

The 'Quadrilogue': an Autoethnographic Account of the Madness and Its Social Environment

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[Abstract. Page 59 of conference programme]

Fictionalised and biographical accounts of the environment in which madness occurs abound (Baker et al., 2010). Despite their undeniable narrative power, many such accounts lack the systematic rigour that is common to social science methodology, including the use of archival sources and the explorations of multiple perspectives (Stone, 2006). In addition, many 'madness narratives' cohere to a conventional storied structure that potentially fails to convey the often unpredictable and incomprehensible nature of psychological distress and the environmental responses to such distress (Baldwin, 2005). These accounts are thus presented in terms of "dead" rather than "live" metaphors (Derrida, 1967). Autoethnography is a research method that combines the evocative retelling of autobiographical 'epiphanies' alongside the social science goal of systematically investigating social institutions and practices (Ellis et al., 2012). It is thus an experimental methodology with a range of diverse possibilities for researching the subjectivity of the distressed and the social environment in which madness occurs (Grant et al., 2013). This paper presents the 'quadrilogue', a novel autoethnographic methodology that utilises a range of sources (e.g. clinical notes, a carer's diary, the researcher's evocative recollections and contemporary reflections of their breakdown etc.) in its depiction of four perspectives on a process of involuntary detention. In this way, the research is presented as a living account of how madness is understood and treated. The methodology and its findings are discussed against the backdrop of Goffman's (1962) "the moral career of a mental patient", Foucault's (2001) analysis of institutional frameworks of power and psychoanalytic interpretations of madness (e.g. Laing, 1967).