

Hi Mad Reading folk,

Apologies for the delay in getting the details for the August Reading Group out – as many of you will be aware, Victoria and Melbourne in particular are going through a challenging period.

In light of this, we will continue with an August group for those who appreciate the distraction, and have chosen two short pieces for those interested in participating.

**Time and Date:**

Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> August from 6pm-7.30pm (AEST – Melbourne time)

**Topic: Preventing the co-option of Mad Studies**

Our discussion last month about the role of allies in Mad Studies raised lots of interesting questions about who is (or ought to be) included in the project of Mad Studies and what impact this might have on progression of the discipline – following on from this topic, this month we will be looking at Jasna Russo and Peter Beresford's paper [Supporting the sustainability of Mad Studies and preventing its co-option](#), available to read at the link.

Here is the abstract for the piece, outlining some themes and the key question: is it possible for Mad Studies to avoid subversion? How do we achieve this?

*Mad Studies is emerging as a new force in 'mental health' discourse and developments. Given the way in which other would-be progressive developments associated with attempts to include experimental knowledge in this field, such as 'recovery' and 'peer support', have been subverted, this article considers whether it is possible for Mad Studies to avoid this. Drawing on developments in Disability Studies and in relation to the social model of disability, we explore what can be done in order to safeguard the distinctiveness of Mad Studies and foster its unique contribution.*

Feel free to also have a read of this short blog post about peer support work, which ties into some of these themes: [The Co-option and Oppression of a Social Justice Movement: Professionalized Peer Support Services](#)

**Facilitator: Antonia Smyth**

I (Antonia) will facilitate in August. As many of you know, I am currently a graduate researcher in philosophy, looking at epistemic injustice in cases of compulsory psychiatric treatment, and also work as an independent mental health advocate. I'm no expert in either Mad Studies or in peer support work but can't wait to hear the collective wisdom everyone brings to the (virtual) room and will mainly be on hand to ensure things run smoothly.

**Zoom details:**

The Zoom link will be made available in the coming days – it will be [uploaded to the website here](#) and also included in the auto-reply for this email account for those who write back next week. I will also make the details available [on Twitter](#) once confirmed.

It would be great if people could RSVP so we get a sense of numbers but, as usual, everyone is welcome whether you have confirmed or not. Do feel free to spread the word! 😊 Please bear with me if I'm slow to reply or give a generic response – it's not a lack of enthusiasm about your attendance, just a busy time!

**Future topics:**

Someone has kindly put their hand up to facilitate in September on the question of Mad Studies' relationship to the Black Lives Matter movement and prison abolition (I'm excited for this one! Further details to come!) A general reminder however that, if you are interested, potential hosts are always

welcome to contact the email account. You don't have to be an expert, just have a topic that you're interested in and some readings you think would apply. The organisers can help with Zoom etc. Some further topics to think about might be the relationship between Mad Studies and Disability Studies (building on the topic this month) or something Madness and Covid-related (The UK-based [Mad Covid Project](#) could be your inspiration ...) Please do put your hand up if you have the time and inclination.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in a few weeks and hearing your thoughts, reflections, and questions for the group!

Antonia