

Introduction

Volume 7 marks the continued expansion of CDD as a platform for emerging work in critical disability studies. Closely following the goals expressed through the 10th and 11th Critical Disability Studies Students Association (CDSSA) conferences, held at York University in Toronto in September 2015 and April 2016, respectively, Volume 7 emphasizes the need for sustained self-reflection among the many scholars, activists and artists who comprise contemporary disability communities. As a step in this direction, CDD has opted to add multiple discourses to the journal's "critical disability discourse" focus. In 2015, we updated our English title from *Critical Disability Discourse* to *Critical Disability Discourses* – a minor change, on the surface, perhaps, but one which gestures strongly towards a plurality of perspectives and experiences.

In keeping with broader efforts in North American disability studies to open up analytical spaces and practices, this volume features four contributions which come into dialogue with the many limitations, both actual and potential, of particular conceptual, legal, policy, and historical configurations. Volume 7's contributors encourage us to consider the many exclusions that critical disability studies approaches have produced over the years, offering examples that seek to enhance the potential that critical disability perspectives hold for understanding and challenging oppressive structures and ideas. These include the experiences of people labelled with intellectual disabilities who are institutional survivors; the position of invisible impairments and chronic illnesses within conceptual frameworks; the danger of rights rhetoric when it is taken up by governments who have only selectively adopted disability concerns; and the search for alternative narratives in the face of canonical research traditions within disability histories.

Continuing the tradition of challenging dominant and official discourses, the first article in this volume, by S. H. McKelvie, interrogates the justice of the 2009 Woodland Residential School's settlement in British Columbia. McKelvie analyzes transcripts from first-person interviews conducted with a range of informants, including a survivor from the Homeland's school who is a person labelled with an intellectual disability; an ally who has been involved in support work in the Ontario, Québec and BC systems, as well as in deinstitutionalization work with survivors; and an executive director of a non-profit group based in BC. Importantly, she frames these interviews as "repositories of alternative knowledges" that can serve as "disruptive sites". As McKelvie concludes, the battle for deinstitutionalization is not over, and "the Woodlands school settlement is only partially 'settled'". Community-based research, she suggests, must be used to reveal the unfinished nature of this work.

Cara Goldberg's consideration of people with invisible and variable impairments and disabilities (PWIVID) harnesses alternative knowledges by centring the perspectives of these excluded embodied experiences. Goldberg uses this knowledge to challenge the presumption that existing intersectional frameworks adequately account for the diversity within disability communities. Focusing on how those who identify with as PWIVID can

be “doubly burdened” by barriers that arise in having “the nature and/or effects of their disabling impairments/disabilities recognised by others”, she draws useful parallels from LGBTQ+ communities, pointing to how bisexual-identified people are not always “‘legible’ as ‘queer’”. Throughout her discussion, Goldberg expresses concerns with how the “mainstream disability scholarship and organising has itself frequently failed to account for non-paradigmatic (e.g., non-male, non-white, non-heterosexual, non-cis-gendered, and non-middle-or-upper-class) PWD”.

Melania Moscoso Pérez’s article asks how the rhetoric of disability rights can be turned against civil liberties and brings us to a concrete policy example from contemporary Spain. Tracing alliances between conservative forces in Spain and Catholic eugenics, Moscoso Pérez identifies a form of Cripwashing that is underway in debates around pre-natal screening practices that target disabled fetuses. She argues that while the defense of disabled fetuses by disability activists in the United States is done through progressive coalitions (LGBTQ+ and feminist), the situation is very different in Spain, where “Spanish disability activist claims have found support in the disciplinary area of bioethics, which in Spain is strongly influenced by the Catholic Church”. Moscoso Pérez shows how Franco’s rule, and “the legacy of 39 years of National Catholicism in Spain”, gives pause to rethink support for legislation that limits abortions in this particular context.

Capping off the article section, Haley Gienow-McConnell addresses activist narratives, using a historical lens to call upon Deaf researchers to look outside of dominant institutions and the lives of their “elite members” and to consider individual and marginalized voices within their own communities. Exploring several methods of writing history, Gienow-McConnell shows that researchers can benefit from biography, which provides a helpful way of capturing the agency of “rank and file members who constitute the majority Deaf community”. When selecting biographical material for study, historians, she explains, should also realize that “the inclusion of specific and diverse deaf figures is an essential component to the future of deaf history”. Another goal in writing these narratives, according to Gienow-McConnell, should be to situate Deaf histories within broader American histories and foster more expansive arguments.

Following these contributions is CDD’s review section. Launched during 2014, reviews of books and films are becoming a regular feature of CDD publications. Reviewers for Volume 7 engage with five new works that expand the focus of disability critiques through film and critical research.

The first featured piece is Yvonne Simpson’s discussion of Ameil Joseph’s path-breaking study, *Deportation and the Confluence of Violence Within Forensic Mental Health and Immigration Systems*. Joseph’s research exposes Canada’s practice of deporting racialized people following psychiatric diagnoses – practices which Simpson points out, “legitimize the meticulous removal of the racialized other”. She explains that this analysis will be particularly relevant to practitioners, as it shows how “violent language can be seamlessly integrated into professional practice as normative ways of referring to people”. Violence, as explained by Simpson’s reading of Joseph, is also at

the heart of Canadian nation-building and its historical dependency on colonialism and “the seizure of the lands and subjugation of Canada’s Aboriginal people”. Providing insight into applications of critical race theory, Simpson describes how Joseph’s study presents intersectional processes of othering that target racialized people and deem them ‘unworthy’ of mental health services.

Next, Estée Klar considers Gerald O’Brien’s exploration of metaphors of othering which centre around conceptions of intellectual disability. Klar reviews his latest book, *Framing the Moron: The Social Construction of Feeble-mindedness in the American Eugenic Era*, and considers why and how “The metaphors we use to imagine the disabled body during the eugenics movement, continue to be invoked today”. Probing these continuities by asking, “why does this targeting continue?”, Klar works through the example of autism and the many efforts that have surfaced to combat its “purported increase”. Arguing for the importance of understanding these alarmist movements, Klar concludes by demonstrating the need for further study of representational constructs. Ultimately, she shows that the value of O’Brien’s work lies in the links he is able to draw between various “imaginings of the Other”.

In his review of Craig Gillespie’s new film *Lars and the Real Girl*, Michael Miceli shows that the story of how a sex doll named Bianca becomes accepted as Lars’ ‘real’ girlfriend, rather than as a delusion, provides a positive example of the role that community supports can play in the lives of conventionally dehumanized and radically othered individuals. Miceli argues that the transformational moment in the film occurs when Lars’ girlfriend, Bianca, achieves personhood. In this moment, “the townspeople transcend their understanding of Bianca as a plastic sex doll, and view her as a full-fledged member of the community”. Miceli observes that it is the failure of communities to accept certain forms of difference and provide appropriate supports that is most harmful to disabled people, and that in reality, this “remains a significant issue that negatively impacts quality of life”.

In her discussion of Kate Ellis’s new monograph, *Disability and Popular Culture: Focusing Passion, Creating Community and Expressing Defiance*, Hilary Martin picks up many of Miceli’s concerns, pointing to how the representational politics inherent in popular culture may be enabling or disabling for many people. Martin addresses popular notions of beauty and shows how Ellis’s book engages in the work of “unpacking the beauty myth in relation to normality and identifying where disability fits in this assessment”. Focusing on Ellis’ discussion of texts produced by disabled people themselves – including blogs and social media campaigns – Martin explains that “these avenues are an effective means for social change”; indeed, taking control of the means of representation allows these disabled authors to produce counter-narratives which help challenge the many ableist values found in popular culture.

Returning to dominant representations of disability, Sharon Caldwell’s review of Carla’s Rice’s *Becoming Woman: The Embodied Self in Image Culture* looks at beauty and media culture. Caldwell shows how Rice applies the insights of Kristeva as well as approaches to storytelling in order to address the limitations in current scholarship and

to better account for “the women missing from these stories – those with diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and bodily experiences”. Caldwell’s review interprets how women with disabilities are reconfigured as objects of both control and self-control, but as she points out, Rice’s new book includes insight into other embodied experiences, including “important discussions about the ways that differences in race, size, and sexuality are experienced”.

As Caldwell’s review suggests, there are multiple perspectives to which we must collectively attend, if we are to account for the exclusionary nature of much of the work that has emerged from critical disability traditions. What the essays in this volume share, however, is their desire to critically question the limits of normative structures and frameworks, within disability studies and within broader society. Each author speaks to her particular values and concerns, and these experiences and priorities are in no way universal. There are many voices missing from this collection, and it is hoped that experiences of other contexts and embodied differences will enrich future volumes. This is also work which can be fruitfully achieved in methodologically diverse ways, incorporating arts-based and other approaches.

With these invitations, absences, and other possibilities in mind, we hope that you that you will enjoy Volume 7 and consider contributing to the growing collection of work hosted by CDD, when the call for papers for Volume 8 is launched this Fall!

Natalie Spagnuolo, Managerial Editor

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