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INTERROGATING MAD STUDIES IN THE ACADEMY
Bridging the community/academy divide

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Introduction
We come together for the writing of this chapter as mad activists from two different countries who have both advocated for, struggled with and actively engaged in the ‘doings’ of mad studies within the academy through the teaching and learning process. One of us (Victoria) hails from the north of England and was first inspired to ‘do’ mad studies in the community with the North East Mad Studies Forum after reading Mad Matters (LeFrançois et al., 2013). Victoria was then invited to co-teach a mad studies course at Northumbria University. The other one of us (Brenda) lives and works in the East Coast of Canada and, in addition to being one of the three co-editors of Mad Matters (LeFrançois et al., 2013), has been teaching mad studies courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels for several years at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

We first met each other in person in 2014 at the Mad Studies conference that was organised by the North East Mad Studies Forum (NEMS) and hosted at Durham University (LeFrançois, 2015; NEMS, 2015), although we had been meeting with each other virtually for several weeks leading up to the conference. Our communications with each other at the time and since have been mostly intense, with the sharing of our varied experiences of ‘doing’ mad studies and with critical debates about how it is done inside and outside the academy, including our visions for its democratic potentials and our concerns over neoliberal and power-infused co-optings. This chapter represents our bringing together on paper some of these experiences and theorisings that we have engaged in both separately and within our conversations with each other.

What follows, then, is a discussion of our experiences of bringing mad studies into the university, and our analyses of what mad studies courses might be, distinguishing them – however messily – from ‘critical mental health’ courses. In addition, we interrogate issues relating to power and mad knowledge dissemination in the classroom, including service user tokenism. In the spirit of engaging in mad democratic (Beckman and Davies, 2013; Davies and MPA Documentary Collective, 2013) pedagogical practices, we offer insights into the construction of a mad studies that bridges the academy/community divide.
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Mad studies in the university: our experiences

Victoria

The publication of Mad Matters (LeFranç ois et al., 2013) sparked my interest and involvement in ‘Mad Studies’. I use inverted commas because I feel somewhat detached from it, unsure of what it means to me, and have reservations about the power at play in its doing. This chapter considers some of those challenges, along with the possibilities, in the telling of that journey which began for me in 2013 whilst I was part way through my PhD studies at Durham University, UK. My PhD (Armstrong, 2016) involved exploring concepts of stigma and discrimination in voluntary sector organisations designed to support people experiencing, or having experienced, mental distress. Whilst I was engaged in fieldwork in 2013 to 2014, I read Mad Matters and found it contemporary, critical, and innovative. The experiences of Mad people and their accounts were the focus of each and every contribution, chiming with some of the themes I was exploring and trying to understand via my fieldwork. For example – and I highlighted this in my review of Mad Matters (Armstrong, 2017) – the co-optation of Mad peoples’ knowledge; the political appropriation of notions of peer support, anti-stigma campaigns and recovery models; and the collaborative exploration of new ways to resist oppressive practices and languages of a largely undemocratised psychiatry. I also surmised that whilst Mad Matters does not provide a blueprint to challenge oppression or necessarily do Mad studies, I felt that it provided us with a number of critical starting points and a foundation to move forward as activists, academics, and practitioners. Along with being critically cognisant that we occupy and negotiate many roles at any one time, and how that negotiation takes shape depends on a range of complex power relations.

Just before Mad Matters was published, me and Roz Austin, a postgraduate colleague from geography also studying at Durham University, were keen to set up a reading group of sorts to discuss ‘mental health’. Due to our own lived experiences we both felt strongly that the group should foreground personal experience and knowledge in our engagement with texts and social theories. We both had good networks inside and outside of the university and so e-mails were sent, a small group of us got together, and we agreed to meet bi-monthly. When I became acquainted with Mad Matters, I enthusiastically introduced it to the group. I think that the group embraced the doing of Mad Studies because it provided us with a vehicle to do things our way, to organise ourselves, and think and speak collaboratively and critically of medical and psychiatric orthodoxy, the psy-disciplines, the impact of other experience(s) on madness such as family, abuse, work, welfare systems, along with failing public and health services, and the dominance of below par services which had shaped many of our lives. We agreed that we would call ourselves the North East Mad Studies Forum (NEMS) or some variation of that title. Due to our interest in Mad Studies, we also applied (with support from Durham University) to the Wellcome Trust for funding to hold the first international mad studies conference. An overarching aim of the conference was to create space to spark meaningful discussion.

Many people were invited and attended the bimonthly meetings, but a core group of us had crystallised by the time we found out that we had been successful in our Wellcome Trust bid and we made plans to hold the conference in Autumn 2015. Despite some criticism, it felt like a very special and engaging event, and what made it such an unforgettable and invaluable experience for me, was the way in which we organised ourselves and, in my opinion, did Mad Studies. It wasn’t about someone taking the lead or dictating how it should be. Around five of us at any one time would sit down and discuss what the conference needed to be, what should be included, how it should be included. There were emotive discussions, hard discussions, each
of us had our own experiences which we brought to the table impacting upon what we thought Mad Studies should be. But we sat together, listened to one another, cried and shouted a little too. It wasn’t easy and it wasn’t conventional. It was exhausting at times, but there was a democratic sense of equality about those working meetings that I have never before experienced. Although I had one foot in the academic camp, I understood that to do Mad Studies with the democracy it demanded, we had to work as a collective. This collaborative way of working was the only way through and it had something to do with equality. What I mean by equality isn’t necessarily about coming from the same place or point of view, but there was a desire by all contributors to make it equal, along with a commitment to respect, and giving space to differing opinions. Often an easier way of doing things may be to give up, not give time or space, because it was too hard. However, to do this would be to emulate the institutions that had so often let us down, and we wanted no part in that sort of practise. We were very proud of what we achieved with that conference.

The group had been galvanised by the doing of the conference, the way we worked together, and facilitated the event. We had been particularly inspired by the folk at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh (Bain et al., 2015), and began considering developing and delivering our own community course at Waddington Street in Durham. Waddington Street is a small independent mental health resource centre with over 35 years of experience offering a wide range of informal educational activities and support services. The staff, trustees, and volunteers at the centre had been extremely supportive to our group and kindly provided a meeting space. As a result, we set to work on designing our ‘community course’ to be delivered in the Summer of 2016.

In terms of bringing mad studies into the university, in addition to the conference, I had also been involved in two other modules in 2014, which were instrumental in shaping my thoughts over this time. The first involved working with Toby Brandon who is a Reader in Disability and Mental Health at Northumbria University UK. Toby had a particular interest in research as co-production and wanted to develop and deliver a Mad Studies module, along with Alisdair Cameron who is Director of ReCoCo (The Recovery College Collective – a peer led mental health charity) and team leader at Launchpad (a charity that offers the chance for anyone who uses mental health services in Newcastle upon Tyne to have their voice heard by the people who run these services). Both Toby and Alisdair had attended a number of the North East Mad Studies Forum meetings and in 2014 I helped co-deliver an optional module for students on the joint honours BA degree programme linked to Disability Studies at Northumbria University. The module aimed to equip students with a cutting-edge critical appreciation of the meaning of madness within contemporary society, how it is constructed from different perspectives, and in doing so how both power and stigma are created and exercised. It was delivered via a combination of ‘traditional’ higher education methods (i.e. lectures and seminars) and assessed by a 3000-word written essay. The lecture topics were largely influenced by sociology and disability studies, and Toby and I often discussed whether we were teaching critical mental health studies as opposed to Mad Studies. For me, it didn’t compare to what I had experienced when I was part of the collective and ‘doing’ Mad Studies to prepare for and deliver the conference, and how we were working to develop a community course. I think that the root of this was because there wasn’t a particularly democratic division or sharing of power. It was the lecturers with the ‘power’. That said, I explored other models for mad studies in the UK, specifically the Mad Studies course at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, and I was invited to deliver a guest lecture on my work on stigma. Influenced by the work at Ryerson University (Reaume, 2019; Reville, 2013) the course at Queen Margaret was developed in partnership with mad identified and mad positive academics and activists. It made me consider how mad studies could have
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a place in the academy, working more collaboratively, with a different distribution of power. Privately I wondered whether Mad Studies actually could ever belong in the academy. I felt that a rethink was in order and I was inspired by a relatively unrelated endeavour – the Inside-Out programme.

In 2014 I had become involved with the development and delivery of a criminology module exploring contemporary issues in criminal justice as part of the Inside-Out prison exchange programme at Durham University. From 2014 until 2016, I was a teaching assistant on the programme and it strongly influenced how I began to think about how we might better do Mad Studies in the academy. I don’t want to conflate criminality with madness, and I think that point ought to be made. Although there are parallels with incarceration and institutionalisation. Namely stereotypes, labels, and how experience is shaped by institution, as well as by exploring wider social structures which shape social inequalities and inequities such as those based on family composition, racism, classism, etc.Essentially, Inside-Out involves a class made up of ‘Outside’ students enrolled at Durham University and ‘Inside’ students incarcerated in the local prisons who were partners in the programme. The module provides the opportunity for ‘Outside’ students to connect with real world criminal justice issues, including imprisonment, and for ‘Inside’ students to place their own experiences of the criminal justice system in a wider academic context. The module is led by Professor Fiona Measham, facilitated by Durham University criminology staff, and places emphasis on the experience learning about crime and justice in the prison context and on learning with and from each other. ‘Inside’ and ‘Outside’ students work collaboratively as peers towards creating a critical and reflective dialogue around issues in criminal justice. The programme was first introduced and developed by Lori Pompa in the United States in 1997 with the aim of breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes and prejudices by providing ‘Inside’ students and ‘Outside’ students with a unique opportunity to study together as peers behind the prison walls (Pompa, 2013). Most importantly, the context and method of delivery placed ‘Inside’ and ‘Outside’ students on an equal footing, as co-learners working together. It was also important that both inside and outside students received the same credits and the inside students could put these credits towards their degree studies.

Taking all of my experiences together at that time, and upon reflection, I began to think that a similar approach could be developed for Mad Studies to work in the academy.

The Mad Studies module at Northumbria University is running again in 2018–19 as an option for the integrated health and social care degree programme. I am no longer part of its delivery, but it now involves ‘service users’ as students. However, as I understand it, they are not enrolled as students of the university because this would be too costly. Even when academics or institutions have the most honourable of intentions, we have seen how chasms open up and divisions are perpetuated. For example, the co-option of mad people in health services and in research, when mad people aren’t paid the same rate or are rolled out to tell their stories as material for study (LeFrançois and Voronka, forthcoming). The power dynamics are inequitable, and it feels tokenistic. There is a violence to this tokenism, a sort of ‘jolly violence’ where we are told we are all the same (“let’s all smile and use the language of inclusion”), whilst they capitalise on experiences of oppression for which the oppressed should be made to feel grateful.

The NEMS collective delivered their community course at Waddington Street in the summer of 2016 and we approached its development and delivery in a similar way to the conference. We opted for three-hour sessions for six weeks and included topics such as resistance, mad people’s history, big pharma, and the history of confinement. The sessions involved creative exercises, much discussion, and reflective journals which were private to the participants unless they chose to share their thoughts. Members of the collective involved in each of the
sessions were referred to pilots and co-pilots, we weren’t lecturing or teaching, we were on a journey together.

During this time, many members of the core group also secured full-time employment and it was becoming difficult to find time to meet for any significant length of time. There was a realisation about how much time it took to really do mad studies. In addition, there was the emotional labour i.e., being prepared to spend more of yourself in a way that regular teaching or lecturing didn’t demand. That said, I think every member of the group at that time would have been happy to be paid a proper salary to work on and deliver mad studies and do mad work, but the reality was that no institutions or funding bodies were queuing up to pay us. It was clear that we needed time and space to develop ideas and that couldn’t happen when we were working 37-hour weeks (and the rest) in other roles. And so, for mad studies to work in the academy it requires time and space; components which are not natural bedfellows with the growing commercialisation of higher education, winning research funding, and writing publications. This is just my own account and journey. For me, at the moment, the battle for social justice, equality and equity IS mad studies rather than the content of what is being delivered.

**Brenda**

My context of bringing mad studies into the academy starts a bit earlier in time, when I was a student on the M.A. in Mental Health course between 1995–1997, a degree convened by psychiatric survivor Prof. David Brandon (1991), at Anglia Ruskin University in the UK. ‘Mad studies’ as a term had not yet been used at that point in time, but I understand myself to have been a student of mad studies through this course, nonetheless. Although very little is written about this programme of study (Khoo et al., 2004) and indeed as I understand it, the programme dissolved into a mainstream mental health nursing course shortly after David’s death in 2001. It stands out to me, nonetheless, as an example of an early point in the evolution of what ultimately is now known as mad studies.

At its inception, the modules were co-developed between David and mad community members (or local service user groups, as they were termed at the time). The modules in this programme were mostly taught by academics who were also service users or psychiatric survivors, although the politics of the time did not demand being ‘out’ about these experiences. This is at a time when ‘service user involvement’ in education initiatives were only starting to be discussed, and in my view this programme fell outside of those efforts, as the tokenism, sanist othering, stereotypical understandings/biomedical readings and disability tourism (Costa et al., 2012) that eventually came to characterise these ‘inclusion’ efforts did not appear to be present. The lecturers who taught us sometimes discussed their personal experiences but mostly did not. Their job was to teach us about mental health from a critical perspective, and given the hierarchical nature of the academy, they were in the position to make choices of concepts to cover, required readings and assignments, which were all undoubtedly influenced heavily by their personal experiences of psychiatrisation and (forced) treatment as well as by the mad communities who co-developed the modules. Indeed, the mental health module started with the study of what we now term mad people’s history (Reaume, 2019; Reville, 2013; Bain et al., 2015), starting with Marjorie Kemp and following mostly the historical analyses of Roy Porter (1989, 1990). It then discussed psychiatric oppression followed by psychiatric survivor activism and current day mad cultural production. Being in this position of power as mad lecturers, allowed for a reversal of the typical imposition on students of professional knowledge as superior. However, as Victoria and I discuss below, this nonetheless remained a non-democratic process where mad students were not involved in the shaping of the courses.
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nor were they overtly accepted into the programme as students, which still leads us to question how we might truly madden the academy.

In addition to this course being taught mostly by mad lecturers, David also organised the bringing of mad communities into the classroom, in order to attempt to bridge the academic/community divide. There were members from politicised psychiatric survivor organisations and user-led services who came into the classroom throughout the two-year programme to discuss what activism and alternative interventions were taking place at a grassroots level. One such invited guest sticks out to me now as he did then. Peter Campbell (2006) of Survivors Speak Out (SSO) came in to discuss the activism taking place organised by SSO as well as to discuss the violence and oppression experienced by people within the mental health system. I particularly remember his discussion of adverse effects of psychiatric drugs such as tardive dyskinesia, demonstrating the effects to us in an embodied way. This was at a time when very few professionals in the UK ventured to suggest that psychiatric oppression was anything other than a delusion of patients. Peter Campbell’s talk and presence in the classroom had a profound impact on me and marked the beginning of the (formal) politicisation of my own lived experiences of psychiatrisation. This was a life-changing moment; a moment of radicalisation from which I would not return. I continue to think that mad studies courses in the academy can offer such experiences to students today, however, the context in which we teach and the world we live in has changed dramatically since the mid-90s, and so too then must the way in which we think about mad studies in the academy.

Filled with fire in my belly, empowered by the mad teachings from this programme, I applied to do my PhD at the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent at Canterbury, making overt in my application form my status as someone who had been deemed ‘mad’. I was surprised to see the question on the application form: Are you or have you ever been a mental health service user? This seemed progressive at the time and led me to assume that I was entering a space that was as politicised as the one I was leaving.

However, my experiences there were on the whole painful, distressing, isolating and oppressive. My ‘service user’ status being made known administratively, I was very quickly targeted by others in this space as problematic, as somehow wrong, as an unacceptable outsider. By many of the academics in the centre, my contributions were actively dismissed and expectations of me were low, in addition to other forms of sanist aggressions such as those that have been well detailed in Poole et al. (2012) as well as experiencing the type of epistemic injustice detailed by LeBlanc and Kinsella (2016) and the aspects of ethical loneliness detailed by de Bie (2019). I, however, was most caught unawares and was especially harmed by the viciousness I endured at the hands of other PhD students – students who were, unsurprisingly, intent on doing research ‘on’ instead of ‘with’ mad and disabled people, or who engaged academically in other forms of epistemological and methodological sanism and/or dis/ableism (LeFrançois and Voronka, forthcoming). It seems my presence in the academy most offended them, and in hindsight, perhaps intimidated them. I was harassed daily, my personal life was invaded and interrogated, and I was overtly made to feel unwelcomed and detested through an ever-changing violent barrage of being shouted at, ridiculed or ignored and excluded. I never asked for or expected support from those around me at the centre, but I also didn’t expect to be actively attacked. That is, I just didn’t expect them to put and keep their feet on my neck (Kadi, 1996). That being said, I did eventually share close friendships with some other PhD students, including some who were also deemed mad. Clearly, however, mad bodies were neither welcomed nor valued in this particular space at this particular time, which contrasts with the experiences detailed by Wolframe (2013) in a different space and time and leaves me with some hope for the maddening of the academy. Regardless, I left this space knowing it was not
safe to be ‘out’ in the academy as mad. All of this provides us with important context to explain how it is that I did eventually come to bring mad studies into my own teachings, however hesitantly.

So how then do we bring mad bodies into the academy, when the potential for experiences of sanist violence is ever present? How do we even bring mad studies into the academy, if the experiences of mad people can be so violent and oppressive? My answers to those questions are exemplified in how I went about establishing myself in academia in Canada. Before completing my PhD, I was made to leave England (after almost a decade of living there) and return to Canada as I ran out of funding and was not able to demonstrate to the Home Office that I had sufficient funds to warrant an extension to my student visa (despite working three jobs whilst being a full-time student). Upon arrival in Canada, I found myself homeless in Hamilton for close to a year. While in provisional accommodation, I applied for many academic jobs, with little success given my status as ABD. Eventually, I was offered an interview and later an academic position. Given my experiences of sanist violence and then homelessness, I re-invented myself as an ally to psychiatric survivors and service users and remained hidden inside this identity up until I was given tenure, and hence security and permanency in my work.

Over the past several years, I have been teaching what I consider mad studies courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at Memorial University in Newfoundland. I cannot stress enough that although there is the existence of some politicised mad people as well as mad cultural production in the East Coast of Canada (see for example, ‘Our Voice/Notre Voix’, ‘Mad Pride on the Rock’ and ‘Cracked on the Rock’), in general mental health services remain mostly unaware of these critiques and continue to foster mainstream oppressive practices unchecked. Unlike in Canadian cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal, both urban and rural spaces alike in the East Coast do not contain a critical mass of dissent towards psychiatric oppression. Mad communities, in their varied forms, remain tiny to non-existent within most of these spaces. This has created room for services to continue to openly oppress patients without any accountability, and with little to no criticism or public/community scrutiny. To exemplify this, when some community members got together in 2014 at the grassroots level to create a Hearing Voices Network (HVN) for Atlantic Canada – an alternative service that has been long established in the UK and other places and, indeed, has now been criticised by mad communities as being co-opted into the mainstream and reproducing psychiatric oppression – it failed to take off effectively. Its failure was largely due to the psychiatric system fighting back hard against its establishment, including with threats to patients that their medication dosages would be increased if they dare attend any HVN meetings, as such attendance would demonstrate that they were becoming more ‘unwell’ (i.e.: not adhering to the psychiatric script of ignoring their voices and understanding them wholly as symptoms of psychopathology that need to be medicated away). There is no need for mental health services to attempt to co-opt grassroots alternatives in the East Coast, if they can merely squash with an iron fist such efforts from the beginning through threats and reprisals to those mad people who they are forcibly treating, either as involuntary patients in hospital and in the community, or as voluntary patients who need to toe the line in order to maintain their public housing arrangements, or keep custody of their children, etc.

It is in this context of uncompromisingly repressive power relations wielded by the psychiatric regime in the East Coast that I have begun to develop and teach mad studies courses geared to social work students. The first course I developed is an on-campus course, held for three hours once per week over twelve weeks. We cover topics starting with mad people’s history, mad pride and mad cultural production to issues relating to psychiatric oppression and sanism. Social work students are asked to deconstruct the impact of social work’s allegiance with oppressive practices within mental health services and to discuss their accountability to service
users, based on anti-racist and anti-sanist values. Mid-term assignments involve getting students out into mad communities (usually virtually) and learning about survivor led services and other mad grassroots resources. The final assignment involves writing a paper outlining how they might work differently given the mad knowledges learned about in the course. I developed the reading list with the focus of both de-centring whiteness and de-centring sane-identified contributions. That is, at least two-thirds of the readings are authored by mad scholars. To de-centre whiteness, like Reaume (2019), I avoided putting Foucault and other dead white men as required reading, although there are many such academics and allies whose scholarship is useful for any discussion of mad studies. Given the need not to overload students with too many readings, I prioritise publications written by mad people of colour and by mad people who actively combine critical race, transnational feminist and anti-colonial theories with their mad theorisings. This is not a difficult de-centring task, given that I would say at the moment the most cutting-edge scholarship tends to be coming from mad people of colour and other authors who understand the deep connections between sanism, racism and colonialism (see for example Aho et al., 2017; Bruce, 2017; Chapman et al., 2014; Cohen, 2014; Davar, 2016; Joseph, 2014, 2015; Gorman, 2017; Gorman et al., 2013; Kalathil and Jones, 2016; Kanani, 2011; King, 2016; Meerei et al., 2016; Mills and Fernando, 2014; Nabbali, 2013; Patel, 2014).

In one of the last iterations of this course, I consulted with an online mad studies community, regarding readings, and I had some guest speakers from the local community come in to lecture. The graduate level course I developed follows from this course although it is online only.

Not surprisingly, since the inception of my first undergraduate mad studies course, complaints rolled in from students, parents and colleagues. Indeed, mad studies was even mentioned disparagingly in an unrelated course in the university’s medical school, presumably so as to make medical students aware of its subversive and supposedly dangerous doings. I am encouraged to think that they felt the need to take time to complain; the courses must be having an impact to elicit such strong reactions. I remain empowered by my tenured rank to continue this work knowing that formal reprisals against me are now prohibited. That being said, the informal reprisals – which are many – continue to take their toll on me, both physically and emotionally. Nonetheless, I remain uplifted by overwhelmingly strong anonymous student evaluations of both the mad studies courses that I am now teaching regularly. I am now developing a PhD-level mad studies course.

Regardless of these barometers of success, there remain problems with the delivery of these courses, that leads me, like Victoria, to question the extent to which mad studies has a place within the academy. I remain committed to the notion that one of the important characteristics of mad studies courses is that they bring students into the mad community and the mad community into the academy. However, the courses I teach do the former without the latter. Although some social work students in the courses identify as mad, this occurs by chance, and there is no way of purposefully opening up the courses to the wider mad community as enrolled students. In addition, unlike Reaume (2019), I am unable to allow mad people to audit the course, due to strict policies around students needing to meet the requirements of the programme in order to take the course. Regardless, I continue to look for ways to disrupt these requirements. Mad studies cannot exist without mad community (LeFrançois, 2016), and one mad body in the classroom does not a community make.

**Mad Studies or critical mental health?**

This leads us to a conversation we have both been having individually and with each other. How does mad studies in the academy differ from critical mental health courses? We remain
inspired by the Oor Mad History course offered in Scotland (Bain et al., 2015), and greatly value the important pedagogical innovations engaged in by so many who have taken on the teaching of mad studies (Castrodale, 2017; Poole and Grant, 2018; Reaume, 2019; Reville, 2013; Snyder et al., 2019). We suggest that the difference must lay in the creation of courses that take up mad democratic principles (Beckman and Davies, 2013; Davies and MPA Documentary Collective, 2013) and are co-developed by mad community members and academics, whether those academics are mad-identified or not. The power relations endemic to the academy which bestows much status and power to individual academics must be rethought and re-managed so as to level the playing field for such collaborations to take place in an equitable manner. In addition to the co-development of courses, we also suggest that mad studies courses in the academy must be open to mad people as students, and in a way that neither requires the paying of expensive tuition nor denies mad people academic transcripts that indicate a mark and credits earned for having taken the course. How do we really bring mad studies into the university in this way, given the hierarchical, competitive and increasingly market-driven nature of the academy (Sweeney, 2016)? At the same time as we introduce mad studies to the academy, we witness the academy becoming more and more entrenched within white neoliberal ideals that exclude, bar, reject and pathologise mad people, some of whom may not have the finances to cover tuition, the academic credentials to be admitted into a course nor the confidence to take a seat next to those privileged students for whom the elitist academy ultimately exists. We remain concerned that the academic industrial complex is more likely to co-opt mad studies, turning it into something that is marketable and sanitised, rather than to open a wider space for mad communities and mad people to stake rightful claims to a place within the university as knowledge producers (Mills and LeFrançois, 2018) and as students.

**Mad knowledge dissemination or service user tokenism?**

We also question the extent to which mad knowledge may be disseminated within mad studies courses in the university. Even if the lecturer/instructor is mad, as was stated earlier by one of us: ‘one mad body does not a community make’. In addition to mad people being students in the courses and mad scholarship being required reading, epistemic justice (LeBlanc and Kinsella, 2016) demands that mad people be valued as providing important contributions as co-instructors and/or as guest lecturers. We acknowledge vast differences here in relation to how this issue plays out both in Canada and in England. In the British context, service user involvement in higher education has meant the steady co-option and de-radicalisation of psychiatric survivor and mad politics, the tokenistic and stigmatised othering of service users’ voices and the proliferation of disability tourism (Costa et al., 2012), without a hint of redressing the social inequalities and epistemic injustice (LeBlanc and Kinsella, 2016) that typically characterises mad–sane relations in the academy. In the Canadian context where service user involvement never really took off in higher education, we find in most universities, limited to no funding available to invite mad people into the classroom as guest lectures, and a complete devaluing by university administrators (and by academic colleagues) of the merits of such contributions. There remains little to no political impetus to force a change in this regard, which leaves mad studies courses in the hands of assigned (albeit usually mad) academic lecturers with little to no mad community involvement, unless mad people are willing to volunteer their time to guest lecture without being paid. The power relations and inequities inherent to this situation reproduce and magnify every sanist injustice found in the academy.
Conclusion: Bridging the community/academy divide

We hope that we might all begin to find ways to madden the academy sufficiently in order to create mad studies courses that are truly collaborative, epistemically just, and that bridge the academy/community divide in innovative ways. Based on a more democratic collaboration between mad people, mad communities and the academy, we suggest that perhaps a mad elaboration of the Inside-Out model might generate challenging solutions to some of the problems we have discussed above. That being said, it takes time to do things democratically, it takes emotional labour, but we owe it to Mad Studies to avoid easy wins in the academy by developing and delivering something that fits a more socially just and collaborative model. We need to avoid the soundbites that are the hallmarks of contemporary western life, from anti-stigma campaigns to recovery stories we should all aspire to. A way to do this may be to follow the Inside-Out model by ensuring all (mad) students are enrolled onto the module as students with credits to contribute towards degrees, that we reconsider the academy as the place to do Mad Studies and that we look instead to institutional and/or community settings to deliver modules. However, this will be hard with cutbacks and in times of ‘austerity’ but if universities want to trailblaze they will have to want us to be there, put in the graft, not see us as a nuisance, and provide the practical and financial support.

Notes

1 We use the term ‘mad’ as it is the language that is most often used by people who ascribe to mad studies, especially in Canada. We acknowledge, however, following Gorman et al. (2013) that not all people who have been deemed mad choose to use the term ‘mad’. Using this type of political language is not always safe, especially for more marginalised mad community members, whose experiences of psychiatrisation may be further complicated by the violations of racism, sexism, classism, cisgenderism and heterosexism. We, nonetheless, choose to use the term ‘mad’ here as a reclaimed term in order to unsettle and contest notions of psychiatric and biogenetic reductionism in understanding experiences of altered states of mind, extreme emotions as well as unusual thoughts and behaviour. As such, we refer to ‘mad people’, ‘mad community members’, ‘mad lecturers’, ‘mad bodies’, ‘mad students’, ‘mad theorisings’, ‘mad history’, ‘mad activists’, ‘mad scholars’, ‘mad democratic practices’, mad knowledge’, ‘mad communities’, ‘mad politics’, ‘mad teachings’, ‘mad pride’, etc., in the spirit of contestation and reclamation.

2 https://www.waddingtoncentre.co.uk/

3 https://www.recoverycoco.com/

4 https://launchpadncl.org.uk/

5 https://www.dur.ac.uk/sociology/crim/insideout/

6 See http://www.insideoutcenter.org/

7 My view here is in contrast to the ways in which the course has been framed within Khoo et al. (2004). However, I do not believe that we would be in disagreement today (the article having been written in 2004) about the ways in which this course differed dramatically from the ways in which service user involvement in education has ultimately become established.

8 See Snyder et al. (2019) for innovating pedagogical approaches to student collaboration, including rhizomatic learning.

9 All But Dissertation: A designation for PhD students in Canada that denotes that all requirements for the doctorate have been completed other than the written dissertation.

10 https://www.ourvoice-notrevoix.com/

11 https://www.facebook.com/Madontherock/

12 The point I am trying to make here is that even alternative services that are no longer seen as radical in most places in the Western world – and are no longer even seen as critical or potentially empowering by mad communities as their grassroots origins and visions become distorted through psychiatric co-option – are still fought off by the monolithic psy system in places where mad dissenting voices are less organised and influential.
References


Bruce L J (2017). Mad is a place: Or, the slave ship tows the ship of fools. American Quarterly, 69(2), 303–308.


Inquiring into the future for Mad Studies


