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Pathologizing Indigeneity in the Caledonia “Crisis”

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Abstract

Disability studies scholarship in Canada continues to place the experiences, identities and embodiments of Indigenous peoples in places of marginality. This paper offers to correct this by centralizing land struggles and the activism done by Indigenous peoples in Caledonia, Ontario. The author will critically analyze texts in order to show how the news media reflects “Canadian” mythologies to its audience when discussing the Caledonia “crisis” in 2006 – 2007. This paper examines the Canadian news media’s use of disability tropes as it imbricates disability with Indigeneity. This imbrication acts as a tool to pathologize Indigenous peoples and ensure that settler colonialism remains immune to scrutiny. By connecting Indigenous peoples to pathology, settlers can continue to understand themselves as the rightful inhabitants and owners of Turtle Island in Caledonia. This paper offers a new theoretical standpoint within disability studies scholarship, one which centralizes decolonization so as to bring discursive constructions of Indigeneity and disability into conversation with each other.

Key Words

Caledonia, Indigenous, Pathology, Settler, Protest

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Pathologizing Indigeneity in the Caledonia “Crisis”

Introduction

There is little disability studies scholarship that addresses the imbrication of Indigeneity and disability in Canada.¹ In this essay, I hope to offer some means of addressing this oversight. The terrain of illness and disability as it is mapped onto Indigenous peoples in Canada continues to operate under the banner of Western biomedicine (Waldram, Herring, & Young, 2006). Disabilities Indigenous peoples experience are individualized and pathologized on/in their bodies (Razack, 2011; Cowlshaw, 2003). Razack (2011) and Morgensen (2010) borrow from Mbembe’s (2003) necropolitics and write that Indigenous peoples are understood by settlers to be already dead and therefore beyond receiving biomedical intervention. Lawrence and Dua (2005) suggest that settlers are both white and people of colour with the understanding that settlers, as Europeans, descendents of slaves, people in the diaspora, migrants and refugees, occupy different relationships to the land. Notwithstanding their typically divergent sociopolitical and geographical locations, settlers (of colour and white) continue to participate in projects of settlement on Indigenous territory (Haig-Brown, 2009; Lawrence and Dua, 2005).

In white settler Australia, Meekosha (2004) argues that the theoretical approach of post-colonialism within disability studies can account for the disabling conditions experienced by Indigenous peoples. In the context of the Canadian nation-state, which was founded on European conquest of Indigenous territories (Razack, 2002a; Wolf, 1999), I want to move beyond a post-

¹ For more on the interconnection between Aboriginality and disability see: Demas (2009) on the interconnections between being Aboriginal, female-identified and disabled; Miller (2009) on the interconnection between Aboriginality and sign language; and Menzies and Palys (2006) on the historical psychiatrization of Aboriginal peoples.

colonial analysis. A post-colonial framework does not account for *ongoing* colonialism experienced by Indigenous peoples (Driskill, 2010; Smith, 1999). As a settler nation, Canada historically has and continues to evict and/or forcibly assimilate Indigenous peoples through regimes of identity formation like the *Indian Act* (Lawrence, 2003); physical and sexual abuse experienced in residential schools (Haig-Brown, 2006); and assimilating Indigenous peoples onto reserves (LeRat & Ungar, 2005). Yet there are also less apparent means of assimilation and coercive identity-formation, such as those distilled in the June 11, 2008 “Canada’s Day of Apology” made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to residential school survivors. Settlers in Canada are typically unwilling to critically engage with their own positions *as* settlers (Schick and St. Denis, 2005). As Milley (2009:np) writes, “Canadian national narratives cast the blame and responsibility for racism and colonialism on the shoulders of a few “bad” white people”.

Understanding Canada as a “white settler society” (Razack, 2002a), I utilize a mixed theoretical approach to include decolonization and disability studies to engage with the entanglement of Indigeneity and disability. Decolonization can be defined as the “ongoing, radical resistance against colonialism that includes struggles for land, redress, self-determination, healing historical trauma, cultural continuance, and reconciliation” (Driskill, 2010: 69). A disability studies approach “locates disability in the midst of physical and cultural environments and does not reproduce the belief that disability is simply in impaired bodies” and minds (Titchkosky and Aubrecht, 2009:179). Indeed, as Snyder and Mitchell (2006) suggest, disability studies contributes to a reformation and remaking of disability in social, legal, scientific and medical contexts, which typically associate disability with abnormalcy. Disability studies interrogate the taken-for-granted relations that have come to construct disability through social and cultural surroundings (Titchkosky and Michalko, 2009).

The incorporation of these two theoretical standpoints utilizes the critical scholarship within disability studies and recognizes settler colonial power structures to make observable Indigeneity, which is typically underrepresented within academia, including the field of disability studies. This paper asks: 1) How does the violence of settler colonialism remain immune to scrutiny through the pathologization of Indigenous peoples? 2) How does disability manifest in the Canadian news media's depictions of the Caledonia "crisis"?

By addressing these two questions the imbrication of disability and Indigeneity will be made observable. In this way, this paper aims to show how the violent use of disability tropes continues to mark Indigenous peoples as abnormal, as well as marginalize people for whom psychiatric labels matter. Ultimately, by producing² Indigenous peoples as disruptive, abnormal, and pathologized due to their protesting, settlers can continue to understand themselves as rightful owners of Indigenous territory. Exposing the ableism in the Canadian news media serves to illustrate how disability tropes are used to further the colonization process of Indigenous peoples and their land, and continue to silence Indigenous rights, and Indigenous peoples with disabilities.

As I begin, I want to clarify some of my terminology. In this essay, I have chosen to use the term Indigenous, rather than Aboriginal, because the term Indigenous signals belonging and connection to land. Anderson (2007: 144) suggests that "Indigenous status [...] is predicated upon – a history of colonization and dispossession, with consequent resistance and adaptation to invaders and settlers". Aboriginal as an identity category has been created by the colonial Canadian state as an ideological and legal assimilative category to construct Indigenous peoples

² The word "produce" is used within this paper similarly to "social construction": defined as a process of making meaning of particular phenomena through ideas, discourses and cultural representations. Disability in this case becomes "socially constructed" within dominant discourses in Canadian news media, which project Indigenous peoples as disruptive, abnormal, and pathology.

as *Indians* (Alfred, 2005). Also, when I write about “disability tropes” in this essay, I refer to all the ways that disability is used in order to render bodies and minds “excessive, insufficient, or inappropriate on the basis of their impairments (actual or perceived)” (Snyder and Mitchell, 2006:178). Disability tropes will be engaged with to evoke the seemingly everyday and ordinary manifestations of disability that need to be unsettled, since it is here where disability and Indigeneity make new meanings as they are read together differently.

I now turn to one particular example in order to expose the workings of settler colonialism today through the production of tropes that situate Indigenous peoples as disruptive, abnormal, and pathologized in the Canadian news media. In particular, the Caledonia “crisis” from 2006 – 2007 lends itself to critical inquiry since the manifestations of disability surrounding ownership of land evokes both ableism and settler colonialism.

Protests in Caledonia, Ontario: History and Context

In Caledonia, Ontario, the *Douglas Creek Estates* (DCE) housing development was set to begin its construction on February 28th, 2006 (Vyce, 2010; Milley, 2009). The housing development sparked fury in the Indigenous population living in Caledonia and the nearby Six Nations reserve, who understood themselves as inhabitants of that particular allotment of land. Indigenous peoples took it upon themselves to protest the housing development and the 200-year old treaty that connects Six Nations peoples to that land (Vyce, 2010; Milley, 2009). In order to combat the construction of the DCE, approximately two-dozen Indigenous peoples peacefully protested the housing development (Vyce, 2010). Milley (2009) argues that the Caledonia residents perceived Indigenous peoples to be “criminal and terrorists,” with no real or concrete understanding as to why the activism was happening. Instead, residents viewed it as an inconvenience.

The protests in Caledonia, Ontario demonstrate white settler narratives of Indigenous peoples as violent, irrational and pre-modern. Vyce (2010) suggests Caledonia is not the only example of Indigenous peoples speaking back to the Canadian state and writes, “across Canada [Indigenous peoples] have been actively engaged in counter-colonial forms of political struggle” (p. 1). But what is the Caledonia “crisis?” Why did Indigenous peoples start to riot and speak back to settlers about their claims to Turtle Island?

In March 2006, *Henco Industries* wanted to see the DCE housing project completed and applied for an injunction ordering all protestors off the housing development property by March 9th, 2006 (Vyce, 2010). Indigenous peoples decided not to vacate the DCE and refused to comply with the court order (Vyce, 2010). On April 20th, 2006 “two hundred [*Ontario Provincial Police* (OPP)] officers conducted a pre-dawn raid on the DCE in an attempt to enforce the court injunction and to forcibly remove protestors from the disputed land” (Vyce, 2010: 9). Nine Indigenous peoples were arrested for trespassing. Hundreds of Indigenous peoples came from the Six Nations reserve in order to demonstrate their *own* connection to Turtle Island, encouraging the OPP to back down and retreat from the DCE (Vyce, 2010). Indigenous peoples saw themselves as peaceful protesters who were trying to have the federal government understand and recognize the 200-year old treaty they agreed upon at settler-contact. They were trying to demonstrate that the land the DCE was trying to develop on was Indigenous territory.

The OPP tried to forcefully stop Indigenous peoples from peacefully protesting and some Indigenous peoples found ways to develop stronger tactics to show the federal government and Caledonia settlers that their land claims needed to be recognized and respected. Indigenous protesters barricaded major access routes in and around Caledonia for a six-week period. Blocking a VIA railway line and engaging in other forms of activism (Vyce, 2010) was

portrayed by Canadian news media as reckless and dangerous. Interviewee 3 in Vyce (2010: 28) commented on the protests in Caledonia:

Don't stop me from picking up my kid from school...[S]topping the people is not going to make us more sympathetic to your cause. It's just going to annoy people... There's going to be certain factions who say, I agree with what you're doing...but the overwhelming faction are going to say, you're screwing up my day, get off the road and go home... Write a letter.

Described as “screwing up,” “annoying” and “stopping” childcare or other routines, Indigenous protesters were constructed as irrational and abnormal for their behaviours.

The protests by Indigenous peoples disrupt the notion that Canada has always been and continues to be a free and democratic nation by making observable the land injustices in Caledonia, Ontario. Schick and St. Denis (2005: 302) state: “In popular imagery, Canada is constructed as generous and tolerant by “giving away” land to white settlers. The image is necessary to cover over and forget that the land was taken by coercive means through a process that depended on inferiorizing and racializing [Indigenous] people[s]” .

In contrast, the stories told in the Canadian news media can be read as normative representations of “problem” Indians (LaRocque, 1993) and their disturbing and violent behaviours. They can alternatively be examined through textual analysis to show how disability tropes constitute Indigenous issues and peoples as sheer limit (Titchkosky, 2007) which manages to construct Indigenous peoples as problems of a pathological bent. It is important, then, to engage in a critical conversation with Canadian news media as a cultural process whereby Eurocentric understandings of being in the world regarding both Indigenous identities and conceptualizations of disability are produced and reproduced.

On July 6th, 2011 the Ontario government agreed to pay Caledonia settlers and business owners a total of 20 million dollars for the damages caused by the protests (Edwards and Talaga,

2011). Yet this reimbursement received by Caledonia settlers furthers the disavowal of Indigenous treaty rights and access to Indigenous territory, thus continuing settler colonial violence. Below, through my analysis of news media texts, I will attempt to chart some of the ways that Indigenous peoples were represented from the first day of non-violent protest in 2006, up until this seeming “conclusion” in 2011.

Text as Method, Method as Text

Texts can be described as “popular texts readily available to literate consumers of mass media, that is, mainstream news papers, magazines, and government documents generated for general public use or consumption” (Titchkosky, 2007: 26). Texts can be used to “articulate our local doings to the translocally organized forms that coordinate our consciousness” (Smith, 2006: 66). Social and cultural texts, like those found in the news media in Canada, reflect and shape the meaning of both disability and Indigeneity to their audiences. By reading Canadian news media as a social text, Titchkosky (2007: 25) suggests that disability can be addressed as a “socially oriented activity of accomplishing meaning” . These meanings from the media typically homogenize a sense of belonging or “Canadian” subjectivity through dominant representations and mythologies reflected in everyday encounters with the news (Jiwani, 2005).

News media organize how subjects should interact with their everyday lives and normalize that very interaction through taken-for-granted cultural practices. It is the everyday, mundane, assumptive encounters with Canadian news media that need to be interrogated to show how disability is and is not being written about. I utilize Titchkosky (2007) who is provoked by Grosz’ (2003: 22) iteration of “...how to think, write, and read differently...” . Titchkosky (2007: 7) writes,

Words on disability are themselves a doing, are themselves a way of knowing; such words reside among us and help to make our fate as embodied beings. From this comes the need to stay in touch with common and ordinary expressions of disability, and to uncover the type of people and type of world those expressions presuppose.

Titchkosky (2007) suggests that disability is made to mean many things through the use of divergent social and cultural texts and thus it is important to pay particular attention to the use of words and narratives to describe and make disability (dis)appear in the everyday. Yet, as Titchkosky (2007) argues, disability cannot be represented *alone*, it too manifests among people through their diverse embodied subjectivities of gender, race, colonialism, sexuality, class, etc. Titchkosky (2007) suggests that the act of reading and writing disability allows for a more nuanced analysis that moves away from simple identifications. By reading between the lines and against the grain, preconceived notions of disability and Indigeneity in the Canadian news media can be troubled.

Reading Canadian news media – *CBC News*, *Maclean's Magazine*, and *Global News* – with a national and international scope, ableism and settler colonialism manifest in everyday sociocultural interactions to reproduce narratives of “problem” Indigenous peoples that allow settlers to continue living on Indigenous territories. Cultural texts need to be engaged with since it is these narratives, which individualize disability as “inability, lack, and loss” (Titchkosky, 2007, p. 8); as something that only happens *to* some people. Cultural texts act to re/present Indigenous peoples as disruptive to the Canadian national mythology. Within the Canadian mythology of multiculturalism, Indigenous peoples are typically represented as another “racial minority” among many (Lawrence and Dua, 2005). This perception continues to marginalize ongoing land claims, and to divert attention from conquest and settler colonial violence (Lawrence and Dua, 2005; Schick and St. Denis, 2005). There is a paradoxical relationship within Canadian news media, wherein abnormalcy, irrationality and pathology are read *in* the

Canadian news media about activism, protest and violence. Disability tropes are used to justify the ongoing naturalization of Indigenous peoples as belonging to “spaces of prostitution, crime, sex, and violence” (Razack, 2002b:143). As Titchkosky (2007: 39) suggests, by reading disability in social texts differently, processes of normalization can be questioned since certain peoples are cast as “not normal, different, [and] *out of the ordinary*” (emphasis added).

I turn now to a consideration of what this disruption appears like in the particular textual manifestations of the Caledonia “crisis.” I also examine how Canadian news media representations that pathologize this disruption reconstitute the national Canadian mythology as normal and render Indigenous peoples as disturbingly out of the ordinary. I will be reading disability differently to show how disability manifests through depictions of Indigenous peoples in Caledonia, Ontario, to devalue and disavow both disability and Indigeneity.

Textualizing Disability/Indigeneity

In Caledonia news media reports, Indigenous peoples are overtly represented as “violent,” “dangerous,” “uncontrollable,” “criminal,” “abnormal,” “disruptions,” “problems,” “irrational,” and “deviant” (Macleans.ca staff, 2007; “Police Arrest,” 2007; “Aboriginal protesters,” 2006; CanWest News Service, 2006; “Caledonia suspects,” 2006; Krauss, 2006; and “Rally organizer,” 2006). Indigenous peoples are represented in the Canadian news media as “problems” where their claims to sovereignty and rights to land are belittled. Disability tropes are one powerful way that this occurs. Consider the following news media depictions of the Caledonia “crisis” – *Ontario considers mediator for native land dispute* May 3rd (“Ontario considers,” 2007), *Caledonia suspects may be holed up on reserve* June 12th (“Caledonia

suspects,” 2006), and *Caledonia protests will lead to violence, politicians warn* October 11th (CanWest News Service, 2006).

1. “Meanwhile, Haldimand County Mayor Marie Trainer said federal and provincial governments must be reminded Caledonia is "still hurting." People can't enjoy their backyards since many back on to the occupied land, she said, adding that some businesses are losing up to \$50,000 a month. "They need some help," Trainer said. "The people of Caledonia need **normalcy** back in their lives” (Macleans.ca staff, 2007);
2. “The Haudenosaunee are a people of **peace and do not condone violence** of any form. Our prayers and concern are with those who were injured during the outbreaks today. A peaceful co-existence with our neighbours and the safety of all remain at the paramount of our concerns” (“Caledonia suspects,” 2006);
3. “Former Ontario premier David Peterson, appointed by the province to negotiate an end to the land dispute, suggested last month the planned march is the work of wackos. There are a lot of **wackos** in society” (CanWest News Service, 2006); and
4. “You’re **screwing up my day**, get off the road and go home” (Interviewee 3 in Vyce, 2010:28).

In the texts above, disability may not appear as obvious as the overt belittling representations of Indigenous peoples offered. Instead, disability manifests to show how a normal and natural Canadian culture should be imagined. The ordinary, seemingly everyday manifestations of disability in Canadian news media may not appear as disability tropes to the reader at first glance. As Titchkosky (2011: 74) suggests, “The mundane efficacy of the merely say-able allows such sayings to slip past individuality. Indeed, speakers of the say-able are perhaps better regarded as a conduit of types of cultural understanding – an understanding that the say-able is where cultural understandings reside” . These four ordinary quotations will be critically engaged with to show how abnormalcy, irrationality and pathology orient readers to understand disability as it is mapped onto Indigenous bodies and minds. Clearly these ordinary narratives are doing a normalizing work to produce Indigenous peoples as “problems” of a pathological bent. Here I

focus on these particular narratives, what narratives *do*, how readers of Canadian news media typically interact with these narratives and how disability comes to appear in these narratives.

In the first quotation the Caledonia “crisis” is made present through abnormalcy and its presence is unwanted. Caledonia residents require normalcy and it evokes settlers as rightful inhabitants of the land. Normalcy is needed to control, regulate and sanitize the protesting. To construct Caledonia as a place of normalcy requires settlers to continually want and desire normalcy in their lives. Whether knowingly, or unknowingly, settlers continue to disavow Indigenous activism by requiring normalcy. This contributes to the continual elimination and extinction of Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2008). By being political and raising awareness about ongoing colonization and inequitable land claims, Indigenous peoples’ bodies and minds are understood to be abnormal. The “routines” of hundreds of years of Indigenous habitation are subordinated to the “normal routines” of the settlers. By needing normalcy in Caledonia, settlers can ignore the ongoing violence done to Indigenous peoples. Depicting Indigenous peoples as “screwing” with normalcy and routine (like childcare) pathologizes the Caledonia “crisis” and Indigenous peoples.

Disability tropes are evoked through the need for normalcy in the lives of Caledonia residents. The conditions in which the Caledonia “crisis” is happening are disabling conditions, which are evoked through irrationality, violence, and abnormality. These conceptions of disability manifest as lack (Titchkosky, 2007). The Indigenous peoples’ activism in Caledonia required settlers to engage with the inequitable conditions that pathologize Indigenous peoples, and thus produce disability. Abnormalcy and normalcy work to produce one another. To bring normalcy into consciousness also does the same to abnormalcy. By placing Indigenous peoples into the margins through their pathology – understanding them as disabled – Caledonia residents

can remain in a peaceful state of normalcy and actively produce the activism as a disruption to settlers' everyday. By needing normalcy, disability becomes unwanted and undesirable. It is the present absences and absent presences of disability that are evoked in the iteration of normalcy. To desire normalcy is to disavow abnormalcy. To remove abnormalcy from the physical space of Caledonia suggests that disruption is unwanted and undesirable and thus creates a facade of normalcy that continues to devalue and marginalize Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and land.

Producing who is desirable and undesirable in Caledonia is evoked in quotation two. This quotation speaks to the above analysis, which situates irrationality and pathology onto certain Indigenous bodies and minds. In particular, this quotation re/presents the rational Indigenous peoples as docile and willing to cooperate with settlers. The violent, irrational, and uncontrollable Indigenous peoples in Caledonia are evicted from their Indigeneity and from their reason due to their activism. Pathology comes to mark *a few* Indigenous peoples as “problems,” suggesting that the rest of the Indigenous peoples are normal, and therefore, not disabled. Through this quotation, Caledonia becomes an isolated site where Indigenous peoples protesting do not represent all of the Indigenous populations in Canada.

Disability in this case is produced, once again, as something that is undesirable. If the representations of Indigenous peoples are constructed as abnormal and violent, their connections to land and their desire for treaties to be honored will be cast as illegitimate. Disability becomes produced as something and/or someone who is unwanted. In not wanting disability, in producing it as “abject,” what is being done *to* disability? Kristeva (1982: 4) describes the abject as “what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect boards, positions, rules.” Disability becomes a *thing* used to show how settlers and Indigenous people alike *need* to be understood as

normal. Abnormalcy is evoked in a few people who cannot and will not contain or control their values, beliefs and bodies. Disability is used to show how normalcy is needed and wanted in Caledonia. This normalcy is excavated by an ongoing settler colonial project that requires Indigenous people to evict their Indigeneity from their bodies. To echo Razack (2011), Indigeneity becomes pathology.

Indigenous peoples are pathologized in the third quotation as “wackos” (CanWest News Service, 2006). Indigenous peoples are rendered pathological through their irrational and uncontrollable behaviours as they riot to defend and honour their Indigenous territory. “Wacko” in the context of the Caledonia “crisis” is used as a pathologizing trope to define Indigenous peoples as weird, different and irrational. The pathologizing trope “wacko” specifically works to delegitimize the Indigenous peoples’ activism and to mark Indigenous peoples as disabled. By producing Indigenous peoples as crazy, where “crazy” serves as an unquestioned and unquestionable way to dismiss difference, their continued activism around access to land and human rights is constructed as pathology. The Indigenous mind becomes a pathologized mind. Therefore, settlers use pathologizing tropes in order to produce Indigenous peoples as defective and reckless and in turn construct settlers as rightful inhabitants and owners of the land.

If the commonsense belief in pathology as a legitimately excluded and delegitimized person is suspended, the way pathology is used to transform politics into personal problems is made observable. In turn, it becomes apparent how Indigenous people as a whole are depicted as problems.

Producing the Pathologized Indian and the Rational Settler Subject

Irrationalizing claims to land and bodily control is a central theme in the Caledonia “crisis” within the Canadian news media. Disability is made to enter as that which can produce

Indigenous peoples as pathological – “mad,” irrational and “crazy.” Wilderson (2010) finds a relevant connection to Indigeneity and madness when discussing an encounter with a Native American man as he was attending university. Wilderson (2010: 1) writes “On the ground in front of him was an upside-down hat and a sign informing pedestrians that here they could settle the “Land Lease Accounts” that they had neglected to settle all of their lives. He too, was ‘crazy’” . The Native American man is calling upon settlers to take responsibility for their colonization of Indigenous territory and by doing so is perceived by onlookers (and by Wilderson?) as “crazy.” Leaving the politics of recognition aside, the Native American is pathologized as “crazy” by ensuring that settler colonialism enters into the consciousness of settlers he encounters. Yet, the disabling trope of “crazy” is put to work here to devalue and marginalize the Native American man who is speaking about land. In bringing land and conquest into the consciousness of settlers, the Native American man is understood to be “mad.” Madness is constructed to be irrationality and much is stripped from anyone’s historical connection to the land. “Mad” -- as an unquestioned bad state of affairs -- is thus both produced as such and used as such to delegitimize any form of questioning regarding *whose land it really is*.

Wilderson (2010: 2) continues, “Thus, [the Native American man] would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world but the world itself to account, and to account for [him] no less!”. When Indigenous people speak out against settler colonialism, why is it that their actions are understood as being “crazy?” In Caledonia, the term “wacko” is used to belittle the activism and rioting done by Indigenous peoples. “Crazy” or “wacko” also does a particular form of work, as Wilderson (2010) suggests when pathologizing terms are used to depict Indigenous peoples, Indigeneity is brought into consciousness. “Crazy” as an identity marker produces certain people labeled with “mental illness” or “psychiatric diagnoses” as “ill.”

By using “crazy,” pathology is naturalized in/on the body and does not take into account the normalizing conditions and everyday cultural representations that produce Indigenous peoples as different in North America.

“Crazy” also creates division between rationality and irrationality, those who can blend into regimes of normalcy, that is, regulate their own bodies and minds, can pass as normal. “Crazy” then, is a production of a deviation from bodily control within a Eurocentric ideology that associates rationality and reason with those who can come to control and regulate their bodies and minds. As Fernando (2003) argues, pathology is also written on non-Eurocentric peoples, traditions and beliefs on a global scale. Indigenous and colonized peoples’ cultural ways of knowing and healing are understood as inferior and abnormal to Eurocentric forms of knowledge and healing.

By casting Indigenous peoples as pathology, settlers can continue to conceptualize Canada as a nation with no genocidal past. Therefore, land claims are merely a result of Indigenous pathology, for who else wants to “screw” with normalcy? The pathologization of Indigenous peoples *cannot* and *will not* be understood a result of settler colonialism. Thus, locating pathology in the bodies and minds of Indigenous peoples renders their behaviours, actions and discussions around land disingenuous.

Razack (2011) writes about the disavowal of colonial violence in the medicalization of the deaths of Indigenous men in police custody in British Columbia. Razack (2011: 21) addresses the imbrication of disability and Indigeneity and writes “Aboriginality disturbs, as does disability, and Aboriginality reminds settlers of something they know but would rather not, and indeed cannot know if they are to continue a colonial relationship.” As Razack (2011) suggests, Indigenous bodies and minds are pathologized and cannot be understood as having the

ability to proclaim sovereignty and self-determination. The pathologization of Indigenous peoples is enacted through multiple regimes of violence: through the ability to cast Indigenous peoples as abnormal, misrecognizing Indigenous claims to land, and the use of disability tropes that place people with disabilities within places of marginality and lack. Therefore, echoing Razack (2011; 2002b) and Edmonds (2010), Indigenous peoples are assumed to naturally belong to spaces of pathology.

The disability tropes used within the Caledonia news media places settlers into positions of power over Indigenous peoples, where they can understand themselves as rightful owners of the land. While Cowlshaw (2003: 119) does not explicitly speak to issues of disability, she does speak to the relationship between activism and violence: “The riot defines the good liberal citizen’s internalization of the legal notion that violent settlement of disputes is wrong because it breaches the principles of rationality and purpose.” Therefore, Indigenous peoples are constructed as irrational and dangerous due to the perceived violence they are engaged in against the DCEs in Caledonia, Ontario. As a result, pathology is pinned onto Indigenous bodies and minds. Conversely, through the use of disability tropes settlers are understood to be rational, legitimizing the violence done to Indigenous peoples, cultures and lands.

Whether the violence done by Indigenous peoples was justifiable or extreme, that is not a discussion I want to have. Instead, the representations of Indigenous activism in the Canadian news media in the Caledonia “crisis” lends itself to inquiry, precisely through the collision between discursive constructions of Indigeneity, pathology and violence. Violence is typically acceptable when the aim is to control, scare and regulate (Cowlshaw, 2003). The continual violence done by settlers is rationalized as a means of control and regulation. Here volatile,

disabled, and pathologized bodies and minds “can also seem dangerous because they are perceived as out of control” (Garland-Thomson, 1997: 37).

Disability Studies in Canada: Why Indigeneity Matters

In the Caledonia “crisis” Canadian disability studies makes observable the ableism and settler colonialism in everyday interactions with culture (e.g. Canadian news media). In situating disability in social and cultural relationships, McGuire (2010: np) writes “disability marks different bodies in different and relational ways; systems of ableism come into contact with racialized bodies, queer bodies, classed bodies, gendered bodies, bodies that have already been touched by other (and perhaps multiple) systems of oppression.” As McGuire (2010) suggests, it is the moments of intersection that show how disability is being evoked as pathology in the Caledonia crisis to mark Indigenous activism and thus a people irrational and abnormal. Specifically, in the Caledonia “crisis” in 2006 – 2007 both disability and Indigeneity are Othered in order for settlers on Indigenous territory to conceive of themselves as rightful inhabitants and owners of that land. Decolonial disability studies makes observable the ways in which abelist tropes are used within the Canadian news media, tropes that would typically be unquestioned in the everyday. By engaging with a decolonial disability studies perspective, scholars can challenge the on-going disenfranchisement and stigmatization of Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and access to land in Canada, and on a global scale

This paper has argued that cultural texts come to produce many meanings of ableism and settler colonialism, and in the case of the Caledonia “crisis” come to reproduce commonsense understandings of Indigenous peoples’ bodies and minds as being in a perpetual state of abnormalcy. By using disability tropes to disavow Indigenous peoples, disability is understood and reproduced as lack (Titchkosky, 2007). By engaging with seemingly everyday encounters

with Indigenous peoples' activism and violence, disability and pathology can be read within social and cultural texts, as being culturally produced and thus, disability can be engaged with and thought through differently.

My recommendations for doing decolonial disability studies are twofold. Firstly, disability studies scholars must move beyond identity politics in order to engage with and trouble race, conceptualizations of nation, and colonialism as they are imbricated with disability. Erevelles and Minear (2010: 132) write in the context of the USA, but their work also relates to the context of Canada where race has been associated with disability in order to justify “the brutality of slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism.” In order to engage with Indigeneity, settlers must “think about matters of restitution, their own decolonization, and what it might mean to transform their complicity in ongoing dispossession” (Cannon, 2011: np). By taking responsibility for settler colonialism within disability studies scholarship, settlers doing work within disability studies can engage in coalition building with Indigenous scholars and communities to amend the paucity of literature that engages with Indigeneity and disability. Disability studies scholars and activists can challenge the application of disability stigma – the use of pathology – to show how colonial oppression and ableism still exists within Canada.

Secondly, disability scholars can critically engage with the lived realities of Indigenous peoples with disabilities. There is a dearth of critical disability studies scholarship engaging with Indigeneity directly, which continues to present Indigenous peoples with disabilities as unworthy of inquiry. Therefore, by understanding that Indigeneity as pathology is an on-going production in Canada (Razack, 2011), disability studies scholars can theorize *with* Indigenous peoples with disabilities to make observable Indigenous experience in disability studies scholarship. By addressing the imbrication of disability and Indigeneity, disability studies

scholars might ensure that they recognize and positively resituate the experiences of Indigenous peoples with disabilities. Therefore, by utilizing a decolonial disability studies approach, disability studies scholars and activists can engage in critical inquiry that centralizes ongoing settler colonialism experienced and resistance strategies adopted by Indigenous peoples with or without disabilities.

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