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**Tyler, I. (2020). *Stigma: The Machinery of inequality*. London: Zed Books.**

I read Imogen Tyler's *Stigma: The Machinery of inequality* at a breathless pace, scribbling in the margins and turning over page corners –testament that an academic page-turner is not an oxymoron. *Stigma* develops from Tyler's earlier (2013) book *Revolted Subjects*, which explored the foundational role of abjection within neoliberal governmentality, and traced “how stigmatization operates as a form of governance which legitimizes the reproduction and entrenchment of inequalities and injustices” (p. 8). Stigmatization thus goes from an index entry in the former, to the main topic of the latter, and Tyler makes a compelling case for this shift (also explored in her co-authored work on *The Sociology of Stigma* (edited with Tom Slater), and *From Stigma Power to Black Power* (a graphic essay, with Charlotte Bailey). This body of work develops Tyler's interest in classificatory violence and declassificatory struggles.

*Stigma's* perspective is both “vertical (looking upwards to sites of stigma production) and temporal (taking long views on histories of stigma practices), while focusing throughout on developing a new understanding of stigma as a violent practice of exploitation and social control” (p. 252). Tracing stigmatization within and across the penal tattoo, black power, bordering practices, and the stigma machine of austerity, Tyler's *Stigma* is explicitly redrawn from the social psychological boundaries and “individualistic, ahistorical and politically anaesthetised conceptualisations” (p. 8) that have dominated stigma research since the work of Erving Goffman. This is a breath of fresh air for those of us who feel frustrated by the often inward-looking genre of work on stigma, with its thinly veiled implication that stigma is something to be managed by the stigmatized.

Highly relevant to CSP, and the central force for me of the book, is Tyler's emphasis on how “stigma is designed, crafted and activated to govern populations on multiple scales and in diverse sites” (p.269), making stigma integral to, rather than an unfortunate by-product of, much welfare and immigration policy. In addition, and in keeping with the rich scholarship of black studies and black feminism which inform Tyler's reading of stigma, Tyler drives home the longer colonial history of stigmatization as a technology of statecraft, across metropole and colony. In fact, she literally locates her writing on stigma to her home – to Lancaster, a small city in north-west England, which in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, was England's fourth largest slave trading centre. A key argument of the book is that while it is important to be attentive to what is ‘new’ within contemporary uses of stigma, a focus only on the ‘new’ can obscure much longer histories of stigmatization and the ways they shape our present.

Tyler draws on the work of Alexander Weheliye (2014), who is deeply informed by black feminist theories, and who argues that the “jurisdiction of humanity depends upon the workings of racialization (differentiation) and racism (hierarchization and exclusion)” (Weheliye, 2014, p. 72) whose techniques boomerang between colony and metropole (Weheliye, 2014, p.3). This boomeranging is captured throughout *Stigma*, for example, in the ‘internal colonisation’ of England's poor put forward by Jeremy Bentham's plans for a profit-making ‘carceral welfare state’ (p. 63) – operating as a public-private partnership modelled on the East India company. For Tyler, stigma is an “inscriptive form of power which operates through the axis of race–class” - while also being a “mechanism of patriarchal power” (p.49), where “there is no politics of class which is not already racialised” (p.73) (see Shilliam, 2018). The book provides extensive evidence that there is also no

politics of stigma that is not already racialized (aligning with Weheliye's (2014) assertion that classificatory violence has racialization at its foundations).

According to Tyler, while its possible to “track the violence of stigma through particular strands and call it by different names – such as racism, classism, disablism and misogyny” (p. 269-270), she is interested in intersections - stigma's function “as a dehumanizing praxis of subjugation” (p.270). Much is gained in this approach – it enables Tyler to focus on “stigma power” in order to “forge an intersectional concept” that allows tracing of “historical continuities, connections and commonalities between manifold forms and practices of classificatory violence” (p. 269-270). While the juxtaposition of different forms of stigma enables their rich connections to be seen, I did at times wonder if there is a risk of conflation of these different experiences as they are clustered under one name. It made me wonder about what is potentially overlooked by grouping such diverse forms of oppression, and governance and the affects they produce, under the name of ‘stigma’? And what does the naming of stigma in relation to oppression do – for example, what happens when we say racial stigma and not structural racism, and what is the intimate relationship between the two?

Tyler's project recognizes how the white sociological canon has marginalized black sociological thought in relation to racial stigma, and *Stigma* is deeply informed by the theory-making and knowledge production of scholars of colour, especially from black feminism, critical race scholarship, black studies, decolonial and postcolonialism, as well as from disability and Mad studies. Mental health makes a late appearance in the book in a fascinating albeit brief exposition of the political economy of mental health anti-stigma campaigns. This left me wanting more. As a book committed to and that often poetically *does* intersectionality, it would also be great to see *Stigma* draw more deeply on the work of people of colour within Mad and Disability Studies – given the critique that both these areas of scholarship are largely white, and yet sanism and ableism, and their associated forms of stigmatization, are deeply racialized (Gorman, 2017; Pickens, 2019).

Another book published in the same year as, and highly relevant to, *Stigma*, is Mary O'Hara's '*The Shame Game: Overturning the Toxic Poverty Narrative*' (2020). In the book, O'Hara traces the weaponizing of the individualistic, stigmatising narrative that poor people, through irresponsible lifestyle choices, are to blame for poverty. In an example that shares its roots with the penal tattoo, so central to Tyler's argument, and to shame sanctions (see Tyler, pp.144-146), O'Hara discusses 'lunch shaming' - the public stigmatization of those who can't afford school meals, including in one school in Alabama, rubber stamping a child's arm with 'I need lunch money' (p. 151-2). Linked to this, I find Tyler's work has much to contribute to, even though it doesn't directly engage with, debates in public health and international development about the pedagogical uses of shame as a policy tool for changing behaviour in the pursuit of so-called 'good health' (Bell et al. 2010). I also found myself thinking a lot about the so far unexplored linkages between Tyler's stigmatization and Jasbir Puar's (2017) work on the production and industry of debility and maiming as forms of statecraft used to control diverse populations.

The book's intersectional analysis, tracing the tentacles of stigmatization across histories and geographies, is an immense strength. Yet the book is also risky – a risk of everything being stigma and stigma being everything. *Stigma* is and does so much in this book that there are times where the nuances of classificatory violence and hierarchization get a little lost, albeit amidst rich entanglements

and historical connections. Yet I was left wanting more pages to turn— pages which I hope will shift the coordinates of future stigma research to focus on stigmatization as a form classificatory power that functions as a technology of statecraft.

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