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## Editorial

### *Frictions of Futurity, Curative Tensions, and Artistic Re-imaginings of Transplantation*

Biomedicine is, broadly speaking, argued to aim toward futures shaped by a pervasive curative imaginary—that is, the disciplinary matrix, frameworks, and practices that orient toward cure and its proxies as the only rational possibility. Here, disability is uncontroversially and simultaneously a tragedy and a problem to be solved; medical intervention is not only desirable, it is imperative (Clare, 2017; Kafer, 2013). As a field of biomedicine, solid organ transplantation is a space in which curative futurities are particularly pronounced: health is offered through the twinned possibilities of technoscience and altruism; promise, transformation, and curative embodiments that are imagined to be free of disablement mark the field, practically as genre (Heinemann, 2020). However, because the contours of the curative imaginary are often part of the taken-for-granted aspects of daily routines and practices of transplantation, they are not easily captured for analysis or critical reflection (Abbey, 2011; Berkhout, Fritsch, Frankel, & Sheehan, 2022).

At the same time, transplant medicine is also a field marked by frictions: entanglements of self with other, graft with host; biomarkers, biopsies, devices, pills, and surgeries blur inside with outside. Hope and cure are paired, inevitably, with

dying, chronicity, and the impossibility of being beyond illness (Heinemann, 2020). Temporal hauntings of before shape the afterward. Bodied absence (as with the removal of a failing organ) is juxtaposed with new presences that are themselves formed in absence and loss (McCormack, 2021). And in the day-to-day, commonplace struggles span this field. Whether through the investigations and assessments that enable listing, the interventions that arise while waiting for transplant, the many complications and complexities of medical regimens (and surveillance of the same) that occur in the aftermath of transplant, or the physical and emotional challenges of survivorship that arise farther out from the drama of surgery—time is borrowed and looped and experience lived in ways that undercut the seemingly straightforward and linear relationship between transplantation and cure. Insofar as articulating the complex personal costs of transplant rubs against cultural scripts of miracles and gratitude, relatively few come to witness how isolation, trauma, and affective messiness are also part of the scene, even if held out of frame.

As a site of deep ambivalence and tension with respect to futurity, where the possibility of having an “afterward” is an ever-shifting horizon, transplantation becomes a rich field for artistic engagement, exploring how binary logics of self/other, cure/harm, inside/outside, absence/presence structure biomedicine’s curative imaginary. Artistic practices offer novel ways to interrogate such bifurcations through counter-logics of sensation, affect, simultaneity, and multiplicity. Art

reconfigures ways of knowing and sensing worlds (Ranci re, 2006), providing opportunities for the emergence of new enactments within creative processes and artistic products (Borgdorff, Peters, & Pinch, 2020). Importantly, acts of breaking down, interrogating, resisting, queering, shifting, and complexifying binaries (including of beauty and ugliness) are significant, political aspects of disability aesthetics and disability art (Rice, Chandler, Rinaldi, Changfoot, Liddiard, Mykitiuk, & Mundel, 2017; White, 2017). If claiming crip is to imagine multiple futures where disability and non-normative bodyminds are desired differently and the social meanings attached to shifting abilities are understood as situated and intersectional (Fritsch, 2015; Kafer 2013; Schalk 2013), then artistic practices are an important location for crippling material-discursive worlds (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019).

These are the tensions and desires that have driven the construction of this special issue of *Ars Medica*, “Frictions of Futurity, Curative Tensions, and Artistic Re-Imaginations of Transplantation.” Each of the pieces within this issue, in their own way, invites a reimagining of the relationships between transplant technoscience, lived experiences that span the transplant process, aesthetics, and disability. Through generative tensions and juxtapositions (whether within a given piece or as the contributions are held/read/seen against one another), the collection explores how, as Donna McCormack, Lynne Zakhour, Richard Kahwagi, and Ingrid Young describe in the introduction to their image/text essay “Bodies on the Border,” arts

can express experiences that have been silenced or denied (McCormack et al., this issue). Artistic and creative making and doings are, in this way, onto-ethico-epistemological practices that are world-knowing and world-making (Barad, 2007). We have curated this issue so as to bring forward knowing/making in ways that resist erasures common to disabling practices and structures that surround transplantation.

Numerous themes cut across this special issue that help us understand how artistic works can offer affordances of crip spacetime in relation to transplantation. Complexity and the intertwining of life/death, hope/dread, absence/presence are foregrounded in each of the pieces within the special issue. The shifting and unstable cut between these binaries are especially palpable in the pieces that layer multiple artistic forms of engagement, such as image or film with prose. Multimodality mobilizes different sensorial engagements simultaneously, generating powerful emotional understandings within a convergence of different forms of signification (whether image, gesture, speech or inner stream of consciousness). Multimodal representations afford different kinds of meaning (Hull & Nelson, 2005); these different kinds of meanings are ones not easily spoken in clinical spaces or even in the domestic, private spaces of home, as showcased in Bibo and Brian Keeley's feature piece. Revisiting the emotional vortex and shared/individual trauma of Brian's transplant through diaries, collaborative film, and still image, "The Liquid Light," asks us to consider what is shared and what is held back, how do we cope, and

what scars does that coping leave, in the midst of critical illness. These are questions that circulate throughout the Keeleys' works and the pieces of the special issue, just as they circulate and are relived in the daily lives of transplant recipients, donors, and carers.

Donna McCormack, Lynne Zakhour, Richard Kahwagi, and Ingrid Young's "Bodies on the Border," Dominic Quagliozi's "Visceral Diary," and Tereza Crvenkovic's "Pain 21" similarly engage viewers/readers with the haunting aspects of transplant wounds, showing how the imbrication of life/death in transplantation are not merely whispers, or hints, or uncanny sensations—they are deeply bodied, material, and fleshy. By representing pain and loss in surprising ways, part of what becomes voiced are the myriad ways in which these experiences can be silenced through the public expectations of transplant recipients. The patronizing and cheeky phrasing of Quagliozi's "Smile You're Alive," depicted through comic-style bubble letters, visually foregrounds the pain of this lighthearted erasure. Cheeky and playful form is also powerfully mobilized in Andrea Barrett's "Transplant Tarot Triptych," which draws attention to the ways that archetypes shape the field.

Form is central to the ways that artistic renderings create new knowledge in/of/about transplantation. Crvenkovic's opening letter finds resonance with the letters of Brian and Bibo Keeley. The formal qualities of these works—writing that takes the form of letters and diaries—invites the reader into what is otherwise private and interior;

the opposite of writing conventions such as the medical chart or even the expository essay. Form is also at the heart of Deirdre Hennings' "Life after Transplant (Contrapuntal)," which toys with separateness and blurring of voice and standpoint. The reader can move in a linear way to make sense of each opposing voice or attempt to cross the chasm on the page to read these together, reflecting the possibilities and the impossibility of knowing self/other, care giver/receiver—experimenting with different ways that these gulfs might be bridged or where silences still resound.

Silence is a compelling theme across many of the pieces, named explicitly in Alishia Hiebert's "The Silenced Side of Living Donation," while gestured to within the special issue's collection of poetry. The poetry within this collection provide a particularly powerful form of engagement with matters surrounding what it means to shift from living with one disease to another kind of medicalized existence that are not often spoken, by those giving or receiving care. To speak these truths would be to break the illusion of cure that transplant is built upon. And yet, artist practices are essential for opening experimental, expressive spaces that can offer partial truths and half-hidden realities. Revealing the half-hidden and questioning its meaning is on full display in Nancy Chong's "The Communicative Body," the politics of which resonate with spoken, unspoken, and speculative politics within "Justice & Borders," "Care as Violence," and "ReTool."

Jonathan Kawchuk's "Boundary Loss" engages an experimental sonic reflection on human-machine interfaces that are a hidden part of everyday transplant experience, resonating with descriptions offered in many of the issue's pieces. As a listening experience, "Boundary Loss" is difficult: it challenges an ugly/beautiful aesthetic binary, the blurring of which reveals a felt knowledge of transplantation as a field site that undermines the softness and comfort of transplant as a story of cure. "Dammar," "Primavera," and "Miracle Cures" bring us further into critical conversation with the common curative tropes of transplantation. Miracles, second chances, gratitude, and being willing to subject oneself to "whatever it takes" are repetitions and scripts that the artists' works challenge. "Dear Angelo," by L.J. Prance is titled in reference to what is miraculous about transplant and the idea of the donor as an "angel." At the same time, the piece offers ways of complexify the relationship to "the gift," by raising questions of the impossibility of speaking even the positive aspects of transplant as well as the difficulty voicing the shift in who one is and who one's kin might be.

This special fall issue of *Ars Medica* was conceptualized within the practices of the *Frictions of Futurity and Cure in Transplant Medicine* project, a multi-year, research-creation study that unabashedly sits at the convergence of crip technoscience, feminist science and technology studies, and arts-based research engaged with disability arts and artists. The impetus for the project and this special issue comes, in part, from an understanding that

artistic practices can generate, as Natalie Loveless describes, “speculative frames through which to defamiliarize and reorganize the local” (Loveless, 2019, 101). This is art as micropolitics.

As you engage with the pieces of this special issue, consider how each of these might be part of a larger set of interventions that aim toward generating, revealing, naming, altering, and engaging with the multiplicity of frictions of futurity surrounding transplantation, persuading us to know differently and care differently (Loveless, 2019) so as to materialize liveability and thriving as political, creative acts.

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