

"A Babe-ilicious Healing Justice Statement"

from the BadAss Visionary Healers (BAVH)

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Introduction

The BadAss Visionary Healers (aka the Healing Babes for Justice) are a 6-person Bay Area-based collective of radical healers who build connections between radical healers in the Bay Area and beyond. We are organizers, activists, writers, empaths, bodyworkers, herbalists and dancers involved in a variety of arenas of political struggle with a variety of experiences. We come from a multitude of backgrounds, Diasporas, ethnicities, and religious and spiritual traditions. We have a variety of physical and neurological abilities. Some of us identify as Disabled, or Crip.¹ We all identify as Queer. Many of us had gotten burned out in other movements, or noticed that other movements to which we belonged either asked us to ignore one part of our identity (i.e. gay rights movement ignoring racism within the "gay community"), or put self and community care on the back burner.

We were brought together by Aurora Levin Morales, a Queer, Disabled, Puerto Rican/Jewish cultural worker, and author.² The initial vision was to bring together a group of people to work towards the creation of a community wellness center and urban farm. A wellness space that challenged dominant ideas around wellness, rejected the toxicity of allopathic medicine, and worked in direct opposition to the "fee for service model" in a way that was still economically sustainable for all practitioners involved. She also provided the seed energy that blossomed into the current collective. While this is still one of our many visions, our focus and vision slowly evolved into what it is now: weaving a web of badass healers for liberation so we can support and learn from each other.

We have come together as a collective because we believe there is a need for connection between politicized healers, because we believe the various justice movements we come from need self and community care to be considered an integral component of justice. While our home-base is the Bay Area, we have come together virtually through video/phone calls and shared documents online from Oakland, Illinois, Toronto, Palestine, and Chile to engage in the challenging process of collective writing to create this statement of our work, collaboration, and ideas on healing justice. This has been a process that has at times been frustrating, but has also served to show the strength of our collective bond, and one that will ultimately bring us more cohesion as a collective.

This is a work in a progress. We seek to layout how we do the work that we do because we believe it reflects a larger movement, a (re)new(ed) moment in time where people are collectively standing up for justice and in mass—"occupying," decolonizing, and idling no more. A moment where more and more people recognize themselves as healers, or are doing healing work, developing and extending practices while also aiming to sustain a financially stable life. We explain how our internal and external processes represent our philosophies, and vice versa—what we do is what we believe and what we believe is what we do. As a collective, we seek to turn the "mainstream" organizing model on its head, grounding ourselves in our ancestral models of organizing and interacting with ourselves, with each other, and with our communities. In this piece, we specifically focus on the following aspects of our collective organizing process: humor, food sharing, our organizing pace, queerness and the erotic, and access. We also look at cultural appropriation in the context of healing.

BadAss Humor for Envisioning Healing Justice

Humor is a central aspect of our work together as a collective. Humor is all about bringing pleasure in our lives to the forefront of our work, an understanding and method for sustaining healing justice work, collective movement, and organizing. However, let it be clear from the get-go that we in no way encourage or practice oppressive happiness: the colonial, ableist, sexist, racist idea that one must be constantly happy, inviting of and emitting strictly "positive" energy (as if our spiritual, emotional, mental energy conformed solely to the binary on which we understand computers and batteries to function), and that to do or be otherwise causes illness and/or perpetuates it. Oppressive happiness is, unfortunately, rampant in the realm of alternative, New Age healing, as well as within dominant allopathic medicine and the medical industrial complex. Many practitioners believe disability and illness can be cured with a "positive attitude" or ignore the effects of oppression on health while urging us to cheer up.

For us, humor is about recognizing the world in which we work and live as full of beautiful shit and full of shit we simply cannot make up, shit that when we examine closely (and even from afar), is often simply absurd and horrendous. For example: the GOP meeting at a former plantation to have a meeting on "minority" outreach—our reaction is to laugh. For us, to laugh is not to dismiss the horror, but a first-step in coping. And we don't stop there. Laughter really is our best medicine. We use laughter much in the same way we use eroticism, as passion to continue energizing the work we do. We never simply give-in out of hopelessness or out of a colonial idea that we must individually remain happy, "posi-

tive,” and policing of those who are read as “negative.” In this way, we intentionally blur the boundary between work and play, using humor as a way to push boundaries, cross borders, and ultimately assert healing as a holistic project and process. Humor is about nourishing the trickster in each of us—that ancient, youthful, and wise energy that makes us want to play, scare, jump out, call out, act out of line, push buttons, and transcend normalcy.

Humor was at the forefront of deciding on a name to call our group and in many ways it is humor that continues shaping what we call ourselves. We are an irreverent bunch, which manifests every time we talk to each other or get together as a group—it feels important to express that in our name. We have gone through many different stages of name choosing, many of which we still call ourselves informally. We wanted to call ourselves the Horde of Healing Whores to speak to our collective desire to redefine sexuality as a form of power and extending this power to and with others as an aspect of healing work. We wanted to call ourselves the Mycelium Mob to honor the value of interconnectedness, to speak to our collective value of the earth and cultivation, and to reclaim fungus and bacteria in our food, bodies, and society as a natural and often nourishing aspect of life. We wanted to call ourselves the Mycelium Mojo Mob to speak to “magic” and to an irreverent-ass love for alliteration. We wanted to call ourselves the Babes for Healing Justice to speak to the importance of self-love, appreciation, and value in a collective movement for community care and healing justice. We thought about Healers United for Holistic Action because of the nifty acronym “HUHA” (pronounced “hoo-haw” as in a colloquial term for cis female junk). We spent hours trying to backend a name that would leave us with the acronyms WHORES. And we had many disagreements about all of the above, some of them quite serious.

Ultimately, we decided to officially call ourselves the *BadAss Visionary Healers (BAVH)* to speak to some of the multiple dimensions of our work. We are Bad as in *BadAss*, pushing boundaries, borders, dominant notions of sexuality, health, illness, disability, spirituality, and collective, collaborative activist work. We are *Visionary* in our drive to always work based on the vision we have for a future of healing justice. We are *Healers*, all in our own ways, employing various healing modalities, and also recognizing the healing potential, healer capabilities, and healing aspects of everyone and everything, in all our imperfections and perfections. Unofficially we call ourselves The Healing Babes for Justice, or Babes for short.

Sexy Times

“[The] erotic offers a well of replenishing and provocative force to the [person] who does not fear its revelation...”

~Audre Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic As Power,” 1989³

Our creativity, our life force, Kundalini, these are all other names for our internal erotic power. Eroticism can be a fuel to power everything that we do. To paraphrase Lorde, oppression requires the suppression of the erotic in order to perpetuate itself. So part of dismantling oppression then requires acknowledging the erotic and its power. We are erotic and sexual beings; cutting off that part of ourselves to do political organizing makes our work less effective (as does any organizing that requires us to leave part of ourselves behind).

Erotic and sexual energy is one of the most potent healing energies that we can access (access to that energy is not always present, but the energy itself is). There is, of course,

intentional erotic and sexual healing (of which some of The Babes are practitioners) but there's also the more "mundane" healing that can be powered by our erotic energy. When our erotic energy is full and flowing, we take care of ourselves, we have energy to spare to take care of each other.

There is a reason that non-sexual energy and commitment to any particular pursuit is referred to as "passion." It is connected to sexual and erotic "passion." While one can definitely sublimate one passion into another, we believe that acknowledging or honoring our sexual or erotic passion makes the passion for social/economic/environmental/healing justice that much stronger. When we take care not to starve our sexual passions, we have more passion to devote to changing the world.

We Babes all identify as some type of Queer. We believe that Queer bodies have a brilliance whose shine teaches us much about the shortcomings of heteronormative ideals of gender and sexuality, and about mainstream society itself. We are not trying to create a world where the rest of the status quo remains and homosexuals/bisexuals/polysexuals/non-gender conformists simply are allowed in the halls of privilege. We want to "queer the revolution," queer the notion of healing, of wholeness, of wellness. Healing and holistic both speak to the notion of wholeness, coming together in a holistic way means being and bringing our whole selves, which by definition would include our sexuality and erotic energy. We also understand that as disabled people whose bodies are desexualized and seen as "monstrous" in an ableist world, and as People of Color who are exotified by a racist, colonized world, reclaiming our ability to be sexual in our whole bodies is a revolutionary, healing act.⁴

The erotic is much more than the sexual, but we don't believe in denying the sexual. In BAVH, our collective meetings start with a check-in. Who's getting laid, who's in love, and who's in pain around a relationship are generally key parts of the check-in. We want to make sure that each of us can bring in all of who we are to each meeting. If we're so juiced up because we're having the best sex of our lives, with ourselves or with others, we want to honor and celebrate that. If we're so brokenhearted that we can't think straight, we need to acknowledge how that affects our ability to function. We also give energy to acknowledging the hotness of each member, reminding them how beautiful they are. It's not at all done in a "creepy" your-sexuality-is-for-me-to-own kind of way, but more in a remember-how-powerful-you-are kind of way.

Babes supporting Babes, supports overall Babe-hood. Asserting and stepping into our power as Babes, and sharing practices that maintain feelings of sexiness, has the ability to transform ourselves and how we organize, from within. Feeling powerful and sexy and collectivizing this practice helps build movements that are powerful and sexy. When we are all hella sexy, it is no longer about being an attractive, charismatic "leader" in movement spaces, but an accountable, sexually healthy, and sex-positive member of our community. It's about transforming shame, guilt, and other self-hate practices that dis-engage our sexy powers. Hiding and repressing these parts of ourselves has historically undermined our movements and fragmented our families and communities through sexual violence and abuse. Reclaiming our sexiness is healing as it asks us to be more honest with ourselves and each other about our sexuality and its profound potential to transform the world.

Pace and Sustainability

One of the values of the Healing Babes is sustainability. Currently the Babes consist of 6 individuals who are trying to figure out our personal and shared roles in resisting systemic oppressions, surviving/healing from the ways that they are present in our own relationships, bodies, and spirits, managing chronic illness, anxiety, and heartbreak, making time for things that feed us—like booty calls and hot tubs, and coping with things that drain us—shitty jobs, being broke, housing searches. We're also trying to stay connected to our families, friends, lovers, and ourselves. A group of 6 only has capacity for so much. It's important that we're real about that and show care to each other and ourselves by honoring that.

So why not have more members so that more "work" can get done "faster?" Another practice that is important to us is building real, caring relationships with each other, relationships that are living alternatives to the fucked up ones we're supposed to have with people we work with. Part of resisting capitalism and colonialism for us is figuring out how to not let fucked up dynamics exist while organizing with each other. We also want to make sure that we're moving at a pace that all of 6 of us can manage. Part of resisting ableism is centering the smarts that disability justice teaches about not assuming an over-the-top, 16 meetings a week, sleepless, hyper able-bodied standard. It can be more difficult managing the schedules and needs of a larger group of people. It can also be difficult creating deep connections with a larger group of people. Prioritizing our group dynamics, individual needs and feelings, energy levels, hunger levels, etc. is a necessity. We're often taught that our needs are expendable and less important than our work. We believe taking care of our needs is a vital part of the work of dismantling colonialism. The work doesn't stop there, but this care helps sustain us and lets us enjoy being around each other.

The interpersonal work it takes to build community, to be comfortable and uncomfortable with each other, to learn how to come as our whole selves, to figure out how to hold space for all of these whole selves, to hold ourselves and each other accountable, to affirm and support each other, and enjoy each other's company takes time. It's a vital part and practice of working towards justice.

We strive to work at a pace in which:

- We're not overwhelmed, burned out, and strained—we do check-ins and practice learning how to hold space for each other to be real about how we're feeling.
- Our needs (food, rest, positive affirmations, emotional support, etc.) aren't neglected during meetings—we don't want our meetings to put strain on our lives outside of them.
- We can stay mindful instead of frenzied, tuned out, or pissed-off because we're doing too much.
- We can get to know each other to build the trust to have challenging conversations about topics that are complex and vulnerable.
- We can acknowledge and resolve/work towards resolving fucked-up power dynamics that may have snuck into our work together with accountability and care.
- There's time for fun, which is sometimes seen as a distraction, something that slows down progress, or seen as a bonus if we've got all our work done—having fun together is just one more strand in the bond that we're weaving between us.
- We can have the energy to continue to do this lifetime's worth of work and pass on our knowledge to others and future generations.

Beloved, kindred, needed: Disability Justice and Healing Justice

"We center the genius and leadership of disabled and chronically ill communities, for what we know about surviving and resisting the medical industrial complex and living with fierce beauty in our sick and disabled bodies. We say no to the medical industrial complex's model of "cure or be useless," instead working from a place of belief in the wholeness of disability, interdependence and disabled people as inherently good as we are."

- Excerpt from 2012 Allied Media Conference Healing Justice Practice Space Principles⁵

In summer 2012, we all traveled to Detroit for the 2012 Allied Media Conference (AMC) Healing Justice Practice Space (HJPS) and network gathering. Travel is something many of us love, but which our chronically ill and disabled bodies often fear. Being away from our access webs, herbs and meds, food sources, acupuncture, bed, and heating pads can throw our bodies and minds into states with lots of symptoms. But we did it; four of us planned and executed a 2,500 mile drive full of canned salmon, kale, mason jars filled up at truck stop Loaf 'n Jug free water dispensers, yoga done at Wyoming truck pullouts, skullcap, heating pads, the milky way, prayer, smudging, real relationship talk, and breath. Our bodies hurt sometimes, but so much less than many other gatherings in super intense conferencelandia.

This is the healing justice movement we want: one where our disabled, crazy, deaf, and/or chronically ill bodies are leaders—where what we know about healing leads the movement. Where non-disabled people listen, do work, and show accountability. We want a healing justice movement that BITCH slaps ableism out of the medical industrial complex.⁶

A question inherent in healing justice is: Who is a healer? Can a Disabled, Chronically Ill, Crazy, and/or Deaf person heal? Is healing even a priority for this person? What would a healing justice movement look like if it centered Disabled ways of healing and Disabled knowledge about the medical industrial complex and living in our bodies and minds?

When our bodies are stuck in an ableist paradigm, "healing" means our disability, illness, craziness, and/or deafness disappears. In this paradigm of ableism, healers are those who fix us. Healers are not those of us who insist that our bodies do not need fixing. The above is true even and especially in communities of "alternative" or "radical" healing. Many healers who are radical, alternative, or rooted in social justice community still believe in "magically heal the cripple" narratives, narratives that see disabled bodies as tragedies inherently in need of fixing instead of as part of the normal continuum of what makes up human life. Every Crip has a story (or like 5 million) about being told "just try chi gong/ meditation/ acupuncture/ fish oils/ yoga/ this supplement/ this diet/ and you'll be all better" by medical practitioners, healers, friends, family members, and strangers. Alternative practitioners often spout ableist rhetoric that our bodies' conditions are a sign of bad choices, bad karma from a past life, or whatever.

With the Healing Babes, we want healing justice to ask, center, and practice: What are Disabled/Crip controlled modes of healing? But first up: what is disability justice? One definition is:

Disability justice to me means a political movement and many interlocking communities where disability is not defined in white terms, or male terms, or straight terms. Disability Justice is to the Disability Rights movement what the environmental justice movement is to mainstream environmental movements. Disability justice centers sick and disabled people of color, queer and trans disabled folks of color and everyone who is marginalized in mainstream disability organizing.

More than that, it asserts that ableism helps make racism, christian supremacy, sexism and queer and trans phobia possible and that all those systems of oppression are locked up tight. It insists that we organize from our sick, disabled “brokenbeautiful” (as Alexis Pauline Gumbs puts it) bodies’ wisdom, need and desire. It means looking at Indigenous and People of Color (POC) traditions of valuing sick and disabled folks (not as magical cripples, but as people of difference whose bodyspirits have valuable smarts), how POC communities being sick or disabled can just be “life” and also how sick and disabled POC are criminalized. It means asserting a vision of liberation where destroying ableism is part of social justice. It means the hotness, smarts and value of our sick and disabled bodies. It means we are not left behind, we are beloved, kindred, needed.⁷

How do the Babes strive to practice disability justice? Everything from:

- Starting meetings on, and understanding, “Crip time” —that if someone’s care team fell through, they’re having a period of increased mental/physical symptoms, they might be late
- Doing access check-ins at all meetings and events. Are you having cognitive problems and need slower or easier word choices? Are you having anxiety? Do you need to eat? Do you need to check-in with your kid? Stretch? Do you need to empty your grey bag periodically?
- And then: seeing how collectively we can respond (following the person with the need’s lead) to help folks with their access and care needs. This is a drastic difference from an ableist world that assumes that access needs are an individual problem (slash pain-in-the-ass) rather than a collective responsibility
- Not seeing this access work as separate from “the real work”
- Making sure meetings always have food...with protein
- Cancelling and re-jigging meetings around what our bodies are actually doing, not what we wish we were doing—using skype, google hangout, and conference calls to make meetings accessible for folks who are sick or homebound
- Supporting accessible spaces in our work—booking our practice and other gatherings in physically, chemically, and Deaf accessible spaces, and making the access information clear and known on our promotional materials.⁸

- Thinking about what we can actually do well—not the 3 million things we wish we could do—eating, sleeping, allowing enough time, offering each other healing
- Offering healing in a way that centers “patient” autonomy—understanding that it is radical and Crip justice to let folks determine their own healing goals, that people are the primary authorities on their bodies
- Never, ever, saying things like “why are you using that cane?” or “wow, you don’t look sick, you look good”
- Encouraging those of us who may still identify as “currently able-bodied” to open up and advocate for their physical needs
- Providing spaces for nondisabled healers to learn about ableism and how they can practice anti-ableism in their practices—everything from changing how intake forms look to committing to creating a scent-free space
- Focusing on building deeper rather than scattershot
- Centering anti-ableism in all our work, not “forgetting” about it
- Letting each other know when we are mindlessly using ableist terms as slang (i.e. “that’s lame”)—welcoming and listening to the critique, taking action and responsibility for our processes of dismantling abelist language and worldviews

We Believe In Cheese

Winona LaDuke, and the work of so many food and environmental activists, reminds us that *food is medicine*. We do not see food justice as a sexy “new” movement, but as a call to action, an opportunity to continue the struggles of our ancestors for land and life, and to re-imagine our relationships with ourselves, with each other, our foods, our farmers, seeds, waters, and the Earth itself. Food movements open up spaces and ways for us to practice collective healing and build earth/body sovereignty.

The Babes believe in cheese. One of our shared principles is to make sure every meeting has food present to nourish, sustain, and feed our bodies, our minds, and spiritual activist movements. We don’t choose cheese to hate on our vegan comrades and relatives, whose liberation work in POC (People of Color) vegan and animal rights movements we celebrate. We maintain our belief in cheese instead to assert our collective needs and to resist ableist paradigms of practicing/imposing dietary ways that promote one-size-fits-all and fatphobic ways of eating—practices that sometimes assert themselves as the only way to be ethical and/or healthy. Every body is nourished differently and for us this includes a diet with specific animal proteins, nutrients that support our members with chronic illness and disabilities. We also love and eat hella kale and other “healthy” foods, but our vision is to resist reproducing oppressive ways of eating—and telling others how to eat—by listening to our bodies and our intuitive desires for certain foods as a community. Foods that heal from within are a basic need in our daily acts of creative and sustainable resistance.

What we eat is deeply important, but how we eat is also a site of re-defining healthy food. We resist fatphobic, food-shaming diets that would have us sitting in the corner by ourselves with an individually wrapped, pre-processed and pre-chewed meal to take in as a prescription drug, worrying and obsessing over calories and fat, eating something different,

separate from everyone else. We eat in community. Sometimes we cook together. Cooking is a creative act, cooking together is a co-creative one. It can be a medium of healing, a way to express ourselves—our love, intentions, and traditions. We give thanks for the food, the elements, and our relatives that made it possible for us to be nourished by it by holding space to honor the food with prayer before we begin eating. We share food, because eating, like healing, is a social, collective, shared practice. It interconnects us, brings us back together. The word *comer* in Spanish comes from the Latin, *cum-* (together) and *-edere* (to be). We follow this understanding of *comida* (food), and see it as a basic, daily way of practicing being (and healing) together in community.

We give thanks and gratitude to the creative and vibrant food justice activists who are working to nourish our communities, for the space they hold for backyard and community gardens, for the access they provide to farmers markets, run for and by community farmers of Color. For holding and sharing the knowledge about how to grow our own food, save seeds, and raise bees. Together, we work to heal the land, the body, and the community.⁹ Food justice directly supports healing justice.

Making sure we are nourished also challenges sacrificial paradigms of understanding revolution. It is another way to assert that our activist work is not about martyrdom. We follow Black Feminist writer Frances Beal when she states: “To die for the revolution is a one-shot deal; to live for the revolution means taking on the more difficult commitment of changing our day-to-day life patterns.”¹⁰ Feeding ourselves in ways that heal, in ways that are more holistic and intentional, allows us to embody these ways of organizing and sustaining social justice movements.

Examining Cultural Appropriation

In this section we will share ideas on cultural appropriation that are based primarily on our own *individual* practices, in an effort to continue building collective understandings of the topic, especially as it relates to how we practice our healing modalities (and otherwise). In other words, we do not embody or choose to enact all these practices as a collective, but rather are exploring many of these questions in our own personal journeys. We come together at times to continue co-creating and collaborating on this work.

Individually and collectively, many of us are working and thinking from ancestral traditions, recovering and re-membering original instructions and ways of being that heal as they dismantle inner/outer practices of multiple oppressions. As Mixed, Diasporic, and otherwise outernational Queer babes, we straddle many worlds at once, finding home in the spaces between worlds, as shape shifters, magic workers, nepantler@s. We honor the power of many traditions that we carry and many that we have chosen to carry.

Because we simultaneously “come from” some of these traditions as well as practice from healing arts/sciences that are not necessarily “our own,” we think it is necessary to raise the question of cultural appropriation. We continue to unpack the politics and pragmatics of practicing across traditions, of sharing, borrowing, and exchanging methods of healing. These are not easy questions. They are unpopular amongst many “New Agers” in the healing arts, who buy and sell ancestral knowledges as currency—for cultural capital

and personal gain—and whose thirst for “exotic” ways of healing have motivated decades of spiritual and material exploitation and violence among Indigenous peoples of the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Nor are these questions popular amongst those who prefer to feel and be “modern,” asking us to “move on” and embrace a “multicultural,” or “colorblind” approach to our political work, where healing is mis-understood as progress, and therefore forgetting. We would rather examine these questions—with all their vulnerabilities and problems—rather than continue avoiding, glossing over, or silencing them.

As healers who are politicized and political activists who are healers, these are deeply important and sensitive questions relating to contemporary political struggles and oppressions of Indigenous/Diasporic Third World decolonizing communities, communities that are our own and those which are not. Many of our healing projects pivot on these critical questions of healing intergenerational traumas, building liberatory futures that directly engage historical and collective wounds left open by colonization, slavery, and other forms of violence. The healing of our individual bodies is inseparable from these collective healing projects.

It is problematic to claim others’ traditions as your own. One can practice rituals across cultures. In fact we already do. The practice of appropriation in its literal sense is not always violent. The word, appropriation, refers to the act of borrowing, of re-using something. Of course there are many rich histories of various oppressed communities sharing ritual, practices, and story. Yet, being conscious of what is at stake and what is different amongst these relationships is what’s important. Hint: power, privilege, histories of oppression, and violence. Who’s making money off what? Who has access easily to what tradition?¹¹

We fully understand the ways that colonization, internalized racism, and self-hatred—everything from boarding schools, to migration, to family assimilation to survive—cut many of us off from our traditions. Therefore, sometimes other groups’ spiritual/cultural traditions are easier to find than our own. Any cultural group that has rebuilt their lost/stolen spiritual and cultural traditions has done so with a lot of blood, sweat, and tears.

Some of the questions we ask of ourselves and others are:

- Who has the power and resources to access non-western healing traditions in the country from which they spring (i.e. who can afford to travel to Thailand to learn Thai massage from a native)?
- Are there reasons why your own culturally and land-rooted spirituality or healing practice doesn’t feel as sexy or cool to investigate as another’s spirituality or culturally-based healing practice?
- Do you know the cosmovision of the culture that this healing tradition came from? Do you know the language?
- Do you have relationships of accountability with the peoples that carry this tradition?
- How have you been cut off from your own ancestral healing traditions? What kind of work have you done to reclaim them?
- If you charge money for your healing work, did you pay your teachers for the learning? Did you pay them relative to what you charge your clients?
- Do you correctly acknowledge the origin of the healing tradition you practice? (“Af

rican” or “Native American” or “Asian” all refer to continents with a number of different cultures, some of which are similar to one another, some of which are radically different. Is the healing tradition that you practice Lakota or Muwekma/Ohlone? Yoruban or Central African? Sri Lankan or Nepalese? Don’t lump all peoples from a continent or even a region together.)

-What does it mean to be POC in North America paying to “relearn” our own ancestral cultural healing traditions from non-politicized white teachers? How does that trigger our ancestral trauma?

-How can POC who benefit from class, citizenship, and other privileges through living within a colonialist empire ethically and accountably practice other ancestral traditions than our own?

For us, healing justice can be a space where a dialogue around cultural appropriation has a framework, that is, a framework of healing, understanding that appropriation has been central to the formation of many wounds, yet sharing can also be a source of healing. We need many different medicine practices to heal our communities and ourselves and we believe in exchanging and sharing these across differences, in order to heal more holistically and collaboratively. We hope through grounding in ethical and politically responsible methods, we can build ways to share (read: appropriate) healing practices that can become ways to heal the colonial wound. That is, we hope to re-member ways of sharing across cultures that do not harm each other in the process.

Honoring Fungal Sources, Extending Mycelia

When we started dreaming on how we wanted to write this piece, we came to the Combahee River Collective’s “A Black Feminist Statement” as a model. A key document in the development of Black Feminist genius, the Combahee River Collective ended their piece with the statement, “As Black feminists and Lesbians we know that we have a very definite revolutionary task to perform and *we are ready for the lifetime of work and struggle before us.*”¹² As radical healers who are here, in part because of the work of the Combahee River Collective and Black Feminism, we ask ourselves: what do we need in order to be ready for the lifetime of work and struggle before us? How can radical healers help sustain these life-long struggles, within ourselves, and for each other?

This is not an ending or a beginning, but a moment along the way to reflect. We are excited to continue having conversations with other radical healers as we build this movement that is already here—that has been ongoing for a while.

Endnotes

1. "Crip" or "Krip" is slang used by some radical Disabled communities, as a way of reclaiming a word that's been used as a slur against us. This is akin to how "Queer" or "Fat" have been reclaimed by Queer and Fat communities. It's "insider language" that is not appropriate to be used by non-Disabled folks. Some folks (especially Black Disabled hip-hop artist and poet Leroy Moore) have started to use the word "Krip" out of an understanding that the Crips street gang also uses the word.) "Krip-Hop Nation," *POOR Magazine/Prensa POBRE*, accessed April 16, 2013, http://www.poormagazine.org/krip_hop.
2. For more information on Aurora Levins Morales's work, please see her website: *Aurora Levins Morales* (website), accessed April 16, 2013, www.auroralevinsmorales.com.
3. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, The Crossing Press Feminist Series (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984).
4. For one project that uses performance art about sexuality to challenge ableism and racism, check out *Sins Invalid: An Unshamed Claim to Beauty in the Face of Invisibility* (website), accessed April 16, 2013, <http://www.sinsinvalid.org>.
5. "2012 Allied Media Conference Healing Justice Practice Space Principles," unpublished work, 2012.
6. We employ and adapt Dr. Phyllis Jackson's use of the term/acronym BITCH—Black/Brown Intellectual Tenaciously Challenging Hegemony. Phyllis Jackson, personal communication with Rico Kleinstein Chenyek, 2010.
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