

Stewart thus illustrates the rise of disability activism against austerity and neoliberalism, by disabled people themselves, using social media and online platforms. She notes that she has a huge debt to all those people who bravely started writing online, organizing themselves into organizations like Disabled People against Cuts (DPAC), and exposing what was happening during the WCA and then how successive policies eroded their legal rights. The book also charts the costs of undertaking this kind of activism and the different ethical decisions that Stewart was faced with and sacrifices that were made to ensure its publication. As such, this book will be of interest to a mix of people from students to academics, as well as practice and policy makers in a range of subjects from politics to history, social policy, health, human rights, economics and disability.

I hope that it also begins a conversation about why it is that disabled people have to become independent researchers to produce research of real social relevance. This is troubling and means that we have to ask ourselves questions about the politics and point of academic research, the priorities of funders, the capacity of voluntary organizations and charities to speak for those they represent and if all research is now increasingly linked to neoliberal policies. Mo Stewart's work is a testament that this does not have to be the case and we can speak 'truth to power', as Peter Beresford's foreword states. It is hard to read this book, but we all have to. It is going to become a classic in disability studies.

References

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A fox crossed my path: creative therapeutic writing on a depressive illness, by Monica Suswin, Sussex, UK, Cabin press, 104 pp., £10 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-9956882-0-9 <https://monicasuswin.wordpress.com/author/monicasuswin/>. Reviewed by Jeannie Wright, Associate Professor of Counselling

The first sentence of this gem of a book drew me in:

A fox crossed my path is about mental illness: my own over a period of 40 years.

It continues:

This mini book shows how *creative and therapeutic writing* has helped me come to terms with what has happened to me.

My only problem with the term 'mini book' is that it doesn't do justice to the combination of poetry, memoir and some very good ideas for creative and expressive writing about life experiences that this book is.

I started at the back, as I usually do, which is why electronic reading never works for me, and enjoyed scanning the exercises and notes. Then I started again at the beginning. The suggested writing activities, at the end of each section of the book, made me want to do some personal writing immediately, after a period of some silence. For anyone with an interest in the therapeutic potential of expressive and creative writing, *A Fox Crossed My Path* is a find. It's difficult to describe its usefulness to interested people and practitioners, so I'll give examples.

Some practitioners and students of counselling and psychotherapy have had very little contact with mental health services and psychiatric illness. The very openness of Monica Suswin's writing about her psychiatric history, the six episodes of clinical depression and the one time of being sectioned means that she is a witness of extraordinary authenticity. She describes her illness and wellness; times of wanting to die, not because of wanting death itself, but because of not wanting to live 'in the reduced hopelessness and despair' that the illness brought with it.

Some people have no idea about how depression feels. I will recommend this short and very readable book to those in the helping professions who don't quite get how very hard it is to do anything when clinically depressed. I'll also recommend it to those who have no idea what spending time in various mental hospitals in the UK is like, and how the powerlessness of locked wards, a regime of diagnosis and treatment works.

Monica Suswin is, like many survivors of the psychiatric health system in Britain, well able to monitor her own history of, for example, being prescribed medication with all of its consequences. She explores in chapter 3, in clear and engaging detail, the shock of realizing that although her self-guided writing is vital, the depression will return. To those who want to try therapeutic writing but feel nervous because of their own history, the exercises at the end of chapter 3, 'The Truth and Lies of Writing', are very carefully introduced. For example, 'A list for a traumatic illness or a difficult event' and 'A list for recovery from a serious illness'.

Like spending time with a good novel or short story, *A Fox Crossed My Path* leaves the reader changed, more aware of how people's lives are, and this life in particular. For any reader who has tried therapeutic writing and is looking for more, Monica Suswin is an experienced and very sensitive guide. I would also suggest that for starting points in how creative writing can be a lifeline when other options are limited, this book is a must-read, and it can be accessed from the beginning, middle or end.

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Political hegemony: a Marxist theory of mental illness, by Bruce M.Z. Cohen, Palgrave Macmillan, 241 pp., £66.99 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-137-46050-9. Reviewed by Gavin Robinson, Counsellor

Bruce M.Z. Cohen's book titled *Psychiatric Hegemony: A Marxist Theory of Mental Illness* is an interesting look at how the current control of people's lives in the early twenty-first century is affecting us in today's world. The book examines how the self is affected as we struggle with trying to 'shape up'. And shaping us up is very much what the neoliberal world is