



Madness & Epistemic Injustice

REFLECTIONS OF TWO PHD STUDENTS

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The rabbit hole of mental health lingo, identities & positions



Image Available: <https://animationscreencaps.com/alice-wonderland-2010/>

(Dis)embodied journeys



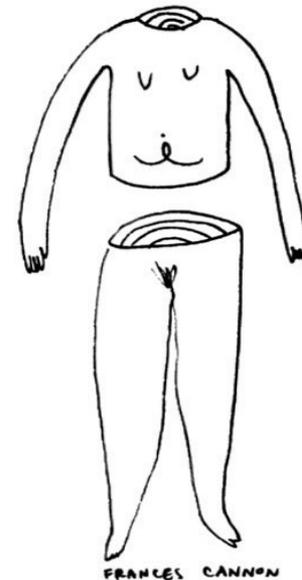
“Just get on with the ‘real’ research”

“Who am I to have a voice in this space?”

“I don’t belong here”

“I can’t do this”

“Am I making this up?”



Madness & Epistemic Injustice

Epistemic injustice can be understood as an injustice relating to one's ability to convey "knowledge to others by telling them, and making sense of our own social experiences" (Fricker 2007. p, 1).

It occurs when someone is insulted or wronged in their capacity as knower.

Individuals deemed 'mad' are one of the most marginalised groups in terms of construction of knowledge (LeBlanc & Kinsella 2016, Russo & Beresford 2015).

Testimonial Injustice

Silencing

- Knowledge, judgements, opinions are not solicited
- Testimonies may be heard but denied from epistemic consideration or considered irrelevant

Objectification

- Participants relegated to role of passive object rather than active agent (source of information rather than informant)
- “at the service of the inquirer’s epistemic agency (her questions, her assessments, her interpretations) (Medina, 2012, p.92)”

Sanism & benevolent othering (Grey, 2016)

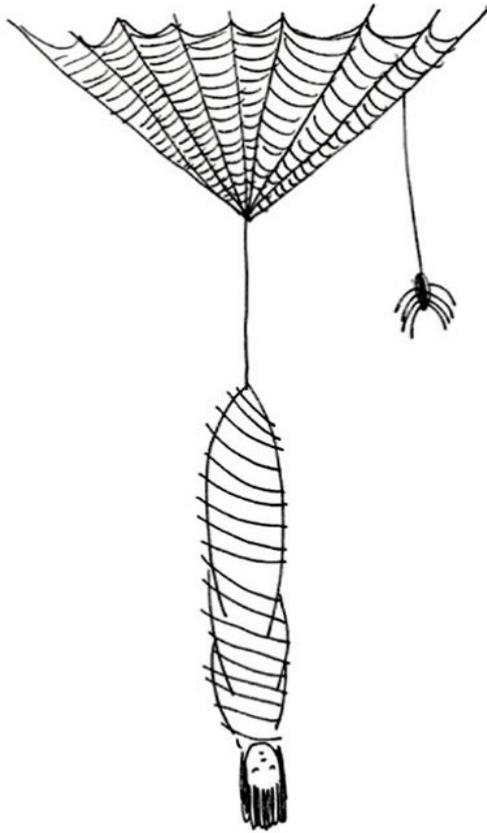
Hermeneutical Injustice

Hermeneutics is about interpretation and understanding. This involves how we interpret, and how we make ourselves understood (Zimmerman, 2015)

- Power: Structural/institutional prejudice and barriers
- Limited access to collective resources to make sense of experiences
- Causes loss of confidence in abilities to articulate experiences, confusion & isolation

“The collective hermeneutical resource for interpreting the social experience of madness is heavily saturated by psy discourses, such that alternative epistemological perspectives on madness are regularly subjugated and dismissed” (LeBlanc & Kinsella 2016. p, 69).

Resisting & Replicating



FRANCES CANNON

Ways we have tried to overcome:

- Centring lived experience
- Opportunities for collective meaning-making
- Valuing of time & payments
- Researcher engagement in critical reflexivity & reciprocity
- Ethics of care

What we are constrained by:

- Sanism & benevolent othering
- Existing ethical committee priorities
- Policy constraints (eg. participant payments)
- Emotional labour
- PhD structure as an individualistic project: Limited possibilities for collective meaning making & ownership

The impact...our experiences



Image: Oscar Keys. Available: facebook.com/oscarkeysphotography

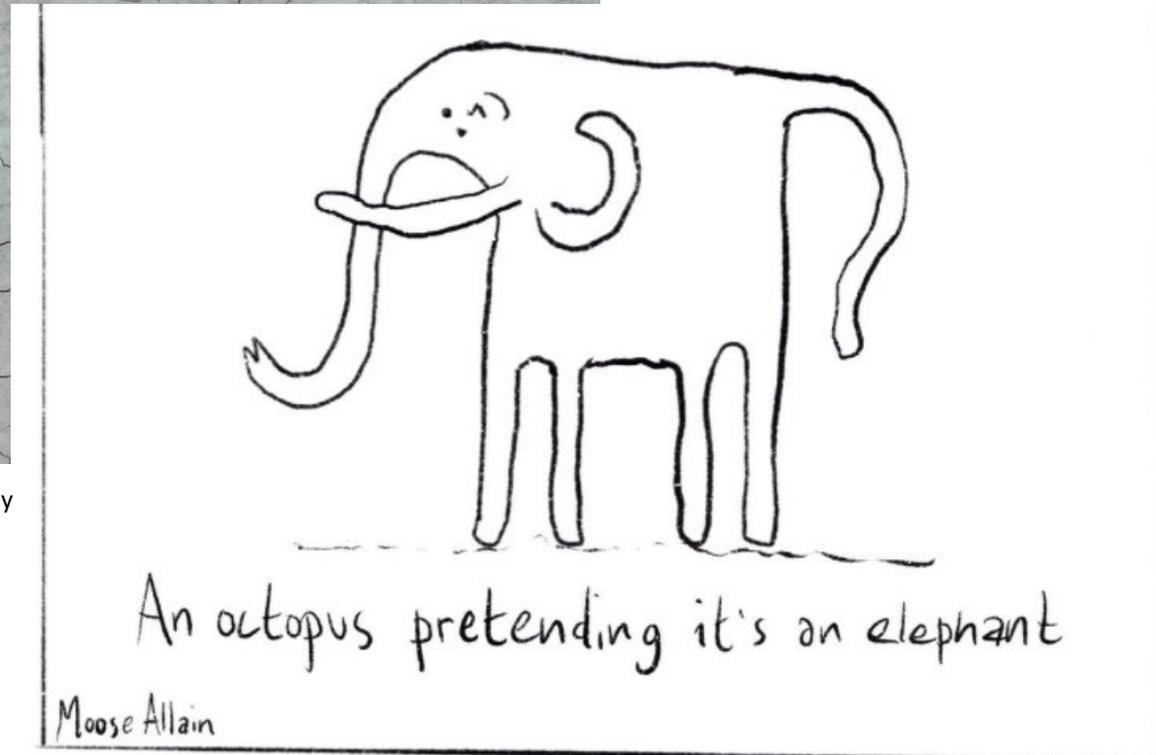


Image: Moose Allain, Available: <https://www.worldofmoose.com/>

‘finding ways to exist in a world that is diminishing’ (Ahmed, 2014)

How can we continue to challenge epistemological norms (including both knowledge and action) within the university setting?

How can we create spaces to question and extend (do things differently) in research and as PhD students?

What does epistemic justice look like? What do the ethical principles and methodologies look like in this research?

How can we work towards academia being open to the value of madness?

How can we create spaces for recognising and working with emotional labour?
Seeing invisible work as of equal value and importance.

How can we open spaces in academia to discuss power and risk in ways that are meaningful and relevant to the people and communities involved in the research (participants or co-researchers)?

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