

Psy-Times: The Psycho-Politics of Resilience in University Student Life

Katie Aubrecht
Mount Saint Vincent University

Abstract

Guided by insights from interpretive sociology, Mad Studies, and Disability Studies, this paper explores the role of universities in a psycho-social politics of resilience. I examine how the concept of resilience is used to rationalize the removal of the perspectives of university students with lived experience of disability and madness. Focusing on the University of Toronto, Canada, as a case, I trace the systematic exclusion, silencing, and erasure of the perspectives of people with lived experience within the University to the University's inception as a colonialist project. The analysis is supported by a theorization of resilience and a brief genealogical analysis of the University of Toronto's history as "Temporary Asylum for Female Lunatics" (or "University Asylum") from 1856–1869. This paper illustrates the integral role that the concept of resilience plays in the social order of the University, and in the exploitation, oppression, and forcible displacement of mad-identified people by the University. Although the University Asylum building is now demolished, the colonial project that leveled it lingers on in resilience-based, success-oriented, university disability programs and initiatives.

Keywords: Mad Studies; Disability Studies; positive psychology; resilience; university students

This paper uses an interpretive sociological perspective informed by Mad Studies and Disability Studies approaches to analyze the role of the university in a psycho-social politics of resilience.¹ I explore the implications that concepts of resilience have for university students living with embodied difference and experiencing madness, mental difference, and distress. To understand how resilience is used to justify discriminatory treatment of mad and disabled university students, current understandings of the "successful" university student are situated within a historical perspective. A genealogical analysis of the of the University of Toronto's history as Temporary Asylum for Female Lunatics (although more commonly known as the University Asylum) from 1856–1869, illustrates how concepts of resilience have been used by the University to legitimize dominance, normalize dispossession and displacement, and absolve the University of responsibility for its role in the perpetuation of oppressive colonial regimes within Canada.

¹ This article is based on research described in the author's PhD dissertation (Aubrecht, 2012b).

A historically grounded analysis of contemporary psy-understandings of university student life highlights the violence of the erasures of the perspectives of people with lived experience of disability and madness. An investigation of resilience as it relates to university student life also reveals important distinctions and even tensions between Mad Studies and Disability Studies. The two fields share common critiques of the hegemony of normalcy (Davis, 1996), and a commitment to anti-oppression and to confronting and transforming intersecting systems of exploitation and oppression (Dixon, 2014; Overboe, 2007). But they are not the same. The ways of knowing, needs, and aspirations of each field have been shaped by mad and disabled people's histories and movements, which are multiple, dynamic, and dispersed. Recognizing the distinct and multiple histories and cultures of Mad Studies and Disability Studies makes it possible to imagine the fields as allies. Allyship is a continuous process that includes, but also involves more than, identity (Burstow, 2005). Imagining Mad Studies and Disability Studies as allies involves recognizing their interrelations and their shared commitment to challenge inequitable structures. It also involves acknowledging how each field participates in the perpetuation of privilege and oppression. To illustrate this point, I next describe how the field of Disability Studies has participated in the marginalization of the perspectives of people who experience madness.

My research in Disability Studies has examined how the field invokes the language and practices of the psy-sciences (Aubrecht, 2010; 2012a). And yet, Disability Studies is not merely a field. It is a space of community and culture (Chandler, 2011). My participation in Disability Studies and self-identification as a disabled person brought me to Mad Studies and supported me in developing an understanding of madness as difference, rather than illness or disorder. Further, Disability Studies made it possible for me to imagine madness as a difference that made a difference (Michalko, 2002); and thus, a difference that mattered and could mean something good. Disability Studies culture, scholarship, and activism made it possible to imagine new ways of relating to myself, others, and society (Titchkosky, 2003). It was, and is, a place in which I feel a sense of belonging, a home. Still, there was something unsettling about my homecoming. As a way of knowing and a way of being, Disability Studies supported my recognition of madness as a difference that made a difference. However, it also provoked questions concerning the meaning of that difference, why it mattered, and for whom. The commitment to question normalcy and the role of medical expertise provides an opportunity to choose disability. However, within Disability Studies, references to madness often appear within disabled peoples' reflections on what life was like before they found disability community and culture, and with it, new self-understanding (Aubrecht, 2012a). Ideas and images of madness are routinely used to communicate a metaphoric rite of passage. Madness is constructed as a cliff on the edge of which Disabled people teetered before coming into consciousness of disability as a social and political identity (Aubrecht, 2012a).

Paradoxically, the place that had given me a sense of home also made it impossible for me to ever be fully at home. Being mad-identified meant I couldn't make the transition into an authentic disability consciousness. My claim to

citizenship in Disability Studies continuously required qualification. And so I searched for my disability; a search that turned me back toward the medical and psy-regimes from which Disability Studies had originally been my refuge.

By adopting a reflexive approach to understanding the field, culture, and community that I had claimed as my home, I could recognize sanism as a form of ableism, and ableism as a structure of Disability Studies. In identifying with a Disability Studies perspective and claiming it as my home, I participated in the perpetuation of ideological structures that marginalize people who are disabled by sanist culture, and who have lived experience of psychiatric oppression. Even as situating myself within Disability Studies created new solidarities, and even as these solidarities were forged in a desire to re-imagine embodied difference, my sense of alienation and estrangement within Disability Studies communities lingered. The traces of this lingering weighed all the more heavily since this was not only my chosen home, but a new orientation to home as a space of community forged out of struggle—for recognition, belonging, and self-definition. In *Mad Studies* (LeFrançois, Menzies, & Reaume, 2013), I found valuable conceptual tools that I could use to navigate my own sense of alienation and homelessness, and reorient my relationship to university life. What I understood as the field's critical reflexive relationship to language (e.g., Reaume, 2002) animated my renewed interest in making a home within academia.

Self-reflexivity is a political project. It supports enhanced awareness of the actuality of multiple, contradictory, and interlocked cultural vocabularies and experiential realities. Self-reflexivity is also a continuous project. The structures of sanism and ableism that organize how academic and activist fields represent perspectives (Overboe, 2007) also shape how universities imagine and treat students. In the section that follows, I use the concept of resilience to examine normative assumptions and processes that marginalize university students with lived experience of disability and madness. I approach the University of Toronto as a case to highlight processes that are local and specific to the University, as well as processes that may resemble, intersect, and overlap with other universities and institutions. For example, many universities in Canada and the Western world have developed initiatives designed to help students cope with the norms, expectations, routine practices, and ritual interactions of university life. Coping initiatives take many forms and are often aligned with recruitment and retention strategies. A focus on coping animates orientation activities and peer-support groups to help new students successfully transition and adapt to university culture. Without discounting the value of such programs for many students, it is important to examine what is involved in learning to cope (deal with estrangement), and what is at stake for students who do not successfully demonstrate knowledge of coping in normal and expected ways.

Learning to Cope: A Sign of the Psy-Times

Within University of Toronto student and health services literature the resilience of Western social institutions emerges as a project for which all individuals must take responsibility. The first step to taking responsibility involves building resiliencies by learning to cope with adversity. Price's (2011) *Mad at*

School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability in Academic Life questioned how university and college students and faculty living with ‘mental disability,’ inclusive of madness, mental illness, and different and disorderly minds, are imagined, interpreted, and negotiated with university environments. Price analyzed how rhetorics of mental disability in academic discourse marginalize and exclude students and faculty whose ways of being of the world appear different from what is expected. As part of her analysis, she sought to “reconstruct ‘normal’ academic discourses to become more accessible for all” (2011, p. 8). Before embarking on such a project, we must first consider the conditions of the production of academic discourse more broadly, and specifically, the relationship between the psy-sciences and academia. Rather than “reconstruct ‘normal’ academic discourses to become more accessible for all,” beginning with the use of a more inclusive new category—‘mental disability’—we could begin by analyzing how psy-knowledge and practice shape inequities and processes of typification that make recognition of “‘normal’ academic discourse” possible in the first place (Aubrecht, 2014, 2016).

A project that aims to “reconstruct ‘normal’ academic discourses to become more accessible for all” (Price, 2011, p. 8) offers one way that universities can learn to cope with the appearance of mad and disabled people in university settings. Learning to cope emerges as a sign of *psy-times*, and the product and primal scene of Western logics of power. The defining characteristic of *psy-times* is a style of thinking about success that is embodied in the notion of resilience. Success is understood as a capacity to make “positive” departures (adjustments), and complete returns (recovery). This approach to success, which is central to positive psychology, frames difference as a question of adjustment, and adjustment as an opportunity to improve life for all. It shifts the focus from repair to reconstruction, and from pathology to health (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to the field’s most prominent thinkers, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, “Treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best” (2000, p. 7). Nurturing what is best involves learning from the successes of those who have endured the worst. Lived experience is valuable insofar as it supports adjustment. But what about when adjustment does not happen? Are people who do not adjust failures?

Psy-times are organized by a utilitarian logic. You are as valuable as the contribution you are perceived to make to the community (Aubrecht, 2013). The perspectives of people who have lived experiences of adversity and have adjusted are valued to the extent that they can be used to nurture what is best. Through positive psychology, *psy-power* and knowledge can focus on nurturing normalcy. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2008) illustrated this assumption in the following assertion, “This science and practice will also reorient psychology back to its two neglected missions—making normal people stronger and more productive and making high human potential actual” (p. 8). Following the logic of resilience practice, this move demonstrates the resilience of psychology as a way of knowing and a way of being—an epistemic community. The idea and logic of resilience make it possible for psychology to demonstrate its capacity to recover its bearings and distance itself from pathology. This positive *return* is distinguished from unproductive *repetition*.

In constructing success as a capacity, psychological reasoning disciplines how the recurrence of adversity can be perceived in terms of repetition. Under psy-control and from its disciplined point of view, repetition is to be interpreted as a product and measurable sign of unfulfilled desires and objectives, what Mazzarino, Morifi, Kaufmann, Farias, and Fernandes referred to as a “never completed satisfaction” (2011, p. 1487). Repetition becomes a tool for (re)constructing normal discourse as a subject proper to the psy-disciplines. Couched within professionalized psy-understandings of repetition, normal discourse represents a means of dividing the world along the lines of the normal and pathological (Canguilhem, 1991). Repetition is central to the reproduction of psychiatric orders, as described by Mills (2014):

In its travels, psychiatry is repeated all over the world, in different contexts. This repetition is the mechanism by which the globalization of psychiatry is made possible. For some, such repetitions are condemned to repeat old patterns—patterns of colonial domination that are only slightly altered. (p. 133)

In psy-times, expressions of grievance, distress, and dissent are subject to interpersonal and administrative processes of individualization, depoliticization, and pathologization. Grief and distress are treated as private matters rather than collective issues, that serve to confirm the “personal tragedy” (Oliver, 1996) of disabled embodiment. Within university discourse, disabled embodiment materializes as an “adjustment problem” (Oliver, 1996, p. 30). This problem is represented as both belonging to the university on the one hand, and beyond its control on the other.

It is important to acknowledge that, however troubling, there is something revolutionary about these times. It is precisely this revolutionary element of a *now* organized by psy-understandings of human action that invites close reading and critical attention. And it is also precisely this revolutionary element that makes the university student a figure that should be figured-in to more macro-level discussions concerning social justice taking place within Disability Studies, Mad Studies, and social work. Critical psychologist and counselor Moodley’s (2009) notion of “speaking inside the sentence” (p. 305) provides a way to think about the constitutive resistances that erupt from within institutions that shape the nature and culture of relations of knowledge and power. In conceptualizing the student body as a site of repetition, and the *return of the return*, it becomes possible to think of the student body as a site of revolution, of social transformation; to interpret the work of returning as action that is oriented to the overturn of contemporary power relations. At the same time, the orders of biomedical language and neoliberal practices constrict the possibilities which revolutionary thought and action make present. Breaking through the return of the return from within requires the use of multiple methods and perspectives, and a critical relation to disciplinary traditions, even in situations where tradition is represented as alternative, critical, and “new.” Moodley framed this process of speaking inside the sentence in politico-temporal terms as “a political strategy of empowerment” and “a time to construct a new meaning of an old self, and an old meaning of a new self” (2009, p. 305).

A critical appropriation of the language of psychology by those who are under its care provides one way to disrupt the system from within. The possibilities for this are discussed below.

Disability Models and Their Disruptions

A good model can enable us to see something we don't understand because in the model it can be seen from different viewpoints (not available to us in reality). (Finkelstein, 2002, p. 5)

Goffman's (1961) medical service model can be used to examine current definitions of university student mental health and illness. The medical service model, however, takes the individual as its focus, and consequently, it is necessarily limited and may even expose the researcher to the risk of reproducing individualizing epistemologies of disability. I now describe what is commonly recognized and referred to in Disability Studies as the "social model" (Oliver, 1983, 1990, 1996; Shakespeare & Watson, 2002), an alternative to the medical model, with the aim of mapping some of the different frames by which the "university experience" and "student life" (University of Toronto, 2009) are made knowable, perceivable; objectively given, and subjectively real.

Beginning with the assumption that disability is a social, political, and cultural phenomenon, Disability Studies can produce unconventional responses to the institutionalized requirement to read difficult situations in terms of personal and highly individualized "problems." In a chapter entitled, "The Social Model in Context," Oliver (1996) discussed his conceptualization of "disability models" (p. 30). As "one of the originators of the discussions about disability models" (p. 30), Oliver claimed a responsibility to "clarify some of the issues [he] intended to raise" in his early writing on what he perceived as a "binary distinction" between "individual and social models of disability" (p. 30). He situated his understanding of a binary distinction in his teaching of health professional and social work students in the search for a practical tool to help him "make sense of the world" for his students (p. 30). Oliver's conception of disability models was derived from the distinction drawn by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) between impairment and disability, as stated in its "Fundamental Principles" (1976, as cited in Oliver, 1996, pp. 30–31).

What is implicit within these first few pages of Oliver's contextualization of a conceptual framework within Disability Studies is his orientation to disability models as a way of teaching his students to "make sense of the world" of Disability Studies. The social and individual models offered a way of clarifying the principles of Disability Studies theory and activism to a group of people who may have no experience in the field, and who as students are also in the process of coming into health professions and social work perspectives, which will be their designation. These models offered a way of making Disability Studies relevant to health professions and social work students on a more practical level, in ways that would align with the perspectives of their respective fields and disciplines, as evidenced in the following passage: "This [binary distinction] was no amazing new insight on my

part dreamed up in some ivory tower but was really an attempt to enable me to make sense of the world for my social work students and other professionals whom I taught” (Oliver, 1996, p. 30). Oliver reiterated his conception of disability models as a way of enabling student discovery from a practice- and professions-based perspective when he said, “I wanted to put this distinction into a framework that could be understood by professionals with a limited though expanding knowledge of disability issues” (Oliver, 1996, p. 31).

The difficulty with disability models is that they, too, are predicated on what Agamben referred to as a “biopolitical fracture” (1998, p. 178): a separation of the individual from the social which invokes a notion of a life lived in the absence of medicine, a non-medicalized life, and with it, a non-medicalized language of health. The critical difference, according to Oliver, is one of location. The individual model defines disability as a problem that can be located within individuals, and originating in “functional limitations and psychological losses which are assumed to arise from disability” (Oliver, 1996, p. 32). This way of making sense of disability is exemplified in what he referred to as “‘the personal tragedy theory of disability’, which suggests that disability is some terrible chance event which occurs at random to unfortunate individuals” (Oliver, 1996, p. 32). In saying this, Oliver presented the individual model as a paradoxical negation of disability, a way of conceptualizing disability as an external problem, immanent to the individual, which “arises” from itself. In contrast, the social model “does not deny the problem of disability but locates it squarely within society” (Oliver, 1996, p. 32). The problem of disability imagined here does not reside in the limits that impairment places on individuals’ capacity to realize success, and with success, potential; but in the discrimination disabled persons face in a world structured by able-bodied experiences and ideals.

Here, we have a version of disability, one pole in the UPIAS impairment–disability distinction, as something that ought to be perceived in dichotomous terms: as external to society, or wholly attributable to society. However, for Barclay (2011), social remedy cannot be ensured by “recognition that social factors contribute to functional limitation and disadvantage” (p. 282). This she related to the fact that “many perspectives that have often been associated with the medical model can embrace the view that society is required, as a matter of justice, to ameliorate the disadvantages associated with impairments” (p. 282). According to Barclay, critiques of the medical model alone are insufficient given that

insofar as they offer a plausible characterization of disability, both the medical model and the social model are normatively loaded. In making claims about how society should respond to disability, each of them implicitly presupposes a view about the social responsibilities of society that are rarely acknowledged let alone defended. (p. 286)

Although the social model of disability may hold promise for understanding the exploitation and oppression of mad people, it was not designed with their experiences at the centre. As a consequence, madness is often figured within Disability Studies as a limit case to develop and refine understandings of the disability–impairment binary (McWade, Milton, & Beresford, 2015). One of the

limits of the social model is that it does not necessarily include a consideration of the historical development of the institutions through which the “social responsibilities of society” (Barclay, 2011, p. 286) are structured and reproduced. This analysis now turns to a significant moment in the history of University of Toronto to illustrate the relationship between reconstruction and resilience.

Reconstruction & Resilience: A Genealogy of the University of Toronto

Figure 1: Demolition of King’s College Residence, 1886



This figure illustrates the original building of what is now referred to as the University Toronto. The building was completed in 1845 and demolished in 1886 following a period as an asylum. (University of Toronto Archives, 2012; reprinted with permission.)

A genealogy of the University of Toronto illustrates one way to situate the University as a foundational moment in Canada’s history as a nation, a moment that when recovered and thought with, could also provide a view to the relationship between colonial governance and institutions of higher education. Although Ottawa is the nation’s capital and the site of Parliament, Toronto was the original site of Parliament, and interestingly, the first building of the University of Toronto, named University of King’s College, was the temporary home of Canada’s first government. The University of Toronto’s colonial history and its early days as an asylum animated my interest in the University as a site for the exploration of student mental life. The story of the University is interwoven with histories of colonialism and conflict, settlement, revolution, and resettlement. It is thus a condition whose actuality cannot be known apart from its beginnings in loyalties and land; a history that is replete with cultural genocide and colonization as part of the founding of Canada (Shantz, 2010):

Displacement was social and cultural as well as physical and geographic. It involved missionary activity and the institution of schools which took

away the ability of individuals and communities to pass on traditional values to their children. It also involved the imposition of male-oriented Victorian values and the stripping away of traditional activities such as drumming, dancing, and other ceremonies. Indigenous peoples were also displaced politically, forced by colonial laws to abandon tradition governing structures in favour of colonial-style institutions. (p. 230)

Within Canada the University of Toronto constitutes the material and symbolic presence of Britain's "new" North American empire within the "new world." It is a living monument to the condition, survival, and recovery of British European hegemony after the Seven Years' War that ended in the Treaty of Paris in 1763, when the British were appointed "masters of what became the Dominion of Canada" (Sussman, 1998), as well as the American Revolution, and Canadian federation in the British North American Act of 1867. Further, grasped from the roots, assumptions of the University as an "experiment" in the secularization of higher learning can also be unearthed. The very "idea of the University" (Jaspers, 1960), as made manifest in the British colony of Upper Canada, can itself be conceived as an "experiment" (Richardson, 1990), insofar as it can be understood as representing something "new": a secular, non-denominational institution of higher education that was composed of multiple denominational colleges, each recognized as having a distinct personality and spirit. In the specific case of the University of Toronto, the idea of the University is an idea steeped in a history of colonialism. Although the British colonists had dreamed of creating a home in the "new world," they also wanted to preserve in this newly discovered land a sense of the home they left. The possibilities of discovery were restricted, since the buildings they created referenced the image and memory of the homes they left behind. The deep structural violence of this otherwise nostalgic relation surfaces once one considers that the land they arrived in was neither uninhabited, nor even really "new."

Between 1829 and 1843 the University released funds and lands (the spoils of colonial conquest) for the University, including a building reserved for "collegiate purposes." In 1852, the construction of King's College, well underway, was abruptly halted by Government House (Richardson, 1990, p. 44). The reason given for the suspension was revealed in two Parliamentary Acts passed in April and June of 1853, which gave the Crown complete control over the University and all of its assets, including "all the property of the university, and every right, title, claim or demand of the corporation of the University of Toronto, to any real or personal property, debts or sums of money," in the form of a trust for the University (Special Committee of the Senate of the University of Toronto, 1895, p. 42). This trust that the Crown held for the University involved the expropriation and possession of any properties imparted to the University through Imperial endowments, as well as the eviction of the University of Toronto from the newly erected King's College to make way for the creation of a Parliament building in Queen's Park to be financed from funds from the University trust (Richardson, 1990, p. 44; Special Committee, 1895, p. 42). The Crown rationalized these moves as in the public's best interest.

The once university, then government complex, was transformed yet again in 1856, this time into a "Branch Lunatic Asylum" under the authority of the

Department of Public Works (Special Committee, 1895, p. 45). In correspondence between the Crown and the University concerning the redistribution of properties within the University trust dated 1860, then University Bursar David Buchan wrote the following to the Secretary of Public Works: “I take it for granted that, under the Order in Council quoted [1858], the Lunatic Asylum portion [of University grounds] will fall into the hands of the University whenever the Lunatics are removed, which we all hope will be soon” (Special Committee, 1895, p. 53). In 1861, the University Bursar continued to protest this on the grounds that the “occupation” of the University Building by the Asylum “withheld the University property from its legitimate use.” While efforts continued to dispossess the Crown of properties acceded to the University by Britain and to remove the asylum from the University building, it was agreed in the interim that, at the very least, the University should receive some compensation in the form of rent and reparations (Special Committee, 1895, p. 47). The asylum, which was designated the “Temporary Asylum for Female Lunatics” but more generally known as the “University Asylum” (Richardson, 1990, p. 44), closed in 1869, at which time most of the “temporary” inhabitants of the University building were “vacated” and absorbed into the Provincial Lunatic Asylum (Burgess, 1898, p. 32); perhaps seeking to avoid a repetition of history. As Friedland (2002) remarked:

The foundation stone for the University College was laid without fanfare or publicity or any of the grand ceremony that had accompanied the laying of the stone for the ill-fated King’s College. The Governor General was not there, and the stone itself was unmarked. As far as anyone knows, no documents or other objects were inserted in it... Wilson later remarked that “they laid the stone secretly as if engaged in a deed of shame, full of hope, but also full of fear.” He then added, “Perhaps it was well and wisely done.” (p. 56)

The University’s repossession and reconstruction of the building involved the forced removal of bodies, perceived as only temporary inhabitants to begin with, to more “suitable” and “permanent” locales *elsewhere*.² Through their removal the natural order could be restored. Only in moving beyond its troubled past, and away from its roots, could the University start over. By treating this situation and experience as a referent of how *not to* proceed, the University could recover the possibility of a future free of madness (and mad women). As can be expected, nowhere in the University archives does one find women’s narratives of their experiences. Their absence appears in the rationalization of their removal and disappearance from the University. The history of the University of Toronto can be read as a psychiatric narrative. The emphasis on gender made visible in references to a *female lunatic asylum* serves to reinforce the irrationality of the failed containments of the past.³ Paying attention to, and documenting, this history makes it

² A critical analysis of the historical displacement of mad people in Ontario is found in Voronka (2008).

³ For a poignant examination of the relationship between documentation, gender, sexuality, and race in psychiatric narratives see Daley, Costa, & Ross (2012).

possible to understand what is happening in the present. It contributes to an archive that mad and Disabled people and their allies can draw on to make sense of current situations, realities and experiences, as noted by Morrow (2013),

There is now an established literature documenting the ways in which psychiatry historically and contemporarily continues to pathologize women and racialized groups, and specifically how psychiatry has been used as a form of social control to contain and constrain individuals who are seen to be disrupting social order. (p. 325)

Reflexive Analyses of Descriptions of Student Life Matter

Disabled persons have witnessed the normative violence of definitions of resilience, while at the same time bearing the weight of an ableist world that refuses to acknowledge this witnessing. Disability Studies has been subject to criticism for its attempts to create spaces in which the pain and anguish of ableist oppressions can be observed, analyzed, and addressed, and within which collective resistance can be organized (Siebers, 2002).

Siebers treated accusations of narcissism as offering a powerful expression of the “political psychology” applied to Disability Studies and to its efforts to organize consciousness of suffering and oppression as the product of ableist norms (2002, p. 42).⁴ In calling for discussions concerning how “questions of identity and suffering contribute to the political as such,” Siebers offered a way to situate Western mythologies of resistance within a “metapsychology that represents acts of self-consciousness as negative by definition” (p. 42). Like resilience, the concept of narcissism serves as tool for regulating relations to adversity and for framing adversity as an experience that is not wholly negative. From the perspective of resilience, difficult experiences could even be conceived as positive in the type of behavior they can condition, and as a resource that can be exploited.

Disability Studies’ and Mad Studies’ analyses of containments, as they are known and as they are lived, can generate new ways of reading solidarity and resistance. At the same time it matters *how* these fields are engaged and where they intersect. Although promising, alternative and perhaps even disruptive, beginning-in-between—in this case as *interdisciplinary* fields and traditions—does not guarantee space for the perspective of first-person voices (Russo & Beresford, 2015). The accounts of the women who lived in the University Asylum are nowhere to be found in the University archives. The story told in the archives is the story of the University. The demolition of the University Asylum clearly shows their perspectives were not welcome. Although they lived and labored there, the University Asylum was never imagined as their home. They never had the choice of when or how to leave. This is important to bear in mind in considerations of how the perspectives of students with lived experience of madness and disability are represented and treated in the University of today, and what we can expect from the University to come.

⁴ Mollow (2004) provides a thoughtful response to Siebers’s understanding of narcissism as inevitably informed by ableism.

The concept of resilience visibly dominates current university-sponsored programs, services, and educational materials to support *all* students. The good of this concept is treated as obvious and beyond reproach. All students should be supported in feeling at home in the university, or at the very least, make it through until it is time to leave. The concept of resilience provides a means of rationalizing the struggles, withdrawal, and removal of students. It serves as a measure of belonging: Universities can never be a home for students who struggle but do not recover. At the University of Toronto, resilience has a special significance. It also serves as a means of distancing the University from its history as an asylum. Through resilience the university can affirm its recovery, and an image of itself as a university and *not an asylum*.

A critical analysis of resilience in university student life programs and services shows how universities rationalize the disappearance and removal of Mad- and Disabled-identified students. McWade, Milton, and Beresford (2015) shared their hope that, “building solidarity across experiences of marginalization and disablement can move us beyond defining how we each individually deviate from the norm” (p. 307). The question becomes how to do so without eliding crucial differences within and across the perspectives of people with lived experience. This is not a new question, and it is a question central to intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1993; Erevelles & Minear, 2010). But it is a question that takes on new meaning when asked within the context of university student life, and in light of a recent move within Canadian universities to collect and combine accessibility programs and services for students with lived experiences of disability and madness, mental difference, illness, and distress under the new title of *academic success*.

References

- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Aubrecht, K. (2010). Re-reading the Ontario review of the roots of youth violence report: The relevance of Fanon for a critical disability studies perspective. In G. Dei & M. Simmons (Eds.), *Fanon and education: Thinking through pedagogical possibilities* (pp. 55–78). New York, NY: Peter Lang Press.
- Aubrecht, K. (2012a). Disability Studies and the language of mental illness. *The Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, 8(2), 31–44.
- Aubrecht, K. (2012b). *Surviving success, reconciling resilience: A critical analysis of the appearance of student ‘mental life’ at one Canadian university* (Unpublished dissertation). University of Toronto, ON.
- Aubrecht, K. (2013). Translating happiness: Medicine, culture and social progress. *Health Culture and Society*, 5(1). Retrieved from <http://hcs.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/hcs/issue/view/6>
- Aubrecht, K. (2014). Re-imagining success: Ordinary orders and university student ‘mental life’. In M. Lynch (Ed.), *Reimagining education reform and innovation* (pp. 55–76). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

- Aubrecht, K. (2016). Solidarity in the solitudes of student life: Contemporary women students discuss life and work in the academy. In E. Whittaker (Ed.), *Solitudes of the workplace: Women in universities* (pp. 118–135). Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Barclay, L. (2011). Justice and disability: What kind of theorizing is needed? *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 42(3), 273–287.
- Burgess, T. J. W. (1898). *A historical sketch of our Canadian institutions for the insane*. Ottawa, ON: Royal Society of Canada.
- Burstow, B. (2005). Feminist antipsychiatry praxis—Women and the movement(s): A Canadian perspective. In W. Chan, D. Chunn, & R. Menzies (Eds.), *Women, madness and the law: A feminist reader* (pp. 245–258). Portland, OR: Routledge-Cavendish.
- Canguilhem, G. (1991). *The normal and the pathological*. New York, NY: Zone Books.
- Chandler, E. (2011). Crippling community: New meanings of disability and community. *Nomorepotlucks*, 19 (Jan–Feb). Retrieved from <http://nomorepotlucks.org/site/cripping-community-new-meanings-of-disability-and-community/>
- Crenshaw, K. (1993). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of colour. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.
- Daley, A., Costa, L., & Ross, L. (2012). (W)righting women: Constructions of gender, sexuality and race in the psychiatric chart. *Culture, Health & Sexuality: An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care*, 14(8), 955–969.
- Dixon, C. (2014). *Another politics: Talking across today's transformative movements*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Erevelles, N., & Minear, A. (2010). Unspeakable offenses: Untangling race and disability in discourses of intersectionality. *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, 4(2), 127–145.
- Finkelstein, V. (2002). *The social model of disability repossessed*. Retrieved from the Center for Disability Studies, University of Leeds, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/finkelstein/soc%20mod%20repossessed.pdf>
- Freidland, M. (2002). *The University of Toronto: A history*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Jaspers, K. (1960). *The idea of the university*. (H. A. T. Reiche & H. F. Vanderschmidt, Trans.). London, UK: Peter Owen Ltd.
- LeFrançois, B. A., Menzies, R., & Reaume, G. (Eds.). (2013). *Mad matters: A critical reader in Canadian Mad Studies*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.

- Mazzarino, J., Morigi, V., Kaufmann, C., Farias, A., & Fernandes, D. (2011). Daily practices, consumption and citizenship. *Annals of the Brazilian Academy of Science*, 83(4), 1481–1491.
- McWade, B., Milton, D., & Beresford, P. (2015). Mad Studies and neurodiversity: A dialogue. *Disability & Society*, 30(2), 305–309.
- Mollow, A. (2004). Identity politics and Disability Studies: A critique of recent theory. *Michigan Quarterly Review*, XLIII(2). Retrieved from <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/lib/collist/>
- Morrow, M. (2013). Recovery: Progressive paradigm or neoliberal smokescreen. In B. A. LeFrançois, R. Menzies, & G. Reaume (Eds.), *Mad matters: A critical reader in Canadian Mad Studies*, (pp. 323–333). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Michalko, R. (2002). *The difference disability makes*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Mills, C. (2014). *Decolonizing global mental health: The psychiatricization of the majority world*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Moodley, R. (2009). Multi(ple) cultural voices speaking “outside the sentence” of counseling and psychology. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 22(3), 297–307.
- Oliver, M. (1983). *Social work with disabled people*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillans.
- Oliver, M. (1990). *The politics of disablement*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillans.
- Oliver, M. (1996). *Understanding disability: From theory to practice*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Overboe, J. (2007). Vitalism: Subjectivity exceeding racism, sexism and (psychiatric) ableism. *Wagadu*, 4, 23–34. Retrieved from <http://webhost1.cortland.edu/wagadu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/02/overbow.pdf>
- Price, M. (2011). *Mad at school: Rhetorics of mental disability and academic life*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Reaume, G. (2002). Lunatic to patient to person: Nomenclature in psychiatric history and the influence of patients' activism in North America. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 25(4), 405–426.
- Richardson, D. (1990). *A not unsightly building: University College and its history*. Toronto, ON: Mosaic Press for University College.
- Russo, J., & Beresford, P. (2015). Between exclusion and colonisation: Seeking a place for mad people's knowledge in academia. *Disability & Society*, 30(1), 153–157.
- Seligman, M., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5–14.
- Shakespeare, T., & Watson, N. (2002). The social model of disability: An outdated ideology. *Research in Social Science and Disability*, 2, 9–28.

- Shantz, J. (2010). 'The foundation of our community': Cultural restoration, reclaiming children and youth in an indigenous community. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 32(3), 229–236.
- Siebers, T. (2002). Tender organs, narcissism, and identity politics. In S. Snyder, B. Brueggemann, & R. Garland Thomson (Eds.), *Disability Studies: Enabling the humanities* (pp. 40–55). New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America.
- Special Committee of the Senate of the University of Toronto. (1895). *Report on claims respecting the assets and endowments of the University*. Toronto, ON: Warwick Bros. & Rutter Printers.
- Sussman, S. (1998). The first asylums in Canada: A response to neglectful community care and current trends. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 43, 260–264.
- Titchkosky, T. (2003). *Disability, self and society*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- University of Toronto. (2009). Health & wellness: Helping students make the most of their university experience. *Student Life Programs & Services*. Retrieved from <http://healthservice.utoronto.ca/pdfs/Health--Wellness-Brochure.htm>
- University of Toronto Archives. (2012). Demolition of King's College residence, 1886 [Photograph]. *Heritage University of Toronto*, U of T Archives Image Bank, B1979-1006. Retrieved from <http://heritage.utoronto.ca/fedora/repository/default%3A21710>
- Voronka, J. (2008). Re/moving forward: Spacing mad degeneracy at the queen street site. *Resources for Feminist Research*, 33(1/2), 45–59.

Author Note

I am grateful to the editors and reviewers for their constructive feedback, and to Tanya Titchkosky, Rod Michalko, and Kari Dehli for their comments on early drafts. Research for this paper was supported by funding from a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Katie Aubrecht, Department of Family Studies & Gerontology, Mount Saint Vincent University, 3155 Union Street, Halifax, NS, B3K 5H2, Canada. Email: katieaubrecht@gmail.com