

***Deportation and the Confluence of Violence Within Forensic Mental Health and Immigration Systems* by Ameil J. Joseph. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillian, 2015, xi + 261 pp. ISBN 978-1-137-51341-0**

Reviewed By: Yvonne Simpson, Critical Disability Studies, York University

This book explicates the complexities of practices in Canada's mental health system within the context of the interlocking dimensions of immigration policy, social justice and the deleterious effects of racism on people identified as the nation's "undesirables". Joseph's background in social work and advocacy for mental health survivors is evident in the skillful use of the tenants of social work ally-practitioner lens in this analysis. A diligent approach is taken, as the reader is guided through a balanced presentation of the literature, steep in the application of the Gadamerian philosophy of conveying meaning of the human experience through the interpretation of language and identity is employed. The discourses in critical disability mental health studies, evidence based research and historiography which is inclusive of the voice of experience, (dis)empowerment, oppression and resilience are carefully woven to reveal the frequently silenced schema of erasure of the lived experiences of the racialized other who find themselves on the margins of Canadian society, hidden then cast away from public awareness behind the gridlock of powerful systemic socio-political structures of law, immigration and mental health systems. The publication of this book is timely, given the projections from Statistics Canada (2010) that due to increased reliance on immigration as a source for population growth and labour market needs, by 2031 an estimated 71% of the visible minority population will be immigrants, arriving primarily from countries where the first language is neither French nor English. Joseph's thesis

underscores the need for urgent attention to Canada's socio-political agenda in the wake of the exposure of the vulnerable populations to systems of injustice and the sustainability of Canada's reputation as a guardian of the principles of inclusion and diversity.

In this ten-chapter treatise Joseph invokes critical thinking about the approaches to mental health, leading to questions such as who is deserving or undeserving of mental health services? Who is included or excluded from the invitation to "let's talk?" – a popularized emblematic media presentation of Canada as a nation where inclusion for all reigns supreme. The author creates a palpable learning experience of the undeniable realities of what it means to encounter human suffering within practices which legitimize the meticulous removal of the racialized other and simultaneously preserves and harnesses an identity of social inclusion for all. This publication will inform and invoke many questions about the meaning of deeply held Canadian values on care, dignity and social supports as, chapter by chapter, the reader is conducted through a journey where profound arguments are shaped around the "confluence of violence", in deportation, forensic mental health and immigration systems.

Chapter 1 outlines an introductory overview with a cohesive presentation of the central argument, clarification of key terms such as "mental illness", relevant literature, immigration policy framework and research findings which rationalizes the scope of the problem that contextualizes the significance of Joseph undertakings. While noting the role of social workers as interveners within the mental health system and serving as

allies in social justice; it is to Joseph's credit that observation is offered of how the social work discipline operates as one which is buttressed within institutional systems of injustice.

One may level some disagreement and wish to challenge Joseph's perspective that Canada stands as "unique" in the discourses and intersectionality involved in the criminalization of immigrant status, mental illness and racialized identity. In this regard, Douglas Baynton (2001) provides a counter claim of a consistent discourse emerging in 18th century (America) history which constructed black skin colour as a form of disability – both in terms of cultural norms in everyday parlance and within diagnostic language. Accordingly, in 1792, Doctor Benjamin Rush propagated the claim through the medical community that the skin color of Africans was an anomaly and due to a form of "congenital leprosy" (p. 40). This line of argument supports the endemic nature of racialized identity and the confluence of violence which has been used to justify race based selective immigration policies, and the deportation of people who are classified as non-citizen and found to be in offense of the law.

Chapter 2 pays homage to leading historical and contemporary scholarly luminaries who provide interpretive analysis of psychiatry and the mental health field. Students of critical disability studies will appreciate Joseph's diligent epistemological approach as it serves to highlight the waves of transformational models of critique from Michel Foucault's (1926–1984) philosophical interpretation of the history of psychiatry as a hegemonic form of control over perceived deviance; to the claims made by Thomas

Szasz (1920-2012) that mental illness is a myth. The reverence for Geoffrey Reaume's exposé is evident in the framing of the history of violence, activism, and the resilience of consumer/survivor movement.

The on-going struggle for dignity and freedom from structures of oppression in Joseph's rendering of the legacy of Eurocentricism and colonial power dynamics is cogently attended to with a respectful regard and placement of Indigenous knowledge, diverse identities and critical race theory as an effective mode of analysis which delimited and marginalized the voices of racialized people of diverse identity (gender, sexual orientation, place of origin, among others). In the discussion of Eurocentricism, Joseph opted for Foucault's assessment of reason while drawing on the enlightenment philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). In this instance, the arguments of critical race theory scholars such as Emmanuel Eze (1997) and Henry Louis Gates' (1986) would have provided a more balanced view of Kant as a Eurocentric philosopher. As such, Kant who did not travel outside his home region successfully propagated a racist pseudoscience based on claims of observations of African people, then imposed the tentacles of racism and derogatory characterizations through his academic influence which are entrenched as institutionalized racism in contemporary society. While Joseph challenges Eurocentrism, a deeper critique of Kant through the CRT lens would be beneficial.

Chapter 3 outlines a detailed explanation and technical insight into how all levers of policy governance operate in unison to criminalize and excise the racialized other, who

are regarded as non-citizen and become entangled in the mental health system. This overview of the “Canadian Forensic Mental Health System“ incorporates consideration of The Mental Health Act, the various conditions which authorize restrictions/confinement and administration of treatment without the person’s consent. Joseph elaborates on the application of these legal instruments with use of a plain language style as opposed to a legalese interpretation of the “forensics” tools of these statutes, including the Criminal Code of Canada and the Refugee Protection Act, which serve as the primary engines of power to justify revisionist-modernized practices of eugenics. Joseph masterfully balances these technical aspects with an outline of the demographics of the vast majority of racialized nationals trapped within the human tsunami where these legislative powers converge in court actions against those deemed to be “undeserving foreign alien”, for the benefit of protecting “deserving members” of citizenry. Through this approach, Joseph’s presentation of statutes is skillfully managed to avoid a mere regurgitation to functional roles, the effect on people and borders.

In Chapter 4 the work of Slavoj Žižek, a political philosopher and cultural critic, is effectively employed as Joseph focuses on “conceptualizing” the structural and theoretical foundations of violence and the gambit of its complex and intersectional manifestations in our daily lives. The depth of Joseph’s knowledge of the critical theoretical interpretations is evident as the author provides an extensive enumerated summation of myriad forms of intersectionality and violence without deferring to simplistic and cursory notions of these concepts. Lessons in critical theory as praxis are extended as Joseph uses the theoretical framings of a diverse range of ideas, such as

the Marxian (1818-1883) principles of the experience of violence in the exploitation of labour and the Fanonian(1925-1961) psychoanalytic explanations of how power is exercised by the colonizer in the dynamics of the relational dealings with the racialized subject. Through this in-depth theoretical analysis Joseph creates a tool for learning and application of an institutional ethnographic approach in understanding the inner workings of mental health systems, and the confluence of various institutional policies.

Chapter 5 examines colonial communities, colonial technologies of difference and brings together the quintessential tools of violence which are engaged in sustaining hierarchal systems and practices of oppression in communities and within mental health and the criminal justice systems. Joseph aptly uses the term “technologies” to depict how systems of control are replicated seamlessly and across all spheres to construct race, and by extension identity markers which create dividing lines and hierarchal structures of power between those cast as inferior and deserving of violence and those deemed as worthy of protection (from the other) and from whom the ruling class of authority, power and control emerges. The author illuminates practices of systematic “dehumanization”, whereby a non-human identity is constructed through the “erasure” of personal history and identity and in the case of mental illness diagnosis, immigration and criminal justice systems, along with any other binary superior/inferior status to the subjugated marginalized other. Joseph provides several examples of the process of erasure during slavery where the dehumanization process of Africans began with the erasure of language, names, and cultural traditions, among others. The same process were stripped of language, culture and identity colonial experience is superimposed

over any other associated with mental illness diagnosis and the history in objectifying racialized members of dehumanizing human experience of racialized injustice. The work of Boster (2013) would be a useful source of reference in this instance, given the arguments of intersection of disability arising out of abhorrent treatment of Africans forced into slavery and labouring for centuries, justified through processes of regulated dehumanization.

Chapter 6 seeks to deepen the understanding of how violence is operationalized in the context of a post-colonial analysis by drawing on the 'Truth Method' philosophy of Gadamer and Žižek's theory on violence. The Foucauldian construct of genealogy in Joseph's examination of a humanistic method immediately draws the reader's attention to the importance of historicity. However, Joseph distinguishes this work on the confluence of violence by taking a non-traditional approach to history, focusing on the specifics of contemporaneous practices and sources of structural supports for the enactment of violence over time as opposed to purely seeking out historical root causes. In order to ensure that this method of analysis is not dominated by European scholars, and especially in the case of Gadamer, around whom some controversy has arisen regarding his past associations (see Richard Wolin, 2004, *The seduction of unreason: The intellectual romance with fascism*), a number of luminaries in post-colonial studies with a lived experience under colonial rule such as Franz Fanon (1925-1961), Aimé Césaire (1913-2008), Gayatri Spivak (1942), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) among others, envelopes Joseph's method of analysis. Students who are interested in diversity representative critical literary theory will note Joseph's efforts in this methods

section, by reference to Said's iconic Orientalism discursive critique. Joseph's efforts of a global reach in cultural literary critique demonstrates a conveyance of the magnitude of confluence of violence and its colonial dimension.

The analysis of 75 cases from the Appeals Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board included as part of the study of post-colonial confluence elucidates the language of violence and the structure of selective deterministic diagnostic surveillance (medical and criminal) systems. Practitioners in case work will find this chapter particularly instructive on how violent language can be seamlessly integrated into professional practice as normative ways of referring to people.

In the remaining chapters Joseph presents an analysis of data, documents and cases as evidentiary manifestations of practices in administrative eugenics in the confluence of violence. The blatant use of racial hierarchies in the systemic violence against groups variously classified but grouped together as "undesirables" paints a vivid picture of racial hierarchies entrenched in law and propagated by various governmental reports and data informatics sources. The statistical and anecdotal analysis of cases cultivate knowledge on how people are problematized and ultimately labeled as undesirable under the mental health, immigration and criminal justice systems. The listing of the derogatory labels which have been carefully socialized through authoritative sources, serve as strong reminders of the history of language which by extension construct mental models which build subjugated identities.

Overall this is a comprehensive presentation of the dimensions of immigration policy, mental health and the criminal justice systems. Joseph's study convincingly transforms any remaining doubt of the violence which is at the core of nation building centered on seizure of the lands and subjugation of Canada's Aboriginal people. The author employs a diverse scope of literature and analysis and shows that despite the overwhelming evidence of violence, oppression and structural confluence of violence, resilience and survival is the overarching response to these powerful and interlocking institutional forces. Joseph has created a timeless tool for learning, and expanding the discourse of our common humanity.

References:

- Baynton, Douglas (2001). Disability and the justification of inequality in American history. In *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, eds., P.K. Longmore and L. Unmansky. New York: New York University Press.
- Boster, D. H. (2013). *African American Slavery and Disability: Bodies, Property, and Power in the Antebellum South, 1800-1860*. New York: Routledge.
- Eze, Emmanuel (1997). *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. (1986). Talkin' that talk. *Critical Inquiry*.13, Autumn,1: 203-210.
- Statistics Canada (2010). Projections of the Diversity of the Canadian Population. Ministry of Industry, Demography Division. Catalogue no. 91-551-X. ISSN 1920-9134. Accessed at:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-551-x/91-551-x2010001-eng.pdf>.

Wolin, R. (2004). *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism: from Nietzsche to Postmodernism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.