

Abstract

This doctoral thesis research examines autobiographical writings of madness or mental illness exploring how these narratives position themselves both in opposition to and alongside biomedical/psychiatric frameworks for understanding health and illness/madness. Drawing on medical humanities and the mad studies movement, the thesis analyses stories of madness written by sufferers in the autobiographical mode. In these mad narratives, the mad take to narrativising their madness as they experience them, without any supervision from biomedical professionals. By attending to the first-person perspective, the thesis analyses the ethical questions the narratives raise about taken-for-granted notions of health and wellbeing, human flourishing, and care. Going beyond the reductive role assigned to narrative and the humanities in general, it shows how mad narratives (re)evaluate notions of selfhood, see form as reparative and political, challenge our ideas of care/caregiving, and index the role of the reader as they bear witness to the mad testimony.