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# The Word Less Taken: A Crip Study of Nonverbal Existence in Three Movements

Clay Davies
*Bard College*

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# The Word Less Taken
## *A Crip Study of Nonverbal Existence in Three Movements*

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
Clay Davies

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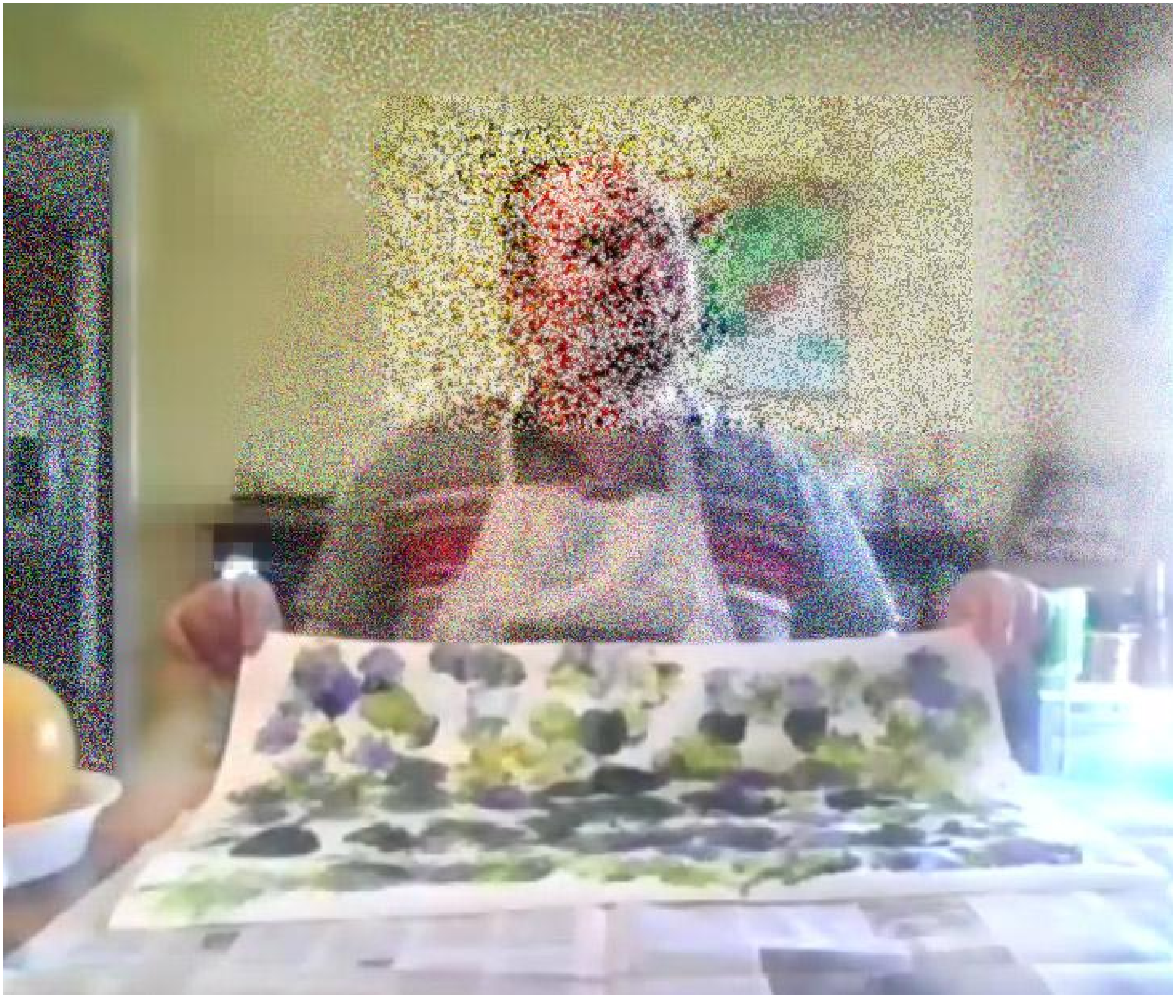

Thank you ⋆

*The WAE Center, for letting me teach and letting me learn* ⋆

*Kathryn Tabb, for shaping my academic world and advising me with care* ⋆

*Jaime Alves, for carefully considering the disabled bodymind in your classroom* ⋆

*My board and my teachers, for everything* ⋆

*Maemae Denner-Kenny, for showing me access intimacy everyday* ⋆

*All those near and dear, for everything and anything* ⋆

*Leo David, for listening and helping and loving* ⋆

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## Preface ⋆

*Where does this project sit in my body? How does it feel?*

*Last year it felt like I was waiting for a large man made from limestone, to climb through my bedroom window. All of my energy was spent on an 8-foot-paddle-boat made from yellow bar soap, I was whittling in my mind. It feels like I will never be enough and neither will you.*

*Breathe in, sit and grieve for a moment.*

*I read Mia Mingus' essay on access intimacy, and I rocked back and forth, laughing and melting. It is a significant and beautiful feeling that disabled people have when our needs and bodyminds are met without resistance and even with joy or excitement. 'Access intimacy' brings vulnerability and rejoice in its shirt pocket. It is a concept not easily put into words, and I noticed this in Mia Mingus' essay. I don't mind. I'm in love with words and I'm really in love with their absence.*

*How does it feel?*

*Sometimes, it feels like this is all for Lily. Most days it is all for me, and M and L. There is discussion and debate around the existence of disabled community. It is difficult to find disabled community outside of clinical confinement. S.E. Smith writes "Members of many marginalized groups have this shared experiential touchstone, this sense of unexpected and vivid belonging and an ardent desire to be able to pass this experience along. Some can remember the precise moment when they were in a space inhabited entirely by people like them for the first time. For disabled people, those spaces are often hospitals, group therapy sessions, and other clinical settings. That is often by design; we are kept isolated from each other, as though more than two disabled people in the same room will start a riot or make everyone feel awkward " (Smith). We* *as people focused on Disability Justice talk broadly about the harm done by institutionalization, and then we also talk about the little moments that we might have experienced in the years we were locked away. We laugh about grand escape attempts, meals made from strange canned foods, the corny songs we asked staff to play on the radio. We remember unusual hospital rooms with one-way-windows, strip searches, and the paperback copy of Fight Club that illegally circulated among us. We mourn our roommates when they die. Being confined is not easy, it is strange and dissociative. The institution or asylum was not created with Disabled people's rights, needs or wants in mind. Deinstitutionalization did not occur with Disabled people's rights, needs or wants in mind.*

*I dreamed as a little kid, sitting under a pile of picture books and cds, that I would be a perfect adult, I wouldn't have any needs, no worries that I couldn't quell on my own. I'm not so sure why I thought life would be better if no one cared for me. There are immense piles of shame wrapped up in dependence.*

*M is a gorgeous friend and student of mine, she provides me with a silent classroom. I can't thank her enough. L is another part of my disabled community and a student of mine, I am grateful for his song and laughter. His stims are inspiring. Lily is a dear friend, a childhood heart, a climbing vine, a cream colored towel being wrung, on some days she stands above all of us humans, and on others she screams and cries. She is an open wound, seriously smart, Lily is a disabled person who has been thrown aside and hurt beyond belief. Sometimes, it feels like this is all for Lily. Who else could it be for? I am searching for Lily every day. I write to Lily with words from the book Pain Woman Takes Your Keys,* *“When you have arrived, you have arrived. Welcome and blessings.*

*When you have arrived, you have arrived. Welcome and blessings.*

*When you have arrived, you have arrived. Welcome and blessings.”  (Huber 18)*

## *Introduction*

Disabled people are often confined and contained. The world is uncomfortable with us and we are uncomfortable, violated, hurt by the world. Confinement is complicated, and something I have needed and sometimes still do. When you are confined and kept inside, it can feel safe when your world is untrustworthy, and when those who keep you inside also care for you. The care isn't fraught with familial resentment or unpaid labor. Containment feels different to my disabled body than confinement. When a disabled person is contained, they are organized and put away by ableist hands, ableist words and actions. When a disabled person is confined, they can also be contained. Confined could mean a safe, tight squeeze to a disabled bodymind, but it so often isn't. It is often a betrayal of care.

Beneath the guise of the "lesson", of teacher and student, is laughter and misunderstanding. And laughter about misunderstanding. Joy and grief, joy and grief. Beneath it all. The disabled classroom can be, and often is, another space of containment. The hospital or similarly clinical spaces most often contains, confines and isolates the disabled person. The classroom does not and should not have the license to contain, and can instead provide the safe, tight squeeze to the disabled student. The classroom allows for a coming and going of students, which provides a framework for learning, for laughter and misunderstanding, for joy and for feeling your grief. Over the course of this project, I will explore various sites and their relationships to disabled bodyminds. To refer to my chapters I'll use the language of movements, which typically appears in classical musical compositions, and often don't have lyrics or words. Instead of a succession of musical works, each of my movements will take you through the reaction between disabled people and whichever space we have entered into. The language of movements refers here to the way crip space moves, where it can melt and run, and where it gets caught and starts to thrash or knot.

More specifically, in this project I move through three distinct spaces in order to investigate the worthy questions that nonverbal people's existence poses in terms of evidence, art consumption, and education. I've started us in the context of the hospital vs. the classroom. I come to this project as a semi-verbal disabled teacher, with students who are disabled adults, often nonspeaking. Writing this project as an art teacher with nonverbal students, the deconstruction of the typical power dynamics that exist within the lesson is what propels this project forward, and continues to push it further. Modes of nonverbal communication are rich with truths and questions surrounding connection and meaning. This project asks you to move in closer and examine how you engage with disabled people. It asks me to consider in my classroom whether I am confining, containing or providing care. I primarily enter into discourse existing in the Disability Justice space; meaning I continuously look to my crip elders for their ongoing conversation of the past, present and future of disabled life.

During the first movement of this project I will pose questions around what evidence of injustice can mean, specifically through the lens of nonverbal folk's sharing of evidence of maltreatment. I will use the framework of philosopher Miranda Fricker's terms surrounding *epistemic injustice*, and introduce the concept of using artworks as evidence of injustice through the works of two nonverbal artists: DJ Savarese and Judith Scott.

During the second movement I will move into the space of the museum, in order to explore the question of what it means to consume art objects, both as a disabled person and as a person consuming disabled art. As I wrote of using art objects as evidence of injustice, questions arose around consuming art as communication; the museum will help to skim the surface of this question. What does accessibility mean in the context of artworks, for both the disabled and nondisabled person? When does “access frustration” take hold, and when should ambiguity thrive? Disability culture can help us to start to answer some of these questions, and also to ask more of the museum.

During the third and final movement, I will move into the space of the classroom. In the way that disability culture poses a threat to the museum, it also has much to question about the typical classroom. In this movement I’ll continue to build upon the other two spaces we’ve moved through, and apply investigations of injustice, translation and intimacy to education. I’ll connect my previous discussion of epistemic injustice to the concept of using disabled and/or nonverbal student’s art as a mode of communication.

### *First Movement………Evidence*

In Australia, the Great Sandy Desert is a large swath of land that sits in the north west corner of the country. In the late 1990's, the Walmajarri, Wangkajunga, Mangala and Juwaliny language groups registered the Ngurrara land claim, stating to Australian courts their right, as aboriginal people, to about 78,000 kilometers of land in the Great Sandy Desert. In order to make claim to this land, the indigenous people were asked to describe which land belonged to them. None of these language groups could communicate with one another, nor with the Australian courts. Some of these languages don't use written word often, or at all. In order to make claim to the land, the four groups met on the land they were claiming, and painted on a canvas measuring about twenty-six by thirty-two feet. The canvas is giant, beautiful, complicated, and importantly, the map is not to scale. There are pictures of the artists and people making this claim standing on top of this incredible piece of art in their sneakers and boots. It is jarring to see these photographs, as the canvas is now preciously hung in museums in Australia so that it won't be touched. Keeping things precious, (precious time, precious resources) is so often misdirected in our colonized, harsh world. The canvas is so saturated with colors that aren't actually there in reality, as the desert is mostly colored with shades of tan and red. On the Ngurrara map of the Great Sandy Desert, the "waterholes, trees, salt lakes and people are visible. It shows the path of serpents and ancestors." (Behrendt 2) Nothing is to scale or existing all at once, the canvas is the past and present and claiming a future for these peoples. This is important. Using art as evidence of injustice is already disrupting the court system that violently took away rights and needs from these peoples, so disrupting further is not using a colonizer's scale. This canvas illustrates so beautifully how art can be used as evidence of injustice, and applies in large and important ways to my specific context of injustice against nonverbal people.

These aboriginal language groups are not the focus of this project, but it is important conceptually to connect the Ngurrara land claim as a historical event to the broader idea of art objects as evidence. However, I don't feel it is so urgent or paramount to separate the Walmajarri, Wangkajunga, Mangala and Juwaliny language groups from the large and amorphous identity of disabled people. In the way that the word "disabled" is both an adjective and a verb, these aboriginal people are disabled. They are disenfranchised, they're deprived of space, resources, community, and thus community care because of the land grab that is colonization. To be disabled is to be acted against by the people and world around you. In using the phrase "nonverbal disabled people", I am describing a group as not using spoken language to communicate, and I am also describing this group as deprived of space, resources, and care. In examining the Ngurrara land claim, the canvas teaches us to be flexible in our understanding of the concept of "evidence".

Can art objects be used as evidence of injustice? That's in answer to: what is the question I am asking? In answer to: what is the problem? There are so many problems. I see so many calls to action, or calls in general, from disabled people to the abled world: "listen to us. Listen when we tell you about the things we need. Listen when we say you are mistreating us." I am thinking, though, about the nonverbal person, who is often labeled as "profoundly" disabled (a label to think about). The nonverbal person probably isn't asking for "listening," specifically, but is asking for something different, and perhaps something *more* by the scale of the abled world. Let's consider seriously, for a moment, this idea that they are asking for something more.

I've been thinking recently about what it means to care for another person. When disabled people all over the world say: "Listen to us!", there is a sense of urgency; perhaps they yell or throw themself into your world verbally. Maybe they are chanting outside the state capitol near your house, or have written an article posted to your Facebook timeline, which is linked with an image of a person, the author, in a wheelchair wearing loud, colorful clothes.

To only listen once someone is yelling "care for me" is not care. That's not care in any relationship that an abled person might have. Care is, of course, to listen, and also to heed a person's words. Think about the person, spend time thinking about them and what they communicate to you and think about their needs, and their joy and grief. To care about someone is to spend time and resources on them, even precious time and precious resources.

Part of what's so beautiful about disability culture is the slowness. I know referring to crip time can be an amazingly nuanced joke for disabled people to laugh about together, but we also know it's very serious, a lot of times life or death. If we're going slowly we're not just listening when someone throws themself in front of us and says "listen!", we are also hearing people that are just talking. We are also looking at people, and seeing their body language, their facial expression, feeling the pressure of their fingers if they want to hold hands- or if they don't want to- feel the absence of physical communication. Communication through art, through gesture, facial expression, body language and touch, this is all the word less taken.

In this first movement I'm going to argue that art objects can be used as evidence of injustice against the artist, and explore the word less taken. I'll introduce existing theory around epistemic injustice, and investigate the place of disability within this type of injustice. Through the work of several nonverbal artists I'll discuss themes of confinement, institutionalization, listening and silencing. As previously mentioned, the Ngurrara Canvas acts as an especially gripping portrayal of evidence of injustice that doesn't use the oppressor's language or scale. The canvas is full of abstraction and emotional representation of the land, a physical setting where tangible forms of violence took place. Similarly, in using art as evidence of injustice, I'm not necessarily looking for a piece of art that depicts clearly the exact injustice against the artist and the specific laws that were violated, I'm asking the abled world to look harder. To spend time *on* disabled people, to spend time *with* disabled people, to go slowly, to not just listen but look. Use all of your senses, all of the ones you have access to, to care.

In Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice: Power and Ethics of Knowing*, she observes and defines a particular form of injustice with the goal of giving the reader a more specific understanding of how to operate against oppression. Epistemic injustice is described by Fricker as a "wrong done to someone in their capacity as a knower." (Fricker 1) Fricker dissects epistemic injustice and separates it into two major categories. *Testimonial injustice* describes the act of giving a speaker less credibility to their word, which Fricker names as harming that person as a knower and an informant. Fricker refers to testimonial injustice as a harmful act against the informant or speaker, explaining that "this harm may go more or less deep in the psychology of the subject" (Fricker 5). Fricker explores the idea that testimonial injustice can "cramp self development" which in turn can keep a person from becoming who they are. This sort of urgency allows us to understand the long-term implications of testimonial injustice, especially when the speaker is wronged throughout their life, and given less credibility due to a sociopolitical, marginalized identity they might hold.

In wrapping my head around this concept, I found it similar to more recent discourse around the connection between complex post-traumatic stress disorder and psychosis. Psychosis has its own flexible definition usually containing auditory and visual hallucinations, delusions, disorganized thoughts/speech, etc. and is typically viewed as a symptom of a psychiatric or neurological disorder or something otherwise afflicting the body from within the body. However, when noticing the very common connection between psychosis and childhood physical/sexual/emotional abuse, observing the environment became helpful. When a person grows up with the adults around them acting in continually violent ways that make them question their own perception of their reality, their reality can become distorted and disorganized via psychosis. This is a form of testimonial injustice and its life-altering effects: a child is continuously told their actuality is not credible, and so their experienced world becomes uncredible in turn.

Fricker also introduces the concept of *hermeneutical injustice*, a gap in our shared tools of social interpretation, this gap most affects the marginalized group who are the subject of a lacking in social interpretation. Fricker explains that we “might say that testimonial injustice is caused by prejudice in the economy of credibility; and that hermeneutical injustice is caused by structural prejudice in the economy of collective hermeneutical resources.” (Fricker 1) She goes on to write about the way hermeneutical injustice violently manifests, explaining that “the social experiences of members of hermeneutically marginalized groups are left inadequately conceptualized and so ill-understood, perhaps even by the subjects themselves; and/or attempts at communication made by such groups, where they do have an adequate grip on the content of what they aim to convey, are not heard as rational owing to their expressive style being inadequately understood. ” (Fricker 7) When thinking through this concept and where in history it becomes most clear, I landed on the invention and introduction by Black intellectuals, sociologists, researchers, and writers of critical race theory into academic schools of thought. Naming structures and actions as anti-Black, becomes necessary to working and moving collectively against those structures and actions. Phrases like “micro-aggression” and “code-switch” have become specific labels for specific experiences in which white people and white/violent structures harm Black people. As Fricker writes about hermeneutical injustice, naming this sort of oppression asks us to ponder: what if I don’t understand an injustice has been committed against me in the first place? Fricker explains that instances of hermeneutical injustice can sound accidental or chronologically natural, excusing the society that contains a gap as simply not having the resources to understand its own violence or systemic harm. However, she makes clear that it is “no accident that the cognitive disadvantage created by this gap impinges unequally on different social groups. Rather, the unequal disadvantage derives from the fact that members of the group that is most disadvantaged by the gap are, in some degree, *hermeneutically marginalized* — that is, they participate unequally in the practices through which social meanings are generated.” (Fricker 6)

The concept of hermeneutical injustice that Fricker defines can be clearly applied to nonverbal, disabled folks. If the root of hermeneutical injustice is participating unequally in generating social meaning, the origin of this injustice is an unrelenting part of nonverbal people’s lives. The privilege of generating social understandings and knowledge around disability is granted to boards of non-disabled doctors, non-disabled parents of disabled children, researchers, etc. The most visible parts of the specifically ableist form of hermeneutical injustice are the various forms of confinement and eradication, cloaked as treatment and benevolent charity.

The medical model of disability is the historically hegemonic understanding of disability, and so injustices that aim to contain, confine, and/or eradicate disabled people are not read as oppression by the non-disabled world. This is a large and violent gap in our social pool of knowledge. Stacy Simplican is the author of *The Capacity Contract: Intellectual Disability and the Question of Citizenship*, which questions and connects the subjects of anxiety, democracy and disability. This text is helpful in thinking through epistemic injustice in terms of disability, and more specifically thinks through the link between democracy as conversation and the participation of intellectually disabled people, nonverbal or non-chronological speakers. Simplican writes of a person she met at a self advocacy meeting for developmentally disabled adults, who she refers to as Charles.

> Although I did not realize it when I first encountered Charles, he is an effective self-advocate precisely because he disrupts dominant norms of political identity and comportment. Charles disrupted my expectations of proper dinner conversation: he was hard to hear, and I had difficulty discerning his words. We made our conversation work through impromptu signs and an on-the-spot private language of smiles, eyebrow raising, and belly patting. Our conversation had to forge new pathways of communication in order to be effective. Rather than see my gestures with Charles as a subpar conversation, disability studies scholar Brenda Jo Brueggemann invites us to consider how disabled people can help reinvent rhetorical standards in the public sphere. Seeing my story with Charles as a conversation fits nicely with a current conceptualization of democracy as deliberative theory. Deliberative democratic theory understands governance as a process in which citizens reach decisions through rational dialogue. We can think of deliberative democratic theory as a spectrum theory, ranging from ideal to critical. In ideal democratic theory, we imagine citizens as perfectly rational, able to process their own desires into rational and public arguments. By "public," theorists mean the ability to offer arguments that any person could understand. Critical deliberative theory is quite different, wherein theorists' starting point is exclusion and injustice. Despite their differences, both ideal and critical theorists give us a picture of democracy as a conversation. (Simplican 19)

In defining democracy as a conversation, Simplican gives us a way to further name epistemic injustices against nonverbal and non-chronological speakers. The "conversation" of democracy implicates verbalness in the process by which our shared tools of social understanding are fabricated. Simplican studies her own reaction to Charles and to other non-chronological speakers, and generalizes her anxiety as a feeling at work in our larger society and within these widely unsuccessful self-advocacy spaces, as disabled people continue to be excluded from practices of generating social meaning.

Simplican's work helps us to frame Fricker's existing definition of hermeneutical injustice in terms of disability, and connect the concept of democracy with the creation of large gaps in social understanding. Simplican's work also helps us to pinpoint the disparity in Fricker's concept of testimonial injustice when considering disability. Testimony is a privilege granted to those who speak using tools they have access to, unspoken social rules around eye-contact, confidence, as well as control- of volume, tongue, and jaw. Chronology, organization, use of appropriate/respectable/white vocabulary: testimony is reserved for reliable speakers. This means speech shouldn't be sporadic; topics should be focused and believable according to a multitude of cultural standards. Fricker's testimonial injustice starts to name a type of injustice in which speakers are not seen as reliable, as not being viewed as a credible speaker of your own experience will keep the systems that work against you, in place. Fricker places importance on the credibility of a person's word, and in this project I'm asking: what if the person being wronged doesn't have a word? Fricker's work makes clear the importance of specificity and naming when it comes to forms of oppression. Disability is a fruitful avenue through which we can become more specific around injustice, and explore more thoroughly the construction of our hegemonic epistemic practices.

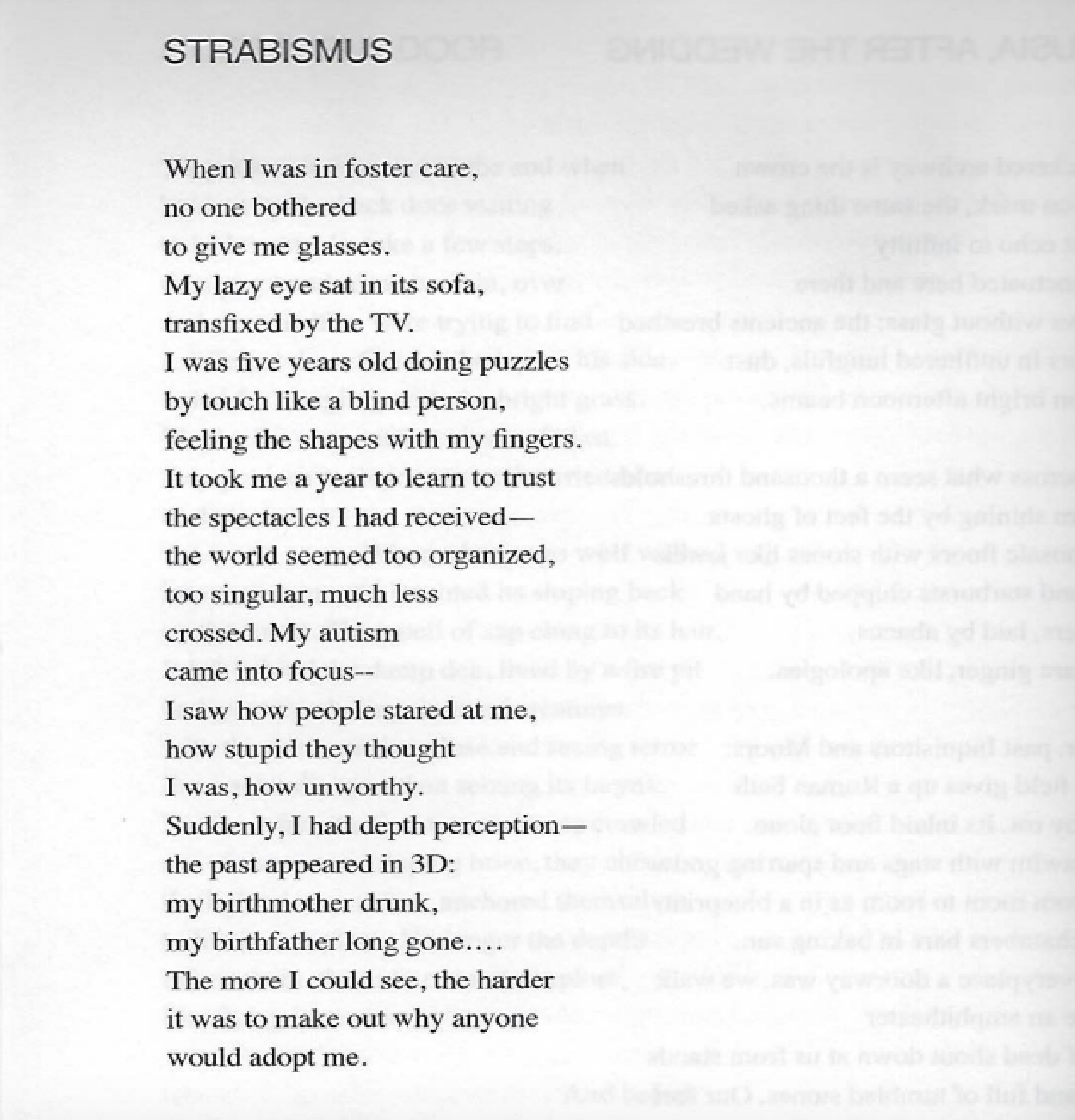
DJ Savarese is a disabled poet and writer. He is a nonspeaking autistic person who uses a text-to-voice synthesizer, and more specifically a method called facilitated communication. Savarese describes facilitated communication in his essay "Passive Plants" through the metaphor of a vine, writing:

> With this method, a person physically supports the typing or writing of someone with autism who cannot speak. That support—in the form of resistance or a countermovement—can be provided at the hand, wrist, elbow, or shoulder, depending on the autist's motor challenges and their familiarity with the support person. The hand of the autist is not being led to the keyboard; to the contrary, it is being gently thwarted. The resistance allows the autist to feel his arm in space and to focus his motoric will… My metaphor is the tree/vine relationship, where the tree resists the vine in the way that a dancer resists their partner and thereby allows them to twirl. Facilitated communication, to say the least, is controversial. "How can we be sure that the autist, and not the facilitator, is authoring his words?" critics ask. "How can someone who looks so retarded type such eloquent things?" they persist. Much anxiety attends to the issue of the competent, self-actualizing individual. (Savarese)

Saverese writes beautifully in this essay of the vine as dependent and resistant, both of these themes being important to disability justice and to disabled life. In his nonfiction writing and poetry, he confronts ableist notions of his body as well as the violence and neglect he has experienced as disabled and nonspeaking. In *Deej*, the documentary about Savarese' experiences, he tells the filmmaker "Until I learned to read and write, people thought I had no mind." (Deej) For Savarese this meant being neglected and cast aside by his birth parents, and having limited access to tools and accommodations in his early life. "Imagine for a minute that you are removed from your home for reasons no one bothers to tell you because you can't speak; so they assume you can't hear or think or feel." (Deej)

Saveres appears to have no word; thus the epistemic injustices committed against him complicate Fricker's definition of testimonial injustice. The idea of justice as giving real credibility to a speaker's word must be expanded for DJ Saveres, to giving credibility to his communication style. Fricker writes of hermeneutical injustice as occurring at a prior stage to testimonial injustice. Before Savarese is wronged by those who don't count his nonverbal testimony of his emotions and experiences, as well as those who don't trust his facilitated communication, he experienced hermeneutical injustice. A gap in understanding of disabled and specifically non-speaking autistic folks led to his birth parents' violent misunderstanding of his disability and of his needs. Survival through accomodation and tool-use as something extra or "more" is a common and destructive notion around disability, and hermeneutical in nature. Savarese was neglected and cast away by his birth parents due to their ableist world, a common fate for disabled children and adults.

The relationship between Savarese and his birth parents is between three people, it is interpersonal in nature, and still the harm he experienced can be seen as both hermeneutical and testimonial. Fricker explains,"While hermeneutical injustice is not perpetrated by individuals, it will normally make itself apparent in discursive exchanges between individuals" (Fricker 7). The gap in social understanding of what it means to be disabled is palpable between these three people. As is the violence that occurs when Savarese is meant to be the informant, and his birth parents are meant to be informed. As is the violence that occurs when Savarese is the informant and the rest of the ableist world is meant to be the informed. DJ Savarese has a visibly differing body, the way he moves through space, releases energy, stims, his volume and movement are all divergent from the ableist "respectable" body. Having a visibly differing body affects the way testimony is taken. As I've begun to write, there are physical parts of communicating that are surveyed by the nondisabled hearer, and signal reliability or unreliability. The image below is a poem written by Savarese entitled "Strabismus", published in *Stone Canoe*.



STRABISMUS

When I was in foster care,
no one bothered
to give me glasses.
My lazy eye sat in its sofa,
transfixed by the TV.
I was five years old doing puzzles
by touch like a blind person,
feeling the shapes with my fingers.
It took me a year to learn to trust
the spectacles I had received—
the world seemed too organized,
too singular, much less
crossed. My autism
came into focus--
I saw how people stared at me,
how stupid they thought
I was, how unworthy.
Suddenly, I had depth perception—
the past appeared in 3D:
my birthmother drunk,
my birthfather long gone….
The more I could see, the harder
it was to make out why anyone
would adopt me.

*Image Description: A photocopy of the poem "Strabismus" in print, slightly grayed around the edges. The poem reads: When I was in foster care, / no one bothered / to give me glasses. / My lazy eye sat in the sofa, / transfixed by the TV. / I was five years old doing puzzles / by touch like a blind person, / feeling the shapes with my fingers. / It took me a year to learn to trust / the spectacles I had received- / the world seemed too organized, / too singular, much less / crossed. My autism / came into focus- / I saw how people stared at me, / how stupid they thought / I was, how unworthy. / Suddenly, I had depth perception- / the past appeared in 3D: / my birthmother* *drunk, / my birthfather long gone…. / The more I could see, the harder / it was to make out why anyone / would adopt me.*

Savarese writes of a lack of access to tools, and knowing about the course of Savarese childhood, we know that his nonspeaking forms of communication were not considered. Being confined and ignored so that time and resources are not spent, is a common experience for nonspeaking folks. Savarese wasn't given the basic tools that would enable him to engage with the world and with people in the way he wanted and needed to. For him this is access to reading and writing, which he was assumed not to be able to do for a very long time. For others this is access to sign language and gesture, and important to this project in specific, art making tools. For many, paper and pencil, marker, crayon, paint, canvas, clay, brushes, facilitated artmaking using resistance, are important to communication of a multitude of emotions and experiences. For Savarese, access to literacy education is also access to an art-making tool. Poetry and creative nonfiction are where Savarese finds a way to express injustice and violence against his disabled bodymind.

DJ Savarese, in his role as an advocate, emphasizes literacy as a necessary tool for access and liberation for non-speaking people. In looking to Savarese to challenge the idea of testimony as exclusively word, I explored the harm that occurs when a non-speaking person is assumed to have no word, and thus no mind. The written art that Savarese creates in which he expresses those injustices is a challenge to the idea that he has no word and no mind. Savarese is nonspeaking and is wronged because of this status. He poses a challenge to the verbal world, and still he has access to written and read word. Further challenging testimony as exclusively word are nonverbal artists that can't and don't read or write. Nonverbal artists who use visual form, color and shape, sound, movement to express injustice pose challenge to even the idea of literacy education as liberatory for the nonspeaking. Literacy education is a concrete right that should of course be fought for and attended to. However, through the work of Judith Scott, a nonverbal sculptor and fiber artist, I'd like to explore testimony without spoken, written, or read word. Testimony through sculpture and gesture, without word, chronology or an organized system of existing language.

Judith Scott was born in Ohio in 1943, and at the age of 7 was institutionalized at the Columbus State School. Scott remained institutionalized until 1985, when her fraternal twin sister became her legal guardian and brought her to California to live and work as an artist at Creative Growth Art Center. Once she had access to materials and tools, Scott began creating sculptures using primarily fiber as well as materials she found – sticks, chairs, bicycle wheels – in which she used a wrapping technique to enclose objects and create complex, dense webs (Creative Growth). Judith Scott's institutionalized life is not unlike any other person in the U.S. who might have had Down's Syndrome and been deaf.

The Columbus State School was founded in 1857, and originally called the Ohio Asylum for the Education of Idiotic and Imbecile Youth. There have been multiple name changes for this institution since then, "including the Institution for the Education of Idiotic and Imbecile Youth (1878-1881), the Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth (1881-1945), the Columbus State School (1945-1970), the Columbus State Institute (1970-1980), and the Columbus Developmental Center (1980-present)" (Ohio History Central). According to Ohio's historical archives, the institution has been most commonly referred to as the"Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth". Feeble as in weak or frail, "and suggesting either pity or contempt" (OED Online). Feeble can be something that is not effective or sufficient, a feeble attempt. Feeble also commonly refers to someone lacking strength of character, cowardly or immoral. If a disabled person is outright labeled feeble, there are a wealth of other adjectives, ideas and histories that amalgamate their treatment within the institution, and their confinement in the first place. Feebleness or weakness might summon the pity or charity model of disability, but there is also immorality and impurity, being small or seated or bent over and less close to god. Institutionalization is a eugenic confining of a disturbance or problem to the respectable public. Judith Scott's institutionalization was an immense injustice, hermeneutical in nature, a commonly accepted solution to her existence beginning at 7 years old.

As Fricker has described, after the hermeneutical injustice which prevents you and the people around you from articulating and registering a large, violent gap in social understanding, there is the testimonial injustice. Judith Scott's testimony comes from her gesture, which she often used to communicate daily wants and needs. She moved her hands and fingers, and directed her head and gaze to interact with those around her. I'm interested here in her sculptures, as not only gorgeous, nuanced pieces in their own artistic right, but also as expressive of Scott's life experiences as a wronged disabled person.

*Image Description: A sculptural form wound with red, blue, purple, yellow, black, brown yarn and string, lays face down against a stark, white background. The long, skinny body of the sculpture touches the floor, while its thick, cylindrical limbs, rise like two arches from its back. It is colorful and anthropomorphic, the form would not be able to move if it had the ability to do so. It's legs and arms have been tied together to create the two arches, it feels as if the form has been put in a physical hold or restraint, and then wrapped with miles of string.*

*Image Description: A shopping cart with two front wheels missing, filled with cream-colored, fluffy fiber material. The cart is overflowing, but the material is being held in the cart by a dense web of thin, white string. This tight web is wound over the top of the cart as well as the handle, and within it is a large piece of yellowed foam. There are clouds of white cotton emerging through the web, there are small pops of magenta and turquoise string contrasting the general off-white, organic colors of the piece. The contents of the cart feel alive and growing, and also forgotten, in the way that mold might take over old fruit left in the refrigerator drawer.*

*Image Description: Layers of webbed, colorful string and fiber overlap to create a teardrop shaped form. The piece looks like a three-foot-high lemon, wound in dense layers of yarn, highlighter orange, deep purple, off-white, red, mustard yellow, the lemon is laid on its side. Centered, wrapped loosely within the top layer of the otherwise tight web, are a few coat hangers. The coat hangers are still in their white paper wrapping from the dry-cleaners, the paper is slightly frayed and ripped. The net of string around this cocoon holds tension, as if to keep safe whatever sleeps inside.*

It is helpful to think of Disabled life, experience and identity in broad terms. Using the word 'Disabled' as a verb allows people who are disabled or limited by the world around them to sit under one broad political identity. Experiences of disability can also be very different from one another, and it can be important to parse through these differences. For my own work, parsing through differences between disabled experiences doesn’t typically mean separating folks by diagnosis, rather by how the world reacts to our bodies. In thinking about a dark history of institutionalization in the United States, I am confronted with the varied experiences of the asylum, and asked to make distinctions between or intentional groupings of confined people. Andrew Scull writes about the history of institutionalization in relation to madness, and specifically about categories created within madness saying:

> For the wealthy, and especially the idle rich, prone to bouts of depression or of ennui, or afflicted with a whole array of mysterious mental and physical troubles, the language of nerves was doubly attractive. For it made legitimate what cruel observers were inclined to dismiss as malingering, or *maladies imaginaries*. It was not clear, however, that nervous invalids were quite as keen for their troubles to be seen as simply a lesser form of madness, for the temptation remained strong to cast the lunatic into an outer darkness. Deprived of the most crucial of human qualities - reason- it was all too easy to see the mentally ill as creatures of a different ontological order (Scull 188).

The category named by Scull in this section is useful to me, as confined people are often marked as ‘without reason.’ Speaking without reason, sporadically, non-chronologically, not enough, too much, unemotionally, overly emotionally, are all categorizations used to diagnose and/or confine. The embodied feeling of disorganization often warrants care through weight or a tight squeeze, rather than the harmful constraints of a cartoon straightjacket, access to pressure that might feel like a blanket of snow. Needing perimeters or enclosed space can be differentiated from the violence of the institution or the asylum, as artists like Judith Scott have shown us what it means to create a cocoon outside of the institution.

As we’ve begun to consume the artworks of Judith Scott, we’ve skimmed the surface of consuming disabled art, as well as the question of consuming art as a disabled person. We’ve entered into the art space through the lens of evidence. In the next movement, I’ll continue to investigate the consumption of disabled art and the consumption of art with a disabled body,  by entering the space of the museum.

### *Second Movement……… the Museum*

If we were to walk into a museum together, there would be a lot on my mind. There might be a thirteen-and-a-half foot high granite staircase to climb or avoid before we even entered. There might be scores of people pushing into us or avoiding us, depending on whether I brought my wheelchair. Maybe you are grabbing museum maps while I dream about Simi Linton's "The Cripple Girl and the Blind Boy Go to the Museum." In Linton's writing the Blind person can be privileged in the obviously inaccessible and unfortunate version of the art world that takes place within the museum, through a gloved, touch tour. As we wander through, there are little plaques every once in a while with images of an ear, mentioning the hearing loop. Besides the titles of paintings protected by sensors and alarms are Braille translations. There is an Italian movie playing in one of the dark showing rooms, the closed captions allow us to almost understand the plot, but not quite. We understand that the dialogue is supposed to be poetic, but once it's found its way to English, the meaning gets scrambled and muddied. In the next showing room there is a movie playing in English. We could ask the front desk for a closed caption stand, and get one if we are lucky. We are tired and understand there probably isn't a closed caption stand for us to use. We watch the movie, and I pretend to understand, watching the projected image float by, or shutting my eyes tightly to focus on the words.

As we roll through the museum together, the art objects installed into the white walls, sitting on top of starchy block pedestals or playing on a projected loop, are wanting to speak up. They are deliberate in mark placement, in how thickly the paint is laid on the paper, in which part of the face the camera focuses on while the subject is interviewed. There might even be short histories or explanations next to each piece- perhaps a large artist statement stuck to the entrance of the gallery describing intention.

When we make our way through this gallery, the closed captions on the video are flat and refer to one of the characters as “roof” rather than “Ruth”. Now that the girl in the film is named roof, Deaf and HoH onlookers feel as if her name is a symbol of her feeling that her house is shrinking every day. The artist made Ruth’s house shrink each time a bell is chimed, but the captions don’t reflect a chime, and they also call her roof, so the house seems to shrink in on roof each time she comes home from work. When objects don’t speak in the way they’re supposed to, they end up speaking in other ways. Abled consumers of art should be just as familiar with this concept as Disabled consumers. Art is not often meant to be completely clear, an audience will most likely need to interpret and ponder, and still- Ruth’s name is definitely not roof. This is one experience of crip space: moving about the museum, looking at it, hearing it, touching it, yelling in it, sipping it through a straw… under the guise of the ableist imagination.

In this movement I’ll describe two types of access frustration, the first being: you can’t get into the museum, read the signs, access the audio or visual content through lack of closed caption, audio or image description. The museum also poses a second type of access frustration, and one that is more amorphous and shifting, which is the frustration provided by the ambiguous nature of art. There is a difference between these two access frustrations, and also intriguing crossing-of-paths, both of which I’m interested in investigating. Here I’ll argue that disability culture helps us to move closer to intimacy and away from frustration when consuming art.

True access frustration is accompanied by an experience of the museum that is differing at its sensory baseline. This is, for example, true of the lack of captions during the English film.

Differing at its sensory baseline of access, while the confusion surrounding the muddled Italian film is shared, and perhaps productive, frustration. Translation plays a part in both of these frustrations, and is a theme I will make my way towards during this movement.

Difference is not inherently frustrating, and crip space is not an inherently frustrating place to inhabit. It overlaps with temporarily abled space, but sits slightly above and below, maybe in the plane of air two feet above and two feet below the polished concrete floor. Crip time is the term that Disabled people use to separate our standard time from EST or PST, because crip time is slow, melting and irregular. Crip time is glorious and not widely observed by the ableist public. I introduce “crip space” here not to refer to the spaces created by and for disabled people, though crip space definitely occurs in those establishments. Rather, it is the experience of moving through many different settings as a Disabled person. There is access frustration within crip space, there is also access intimacy and joy. There is grief and acknowledgement of fragility within crip space, there is crip time sitting in crip space’s lap. Sometimes there are stares from passersby intending to penetrate crip space. The passerby doesn’t know: the ableist has already penetrated crip space six separate times this morning. When the doorway wasn’t wide enough, when the elevator door wouldn’t close, when the employer wouldn’t repeat his directions more than once for comprehension.

Here, in the museum is where the problem of translation is complicated and starts to split into two blurry directions. There is the problem of access- if basic translation isn’t present in the museum, if there aren’t closed captions, or elevators to move your body up and down the way stairs do, this is an epistemic, or more specifically hermeneutic, injustice. There is also bad or misplaced translation, the audio description is a monotone approximation, an abstract version of the video, rather than translating the feeling one would probably get when watching the video, or any of the artist's intentions. I am interested in both of these directions, and the way they cross and split. This is where access and accommodation are placed in opposition, rather than used interchangeably in a document asking my teachers to give me extra time on tests and seat me in the front of the room. Access is a basic human right, while accommodation is something more, an answer to the common problem of access frustration. The concept of accommodation as something with potential to move past access is not immediately obvious. Accommodations are generally requested rather than granted without begging, like an access need sometimes is. Accommodations are seen in this way as above and beyond what an institution- a museum, a school, etc, needs to give a disabled person. The extra-ness of the accommodation is exactly what I am interested in.

Along these lines, Mia Mingus names for the crip world something more than access, the concept of "access intimacy." Mingus approaches this indescribable feeling, writing:

> Access intimacy is that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else "gets" your access needs. The kind of eerie comfort that your disabled self feels with someone on a purely access level… Access intimacy is not charity, resentfulness enacted, intimidation, a humiliating trade for survival or an ego boost. In fact, all of this threatens and kills access intimacy. There is a good feeling after and while you are experiencing access intimacy. It is a freeing, light, loving feeling. It brings the people who are a part of it closer; it builds and deepens connection. Sometimes access intimacy doesn't even mean that everything is 100% accessible. Sometimes it looks like both of you trying to create access as hard as you can with no avail in an ableist world. Sometimes it is someone just sitting and holding your hand while you both stare back at an inaccessible world.

In Mingus' writing, she notes that access intimacy isn't necessarily a situation that is 100% accessible. It's important to note here that the possibility of something being 100% accessible to more than one person is extremely slim, almost utopian, in that it probably can't be achieved. The larger problem of access that I am curious about isn't that disabled people's access needs conflict. Conflict is inevitable and can be okay. I am interested in the fact that there is benefit to exploring the possibility of translation efforts being frustrated. I am also interested in access frustration as real and true, *and* there is something beyond access that we need to pay much closer attention to, namely what accommodation can become.

Here I'd like to move from the problem of basic access to accommodation, and namely what this extra-ness and privileging of disabled consumers of art would mean for the *non*disabled consumer. In Bojana Cokylat and Shannon Finegan's *Alt Text as Poetry Workbook*, the authors share with us the experience of something more than access. Here the authors explain the purpose of the workbook, writing:

> Alt-text is an essential part of web accessibility. It is a system of text descriptions built into websites, which makes visual content accessible to people who are blind, low vision, or have certain cognitive disabilities. Alt-text has existed since the 1990s, but it is often overlooked altogether or understood solely through the lens of compliance. The resulting alt-text is often written in a reluctant, perfunctory style, but it has tremendous expressive potential. This workbook re-frames alt-text as a type of poetry and provides exercises to practice writing it. We don't just want alt-text users to be able to access visual content on the internet, we want them to feel a sense of belonging in digital spaces (4).

Alt text poetry offers us a concrete case of access as providing art, and, as the authors put it, belonging. Cases of access tools turning towards something much more than the bare minimum is what I will call *accommodation* for the duration of this project. Accommodation need not be hidden or minimal to be part of the art world. The art world refers here to the museum and the well-funded gallery but also to the classroom, the communal studio, the underfunded community center. In thinking about alt text as poetry, the authors not only suggest their thoughts on valuing blind and low vision folks, but also suggest that conventions in poetry have a lot to offer alt text and the restrictions of alt text are fruitful for poets.

The authors point to three main ideas from the world of poetry that could be resources for writing alt text: attention to language, word economy and an experimental spirit. They point out through these tenets of poetry that attention to language in alt-text is writing with “thought and care”, and with attention to connotation, tone and voice. Word economy serves in alt-text as a way to think about “paring down language to create something that is expressive yet concise.” (26) Experimental spirit refers here to trying to confront the various “complex and interesting questions that come up when translating visual information into text.” (26) The authors want playfulness and exploration in the context of this translation, and also are clear about experimentation as a tool for a “more nuanced accessibility for alt-text users.” This clarifies the line between creating experimental work inspired by access tools, and harnessing experimentation to expand from access into accommodation.

Poetry is not a universal design feature, though alt-text or image description being coded into a website to make it screen reader accessible is universal design. Both are needed of course, but poetry as alt text is yet to be acknowledged in the way that image description is at this moment. Features of access that are included in the universally designed world are often needed, and also often sanitized, much like the museum. There is often not enough access and somehow too much in the space of the museum. We can also replace “access” with “translation.” The audio description available is not poetry or anything close, but rather a sanitized translation, *and* there is a bizarre, outdated paragraph on the wall preceding the outsider art exhibit; which explains that the artists “did not know that they were creating thought provoking work, but educated, abled museum patrons can see the gorgeous, complex elements of the disabled art and interpret it themselves.” These sorts of exhibits over-translate the art, and leave the disabled artist at the door.

Interestingly, Brian O’Doherty describes in *The White Cube*, this exact relationship between the museum and the body of the museum-goer, writing: “The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space-occupying bodies are not- or are tolerated only as kinesthetic mannequins for further study. This cartesian paradox is reinforced by one of the icons of our visual culture: the installation shot, sans figures. Here at last the spectator, oneself, is eliminated” (O’Doherty 15). This idea of the relationship between the museum and the body is interesting to consider when thinking of the abled consumer of art as benefiting from disabled practices of taking up space and time, and of sitting in the anxiety of speaking non-chronologically, or perhaps being sick non-linearly. Nonverbal existence introduces to us the concept of bodily knowledge, or intelligences beyond the written word. What does the body bring, rather than detract, from the “white cube” of the museum? Nonverbal or nonspeaking artists give the abled consumer an abled version of access frustration- namely a *productive frustration*. Translation of nonverbal art is specifically interesting in this movement towards understanding access vs. accommodation.

The question of evidence is often bound to the question of translation. A few strands of hair, a blurry photograph, a voicemail – each of these have to be translated to be useful in a court of law. For an object to speak to an injustice occurring, a lawyer has to give it a voice. In the first movement, I introduced Judith Scott’s work as sculptures that have the potential to communicate about Scott’s lived experiences as an institutionalized, nonverbal Disabled person. The idea of giving voice to, or translating Scott’s sculptures into definitive verbal statements from their nonverbal form, leaves much to be desired. Imposing translation upon art objects that nonverbal artists create would continue to hold verbalness to the highest standard, and wouldn't ask the verbal person to do much-needed, hard work. Here I am suggesting that for the person invested in this ableist world, looking at a nonverbal artist's work and arriving at a direct, verbal translation is the easy way out. Simplican emphasizes in her writing the importance of sitting in the anxiety that the disabled person who doesn't speak, or speaks non-chronologically, gives to the abled person. "Give" (as in gift) might be the operative word here, as this anxiety is central to truly understanding communication, connection and as Simplican points out- democracy. This is not a moment of my reprimanding the abled person, but sharing access with you, to this valuable experience.

I'd like to approach the question of nonverbal communication's relationship to translation from the complicated, warm nest of access intimacy. Direct, verbal translation of nonverbal communication undermines access intimacy, and is an otherwise terribly uncomplicated, ableist viewpoint from which to stand. The question for us to sit in, and the anxiety that I am asking us to sit in, is what happens when nonverbal ways of communicating simply *shouldn't* be translated to language, but only to bodily knowledge/feeling. Access intimacy also enters the picture for us in terms of showing you the door to the lessons that nonverbal communication teaches us. And welcoming you into crip space to sit with yourself for a spell, as I continue to investigate the connection between translation, access, accommodation and power.

First, there is entering the museum building. The stairs are bright and glaring in the late afternoon sun, and there is an immediate question of where my chair and I will enter. I circle around the block twice before finding a staff member who points me to the freight elevator, just inside the building over a crumbling outdoor step. The sun is starting to rest, setting over the bicycles and curb cuts. The ascent into the gallery has taken just under an hour, and stolen too much of my energy. I have ridden the elevator and found the natural entrance to the exhibit… and then there is the mark on the wall. Virginia Woolf writes “The mark was a small round mark, black upon the white wall, about six or seven inches above the mantelpiece. How readily our thoughts swarm upon a new object, lifting it a little way, as ants carry a blade of straw so feverishly, and then leave it.... If that mark was made by a nail, it can't have been for a picture, it must have been for a miniature–the miniature of a lady with white powdered curls, powder-dusted cheeks, and lips like red carnations.” (Woolf) Woolf goes on in this short story, “The Mark on the Wall” to delve into her river of consciousness, the mark on the wall as her original source of thought. She writes at some point, “Why, if one wants to compare life to anything, one must liken it to being blown through the Tube at fifty miles an hour–landing at the other end without a single hairpin in one's hair! Shot out at the feet of God entirely naked! Tumbling head over heels in the asphodel meadows like brown paper parcels pitched down a shoot in the post office!” (Woolf) The mark on the wall is accessed by Woolf through her sight, as she sits in a chair next to a fireplace, reading. She brings us along as she considers what it means to view or consume a mark, not in a museum, but similarly just out of reach on the wall.

In Rizvana Bradley’s introduction to “Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory”, she references this same short story in the context of thinking through the concept of the haptic. Bradley writes on “The Mark on the Wall”:

> Her reordering of private experience directs us to the interior limits of thought, in a way that potentially renders the intelligible self indecipherable. From Woolf we learn that

> consciousness is not simply “consciousness of something” as Sartre would have it. She adds another layer to this formula: consciousness is always consciousness of itself, feeling in relation and resisting relationality. In this way, her prose offers us an alternative to the phenomenology of seeing, for just as the narrator wishes to clearly see the mark, to achieve further proximity to it and intimacy with it, she struggles to apprehend it and ultimately wishes to disappear it: “But for that mark, I’m not sure about it ... Everything’s moving, falling, slipping, vanishing ... There is a vast upheaval of matter” (10).” (Bradley 131).

For Bradley, considering the haptic means considering touch, feeling, relation, breath, “the visceral register of experience” and “somatic forms of knowledge”. (Bradley 129) This is beyond the five senses that we use as point of reference, and therefore useful as I consider art like Judith Scott’s, that is communicating, but not translatable. As Ruth’s name was definitely not roof, Judith Scott’s art is definitely non-verbal, and should be treated as such.

As Virginia Woolf allows us to see, having access to the mark on the wall is having access to an ocean of bubbling thoughts. The access to the art object is not just access to something, but to consciousness of that ocean. Once again in the museum, there is an audio description of a mark on the wall, which gives the listener so little art that the listener’s consciousness is uninspired and frankly frustrated. Translation in this way is not always successful, it gives the false impression that something has always been achieved when universally designed access tools are present.

The haptic- touch, feeling, relation, breath- is a tool for the disabled and nondisabled, the verbal and nonverbal person to understand the world around them, as well as the art around them. Approaching art with touch is not familiar for the nondisabled museum goer, curator or board of directors. In “The Gravity, The Levity: Let Us Speak of Tactile Encounters”, Fayen d’Evie and Georgiana Kleege describe their call for touch tours of art works led by blind docents. D’Evie writes:

> Whether they are good or bad, standard museum touch tours systematically fail to capture and collate the responses of the privileged few who enjoy this exceptional access. I always feel like I come away from even the least successful touch tours, with something of value to communicate to sighted art lovers. It is precisely the aspects of the work that are not available to the eyes alone that I believe can enhance a sighted viewer's appreciation. I ask, since not everyone is allowed to touch the art, why not include tactile and haptic details in descriptive labels, wall text, and catalogues? Why not employ blind docents to conduct tours where they touch the art and describe the experience to people who are not allowed to touch? …
>
> I worked with the concept of a haptic "be-holder", retrieving the etymological root of beholding, *bihalden*, a conjoining of *bi*, thoroughly, and *halden*, to hold, to keep, to guard, to preserve, to maintain, to take care. I proposed that the concept of accessibility be inverted, shifting away from a segregated, disability-focused model, to awaken or extend perceptual attentiveness and movement vocabularies of all haptic be-holders. Responding to the invitation from V.A.C. in Moscow, I developed a performative pedagogical score to expand sensory attentiveness and movement vocabularies, which was performed through tactile encounters with sculptural works from the State Museum of Vadim Sidur. William Forsythe's theory of choreographic objects implicates the

> perceptual reflections of Jacques Lusseyran and Bernard Morin, and I drew on close readings of the latter sources to reconceptualise a touch tour as an encounter between a haptic be-holder in motion and an artwork understood as a specific choreographic object. The touch tour may then be approached as a site for understanding embodied interactions at nested scales: with discrete artworks; micro and macro relationships between arrangements of artworks and bodies in motion; movement pathways within an exhibition site; and spatial, environmental, social, or temporal factors that alter the experience of the encounter.

The haptic, brought to us here by blind and low vision thinkers and artists, is also a definitively nonverbal form of communication. Engaging with touch, with breath and relation in the museum while consuming art is a way to sit in crip space. The haptic is intimate, and disability culture invites us to grow more intimate with our own bodies and those around us, in everything we do. The museum is a fruitful place to pursue an entrance to crip space and time, as that intimacy might look like sitting with a piece of art for a very long or fleetingly short amount of time, according to your body's needs. Especially in the context of disabled art, this is your official invitation to engage with art that asks you to sit with yourself, touch and breathe and approach explicitly nonverbally.

### *Third Movement………the Classroom*

At the start of the summer, I would wrap my balding head every morning to walk to the museum; by lunch Hen would be in trouble. Art camp was difficult for Hen, but he made it clear he didn't want to be anywhere else. Underneath my cheap plastic folding table, Hen sat beside my left knee, bobbing up and down on the marble floors as I greeted rushing parents. I quickly became his shadow, in the language of teacher's aides, and in the feeling of the black summer sun melting me into the pavement. Or stinging my legs until I bent for a break on my way to and from work. As Hen's shadow, the museum fought to be self important. We had entered a big, gleaming, soft, spongy, always-shifting, crip space. The museum was meant to be the classroom, so Hen treated it that way. We slinked through the halls together, running our hands over the community murals, stopping ourselves just before we could touch the stuff in frames. Hen repeated scripts of the movies he had most recently watched while his dad was out of the house, *Silence of the Lambs*, *It* or sometimes *The Dark Knight Rises*. Hen learned how to cut fabric into the shape of Hannibal Lecter, as we sat on the floor of the gallery, surrounded by scraps of linen. Running back and forth from the classroom to collect supplies, as the teacher was frustrated with him and wanted him outside of her space. We could climb to the top of the museum, to the small limestone statue dancing in its cage. We could sit right next to it and hear our voices echo, let our bodies rock back and forth to soothe our nerves. Feel the museum move with us, swaying and tipping, sun sick and smiling.

During this final movement, we'll shift from the museum to the art classroom, and again think through what crip space and disability culture can offer in terms of facilitating progress in the realm of art education. In the first movement of this project, I argued for the use of art objects as evidence of injustice against disabled people, and in the second movement I examined closer what it means to consume art objects from a definitively disabled perspective. As we walk, roll, limp, crawl into the classroom, I will shift us towards the idea of using art objects as more than evidence of injustice, but rather evidence of the whole range of experiences the disabled student can have. In line with what we engaged with in the museum, I will continue to explore how we can move towards intimacy and away from bad translation, in the context of the classroom. I'll continue to center the nonverbal experience, and ponder: what can silence bring to the art classroom?

In defining injustice against nonverbal people in my first movement, Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* was extremely helpful. I would like to use Fricker's terms again, but this time to describe justice in the classroom. Hermeneutical injustice, as defined by Fricker and referred to in my first movement, is a gap in our shared tools of social interpretation. In philosophy, "hermeneutics" is the study of interpretation, "hermeneutics therefore concerns the meaning of interpretation—its basic nature, scope and validity, as well as its place within and implications for human existence." (George) Hermeneutic injustice as defined by Fricker is then a prejudiced or violently lacking interpretation of a group. In terms of disabled folks, this might be a treatment of accommodation or access as burden, or simply the eugenical mindset that pure, healthy, abled life is inherently more worth living. In thinking through the cultivation of hermeneutical justice, I'm interested in focusing on the ways students can generate social meaning and interpretation of their own bodies in the classroom. The mechanics of the classroom I am describing are not very different from a classroom that isn't created with the purpose of serving the disabled student. However, realizing the dynamics of a classroom and utilizing them to serve the disabled student is hopefully more active and less passive in its approach.

One of the relational principles that I am curious about here is the student as teaching those around them how they should be treated. This is not an inherently positive rule of social dynamics, it is actually very neutral. A student can teach the people around them to walk on eggshells, or as if they are made of glass. This is still important for the development of the classroom. If a student asks a teacher, through nonverbal and verbal cues, to treat them like they are fragile- they might very well be fragile. When a student, and specifically a disabled student, has their needs met, this is hermeneutical justice in the classroom. They are generating the social meaning and interpretation of their disabled bodymind, so that their needs can be met and they can be served/taught.

In my own work as a disabled teacher of disabled people, thinking about nonverbal communication in the classroom, and specifically haptics, has provided me with much information on the needs of the students. During the second movement, haptics came into view when approaching nonverbal artist's work in the museum. Touch, feeling, relation, breath all have pertinent places in the classroom as well. One of the haptical pieces of the classroom that I am interested in is proximity. Feel the pressure of their fingers if they want to hold hands- or if they don't want to- feel the absence of physical communication. Paying close focus and attention to the haptic in the classroom is not just noticing when touch is wanted, but just as equally when it isn't. Proximity is one of these needs that is wound up in the task of interpreting the student's bodymind. How much space does the student need to learn or create? How much closeness does the student need to learn or create? In my experience, they will let you know.

In Fricker’s terms, testimonial injustice describes the act of giving a speaker less credibility to their word. As opposed to hermeneutical injustice, which deals with the wider issue of the interpretation of a group, testimonial injustice deals with a more individual injustice, when a person’s testimony of their experience is not taken at face value. The piece of hermeneutical justice that deals with generating social meaning around one’s own needs as a disabled person, winds around and through testimonial justice. Testimonial justice in the classroom has much to do with needs and personhood, broadly giving the student credibility to their word. In the classroom that provides for the disabled student, and in a project that considers heavily the nonverbal student, there is a different emphasis on the word, and a shift towards the various forms of communication. Testimonial justice in the classroom is where we turn more specifically to art education. Again, an understanding of needs- how we communicate them, how we meet others’, is extremely important in the classroom. Communication of needs is essentially testimony, and testimony need not be verbal. In the disabled art classroom, we can begin to understand haptics, gesture, and mark-making as crucial to testimony. Credibility to the student’s art, to their mark, is specifically interesting to me in this project as I explore the relationship between nonverbalness, art making and justice.

In the first movement I reference the poet DJ Savares who writes on the experience of being nonverbal: “they assume you have no mind”. Here Savares is referring to the discriminatory lack of education that nonverbal people often receive, which can easily connect to the lack of resources around communication tools that nonverbal children and adults have access to. To assume one has no mind, is to assume that you have no responsibility in relation to a nonverbal person to focus on touch, relation, breath and gesture. Again, this can also be extended to the mark in the context of the art classroom. In Savares' own work, he specifically advocates for nonspeaking and disabled students to have access to literacy education. In trying to draw a line between Fricker and Savares, it's important to recognize the differences between their respective relationships to epistemic injustice. Fricker explicitly writes that while distribution of education seems like it has to do with epistemic injustice, it is purely "incidental".

> Given how we normally think about justice in philosophy, the idea of epistemic injustice might first and foremost prompt thoughts about distributive unfairness in respect of epistemic goods such as information or education… When epistemic injustice takes this form, there is nothing very distinctively epistemic about it, for it seems largely incidental that the good in question can be characterized as an epistemic good. (Fricker 1)

However, while thinking and writing about the gaps specific to disability/nonverbal existence in Fricker's definition of epistemic injustice, Savares' advocacy seems absolutely in line with Fricker's philosophy. In the case of nonverbal people, lack of communication tools provided by educational environments, and alternative modes of communication going unrecognized in educational environments, is seemingly due to both hermeneutical and testimonial injustice. Fitting squarely into the definition of epistemic injustice as "a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower." (Fricker 1) The classroom is exactly where this seemingly passive harm can and should be recognized and mended.

The disabled teacher sits at an interesting vantage point in terms of generating social meaning around disabled students, and in terms of testimonial justice in the classroom. Recognizing the power dynamic of the teacher and student means recognizing where the disabled teacher is in terms of responsibility to the disabled student. Where does crip solidarity fit into this classroom? Does it move both ways, or is the responsibility to the student? As a disabled teacher serving disabled adults, I can affirm that my body fits into the classroom in interesting ways. Keeping in mind that my superiors are positioning themselves as abled, especially in comparison to the people we teach, my “employee” status becomes important.

Stacy Simplican’s writings around anxiety come to mind once again:, part of my practice of crip solidarity in the classroom is sitting in and around the anxiety of non-linearity, silence, stims, tics, volume changes, etc., and, more importantly, encouraging other staff members to do the same. In this way, generating social meaning around disabled students can look like encouraging students to stim, as this small action rocks in the opposite direction of the dominant culture around neurodivergence. Stimming as a teacher, rocking or flapping as my students do the same, acts in opposition to the slice of ableism that does not begin to comprehend carewebs, or the concept that disabled people can care for, and teach, eachother. This is where the employer re-enters, who is commonly non-disabled, or identifying as such in their higher position. Credibility to the word of the disabled teacher is part of testimonial justice in the disabled classroom, as their commitment to crip solidarity in all of its nuances can provide a more functional classroom. As I continue to move through the disabled classroom and become more specific about the role of mark-making, I’ll also continue to explore the complexities of the role of the disabled teacher.

Investigating Fricker’s hermeneutical injustice in the context of the classroom, as a gap in our shared social understanding, adjoins interestingly with the concept of translation. Previously introduced as relevant to art works, I’m interested in the concept of translation, and perhaps more accurately “bad” translation, as it applies to disabled bodies. A prominent gap in our shared social understanding of disability, is the gaping vortex and surrounding ripples and waves created by eugenics. When I think about translation, I might think about a piece of text or an object taken out of its familiar context, whether that is a different language or a vastly different environment. When a disabled person is in a classroom, their body is not out of context inherently, but the prevailing ideas about the disabled person as unworthy of time and space means that they are felt to be out of context by the educational system in place. The hugely unjust, epistemic concept of disabled bodies is that they are meant to be confined or otherwise destroyed. This is the eugenical translation of disabled bodies. When the classroom that serves disabled students is not a place of confinement or violence, it is effectively no longer translating the disabled student through the eugenic gaze.

The eugenic gaze is a concept introduced in "Constructing Normalcy", an essay written by Lennard Davis. In this essay, Davis clearly draws the connection between Sir Frances Galton's statistical theories, Darwin's survival of the fittest and the dominant eugenical mindset around disability. The author references the creation of disability as a site of difference, which he then applies to literary works that utilize the disabled figure. Davis explains in his essay that "Statistics is bound up with eugenics because the central insight of statistics is the idea that a population can be normed. An important consequence of the idea of the norm is that it divides the total population into standard and nonstandard subpopulations. The next step in conceiving of the population as norm and non-norm is for the state to attempt to norm the nonstandard- the aim of eugenics." (Davis 7) The eugenic gaze is extremely normalized in colonized life. Surveillance of each other's bodies is an action that we are conditioned to partake in everyday, in many different parts of our lives. Surveying someone walking down the street could mean flagging the way their body moves as typical of a "crazy" or "neurotic" person, judging their food choice as unhealthy while they eat their lunch, noting their mobility aid as perhaps unnecessary- as you make the judgment that they are not paralyzed or an amputee. Surveillance is also of course grounded in anti-Blackness, the white person noticing and flagging a person's hair texture or how deep their skin tone is in tandem with the way their body moves, their volume, etc. All of this is to say: accepting the idea of norms and ranks as it relates to the human body is to participate in the surveillance of each other's bodies. The eugenic gaze grabs onto the idea that a norm exists for a human body, and then pushes that idea into the concept of a perfectible body. As Davis writes, "… The evolutionary advantage of the fittest lays the foundation for eugenics and also for the idea of a perfectible body undergoing progressive improvement." (Davis 7) The ideal of the perfectible body can easily be viewed in the classroom that partakes in ableism, as classrooms across the country that aren't meant to serve the disabled student have stock in ranking and norming their students.

A classroom that views student's bodyminds as either within a norm or as a defective outlier, in both loud and quiet ways, is participating in what I am calling a bad translation of bodies. Bodies translate differently from one environment to the next. We can see an example of this translation from the museum to the classroom. The person whose speaking volume is disruptive or above respectable levels in the space of the museum, might be made to feel out of place, or asked to leave. That same person's bodymind might translate to a student with a valuable perspective in the context of the art classroom or studio. Or, going the other direction, the voluntarily mute person is mistreated in the ableist classroom, as they are translated into this space as having no mind. In the museum, their silent nature is encouraged. We can see in both of these examples that the people in power, whether in the museum or classroom, decide how bodies will be translated as they walk, limp, roll through the door.

Often, as a disabled student, you are reminded that the classroom was not created with you in mind. An emphasis on grit and grind, an expectation of the kind of time or energy one might have to devote to reading, writing or creating; when time or energy may be divided between staying alive, caring for yourself, caring for those around you, and also production. The eugenic gaze upon the student's bodymind does not always show up as murderous, and it is important to note the subtleties. If the eugenic gaze is descended from Darwin's idea that the fittest, most perfected bodies will survive, then the classroom that utilizes bad translation will most likely emphasize grit. Again, part of colonized life is the ideal of the perfectible body, as well as a person's productivity as determining their worth. Grit, and the illusion of meritocracy, are very present in the typical classroom, as these are tools to show whose bodymind is the fittest, and thus whose bodymind is worthy of survival. My intention in this movement, however, is not to just list the ways the eugenic gaze translates in the typical/ableist classroom. Though these specifics are important, and will naturally reveal themselves, as I move beyond the basic request of a lack of violence in the classroom. I'd like to now peer into the ideal classroom, which not only doesn't punish disability, but embraces difference and learns from it.

When thinking through hermeneutical injustice in the classroom as it pertains to disabled students, highlighting the concept of the eugenic gaze illustrates specifically the violent gap in our shared social understanding. Hermeneutical *justice* in the classroom addresses the gap, by embracing specificity of needs and ambiguity of bodyminds. Further, looking to implement testimonial justice in the classroom allows us to be much more particular or distinct about the implications of embracing specificity of needs or ambiguity of bodies. Testimonial justice is especially relevant to the art classroom, the setting of this particular movement. I've referred to the effect of the hermeneutical gap in the classroom as bad translation, testimonial justice is where we can start to see a move away from bad translation and towards intimacy. As with the relationship between the art and the consumer in the museum, a move towards intimacy in the classroom can be incredibly important in terms of consuming student's artwork. The nonverbal student plays an important role in understanding how we can create a classroom that moves towards intimacy and away from bad translation of the student's bodymind, as they help us deal directly with the role of communication in education.

In the first movement of this project, I explored the connection between nonverbal existence, art and evidence, and made clear that evidence needn't always be crystal clear. Meaning, a written list of injustices is not typically what art as evidence means, we need to grow more comfortable with nonverbal, unwritten evidence in order to attend to the needs of nonverbal people who have experienced violence. In order to consume the art of disabled, nonverbal students in the context of the art classroom as a form of communication, we need to employ this same type of flexibility. Nonlinearity of narrative, soft yet important marks, these are just a couple of the aspects of utilizing art as nonverbal communication, that might cause a certain amount of abled anxiety. Flexibility, as I've stated, is especially important to the ideal classroom, not just as a tool for consuming artworks, but for simply communicating with nonverbal students. Earlier in this movement, I highlighted the importance of the student as teaching us how they should be treated- and used the example of proximity and distance as important specific needs for each of us as learners. In terms of the nonverbal student, they teach the facilitator of the classroom specifically how they should be communicated with. As do all of us, with varying versions of neurodivergence, but the nonverbal person gifts us much in the realm of communication.

When those who have learned a second or third verbal language in a school environment or in an otherwise immersive setting are asked, they often say similar things about being able to successfully exist in a different language. I was reminded when a close friend explained the way they learned French was by participating in conversation, and learning how not to say "I don't understand this." The moment you say to yourself that you don't understand a specific word, that is the moment you stop listening to the conversation, and the moment you give up any understanding you might have of those speaking. Again, this is how the student learns. In my role as a teacher, I work with nonverbal, disabled adults who haven't had access to an education that includes sign language. We work on expressing ourselves through nonverbal means, whether that is American Sign Language, gesture, or a home sign system that is distinct to that person.

I have been friends with and working with one particular person for many years at this job- I'll refer to her here as *M*. She is Deaf and developmentally disabled, and has taught me much, effectively laying the foundation for this project. *M* has underscored the significance of flexibility in the classroom, and in communication generally, and helped me to notice the abled obsession with exact translation. She and I work on ASL together, and in conversation *M* signs non-chronologically, and utilizes gesture and non-word mouth movements and sounds. I've learned from *M* to never say to myself during our conversations "I don't understand this". That would be the moment I stop listening and stop witnessing her. On some level I always do understand what she is communicating with me, whether it's the expression on her face, one or two signs, or the cadence at which her hands move. This isn't all to say I'm a passive listener with *M*, because that's not what she's asking me to be. Clarifying questions are always part of conversation, and encouraged in most friendly dynamics.

Flexibility plays a very similar role when I am working with *M* artistically or other members that are nonverbal. At this point in my project I'd like to introduce the tool of silence as useful in the classroom that serves nonverbal, voluntarily mute and/or Deaf people. When I refer to silence as a tool, I'm referring to it as a tool specifically for the teacher or facilitator to utilize. In this way, silence in the classroom can privilege the nonverbal student and challenge the teacher. In the art classroom this is an especially useful concept, as it opens up the possibility of truly communicating through art. Communicating through mark-making allows for an entrance from both sides of a conversation to engage in non-chronological or nonlinear conversation. As I've stated, the Silent Art Class is an example of privileging the disabled student, and challenging the historically ableist structure of the classroom. It emphasizes the importance of access to an art education, as well as the importance of access to nonspeaking, alternative methods of communication. Let the class, the act of sitting together, drawing, painting, sculpting, stitching together, be your conversation and a spending of precious time and precious resources.

In the Silent Art Class that I facilitated, I found especially interesting the very first class, which was very obviously flawed and imperfect- as it always is during a very first class. During this first silent class I wrote in my log that I had significant trouble with the system that was already in place for assistant teachers and aids. Meaning the typical classroom was working against me, the way the aids were trained was explicitly verbal when communicating with the nonverbal students we were working with. We are often taught as teachers in the disabled classroom to fill in the "blanks", a truly retractive, medical model of disability. In terms of the nonverbal student, this might look like a teacher being explicitly more verbal than they typically are with a verbal student. Giving direction without verbal affirmation from a student might lead to the teacher giving the directions multiple times, and giving unnecessary instructions as well. The Silent Art Class is meant to act in direct opposition to this habit/system, by working within the student's wheelhouse.

Another piece of the Silent Art Class for me as a disabled teacher, my madness often leaving me nonverbal or semiverbal, is that I paid attention on this first day to whether I was benefited or privileged in the silent classroom. As I looked for this theoretically beautiful silent experience to appear in front of me, within the first 10 minutes I began to hear "Moves Like Jagger", a pop song by Maroon 5 blasting from a nearby room. It was distracting and definitively not silent or beautiful. I sat in the discomfort, much to my chagrin, unable to turn off the music or provide for myself an environment that wasn't overstimulating. Part of the way through the class I noticed the teacher's assistant, as well as a different teacher observing my class, begin to talk to each other. I grew uncomfortable with what seemed like a lack of control of my classroom, at which point I decided to use my voice. Against my own directions for creating a silent or nonspeaking classroom, I asked the students verbally if they would share their work thus far. Over the course of the classes that followed, I tried to parse through the difference between the two kinds of discomfort I had encountered. The first kind of discomfort, provided by Maroon 5, was surrounding my disabled bodymind and my needs as a disabled teacher. The discomfort that caused me to use my voice during a specifically nonspeaking class, is the good discomfort/anxiety that Stacy Simplican names for us. Something to sit in, observe and question. The first kind of discomfort is of interest to me, as it reminded me that the needs of my students and my own needs don't conflict, rather belong together in the same room, and even provide food for thought when they might present as conflicting. The second type of discomfort requested that I investigate the tangled knot of my ableist conditioning. Over the course of the Silent Art Class, it became clear to me that the silence removes the power of the teacher's voice, and this is welcome in the classroom meant to privilege nonverbal people. As the silence removes one kind of power structure, it also provides the room with a much more interesting and intimate dynamic. The art materials also fill the role of providing- tools for conversation, narration and expression.

As we've moved from the museum to the art classroom, I'd like to accentuate crip space once again, which moves with me wherever I go. Crip space, as I've defined it, is not inherently frustrating. Not only this, but its existence proves to be especially useful in the ideal classroom. Winding around and laced through crip space is crip time, which provides an important framework for the pace of the classroom. Crip time embodies both flexibility and intimacy, two of the major attributes of the ideal classroom that I've focused on in this project. Flexibility has a bold and gorgeously obvious connection to crip time. Crip time is the stringy clock that allows for the disabled person to move at their own pace and still be worthy in a productivity-centered world. It is extremely flexible, and in a classroom means not only an extended-deadlines accommodation, but a further investigation into why that deadline needs to be extended. Is the project a larger task than you (as the teacher) anticipated? How can you divide the project into smaller chunks, or anticipate this issue in the future of your syllabus? Is there a different project the student can be working on that their bodymind might more readily allow them to create? Is the subject of the project worthy of more time than you originally anticipated? Does the class as a whole need to move slower for one or all of the students? The typical classroom thinks that it values our time by running through a million different lessons and assignments. The classroom can differently value our time by realizing what is of interest to the students, how much pressure they are under, and prioritize wellbeing of students; noticing when to slow down.

Flexibility, in this way, holds hands with intimacy as a tool in the classroom. Crip time is loose and it is also observant and kind. Access intimacy, as defined by Mia Mingus, is observant of a person's needs and anticipatory of them as well. Crip time in the classroom moves with student's specific needs, which means first observing and respecting those needs. Sitting with someone rather than surveying their body, is an intimate act. In the classroom this might look like asking a student to do the work of communicating their needs, rather than pondering their possible diagnosis and how that might impede their learning. Crip time, flexibility, and intimacy are not just useful for the classroom meant to serve disabled students. These are tools for every classroom, and kind to both student and teacher. Crip space falls under this same umbrella, of something lived in by disabled people, but an incredible privilege to be invited into for nondisabled folks.

Crip space in the classroom is adaptation, observation, accommodation, a welcoming environment to extension or tool-use, and care. I'd like to conclude this movement by welcoming you into crip space, if you haven't existed here already. Showing you this vast plane will help us to move in two different directions as we come to the end of this movement, and towards the end of this project. Crip space has been secluded for so long in spaces of confinement and violence towards disabled people; in clinical settings that isolate us and don't fulfill our basic or complex needs. By bringing crip space with us into the classroom, which is meant to teach, care and encourage, we are also bringing what has been referred to as crip futures. The concept of a crip future is in direct opposition to the isolation and confinement of disabled people, it imagines that disabled people aren't destroyed, but get to become elders when their bodyminds allow it. Inviting you into crip space, and bringing crip space into the classroom, imagines accurately that being disabled is not pitiful or retractive, and that there is a specific flavor of caring and creativity that disabled people have mastered. It is here that we'll move away from disabled isolation, and towards a classroom that cultivates access intimacy for every student.

"And that is such a huge paradigm shift—to view coming into disability identity as a birth, not a death, which is how the transition(s) are seen by ableist culture. To see it as a series of births, as our bodyminds evolve in their crip, neurodivergent, Deaf, sick identities over time—to name that there are life stages and rites of passage of becoming disabled, that this is not a static wound, these disabled bodyminds are creative, evolving strategies. " (Piepzna-Samarasinha 300)

## *Conclusion*

As I write to you, it does not get any easier.

Over the course of this project, I paint many times an idealized crip-focused world, sometimes with specific directions, other times with vague strokes. With this project I am wanting to show you crip knowledge focused around nonverbal communication, and enter into the conversation that Disability Justice started and continues to feed. I try to remain specific to the nonverbal experience, but with a call to justice for one disabled person, comes broader concepts from the wider disabled world. In entering into this genre, I have found that a certain amount of optimism feels at home. It allows us to explore crip futures and to peer into possible images of justice. This is where optimism fits, and as I've spent much time in the written world that I am trying to help create, I've noticed also where it does not; where I feel let down, hurt and alone. I've placed my disabled body and thoughts into an academic context in order to write about the fact of injustice and the possibility of a greater reception of disabled bodyminds. In being a disabled person in an academic context, it becomes clearer and clearer that sometimes being seen or being read is not enough.

To be in disabled community is aspirational; I know the importance of it and I also know that disabled community is not typically within the understanding of a social model or something close. It is important that this discussion of nonverbal existence is taken further outside of an academic context, so that it can both be in community and bring theory with it.

I'm also interested in the way that this discussion of verbalness- whether that means nonverbal, nonlinear, repetitive, etc. translates to higher education. There are disabled people at colleges and universities, though sometimes it feels like we are hard to find. However, generally we are required to be especially verbal. Maybe you are sick or mobility impaired, so participation in one day of class has to make up for two classes missed. Maybe you are neurodivergent, but are made to feel the need to prove that you are “high functioning”. Maybe you are mad, but are made to feel the need to prove you can reality test. These are all essentially providing proof of being verbal. The classroom here is a different kind than that I’ve been writing about, but I’d argue it still needs crip space. It desperately needs crip time, flexibility, access intimacy, an acceptance of extension (tool-use), and for cultural stock to be removed from grit and grind.

Let time to breathe, sit and grieve for a moment.

What has been left unsaid, unspoken?

Over the course of this project I chose to hold up the interaction between the disabled person and artwork to the sun-bathed magnifying glass. I entered the museum with access in mind, but the future of this project also reckons with aesthetics; a subject extremely relevant to disability study. These discussions of beauty in art definitively implicate disabled people commonly deemed unsightly, disfigured, clunky. A discussion of aesthetics can further bring crip space and crip knowledge into the sphere of the art world, whether that’s the museum or the art classroom, in order to bring it closer to intimacy and farther from bad translation. Other pieces of this project recognize what is left unsaid through a valuing of haptics and feeling. Sometimes what is left unsaid is just simply what is meant to be felt. There are glorious, unapologizing moments of access and accommodation that have played colossal roles in the creation of this project, and many of these moments can only be felt, experienced, inhaled.

A discussion of communication through art in this project references art as a tool. This might look like meaningful mark-making, with narrative or expression of emotion. What has been left unspoken here is communication through art can also reference connection through art making. Connection meaning the act of being with another person, getting to know them, laughing with them, gossiping with them, sitting with them. This is again a moment of crip optimism, getting to know another person as they get to know you can be facilitated through the art studio. The future of this project is to continue to create physical spaces dedicated to disabled people and our pursuits in making. To make silent art classrooms, to make extra-visual opportunities in creating and consuming, to make spaces that question rugged individualism and emphasize community. The future of this project invites you to shoulder the weight of crip optimism, because with it comes the heaviness of the present; inaccess, lack of healthcare, confinement and isolation.

I hope you can feel it.

We all sit around a long table, a bubbling piece of red burlap reaches each corner. Everyone at the table touches the burlap. We think about skin and veins and eventually, our bodies. Not as a vessel or a burden, but as the self. The way we engage with the world can only be through our bodies, skin and veins and sinewy red nets that look a lot like burlap. To my right I work with someone stringing beads, tying those strings into knots, and then fastening them to our big red burlap. These are our cell bundles, or maybe the knots in our collective stomach. To my left I am being asked to write in someone's journal, she is communicating to me that this is a journal her mother reads everyday when she goes home from program. I draw a picture of her in the journal as she squints at me, and laugh with her when the picture is finished. In a few minutes I'll be asked to work with someone felting the shape of a big necklace, to fasten to our big stretch of red burlap muscle tissue. This is adornment, part of the body’s survival. Then *M* will knit an intestine as we sit together and giggle. Then *L* will organize the supply cabinet, while someone sits next to him, painting a map to their house. Self portraits line the path, placing himself along the way, like crumbs or reminders of body. All the while, I am seated inside of myself. There is time enough to be together, and always help with being if you need it. There is time enough to feed each other, and time to figure out how to make whatever sculpture, textile, painting that needs to be made.

This is crip space within the limits of the art studio.

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