

*Rethinking Pathographies: illness as narration, metaphor and construction of the self*  
Edited by Valentina Gazzaniga e Donatella Lippi

In spite of the early intuitions of the Hippocratic school on the importance of the patient's testimony in identifying diseases, European autobiographical accounts of illness represent just a marginal field of study little investigated by both literary criticism and the history of medicine. Analysis of diagnoses beyond those available to medical practitioners from the objective physical symptoms of the body has long been sidelined with the medical world more attentive to the voices of health professionals than to the testimony of the suffering.

Nevertheless, the stories of illness have become objects of interest in recent years, especially in anglophone western nations, and are now used as a didactic tool by the Medical Humanities as they have much to say both as narrative accounts and as alternative sources through which the historian can reconstruct healthcare environments, the relationships between caregivers and patients, the conceptualization of diseases and attempts to verbalize suffering.

Pathographies document the stories of bodies that escape the technical gaze and the 'monopolistic' narratives of medical practitioners. Although, until the modern age, physicians are the only authorized interpreters of suffering, occasional and heretical voices rise up in every historical period to testify to the dialogue that has always existed between illness, medicine, society and literature.

From Aelius Aristides and his twenty years of life in the temple of healing to Piero Calabrese and his tree of a thousand years, patients' voices constitute, for the historian of medicine, an essential complement to the voices of science: as Maria Malatesta says on post-modern narratives of illness, namely that they rebalance "the historical asymmetry of the relationship with the doctor and the novelist". It is then a truth untold that for every historical period there are patients who have told and used their stories of illness as both a means of self-understanding and relating to the world.

The present issue of *Costellazioni* is devoted to contributions focusing on the experience of illness and its narration concerning:

- The literary meaning of pathographies
- Rhetoric and medicine
- The narration of illness in ancient sources, including iconographic and archaeological sources (Iamata, ex-voto)
- The narration of illness in diaries, chronicles, epistles and 'private' sources of the Modern Era
- The narration of illness as a literary tool
- The narration of psychological discomfort
- Narratives from healthcare environments
- Theatre and medicine

Please send proposed abstracts to both the following addresses before December 31st 2022:

[valentina.gazzaniga@uniroma1.it](mailto:valentina.gazzaniga@uniroma1.it); [donatella.lippi@unifi.it](mailto:donatella.lippi@unifi.it).

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Deadlines

31 December 2022 – Submission of abstracts expires

31 January 2023 – Last day for notification to authors of acceptance or refusal of proposals

31 December 2023 – Last day for the reception of essays (texts must comply with Editor's Guidelines and include abstracts in English, 5 keywords, bibliography: please check at

<https://www.rivistacostellazioni.org/norme-redazionali>

31 May 2024 – Approved texts are submitted for double blind peer review