On Becoming 'White' Through Ethnographic Fieldwork in Ghana: Are Ideas Imperial by Course?

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Abstract

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Ghana, and the growing number of studies on "sanism" (or psychiatric oppression), this paper revisits outstanding methodological concerns around privilege and power, body and space, language and the liminality of social categories, as a platform to reconsider the insider/outsider debate. It ponders openly, and hopefully collectively, the implications of expanding research interests, so, too, the very circulation of ideas, against what the author is analytically describing as the experience of becoming "White." The article focuses on questions that fieldwork exposed about researcher identity and "belonging," not least the risk of essentialism. In effect, it seeks to demonstrate the ethical and epistemological dilemmas that arise from giving account, toward a more sensitive way in academia, relationship building, and solidarity work—where, when, how, or whether, critical ethnography can relinquish, reimagine, or altogether transform its dialectical tensions without undermining ends of resistance?

Keywords

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Introduction

In the wake of my return from ethnographic fieldwork in Ghana, I seized every opportunity to discuss my research findings, albeit preliminary and in the most careful strokes. It would follow worthwhile, so early into organization and analysis, to elicit feedback, otherwise brainstorm, that which I had been considering on the curious emergence of "Mad" activism some eleven thousand kilometers away from the unceded Coast Salish territories that I troublingly occupy, even call "home" or Vancouver, Canada. But the more I teased apart the data, the more I reflected on my experiences, the more I engaged with the journey and the qualitative interviews that I had conducted, the more I became consumed by such outstanding methodological concerns as privilege and power, body and space, political and ethical responsibility, indeed, "the very existence of ethnography as an imperial endeavor" (Clair, 2012: 19). The thoughts have grown to rage—my head so full, spiraling tirelessly with frustration, anxiety, often resentment, or the worse being despair (and its miscreant twin on integrity). There has simply been no way for me to "bracket" these emotions for later, as encouraged to do, and focus on transforming the field to text, however beyond these lines. They have shifted my thinking too radically. They are my ethnography—Ghana, the precursor.

Of particular interest have been "the rhetorical force of culturalist arguments" (Crosson, 2014: 22) and their translation into the sharply bounded dichotomies of insider or outsider. "The issue of researcher membership in the group or area being studied" is not a new phenomenon, of course (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009: 55). In 1972, American sociologist Robert Merton framed the debate along the lines of a conflict or disjuncture in what German philosopher Martin Heidegger had previously described as the "public interpretation of reality" (cf. Kusow, 2003: 592), with the adequacies of "insider" standpoint thwarted on account of vested loyalties and those of an "outsider" falling peril to the classic image of a "neutral" field scholar, "just sitting around" (Pigg, 2013: 127), observing and recording, in effect, gazing—that passivity, perhaps lassitude, removed, decontextualized, ominously uncontested. Prefiguring the Combahee River Collective (1977) and intersectionality studies more explicitly, Merton (1972: 24) went on to point out that we occupy a "status set" at any given time insofar as he recognized the interactions of social markers within, between, or across one another. The postmodern circles of the 1980s brought "greater consciousness of situational identities and to the perception of relative power" (Angrosino, 2005: 734). This has continued to put much emphasis on the importance to qualify oneself as researcher to the communities of study, furthermore to reflect upon positionality over the research process and, by extension, the dynamic or collaborative nature of the field, including that which may be implied for "Truth" claims, representation, authorship, and that ethnographic trademark of "culture" (Coffey, 1999).

The concern that I raise is the fundamental ramifications that insider/outsider bears on identity politics and (postmodernist) moves away from essentialism (or objectivity in any sense). I sift what I am analytically describing as the experience of becoming "White" to problematize researcher disclosure and belonging, if not the very circulation of ideas, in this age of unprecedented mobility, liminal roles, changing mediators, and shared resources. My intentions are not to undermine the value of reflexivity in the pursuit of knowledge, but rather grapple with its near impregnable grip now, a quarter-century later, over critical scholarship and the "constellations of meaning" (Young & Meneley, 2005: 1), nay, oppressive structures that have developed at the institutional level as a result. Ergo, I contend that our practice of insider/outsider relations is well contrary to the ideals of academic freedom and as much a

part of "the ugly politics of class, racism, colonialism, and sexism" (Young & Meneley, 2005: 1) upon which rests the notoriety of ethnography at the turn of the twentieth century. Buried within such preoccupations of researcher "identity" are concomitant struggles of power, themselves fraught in fragmented categories, be it guised, negotiated, flattened, or frozen. They heed inner contradictions, our rolling complicity in the violence of modernity (Nabbali, 2015), withal the technologies of difference qua project of eugenics (Joseph, 2015).

To be clear, this paper examines the questions that fieldwork exposed about my position as a researcher and on the ethics of knowledge production. I begin with the challenges already indicated which drew especial attention to the contrived, and deeply political, asymmetries carved into the academe (Young & Meneley, 2005: 7). Second, I canvass the feminist literatures that have sought to disrupt the "practices of power" (Smith, 1978) through the presentation of first-person accounts and the co-reflection of experience (Burstow, 2005). Here, I am referring to standpoint and intersectionality theories, toward a situated or embodied knowledge-building tradition. I argue, then, that the assumptions shaping these models efface the complexities of selves, like research, running altogether paradoxical to their entry. Significantly, they collude with dominance and operate as micro-aggressions (Badwall, 2016). At stake is both my own sense of understanding and ethnographic "currency" (read: epistemology).

A byproduct of the work is a brief and stylized overview of "sanism" (Perlin, 1992, 2000), sometimes used interchangeably with "mentalism" (Chamberlin, 1978), although the analogue has been cautioned of late (Fabris, 2012; Poole, et al., 2012). Terms much like other "isms," they describe tenuous prejudices against people whose minds are judged of pathos, "ill logic, reason, or wisdom" based on select interpretation of behaviour and attitudes (Fabris, 2012: ix), systematically sanitized "in an effort to prove that the golden road to recovery will reveal itself—but only if you take your medication and listen to your mental health care providers" (Costa et al., 2012: 89), the economic keystones of a multi-billion dollar psychopharmaceutical-industrial complex (Murray, 2009). To make a case against resources fuelling this single narrative (Badwall, 2016), therefore, to erode "spirit-breaking" and socially divisive tactics (Deegan, 1990), I conclude on the promise of Mad Pride. By no means exhaustive, I glean from history, happenings, but primarily, personal communications with veteran activists and other participants of the Canadian "scene," that Mad Pride is at once a bridge for resistance as well as a theoretical praxis for social movement research integral to decolonization and subsequent true democratization.

1.   Marking Maps, Charting Currents

From the outset of their revolutionary expositions, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (2007: 64) noted "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas." It would take more than 150 years for cultural critics of the charged atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s to turn to the task of unpacking the implications on our metropole, both on "our vehicle for thought (language) and the content of thought (concept)" (Eichler, 1988: 5). Ethnographers would follow these questions of power with concerns around the ethics of knowledge production (Armbruster, 2008: 4). Over the next decades, they would bare the heavy politics that had gone into making the field. Central lay the "borders that separate self from others and [researcher] from natives," no less their servitude or interconnectedness with wider systems of inequality (Young & Meneley, 2005: 7). Condemning earlier conventions of ethnographic fieldwork as "a form of Eurocentric ventriloquism" (Elie, 2006: 57), "wittingly or unwittingly, as smokescreen or apology" (Farmer, 2005: 26), even "handmaiden to

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imperialism" (Fergusson, 2007: 2), efforts would be staunch to advance the discipline as a "cultural project" (Geertz, 1973), always "situated, partial, local, temporal, and historically specific" (Coffey, 1999: 11).

The ethnographer as author(ity) remains perhaps the most flagrant discomfort with "objectivity," standing in harsh contrast to "the researched subject as a voiceless 'other'" (Armbruster, 2008: 7), "rhetorically apprehended" or else denied (Echeruo, 1993: 7). The power exerted in "capturing" the "ethnographic present," and its inherent risk of impressions forever netted to that time, cannot be gorged (Young, 2005: 212). There is no better example than in *The Invention of Africa*, first surmised by Congolese philosopher V. Y. Mudimbe (1988), and since rearticulated by American anthropologists Paulla A. Ebron (2002) and James Fergusson (2007), among others. Ethnography is one of many sites to have circumscribed the continent south of the Sahara Desert as a homogenous anomic whole (Fergusson, 2007: 2). An area of 48 countries, some 800 million people, and more than a thousand languages, or a sixth of the global linguistic diversity (Bowden, 2008), etched in popular imagination to "primitiveness" (Tomaselli, 2003: 869), "simple societies" (Fergusson, 2007: 2), "ethnic wars, famine, and unstable political regimes" (Ebron, 2002: 2), effectively, "a symbol of fear, evil, and death" (Mbeki, cf. Meredith, 2005: 677). "There is no description of Africa that does not involve destructive and mendacious functions" (Mbembé, 2001: 242). It is this blanketed, dystopian "Africa" that has been juxtaposed, or made antithesis, to other parts of the world in the politics of nation- (and subject-) "building," themselves, economic "reforms." Accordingly, and in cue with Edward Said's seminal critique of *Orientalism* (2003), the ethnography of Africa has held canonical to the development of the concept of "modernization" and ensuing (neo)colonialism, what is being attended as imperialism today, when State powers no longer seek presence but "how deeply they [can] alter people's perceptions," so, disrupt traditional modes of knowledge production, resulting in exploitation more or less from afar (Taiwo, 1993: 891).

Interrogating our "textual attitude" (Said, 2003), that academic imperative to textualize, has established across critical studies as the "Crisis of Representation" (Marcus & Fisher, 1986). This discursive cynicism, at the least skepticism, foregrounds the limitations of textualism, including the ways in which intertextuality can reduce as much as appropriate individuals like total communities (Tomaselli, 2003: 859). Ethnographers, for their part, have undercut authority with probes not just about the role of the researcher but also proper research relations. "You can't do ethnography without embodied attention to the symbols and practices of a lived space" (Madison, 2005: 401). It is, unvaryingly, the entering and active participation in that lived space, an "existential space" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007: 18), which sprout to meaning. Whatever representations stem are nothing short of "something made" by the researcher (Geertz, 1973: 15) and the flux or messiness "when your body must move and adjust to the rhythms, structures, rules, dangers, joys, and secrets" (Madison, 2005: 401) from "both within and outside of the academy" (Young & Meneley, 2005: 7).

To wit, the cover of texts has broken open. The spine, cracked. Fallen has the modernist tendency to protect "us" from having to deal with the (push)penning of "them" into the abyss (Tomaselli, 2003: 856). That us-them, self-other, researcher-subject/object/project has given way to a new kind of methodology—the valuing of perspectives (Rinaldi, 2013, para. 8), what "we might rename as mindfulness" (Pigg, 2013: 6), otherwise an improvisation (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007), if not rejection of the "methodologization" of fieldwork tout court (Casteñeda, 2006: 100). At crux is the principle of "dialogue," aspired from Indigenous pedagogics to deflate colonial modes of knowledge production and divest privileges as possible (Sefa Dei,

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2009; Tuhiwei Smith, 2012; Wane, 2008). An exchange in its right demands the commitment between a basal two, a trust and reciprocity, polyphonic by esteem. Furthermore, it provides opportunities to learn from, and learn to use, the "standpoints" not previously, easily, or legitimately textualized (Harding, 1991: 277). The stories handed down over generations have marked life for important teachings disembodied from—oft threatening to—the growing corpus of "science" since before the "Enlightenment" (Daly, 2005: 13). "Accounts of 'real' world do not, then, depend on a logic of 'discovery' but on a power-charged social relation of 'conversation'" (Haraway, 1988: 593). In dialogue so dwells the potential for resistance—the mobilization of voices, a sense of numbers, strength, inertia, collective memory, continuity, and ultimately, survival. Implicit is a saliency for "most First Nations peoples [who] traditionally come from an oral society" (Qwul'sih'yah'maht, 2005: 242). A similar inference can be drawn for diaspora (Berg, 2011) and the diasporic condition (i.e. refugees, exiles, migrant workers, trafficked victims, and other displaced or homeless peoples) which is said to "epitomiz[e] a postmodern existence of border crossings and life on the margins" (Conquergood, 2013: 89).

2. Stand. Point. Up and at 'Em!

"By granting that there are other vantage points in research, indeed by holding that the neutral vantage point was an illusion all along" (Rinaldi, 2013, para. 8), wryly likening it to "the god trick" (Haraway, 1988), critical feminists have been instrumental in responding to Marxian analyses of the ruling ideas with standpoint theory. The concerted works of Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith, for instance, have revaluated mainstream—no, "malestream" (1974: 7)—theoretical formulations as construed through abstraction, rather than accrued from situ and its intimacies. This has "generate[d] ideology, not knowledge" (Smith, 1990: 48), proving largely toothless to the (de)(re)organization of structure and agency. The "male subtext" has pervaded "the complex of discourses, scientific, technical, and cultural," such to intersect and direct, palpably stifle or dispossess, individual relations with the "everyday world," extending from administration to academia, employment, law, citizenry, as well as the media (Smith, 1990: 6). The "practices of power" have been conceptualized perhaps most cogently by Smith (1978) in the case of "K," a young woman whose lived experience was reiterated, even stripped of domestic abuse, to serve the language of "serious mental illness" and make actionable through "treatment" (read: professional intervention).

The breadth of psychiatry stands telling of the social and physical consequences of an echelon underwriting "in its endless incarnations and points of application" (Menzies, et al., 2005: 1). Spurious, it most certainly is to have a shifting array of diagnostic checkboxes, if not "based on value-laden [thus, discretionary] definitions" to assess (Ussher, 2005: 23)—most recently updated in 2013 with a fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* or DSM-V. Late-nineteenth century constructions of "hysteria," then "warranting" hysterectomies, found sole targets in women that cannot be understood as anything other than patriarchal, puritanical measures for transgressive (gendered) behaviour (Kempe, 1982; St-Amand & LeBlanc, 2013). Her "failure to be a 'paragon of domestic virtue'" (Labrum, 2005: 60), for seeking to marry outside of familial purview or for planning a career away from the home (Newnes, 1999), for becoming pregnant out-of-wedlock, for her "talkativeness and [related] violations of conventional feminine speech" (Labrum, 2005: 60), and for a short while in the twentieth century, for masturbation (Coppock & Hopton, 2000: 94), have all been "factors" in the process of "pathology," objectification, submission, committal, and control. The atrocities weighted against women have only exacerbated since the 1930s under the aegis

of "help" and the welfare state (Caplan, 2005: 118), dovetailing with the development of insulin-shock, electroshock, and psychosurgical procedures (Hudson, 1987).

In Canada, electroshock "therapy" continues to be administered on women two-to-three times more often than men (Arscott, 1999; Burstow, 2006), nearly half of whom are over the age of 60 years old, many above 80 alarmingly enough (Kroessler & Fogel, 1993; Weitz, 1997). It is also the "treatment" of choice for expecting mothers (Health Canada, cf. Shimrat, 2013); whereas British psychiatrist William Sargant and clinical director Eliot Slater dared recommending that psychosurgery, most widely in the form of prefrontal lobotomy, be used for those women "who may owe her illness [sic] to a psychopathic husband who cannot change and will not accept treatment" (cf. Showalter, 1985: 210). Their textbook, though dated to 1972, unabashedly renders the manifestation of social conflict, here, of unequivocal (acknowledged) violence, onto women as their personal responsibility. Worse, it can be forced upon them, notwithstanding testimonies of trauma, pain, and suffering (Chamberlin, 1978; Findlay, 1975; Millett, 1990; Shimrat, 1997). Lest the additional challenges and vulnerabilities akin to the destruction (err, mutilation) of brain tissues and connective nerve fibers (Andre, 2008; Anonymous, 1948; Bentall, 2009; Breggin, 2008; Moncrieff, 2008; Squire & Slater, 1983; Weitz, 2013). "That psychiatry … is the only profession allowed to incarcerate people who have committed no crime" (Burstow, 2013: 80), for which it has been shown to condemn women to compulsory admission at a higher rate than men (Sheppard, 1991), raises mammoth questions around civil liberties and equal rights.

The war on women does not stop at the doors of the wards. Oftentimes, it ends on the streets (Dear & Wolch, 1987) "with lifelong impairment and sometimes with horrifying accidental death" (Fabris, 2011: 18). The last four decades so have been marked as Canada increasingly pursues a neoliberal agenda and "general policy of deinstitutionalizing patients" (Morrow, et al., 2008: 1). Cost-containment, urban densification, its soaring market prices, uneven investment patterns, and constitutive disenfranchisement, what Noam Chomsky (1999) has poignantly quipped *Profit Over People*, have culminated to greet the displacement (said, "reintegration") of ex-psychiatric inpatients into the community with no viable options for supportive and affordable housing (Capponi, 1992; Finkler, 2014; Krupinski, 1995). Further, it has led to counter- (cum sanist) campaigns from neighborhood groups to the tune of "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY) (Teelucksingh, 2002). Such an environment has been ripe for the psychopharmaceutical revolution (Moynihan, et al., 2002; Shorter, 1997; Whitaker, 2010), complete with "a surge of 'outpatient committal' laws," which surfaced in Canada in 1993 and have been admonished by psychiatric survivor and scholar Erick Fabris (2011: 97) as "chemical incarcerations." This is when outpatients can be legally ordered to subject themselves to "'antipsychotic' (major tranquilizers), 'antianxietant' (minor tranquilizers), and 'antidepressant' drugs … whether or not they refuse medication or act aggressively," bolstering the power of psychiatry in society with the mandate of police to enforce these arrangements (Fabris, 2011: 4).

The entire project of "community mental health care" has been a "tragic farce," according to venerable antipsychiatry activist Irit Shimrat (2013: 144). The community so invoked in these ostensibly "progressive" models of "reform" is deemed "both means (the response of choice; the caring, restorative community) and end (membership, inclusion)," but operates as a "revolving door" to medical (individualistic) discourses of recovery (Morin, et al., 2005: 127-8). "To take charge of our bodies and minds [is to hone] the emphasis on private solutions [and] work against social change" (Morrow, 2013: 328). It is to imbue, not with patterns of repression, but biologism. "Norm violations" signal deviance just as they are the entry for

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psychiatry (Chesler, cf. Tomes, 1994: 354). That is, they are characteristically framed as a product of "faulty" brains, defective genes, or hormonal theories of "imbalances."

With respect to women, the very existence of "premenstrual tension" (PMT) or "premenstrual syndrome" (PMS), the more hefty "premenstrual dysphoric disorder" (PMDD), of "postpartum depression" (PPD), which has now been "neutralized" in the DSM-V to "depressive disorder with peripartum onset," and of menopausal "episodes" around depressive, panic, or personality "disorders," are derived from expected ("normal") life transitions of the female reproductive system (Becker, 1997; Burt & Rasgon, 2004; Maartens, et al., 2002; Marsh, et al., 2008; Ussher, 2005). Noteworthy is the absence of consistencies on the prevalence of "symptoms" across populations to suggest the "proneness" of women to psychiatric aberrancy, thus, their overrepresentation on the whole (Chandra & Chaturvedi, 1989; Coppock, 2008; Davar, 1995). Neither is there widespread agreement on the amelioration among women when hormonal cycles are "managed" (aka "re-balanced"), say, with estrogen replacement during menopause (Campbell & Whitehead, 1977; Coope, 1981; Pearce, et al., 1997), or in cases of those who have been hysterectomized (Heinrich & Wolf, 2005). Still, women are dispensed double the amount of psychiatric drugs than men each year (Baum, et al., 1998; Robinson, 2002). They have been found more likely to take multiple prescriptions at once (Domecq, et al., 1980). As would follow, they have more adverse reactions to the mind-altering neurotoxins (Burstow, 2005), not least, a disproportionate risk of drug dependency (Coppock & Hopton, 2000) and tardive dyskinesia (van Os, et al., 1999; Yassa & Jeste, 1992), stigmatizing the body unmistakably from having a psychiatric history with "the tongue becom[ing] quite loose and you have a lot of drooling [and uncontrollable] movement of the mouth and facial muscles, as well as sometimes the hands or legs. [And] you can't get rid of it. There's no cure. It's something you live with for the rest of your life!" (Anonymous 2, interview, June 23, 2008).

Suffice to say that psychiatry "is a story of a possible *iatrogenic* progress at work, of an otherwise normal person being made chronically sick by diagnosis and subsequent treatment" (Whitaker, 2010: 30, emphasis in original). Puzzling is its indebtedness to the creation— whence protection, upkeep, and arguably, acceleration—of a "modern plague" to specialize and intervene (Whitaker, 2010). "As common targets … in a patriarchal colonial society" (Fabris, 2011: 156), and something of the clutch or operant of "the epidemic" (Whitaker, 2010), so the backbone of its political economy, women have long played a central role in critiques of psychiatric hegemony and its disciplinary technologies (Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1991). The knowledge that they have created over centuries, particularly from first-person accounts and the co-reflection of experience (Burstow, 2005), continues to lend itself to larger discussions around power, feminist consciousness, through revisionist approaches to health, medicine, science, and the body (Garland-Thomson, 1997; Turner, 1997). It is outside the purview of this paper, however, to canvas their contributions in depth, like the many constituencies (sometimes contentious pursuits) toward radical alternatives. There are many who have with great insight (Burstow, 2005; Chamberlin, 1990; Diamond, 2013, 2014; Everett, 2000), often anchoring North American action to Elizabeth Packard and her publications during the 1860s (Appignanesi, 2008; Geller & Harris, 1994; Hubert, 2002). She is well-known for having protested against being "legally kidnapped and imprisoned three years simply for uttering … opinions [that] conflicted with the Creed of the Presbyterian Church," ultimately those of her preacher husband at a time when no law existed to shield "a wife from a husband's power, and no man dares to take the responsibility of protecting [her]" (cf. Packard, et al., 1994: 59, 65). While Packard has also been slated for holding pejorative views of some fellow inmates at the Illinois State Hospital for the Insane, we are reminded

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that this distancing effect was demanded through the "long court battle in order to gain custody of her children" (St-Amand & LeBlanc, 2013: 42), as it arguably remains in family court judgments today (Savvidou, et al., 2003; Seeman, 2012). Packard dedicated her twenty years after liberation to the plight of women and the "absolute despotism" or "Inquisitions," as she put it, of the American government, for the vast majority of those persecuted through psychiatry have been women (cf. Packard, et al., 1994: 62-3), much like the "regime of terror" that took various names across Europe over centuries (Barstow, 1994). Packard's brazen standpoint witnessed to fruition the passage of 34 bills to protect women from undue internment (St-Amand & LeBlanc, 2013: 42), effectuating a "sociology for women" far before Smith's (1987).

3. Talking Back to Each "Other"

While "women's distinctive experiences [have] bec[o]me important ingredients in the attempt to set the record straight … the simple addition of women to the research process [neither] seemed adequate" (McCall, 2005: 1775). For Black feminist thinker Patricia Hill Collins (2000), the preponderance to standpoint devoid of the "interlocking nature of oppressions" introduces new methodological problems. The dual, if nuanced, marginality of Black women is "not a trivial difference in a racist society" (Clarke, cf. Lorde, 2007: 10), "complicated by age, class, accent, education, national origins, region, as well as sexuality," ability, and religion (Twine, 2000: 9). Such a "matrix of domination" (Hill Collins, 2000: 222) renders futile—limiting (McCall, 2005), reductionist (Butler, 1993), and exclusionary (Young, 1997)—to start justice work with gender or any one feature of the human cosmopolitan. Intersectional approaches, as formally coined by Black legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), respond to the lacuna of contemporary feminism, including its "white-centricity" (Liska, 2015), by focusing our attention on the varying amounts of penalty and privilege that cross every life (Hill Collins, 2000: 220).

Intersectionality has been heralded as "one of the greatest gifts" (Belkhir, 2009: 303), even "the most important contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far" (McCall, 2005: 1771). In striving to pay credence to myriad subjectivities and material conditions (Creese, et al., 2009: 607), it offers a theoretical and political resolve to the isolated (categorical) ways in which issues of oppression have previously been discussed (Davis, cf. Carastathis, 2014: 304). That, racialization makes for resounding pitch in the relationship between women and psychiatry, seems hardly needing to expound—hitherto lacking from critical scrutiny till late (Adebimpie, 1981; Daley, et al., 2012; Fernando, 1984; Gorman, 2013; Jackson, 2002). The co-organization and intergenerational implications of war, colonialism, migration, so, processes of (re)settlement and juridical surveillance, network fragmentation, as well as precarious or low-wage labour, are bound up in the narratives of struggle and "maladjustment" core to (psycho)pathologization, security, detention, and management otherwise. Perhaps most pernicious, social work theorist Brenda LeFrançois (2013: 112) has exemplified, is how a mother who was "scooped" (abducted) from her family as a child on a First Nations reserve in Canada, deemed unsuitable to care under virulent "assimilationist" policies, and placed into the compulsory residential school system (bar of traditional knowledges and interactivities), might call upon child protection services "looking for support," in turn, opening the door to the psychiatrization of her adolescent daughter, if not removal from the home, unbeknownst of alternative approaches to parenting, which would have been modeled for her had she remained within the community herself.

It is less "the notion that racism is more evident in psychiatric practice than elsewhere in the mental health system" (Patel & Fatimilehin, 1999: 63). LeFrançois (2013: 115) makes clear that "benevolent" institutions "feed off each other" to produce and reproduce the rigid (ahistorical) formulations, those insidious boundaries that threshold (lineate, essentialize) "respectability," by virtues, the "other." Rather, "the very construct of mental health is in itself Eurocentric and systems based on such constructs have inherent biases" (Patel & Fatimilehin, 1999: 63), withal "respectability" and the "other." "Peel back the nuances in description, the rules of sentence structure, to a structural motif of presence and identity to be found in formal logic" (Fabris 2011: 25). "The expression 'losing one's mind' invokes loss or absence" (Fabris, 2011: 25); it is the negation of experiences, their invalidity. Follow people labeled accordingly and "they're not thought able to put together a sentence. Or, if the sentence is put together correctly, grammatically correctly, it's not going to make any sense" (Fabris, cf. Nabbali, 2013: 185).

Confronting similar "linguicism" (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013), Vietnamese filmmaker and literary critic Trinh T. Minh-ha (1987) has reflected on the (institutionalized) policing of "Third World" women in (feminist) scholarship. "She has been warned of the risk she incurs by letting words run off the rails, time and again, tempted to gear herself to the accepted norms" (Minh-ha, 1987: 5). To submit to "the standard" of language and syntax, "the humiliation of having to falsify your own reality, your voice" (Minh-ha, 1987: 6), or have it "dissed" (Fordham, 1999) as "improper" (Chrisomalis, 2015), as "intolerant" (Anzaldúa, cf. Kang, 2014: 177), perhaps as "ranting" (Neale, 2008)—in sanist ontology, "through the marking of a person as 'not-there'" (Fabris, 2011: 26), to be spoken for. "Difference is not difference to some ears but awkwardness or incompleteness. Aphasia. Unable or unwilling?" Minh-ha (1987: 6) questions only in the rhetorical because she knows that it does not matter. Affixed to the story of any disorder, "transgressions" (here, unwillingness) are nail-to-coffin, "evidential," "symptomatic." For "the power to control language," prophecied Sir Winston Churchill on receipt of an honorary doctorate at Harvard University in 1943, "offers far better prizes than taking away people's provinces or lands or grinding them down in exploitation. The empires of the future are the empires of the *mind*" (cf. Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013, n. pg., emphasis added).

4. Hypothesis Null

Emancipation is fundamentally unimaginable if staked over distinct junctures, lest the trop of "pure strands" (Brah & Phoenix, 2004: 76). We retain not only prioritized growth, a propensity to hierarchy, but also, the eugenical ("othering") thinking from which derives, for instance, "race, ability, mental illness, as they were all products of a project delineating conceptualizations of undesirability based on perceived blood or genetic ranking and classification" (Joseph, 2015: 16). Correspondingly, Hill Collins (2000: 225) posits, we are obliged to address the confluence of experiences as mediated "in one historically created system" to resolute rights-based discourses at every level. The potential of intersectionality to become that "nodal point" (Lykke, 2011) or "basis for cooperation" (Maj, 2013), with the sweeping numbers and committed aggregates for meaningful change, has been well noted.

Writing from the United States on "pluralistic feminism" before intersectionality was named, Argentine philosopher María Lugones (1987) forged the metaphor of "'world'-travelling" to (re)script those, much like herself, who are "outsiders to the mainstream," with enormous value in the spirit of "loving" and "learning," on mutuality and solidarity—on coexistence. To travel for Lugones (1987: 3) is the "necessarily acquired flexibility in shifting from the

mainstream construction of life where she is constructed as an outsider to the other constructions of life where she is more or less 'at home.'" It positions her in the "borderlands" (Anzaldúa, 2012), a space between differential powers, "among the most fertile grounds for understanding the structure of society in general," while fostering subversive discourse and coalition-building more significantly (Harrison, 2008: 44). Hill Collins (2004) echoed the epistemic privilege of Lugones' protagonist, drawing parallels with Black domestic workers who have historically moved from their families to that of the employer, before channeling it herself through the concept of "outsider-within." She encouraged Black women scholars to embrace their unique standpoint as having access to decentered Black feminist thought from the ranks of the university, thereby, attending to the knowledge claims with *some* of the credentials ("merit") not previously afforded.

"We might extrapolate, then, that positionality functions as a sufficient condition for reflexive research" (Rinaldi, 2013, para. 15). Reflexivity, in the Giddenian sense, concedes "the self" (so, agency) as recursive of social structures (Giddens, 1991; Rinaldi, 2013). Of course, this underpins the interpretivist movement in ethnography, most recognizably in the work of Clifford Geertz (1973) and the literatures aforementioned that advocate for the active incorporation of researcher(s) in analyses given the political power of "writing culture" (viz. their direct shaping of it). Coupled with the urgency marked by anticolonial and feminist observations, ethnographers took serious representation such to transform the methodological altogether. They advanced an explicitly "critical" genre of research, interested in the fork of social taxometrics (Anderson, 1989: 264). The overriding premise is that theory and action cannot be separated.

"At home" research, or "insider" status, becomes highly regarded by way of "lived familiarity" (Griffith, 1998: 361), chiefly in terms of access to information and the "trustworthiness" of the interpretations discerned from the information gathered—overall, what has been framed as the "authenticity" of the ethnographic account (Kusow, 2003). "A question that has nagged much feminist ethnography is: if we accept that there is no essential category called 'Women,' and if we accept that women are differently situated and so have different perspectives, can a female ethnographer truly understand the experience of the female 'other'?" (Sylvain, 2005: 35). "At this particular juncture in gender studies, any scholar who neglects difference runs the risk of having her work viewed as theoretically misguided, politically irrelevant, or simply fantastical" (Davis, 2008: 68). But "when multiplication [of experiences] doesn't equal quick addition" (Hancock, 2007), "how native is the native [researcher]?" (Narayan, cf. Young & Meneley, 2005: 7) "Why do political communities that are founded on liberation ideologies fall into this trap?" (Diamond, 2014: 200). "Isn't it time the connection between women's studies and the women's movement is fully recognized?" (Lees, cf. Griffin, 2005: 1)

5. Alien(nation), or, the Problem is/in Identity

I remember the days—the every days—when I would cry over my hair. Going to a hairdresser was a nightmare, so my father would spend hours after his unrelenting, typically overtime workday straightening it for school in the morning. My mother, I think it is telling now in hindsight, would outright refuse. She would emphasize just how lucky I was to have big curly hair, how people spent a whole lot of money at salons trying to get big curly hair. But it did not matter what she said to me then, I would still pout about "what Dad *did* to me!"

Under the heat of the blow-dryer, and pain of that round brush, Dad would try to reassure me with tales from his 1969 immigration to France after the Algerian Revolution, of the bleaching and straightening that he did of his own mane as a way to fit in, as a way to blend in, as a way to disappear, as a way to "survive." Never getting into the rife politics of place, nor ongoing struggles in Algeria from 132 years of French strangulation and its "civilizing" mission of those "people they considered barbarians," at best, an uncompromising policy of "assimilation" (Ahluwalia, 2010: 25), I understood—as I understand—not to pass judgment on him for the steps that he chose to take at that time. So destructive were the colons, I would eventually learn, that the "native" (Arab, Berber, Muslim) population decreased from 3 million under "restrained occupation" in 1830 to 2.5 million a short decade later (Ahmed, n. d.). This is said to have marked the ascendancy of "total conquest" (Gallois, 2013) before being formalized by 1887 as French "subjects" through the *régime de l'indigénat*, a set of laws (legal violence) specifically "aimed at breaking down tribal structures" and organizing the appropriation of Algerian lands (Dunwoodie, 1998: 19). Above all else, Algeria assumed France's foreign reputation and interest (Boariu, 2002: 174); "a great monument to the glory of our country," wrote Alexis De Tocqueville in 1837, some years prior to holding office as French Minister of Foreign Affairs (cf. Ahluwalia, 2010: 24). France would push on with "the most venal forms of engagement" (Gallois, 2013: 12), creating a two-tier system of *pieds noirs* (settler-colonial) heteronomy and command (Balch, 1909: 544). Only a "very small percentage of urban French-educated [read: assimilated] indigenous males [would] effect the passage from subordinate status of *indigène/colonisé* to the supposed equality of citizenship offered by the republic to the *évolué*" (Dunwoodie, 2006: 69, emphasis in original).

As time passed, as I got older, people started to come up to me at all kinds of events, in all kinds of spaces, with all kinds of sweet words. I started to embrace my big curly hair—and more, and more, and more, and more. It was only when I moved to the west (incidentally, Left) coast of mainland Canada that it hit me: the love for my locks was an exoticized one, just another form of "othering." In Vancouver, the attention came generally as question, oftentimes even paired with gestures: "*what* are you?" I could not sum such encounters. "I mean, where are you from?" "Toronto," I would reply with confidence, whereas today, I accost a more troubled articulation of the shared territory of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Nations under Imperial Canada (Edgar Heap of Birds, 2006). "No, but where are you *really* from?" Stillness. "What's your *race*?" Starring. "Can I touch *it*?" Bewilderment. "I… I…. I just want to feel it!" as their hand may be in full swing toward my head. "The texture … it's … well, is it real?" "But you put product in it, right?"

Stop. Fast-forward to my arrival at Kotoka International Airport, on a temporary (F-1) Visa as part of a research affiliation with the oldest university in Ghana. It would be during this dry season of Harmattan, when the northeast trade winds of my ancestors blow from the Sahara Desert and engulf the subtropical region in a particle haze (Gocking, 2005: 2), that I would awake nothing other than "obŭroní" (Christaller, 1933: 54; Dolphyne, 1996: 17). Elsewhere is the (mis?)spelling "òbùrònî" (Bosiwah, et al., 2015: 5), "obruni" (Pierre, 2013, p. 76), and "obroni" (Utley, 2009, p. 74), all to connote a singular-noun for "White Man" in Twi (Asante), the most widely spoken dialect of the Akan linguistic group, itself making up a dominant 47.3% of the total country population (Bosiwah, et al., 2015) and used as a second language by many others (Dolphyne, 1996). This is especially the case in the most cosmopolitan part of Ghana, around the coastal capital of Accra, where I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork and where "Akanization" is said to have gone furthest, despite trepidations among the Ga-speaking people in particular, who have traditionally inhabited the region (Gocking, 2005: 10).

Afore 1874, perhaps it bears mentioning, Ghana comprised of many independent states, kingdoms, even empires, lying five degrees above the equator along the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, and stretching inland over rainforests to the savanna (Gocking, 2005: 2). These were merged into one territory "through a series of treaties of 'friendship' and forced annexations," to be proclaimed the Gold Coast under British rule (Buah, 1998: 1). The 234,540 square kilometers of what is the present-day Republic took final shape after World War I, when approximately a third of the German colony of Togoland was ceded by mandate of the League of Nations (Buah, 1998: 1). The other two-thirds was transferred to France, delimiting each of Ghana's three frontiers with previous French colonies: Togo to the east, Burkina Faso to the north, and Côte d'Ivoire to the west. However, a relatively small number of people in Ghana speak French, "even in the border areas. The few who do are young people who learned it in school" or migrant, maybe seasonal, workers from neighbourlands (Kropp Dakubu, 2015: 166).

Inherited from the colonial era, English has remained the official language since independence in 1957, although its distribution and development vary polemically by community and sub-communities (Kropp Dakubu, 2015). This has long wielded (uneven) political and economic pressures, in "extreme cases, of denationalization" (Teye, 2008: 49). A local Pidgin English, or pidgin-like speech, has evolved informally to connect interlocutors as necessary. "Multilingualism in south-eastern Ghana, especially around Accra and what could be called its hinterland" is a matter of course not exception (Kropp Dakubu, 1996: 8). Ga, Akan, and (Pidgin) English configure the cityscape on whole, with Hausa (closely related to Arabic) "often heard in Islamic enclaves known as Zongos" (Henaku, 2011: 4). Studies do not seem to agree on the number of active languages in Ghana, but most put it "between 40 and 50-odd, depending on your criteria for counting" (Kropp Dakubu, 1996: 3). Nine languages have government-sponsored status, divided over the ten administrative regions (Gocking, 2005: 1) and an official population of 24.66 million (Bosiwah, et al., 2015).

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Now, I make no oblivion that my "whiteness" in Accra was entirely removed from (phenotypic) impressions of fair or lighter skin per se. I understood—as I understand—that *obŭroní* was operating on (relative) privilege, one that I could not hide, from my orthodontic smile, to the clothes that I wore, to the English that I spoke, to the level of formal education that I had, to this opportunity of travel… in a plane… across borders… with a passport… computer… return-ticket… etcetera… etcetera… It would soon take on an aura of research. I would brave to broach the word. Discussions were surprisingly welcomed; pensive but encouraging, challenging while lively and illuminating. *Obŭroní* came to defend as synonymous to "foreigner," at least so it manifests in the public domain. Indeed, I have read it to mean:

> someone from "aburokyire" … "the land beyond the horizon" (borɔ: horizon; akyire: back/ behind). (Bosiwah, et al., 2015: 2)

I have also read the reverse, that *aburokyire* is compounded from *obŭroní*:

> Etymologically, the word can be said to consist of two forms, *oburoni* and *nkyi*. *Oburoni* is the Akan word for "white man" and *nkyi* refers to "homeland," so *aburokyiri* is the white man's homeland. As the Akan got exposed to the fact that there are other white people than the British [colonizers], the concept was extended to cover the continents of Europe, America, and Australia. (Fretheim & Amfo, 2008: 187, emphasis in original)

Obŭroní has morphed to apply to the Black diaspora, as it has "to Ghanaians returning from abroad who are perceived to be affluent and are often derided as dressing, walking, talking, and acting White" (Pierre, 2013: 77). Significantly, it can be adorned to one's child or family member of distinguished (celebrated) stature, likewise, shared between lovers as "me broni" (to be corrected from Pierre's "mi bruni") (Appah, email, August 8, 2015; Owusu, 2009; Pierre, 2013). "In terms of beauty, the whites are generally considered to be beautiful. So, even a dark beautiful lady is sometimes likened *òbùrònî*" (Bosiwah, et al., 2015: 5, emphasis in original). "Ghanaians do not, as is sometimes claimed, intend any racist insinuations by this" (Utley, 2009: 74), but they are effectively servicing a bifurcated state (Pierre, 2013), the consolidation of colonial consciousness, so its tokenized relations—to "us," from "them."

"I learned about power not so much because I was studying it, but because I had it" (Sylvain, 2005: 32). With every sunrise, I turned a Fanonian page. "The oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves," I could hear the Martinique-born luminary repeat from his annals of guerilla insurgence (Fanon, 2004), having joined the Algerian nationalist movement much like my uncle at its outbreak in 1954, neither bearing witness tragically to formal decolonization eight years later, what turned out to be "one of the longest and bloodiest wars" in the post World War II period (Evans & Phillips, 2007: 54). My "whiteness" (read: privilege) in Ghana sunk intolerable. I could not swallow "the front of every queue; [to be] given immediate attention in any government office" (Sylvain, 2005: 32), or that time, when I accompanied a contact to a chockfull medical clinic and the registration clerk scurried almost on cue to the next room, returning with a lone chair to offer me. I tendered it kindly to another. Never mind making a stink of her "hospitality," may well, a product of circumstance, an employer (read: institutional) expectancy. It resonated "under the yoke of inferiority complex … a deep scar" that has not vanished, an endemic disease (Akordor, 2013: 7).

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> No wonder some [Ghanaians] (especially the ladies) bleach to become like the whites. (Bosiwah, et al., 2015: 5)

> If it is not foreign, it is not good. Even the foreign comes with various classifications; it is best if it comes from Britain, Germany, France, or the US. (Akordor, 2013: 7)

The local production of a historical politico-economy, I could not escape (Pierre, 2013: 71). This is not to imply that I wanted to escape it, as parceled in the superficial by that return-ticket looming in my suitcase. I wanted to overthrow it, in the absolute.

Stop. Fast-forward again to a little over a year ago when I attended an international conference on intersectionality research, policy, and practice, with an opening keynote by Patricia Hill Collins no less. A colloquium on the closing afternoon canvassed the academic wellbeing of racialized students. The moderator was sure to introduce the four panelists, in addition to her self and a thought-filled digression as to why she chose to wear a sari that day. She closed by asking that "non-racialized" folk please leave the room after the presentations during what will be a changeover to roundtable discussions. I felt my stomach knot with apprehension. A flood of fury. A visceral reaction despite the otherwise provocative speeches made by the students and much else the moderator had contributed. The panel, in its entirety, was among the highlights of the conference and I would not want that to be missed.

As I got up to leave, the colleague sitting next to me screeched "Where are you going? You're totally racialized *enough*, you should stay!" Meanwhile, she was getting up herself. "Where are YOU going? If I'm racialized 'enough,' you most certainly are too!" There is a long

history of systemic discrimination among the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, recognized under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. The *Indian Act* slates separate governance to "Status Indian," so, too, the federal provisions that it confers. What has transpired is a byzantine web of imposed (settler-colonial) "rules" such to "superficially decide who is and who is not 'authentically Indian'" (King, cf. Fitzgerald, 2015: B2).

> Non-status Indians who identity themselves as Aboriginal, with ties to their ancestral homelands, cultures and histories, may find themselves excluded from land claims, treaties, and other similar agreements … On the other hand, concepts of Indian status can cause those ineligible for Indian status to question their own claim to Indian identity, and bring up questions of legitimacy. (Crey & Hanson, 2009, n. pg.)

The problematic nature of "Indianness" in Canada is further imbued with intrapersonal conflicts that have been warped by extant poverty and the (intergenerational) affects of "assimilation." "Any identification with Native people," alerts Mi'kmaw sociologist Bonita Lawrence (2004: xii), juxtaposing her own "mixed-blood," off-reserve, working-class past, might have stood "in the way of our survival as a family" at a time when the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* did not exist and residential schools were enforced. "It is out of these experiences of belonging and not belonging" (Lawrence, 2004: xiv) that my friend concerned her "entitlement" to stay behind, or risk upsetting the dynamics of the roundtable.

I honestly could not help but be struck, then like now, by the irony of the identity politics that we were trying to negotiate at a conference on intersectionality. Another woman nearby, a Black American Assistant Professor whom I was only introduced to afterwards, must have caught our hesitance because she sharply whispered, "Really, who's non-racial?!" Of course, "at the genetic level, there is more variation between two individuals in the same population than between populations" (Garrod, 2014: 43), debunking any biological basis to "race" as a quotient of human categorization "by some notion of stock or collective heredity of traits" (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992: 2). The tale around my hair underscores the fluidity, malleability, insatiability, therefore, failure of (phenotypic) markers toward boundary constructions, let alone in a single country (e.g. between Toronto and Vancouver) than across continent (e.g. from Canada to Ghana). It should also be clear how "one may classify themselves as a member of this or that [group] will differ extensively and rely on the particularities of the social system in which they [are in]" (Garrod, 2014: 45). Just as muddled, the reliance on "ethnicity" as more "politically correct" holds the parameters for its boundaries so heterogeneous that it nullifies its own aims, "ranging from the credentials of birth to being born in the right place, conforming to cultural or other symbolic practices, language, and very centrally behaving in sexually appropriate ways" (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992: 4). "The recent trend in the forensic literature has been to use the term 'ancestry' instead of 'race,' with no change in the underlying concept, so that determining continental origin has been substituted for color terminology" (Albanese & Saunders, 2006: 282). The confusion remaining, how ancestral do we get? How many layers do we add? "How do we classify mulattos? If one drop of black blood is enough to become black, why not the reverse?" (Swynghedauw, 2003: 439).

Regrettably, my friend was not convinced. But I was encouraged that another woman, seemingly "non-racial," joined the roundtable. She did, however, "status" herself almost as a preface, benchmark, or "quality check," to her first contribution. In turn, I voiced my discomfort with the moderator's request and pondered who else may not have been as brave.

It is not that I wish to trivialize the density of "race" in Canadian society, as elsewhere, when racially motivated police brutalities pervade our news (Comack, 2012; Mack, 2014; Wortley, 2006), against the concentration of marginalized communities (and their notoriously impoverished living conditions) a couple of blocks from my doorstep in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (Culhane, 2009). "Canada's poorest postal code," this inner-city neighborhood is pointedly strung five square-kilometers between Chinatown and Oppenheimer Park (Culhane, 2009: 160), what was Japantown before the Federal Government had decreed the removal of all people of Japanese descent residing within 160 kilometers from the Pacific Coast following the attack on Pearl Harbor (Kinoshita, 2014). They were to be interned, or, "chose" deportation (Kinoshita, 2014). Some 22,000 individuals in total, over half of whom had been born in Canada (my partner's father inclusive), were forcibly dispossessed of their properties so as to fund the camps themselves, which lasted four years longer than World War II and were silenced until 1988 when a written acknowledgement was finally issued by then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney along with "token compensation for the wrongs done," never to be undone (Kinoshita, 2014: 137). But "if as [American biologist Joseph L.] Graves notes, 'a crucial part of the battle against the legacies of the social construction of race is to get across the message that biological races do not exist and that these types of correlations are spurious,'" then it does answer troubling for scholars who understand this datum to employ "race" at all (cf. Garrod, 2014: 43). We should be especially vigilant where the overarching drive is to forum (intersectional) knowledge *production* and resistance. "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 2007: 112).

6. Under the Big Tent

I think to have understood—so I want to understand—that the moderator was calling for a safe-space to examine issues of privilege, much in the way that *obŭroní* conceived of privilege in Ghana. Still, "power inheres in the ability to name and what we call ourselves has implications for political practice" (Epstein, 1992: 241). "Science" has played a historical role in this sorting and ordering of "*like* with *like*" (Boyle, 1999: 75, emphasis added), indeed classification schemes, such "to legitimize and explain existing social inequality between 'races'" (Castagna & Sefa Dei, cf. Garrod, 2014: 44).

> One justification for the enslavement of African peoples was viewing Africans as "sub-human" species, *like* cattle. They supposedly did not have the "same" capacities for language, communication and culture as their European oppressors. (Castagna & Sefa Dei, cf. Garrod, 2014: 44, emphasis added)

In a similar vein:

> psychiatric [labeling] gains its professional and social [capital] by presenting itself as equivalent to medical diagnosis. This is achieved, not least, by using the language of medicine to talk about behaviour and psychological experience [as readily identifiable, thus, meaningful or scientific patterns of phenomena]. (Boyle, 1999: 76)

Taken-for-granted, the practice of diagnosis can lead to the self-fulfilling prophecy of the "sick role," theorized by American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1951), also well associated with the school of interactionism (Goffman, 1959, 1961, 1963; Scheff, 1984). To label, as with any function of language (symbols and words), is to create, impart, or attribute images and concepts through which derives social impressions and scaffolds relations. Psychiatric "diagnostics," *like* racial "hierarchies," work to obscure the highly heterogeneous criteria

(otherwise, "symptoms") for grouping. Moreover, they may "spoil" (stigmatize or devalue) the identity of an individual, who must then "confront and be affronted" by the subsequent reactions of others (Goffman, 1963: 137).

> That's what the really nasty psychiatric words are all about: they are justificatory rhetoric, labelling [sic] a package "garbage," it means "take it away!" "Get out of my sight!" etc. That's what the word "Jew" meant in Nazi Germany: it did not mean a person with a certain kind of religious beliefs … [I am afraid that] psychiatric diagnostic terms mean exactly the same thing; they mean "human garbage," "take him away," "get him out of my sight!" (Szasz, 1974: 460)

"There is no system of racism or ableism or mentalism that is ever distinct or separated from this history" (Joseph, 2015: 16), hellbent on achieving some "normate" or whatever has come to fashion the quintessential human being within that setting (Garland-Thomson, 1997: 8), including the (unwritten) standards by which we are expected to live (Cresswell, 2005: 1673). "Mental health, criminal justice, and immigration systems have also been historically bound to each other" (Joseph, 2015: 16). Canadian criminologist Anna Pratt (2005: 1) has framed detention and deportation as "the two most extreme and bodily sanctions" of imperial enterprises such as Canada, where the death penalty has been abolished since 1976. By enforcing boundaries and borders, "these systems, the professionals that practice within them, and the knowledge regimes that form their discursive fields" rely on "identification," regardless of agreement or consent, to deny or cast out the "undeserving" or "undesirable" (Joseph, 2015: 17).

"The community of people who take issue with psychiatry" continue to fight pitched battles over the right to *self*-identification (Burstow, 2013: 89). They have carefully crafted a lexicon of "refusal terms," outlined by radical feminist therapist Bonnie Burstow (2013: 84), to actively subvert its imposing language, so the imagery and symbolism that is embodied or conjured up (Reaume, 2002). There remains great tension within this movement:

> Some reject psychiatry completely. Some see it as legitimate. Some allow allies to join. Some reject non-survivors. (Burstow, 2005: 247)

A (nearly) annual festivity was launched in Toronto in 1993 by members of the West End Psychiatric Survivors as a way of coalescing "the left and the right and the people without a clue, and also address[ing] the increadible shame and hesitation that people feel because … of psychic degradation" (Anonymous 2, interview, June 23, 2008). Over 100 people gathered at the Parkdale Library that September afternoon and marched to the far west wall of what was then the Queen Street Mental Health Centre, and today, the Centre for Additions and Mental Health (Reaume, 2008). At the time, it was unknown that the wall had been built on unpaid "patient" labour, first in 1860 and reconstructed in 1888-89 (Reaume, 2006). The rally was followed by a vigil to honour all whom perished on these grounds, enclosed by such institutional barriers, the very fruits of *our* loins. The irony is alarming—ongoing. The event concluded with entertainment, refreshments, frolicking, and fun. It "was such a success," gaining media attention and pursuance (Fabris, interview, July 4, 2008).

From a day of activities, "Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day" expanded to a full week's worth of theatre, music, film screenings, poetry readings, processions, memorials, and seminars (Reaume, 2008). Parades resumed in 1998 and were moved from early Fall to July, usually on or around July 14, to align itself with Bastille Day for historical purposes (Nabbali, 2010; Reaume, 2008). Reflecting the debates over nomenclature and similar programs surfacing the

globe, the Toronto celebration became known as "Instance of Resistance" in 2000, "Psyche Survivor Pride Week" in 2001, and since 2002, "Mad Pride" (Reaume, 2008).

> Indeed, I would argue that [madness] is a useful term for critics to retain insofar as it problematizes the pathologizing implications of phrases such as "mental illness." In particular, the term allows cultural critics to shift their critical focus from marginalized individuals to questions of institutional and social madness. (Harper, 2005: 463)

> It's saying, "Come, join us, make a statement! You don't have to have seen a psychiatrist to be here. You don't need to be on Zyprexa or Prozac. Perhaps, as a result of wealth or some semblance of togetherness or whatever else it is shrinks stay away from, you've managed to elude the system. Whatever it is, whatever your story, if you see the oppression, if you are or could be included in that oppressions, celebrate Mad Pride!" (Anonymous 1, cf. Nabbali, 2010: 27)

Effectively, even affectionately, Mad Pride is "inviting people into the tent who weren't invited before" (Reville, interview, June 19, 2008). It "doesn't try to separate between those who agree with some aspects of psychiatry and those who don't" (Fabris, interview, July 4, 2008). Rather, it recognizes that "people aren't necessarily encountering psychiatry in the same way" (Bach, interview, June 30, 2008). But *everyone* is in jeopardy" when we pathologize difference (Burstow, 2013: 89, emphasis in original). As such, we compromise the liberties of self-expression, thus, of being—non-violently, non-aggressively, with pride, dignity, and respect.

"Being psychiatrized, or being perceived as mentally ill, has consequences in the world we inhabit," both material and nonmaterial, which often vary by context and access to privilege, love, and supports (Diamond, 2013: 73). Mad Pride speaks up against "psychiatry as a form of oppression, as White Supremacy and patriarchy" (Anonymous 2, interview, June 23, 2008). It rejects marginalization and longstanding mores, "pointedly exposing the pernicious underbelly of what is passing as innocent" (Burstow, 2013: 84).

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> Are some of us, any of us, just machines that need to be re-tooled for the perfect future? I mean, that's [what we seem] to be saying, "Eugenics is just fine! Correcting people's lives by force is just fine! … We're not only going to restrict you, police you, we're going to go fucking medical on your ass!" (Fabris, interview, July 4, 2008)

> Anti-oppression movements may have lessened the medical pathology based on racialization or gender. However, the experience of being psychiatrized continues to be pathologised as a condition requiring a cure. (Overboe, cf. Wolframe, 2012, para. 1)

Truly a commingling of solidarity, Mad Pride not only brings people together from different social and political viewpoints, "it also give[s] people an opportunity to develop a sense of themselves" through the organizings, as well as the provisions, of a safe/supportive environment to explore, engage, and embrace the expanse of humanity (Anonymous 2, interview, June 23, 2008).

> I think reaching into the other communities, especially the "normal" community, the non-psychiatric survivor community, is really important … [T]hose links can kind of help us out of some gulags that they put us in" (Fabris, interview, July 4, 2008)

Conclusion: The Prolegomena to Debate

Research, as a source of knowledge production and representation, is intertwined with performances of power (Ebron, 2002). "The ethnography of Africa [reveals] not that the human world is ruled by powerful objects, but that, all of the world, even the natural, bears traces of human agency" (Fergusson, 2007: 74). Throughout this paper, I have followed on the scholarship of critical theorists before me, leaving them to converse almost directly between each other, in order to synthesize against my own experiences that "nothing fits; *nothing is fixed*" (LeFrançois, 2013: 110, emphasis added). We learn, too, from Kahnawake Mohawk educator Taiaiake Alfred and the histories of "assimilation" (read: eugenics), including that of psychiatry, how "imperialism is inherently a process of homogenization, culturally and politically" (cf. Sium & Ritskes, 2013: II). The point being, quite right, that "few aspects of my identity, as I understand them, have simple words to make them speakable," neither within an intersectional paradigm, nor would I want them to (LeFrançois, 2013: 110).

In this current of digitism, where "papers" trail us like never before, medias interconnect, context's forgotten, time's ignored, when a single sound-bite may run wild, reconfiguring even the hardest-to-tell stories into 140 digestible characters, self-disclosures write complicity with identity politics (Nabbali, 2015: 4). Disability circles have discussed it as painful and invasive (Corrigan & Matthews, 2003; Erevelles, 2011; Rinaldi, 2013; Samuels, 2003), as fractious (Clark, 2007), misleading (LeFrançois, 2013), or potentially threatening (Titchkosky, 2007). Through gender studies, we concert it to be a precarious moment of "coming out" (Abramovich, 2014). We also hear, in testimonies of torture, or trauma of any kind, a re-victimization of graphic, complicated, and emotionally raw experiences (Macías, 2016). Inseparable from violence, I have mapped positionality and reflexivity, and their platter of "ready to wear" (or -chew) tags (Robertson, 2002: 788), as historically couched in a normative standard, the eugenical thinking at cross with anti-essentialist stances (LeFrançois, 2013; Rinaldi, 2013).

My reflections have emerged from my own shifting, ambiguous, or contradictory encounters with identity. They mark a moment in the research process that demands for decisions about how to represent what we are studying, and why. There are no short risks for research participation (Costa et al., 2012; Richer, 1988; Tomaselli, 2003). Hence, the academy has developed what it maintains to be a series of protocols to pin down or constitute (ethical) roles and responsibilities in field sites and relations. Attention (and critique) has focused on informed consent (Sylvain, 2005), confidentiality (Scheper-Hughes, 2001), reciprocity or competing interests (Frank, 2000; Young & Meneley, 2005), as well as the politics of language (Fabris, 2011; Minh-ha, 1987), textualization (Geertz, 1973; Marcus & Fischer, 1986), grant allocation (Lindow, 2001), and peer reviews (Bocking, 2005). But, of course, the ethnographer "is as much acted upon as actor" (Lambek, 2005: 233). Our selves hold their own vulnerability to unethical dispositions, additionally so where (translocal) unfamiliarities can cultivate isolation, distance, even danger. Positionality and reflexivity are inevitable slippages in research, much in the way that they have come through this paper. They prompt a place in space and elicit relationships and responses organically (not, a priori). "Empathy is not identity" (Armbruster, 2008: 13), but neither is it a guarantee "at home" (Kusow, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, giving an account is seldom ours alone. All interview participants quoted here were asked, first upon recording, and again, before dissemination of the results,

whether to adopt a pseudonym to disguise the extent of published output as possible.[1] With the exception of Anonymous 1, they chose to use their real names as another avenue for "talking back" (Morrison, 2003). It is relevant to note that Anonymous 2 approached me in the afterwards with qualms explicitly over the potential impact to loved ones.

Psychiatric survivor and educator PhebeAnn Wolframe (2012) has argued for discussions of sanism in existing curricula across disciplines. Indigenous, gender, queer, and ability studies have entered the classroom over the decades, so, too, throughout the university, gaining access to funding resources and scholarly journals, which can influence other works and academics (Lindow, 2001: 144), indeed, disseminate alternative voices more widespread, toward a polity attune—if not, actively resisting—the perpetuation of "scientific" forms of oppression that might not have been experienced first-hand (Wolframe, 2012). Careful not to dismiss the increasingly hostile climate for the arts and humanities, Wolframe (2012) advances her call to action as part of the "project of inclusivity," echoing the sentiments of Mad Pride as I have come to appreciate them, in turn, to be conceived as a counter-project to eugenics. Methodologically, her framework has evolved from standpoint and intersectionality theories, whereas I hope to have added to the alarms of having to provide a (meta)narrative to pedagogical praxes altogether. An address that, I regret, has achieved only one of two folds: towards democratization, not necessarily decolonization by way of access.

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[1] The research from which these exchanges are drawn was conducted during my tenure as a graduate student in Critical Disability Studies under the remarkable tutelage of Geoffrey Reaume at York University, Toronto, Canada. No incentives were offered to encourage research participation, besides the provision of a copy of the final manuscript (Nabbali, 2008, 2009). All participants were informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the project at any time, up to the final stages of data analysis, for which a specific date was provided. The informed consent was photocopied for their personal records.

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