



EDITORIAL

Editorial introductions (2.1)

Adam Davies, Jennifer Poole, Jersey Cosantino, Hel Spandler and Kath Thorburn

At the conclusion of our editorial for the very first issue of the *International Mad Studies Journal (IMSJ)*, published in January of 2023, we shared the following hopes and desires for how we seek to move forward alongside our mad community and in the midst of our own journalistic emergence:

Moving Forward:

Many of the questions we have discussed and pondered remain unanswered, and some have many possible answers. Recognising that some of the processes we followed together are imperfect, being actively returned to and revisited, we embrace the collective visioning that propels us forward, and the inherent uncertainty that processes of becoming so often entail. We are, thus, indebted to all who have made this journey of Mad knowledge production possible.

This journal seeks to honour these histories, communities, and movements by publishing scholarly work on archives of Mad thoughts, Mad dreams, Mad lives, Mad hopes, Mad desires, Mad theories, and Mad resistance. We do this in the search for Mad futures that may become a home for us all via the transformative frameworks of Mad Studies. We thank you for your willingness to join us and look forward to engaging in this exploration together (pp. 5-6).

We return to these aspirations almost two years later as an international community co-navigating the intensities of global political, economic, social, and environmental instability, each of us impacted in disproportionate ways given our identities, social locations, and proximities to the unjust protections of privilege. As mad/dened scholars co-visioning liberatory mad futures in a mad/dening world (Yancy, 2023), we have come to generate far more questions than answers since the publication of our first editorial. This collaborative endeavour of ongoing questioning, wondering, and dialogic reflection has helped us push the boundaries of what can be possible within the ecosystem of mad publishing, while also requiring us as an editorial team to embrace (however reluctantly) the uncertainty of this process. While simultaneously responsive to the uncertainty and precarity that floods this

moment from a global perspective, the questions that have arisen for us at *IMSJ* have been definitively reflective of the beauty, brilliance, struggle, and challenge of our journal's own becoming.

Thus, in order to introduce readers to the first issue of our second volume, building proudly on the foundations of volume one, we must first take a moment to introduce and re-introduce our co-lead editorial team, mapping how we each arrive at Mad Studies, collaboration, and community building, and honor the genealogies of mad knowledge that *IMSJ* is dedicated to affirming and centering. As Lucy Costa and Lori Ross (2023) illustrate in "Mad Studies Genealogy and Praxis" – the opening article of volume one, issue one – the ways in which we as co-lead editors support the evolution of an ever-emerging journal like *IMSJ* must be done as an intentionally crafted, deeply accountable, and reflexive Mad Studies praxis that is collectively imagined, lived, embodied, and enacted.

Who Are We: Introducing the New Co-Lead Editors

Adam Davies (they/them)

I arrive at mad studies as a mad(dened) person – someone who has spent the majority of my adult life in higher education and who has encountered various forms of exclusion within formal educational systems and structures. Much of this maddening has occurred through years of epistemic injustices and erasures within various levels of formal education and schooling as both a student and educator. I have grown up and spent my life on the unceded lands of the Mississaugas of the New Credit and as a queer, neurodivergent, white settler, aiming to centre intersectional and decolonial analyses of madness within my academic work. My journey to madness has been one of unbecoming - that is, unbecoming all that the educational system taught me I am and should be by allowing space for my queerness and madness to be unruly. After spending my childhood experiencing heightened amounts of anxiety, 'obsessive thoughts,' and, in particular, bullying because of my gender expression, I entered my adult life attempting to navigate several moments of rupture through mental health crises. In seeking to find community and wholeness, I entered into the mad studies and mad pride communities and experienced collective care and community from others that I never encountered within the psychiatric and biomedical 'care' systems and for that, I hold eternal gratitude. Now, much of my work involves tracing the forms of epistemic violences and erasures that Mad people encounter within educational structures and holding and crafting space for others who might have similar experiences to my own, both within and outside of formal structures of education and schooling.

Jen Poole (she/her)

I come to this journal work as a first generation white settler to Treaty 13 (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) who is also a mad(dened) person. I have spent my whole life in the confluence of madness and grief, as a child/sibling/partner to maddened and neurodiverse folks, as a user/refuser/navigator of so-called mental health systems/supports and as an educator and

(re)searcher in the related fields of mad studies, sanism studies, grief studies, social work, studies that seek to interrupt colonialism and domination as well as work centered on the scholarship of teaching and learning. I have also spent over thirty years in many mutual aid spaces; as a maddened member, as a co-leader and organizer and as a listener. Those spaces have held me and taught me more than any degree program, and I will continue to serve in this way for as long as I have capacity. I come to this journal work now with reverence and respect for all those spaces, for the multiplicity of mad knowledges and experiences and with the express goal of making more room in mad studies. I also come with a commitment to interrupt the ways in which whiteness and white supremacy continue to show up in this work through domination, competition and injustice.

Who Are We: Re-Introducing the Co-Lead Editors Continuing on this Journey

Hel Spandler (they/them)

I was introduced to the idea of Mad Studies by disability Scholars in Toronto about 15 years ago and have tried to help establish the field in the UK through my academic and activist work with *Asylum magazine*. I was honoured to be invited, by a group of mad scholars in Australia, to help establish IMSJ - the first Mad Studies journal. So, I have been involved in the journal since its inception and try to use my position to help support opportunities for up and coming Mad scholars and mad (and mad-related) scholarship. I'm especially keen to encourage and support accessible and scholarly reviews of Mad Studies relevant books and other outputs. I have a deep yearning for different ways of doing scholarship and different relationships with madness: my own, my families' and the increasingly maddening world we have created, in the hope that a different world is possible.

Jersey Cosantino (they/them/theirs)

I had the honor of joining the editorial team of *IMSJ* in fall of 2022. Being welcomed into an established and ever-expanding international community of Mad scholars, authors, and activists from both within and beyond academia allowed me to find a home that I had been desperately longing for. As a Mad and trans studies scholar seeking to co-create the fully intertwined field of Madtrans studies (with scholars such as Merrick Pilling and KJ Cerankowski) that tasks each field with confronting its respective histories of trans and Mad disavowal, I found my desires for community to mirror my yearnings to heal the fractures that existed within my own self – i.e., the ways in which my madness could never find home alongside/within/amidst my transness. Acknowledging the transsanism (Cosantino & Poole, forthcoming) – the interlocking oppressions of anti-transness and sanism – that I and so many of my friends and colleagues experience within medical settings, educational spaces (including academia), and broader society in general helped me to meet these internal fractures with compassion and tenderness. Bearing witness to the parts of me that disavowed my madness, that attempted to hide my madness in order to access trans affirming care, required that I acknowledge and take accountability for the ways in which this process of masking always harmfully relies on weaponizing my whiteness, settler coloniality, and class, citizenship, and

educational privileges. To meet these discordant parts of myself with tenderness only truly felt possible once I had access to Mad community and space to embark on this journey with both criticality and care.

While holding the tensions of what it means to do this work as an editor with race, class, education, and citizenship privileges, I hope to co-create *IMSJ* as a respite for those whose madness is policed, criminalized, and surveilled, especially at the intersections of other marginalized identities, helping to (hopefully) ensure that, at least within the context of our journalistic community, their Mad wisdom and beingness in this world is powerfully affirmed. As a Madtrans scholar and bodymind (Clare, 2017; Price, 2014; Schalk, 2018) who often uses Madtrans poetics to trace the contours of my own fractures, of the ever burgeoning fringes of my own un/becoming (Cerankowski, 2021), I am perpetually reminded of how indebted I am to this space, to this journal, and to this community for showing me how much of myself and ways of being/feeling/dreaming/living in this world is possible.

Who Are We: Re-introducing the Coordinating Editor Continuing on this Journey

Kath Thorburn (she/her)

Living and working (mostly) on unceded Dharug Land in Colomatta - the Blue Mountains - Australia. I started questioning dominant (mis)understandings of, and responses to, madness from a young age, particularly as a result of a parent's experiences of rejection and alienation when they didn't fit in and when some sort of genuine care would have been helpful. What was understood as 'help' (by family, community, services and systems) just didn't make sense to me. Over many years I have attempted to find and create spaces that seek to examine and question dominant constructions and approaches, and which respect and learn from and with mad knowledges and experiences. For me, Mad Studies has been a significant part of that. I have been involved in *IMSJ* since its inception, but I am still learning and so my contribution is primarily 'back-of-house' - organising and coordinating submissions, reviews, copy editing and production, volunteers, promotion, events and website updates - and navigating the inevitable (im)balance of the *doing* of the journal and *being* as humans (with aspirations that often seem to overshoot our reserves of energy and time!)

How We are Working Together

In this journal, we embrace mad(dened) and crip(ped) approaches to work, time, and temporality, in how we seek to work collectively to disrupt and alter the neuronormative and sanist linearity of modern Western colonial time and understandings of 'productivity.' In this collective work, we might gesture towards La Marr Jurelle Bruce's (2017) work in madtime, which denotes "any mode of doing time or feeling time that coincides with renegade rhythms of madness" (p. 3). Through our collective "madtime" aspirations, we embrace forms of time and temporality that are "multidirectional and polymorphous, errant and erratic, dazed and dreamy, unruly and askew" (Bruce, 2017, p. 3). Echoing Bruce's (2017) invocation of "madtime," in our journal, we seek to collectively "move together" (McGuire & Fritsch, 2021;

Sins Invalid, 2015) as we engage in editorial and community work that honours the various speeds and rhythms of Mad bodyminds. How moving together is negotiated is navigated through ongoing relations, collective care, and an aspiration to imagine a world that holds space for the multitudinal, embodied capacities and capabilities of Mad(dened) people and communities. We might, here, echo Johnson's (2021) description of neuroqueer feminism, which "turns with tenderness toward those who are—or have histories of—unraveling" (p. 637). By turning tenderly towards mad(dened) community, we hope to affirm the various bodyminds and speeds of mad community. We also seek to turn tenderly towards ourselves, as editors, as we respect our various rhythms and capacities, which also fluctuate depending on our bodyminds and sensorial needs, which is why there are many of us, working to support authors, reviewers and each other in this solidarity and community. If you don't receive an email reply as quickly as you'd expect, it might be that we are just taking a moment/day/month to breathe again in this maddening capitalist system where we are expected to produce all.the.time.

At *IMSJ*, we aim to provide a different space for knowledge production that does not further harm M/mad knowledge producers through forms of epistemic violence that can occur throughout the peer-review processes. In typical academic journals, the peer-review process might feel alienating and demoralizing as academic work and knowledge production is cut through anonymized peer-review processes. Instead, here at *IMSJ*, we seek to craft a space for Mad(dened) people who are valued as knowledge producers and honoured in their knowing through a supportive and relational peer-review process that both provides helpful considerations for further publishing and support, community, and relationality. To that end, we would like to ask authors if they would prefer anonymized reviews, editorial read throughs or a combination of both with individual agency over who reads their work. They can suggest reviewers at the outset, and we will reach out to those folks first and always with a flexible, invitational, and relational approach. Through these processes, we seek to respect everyone's various capacities, aims, goals, and preferences throughout the peer-review process and allow communal input and author agency within the reviewing stages. Where possible, within our capacities, we will also offer author support, working with authors to develop a piece and ready it for review and publication. We want to companion authors throughout the process so that there is company and solidarity throughout the peer-reviewing stages. We know what it is to work in isolation on a journal submission, always worrying about the impact of a review on our bodyminds. We have known deep *editorial sanism* from reviewers who imply our work is just too 'mad' for their publications. (Stay tuned for more from us on this and we welcome submissions on this topic as well!) We want this process to be altogether different.

Doing this peer-review process differently also seeks to provide what Snyder et al. (2019) term, "ruptures" in higher education and academiatic – ruptures "in how mad and non-mad students imagine their roles in engaging with mad communities as they redefine the discursive limits of their engagement" (p. 496). We seek to engage with Mad community in a way that honours and affirms mad communities and places mad(dened) people at the forefront of what we do and who we are – essentially, rupturing the normative fabrics of how

peer-review processes and higher education typically operate. Through these Mad ruptures (Davies, 2022, 2024; Snyder et al., 2019) to typical academic processes, we seek to cultivate relationships with community, challenge capitalist notions of knowledge being ‘owned’ and constantly ‘produced,’ and engage with Mad and crip time and temporalities. Part of this work involves acknowledging our own capacities and bodyminds as editors and ensuring we hold space for each other as we ebb and flow in our work rhythms and temporalities. This work necessitates tenderness and care – care for ourselves, care for others, and collective care for liberation (Sins Invalid, 2015). As such, we seek to work tenderly and carefully with one another, with community, and through a praxis that centers liberatory politics (hooks, 1991).

What’s To Come

We are excited about this second issue and appreciative of the writers, reviewers and editors that made this possible. We also thank and look forward to those who are working away on the special issues to come on “Maddening the Academy”; “Transing Mad Studies: A MadTrans Studies Special Issue”; “Mad People’s Coping Mechanisms” and “Critical Eating Dis/Order Studies: Madly Questioning Eating Orders”. We continue to marvel at the response to this journal and this space and all the learning that comes from reading and engaging with the submissions, their creators, and communities.

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