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## **Out of Place, Out of Mind: Min(d)ing Race in Mad Studies Through a Metaphor of Spatiality**

### **Hors de place, hors d'esprit : Penser à la race au sein des Études de la folie à travers une métaphore de la spatialité**

Sarah Redikopp, Ph.D. Candidate  
School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies  
York University  
[sredikop@yorku.ca](mailto:sredikop@yorku.ca)

#### **Abstract**

This article examines the racial politics of Mad Studies in Canada through a metaphor of spatiality, underscoring the urgency of an antiracist Mad Studies paradigm. Drawing on critical race scholarship which situates “madness” as reliant on and informed by white supremacist and colonial logics of rationality and reason (Bruce 2017), I foreground claims made by critical race scholars of racialized madness as contingent on and informed by histories of slavery, genocide, and everyday realities of racism and racial violence which an anti-racist Mad Studies project must contend with. By locating the racialization of Mad Studies within a metaphor of spatiality, I heuristically problematize the “space” available for racialized subjects to re/claim madness within contemporary Mad Studies paradigms. I conclude that in failing to rigorously unpack the relations of race which undergird understandings of madness, and to challenge the presence of white supremacy in the Mad Studies discipline, scholars potentially perpetuate a colonial project of “othering” and consequentially maintain the systems of psychiatric violence they seek to undo. Centralizing race in Mad Studies exposes the workings of white supremacy in logics of violence against Mad people more broadly and is thus necessary to an anti-racist and anti-oppressive Mad Studies project.

Cet article examine la politique raciale des Études sur la folie au Canada à travers une métaphore de la spatialité, soulignant l'urgence d'adopter un paradigme antiraciste pour les Études sur la folie. En m'appuyant sur les études critiques de la race qui situent la « folie » comme dépendante de la suprématie blanche et des logiques coloniales de la rationalité et de la raison, et marquée par celles-ci (Bruce 2017), je mets au premier plan les revendications des spécialistes de la théorie critique de la race d'une folie racialisée conditionnée et influencée par les histoires d'esclavage et de génocide ainsi que les réalités quotidiennes du racisme et de la violence raciale, et desquelles un projet antiraciste d'Études de la folie doit prendre acte. En situant la racialisation des Études de la folie dans une métaphore de la spatialité, je problématise heuristiquement « l'espace » disponible pour les sujets racialisés pour se réapproprier la folie au sein des paradigmes contemporains des Études de la folie. Je conclus qu'en omettant de décortiquer rigoureusement les relations de race qui sous-tendent les compréhensions de la folie, et de contester la présence de la suprématie blanche dans la discipline des études de la folie, les chercheurs perpétuent potentiellement un projet colonial d'« altérité » et par conséquent maintiennent les systèmes de violence psychiatrique qu'ils cherchent à défaire. Positionner la race au cœur des Études de la folie expose les rouages de la suprématie blanche dans les logiques

de violence contre les personnes folles plus largement et est donc nécessaire à un projet d'Études de la folie antiraciste et antioppressif.

**Keywords**

Mad Studies; Race; Racialization; Anti-Racism; Spatiality; White Supremacy

## Introduction

This essay examines the racial politics of the Mad movement, and particularly the growing discipline of Mad Studies in Canada, to advocate for an urgent redress of the whiteness inherent in existing Mad Studies paradigms. Mobilizing a metaphor of spatiality, this essay considers the “space” within Mad Studies to account for racialized experiences of madness, and the implication of this “making space” for understandings of madness more broadly.<sup>1</sup> I begin by tracing the contours of Mad Studies and explicitly considering the relationship between Disability Studies, Mad Studies, and whiteness, offering a critical account of Mad Studies as a discipline which has thus far not centralized processes of race and racialization in accounts of Madness (Gorman et al. 2013). Drawing on existing scholarship which theorizes the particularities of racialized madness, I suggest that careful engagement with racialized accounts of madness underscores the urgent need for Mad Studies to centralize a critical race analysis in Mad approaches. Such consideration may spur an urgent re-thinking of madness itself.

By mobilizing a metaphor of spatiality, I problematize the “space” available for racialized selves to (re)claim madness within contemporary Mad Studies paradigms and situate the organization, production and distribution of madness within material structures of white supremacy and settler colonialism. I conclude that in failing to rigorously unpack the relations of race which undergird understandings of madness, and to challenge the foundational structure of white supremacy in the Mad Studies discipline, scholars potentially perpetuate a colonial project of “othering” and consequentially maintain the systems of psychiatric violence they seek to undo. More specifically, to develop a cohesive critique of sanism and embark on a project of

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article, I capitalize ‘Mad’ when referring to the intentionally reclaimed term used by Mad scholars, Mad activists, and Mad-identified individuals. I use “madness” when referring to the broad experience of mental distress normatively characterized as “mental illness” or “mental health issues”.

reclaiming madness,<sup>2</sup> Mad Studies must foreground the reality that re/claiming madness is a deeply racialized phenomenon, and that this reclamation materializes differently for white Mad people. Centralizing race in Mad Studies exposes the workings of white supremacy in logics of violence against Mad people more broadly and is thus necessary to an anti-oppressive and sustainable Mad Studies project.

### **Mad Studies, Mad Politics: An Overview**

Mad Studies is an interdisciplinary and coalitional field of academic inquiry, or in/discipline (Ingram 2008), with roots in Canadian Mad activist alternatives to psychiatry (Diamond 2013; Reaume 2006). Building on histories of mental patient liberation and anti-psychiatry activism of the 1960s and 1970s in Canada, US, and UK contexts, Mad Studies is closely related to Disability Studies and invokes the term “Mad” as a politicized identity category and signifier of a subversive standpoint relative to biomedical psychiatric paradigms. In their introduction to *Mad Matters*, an anthology of Mad Studies scholarship particular to Canadian contexts, Menzies, LeFrancois and Reaume (2013) identify Mad Studies as “a project of inquiry, knowledge production, and political action devoted to the critique and transcendence of psy-centred ways of thinking, behaving, relating, and being”, positioning itself against biomedical psychiatry while validating and celebrating survivor lived experiences, knowledges, and cultural productions (p.13). Central to the Mad Studies project is the privileging of the Mad subject as a knowing agent. As a critical lens of analysis, Mad Studies visibilizes and interrogates the structural contexts within which Mad subjectivities emerge, including attention to socio-economic,

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<sup>2</sup> Shaindl Diamond defines sanism as “the inequality, prejudice, and discrimination faced by people who are constructed as ‘crazy’ within dominant culture” (2013 p.77).

political, and historical processes which produce “mental illness” as a knowable phenomenon, for example, the increasing neoliberalization of mental health in late stage capitalism (LeBlanc-Haley 2019). Mad Studies paradigms centralize advocacy for anti-oppressive and transformative alternatives to biomedical psychiatry – though importantly, Mad Studies is not inherently abolitionist (Burstow 2013) – as well as the incorporation of “all that is critical of psychiatry from a radical socially progressive foundation in which the medical model is dispensed with as biologically reductionist whilst alternative forms of helping people are based on humanitarian, holistic perspectives where people are not reduced to symptoms but understood within the social and economic contexts of the society in which they live” (Menzies, LeFrancois and Reaume, 2013, p.2). Mad Studies therefore works to trouble the authority of psychiatry and reclaim “madness” as a positive (or critical) disability identity, all while centering and valuing the lived experiences and voices of those labelled “mad” (Reaume, 2006).<sup>3</sup>

Conceptualizing “mad”, or madness, is a complicated and ambiguous project. Ingram (2008) writes that “Giving the name ‘Mad Studies’ to certain perspectives is intended to set a minimum threshold for academic investigations to be considered as offering radical critiques and alternatives to psychiatric, psychotherapeutic, and psychological perspectives, whose pathologization of madness as ‘mental illness’ entails wide-ranging negative social and political consequences” (p. 1). Scholars and activists aligning themselves with critical orientations to mental health and lived experiences of mental distress have varyingly mobilized terms such as Mad, crazy, insane, as well as more diagnosis- or illness-specific language, such as borderline or neurodivergent, to locate their experiences within constellations of behaviours or feelings while

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that while Mad, psychiatric survivor, mental patient liberation, consumer, and anti-psychiatry activism and scholarship are all related in their critical orientation to psychiatry and sanist oppression(s), there are particularities among these constituencies which have implications for their academic and activist projects: see Diamond (2013) and Burstow and LeFrancois (2014).

contesting and/or destigmatizing the experience of mental distress (Johnson 2015). For this article, I take up ‘madness’ as a referent to the experience of mental distress or mental suffering and employ ‘Mad’ to refer to the reclamation of madness as a politicized disability identity in line with Mad politics. Madness, as conceptualized by Mad Studies, is not an illness, but an epistemological standpoint, political identity, and creative opening with the capacity to be reclaimed as a meaningful site of onto-epistemological production (Leigghio 2013). Reflective of this impetus to reclaim madness, Ingram (2008) writes that

We await the time when our epiphanies are no longer misrecognized as mania or psychosis; when our dry spells are no longer misrecognized as depression; when our frenetic energies are no longer misrecognized as ADHD or borderline personality disorder; and when our search for an inner place of refuge is no longer misrecognized as autism. A time will come when our bodyminds are no longer declared incompetent and are no longer regarded as accidents waiting to happen. A time will come when we can laugh and cry, love and hide, freely, and without fear. A time will come when there will be no punishment for allowing your imagination to run wild (p. 3)

This is a powerful image; but who has access to it? The figure invoked by Ingram, I argue, is a particular one, and begs the question of who is able to reclaim madness safely, what this project of reclamation entails, as well as how this project shifts when substantively paired with a critical race analysis of madness and mental illness.<sup>4</sup> The deaths of racialized Canadians at the hands of police during wellness checks in recent years (Waldron 2021) and the equation of Black and racialized madness with danger or threat (Erevelles 2011) underscores the absolute necessity of a critical race lens in Mad Studies – that a project of reclaiming madness is only truly liberatory when the differential and material effects, experiences, and contexts of racialized madness are centralized in Mad critique. In what follows, I offer a brief outline of critical race perspectives in

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<sup>4</sup> While beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that identification with psychiatric diagnostic categories has been taken up critically by scholars as potentially helpful, both in the sense of validating lived experience and in material access to treatment and medications. See Johnson (2015) for further discussion.

Mad Studies, including a critique of the whiteness of the Mad Studies discipline and the insights gleaned from critical race engagements with madness.

### **White Mad Studies**

In 2006, Christopher Bell published a critique of white disability studies, arguing that the discipline of disability studies has largely failed to engage with race in complex ways. Noting the chronic mobilization of race as a metaphor for disability, as well the under-theorization of the intersection and mutual constitution of race and disability, Bell (2006) argues that disability studies has conceptually foreclosed the possibility of racialized people as disabled subjects at the same time that it has “entrenched whiteness in its constitutive underpinning” (Bell, 2006, p. 275). Proceeding with some caution, as scholarly work addressing the intersections between race and madness is steadily proliferating (Bruce, 2017; Gorman, 2013; Jarman, 2011; Kanani, 2011; Metzl, 2009; Mollow, 2006; Tam, 2013), I suggest that similar critiques can be made of Mad Studies as a discipline which entrenches whiteness in its conceptual foundations: although the whiteness of Mad Studies is often acknowledged as “implicit” (LeFrançois, Menzies and Reaume, 2013, p. 266), Mad Studies is a discipline that continues to be dominated by white scholars (Gorman, 2013), uses “colonization” as a metaphor for psychiatrization and the co-optation of Mad knowledge (Gorman et al., 2013; Russo & Beresford, 2015; Tam, 2013), and, I suggest, assumes a white subject in its very conceptualization of madness while overlooking interventions made by Mad scholars of colour.

The whiteness of Mad Studies in Canada has been addressed most notably by scholars Rachel Gorman (2013) and Louise Tam (2013), both in separate works and in a co-authored blog post titled “Mad People of Colour: A Manifesto” (*Asylum*, 2013). In this coauthored manifesto,



Gorman et al. write of the racism inherent in the Canadian Mad movement, including racism experienced by the authors in Mad spaces, and call for white Mad people to take responsibility for keeping the Mad movement white (and middle class), writing that “The mad movement presents a mad identity based on white people’s experiences and white people’s theories” (Gorman et al., 2013). Gorman (2013) further explores the production of the white, middle-class, Western Mad subject through institutionalized spaces of academic accommodation, where white students who come to know themselves as having a mental illness which can be individually treated and accommodated are more likely to become politicized as claiming a Mad identity than students needing accommodation based on race and class oppression. Gorman writes that these institutional processes “must be understood as being central to how Mad identity gets organized, who may become politicized through Mad identity politics, what political demands are made, and what kinds of alliances and solidarities are forged” (2013, p. 279).

It is vital that scholars of madness – and Mad scholars – work to challenge the production and reification of the white, middle-class, Western Mad subject produced through Mad Studies, as well as to explore the implications of white Mad Studies for racialized experiences of madness and mental distress. Where Gorman takes up the limitations of Mad identity politics, I am more concerned with the epistemological underpinnings and material implications of madness itself – the very concept that Mad Studies seeks to reclaim and celebrate. I suggest, as Louise Tam articulates so succinctly, that “[t]here remains a gap in mapping relations of race *to* and *in* madness. It is this epistemic gap that fails to account for how race-thinking inherently constitutes psy knowledge” (2013, p. 283). The constitutive underpinning of (white) madness is tethered to complex understandings of racial otherness, Western rationality, and spatialization which inform the subjugation of Mad knowledges. In seeking to reclaim and celebrate Mad knowledges and

experiences, while overlooking the ways in which processes of racialization inform what is marked “sane” and what is “insane”, Mad scholars are potentially complicit in maintaining the violent systems of psy- knowledge they seek to undo. Put more clearly, a reclamation of madness which is not explicitly anti-racist potentiates harm against racialized people and communities experiencing mental distress. In this next section, I examine how race and madness have been thought together in existing scholarship, and the implications of these insights for theorizing and crafting anti-racist responses to madness.

### **Confluences of Race and Madness**

Understandings and practices of racial subjugation are foundational to Western understandings of madness, mental illness, and psychiatry. Critical race scholars have demonstrated the ways in which psychiatric and discursive constructions of madness are created and reinforced in relation to medical and structural racism (Kanani, 2011; Metzl, 2009; Raimundo et al, 2005), as well as the ways that racism and racial violence produce madness and mental distress through the structural organization of racial and colonial violence (Danquah 1998; Fanon 1967; Mollow 2006). On the relationship between race and madness, Nadia Kanani (2011) suggests that much existing literature posits race and madness as additive, rather than thinking through race and madness as socially co-constructed categories. Linking processes of psychiatrization with “political projects of colonization; political institutions such as slavery, scientific racism, and eugenicist discourses, and exclusionary immigration policies” (2011 p.2), Kanani demonstrates the racialized dimensions of psychiatry as an institution of social control, locating psychiatry as a key informant of discursive constructions of the racialized “Other” while particularizing racialized violence as shaping the experience of mental distress or madness.

Importantly, colonial violence and racial subjugation are foundational to the psychiatric discipline itself, and historical research excavates the role of colonialism and racism in the proliferation of diagnostic categories and psychiatric violence. Scholar Ingrid Waldron argues that, because psychiatry developed during periods of colonization and slavery, “it is not surprising that racist ideology has become and remains an integral part of the discipline” (2002 p.17). In a similar vein, Dorothy Roberts (2011) links the expansion of the transatlantic slave trade with the European scientific revolution’s emphasis on the taxonomization of human bodies in a racial hierarchy, thus justifying the enslavement and colonization of “mentally inferior” Black and Indigenous peoples across the globe. Consistent with this argument, in their account of colonial psychiatry, Raimundo, Banzato and Dalgarrondo (2005) link the development of psychiatry to European racism which “transformed the savage and the Negro from an exotic and simplistic personality into someone with a cruder and more primitive brain” (Raimundo, Banzato and Dalgarrondo, 2005, p. 163), thus linking racialized “primitivity” to a question of evolution, biology, and inferiority.

These foundational epistemological and scientific premises of racial inferiority functioned to justify the enslavement and colonization of racialized peoples and suppress Black resistance in American plantation economies (Roberts 2011). Following American emancipation, psychiatric arguments were invoked in an attempt to show that “the supposed increase of mental illnesses among Negroes after the abolition of slavery was related to the lack of mental preparation of African Americans for life in a ‘free and civilized’ society” (Raimundo, Banzato and Dalgarrondo, 2005, p. 164). This apparent “inferiority” was reinforced through the creation of diagnostic categories justifying enslavement, including *drapetomania*, coined by physician Samuel Cartwright in 1851 as an illness which compelled enslaved men and women to flee their

bondage. Indeed, freedom from enslavement was often forwarded as a *cause* of mental illness among Black men and women: Michelle Jarman (2011) cites Sander Gilman's treatment of the 1840 U.S. census – the first national census to document mental illness – which falsified higher rates of madness among free Blacks in the north than numbers existed. Citing Gilman, “If these staggering census statistics were to be believed, free blacks had an incidence of mental illness eleven times higher than slaves and six times higher than the white population” (cited in Jarman, 2011 p.137). These patterns of scientific and psychiatric justification for the subjugation of enslaved and emancipated Black Americans and racialized subjects continued into the twentieth century: for example, Jonathan Metzl's 2009 monograph *The Protest Psychosis* examines the ways that schizophrenia was mobilized to medicalize, contain, and control Black men during the height of the American civil rights movement, while Menzies and Palys (2006) examine the forced incarceration of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia's public mental hospital system under the Mental Health Act between 1879-1950, interrogating how “ideas of Aboriginality, pathology, and reason figured in the medico-legal management of ‘insane’ Native people” in so-called Canada (p.154). Kanani (2011) further takes up the racist and colonial dimensions of psychiatry as an institution of social control, citing eugenicist practices of forced sterilization of Indigenous women in Canada, as well as the mass incarceration of Chinese immigrants in the twentieth century in response to white fears of racial contamination (Menzies 2002). In each of these cases, psychiatrization has functioned as a mechanism of pathologization and control of groups under duress with specific consequences for and implication of racialized communities. Madness can therefore be understood as central to projects of settler colonialism, expansion, and empire.

These legacies of settler colonial and white supremacist violence are ongoing and entrenched in contemporary psychiatric paradigms. On the anti-Black foundations of modern psychiatry and Western reason, La Marr Jurelle Bruce (2017) argues that legacies of slavery, colonialism, and slave ships “orient Western notions of madness and Reason, and help propel this process we call modernity” (p. 304), and that “any critical investigation of madness and modernity must confront the matters of blackness and antiblackness in the foundation of modern Reason” (p. 304). Processes of colonization and the journey of the “Middle Passage”, whereby enslaved Africans were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas in service of slave economies and anti-Black modernity, rendered the African as “categorically mad: wild, perverse, subrational, pathological, mentally unsound” (Bruce, 2017, p. 304). Bruce (2017) writes that

By the height of the Euro-Enlightenment, preeminent philosophers like G. W. F. Hegel, David Hume, and Thomas Jefferson posited Africans as ontological foils for the modern, rational, European subject. Europeans repeatedly consolidated their identities as free and reasonable by casting the black-cum-mad as antithetical embodiment of unfreedom and unreason. (p. 304)

In Bruce’s account, Blackness operates as a foil in the construction of European reason, and it is this legacy of reason that continues to operate in the contemporary production and pathologization of “madness”. The historicities of madness as a racialized phenomenon have material ramifications in the political landscape of the contemporary Americas. Black, Indigenous, and racialized subjects experience madness, mental illness, and mental health in ways that are embedded in colonial and racial contexts. In her book *Depression*, Ann Cvetkovich draws on Cornel West’s allusion to an “emotional colour line” that separates black sadness from white sadness. This distinction is important and provides a point of entry into the specific experiences of (Mad) Black subjects. Cvetkovich, referencing the work of Saidiya Hartmann, asserts that Black sadness is constituted by “African diaspora lineage” and offers a framework

through which to articulate the afterlife of slavery and colonialism, where Black sadness is particularized by the veracity and sharedness of trauma and racial violence, as well as the ways in which current methods and access to treatment are (un)available to racialized selves (Mollow, 2006). Furthermore, the diasporic lineage of Black sadness materializes in high rates of poverty, poor housing, and police violence, all of which contribute to mental suffering (Hartmann 2007; Robinson-Brown and Keith 2003; Shattell & Brown, 2017).

While the particular ‘madness’ of Black subjects can be conceptualized and understood as a result of white supremacist and colonial violence, it can also be a *response* to white supremacist and colonial violence. Bruce, referencing the work of Toni Morrison, notes that

‘Going mad’ was... a strategy to clutch hold of one’s mind when Reason would steal or smash it. Indeed, if Reason is benefactor of white supremacy, proponent of antiblack slavocracy, and patron of patriarchal dominion, a black enslaved woman might fare better going insane instead. Captive behind the barbed fences of slavocratic sanity, she might find some refuge—however tenuous, fraught, and incomplete—in the fugitivity of madness. (2017, pp. 306)

This is not to conflate madness with simple resistance per se, but to complicate the relationship between colonial violence, racism, and madness as both a symptom and potential escape. Where white Mad selves work to reclaim themselves from the violences of psychiatry, racialized Mad selves work to reclaim themselves from the very violences which make psychiatry possible – settler colonialism and white supremacy – as well as to fight for access to safe and accessible healthcare and treatment (Mollow, 2006). Recall Bruce’s consideration of the slave ship that tows the ship of fools. Recall, again, that race constitutes the foil against which Western reason constructs itself as dominant, all-knowing, and masterful. Psychiatry, Mad scholars will argue, is influenced by Western reason and Enlightenment epistemes which differentiate between sanity and insanity, body and mind. We can draw a line between race and colonization, Western

epistememes, and psychiatric violence; the slave ship indeed tows the ship of fools (Bruce 2017), and this is what Mad Studies misses in its political orientation. Race informs understandings and experiences of madness, as well as the spaces in which madness is fostered or disallowed.

### **Spatializing Madness and Racial Geographies**

Thinking racialized madness through a metaphor of spatiality can more explicitly visibilize the organizing role of white supremacist and settler colonial violence in the production and distribution of racialized madness, as well as the role these systems play in constructing understandings of madness. I take up “white supremacy” as an organizing structure which underscores “the material production and violence of racial structures and the hegemony of whiteness in settler societies” (Bonds and Inwood, 2016 p.717). White supremacy organizes and distributes exposure to premature death through racial violence and racialized geographies; naturalizes, normalizes and invisibilizes white racial identities; and is a “central organizing logic of Western modernity, legitimating both European colonization and settler projects... Rather than being a relic of the past or an ideology of extremists, white supremacy *continues to produce social and spatial relations that frame broad understandings of difference*” (Bonds & Inwood 2016 p.720, emphasis added). By engaging white supremacy as a spatial organizing structure of madness, a connection thus far not explicitly engaged in the scholarship, I suggest that white supremacist spatiality shows up in discourses of race and madness in two ways: first, with regard to the material organization and distribution of madness and racial violence, evidenced by insights from critical race scholars and critical geographers who argue “that landscapes do not merely reflect racial patterns, but are a fundamental component of processes of racialization” through the organization and distribution of poverty, precarity, violence, and ill health which

inform madness (Bonds and Inwood 2016 p.717; Razack 2002; McKittrick 2006; Waldron 2021). Stated more clearly, attention to the spatializing role of white supremacy in madness discourses underscores how the organization of space, resources, and capital produces material conditions which exacerbate and shape racialized experiences of madness within Western epistemes. Second, attention to spatiality calls to question Mad Studies' lack of an anti-racist strategy and implicitly white disciplinary scope, thus "honing in" on the lack of *conceptual space* available to interrogate race, racism, and white supremacy within the Mad Studies discipline.

The use of spatiality to explore questions of madness can be traced to Foucault's treatment of the ship of fools elucidated in *History of Madness* (1965). The "ship of fools", or *stultifera navis*, is a literary invention of the renaissance age representative of the outsider status of the mad. According to Foucault, the German *Narenschiff* functioned to remove undesirables from city limits – cast onto a river, the mad, deviant, and criminal were destined to wander. In the coming centuries, as madness became a phenomenon not simply of removal, but of containment and incarceration, mad people were confined to asylums and sanitoriums. Much like poverty and destitution, madness was rendered a state of "unreason" to be contained (Foucault, 1965). Madness is, in this example, already spatialized – that is, the mad are relegated to the ship of fools, or beyond the walls of an asylum or a sanitorium. This material spatialization of madness is further explored in Ann McClintock's examination of the spatialized construction of racial madness in imperial Africa. In her work "Double Crossings: Madness, Sexuality and Imperialism" (2001), McClintock argues that as colonized African women began to "wander" into city centres as a result of colonial famine and poverty, they were rendered "mad strays" by European settlers. McClintock writes that "Madness became a discourse of territoriality. For African women, *to be mad was to be out of place*" (2001, p. 27).



These initial explorations of the relationship between madness and space invite critical consideration of the particular material conditions which frame, produce, and inform madness as spatially and temporally located. With the widespread closure of large Canadian psychiatric institutions in the latter half of the twentieth century and the attendant decimation of social supports under neoliberal capitalism (Leblanc-Haley 2019; Morrow, Dagg & Pederson 2008), the spatialization of madness and confinement of mad people has arguably transformed from that figure “beyond walls” to a phenomenon of hypervisibility organized through neoliberal capitalist and settler colonial organizations and distribution of poverty and precarity. This organized visibility of “mental illness”, poverty, addiction and homelessness in Canadian cities (see, for example, Van Veen, Teghtsoonian and Morrow 2019) suggests that “the mad” are among “us” – yet fundamentally out of place. This spatialization of madness – the idea that the “Mad” belong “somewhere else” – is closely informed by processes of racialization and racial cartographies, including insights from critical geographers on white spatial imaginaries. Lipsitz (2011) conceptualizes white spatial imaginaries as those which “idealize ‘pure’ and homogenous spaces, controlled environments, and predictable patterns of design and behavior. It seeks to hide social problems rather than solve them” (p. 209). It is easy to see how the Mad are excluded from (or rendered problematic in/against) white spatial imaginaries – impure (within eugenicist logics), unpredictable, and uncontrollable “social problems” which necessitate removal. This is not to conflate madness with racialization, but to suggest that critical attention to the structural (and structuring) role of white supremacy can underscore its impact on understandings of madness more broadly, and racialized madness in particular.

### **Madness, Race, and Anachronistic Spaces**

McClintock's (2001) articulation of anachronistic spaces is a helpful heuristic device for thinking through the spatialization of racialized madness within white supremacist projects of Western modernity and reason. McClintock notes that, in imperialist Europe, white degenerate groups in the "imperial metropolis", including unemployed homeless, sex workers, gay men, and the mad, were excluded from the parameters of whiteness for their failure to approximate and uphold heteronormative and ableist forms of white supremacist respectability and projects of civilized modernity. This failure rendered these subjects "racial deviants", signalling their belonging to primitive moments in human prehistory and rendering them occupants of what McClintock terms an "anachronistic space" (2001, p. 17). This anachronistic space is not unlike the ship of fools – a temporal space, rather than physical or literary construction, inclusive of both white "failures" and racialized "Others" within and outside of modernity:

[racial deviants] within the imperial metropolises were figured as existing in an earlier, more primitive, prehistoric time. These groups and spaces coexisted spatially with modernity (indeed existed ominously within or alongside it) but were figured as somehow not really belonging in the time of imperial modernity. (2001, p. 18)

In their rendering as *prehistoric and primitive*, occupants of anachronistic spaces were simultaneously racialized by virtue of their failure to approximate norms of white respectability, including sanity and heterosexuality. Here, race and madness are intertwined and co-constitutive. Beth Ribet (2011) notes that for a white person to be disabled (or, I would suggest, to be mad) is to be effectively stripped of their whiteness – to be mad or disabled is to be "less than white" (p. 214). This is not to erase the white privilege of white disabled people, or to suggest that disability is somehow "like race". Rather, it is to suggest that, within structures of white supremacy, the parameters of proper whiteness are slippery, and that "proper whiteness" is bolstered by norms of sanity, ability, sexuality, gender, wealth, all of which feed into and fortify our understandings of race and racialization (Deliovsky 2010). In a more material sense, histories

of genocide and colonialism inform the spatial organization of racialized life (Razack, 2002; Waldron, 2021; Lipsitz, 2007); occupants of urban city centres, psychiatric institutions, prisons, shelters – contemporary “anachronistic”, or “primitive”, spaces, are not placed accidentally or by happenstance, but through consistently rigorous and indiscriminate operationalizations of white supremacist projects (Razack 2002). Racialized subjects are more likely to occupy these anachronistic spaces due to the afterlife of slavery, genocide, and diasporic lineage which manifests in poverty, systemic racism, and violence (Cvetkovich, 2012; Hartmann, 2007; Mollow, 2006). Recall, the spatialized aspects of race and madness; “anachronistic spaces” are rendered mad due to their white failing. Where “white spaces” are conceptualized as able-bodied, able-minded, progressing in a chronological, linear fashion under the mantle of Western Reason, any other space which fails to actively uphold and reinforce ideologies of white supremacy are maddened (and racialized) as “Other”. While resisting false connotations of racialization and madness, and critically challenging the implication that disability absolves white privilege, what becomes visible through critical attention to race and madness as spatialized phenomena is that understandings of madness as “outside” of rational modernity are not easily parsed from ongoing projects of settler colonialism and white supremacy. Put more clearly, white madness and racialized madness are both organized through proximity to white supremacist norms and structures, and therefore, rigorous attention to the structurally organizing role of white supremacy in understandings of and responses to madness within contemporary settler colonial and white supremacist paradigms poses an urgent project of inquiry for Mad Studies scholars. Attention to the structurally organizing role of white supremacy by Mad scholars invites explicit consideration of the historical, structural, and material conditions which produce madness as a racialized phenomenon, including, for example, racialized poverty,

precarity and housing insecurity under racial capitalism, police violence and the enmeshedness of systems of carcerality and “mental illness”, and the role of the state in producing and policing racialized madness. Such attention moves the workings of white supremacy and settler colonialism from the margins of Mad analysis to the centre of Mad analysis, where these systems and their harmful effects can be exposed as epistemically undergirding conceptualizations of madness, as materially producing, organizing, and distributing racialized madness, and visibilizing the undertheorized workings of whiteness in Mad Studies. Spatializing madness with rigorous attention to racialized cartographies thus has urgent conceptual and material implications for Mad activism and analysis.

### **Recovering Mad Studies**

I have worked, in this paper, to argue that Mad Studies continues a colonial project of “othering” by failing to account for the structuring role that white supremacy and settler colonialism plays in the construction, organization, and distribution of madness itself. I am, however, not ready to give up on Mad Studies. It is a promising framework that invites feminist and critical engagement with psychiatry as a discipline that has long pathologized and medicalized what can otherwise be accounted for as “everyday” experiences and “normal” ranges of feeling, such as sadness, melancholy, or anger. It also offers a window through which we can imagine the possibility of cherishing and holding valid the creativity and full range of human expression, emotion, and affect (Leigghio 2013). Mad Studies, as a discipline and a politic, has the potential to turn dominant Western epistemic regimes in on itself; troubling, confronting, and destabilizing erasive mechanisms of power which embed themselves in the operationalization of ableism, capitalism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, settler colonialism, and patriarchal violence.

The realities of racism and legacies of the diaspora, left unattended by the contemporary Mad movement, have restricted the possibility of Mad freedom to those who can reasonably “run wild” without being murdered by police in the streets and slapped with the visceral materialities of racial violence (Waldron 2021). It is my hope that by deconstructing and critiquing psychiatry, Mad scholars also forward critiques against white supremacy, police violence and racialized poverty which construct and inform madness, among other forms of maddening social violence. More robust reckoning with structures of white supremacy and settler colonialism may be useful in informing a possible – and necessary – amelioration with the racial politics of madness. More work is needed to speak white supremacy, settler colonialism and racialization into Mad Studies, to name the ghosts that live there, and to demand accountability of Mad scholars to envision a new kind of liberation, one which centralizes the deconstruction of white supremacy insofar as it is intimately connected to madness and psychiatric violence. Imagining a reclamation of madness without addressing the racial politics upon which madness rests renders any Mad activism only partial, and ultimately unsustainable.

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