

Tricia Hersey's Words in *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto*

17 Excerpts from
PREFACE and INTRODUCTION

Read each of the excerpts at the left. This text is from your reading homework but are worth re-seeing and re-hearing together in class.

In this column on the right, put a check mark next to each and every statement that resonates in some way for you. After that, STAR at least three places that you like most of all.

1)I was fueled by the deep history of cultural trauma I was studying while in seminary. I was reading slave narratives while studying Jim Crow terrorism and falling asleep with the hook on my chest. I was guided by Harriet Tubman, pro-claiming after waking up from a prophetic dream: "My people are free." The audacity to proclaim freedom via rest in the now. Rest has been revolutionary for my soul. (p. 4)

2)I refuse to push my body to the brink of exhaustion and destruction. Let the chips fall where they may. I trust myself more than capitalism. Our refusal will make space for abundance. We will have to leap and trust rest. May the ground underneath hold us, and if we must collapse, may a soft pillow be there. This book is a scream on a bullhorn for the collective to join me in disrupting and pushing back. The Nap Ministry is a warm blanket swaddling us all back to our deepest selves. A more human place. A resting place. (p.4)

3)I come from a legacy of exhaustion. My maternal grandmother, Ora, the muse of this work, a refugee from Jim Crow terrorism, rested her eyes every day for thirty minutes to an hour in an attempt to connect and find peace. My greatgrandmother Rhodie, I am told, stayed up late nightly on her farm in deep Mississippi with a pistol in her apron pocket to creatively solve any problems from the Ku Klux Klan. The reality of our survival from white supremacy and capitalism is deeply shocking to me. I am in awe at what our bodies can hold. We must lighten our loads. Survival is not the end goal for liberation. We must thrive. We must rest. (p.5)

4)While my grandmother rested her eyes, I would tiptoe around her home trying not to wake her up. I always thought she was sleeping while sitting up. I was curious about her rest practice and thought she was so eccentric. Whenever I would inquire if she was sleeping, her response was always the same: "Every shut eye ain't sleep. I am resting my eyes and listening for what God wants to tell me." While all the world around her was attempting to crush her Spirit, she rested and resisted the beast of grind culture. She taught my mother to rest, she taught me to rest. I am humbled to be a vessel to guide thousands on their own rest journey as we embrace rest as a way to make us all more human.(p.6)

5)Our collective rest will not be easy. All of culture is collaborating for us not to rest. I understand this deeply. We are sleep-deprived because the systems view us as machines, but bodies are not machines. Our bodies are a site of liberation. We are divine and our rest is divine. There is synergy, inter-connectedness, and deep communal healing within our rest movement. I believe rest, sleep, naps, daydreaming, and slowing down can help us all wake up to see the truth of our-selves. Rest is a healing portal to our deepest selves. Rest is care. Rest is radical. (p.7)

6)People are waking up. People are waking up. People are waking up to the truth of their manipulation under toxic systems. People are waking up to heal. People are waking up to rest. We will no longer be a martyr for grind culture. Grind culture is a collaboration between white supremacy and capitalism. It views our divine bodies as

<p>machines. Our worth is not connected to how much we produce. Another way is possible. Our shared history is one of extreme disconnection and denial. We ignore our bodies' need to rest and in doing so, we lose touch with Spirit. In our bodies we have our temples. It is the only thing we own. Our bodies are a tool agent for change. A site of liberation. Our bodies know. The time to rest is now. Our collective rest will change the world because our rest resides in a Spirit of refusal and disruption. Rest is our protest. Rest is resistance. Rest is reparations. (p. 12)</p>	
<p>7)Capitalism was created on plantations. The roots of it are violence and theft. We as a culture gloss over this historical truth. But, to dive into the cracks of this reality is where a profound part of your deprogramming from grind culture resides. To understand and meditate on this truth may place us all in a space of grief. We must grieve. Rest supports our grieving by allowing space, and with space we can begin healing from the trauma of grind culture. Grieving is a sacred act and one of the ways we can begin to reconnect with our bodies, as we craft a rest practice. (p. 15)</p>	
<p>8)Capitalism has cornered us in such a way that we only can comprehend two options. 1: Work at a machine level, from a disconnected and exhausted place, or 2: Make space for rest and space to connect with our highest selves while fearing how we will eat and live. This rigid binary, combined with the violent reality of poverty, keeps us in a place of sleep deprivation and constant hustling to survive. The work of liberation from these lies resides in our depro-gramming and tapping into the power of rest and in our ability to be flexible and subversive. There are more than two options. The possibilities are infinite, although living under a capitalist system is to be confronted with a model of scarcity. This space makes you falsely believe there is not enough of everything: not enough money, not enough care, not enough love, not enough attention, not enough peace, not enough connection, not enough time. There is abundance. (pp. 15-16)</p>	
<p>9)I feel like a legacy of exhaustion resides somewhere in all of us, but specifically resides in the bodies of those who have melanated skin. To those who are descen-dants of plantation labor and those marginalized, this exhaustion is deep. Sleep deprivation is a public health issue and a spiritual issue. It is a spiritual issue for a few reasons. We have been trained to believe that everything we accom-plish is because of our own pushing alone. This is false because there is a spiritual dimension that exists in all things and in everything we do. To understand that we are spiritual beings navigating life in a material world opens us to the possibilities of rest as a spiritual practice. Our entire living is a spiritual practice. Much of our resistance to rest, sleep, and slowing down is an ego problem. You believe you can and must do it all because of our obsession with individualism and our disconnection to spirituality. Nothing we accomplish in life is totally free of the influence of spirit and community. We do nothing alone. (p. 18)</p>	
<p>10)Later, my son left the comfort of our slow-paced home into the public school system, and I began to watch slowly how his voice, connection to his body, and intuition were attacked. In elementary school, students are being trained to be workers who can follow orders, memorize facts, and be on time no matter what. Imagination and critical thinking skills are replaced with cookie-cutter learning and standard-ized testing. I would volunteer in my son's third grade class-room weekly and noticed the young children being told, "Hold your pee. Bathroom break isn't for another twenty minutes." I watched in horror as an eight-year-old squirmed, attempting to wait the twenty minutes until he could allow his body to relieve itself. The teacher, obviously over-whelmed with a large classroom, continued to ignore his cues and he eventually used the bathroom on himself. I helped to take him to the bathroom to clean up and walked him to the office so his parents could be called to bring a change of clothes. (p. 22)</p>	
<p>11)When we honor our bodies via rest, we are connecting to the deepest parts of ourselves. We are freedom-making. What stories are we holding deep inside that are</p>	

<p>untold and uncovered because we are too exhausted? This rest work is holding space for our memories, our microhistories, and all the things that make us human. The idea of rest as resistance and rest as reparations can be challenging to distill in a few lines when I am asked to do a quick take. It's counterintuitive to believe rest to be not a place to waste time but instead a generative place of freedom and resistance. We have never learned this in our culture. The thought of not doing, even for a short time, is seen as lazy and unproductive. So an explanation for rest as a form of justice is layered and nuanced. I have learned that one of the most concise and true ways to share the message of rest is to say: "Rest makes us more human. It brings us back to our human-ness." To be more human. To be connected to who and what we truly are is at the heart of our rest movement. (pp. 26-27)</p>	
<p>12)You are worthy of rest. We don't have to earn rest. Rest is not a luxury, a privilege, or a bonus we must wait for once we are burned out. I hear so many repeat the myth of rest being a privilege and I understand this concept and still deeply disagree with it. Rest is not a privilege because our bodies are still our own, no matter what the current systems teach us. The more we think of rest as a luxury, the more we buy into the systematic lies of grind culture. Our bodies and Spirits do not belong to capitalism, no matter how it is theorized and presented. Our divinity secures this, and it is our right to claim this boldly. I'm not grinding ever. I trust the Creator and my Ancestors to always make space for my gifts and talents without needing to work myself into exhaustion. (pp. 28-29)</p>	
<p>13)Get up today and tomorrow and think to yourself: "When and where can I find a moment of rest?" You can plot and plan for ten minutes at your desk, thirty minutes of weekend napping, or one minute of resting your eyes. Keep pondering and making space for the time to detox from tech-nology. Listen. What day will you be able to remove one app from your phone in an effort to retain expansiveness for yourself? How will you be able to one day say no to a request that doesn't serve you? To build firm yet caring boundar-ies that teach us all the meaning of community care? All these things are a form of rest. (p. 30)</p>	
<p>14)The Nap Ministry is a meditation on rest as resistance. It shines a light directly on the power of dismantling the toxic systems that create trauma and terror in our bodies and souls. We center rest as a means for healing and liberation. We believe sleep deprivation is a racial and social justice issue. We must be able to sit with this deep truth: America is not a wel-coming place to all bodies. America was built on the backs of Black and Indigenous people who labored without rest for centuries as the country built its economic power. White supremacy became a vehicle to poison the hearts and minds of an entire nation to view human beings as less than divine. Rest is resistance because it is a counternarrative to the script of capitalism and white supremacy for all people. Resting is a connection and a path back to our true nature. We are stripped down to who we really were before the terror of capitalism and white supremacy. We say no to the systems that see us as simply machines. We resist the lie that we aren't enough. We are enough! We are divine. Our bodies don't belong to these toxic systems. We know better. Our Spirits know better. (p. 33)</p>	
<p>15)When I think about the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, chattel slavery, and plantation labor, I am stunned by how much we have chosen to forget that capitalism was built from these systems. An experimentation in how to push a human body to machine-level pace for centuries led by white people dizzy with hate and brainwashed by a system that trained them to look at a divine, human body as property to be owned. This fact by itself is why I will never donate my body to this system and why I navigate my life from a politics of refusal and resistance. My consciousness and Spirit will not allow me to align myself with a system that still owes a debt to my Ancestors. I personally find it disrespectful and utter disregard to allow myself to be boldly and proudly grinding my body into a state of exhaustion. It stops with me. (p 35)</p>	

16)The more I studied the voices and stories of my Ancestors and went head and body first into listening and communicating with them, I simply could not even begin to re-create the brutal-ity they suffered at the hands of the labor they were forced to participate in on plantations. I vividly remember reading the book *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* by John W. Blassingame for six months while in graduate school. I would lay on the couch with this massive collection of archival history and feel rage and power reliving the daily life of an enslaved person. The story of Madison Jefferson, born and enslaved in Virginia as a house ser-vant, who was interviewed in 1841 while living in England. He was a field hand and herder on a plantation with 250 other enslaved people who cultivated tobacco, com, and hemp. The stories he told of his brother dying while being forced to work in the fields with a head injury rattled me and made me think about all the times capitalism calls for us to ignore our pain and health for the sake of being on the clock. I recalled the trauma of a former boss telling me to come into work after I was in a car accident that sent me to the emergency room with a pinched nerve in my shoulder. In his words, "If you could just muster up the energy to come in for a few hours." (p. 36)

17)Grind culture is a collaboration between capitalism and white supremacy. Capitalism is from the plantation. Our current system of labor was made from this paradigm. Knowing this shifted me and must be acknowledged as part of our deprogramming process from grind culture. It is a painful realization, but one we must confront to find our way to healing. What does it feel like to hold this knowledge and to understand you are unconsciously and consciously participating in a system that has its foundation in viewing human bodies as nonhuman machines? What is grind cul-ture doing to our spiritual, mental, and physical health? How does it feel to know your human body is viewed by a capital-ist and ableist culture as existing only to make profit? For us to not view our own bodies or the bodies of others as a divine dwelling, the site of liberation and a miracle, is to bow down to the dominant, oppressive culture. (p. 38)

Why did you star these three excerpts? Why did you like these three the best?

Look to the agenda for how to respond to the three moments that you have chosen.