

Disability Studies Quarterly (DSQ) Special Issue

Call for Papers

Origins, Objects, and Orientations: Towards a Racial History of Disability

Special Issue Editors: Sony Coráñez Bolton, Amherst College; Kelsey Henry, Yale University; Leon J. Hilton, Brown University; Anna LaQuawn Hinton, University of North Texas

How might the who, the what, and the where of disability studies shift if the field searched for origin stories in unfamiliar places? What novel objects, subjects, methodologies, care practices, and survival strategies can emerge if we assume multi-sited, polyvocal genealogies rooted in historical processes of racial slavery, settler colonialism, imperial expansion, and racial capitalism? Conventionally, the intellectual history of disability studies constellates around the U.S. American disability rights movement in the 1970s and 1980s. In doing so, the field's own self-periodization frames what counts as disability, who qualifies as disabled, and how thinkers within disability studies have defined the parameters of our field. Similarly, presumptions of a singular "where" and "when" around which disability studies coheres has delimited which forms of thought and fomentations of resistance capture the field's attention, often by assuming in advance which sites, scholars, and social actors can generate disability theory to begin with.

This special issue of DSQ invites contributions that re-zone and re-people disability studies by unsettling its commonplace temporalities and theoretical referents to better reflect racialized histories of disability and debilitation. We are curious about the vernacular theories of disability that emerged out of epochal moments in histories of race and racialization, including debilitating geographies of the transatlantic slave trade and US transpacific empire building, the conquest of the Americas, the Opium Wars, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the antiblack surveillance regimes of the Jim Crow South. This special issue asks what a crip reading of these historical moments might look like. It especially hopes to widen the critical attention of disability studies beyond historical subjects and movements that have confessed to disability as a category of identity. We take Cristina Visperas's contention seriously that there are "*limits* of seeing and naming disability in subjects who have been at the margins of its theorizations and field-building" (2019). How might Western disability activism and scholarship *propound* disability globally by centering and privileging renditions of embodiment whose parameters would be radically different in distinct contexts or languages? How does the centering of black life and death, or the non-incidental production of debilitation as a result of state divestment or injurious labor policies, transform the stories we can tell and the histories we can recover about dis/ability,

access, and care? What provocative recanonization work is made possible by exploring disability theories that are already intrinsic to the black radical tradition, postcolonial studies, and women-of-color feminisms, lying in wait amongst the prose of Frantz Fanon, Sylvia Wynter, Audre Lorde, or Gloria Anzuldúa.

Our desire for multiple disability studies genealogies is inseparable from a longing for new methods; destabilizing the place, time, and proper subjects/objects of the field necessitates novel approaches to the “how” of disability studies as well. We, like Julie Avril Minich, Jina B. Kim, and Sami Schalk, are eager to explore the methodological shift that emerges when we reframe disability as a “verb: the state-sanctioned disablement of racialized and impoverished communities via resource deprivation,” not simply a “noun - a minority identity to be claimed” (Kim 2017). This methodological pivot interdigitates with formulations of “subjectless critique” in Asian American Studies and queer theory, or non-identitarian approaches to anti/blackness as a structural force that operates beyond the bodyminds of black folks. Rather than calcify a stable subject around which we organize critique and identity claims, a subjectless, non-identitarian critique continually revisits, reframes, rejects, reimagines the proper subject/object of its analysis as part and parcel of the analytical operations of any field on the move. This special issue invites contributions that consider disability as a verb, perhaps by asking how police brutality, mass incarceration, and medical neglect destabilize assumptions of what constitutes an “able body.” The biopolitical fractures of the COVID-19 pandemic could similarly be read through a disability studies lens if we loosen our referents to include the complexities of racialized debilitation and capacitation. For example, the rising incidence of anti-Asian violence exposes the “model minority myth” for simultaneously producing a racial subject that is strategically capacitated in ways that insidiously conceal racial disposability.

In keeping with disability studies’ foundational commitment to praxis and pedagogy, we encourage scholars, activists, artists, caregivers, and teachers to send in submissions that document efforts to nurture access centered spaces and movements that move beyond formal accommodations and diagnostic models of disability.

Possible topics might include:

- Disability and chattel slavery
- Racial monstrosity/racial enfreakment
- Cross-coalitional anti-racist and anti-ableist movements
- Feminist genealogies of care and care work
- Welfare policy and racial ideologies of dependency
- Geopolitics of disability/geographies of debilitation (any era)

- Transnational and multilingual approaches to capacity and ability across diverse geographies not limited to the United States or Europe
- Histories of measurement and standardizing “normal”
- Incarceration and disability
- Post/colonial histories of psychiatry and psychology
- Racial-pathologization, policing, and surveillance
- Black health activism as disability justice
- The naturalization of Black expendability via ableist logics (i.e. childlikeness, dependency, intellectual underdevelopment)
- Special education and the school-to-prison pipeline
- Environmental racism and antiblack ecologies
- Africanist perspectives on dis/ability and debilitation
- Feminisms-of-color, queer of color critique, and anti-ableist critiques
- Intersections of fat studies and critical ethnic studies
- Racial histories of diagnostic categories and classifications
- Afropessimism, social death, and debility/disability
- Labor, service economies, and injury
- Chronic pain/illness
- Disability justice, women of color feminisms, and poetics of survival
- Slow scholarship and “crip-of-color time”: disentangling human value from capacity to labor and labor “efficiently”
- Teaching at the intersection of critical race studies and disability studies in the elementary school classroom, higher education, and activist spaces

Abstracts of no more than 500 words and a brief CV should be sent to **racialhistoriesdisability@gmail.com** by **May 18, 2021**. The invitation for full papers/complete submissions will be sent out on **June 18, 2021** and completed submissions are due by **November 1, 2021**. In your proposal, you are invited to address your own positionality and/or relationship to the project and how it might contribute meaningfully to the communities you address in your work. In addition to inviting proposals for articles, we also welcome proposals for fora, roundtables, curated meeting minutes, and reflections on disability justice organizing or pedagogical experiments in teaching about race and disability. Creative work (personal narratives, poetry, oral history interviews, etc.) of all kinds is welcome. If you have any questions about the suitability of your proposal or project, please do not hesitate to reach out at the email address listed above.