

## **BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS**

Ameil J. Joseph (2015) *Deportation and the confluence of violence within forensic mental health and immigration systems*- Authored Book. Published by Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire. 261 Pages. ISBN 978-1-137-51341-0

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The book 'Deportation and the confluence of violence within forensic mental health and immigration systems' authored by Ameil J. Joseph, brings to the fore the plight of an invisible and voiceless group of people. It renders visible the injustice and the difficulties faced by migrants with mental health problems who have committed a criminal offence as a result of which they are pending deportation. This book's aim is to contribute to an understanding of how deportation is framed by exploring the confluence of discourses and practices in the mental health, criminal justice and immigration systems in Canada. The author convincingly demonstrates how the practices and technologies of evaluation and decision-making used by professionals, police, lawyers and experts create a space of injustice and contribute towards the (re)production of this particularly vulnerable group. In addition, the author shows how Western responses to injustice, immigration regulation and mental health, reproduce Orientalism, dehumanisation, North-South and racial divisions and therefore demonstrate the deep entrenchment of these historical forms into systems of knowledge and law. This serves to explain the discriminatory and discretionary use of the law and moreover the paradoxical use of moral arguments to authorise violence on this group of people. The historically targeted colonial subjects, Joseph argues, are denied the possibility of not being encapsulated, as demonstrated by the notion of the 'unrehabilitatable criminal person of colour' which invokes the idea of the uncivilised primitive person. A person who in the past was perceived as deserving of subjugation or slavery, in our contemporary settings becomes a subject of surveillance or confinement.

In its ten chapters, the book presents detailed, dense theoretical discussions often illustrated through empirical material, through which Joseph slowly constructs his argument. This review will follow the structure of the book. The author devotes the first chapters of the book to laying out the field and delimiting the scope of the book. He first adopts a broad approach, starting in Chapter 2 with the questioning of institutionalised processes in mental health and forensic mental health systems through the use of postcolonial theory and critical race theory. Chapter 3 gives a legal and systemic overview of the Canadian Forensic Mental Health System which enables the deportation of mental health migrants who have committed criminal offences in Canada. The author shows how the legal framework backs up a system which is static and resistant to outside critique, voices or interrogations. This, he argues, is

made possible by strictly limiting legitimacy and authority to the expert disciplines and professionals as recognised and enabled by law.

With the main framework laid out, Chapter 4 attempts to construct a complex conceptualisation of violence that engages simultaneously with the historical, contemporary and separate issues of violence which ultimately result in deportation. To do this, Joseph first draws on a wide array of theorists of violence and then moves on to analyses of oppression which use intersectionality and are constructed on the understanding that oppression is targeted at certain groups by virtue of their identification by race, class, age, dis/ability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language and so on. Joseph offers a critique of both sets of approaches in particular for their inherent resistance to transformative analytical perspectives that would allow for a dynamic engagement with social issues, without a reliance on systems of difference produced through colonial and imperial projects. The author therefore proposes that modes of analyses should include the idea of confluence, where ‘ideas emerge and co-develop interdependently through history through the deployment of multiple forms of violence’ (86). The use of confluence would therefore produce modes of analyses that are not static; that are based on an understanding of the links between different elements in the system; and that offer the possibility of looking at an issue through different perspectives and demand a historical appreciation.

Chapter 5 and 6 constitute the theoretical heart of the book. In these chapters, Joseph’s theoretical discussions become more sophisticated and the focus is brought back to the specific nexus of mental health, criminal justice and immigration systems to look for colonial practices and technologies of violence and difference. Joseph here pulls together the different strands from the discussions in the previous chapters to argue that dominant practices, policies and technologies are guilty of complicity in the remaking of North-South divisions, participation in the reinforcement of ideas of nationalism and the utilisation of moral and ethical arguments for the justification of atrocities. Methodologically, he argues, this topic requires a postcolonial analysis of confluence in order to understand how violence operates.

Chapters 7 and 8 are the empirical chapters where Joseph applies the method of postcolonial analysis of confluence. These chapters are rich in detail and analytical engagement. Joseph discusses archival correspondence and archival policies and laws relating to mental health, criminal justice and immigration systems that support deportation of people identified with mental health issues, are non-Canadian citizens, and are involved with the criminal justice system. Joseph finds that the selective use of law and authoritative text, the denial of a racial and eugenic rationale, and the portrayal of abuses of power as within the discretionary authoritative powers, allow for the systemic use of violence. Chapter 8 is an analysis of 75 appeal cases from the Appeal Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board that fit the criteria of appeal cases of deportation for those identified with mental health issues spanning the decade 2001 to 2011. In addition to providing a representation of the practices, technologies and laws at work in this area of confluence, this analysis yields a clear depiction of resistance in Canada to systems of dehumanisation, identification, incarceration and

removal.

Chapter 9 specifically applies the postcolonial analysis of confluence to a representative selection of contemporary decision documents of deportation appeal cases from the Immigration and Refugee Board. The outcome demonstrates the ongoing reliance on notions of the biologically inferior or untreatable, the unrehabilitatable criminal and the undeserving alien.

Overall, this is an advanced book which delivers a complex and sophisticated set of arguments in the critical theory tradition backed by empirical material. Ideas and the research are presented in a logical and flowing manner allowing the reader to slowly immerse oneself into the subject. The main critique of this book is the pedantic use of overly descriptive terminology and a sentence construction style, which combined with intensely intricate theoretical arguments, slow down even the experienced reader in the subject, and generally put at risk the clarity of the arguments. This is therefore not a book for the inexperienced reader new to the subject. It requires a background in critical theory, critical race, critical criminology and critical mental health.