

Zsuzsanna Chappell - Madness as Political Identity

Abstract:

The term Madness is increasingly used as a personal, social and political identity for people who have experienced mental differences, mainly mental illness. It may be seen as an emancipatory and liberatory identity similar to Crip or Queer identities. As a political identity it then raises opportunities for things such as group rights, representation or repair. At the same time, (just as disability) Madness encompasses a very wide range of disparate experiences. It is also adjacent to other identities and concepts such as disability and neurodiversity which could lead to confusion, encroachment or erasure. Finally, one may worry that the very political identity of Madness relies on people not being Mad all the time, creating not only an interpersonal but also an intrapersonal tension between those who can and those who cannot speak for themselves.

Lorna Collins – ‘A Creative Transformation’: reflections on creativity, madness, finitude and community

Abstract:

This presentation responds to a project called “A Creative Transformation” (ACT), which works with people (identifying as ‘mad’ or not) who have lived experience, academics, researchers, and NHS clinicians, intertwining responses to the brain, trauma, madness and creativity. We will think about what the ACT project has done and build a philosophical base to support its outcomes and ongoing practice. Drawing from French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy’s work about community, finitude and freedom, I consider how interpreting these texts as mad philosophies builds foundations to engender further creative transformations, asking whether the texts deepen or lighten madness and non/sense. We will examine how and why art making can support ‘mad’ people, how creativity generates perpetual creative transformations, in a community of non/sense. We will see if or where this has occurred during the ACT project and evaluate what could (or should) happen next.

Justin Garson - The Madness of Delusions: Is it Time to Drop the D-Word?

Abstract:

A vast philosophical and scientific literature has grown up around the nature and function of delusions. In the following, I argue that we should abandon the concept of delusion entirely. This is not because the concept of delusion is difficult to define precisely. It is because it involves an unreasonable and harmful stance toward the “delusional patient.” First, it implies that the patient’s belief system is not only false and/or irrational, but false and/or irrational in a manner that merits no further argumentation or discussion. This decision assumes a kind of epistemic privilege that I do not think anyone is entitled to. Second, it implies a harmful form of human relationship. It implies that the patient is no longer a reasonable person that deserves to be engaged with, but something like a broken mechanism to be managed or controlled. As a case study, I consider the plight of targeted individuals (TIs), a global community whose members have the belief that they are the victims of organized stalking or electronic harassment.

Sofia Jeppsson - Madness, transcendental arguments, and alternate realities

Abstract:

How can I trust that what I experience is real? Some anti-sceptics argue that it is, in fact, rationally *impossible* to doubt *everything* at once. However, even if this is so, it remains possible to doubt *a lot*. Kant's transcendental argument (arguably) offers another rebuttal of scepticism: it is necessary to accept things like the spatial and temporal dimensions of the phenomenal world, otherwise no experience would be possible. Critics counter that this argument – at most – shows that some beliefs are psychologically necessary. We may still be ignorant of true reality. This critique of transcendental arguments collapses if we accept Chalmers's theory of reality. A world may be *real* even if it was made differently than we initially thought. Computer-generated Matrix worlds may be real, as well as sufficiently detailed mad worlds. If we accept this theory, transcendental arguments work *in a way*. However, combining Kant and Chalmers allows for the possibility of unbridgeable chasms between different people's different realities.

Alastair Morgan – What might it mean to affirm madness?

Abstract:

If one of the key elements of a philosophy of madness is an affirmation of mad experience, what might it mean to affirm madness? One approach to this question is to claim that all “strange experiences” make sense if sufficiently understood with the requisite attention and empathy. Here, madness as a concept and experience is dissolved into experiences that are continuous with everyday problems of living. The philosophy of madness becomes a stepping-stone to a situation where madness no longer exists. All is sanity in its myriad forms. Other approaches aim to affirm madness in either its difference or its alterity to dominant forms of rationality. In this talk, I am interested in interrogating these concepts of alterity and difference and how they relate to the affirmation of madness. I will conclude by thinking about how this idea of affirming madness relates to psychopathology.

Mohammed Rashed - Understanding Madness: Personal, Cultural, and Philosophical Accounts

Tasia Scrutton - Can scrupulosity be spiritually innocent?

Abstract:

Scrupulosity is sometimes regarded as a form of OCD which focuses especially on religious obsessions and compulsions. In this paper, drawing on my own experience and that of C.S. Lewis and others, I will expand our understanding of the phenomenology of scrupulosity. I will then turn to the question of whether scrupulosity can be ‘spiritually innocent’, i.e. that, in spite of scrupulosity being (I argue) a spiritual disability, a person might gain spiritual benefits as a result of having scrupulosity that they would not otherwise gain. I argue that scrupulosity can be spiritual innocent, and gesture towards three ways in which this might be the case.

Sabina Wantoch - Integrating madness through mad philosophy: new kinds of intersubjectivity

Shay Welch - Borderline Personality Disorder and the Phenomenology of Existential Boredom.

Abstract:

In this paper, I offer a first-person narrative to resist what clinical practitioners identify as self-harming and suicidal behavior in those with Borderline Personality Disorder. To provide an alternative perspective on seemingly self-destructive behavior, I show that living daily with feelings of chronic emptiness can lead to a feeling of existential boredom. This regular way of being in the world—as existentially bored—requires that one lives in ways that bring feeling that others may not understand, sometimes fear, and always pathologize. However, I will argue that this way of living is not always self-destructive but is rather living on just this side of a suicide attempt. Ultimately, I use this narrative about strategies for dealing with Madness to critique clinical practitioners and argue that their work is both incomplete and inadequate without prioritizing Mad testimony, which results in harmful treatment. I use this first-person narrative to demonstrate why accounts of psychiatry should start and end with the Mad.