

**Louise Tam - Class Aspiration, Diaspora, and Dis-ease with the 'Neurasthenic' Condition: Feminist Sense-making Through an Institutional Autoethnography of OCD Discourse**

A range of thoughts, feelings and actions pathologized as Obsessive-Compulsive Spectrum Disorders or are vastly underrepresented in Mad movement narratives. In this interdisciplinary study, I technically explored how I have used autoethnography as a methodological tool for practicing “active disloyalty” against totalizing psychiatric and Mad paradigms (Mohanty, 2003, p. 504). I discussed how my situated epistemology of morbid thoughts—graphic thoughts that are taboo and aggressive against loved ones or the self—can critically and credibly provide a counter-discourse not only to ‘OCD’ as irrational and meaningless, but to Mad tropes of the idiosyncratic genius or eccentric, artistic spirit. I sought to demedicalize without romanticizing through using the complexity of embodied narrative from the standpoint of an anti-racist, queer and feminist student scholar. My use of self/biographical writing as a model for initiating resistance against psychiatry followed the general tradition of Binder Wall (2006), in which an ethnographic study of my patient records is used to conjure ‘mad’ moments from my memory. From these selected moments, such as the time I self-diagnosed in my youth, I revealed how sense-making is mediated by ruling relations, in particular the economics of understanding how we are ‘irrational’ and how we must self-survey. From my standpoint as a marginalized Asian Canadian woman, I considered how my family’s history as working and middle class immigrants reveals the racial and class dimensions of psy discourse. What follows was a consideration of how embodied narrative can be used not as individualized therapy, but as a rigorous, collective consciousness-raising practice.