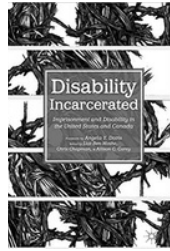


BOOKS TO PRISON PROGRAMS

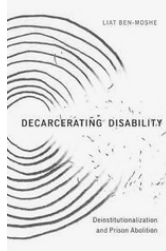
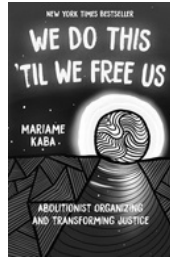
NYC Books Through Bars

c/o Bluestockings Bookstore
116 Suffolk Street
New York, NY 10002
Serves: all states except AL, FL, LA,
MA, MI, MS, NC, PA, OH, and WI,
priority for NY.



Prison Book Program

c/o Lucy Parsons Bookstore
1306 Hancock Street, Suite 100
Quincy, MA 02169
Serves: All US states EXCEPT CA, IL,
MI, MD, NV, and TX



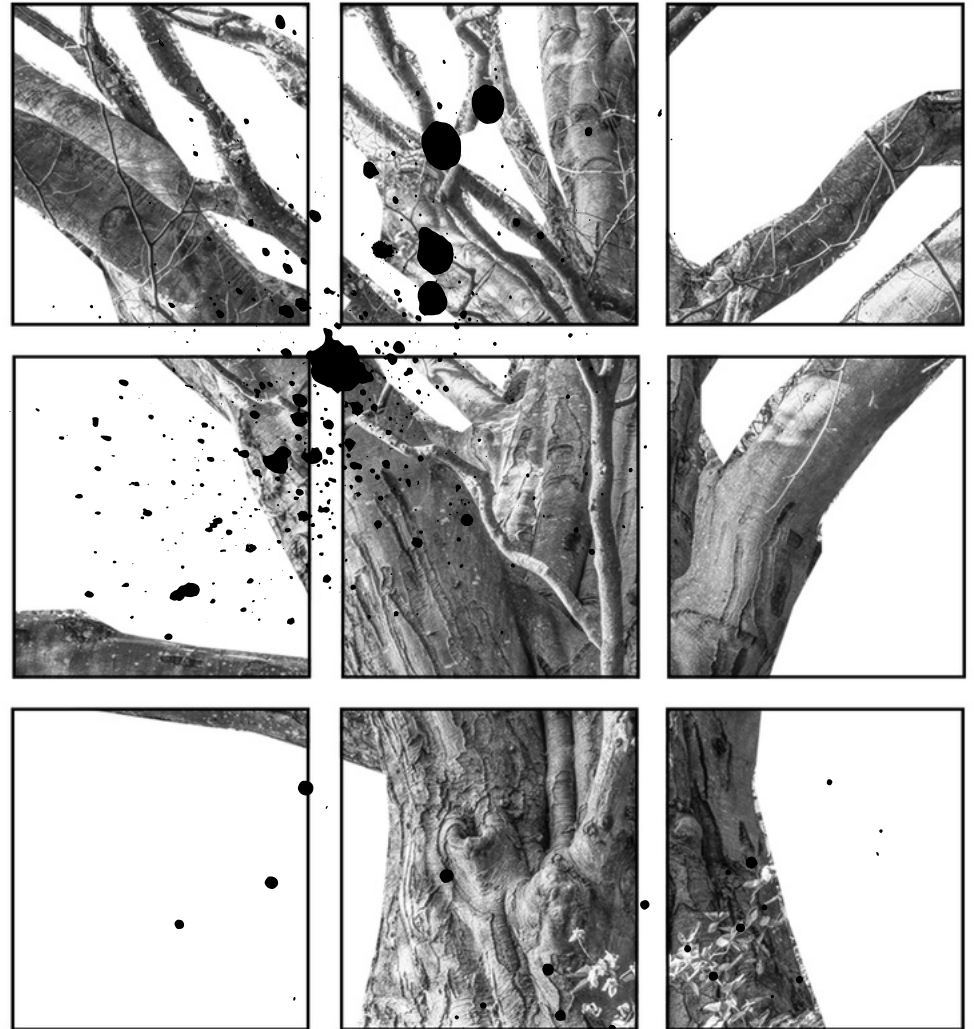
The Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project

PO Box 1324
Bloomington, IN 47402
812-727-0155
Serves: AR, IA, IN, KS, MN, MO,
ND, NE, OK, and SD



SICK OF IT!

SPECIAL EDITION



To subscribe to this zine, submit works, or request a pen pal, send the following to the address below:

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TO:

Matilda Sabal
c/o Sick of It!
PO Box 180177
Brooklyn NY 11218

*Processing times are slow
but we read every letter!

A Disability Inside/Outside Project

INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone,

As always, we are thinking of you. This is a special book review edition, put together by me, Merlin (aka Matilda), one of the three main organizers of this project. Featured in this issue are snapshots and key takeaways from some of the books I have found most helpful in learning about disability history, justice, and collective liberation. Since I can't just send everyone a copy of the all books themselves (I wish!) I have tried to boil them down, and present some of the most important parts of them. There is also a list in the back of the zine of projects who DO send books to folks inside, so check out that list if any of these books catch your eye. I feel really lucky and excited to be getting to share some of this awesome writing with you. Tell us what you think!

In solidarity,
Merlin



Sick of It! A Disability Inside/Outside Project is a group of abolitionists and disabled activists working to build connections between the free world disabled community and that behind bars. We aim with this project to amplify the voices of incarcerated disabled people, and provide education about the ways disabled liberation and a world free of cages are intertwined.

More at sickofit.space

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SKIN, TOOTH, AND BONE: THE BASIS OF MOVEMENT IS OUR PEOPLE, A DISABILITY JUSTICE PRIMER

BY SINS INVALID

Sins Invalid is a disability justice based performance group, who also generate resources and information about DJ. Skin, Tooth, and Bone “offers concrete suggestions... such as mobilizing against police violence, how to commit to mixed ability organizing, and access suggestions for events” as well as “analysis, history and context for the growing Disability Justice Movement.”- sinsinvalid.org



“We can take a particular kind of leadership, and the bigger our goals for ourselves, the more we ask for, the more potential we have for doing that across many movements... For example, accessible public transportation puts you directly up against the oil companies who have a vested interest in automobile transportation. Who else is up against oil companies? The indigenous people in Ecuador who are fighting Chevron, people in Nigeria who are up against Royal Dutch Shell, the people in the Gulf dealing with the BP spill... The preciousness of our bodies and our lives is the basis for a huge coalition.”
— Aurora Levins Morales

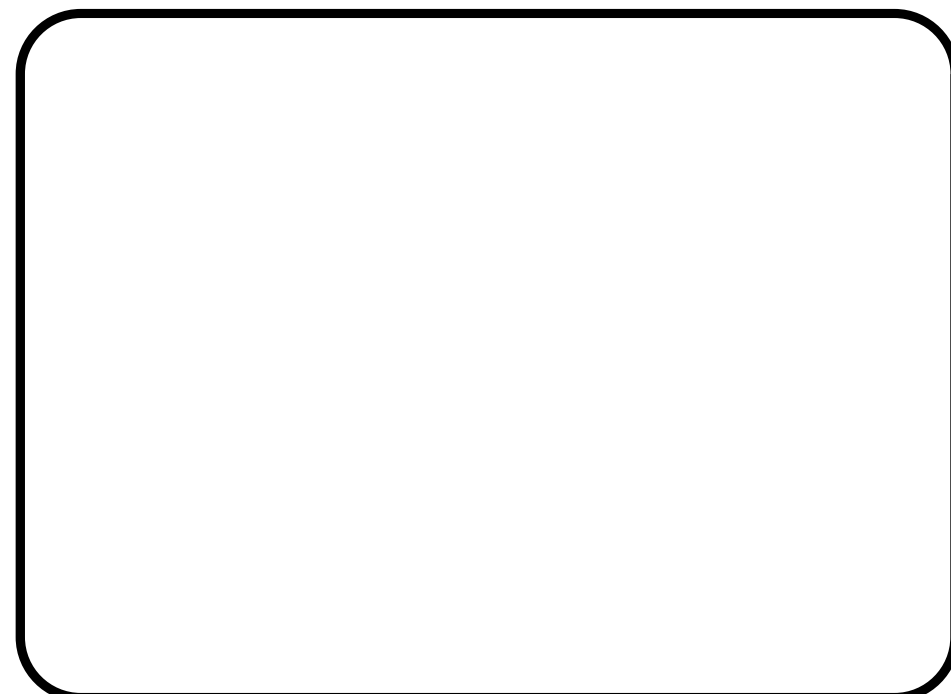
10 PRINCIPLES OF DISABILITY JUSTICE

- INTERSECTIONALITY
- LEADERSHIP OF THOSE MOST IMPACTED
- ANTI-CAPITALIST POLITIC
- COMMITMENT TO CROSS-MOVEMENT ORGANIZING S
- RECOGNIZING WHOLENESS
- SUSTAINABILITY
- COMMITMENT TO CROSS-DISABILITY SOLIDARITY
- INTERDEPENDENCE
- COLLECTIVE ACCESS
- COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

See SOI Issue 1 for the expanded 10 principals

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER EXAMPLES OF CROSS MOVEMENT SOLIDARITY?

What do these movements have in common? Where can they connect? Write something, draw, connect the dots!
Climate Justice, Black Lives Matter, Land Back Movement
Transgender Rights, Fat Liberation, Reproductive Rights...



DISABILITY INCARCERATED: IMPRISONMENT AND DISABILITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

&

DECARCERATING DISABILITY: DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION AND PRISON ABOLITION

by Liat Ben-moshe

"Liat Ben-Moshe is an activist-scholar-educator-researcher working at the intersection of incarceration, decarceration, abolition and disability/madness. Her work aims to expand what counts as incarceration to include all carceral locales...and to connect deinstitutionalization, disability and mad movements to prison abolition activism." - liatbenmoshe.com

DISABILITY INCARCERATED KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS:

- **Back Ward:** Part of an asylum where the most high needs inmates were kept, almost always in squalid and abusive conditions
- **Chemical incarceration:** mandatory or involuntary administration of psychiatric medication to pacify people incarcerated in prisons and institutions as well as those
- **Convict lease system:** a system invented after the civil war in which Southern states "leased" prisoners to companies to perform hard labor, essentially a continuation of slavery
- **I/DD:** Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities
- **Neoliberalism:** An ideology and policy model that emphasizes the value of free market competition- Examples of neoliberal policies include eliminating price controls, deregulating markets and defunding social services.
- **Post incarceration syndrome:** a set of symptoms experienced by many currently incarcerated and recently released prisoners, due to the stress, violence and isolation of the prison system, including PTSD and substance use disorders
- **Saneism:** discrimination and systematic oppression of people who are mad/experience mental illness

DECARCERATION & DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION:

- The movement to close large state institutions where people with psychiatric disabilities or I/DD were incarcerated long term and move them into community living support structures. The majority of this movement took place in the 1950s and 60s, and the majority of facilities, though not all, were closed by the 1970s. LBM argues that decarceration was a perfect storm of events, rather than a single political strategy, and that deinstitutionalization can and should be looked at as an example of a mass decarceration that prison abolitionists can learn from
- **TOOLS AND FACTORS THAT LED TO DECARCERATION:**
 - **Exposes:** Photojournalist publishing images of the horrifying conditions inside facilities, especially the back wards
 - **Class action lawsuits** by inmates
 - **Post war factors:**
 - conscientious objectors who were assigned work in institutions instead of military service helped to organize against large institutions
 - JFK's interest in mental health because of his sister Rosemary's intellectual disability and lobotomy
 - **Cost cutting** / neoliberal influences that encouraged divestment from state institutions
 - **Rise of the use of psych drugs-** often portrayed as THE reason for Deinstitutionalization but much more complex
 - Note on exposes: while they did have an effect, they largely led to reform rather than abolition. They also can further ableism by presenting disabled people as lacking any agency inherently

TYPES OF CONFINEMENT

Then and now

Confinement based on...

◆ = Includes
Forced/Uncompensated
Labor

Crime & Punishment

- ◆ Prisons & Jails (Ancient Rome-Present, modern prisons emerged eearly 1800s)
-
- ◆ Transportation & Indentured Servitude (1600s-1900s)
-
- ◆ Penal Colonies and Prison Ships (1700s-1800s)
-
- ◆ Reform Schools & Juvenile Detentions (1800s-present)
-
- ◆ House Arrest/ E-Carceration (1600s-present, electronic monitering first used in 1983)

Disability

- ◆ Nursing Homes (Evolved out of poor houses, 1800s-present)
-
- ◆ Work House/ Poor House (1830s-1930s)
-
- ◆ Asylums and Residential Schools for people labeled Idiots and the Feebleminded
- ↓
- ◆ State Hospitals & Institutions for Mentally Ill/Mad & Developmentally Disabled people (1850s-1960s)
-
- ◆ Court Mandated Rehab
-
- ◆ Chemical Incarceration (Long term involuntary sedation, 1950s-present)

Poverty

- ◆ Debtors Prison (1400s-present)
-
- ◆ Work House/ Poor House (1830s-1930s)
-
- ◆ Cash Bail (~1600s-present in some form)
-
- ◆ Survival "Crime" (Sex work, selling drugs, other criminalized economies)
- ↓
- ◆ Criminalization of Homelessness leading to incarceration (Illegal to sleep outside, panhandle, loiter, etc)

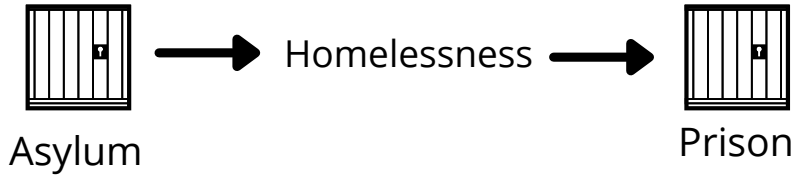
Race/Nationality

- ◆ Trans Atlantic Slave Trade (1480s-1800s)
-
- ◆ Convict-Leasing system (1840s-1941)
-
- ◆ Mission Schools & Indian Residential School (1600s-1990s)
-
- ◆ Japanese Interment Camps (1942 to 1945, USA)
-
- ◆ Prisoners of War/Political Prisoners (Ancient times-present)
-
- ◆ Immigrant Border Detention (1890s-present)

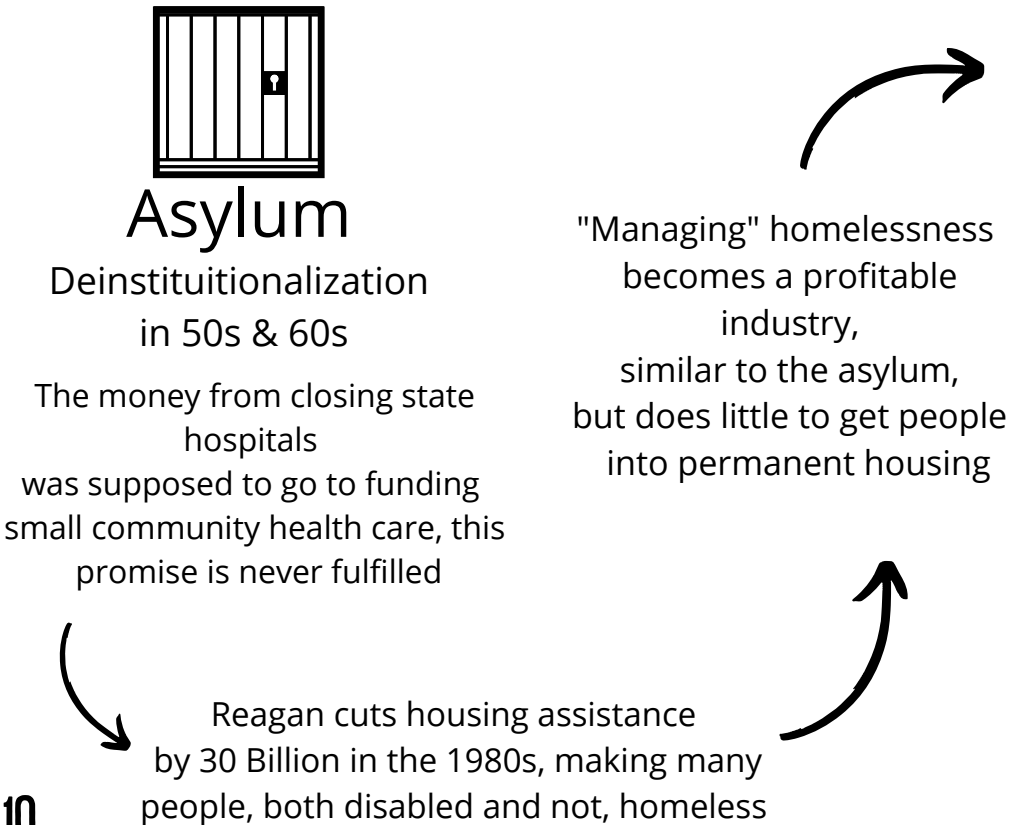
People keep saying prisons are the new asylums....

Its more complicated than that

This is the main narrative around the closing of asylums (decarceration). It says that all the people who got out of asylums ended up in prison, and that's why the US has such a high rate of incarceration.

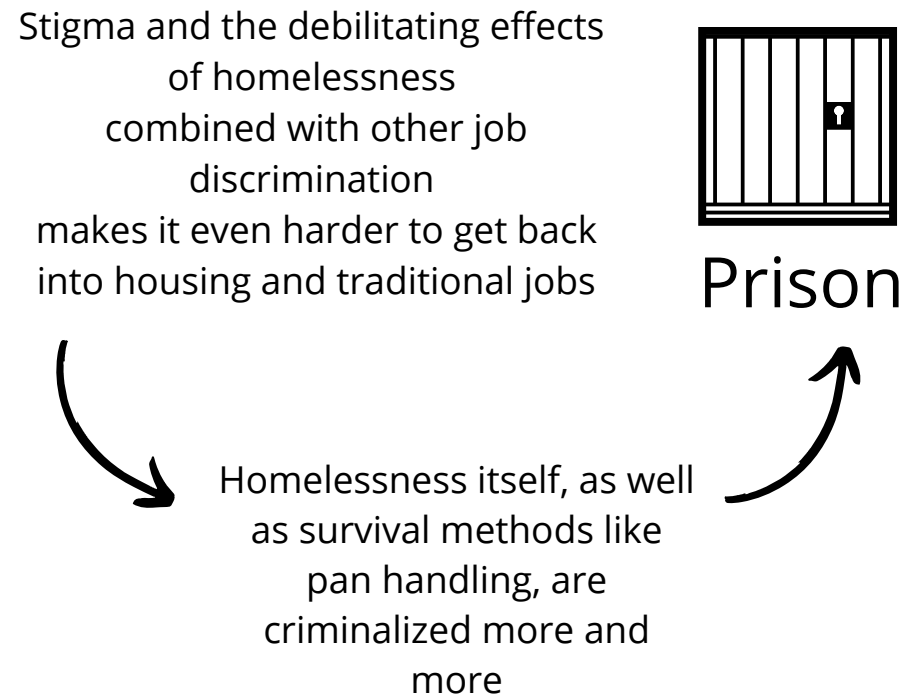


What actually happened is closer to this:



From: Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Prison Abolition by Liat Ben-moshe

This story is useful for people who do not want to close hospitals or institutions, because it blames mentally ill and disabled people for not being able to live on their own. It leaves out major factors, like the cuts to supportive housing, accessible healthcare, and the criminalization of survival methods and homelessness.



WE DO THIS 'TIL WE FREE US: ABOLITIONIST ORGANIZING AND TRANSFORMING JUSTICE BY MARIAME KABA

This book collects essays and interviews by Mariame Kaba, where she writes about abolition and transformative political struggle. She explores why we need abolition, justice and accountability outside of the prison and punishment systems, and how to build the new systems we need to be free. This book is so full of hope. It was the hardest for me to try to just pick one or two ideas from, so I'm picking my favorite quotes and ideas, because they are things I hold onto when I am feeling crushed by the systems designed to destroy us.

"HOPE IS A DISCIPLINE"

It is easy to feel hopeless looking at the state of the world. Choosing hope, to work towards better things in spite of the cruelty of the systems we are surrounded by, is a revolutionary practice. "There's always a potential for transformation and for change"

REVOLUTION IS CREATION NOT DESTRUCTION

We are not setting out to burn it all down and hope for the best. We are building something new where everyone is valuable, and we do not rely on violence to discourage more violence.

"EVERYTHING THAT IS WORTHWHILE IS DONE WITH OTHER PEOPLE"

Kaba's father was a revolutionary from Guinea, and the one who first told her this. It emphasizes other radical calls to action, like "all we have is each other", as well as the DJ concept of interdependence and collective care.

"LET THIS RADICALIZE YOU RATHER THAN LEAD YOU TO DESPAIR"

not from this book but a favorite of mine from M. Kaba

HERE'S HOW TO BEGIN CHANGING EVERYTHING

Adapted from So You're Thinking About Becoming An Abolitionist

- 1. To transform society we must transform ourselves:** Unlearn the oppressive systems we are entangled in so that we do not reproduce them while we try to make a better world.
- 2. Experiment with new structures that reduce harm and foster collective accountability:** Less hierarchical and more transparent social structures reduce violence and harm.
- 3. Divest from the criminal legal system and reduce contact with it:** It cannot be improved or reformed, and we must be careful not to build things we will need to later tear down on the way to freedom.
- 4. The PIC is part of a web of harm:** Capitalism, white supremacy, ableism, must also be deconstructed and new things built.

**"CHANGING EVERYTHING MIGHT
SOUND DAUNTING,
BUT IT ALSO MEANS MEANS THERE ARE
MANY PLACES TO START"**

- M. KABA

BRILLIANT IMPERFECTION: GRAPPLING WITH CURE

BY ELI CLAIRE

"Eli Clare uses memoir, history, and critical analysis to explore cure—the deeply held belief that body-minds considered broken need to be fixed. Cure serves many purposes. It saves lives, manipulates lives, and prioritizes some lives over others. It provides comfort, makes profits, justifies violence, and promises resolution to body-mind loss. "-dukeupress.edu

Throughout the book, Clare uses the metaphor of a mosaic, a picture or pattern made up of broken pieces of tile or glass, both to describe experiences of disability and the complex and contradictory nature of cure. Like the subtitle of the book, "Grappling" suggests, these are ideas that do not fit neatly together or offer a correct answer.

"DEFECTIVENESS WIELDS INCREDIBLE POWER BECAUSE ABLEISM BUILDS AND MAINTAINS THE NOTION THAT DEFECTIVE BODY-MINDS ARE UNDESIRABLE, WORTHLESS, DISPOSABLE, OR IN NEED OF CURE. ANY PERSON OR COMMUNITY NAMED DEFECTIVE CAN BE TARGETED WITHOUT QUESTION OR HESITATION FOR ERADICATION, IMPRISONMENT, INSTITUTIONALIZATION. THE ABLEIST INVENTION OF DEFECTIVENESS FUNCTIONS AS AN INDISPUTABLE JUSTIFICATION NOT ONLY FOR CURE BUT ALSO FOR MANY SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION."

Brilliant imperfection, 23

A NOTE ON RACIST MEDICAL DIAGNOSES:

Many of the texts in this review touch on the history of using medicine as a way to justify, prop up or enforce racism. Eli Claire in particular talks about the racialized history of schizophrenia as "protest psychosis", drapetomania, and the many other kinds of medicalized racism. Like other eugenics labels like "feebleminded", they are forms of structural violence that turn racism or ableism into "medical truth" which is commonly portrayed as unbiased fact.

In 1851, white American physician Samuel A. Cartwright invented several disorders he attributed to enslaved Black peoples:

Drapetomania: A disorder causing enslaved people to run away

Dysaesthesia Aethiopica: A disorder causing enslaved people to be lazy, the 'treatment' of which was beating

Protest Psychosis: Coined by white psychiatrists Walter Bromberg and Frank Simon, it was the repackaging of schizophrenia, previously most diagnosed in middle class white women, as a disease caused in Black men as a result of the "stress" of the Civil Rights movement in the late 1960s.

Currently, young Black children are diagnosed with things like Oppositional Defiant Disorder at a higher rate than their white peers, and Black adults are diagnosed with schizophrenia at more than 2x the rate of white peers. The medicalization of behaviors that challenge white supremacy is not a thing of the past.

DIAGNOSIS WIELDS IMMENSE POWER. IT CAN PROVIDE US ACCESS TO VITAL MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY OR SHAME US, REVEAL A PATH TOWARD LESS PAIN OR GET US LOCKED UP. IT OPENS DOORS AND SLAMS THEM SHUT.

Brilliant imperfection, 41

HERE ARE SOME ASPECTS OF CURE TO THINK ABOUT

Some disabled people do feel like they are broken

Disabled people can be whole

"Cure" makes it sound like disabled people are broken and need to be fixed, and creates a narrative that it is wrong to be disabled. It creates the idea that disabled people are failing at being abled.

Cure can be violent; it can mean involuntary incarceration, electroshock treatment for autistic people, it has historically been used as a racist weapon against Black people and other non-white people.
(see X Page)

"Cure" is often about conformity not comfort. This can lead to medical interventions that don't improve a person's life but aim to make them appear more "normal".

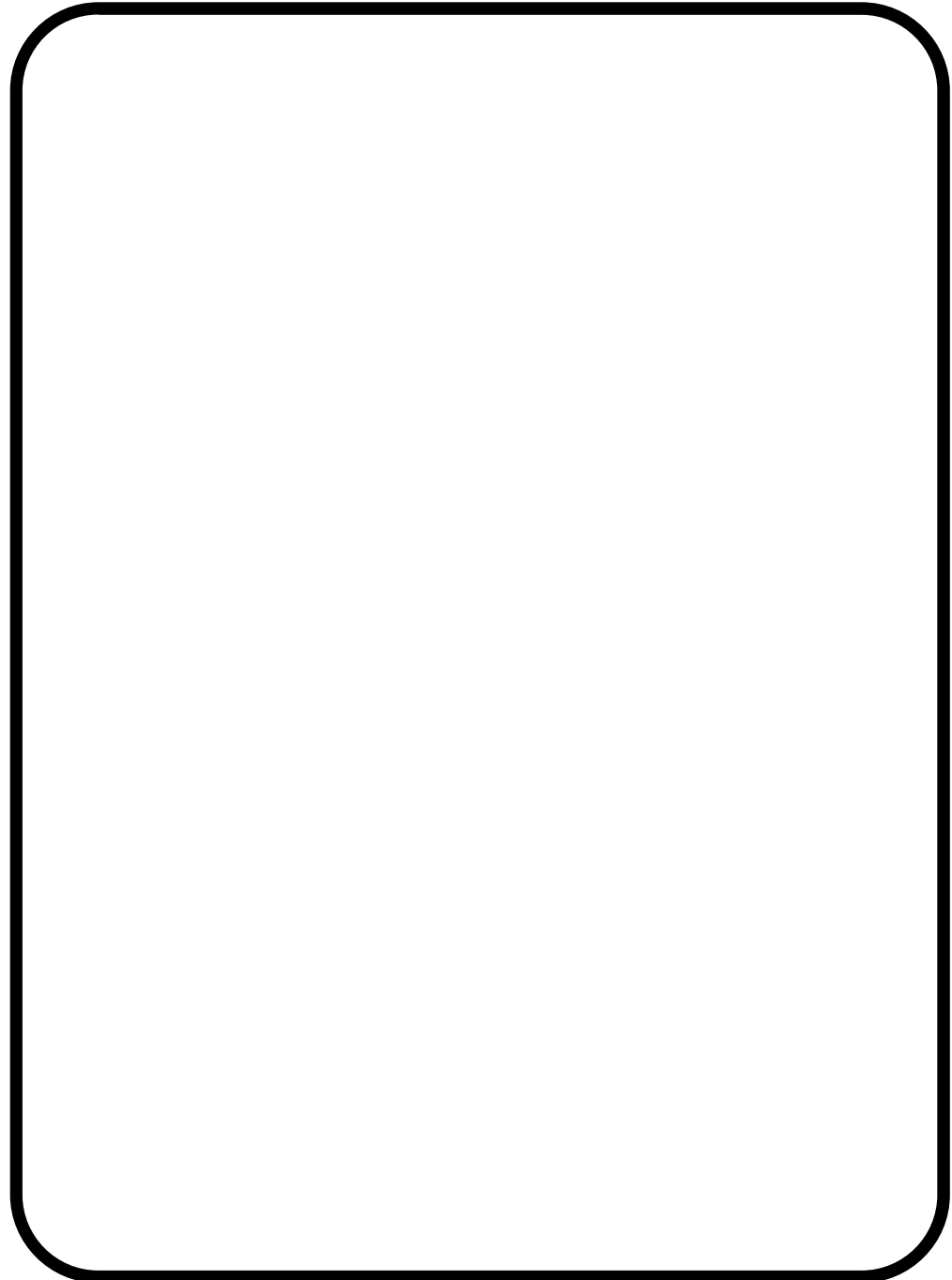
Cure can prevent us from living in the present

"Cures" like medications that work well and assistive devices are important parts of disabled lives

Looking for cure can lead to important advances in medicine

HOW DOES THE IDEA OF CURE FIT INTO YOUR LIFE?

Write, draw or reflect here



HOW TO GO MAD WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND: MADNESS AND BLACK RADICAL CREATIVITY BY LA MARR JURELLE BRUCE

Bruce theorizes four overlapping meanings and ways of looking at madness, and explores madness within the work of Black artists like Nina Simone, Lauryn Hill, and Kendrick Lamar as part of Black radical tradition. Examining these examples of Black radical creativity, he also defines a new kind of analytical structure he calls "mad methodology."

Phenomenal madness: "an intense unruliness of mind... This unruliness is not necessarily painful, nor is it categorically pleasurable"

Medicalized madness: "a range of "serious mental illnesses" and psychopathologies" as described by Western medicine, such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Rage: a "state of intense and aggressive displeasure... black people in the United States and elsewhere have been subjected to heinous violence and degradation, but rarely granted recourse...In short, when black people get mad (as in angry), antiblack logics tend to presume they've gone mad (as in crazy)."

Psychosocial madness: A "radical deviation from the normal" Anything that challenges the psychonormative status quo is "liable to be labeled crazy". Many radical behaviors such as "slave rebellion, willful womanhood, anticolonial resistance, same-sex desire, and gender subversion" have all been labeled crazy by the dominant cultures who are threatened by them.

EXCERPT FROM MISSISSIPPI GODDAM BY NINA SIMONE

Simone wrote Mississippi Goddam in 1964, in a furious response to the antiblack terrorist bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. She described a desire to drive audiences crazy: "I want to shake people up so bad that when they leave a nightclub where I've performed, I just want them to be in pieces!...I want to go into that den of those elegant people with their old ideas, smugness, and just drive the insane!" Bruce describes this as her longing to "Do righteous violence to smug audiences—to shatter their complacency and topple their sanity, making way for transformation".

Oh but this whole country is full of lies
You're all gonna die and die like flies
I don't trust you any more
You keep on saying "Go slow!"
"Go slow!"
But that's just the trouble
"Do it slow"
Desegregation
"Do it slow"
Mass participation
"Do it slow"
Reunification
"Do it slow"
Do things gradually
"Do it slow"
But bring more tragedy