other, more expansive arrangements of care that would render her less vulnerable to social isolation and abuse. I found myself dreaming of a robust and free healthcare system that does not harvest sickness for profit, does not treat sick and disabled people as burdens, and honors the inherent value of disabled lives. I found myself dreaming of care networks that would make nourishment and pleasure possible even in the midst of her illness. At the end of her life, I found myself dreaming of infrastructure.

I know, however, that as a disabled Korean American woman, this kind of dreaming is not allowed. At the very least, it is not expected. As the disability justice writer-activist Leah Lakshmi Piepnza-Samarasinha observes, "Sick and disabled and neurodivergent folks aren't supposed to dream, especially if we are queer and Black or brown—we're just supposed to be grateful the 'normals' let us live. But I am the product of some wild disabled Black and brown queer revolutionary dreaming, and I am dedicated to dreaming more sick and disabled queer brown femme dreams."[1] Other writer-activists in the disability justice movement, such as Shayda Kafai and Talila "T. L." Lewis, have similarly affirmed the centrality of dreamwork to projects of radical disability liberation.[2] These writers situate disability politics within the long tradition of freedom dreaming, what Robin D. G. Kelley defines as the imaginative practice of "[producing] a vision that enables us to see beyond our immediate ordeals."[3] This, too, is unexpected, because disability is so often seen as antithetical to freedom. In the popular imagination, we are bound: bedbound, housebound, wheelchair-bound. This narrative of boundedness further takes hold in many revolutionary and ethnic American political imaginaries, which have implicitly centered able-bodiedness in their visions of freedom.[4] Here, disability is equivalent to dependency, failure, and neediness—something to avoid in the pursuit of liberatory futures.

This is a book about the dreamwork that disabled, feminist, and/or queer-of-color writers do to envision alternate infrastructural arrangements in a world and nation that has refused to support us. First and foremost, it asks, how can disability justice politics and aesthetics provide imaginative blueprints for navigating contemporary crises of care? While disability has often been cast outside the scope of racial justice and political liberation, this book demonstrates how contemporary ethnic American writers such as Jesmyn Ward, Karen Tei Yamashita, Samuel Delany, and Aurora Levins Morales bring disability and dependency to the forefront of their literary freedom dreaming. In their writing, freedom does not take the shape of the unfettered or (self-)possessive individual, nor does it hinge on the achievement of independence. Instead, it emerges from the recuperation of dependency, the cultivation of radical *inter*dependency, and the recognition of the numerous support systems on which survival depends.

This refusal of support has assumed many forms, and I focus here on the eviscerated US welfare state, which includes social assistance programs such as

Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). My anchoring event is the passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), a piece of legislation known as major welfare reform. By ending the federal entitlement to aid, alongside other significant restrictions, PRWORA weakened an already shoddy support system for assisting low-income and/or single mothers, and it did so through the language of family, work ethic, and independence. This rhetorical framework persists in the present day: over twenty years after Bill Clinton pledged to "end welfare as we know it," the mythical threat of state dependents continues to animate the national imagination. Organized around figures such as the welfare queen, the undocumented or noncitizen immigrant, and the disabled nonworker, this myth conjures up the specter of needy populations, implicitly racialized and feminized, draining the American public of its hard-earned resources. This narrative crucially has shaped not only contemporary US public policy but also, as I argue here, the writing of women and queers of color who fought, theorized, and dreamed under the long shadow of Reagan.

Looking to feminist disability and feminist-of-color theories of interdependency, *Care at the End of the World* demonstrates how contemporary ethnic American writers recuperate the maligned condition of dependency. They do so through their imaginative engagements with civic infrastructure: education, sanitation, transportation, and health/care. By drawing readerly attention to these networks, such texts emphasize our contingency on human and material infrastructures alike—the pipes, wires, roads, and labor networks that coordinate contemporary life yet so often go unnoticed. They thus invite, in the words of the performance scholar Shannon Jackson, "an acknowledgment of the interdependent systems of support that sustain human beings."[5] For scholars of feminist disability studies, interdependency suggests a condition of shared dependence, an ecology of contingent relations, in which dependency can be understood in terms of its mutualistic, symbiotic properties. Rather than being a parasitic relationship abused by certain types of people, here dependency becomes legible as a value-free relationship articulated across all subjects and the support systems in which they are embedded. Public infrastructure, in my project's archive, thus becomes a key figure for articulating a counterdiscourse of dependency—one that documents the disabling violence of state neglect while foregrounding a public ethics of care.

By deriving a disability politics and aesthetics of interdependency from the supporting operations of literary infrastructures, this book develops what I term a *crip-of-color critique* from the underexamined intersection of antiracist, anticapitalist, and feminist disability analysis. In this way, it enables the exploration of a "crip affinity," as disability scholar Lezlie Frye puts it, between disability politics and the targeted populations of welfare reform.[6] At once a coalitional practice, critical methodology, and epistemological project, a crip-of-color critique demonstrates how theories and narratives of disability authored by women and queers of color can intervene in state-authored myths of resource parasitism. Through examining state narratives of stigmatized dependency, the crip-of-color framework highlights the centrality of ableism to contemporary regimes of austerity and racialized state violence, while simultaneously underscoring the function of the state as an instrument of mass disablement.

However, it doesn't stop there. In addition to naming the ableist ideologies key to welfare reform, this book highlights the alternate structures of support envisioned by women and queer writers of color in the face of infrastructural divestment. In so doing, it centers the "ruptural possibilities," to borrow Roderick A. Ferguson's formulation, engendered by minority literary expression that enable and call forth other modes of knowing.[7] As Lisa Lowe has argued, minority literary and cultural expression often exists in a dialectical relation to official state narratives, insofar as such literatures can register the shape of dominant culture while simultaneously offering other ways of imagining and inhabiting the world. As such, minority literary production functions as "the site of more than critical negation of the U.S. nation; it is a site that shifts and marks alternatives to the national terrain by occupying other spaces, imagining different narratives and critical historiographies, and enacting practices that give rise to new forms of subjectivity and new ways of questioning the government of human life by the national state."[8] Following Lowe, each of the following chapters examines ethnic American literary and cultural engagements with infrastructure: infrastructural divestment (chapter 1), sanitation (chapter 2), transportation (chapter 3), and health/care (chapter 4). I consider how these infrastructural narratives generate new perspectives on and pathways around the punitive logics of public resource distribution, which weaponize the charge of dependency to argue that some people deserve less than others. *Care at the End of the World* demonstrates how feminist, disabled, and/or queer writers of color, rather than distancing

themselves from this charge, craft rival systems of thought that take up dependency beyond the singular register of pathology.

This introduction proceeds in five parts. First, I begin by describing the US infrastructural landscape against which this book takes shape. Then, I explain the concept of infrastructural violence, tethering this term to political economies of care work. Shifting to the imaginative work of rupture, the third section offers an infrastructural reading of the 1981 anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, demonstrating how the writers in this book refuse existing arrangements of support to dream of more and better. Following this, I explain in greater detail the crip-of-color methodology I develop and employ throughout. I conclude by returning to the concept of infrastructural freedom dreaming, a practice that not only destigmatizes dependency but also envisions it as a site of aesthetic possibility and political transformation.

Infrastructure and the US Welfare State

In examining fictional accounts of infrastructure, *Care at the End of the World* forwards a theory of disability analysis attuned to the networks of resource distribution and circulation that maximize life chances for some while disabling others. Rather than framing the US nation-state as a haven of protection for disabled people, it addresses the debilitating effects of state-sanctioned racialized resource deprivation—what I term *infrastructural violence*—that constitute the primary context for the literary dreams examined here. While early disability scholarship often aligned itself with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), crediting the legislation's passage for the emergence of the field, my emphasis on infrastructural violence instead furthers a disability framework that decenters the ameliorating function of legislation and policy.

Toward this end, Lezlie Frye and Samuel Bagenstos have pointed out how the passage of the ADA colluded with the conservative logics of welfare reform, insofar as some supporters posed the legislation as vital to weaning disabled citizens off public assistance and sending them into the workforce.[9] Examining the denigration of dependency deployed by white disability rights advocates, which served to distance them from implicitly racialized welfare recipients, Frye writes that the "lost opportunities for coalition remain glaring."[10] My focus on infrastructural violence and welfare reform, then, aims to resuscitate some of

these coalitional opportunities, which were set adrift in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Following scholars like Frye, I ask, how might disability studies shift if antiwelfare and austerity policies occupied a focal point of analysis?[11]

Care at the End of the World therefore builds on disability studies interventions forged by scholars such as Lezlie Frye, Nirmala Erevelles, Jasbir Puar, Akemi Nishida, and Liat Ben-Moshe, all of whom forgo the rights-based, individualistic accounts of disability favored by first-wave disability scholars in order to highlight bio/necropolitical accounts of racialized disablement and debilitation.[12] My theory of disability, then, might be more accurately described as an analytic of dis-/enablement, in which I ask, who is supported by infrastructure? Who is disabled by it? And which racialized and gendered subjects, through the exploitation of their unseen and unvalued labor, become the living infrastructure for others' fantasies of independence? It is impossible, my book asserts, to understand US infrastructure without understanding disability.

In its most literal sense, *infrastructure* refers to the built networks that enable cities and regions to function: the roads, electric wires, sewers, and fiber-optic cables that allow for the circulation of people, goods, and ideas. The term also refers to public services and institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and welfare offices, which often travel under the term *soft infrastructure*. Finally, taking a cue from AbdouMaliq Simone's concept of "people as infrastructure," I also use the term to describe the support labor of care, service, and maintenance disproportionately performed by women and people of color, as well as the more informal networks that distribute resources in the absence of state assistance.[13]

By centering support labor in my understanding of infrastructure, my book builds on ongoing conversations in feminist-of-color, Marxist feminist, and disability justice circles around the often-devalued status of care work. The practice of care, or what disability scholar Akemi Nishida defines as "the energy and time we spend in intention to contribute to others' well-being," opens up a complex definitional universe that carries multiple contradictory functions.[14] For disability scholars and activists, *care* names what we do to ensure the life force of our disabled comrades and friends; it is the necessary labor we expend to assert the value of disabled lives in a world that insists otherwise. However, *care* has also been the word applied to systems of state control, such as the incarceration of disabled people in psychiatric wards, institutions, and prisons under the pretense of protection—a practice and ideology Liat Ben-Moshe terms "carceral ableism."[15] Marxist feminists favor the term *social reproduction*, described

by Tithi Bhattacharya as the "tremendous amount of familial as well as communitarian work that goes on to sustain and reproduce the worker, or more specifically, her labor power."[16] Rather than seeing domestic tasks (childcare, cleaning, cooking) as a set of practices natural or innate to women, social reproduction theory understands such tasks as necessary forms of labor. Social reproduction names the work that makes survival—of the worker, of capitalism—possible. It also names a site of uneven labor extraction, a means of positioning some as the ones who always give support and some as the ones who always take.

The conceptual entanglements of infrastructure and care work came to the fore in recent political debates, when the Biden administration released plans for a bipartisan infrastructure bill in early 2021.[17] This bill included a proposed $400 billion for at-home care for the elderly and disabled, which caused Republicans (and some Democrats) to bristle at the thought of including care under infrastructure's semantic umbrella. Others saw the term as a means of validating and honoring the labor of support, with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York tweeting, "Paid leave is infrastructure. Child care is infrastructure. Caregiving is infrastructure."[18] Rather than attempting to resolve the contradictory nature of care work or debating what "counts" as infrastructure, my book takes up all of these registers of meaning. It focuses particularly on the relationship between literary representations of infrastructure—in its hard, soft, and living formats—and the US welfare state, which is also at once an infrastructural form.

In their critiques of contemporary antiwelfare policy, many feminist scholars have turned to the passage of the 1935 Social Security Act to examine the welfare state's origins.[19] A cornerstone of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Second New Deal, this omnibus bill established a social welfare safety net encompassing programs such as Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), unemployment insurance, and old-age insurance. Zooming outward, it also represented and enacted a form of state-managed capitalism in which governments assumed some level of social responsibility for populations in need, thereby managing the crisis of social reproduction generated by the Great Depression and mass unemployment. As such, the Social Security Act aimed to provide a system of state assistance for elderly people, people with disabilities, nonworking populations, single mothers, and other vulnerable classes.

However, the act came with a set of vital exclusions: occupational groups such as agricultural laborers, private domestic workers, and government employees were barred from accessing benefits. Such exemptions disproportionately

impacted working women, Black workers, and other workers of color, thereby creating a state support system bifurcated along lines of race and gender. Further, as scholars such as Gwendolyn Mink and Dorothy Roberts have argued, welfare has historically reinforced the nuclear family form through mechanisms of surveillance and control, such as the enforcement of "man-in-the-house" and "suitable home" rules for ADC recipients.[20] Following this, while *Care at the End of the World* condemns welfare reform and its attendant logics of austerity, it also recognizes that systems of state care are themselves violent and punishing and therefore cannot constitute the horizons of our political imagination.

The ADC program, later the central target of 1996 welfare reform, emblematizes the regressive moralism and white supremacy underlying the US welfare state. With the program's creation, mothers' pensions became policy at the federal level. However, many states claimed discretion to disperse benefits based on standards of moral fitness and suitability, which they assumed Black women and other women of color inherently could not meet. Eventually, in part due to welfare policy shifts and urban migration, women of color did gain access to ADC in disproportionate numbers. By the 1950s, the single and/or Black mother had become the imagined face of the program, a change in public perception aided by increasing political attacks on welfare. Such assaults on welfare access were mobilized using the seemingly race-neutral language of dependency, which condemned women for their reliance on government rather than a husband. This dependency on state assistance, while once seen as understandable for white widowed women, became reframed as a source of familial harm and individual pathology when associated with women of color.[21]

With the emergence of globalization and the exportation of US production abroad in the 1970s, the meaning of *dependency* was made to signify anew.[22] Business and political elites, who now relied less on a domestic workforce, increasingly cast social welfare spending as wasteful and detrimental to economic growth, decrying "big government" and the gains of social movements. Further, the enforcement of Global North economic development policies on formerly colonized nations, such as structural adjustment programs, drove new waves of immigration to the United States comprising people who could no longer afford to live in their home countries. These migratory classes, figured disproportionately in the national imagination as Mexican/Latinx, were similarly cast as undeserving drains on public resources. Meanwhile, in 1974, the creation of a new federal supplemental security program significantly raised Social Security benefits

for elderly, blind, and disabled people, which seemingly intensified the perceived distinctions between the deserving (e.g., elderly and disabled) and undeserving (e.g., single-mother) poor. However, the emergence of SSI as a disability program soon led to controversy, as the program's critics raised the specter of disability fraud.[23] The program became the target of many of the same allegations lobbed at welfare and its recipients. Noncitizen recipients of SSI were particularly vulnerable to these accusations, as they were targeted by the pervasive nativist myth that immigrants come to the United States to take advantage of its social programs.

Though single-issue identity politics may have partitioned these subjects—single mothers, working immigrants, and disabled nonworkers—into separate categories, the maneuvers of austerity politics linked them under the banner of pathological dependency. Following the signing of PRWORA in 1996, these US fictions of dependency helped underpin the large-scale decimation of the welfare state. PRWORA constituted a multipronged attack on the nation's perceived drains: racialized motherhood and families, poor single mothers, disabled people, and immigrants. With PRWORA, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), formerly the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), program became Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), transitioning from an open-ended entitlement program to a block grant replete with time limits and stringent work requirements. For children, the parameters for claiming disability and SSI tightened. For noncitizen immigrants, access to federal, state, and local public services, including SSI and food stamps, was restricted. Finally, to enforce the "proper" dependency represented by the nuclear family, the newly minted law discouraged single-parent households and children born out of wedlock, declaring both that "marriage is the foundation of a successful society" and that "out-of-wedlock pregnancy and reduction in out-of-wedlock births are very important Government interests."[24]

PRWORA thus marked a watershed moment in the ongoing divestment from US welfare and infrastructural support, occupying the epicenter of a constellation of policy shifts spanning the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Given the immense material and cultural impacts of antidependency discourse on the US infrastructural landscape, impacts disproportionately borne by multiply marginalized populations, I identify 1996 US welfare reform as my periodizing event. PRWORA perpetuated and worsened the manifold crises of care making up the terrain on which this book unfolds, "shortening [welfare] recipients' lives by nearly six months," as Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink

write.[25] It is therefore the anchoring example, though by no means the only example, of what I term *infrastructural violence*.

Infrastructural Violence and Political Economies of Care

While many of the conversations around state-sanctioned violence have focused rightfully on carceral systems and police brutality, the term *infrastructural violence* aims, in the words of Cathy Cohen, to "expand where we look for victims of and resisters to state violence"—beyond and in addition to confrontations with police.[26] My usage of *infrastructural violence* offers a variation on Omar Jabary Salamanca's deployment of the term, which he employs to describe Israel's absolute control over Gazan utilities and fuel, capturing the inscription of colonial violence in the "tiniest details of daily life."[27] Drawing from concepts such as "organized abandonment" (Gilmore), "administrative violence" (Spade), and "debility" (Puar), this book mobilizes infrastructural violence to name the dis-/enabling effects of degraded state infrastructures, the US welfare state, and pro-austerity policies.[28] These effects emerge from the punitive operations of welfare administration as well as the manufactured neglect of social programs and public institutions: the defunding of school lunches, the militarization of public schools in underresourced neighborhoods, right-wing attacks on Medicaid, and a profit-driven health/care system.

Yet, far from describing just the debilitating aspects of state neglect, infrastructural violence also describes the attendant production of *enablement* for highly resourced populations through welfare reform and other forms of safety net retraction, which further fortify white supremacy, the heteropatriarchal nuclear family, and class stratification. For instance, in chapter 1, I describe how Sapphire's novel *Push* (1996) and Jesmyn Ward's novel *Salvage the Bones* (2011) generate forms of infrastructural literacy that foreground the structural production of racialized disablement via actively harmful systems of education, welfare, and heath/care. These works further link racialized disablement to the simultaneous creation of white enablement through exploitative workfare programs (*Push*) and land theft (*Salvage*). Though literary scholars have often emphasized infrastructure's downright "boring" nature, noting how it often occupies the background of collective attention, I find that it emerges, again and again, as a key site through which women and queer-of-color writers grapple with the intensifying resource deprivation of a postwelfare United States.[29]

As I note throughout the book, one primary function of infrastructural violence is the privatization of care—that is, the ongoing enclosure of resources such as healthcare, childcare, housing, education, transit, and food. Such enclosures wear away at infrastructures of disabled survival while disabling low-income and racialized people en masse. Indeed, to be disabled is often to be hyperaware of existing care systems and the many ways they fall short. It is also to be particularly brutalized by these shortcomings. The privatization of care, then, constitutes one of the most fundamental elements of disability oppression.

Returning to social reproduction theory, Nancy Fraser places this privatizing drive at the heart of contemporary care crises, or what she describes as the increasing inability to perform the work of care in an unforgiving context of both reduced state support and eviscerated labor protections. Fraser locates the root of such crises in a socially reproductive contradiction inherent to capitalist accumulation: capitalism depends on socially reproductive labor in order to sustain itself, and yet, the increasing pressures generated by capitalist demands deplete all reserves available to do the work of social reproduction. In our era of global financialized capitalism, those who can afford to outsource care labor do so, thus creating a "dualized organization of social reproduction, commodified for those who can pay for it, privatized for those who cannot."[30] Transnational and feminist-of-color scholars including Chandra Mohanty and Evelyn Nakano Glenn have demonstrated how this dualized organization fortifies racial and class hierarchies across domestic and global scales, and further, how these care crises are unevenly distributed across race and class.[31] In dualized care arrangements, elite families extract domestic and support labor from low-income racialized and/or immigrant women, depleting their workers' personal and familial well-being.

Following this, my analyses of infrastructural violence—as both an uneven system of resource distribution and a figure of literary representation—foreground the political economies of racial-gendered care work generated through policies and practices of safety net divestment. And so, while scholars like Ruth Wilson Gilmore highlight the "prison fix" as a key response to "organized abandonment," or what she defines as the purposeful dismantling of the welfare state, this book focuses on care crises under racial capitalism as its chief terrain of struggle.[32] In this way, I offer a crip expansion of feminist- and queer-of-color perspectives on historical materialist critique, which have broadly sought to address the limitations of Marxist analysis in relation to white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, heterosexism, and sex work.[33]

Roderick Ferguson in particular has identified how Marx's own naturalization of heteropatriarchy—as the proper order of social life—effectively rendered the "heteronormative subject the goal" of both liberal and revolutionary projects.[34] As a result, these ostensibly antiestablishment projects often conspired with the "normative investments of nation-states and capital," a reproduction of heteronormative ideals that Ferguson's queer-of-color framework sought to disrupt.[35] Akin to queer-of-color critique, the crip-of-color framework argues that these "normative investments" are also fundamentally shaped by ableist ideas around disability and dependency, in which those deemed too needy of care are paradoxically deemed the least deserving of it.

As Julie Avril Minich, James Kyung-Jin Lee, and the Harriet Tubman Collective have observed, such ideas have shaped leftist political imaginaries, which at times have defined political work and social change in ways that reproduce the capitalist state's devaluation of care, dependency, and disability.[36] For instance, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's 2018 book *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* has detailed the tendency to elevate certain forms of activist labor (marches, speeches) over others (emotional support, food preparation, organizing and logistics). In response, the crip-of-color framework registers and refuses the ableist ideals undergirding the simultaneous retraction of (state) care and forcible extraction of care work from racialized and immigrant women. In so doing, it denaturalizes the particular calculus of need and support enforced by the nation-state and global capitalism and envisions more just distributions of caring labor.

Toward this end, *Care at the End of the World* highlights the support imaginaries generated within feminist-, queer-, and crip-of-color literature as vital sites through which struggles around care are waged, emphasizing the ideological and narrative elements of infrastructural violence. To put it simply, the writers I examine offer different stories around care: how we define it, how it works, and who works it. Even as disabled, racialized, and feminized people have borne the brunt of care crises, we have also, out of necessity, spent ample time reimagining what care means. In addition to naming an identity and a movement, then, disability also names a practice of reinventing care.

Consider, for example, Audre Lorde's 1988 essay "A Burst of Light: Living with Cancer," which contains the famous quote "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."[37] Written after Lorde's breast cancer had spread to her liver, "A Burst of Light" offers

a radical theory of self-care incubated in Black queer feminist disabled experience, one that refuses the hierarchies of life-value upheld by a racist, profit-driven healthcare system. In addition to asserting the worth of her own Black queer disabled life, Lorde articulates this assertion against the backdrop of the Reagan administration, whose evisceration of state care provides key context for Lorde's cancer journaling. In one of the first entries penned after her liver cancer diagnosis, dated February 9, 1984, Lorde reflects on the retraction of welfare and public housing, positioning these processes adjacent to her own health struggles:

> So. No doubt about where we are in the world's story. It has just cost $32,000 to complete a government-commissioned study that purports to show there is no rampant hunger in the U.S.A. I wonder if they realize *rampant* means *aggressive*.
>
> So. The starving old women who used to sit in broken-down rooming houses waiting for a welfare check now lie under park benches and eat out of garbage bins. "I only eat fruit," she mumbled, rummaging through the refuse bin behind Gristede's supermarket, while her gnarled Black hands carefully cut away the rotted parts of a cantaloupe with a plastic Burger King knife.[38]

Akin to the figures of welfare queen, the noncitizen immigrant, and the disabled nonworker, the ideological arm of infrastructural violence is captured by the "government-commissioned study." It indexes state-authored narratives of care that justify routing resources away from Black, elderly, poor, and disabled communities—that is, the "starving old women" who cut fruit with "gnarled Black hands." Lorde's journal entry grants form and urgency to the state's particular metric of care distribution, highlighting a paradox key to my formulation of infrastructural violence: that systems of state care are brutal, punishing, and not enough, and still, their evisceration by the capitalist state is similarly brutal, punishing, and not enough.

In response to the narrative weapons of the state, Lorde's essay engages in a crip-of-color practice of redefining and rerouting care work toward alternate political ends—that is, toward the (Black, queer, disabled) self and toward the communities in which Lorde was embedded. For instance, she begins "A Burst of Light" with a sumptuous dinner shared by the Black and brown lesbian group Sapphire Sapphos, describing all the dishes one by one: "There was sweet potato pie, rice and red beans, black beans and rice . . . spinach noodles with clam sauce, five-bean salad, fish salad, and other salads of different combinations."[39]

Her recollection of this feast, which lingers on each pleasurable detail, models a more lateral and collective arrangement of care work, one in which queer Black and brown women are the recipients of nourishment rather than the ones always coerced to give. Against the meager options offered by the United States, "A Burst of Light" dreams of alternate infrastructural arrangements that can honor the sacredness of Black, queer, and disabled lives. In the following pages, I further outline what these rival arrangements might look like.

"I Have Dreamed of a Bridge . . .": Envisioning Rival Infrastructures of Care

As decrying "dependency" in the 1970s and 1980s became a viable discursive strategy for liberals and conservatives to further privatize care, there emerged another set of fictions in which dependency enabled other ways of knowing, living in, and surviving an increasingly hostile world. The 1981 anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, coedited by Chicana lesbian feminists Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, put forth a revolutionary vision of interdependency furthered by the infrastructural motif of the bridge. This vision refused the instrumentalization of women and queers of color as bridges "[to be] walked over."[40] In the face of infrastructural violence, it articulated instead a vision of reciprocal support for those most targeted by state divestment and racialized dispossession.

I begin this analysis with *Bridge* because it both models and presages the rival infrastructures of care envisioned by the literary texts in this study. While *Bridge* was published long before the Bay Area activist performance group Sins Invalid coined the term *disability justice*, the anthology's radical feminist-of-color platform addressed the interrelations between multiple axes of difference, of which disability was unquestionably a part.[41] Take, for instance, Moraga and Anzaldúa's articulation of "El Mundo Zurdo," or "the left-handed world," inhabited by "the colored, the queer, the poor, the female, the physically challenged."[42] This vision expressed the necessity of coalitional politics in order to address the "many-headed demon of oppression."[43] In the vein of "El Mundo Zurdo," *Care at the End of the World* continues *Bridge*'s project of solidarity building across categories of difference. One of my central interventions, then, is bridging the adjacent intellectual fields of disability studies and feminist-/queer-of-color critique through the axis of dependency, demonstrating how they can be—and

already have been—in generative dialogue. It is through "blood and spirit connections with these groups," Moraga and Anzaldua write, that we might "brew and forge a revolution."[44]

Throughout the anthology, contributors draw on the bridge metaphor to describe the exploitation of women and queers of color in single-issue ethnic nationalist and feminist movements, which often depended on the unremunerated labor extracted from multiply marginalized members. In the prefatory text "The Bridge Poem," the Black lesbian poet Kate Rushin renounces this role, stating, "I've had enough / I'm sick of seeing and touching / Both sides of things / Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody."[45] Similarly, Audre Lorde's canonical "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," anthologized in *Bridge*, foregrounds this support labor and names what it makes possible. In this paper, she asks white academic feminists, "What do you do with the fact that the women who clean your houses and tend your children while you attend conferences on feminist theory are, for the most part, poor and third world women?"[46] This characterization of Black and brown women as bridges and support structures offers a powerful counterpoint to myths like the welfare queen and the noncitizen migrant mother, which framed women of color as primary symbols of state dependency. Rushin and Lorde suggest that, in fact, so much more depends on the disregarded care work of women of color, including but not limited to the functioning of political movements and academic institutions.

Rather than serving as bridges toward other ends, the contributors of *Bridge* express the queer desire to redirect the labor of support toward each other. In her preface to the 1981 edition, Moraga details this infrastructural vision, writing, "Literally, for two years now, I have dreamed of a bridge."[47] In her dream, women who "contradict each other" come together to form an intimate textual coalition. Here, they can "make faith a reality and . . . bring all of our selves to bear down hard on that reality."[48] Through the metaphor of the bridge, Moraga dreams of care, intimacy, and freedom for women and queers of color during a time of accelerated resource deprivation. At times, her dream is made manifest: she recalls receiving "encouragement and identification" from "five Latina sisters" while speaking on a panel about racism in San Francisco.[49] Later, Moraga and her companions "buy burritos y cerveza from 'La Cumbre' and talk [their] heads off into the night, crying from the impact of such a reunion."[50] Her dream of the bridge thus furthers an understanding of liberation for women and queers of color that can emerge only through the mutual, loving practice

of support. "For the women in this book," she writes, "I will lay my body down for that vision."[51]

Moraga's infrastructural freedom dreaming, which emphasizes dependency between feminist and queer-of-color comrades, further resonates with a feminist disability ethos that emphasizes the value of care work as well as the transformative potential of interdependency. "Interdependency," writes disability and transformative justice activist Mia Mingus, "is both 'you and I' and 'we.' It is solidarity, in the best sense of the word. . . . Because the truth is: we need each other."[52] As Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and other feminist disability scholars have argued, disability presents the self-sufficient, autonomous individual as a mere fiction, forcing us to contend with the very real needs of our bodyminds.[53] Rather than denying our embodied and enminded limitations, a feminist disability perspective insists we learn to accommodate them, foregrounding the support systems that make life more possible. "Our bodies need care," writes Garland-Thomson. "We all need assistance to live."[54] Dependency, in this context, is not evidence of failure; instead, it names a social bond vital to individual and collective well-being. Interdependency describes the webs and networks that emerge through these bonds, as well as a set of practices that honors bodily limitations and vulnerabilities.

Care at the End of the World identifies interdependency as a primary node of alignment between disability and feminist-/queer-of-color politics. This work continues, too, with essays such as Cathy Cohen's "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?," in which Cohen envisions a politics where "one's relation to power, and not some homogenized identity, is privileged in determining one's political comrades."[55] This book takes seriously Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick Ferguson's call, issued in the 2011 anthology *Strange Affinities*, to develop relational, coalitional, and cross-categorical analytics that can assess how "particular populations are rendered vulnerable to processes of death and devaluation over and against other populations" in the afterlives of the civil rights movement and decolonization.[56] Following this, I foreground the dominant discourse of dependency as a chief rhetorical instrument justifying racialized death and disablement following the abolition of legal racial discrimination.

By highlighting interdependency as a link between adjacent intellectual fields, I draw on a feminist-of-color tradition that privileges not sameness in

identity as a basis for political solidarity, but rather a "common context of political struggle," to use Chandra Talpade Mohanty's oft-cited phrase.[57] To further elaborate on this potential affinity, I return once again to the work of Audre Lorde, who has in the past two decades been reclaimed as a queer disabled ancestor by a new generation of scholars and activists.[58] In the "Master's Tools" paper, delivered at the *Second Sex* conference soon after her breast cancer treatment, Lorde prefaces her condemnation of third world labor exploitation with a radical theory of interdependence. Critiquing feminist discussions of "nurturance" that fail to consider "lesbian consciousness" and "the consciousness of third world women," Lorde speaks to the "mutuality between women," "systems of shared support," and "interdependence" that offer alternate models for nurturance beyond the reproduction of the white heterosexual nuclear family.[59]

For Lorde, interdependency constitutes an alternate infrastructure of care for those women "forged in the crucibles of difference," the occupants of El Mundo Zurdo.[60] She writes, "Interdependency between women is the only way to the freedom which allows the 'I' to 'be,' not in order to be used, but in order to be creative."[61] In this passage, interdependence becomes legible as a liberatory ideal and practice, one that nourishes lives that were, as Lorde once famously wrote, "never meant to survive."[62] As she makes clear, this practice of interdependency must not only account for difference (along the lines of race, sexuality, ability, and class) but also honor such differences as vital sources of political creativity and change making. What Lorde terms "the interdependence of mutual (non-dominant) differences" is the condition of possibility for "true visions of our future," a vision of unqualified support that "[defines] and [seeks] a world in which we can all flourish."[63] Learning how to support and "make common cause" with those living "outside the structures" is the primary way to not only survive an otherwise unlivable world but also imagine viable ways out of it.[64]

Paired with her critique of white academic feminists delivered later in the paper, in which she underscores the childcare labor performed by "poor and third world women" that makes conference participation possible, Lorde furthers a theory of interdependency that also takes into account the political economy of racial-gendered care work.[65] This element feels crucial, as it demands a more in-depth analysis of the interdependency concept. At times, in disability writing, *interdependency* can function as a kind of vague utopian cure-all for an ableist world, a move that all too often evacuates the power dynamics and

fraught histories shaping social relations of care. Or, as Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha so aptly puts it, "Interdependence Is Not Some Giant Living in the Hillside Coming Down to Visit the Townspeople."[66] For Lorde, then, *interdependency* carries multiple meanings—it can describe a web of reciprocal support between those who exist at the intersection of multiple oppressions, or a system of exploitation fueled by the disregarded, devalued care labor of Black and brown women, among other possibilities.

Following Lorde, *Care at the End of the World* considers the question of interdependence vis-à-vis political economies of care throughout the chapters, mapping the different ways that women- and queer-of-color writers have explored the relationships between care work, state divestment, and freedom dreaming. For instance, in chapter 3, I take up Octavia Butler's novel *Parable of the Sower* (1993) alongside Karen Tei Yamashita's novel *Tropic of Orange* (1997) in order to delve further into the exploitative version of interdependence, linking it to the dependency myth of the undocumented migrant worker. Chapter 2 turns to Samuel Delany's novel *Through the Valley of the Nest of Spiders* (2012) to examine a vision of mutual reciprocity, exploring the possibilities of queer eroticism that the novel derives from care work. Lorde's distinction between ecologies of interdependence, as well as her recognition of the maintenance labor often performed by racialized women, therefore provides a key touchstone for this project's analysis of dependency and support.

While "The Master's Tools" does not make explicit mention of disability, the essay's politicized focus on care and dependency is nonetheless aligned with a feminist disability ethos, demonstrating how disability politics can be present even in the absence of straightforward representation. Lorde's emphasis on the racialized divisions and dimensions of care labor further calls to mind recent disability justice interventions, such as Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* and Akemi Nishida's *Just Care: Messy Entanglements of Disability, Dependency, and Desire*, both of which contextualize disability justice theories of care within longer histories of labor extraction from Black, brown, and Indigenous femmes.[67] In the following pages, I will explain more fully my methodological approach of disability as an analytic lens, in which disability functions less as a category of identity—a descriptor of what someone is—and more as a reading practice and framework for understanding the US landscape of infrastructural violence.

Crip-of-Color Critique as Methodology

This book models an analytic I term a *crip-of-color critique*, which considers how disability politics and aesthetics can offer useful interventions into anti-welfare narratives about who deserves care. It examines how the language of disability helps enable the ongoing evisceration of public resources, as well as the necessity of a radical disability ethos in overturning the operative logics of racialized resource deprivation. In this way, I address a seeming contradiction in the role of disability within racial capitalism, in which disability operates as both archive and evidence of state-sanctioned violence and a key political practice through which we might refuse the continued proliferation of that violence. Rather than seeking to resolve this tension, I embrace disability as a multivalent site of meaning, one that serves multiple and sometimes opposing functions: a testament to the "violence of social/economic conditions of capitalism," a joyful source of freedom dreaming, and finally, a lens for making sense of a postwelfare United States.[68]

Disability scholars such as Carrie Sandahl and Robert McRuer have termed this form of analysis *cripping*, a reading practice analogous to queering that "[spins] mainstream representation or practices to reveal able-bodied assumptions and exclusionary effects."[69] To be clear, cripping does not necessitate looking for diagnostic evidence of disability in a text, nor does it prioritize the positive representation of identifiably disabled characters. Instead, it uses disability as a lens to read across literary and cultural works, through which the critic pays attention to how the text engages the "able-bodied assumptions" organizing the world. Indeed, cripping can explain how a text furthers a critical disability ethos even if no disabled characters are present at all.

Following this, while some of my analyses—the fourth chapter in particular—center the testimony and embodied experiences of disabled queer people of color, other chapters highlight the structuring presence of a disability ethics, aesthetics, and politics even as disabled representation and authorship seem to be absent. A crip-of-color critique, then, does not privilege a highly specialized subject position—the disabled queer person of color. Rather, it names an analytic for understanding US infrastructural arrangements that disable some while enabling others. In so doing, it follows the analytic strategies forged by Cohen in "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," in which queerness functions less as

a category of identity—naming what someone *is*—and more as a framework for assessing (and condemning) state surveillance, punishment, and control of Black women's sexualities. Not limited in scope to the disabled subject, a crip-of-color critique similarly foregrounds disability as an organizing principle of state investment and abandonment. To return to my earlier assertion, it is impossible to understand US infrastructure without understanding disability.

A crip-of-color critique also shows how disability as methodology might further expand the scope of disability critique beyond its once single-issue focus, as demonstrated by Sami Schalk and Julie Avril Minich in their scholarship.[70] In "Enabling Whom? Critical Disability Studies Now," Minich explains how a disability studies defined by its framework of analysis rather than its objects of inquiry would further connect the field to questions of race, power, and redistribution. For Minich, disability as methodology "involves scrutinizing not bodily or mental impairments but the social norms that define particular attributes as impairments" and that disproportionately concentrate disability in vulnerable populations.[71] "Cripping" welfare reform, then, entails underscoring how normative ideologies around dependency, labor, care, and (re-)production undergird US regimes of resource austerity.

As a coalitional analytic linking feminist- and queer-of-color thought with disability perspectives, a crip-of-color critique attends to the coarticulation of systems of domination, recognizing ableism as one vector operating alongside and through other matrices of oppression. It thus draws from the theorizing of disability justice organizations such as Sins Invalid and activists such as Patricia Berne, Stacey Milbern Park, and Talila "T. L." Lewis, while also recognizing the specificity of disability justice as a movement-organizing framework. Patricia Berne offers a useful summary in "Disability Justice—a Working Draft," where she writes, "We cannot comprehend ableism without grasping its interrelations with heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, and capitalism."[72] The crip-of-color framework thus envisions an explicitly intersectional disability politics attuned to regulatory regimes of power. What's more, it highlights the imaginative and cultural strategies envisioned by writers, activists, and intellectuals of color who refuse these regimes. As the chapters demonstrate, these refusals are often articulated in terms of infrastructure—as a representational strategy, category of labor, and built environmental network.

Chapter Overview

In chapter 1, I offer an overview of the US landscape of infrastructural violence and the operative logics of welfare reform. Turning to Sapphire's 1996 novel *Push* and Jesmyn Ward's 2011 novel *Salvage the Bones*, I pay particular attention to how these novels forge necessary links between welfare reform's dis-/enabling reorganization of public infrastructure and ableist narratives of Black mothering that frame so-called welfare queens as parasitic on the collective well-being. The welfare queen, I argue, functions as perhaps *the* definitive disability narrative of global financialized capitalism: she is defined as a pathological mother, a cautionary tale of state dependency that enabled the reallocation of public resources toward a global elite. Yet, rather than disavowing disability, both novels depict young Black mothers grappling with the debilitating context of infrastructural divestment, in which the basic support systems for maintaining life—public schools, hospitals, housing, social services—have become increasingly compromised. As such, both novels enable the elaboration of a critical disability politic centered around welfare queen mythology and infrastructural violence, one that identifies, contests, and overwrites the punitive aims of public resource distribution.

Chapter 2 extends the previous chapter's analysis of welfare queen mythology and state narratives of dependency by taking up dependency's counterpart: the American mythology of independence, tied to one's capacity to perform waged labor. Here, I turn to the sanitation and waste management systems of Samuel R. Delany's 2012 novel *Through the Valley of the Nest of Spiders*, which depicts a lifelong, interracial, and incestuous partnership between gay garbage workers. I argue that *Through the Valley* takes up waste management—as vocation, infrastructural figure, and non-(re-)productive sexual practice—in order to refuse the naturalized relationship between waged labor, normative kinship, and independence forged by welfare-to-work narratives. This refusal further marks a form of crip-of-color insurgency, given that it disarticulates the connections between paid employment, nuclear family making, and access to life-sustaining resources. I anchor this chapter with the concept of "refuse work," which carries multiple registers of meaning across Delany's novel: (1) the literal work of sanitation infrastructure; (2) the erotic management of human waste; (3) the intimate labors of sex and care that honor the body's needs; and (4) the refusal of an antirelational American work ethic that disavows dependency on

others. Through refuse work, I demonstrate how Delany's reverent depiction of sanitation infrastructure makes imaginable a crip-queer politics of labor, insofar as it highlights the kind of work that sustains abject social collectivities in excess of welfare reform's imaginings.

While chapters 1 and 2 deal with welfare reform policy in the domestic arena, chapter 3 examines the extension of antiwelfare logics to the transnational arena of so-called free trade. Taking up the infrastructure of transportation, I look to the California freeway fictions of Octavia Butler and Karen Tei Yamashita in order to articulate the relationship of infrastructural violence to coerced migration, transnational capitalism, and the myth of the parasitic noncitizen immigrant. A long-standing emblem of social and spatial division, California's freeways emerge in Butler's 1993 novel *Parable of the Sower* and Yamashita's 1997 novel *Tropic of Orange* as multivalent sites for engaging questions of mobility, movement, and migration under the exigencies of transnational capitalism. Specifically, Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* prompt reflection on three infrastructural narratives: (1) the open road story and its fantasy of unfettered freedom; (2) global capitalism's dependence on unseen, undervalued migrant laboring networks; and (3) the alternate webs of survival dreamed into being by neurodivergent visionaries who further the disability justice principle of interdependence. I argue that both novels direct attention to California's freeway network in order to address the differential production of mobility by transit and economic infrastructures in the wake of trade deregulation, with the North American Free Trade Agreement as the nucleus event. This unequal production across the lines of race and class, in which the freedom of movement enjoyed by resourced populations is linked to the constriction of more vulnerable classes, is one of the primary ways that this chapter and this book theorizes disability.

Finally, the fourth chapter considers disability justice life-writing and poetry that navigates the health/care infrastructural landscape of the 2010s, anchored by the passage in 2010 of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). In so doing, chapter 4 bridges major welfare reform with the adjacent arena of health/care reform, and in particular, the state benefit programs of Medicaid, Medicare, and SSI. Looking to Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's 2019 poetry and performance text collection *Tonguebreaker* and Aurora Levins Morales's 2013 essay and poetry collection *Kindling: Writings on the Body*, this chapter examines how radical queer-of-color writers negotiate the ableist bureaucracies and diagnostic gate-

keeping of the medical-industrial complex while simultaneously dreaming of other configurations of care. I begin by mapping out how health/care infrastructure emerges and makes itself present in these works, shaping the form of what I call disability justice life-writing. Then, I turn to what Piepzna-Samarasinha calls "wild disability justice dreams" and elaborate on the rival care infrastructures envisioned by *Kindling* and *Tonguebreaker*. What, I ask, does care look like in the context of abandonment, apocalypse, and social isolation, when the state wants people to subsist on less and less? How do we reclaim, define, and practice care outside existing models offered by the state and the medical-industrial complex, in which care all too often exists on a continuum with control and abuse? I argue that *Kindling* and *Tonguebreaker* offer wild disability justice blueprints for health and care in an era of deprivation, in which care suggests not restoration and movement back toward the status quo—the reacquisition of a fabled norm—but rather the serious and sustained tending of a lifeworld that makes room for sickness and grief while generating real moments of joy.

The epilogue relays my own disabled, femme-of-color dreams of infrastructure and further describes my experiences with my best friend at the end of her life. I reflect on how queer-of-color and disability life-writing functioned as a kind of safety net for us during this time, offering support and recognition in a healthcare landscape that does not always view friendship as a legitimate connection. Looking to the essay "After Peter," written by gay Korean American author Alexander Chee, I examine some of the ways that queer people have acted as infrastructure for one another through sickness and death, when nothing else in the world will hold us.

Toward More and Better

This book emerges from the desire for more and better infrastructures of care—for adequate systems of support that can honor the sanctity of Black, brown, queer, feminized, and/or disabled lives. In the summer of 2019, I knew I could not separate my friend's illness from the context of a postwelfare United States, in which escalating healthcare costs and eviscerated public support systems rendered harmful care by one's romantic partner one of the few viable options in a threadbare world. I knew I could not separate it from the context of a presidential regime bent on killing sick and disabled people through its persistent attacks on Medicaid and ADA. I knew I could not separate it from the

inflating numbers of the uninsured, or from the profit motives of the pharmaceutical industry. But I also knew that infrastructure did not have to look this way. And I knew this because of the blueprints left by my queer-of-color and/or disabled peers, elders, and ancestors. Now in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has underscored for so many the lived reality of state abandonment, I once again look for those dreams on the written page.

Care at the End of the World identifies disabled, feminist, and/or queer-of-color literary expression as a vital site of freedom dreaming in an era of accelerating infrastructural violence. Not frivolous or passive, dreaming envisions a different way out of the world that currently exists, and it requires very little aside from time and space. As Shayda Kafai suggests, "Perhaps the most compelling survival tool that disabled, queer, gender nonconforming, and transgender communities of color have is their dreamwork. . . . In dreaming, our communities materialize a world where, through fury and love, transformation in all its rebelliousness thrives."[73] Octavia Butler knew this when she wrote *Parable of the Sower*, which begins with the line "I had my recurring dream."[74] Recorded by Black disabled protagonist Lauren Olamina in her journal, the dream first registers a doorway, then a burning wall—a figure that encapsulates the hypermilitarized state of *Sower*'s California. Yet, the dream does not linger there. It tilts upward toward the stars, and toward the dream of "city lights" invoked by Lauren's mother: "Kids today have no idea what a blaze of light cities used to be—and not that long ago."[75] By calling up the memory of infrastructures past, great grids of power that seem unimaginable within *Sower*'s context of manufactured scarcity, Lauren's dream intervenes into the realities created and upheld by uneven systems of resource distribution. In the face of abandonment, she dreams and calls forth a "blaze of light," one that might illuminate other possible horizons of life.

I see infrastructural dreams like Butler's as bridges out of a turbocapitalist world that asks us to subsist on less and less. Within the lights, roads, pipes, and care networks spanning my project's archive, I locate the "desire for life between all of us" that Cherríe Moraga prophesied in her dream of a bridge.[76] Through the genres of speculative fiction (Butler, Delany, Piepzna-Samarasinha), magical realism (Yamashita), and myth (Ward), the writers in this book divine new maps from the seemingly mundane world of infrastructure, dreaming up ways of organizing life based in reciprocity and mutual support. These visions not only offer liberatory ways of knowing and inhabiting dependency but also pose

dependency's recuperation as one key to liberation. Because freedom, at least in the crip-of-color imaginary, hinges on the support structures and care labor that make life more possible. This vision of freedom, as Piepzna-Samarasinha writes, means that we "massage the feet of those who make us live," including the radical Black, brown, queer, feminist, and/or disabled writers whose infrastructural dreams I recount here.[77] Together, like Moraga and Anzaldúa, we "brew and forge a revolution."[78]

Notes

Acknowledgments

1 Smith, *Homie: Poems*, 81.

Introduction

1 Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work*, 122.
2 Kafai, *Crip Kinship*.
3 Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, x.
4 For more on the implicit centering of able-bodiedness in antiracist political movements, see Harriet Tubman Collective, "Disability Solidarity"; Minich, *Accessible Citizenships*; and Lee, *Pedagogies of Woundedness*.
5 Jackson, "Working Publics," 11.
6 Frye, "Birthing Disability," 100.
7 Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 26.
8 Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 29.
9 See Bagenstos, "Americans with Disabilities Act"; and Frye, "Cripping the 'Crack Baby' Epidemic."
10 Frye, "Cripping the 'Crack Baby' Epidemic," 86.
11 For more on disability and austerity policies, see McRuer, *Crip Times*.
12 See Erevelles, *Disability and Difference*; Puar, *Right to Maim*; Frye, "Cripping the 'Crack Baby' Epidemic"; Nishida, *Just Care*; and Ben-Moshe, *Decarcerating Disability*.
13 Simone, "People as Infrastructure," 407 (emphasis in original).
14 Nishida, *Just Care*, 9.
15 Ben-Moshe, *Decarcerating Disability*, 15–17.
16 Bhattacharya, "Mapping Social Reproduction Theory," 2.
17 See, for instance, Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work*; Nishida, *Just Care*; Hobart and Kneese, "Radical Care"; and Glenn, *Forced to Care*.
18 Donegan, "How Domestic Labor Became Infrastructure."
19 See Mink, *Welfare's End*; Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*; Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled*; and Poole, *Segregated Origins of Social Security*. Recently,

Priya Kandaswamy has argued convincingly for the Freedmen's Bureau as an underexplored site of analysis for US welfare history; see *Domestic Contradictions*.

20 See Mink, *Welfare's End*; and Roberts, "Welfare's Ban."

21 Influential texts like Charles Murray's *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950–1980* and Lawrence Mead's *Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizenship* advocated for major overhauls of the existing welfare system, which ranged from its complete abolishment (Murray) to establishing work as a prerequisite for aid (Mead). Their books claimed that welfare dependency would discourage welfare's recipients from wage-earning work, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and enabling them to continue self-indulgent lifestyles.

22 See Fraser and Gordon, "Genealogy of Dependency." "Whereas industrial usage had cast some forms of dependency as natural and proper," write Fraser and Gordon, "postindustrial usage figures all forms as avoidable and blameworthy" (323).

23 For more on the eventual association of SSI with the more stigmatized elements of welfare, see Berkowitz and DeWitt, *Other Welfare*.

24 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104–193 (1996), 2110, 2112. Hereafter cited as PRWORA.

25 Kornbluh and Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, ix.

26 Cohen and Jackson, "Ask a Feminist," 776.

27 Salamanca, "Unplug and Play," 34.

28 Ruth Wilson Gilmore uses the term *organized abandonment* to describe the purposeful starvation of the welfare/social functions of the state, creating gaps that are then filled in by prisons and policing. See Gilmore and Gilmore, "Beyond Bratton." Dean Spade's concept of administrative violence, described in *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*, describes how state agencies such as the Department of Child Welfare, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Environmental Protection Agency actively manufacture and distribute life chances at the population level. Finally, Puar's concept of debility is mobilized as part of a conceptual triad (capacity, debility, disability) to intervene into the disabled/nondisabled binary. Derived from the context of settler colonialism, debility further describes processes of bodily incapacitation that unfold without access to legal recourse, accommodations, or the rights associated with the liberal category of disability in settler states. See Puar, *Right to Maim*.

29 Rubenstein, Robbins, and Beal, "Infrastructuralism," 576.

30 Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 112.

31 See Glenn, *Forced to Care*; and Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders*.

32 See Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*.

33 See Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*; Hong, *Ruptures of American Capital*; and Chambers-Letson, *After the Party*.

34 Ferguson, *Aberrations*, 10.

35 Ferguson, *Aberrations*, 10, 4.

36 See Minich, *Accessible Citizenships*; Lee, *Pedagogies of Woundedness*; and Harriet Tubman Collective, "Disability Solidarity."
37 Lorde, "Burst of Light," 130.
38 Lorde, "Burst of Light," 44.
39 Lorde, "Burst of Light," 41–42.
40 Moraga, "La Jornada," xxxvii.
41 Sins Invalid, "10 Principles of Disability Justice."
42 Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge*, 196.
43 Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge*, 195.
44 Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge*, 196.
45 Rushin, "Bridge Poem," xxxiii.
46 Lorde, "Master's Tools," 96.
47 Moraga, "La Jornada," xl.
48 Moraga, "La Jornada," xli.
49 Moraga, "La Jornada," xxxix.
50 Moraga, "La Jornada," xxxix.
51 Moraga, "La Jornada," xli.
52 Mingus, "Interdependence."
53 See Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability"; and Kittay, *Love's Labor*.
54 Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability," 21.
55 Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," 438.
56 Hong and Ferguson, *Strange Affinities*, 1–2.
57 Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders*, 25.
58 For feminist disability reclamations of Audre Lorde, see Bailey and Mobley, "Work in the Intersections"; Bolaki, "Challenging Invisibility"; and Kim and Schalk, "Radical Politics of Self-Care."
59 Lorde, "Master's Tools," 94.
60 Lorde, "Master's Tools," 95.
61 Lorde, "Master's Tools," 95.
62 Lorde, "Litany for Survival."
63 Lorde, "Master's Tools," 95.
64 Lorde, "Master's Tools," 95.
65 Lorde, "Master's Tools," 96.
66 Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Future Is Disabled*, 75.
67 See Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work*; and Nishida, *Just Care*.
68 Erevelles, *Disability and Difference*, 17. In response to reclamatory accounts of disability, Erevelles provocatively asks, "How is disability celebrated if its very existence is inextricably linked to the violence of social/economic conditions of capitalism?" (17). I reference this quote here because I see it as one of the most important early interventions into white-centric, rights-based disability studies.
69 Sandahl, "Queering the Crip," 37.

70 For further explanations (and demonstrations) of disability as methodology, see Schalk, *Bodyminds Reimagined*; and Minich, "Enabling Whom?"
71 Minich, "Enabling Whom?"
72 Berne, "Disability Justice."
73 Kafai, *Crip Kinship*, 17.
74 Butler, *Parable*, 3.
75 Butler, *Parable*, 5.
76 Moraga, "La Jornada," xli.
77 Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Tonguebreaker*, 117.
78 Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge*, 196.

1. Cripping the Welfare Queen

1 Abdur-Rahman, *Against the Closet*, 136.
2 Ward, *Salvage the Bones*, 2.
3 Ward, *Salvage the Bones*, 2.
4 Lewis, *Abolish the Family*, 30. See also Weeks, "Abolition of the Family."
5 I return here to Audre Lorde's formulation. See Lorde, "Master's Tools," 95.
6 For more on the long-standing history of disgust for Black mothers, see Hancock, *Politics of Disgust*.
7 See Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*.
8 *New York Times*, "'Welfare Queen' Becomes Issue," 51.
9 Moynihan, *Negro Family*.
10 *Culture of poverty* is a social theory concept that holds low-income communities responsible for their own poverty, particularly over generational cycles. See Lewis, "Culture of Poverty."
11 PRWORA, 2113 (emphasis mine).
12 See Mientka, "'Welfare-to-Work' Programs"; Muennig, Rosen, and Wilde, "Welfare Programs"; Wilde et al., "Impact of Welfare Reform"; and Muennig et al., "More Money, Fewer Lives."
13 Muennig et al., "More Money, Fewer Lives."
14 For more on the connection between dependency, Black motherhood, and welfare reform, see Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*; Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens"; and Abdur-Rahman, *Against the Closet*.
15 Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," 438.
16 See Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*; Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe"; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Hancock, *Politics of Disgust*; Lubiano, "Black Ladies, Welfare Queens"; and Gumbs, "m/other ourselves."
17 See Gumbs, "m/other ourselves."
18 Frye, "Cripping the 'Crack Baby' Epidemic," 70.