Introduction

Madness is a complex and contested term. Through time and across cultures it has acquired many formulations: for some people madness is synonymous with unreason and violence, for others with creativity and subversion, for others it is associated with spirits and spirituality. Among the different formulations, there is one in particular that has taken hold so deeply and systematically that it has become the default view in many communities around the world: the idea that madness is a disorder (or a dysfunction or an illness) of the mind. Medical interest in madness is not new—it stretches back, at least, to Ancient Greece—but medical dominance over madness can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. We encounter madness after more than a century and a half of sustained medicalization; the subsuming of madness under scientific (medical and psychological) idioms and their associated practices. According to the dominant view today, madness—or as it would be classified in terms of the various subtypes of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and psychosis—is a disorder of the mind caused by the interaction of multiple factors that include the biological, psychological, and social. It is a view that has taken significant hold on the cultural imagination, supplanting alternative views. It has become fundamental to healthcare planning and funding at the governmental level. It delineates the aims of local and global research programs concerning the causes of mental disorders and the interventions that can alleviate disorder. Yet the dominance of this view is being challenged within certain strands of mental health activism.

Dissatisfaction with the treatment of individuals considered to be "mad," "insane," or "mentally ill" goes back a long way, but the 1970s are generally regarded as the starting point of a distinctive wave of activism that persists to this day.[1] In the wake of the efforts of black, gay, and women's civil rights movements, a number of broadly connected mental health ex-patients movements began organizing for the civil rights of users and survivors of psychiatric treatment and for reform of mental health institutions. In time, the mental health consumer/survivor/ex-patient (c/s/x) movements grew and diversified and today various discourses and initiatives can be identified: in addition to long-standing concerns with coercive interventions, lack of involvement in recovery, limited access to treatment, and social stigma and discrimination, some activists have resisted the medicalization of madness. Mad Pride and mad-positive

[1] A note on the use of scare quotes, which are quotation marks placed around terms whose meaning or legitimacy are contested. Many of the key terms used in this book are contested, for example: madness, mad, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, mental disorder, and mental illness. To use scare quotes every time one of these terms is mentioned would result in numerous instances on every page; it would be unwieldy and distracting. Accordingly, I only use scare quotes in two situations: where the emphasis in the usage of a term is the fact that it is contested, and to indicate that I am referring to a concept.

activism (henceforth Mad activism) seeks to counteract discrimination by rejecting the language of "mental illness," "disease," and "disorder." Activists reclaim the term "mad," reverse its negative connotations, and present madness as grounds for culture and identity.

A key difference between Mad activism and treatment-focused/service-improvement endeavors is the former's formulation of the problem as one to do with respect and recognition. What is at stake is the entire way in which people's identities are publicly represented and valued, with the dominant, reductive view of madness as a disorder of the mind being seen as an affront to a positive identity. The goal is not so much to reform psychiatry (though that also is on the agenda) but to effect cultural change in the way madness is viewed. In this respect, the aims of Mad activism overlap with those of other movements that organize around issues of identity and recognition. In the domain of sexual orientation and gender, for example, Gay rights and Trans rights are not only concerned with countering discrimination in employment opportunities, for instance, but with achieving symbolic and cultural reparation in the wider society. A key aim is for being gay or being transgender to be viewed as a valid way-of-life, and for individuals to develop positive identities that society would recognize and reflect back to them as such. In those terms, gay individuals in some parts of the world have been able to achieve some redress, while recognition of transgender identities is being worked-out at present. In contrast, madness and Mad individuals lag behind, with professional and social views dominated by a cluster of terms emphasizing deficit and disorder. Mad activism is trying to change this, and it is this radical and, potentially, far-reaching activism that is the focus of this book. What are the claims and demands of Mad activism?

A review of Mad activism (Chapter 1) shows that dissatisfaction with the dominant view of madness can be formulated into a claim and a demand:

- The claim: Madness is grounds for culture and identity
- The demand: Society should recognize the validity and worth of Mad culture and Mad identity

This book is an examination of this claim and of the demand for recognition. Before I can present an outline of the overall methodology and argument, we must contend at this early point in the exposition with two kinds of response that we may encounter: skeptical and supportive. Both responses do not see the point of conducting the examination attempted in this book. Skeptics unconditionally reject the claims and demands of Mad activism, while supporters unconditionally accept them. Skeptics can make several arguments, all of which rely upon a version of the view that madness is a disorder (or a dysfunction or an illness) of the mind, along with the idea that this view implies falsity of the claim that madness can be grounds for culture and identity—skeptics essentially respond to Mad activism's objections to this view by insisting on that view. That, of course, is not a reasonable way to address a political demand. Skeptics who are mental health clinicians may respond in this way because they do not consider the claims of Mad activism to be about the individuals they see in the clinic and on acute wards, rehabilitation units, and psychiatric intensive care units. These individuals, the skeptics can point out, are too unwell for the claims of this movement to apply to them: they are unable to function in the most basic of ways let alone make political demands and construct culture and identity. Other skeptics can be patients/clients who understand their experiences and situation in terms of medical concepts; Mad activism does not speak to them for they consider themselves to be ill. Aside from the clinic, skeptics among the academic and the nonacademic public may view Mad activism with interest yet suspicion that there is something oxymoronic, if not dishonest, about constructions such as Mad Pride or Mad identity: madness, they could point out, is essentially negative and associated with illness and irrationality; whence the positive conceptions?

Underlying the skeptic's unconditional rejection of Mad activism is an unjustified generalization. Skeptics take the view of madness that fits their experiences (and, in some cases, their prejudices) to be the paradigm case. They then generalize from this to all of madness. But we must not take one view as constituting all we can think and know about madness: such a move, as we know all too well, is at the heart of various forms of discrimination in society such as those based on race or gender. Madness is not one thing, and neither are people's hopes about what they want to achieve through activism, or even if they can or want to take part in activism. Throughout the history of the Gay rights movement, there were individuals in society who wanted to be "cured" of homosexuality; it was and remains wrong to take such individuals as evidence that Gay activism was/is misguided. Similarly, the fact that some individuals wish to medically frame and treat their experiences, or may appear to lack capacity for certain decisions, should not be taken as evidence that Mad activism is oxymoronic. Does that mean that Mad activism can only speak for a limited number of individuals, those who are already making the demand for recognition? As a starting point, yes. But what the activists are trying to achieve can have repercussions that go far beyond the activism itself: through their efforts to render intelligible and to popularize a number of alternative narratives of psychological, experiential, and emotional diversity, Mad activists are playing a key role in broadening our cultural repertoire as it pertains to madness. In these efforts, many stand to benefit, as I argue in Chapters 9 and 10.

In contrast to skeptics, supporters unconditionally accept the claims and demands of Mad activism. For them, there is nothing to examine, just a lot of work to do to question the dominant view of madness and to achieve symbolic and cultural change in society. That, indeed, may be the position we arrive to at the end, but we have to *arrive* there: we cannot assume it at the outset and this is for a number of reasons. We owe it to Mad activists to take their claims and demands seriously, which requires engagement with these views in a process whose outcome cannot be prejudged; anything less would undermine the value and sincerity of the position we hold. We owe it to the skeptics to demonstrate to them the validity of the claims and demands, the importance of what Mad activism is trying to achieve, and how these achievements can be relevant to the skeptics themselves. We owe it to society in general to get right our recommendations on the direction of moral and social change. If the claims of Mad activism lack coherence, and if the demands lack normative force, then they should not command our sense of obligation. Yet to establish this we need to examine those claims and demands: we need to get it right.

Neither unconditional acceptance (the supporter's position) nor unconditional rejection (the skeptic's position) will do. But it will not do either to ignore Mad activism—to make no effort to take a considered position toward it—and this is for two reasons. First, if the claims put forward are coherent and the demands for recognition justified, then society has a problem at its hands evident in the dominance of reductive and pathologizing language about madness that would not be accepted today as a way of talking about other social identities. Second, Mad activism presents us with a valuable opportunity to question our ideas about identity, self, agency, and rationality to name some key concepts. It is a chance to ask if positive definitions and uses of these concepts exclude many individuals, perhaps unjustifiably so. For these reasons, we must not ignore Mad activism. In the spirit of respect for a particular viewpoint, this book sets out to examine and respond to the claims and demands of Mad activism.

Synopsis

This book is an extended philosophical argument that addresses the following questions derived from the claims and demands of Mad activism:

- Can madness be grounds for culture or identity?
- Does the demand for recognition possess normative force and, if it does, how should society respond to it?

These questions are addressed, respectively, in Part III and Part IV of the book. Part I offers an overview of activism in mental health and responds to key objections to Mad activism. And Part II presents background arguments in the philosophy and politics of identity and recognition. The nature of the questions and the overall subject matter require that we engage with a range of literatures: mental health activism literature; philosophical literature on the concepts and politics of identity and recognition; philosophy of psychiatry literature on the concept of mental disorder, delusions, unity and continuity of self, and specific mental health conditions; Mad studies and Disability studies literatures. In what follows I present an outline of the approach and content of each part, indicating how the argument of the book as a whole hangs together.

Part I: Madness

Chapter 1 begins with an overview of developments in mental health activism in the United Kingdom and the United States from the late nineteenth century to the present day. It outlines the discourse of "mental hygiene," the "antipsychiatry" of the 1960s, the 1970s civil rights movements, and the consumer/service-user/survivor movements. A historical overview allows us to appreciate the distinctiveness and, in some ways, the radical nature of Mad Pride activism relative to older and other contemporary endeavors. The rest of the chapter is devoted to describing the activities, claims, and demands of Mad Pride activism as they emerge through key writings, publications, and manifestos by activists. Chapter 2 responds to objections that have been put forward to Mad activism to the effect that madness is inherently disabling and distressing. For the objectors, these problems undermine positive constructions such as Mad Pride and Mad identity. I respond to these objections as follows: on the question of disability, I develop two bulwarks against the tendency to assume too readily the view that madness is inherently disabling: the first arises from the normative nature of disability judgments, and the second from the implications of political activism in terms of being a social subject. In the process of making these arguments, I explore the social model of disability in light of debates on naturalism and normativism, the applicability of the social model to madness, and the differences between physical and mental disabilities in terms of the unintelligibility often attributed to the latter. On the question of distress, I demonstrate that a phenomenon can be distressing and valuable, and this despite distress or, sometimes, because of it. With the subject matter in place, I now move on to Part II where I lay down the philosophical foundations for this book.

Part II: Recognition

Part II presents a philosophical account of identity and recognition, an account that is essential to addressing the questions in Parts III and IV (Can madness be grounds for culture or identity? Does the demand for recognition possess normative force and, if it does, how should society respond to it?). The philosophical literature on the concepts, theories, and politics of identity and recognition is huge and criss-crosses several philosophical schools and styles of argument. Further, it is a literature that has many unresolved issues and taps into long-standing problems in epistemology, ontology, moral philosophy, and political philosophy. In order to be able to address the questions just noted, I develop a formulation of identity and recognition that we can work with and that can allow us to make progress. My account seeks to achieve four aims: an understanding of the concept of recognition; an understanding of the concepts of individual and social identity; an argument for the normative force of demands for recognition (in general); a view on possible social and political responses to demands for recognition. In so far as possible, I ground my account in primary sources; for the concept of recognition I work with Hegel's exposition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (while siding with Robert Pippin's and Terry Pinkard's interpretations of Hegel's work); for the concept of identity I work, primarily, with the account developed by Charles Taylor; for the politics of recognition I work with key arguments by, among others, Axel Honneth, Nancy Fraser, Richard Rorty, and Kwame Appiah. Part II is essential to the argument of the book as a whole but can also be read independently as a perspective on the theory and politics of recognition.

Part III: Routes to recognition

With the background prepared, Part III examines whether madness can be grounds for culture or identity. Culture and identity are two routes by which social groups make the case for the validity and value of their way-of-life or shared self-understandings. Mad culture is examined in Chapter 6 and Mad identity in Chapters 7 and 8. In Chapter 6 I begin by outlining several concepts of culture followed by an assessment of whether Mad culture satisfies the relevant concept. As will be seen, Mad culture does not fit neatly with typical understandings of a societal culture. However, even if it

does, a consideration of the moral basis for cultural rights leads us to identity and not to culture as the primary issue at stake.

Chapters 7 and 8 examine the viability of Mad identity as a route to recognition. The key problem that confronts us here is, in effect, a paradox: how can madness be grounds for identity given that phenomena such as delusions, passivity experiences, hallucinations, and extremes of mood, as commonly assumed, *undermine* the requirements for identity formation? Madness, it seems, cannot be grounds for identity: it lies outside the scope of recognition. I explore and respond to this objection in two stages. First, I outline three requirements for identity formation that need to be satisfied by any potential demand for recognition: this is for the identity claim to be of a certain epistemic status; to be an expression of a unified mental life; and to persist over a sufficient period of time. Second, I examine key phenomena of madness in light of these requirements. In each case I begin by interrogating the ways in which the phenomenon in question is judged to impair the relevant requirement, and I continue by demonstrating the complexity inherent in such judgments. For example, thought insertion is typically considered to indicate disunity of self, evident in the subject's inability to identify with its own mental states (in this sense thought insertion undermines the second requirement for identity formation noted here). By identifying the premises implicit in such a judgment, I demonstrate its reliance on a range of distinctive cultural psychological assumptions pertaining to self and authorship of mental states. In a different cultural context, thought insertion (passivity phenomena more generally), rather than constituting disunity of self, can actually be the basis for a potentially enriching self-understanding. A similar procedure of analysis and unpacking is performed for delusions and for the discontinuities of self often seen in schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. The aim of Chapters 7 and 8 is to establish, as a possibility, that these phenomena can be brought within the scope of recognition.

With this possibility established, Chapter 9 examines how it can be achieved. I explore this through the notion of "ordering madness," an endeavor that requires the fulfillment of two conditions: (1) preserve something of the phenomenology of madness, and (2) resolve impairments to identity formation. Only if these two conditions are satisfied can madness be brought within the scope of recognition, not as a psychiatric condition or a psychological construct, but as itself. I argue that only Mad narratives—the narratives of psychological, emotional, and experiential diversity advanced by activists—can satisfy these two requirements, whereas subjective narratives and professional narratives fail in this respect. In conclusion, madness can be brought within the scope of recognition: the notion of Mad identity is not incoherent.

Part IV: Approaches to Mad activism

Having defended the notion of Mad identity and demonstrated in what way madness can be brought within the scope of recognition, the final question can now be addressed: Does the demand for recognition of Mad identity possess normative force and, if it does, how should society respond to it? Building on the account of identity and recognition developed in Part II, Chapter 10 argues that the demand for recognition of Mad identity possesses normative force if the demand passes adjudication. In general terms, this requires that the identity in question is not trivial, morally objectionable, or irrational. I examine Mad identity in light of these three requirements: Mad identity is neither trivial nor morally objectionable, but the question of irrationality is more complex. An identity is irrational if it is constituted by claims whose truth can, in principle, be determined (and where such claims are false). Determining the epistemic or logical status of a claim presupposes a standpoint of assessment; if we adopt the stance of scientific rationality we are in a position to make such assessments. However, such a stance is not always an appropriate one to adopt. For some identities, it would be inappropriate to assess their constituting claims in terms of their epistemic or logical status; their claims are better apprehended in their performative and expressive aspects. In other cases, there might be experiences that overdetermine the framework that can adequately express them, hence that framework cannot be summarily rejected; it calls for examination and understanding. The Mad narratives discussed in this book, I argue, involve claims that can be apprehended in these different ways, and hence cannot simply be dismissed as irrational.

How should society respond to these valid demands? Drawing on the account developed in Chapter 5, Chapter 10 outlines a response to misrecognition where both political activities and interpersonal reconciliation play a key role: I discuss four aspects of this response: the intended outcome—the final aim—of responding to misrecognition; the vehicle through which this outcome can be realized, which is "conversation"; the attitude that should inform these conversations (an attitude of reconciliation); and the activities that can facilitate reconciliation. Chapter 10 then concludes by considering (hypothetically) the fruits of a successful process of reconciliation. These consist in the broadening of our cultural repertoire as it pertains to madness beyond medical and psychological constructs and frameworks, to include in addition a range of Mad narratives. In this sense, Mad narratives can be understood as a cultural form of societal adjustment; a "cultural adjustment" that can bring benefits to many people in society, and not just to the activists demanding recognition. Finally, Chapter 11, the Conclusion, ties together several arguments in the book and charts two pathways to reconciliation: reconciling skeptics and supporters of Mad activism, and reconciling madness and society.