

Section: Narratives of Health and Illness

Alexandra Effe (Oslo), Nicola Glaubitz (Kiel), Melissa Schuh (Kiel)

The medical humanities can broadly be defined as designating “any interaction between the arts and health” (Kirklin and Richardson 2001: vx). While an important subfield gaining prominence in the past decades explores the value of literature in medical training and practice (e.g. Charon 2006; Charon et al. 2016; Montgomery Hunter 2006; see also the 2011 Anglistentag section on “The Writing Cure”), this section on narratives of health and illness focuses rather on the role of creative literature in therapeutic contexts, and as a participant in the societal discourse on health, illness, disability, and treatment.

Health and illness are relational terms: Health and wellbeing are often (mistakenly) equated and considered as the absence of illness. How and where, and to what (political) ends is this dichotomy construed – in medical discourses, in wellness and lifestyle discourses (Ehrenreich 2018), in public health programmes – and which literary or media narratives (such as, for example, Eimear McBride’s *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing*) change, critique, or endorse this dichotomic thinking?

Transitions from health to illness or vice versa – narratives of healing and narratives of becoming ill – are bound up with rather fixed narrative patterns and temporalities. –Narratives of coping with or being affected by illness often follow narrative patterns of heroism and individual courage, trace processes of self-transformations or self-loss, or reconfigurations of social ties (Brody 2003). Which patterns can be detected in societal discourses of health and illness, and how do literary or literary-autobiographical texts (such as, e.g., J.M. Coetzee’s *Slow Man*, Christine Brooke-Rose’s *Life, End of*, Audrey Lorde’s *The Cancer Journals*) engage with them? Which kinds of illnesses seem more ‘narratable’ than others? Is health less ‘narratable’ than illness or disability? How might literary representations demonstrate and possibly influence how we perceive others and how society defines healthy bodies, minds and the condition of disability?

Finally, what kind of cultural work can literary narratives of illness and health achieve? Can literary texts convey a particular kind of knowledge about health and illness, and about their relationality – as regards e.g. the entanglement of physical and mental, affective and bodily states, and as regards the tensions between experiencing states of health/illness and the medically and socially accepted vocabularies and narrative patterns of what this experience entails or teaches (Scarry 1985)? How might representations of health and illness affect and potentially change readers’ perception of their own state of well-being or suffering? How are writing and reading exercises used in therapeutic contexts?

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Panel 1

Gero Guttzeit (Munich): In/Visible Ills – Health, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Gothic

Abstract: This paper approaches narratives of health and illness through an analysis of the trope of invisible monstrosity in nineteenth-century transatlantic Gothic texts, elucidating the significance of invisible monstrosity for the establishment and critique of medical constructions of health. It connects insights in the analysis of invisibility narratives from the field of invisibility studies (Peeren 2014; Král 2014; Borrego and Lecomte 2021) to Monika Pietrzak-Franger's pioneering work on the significance of (in)visibility for the medical humanities (2014, 2017), made newly salient by the "visiodemic" accompanying the Covid-19 pandemic (Pietrzak-Franger 2021, 184; see also Scherr 2022, 457-461). My argument reframes Victorian-era Gothic texts that prominently feature invisible bodies as negotiating questions of the marginalization of disease, attempting to uncover moments of resistance to dominant conceptions of the healthy body.

The nineteenth-century Gothic spectrum of in/visibility, monstrosity, and narratives of health can be construed as lying between two poles: the excessive visibility of undead monstrosity as embodied in Frankenstein's Creature (Shelley 1818) and the invisibility of colonially coded mental disease of the "madwoman in the attic" in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847; Gilbert and Gubar 2000, Spivak 1985). This spectrum will inform a reading of the relationship between optics and epidemiology in one of Edgar Allan Poe's texts on the cholera pandemic, "The Sphinx" (1846), which develops an implied theory of the monstrosity of perception under the conditions of extreme threats to bodily health. The spectrum will also be put to the test in a reading of the late-Victorian intersection of cultural invisibility, dermatology and racialisation in H. G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* (1897). My hypothesis in approaching these transatlantic texts is that mid- and late-nineteenth-century Gothic narratives position characters in tenuous configurations of in/visibility to reflect on questions of the limit of health, using images of the impossibility of wellbeing to horrify readers. In

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discussing this hypothesis and my examples, I shall focus on a number of more general questions of relevance for the analysis of narratives of health, illness, and wellbeing: Which experiential knowledge on health and wellbeing is emplotted in Gothic narratives? What are the critical and positive values of Gothic narratives of disease and sickness? How do narratives of contagion (Wald 2008) and narratives of health and illness interact in the Gothic mode? And, finally: which strategies of immunization are part of the cultural work of Gothic narratives of in/visible ills?

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Bio Note: Dr. Gero Guttzeit is Assistant Professor of English Literature (Akademischer Rat a. Z.) in the Department of English and American Studies at LMU Munich. He specializes in modern transatlantic literatures, rhetorical cultures, popular fiction, and authorship. His first book *The Figures of Edgar Allan Poe: Authorship, Antebellum Literature, and Transatlantic Rhetoric* appeared in 2017. His current book project deals with literary character and narratives of invisibility since 1750. In this context, he has written a series of articles on invisible characters in narrative fiction as well as on the visualisation of contemporary surveillance. His work has been published in such venues as *Forum for Modern Language*

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Studies, Scholarly Editing, Études britanniques contemporaines, Journal for the Study of British Cultures, and Anglistik. He is currently guest-editing an issue of *Poe Studies* on “Poe and Science” and an issue of *ZAA* on “Contemporary Literature and Social Invisibility,” both forthcoming in 2024. Many of his publications can be accessed at <https://geroguttzeit.de>.

Martina Allen (Frankfurt): Addiction and Dislocation in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton*

Abstract: In the 1970s, Canadian psychologist Bruce K. Alexander conducted a series of experiments with narcotics and laboratory animals that qualified as “abnormal science” in Kuhn’s sense because they contradicted expectations resulting from the underlying paradigm dominating their field – in this case the disease paradigm of drug use. These experiments, dubbed “Rat Park studies”, refuted previous findings that lab rats, when offered morphine, would reproducibly continue to increase the amount they ingested until they died. Alexander showed that this excessive use did not primarily result from the ‘addictive’ properties of opiates but was better described as an adaptive response by the highly social animals to the stress of isolation, confinement and the bleak environment of the laboratory setting. In his lush and rat-friendly enclosures, the subjects mostly chose to forego the proffered narcotics, even when they had already developed physical dependency. When Alexander, decades later, returned to the study of addiction from a historical perspective, he developed a new approach to addiction that understood it as a range of behaviours that resulted from a lack or loss of *psychosocial integration*, or “dislocation”. Though the causes for an individual’s dislocation can vary greatly, Alexander believes that the main driver behind addiction as a *societal* issue is the spread of market capitalism and its corrosive effects on the traditional institutions that bestow a sense of meaning and belonging on the individual. One of the starkest historical examples of such seismic societal changes in European history is the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain.

In my paper, I read the industrial novel as the primary literary genre for expressing this growing sense of dislocation in the early Victorian Era. Focusing on Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton*, I seek to show that in the mid-19th century, roughly half a century before the disease paradigm began to dominate (and limit) the discourse surrounding drug use and addiction, discussions about the causes and effects of the kinds of overwhelming engagement that, according to Alexander, characterise addiction, were very much interested in the (psycho)social dimension of these behaviours. While in Gaskell’s novel, John Barton’s opium eating is depicted as having negative consequences on his life and the lives of those around him, his substance use is neither identified as the main cause of his suffering, nor as the only form of ‘addictive’ behaviour in the text. Indeed, Barton becomes obsessed with the Chartist cause first, in reaction to the death of his wife and son. By the same token, his daughter reacts to the disintegration of her family by becoming infatuated with the idea of marrying a wealthy suitor, in turn emulating the example of her “fallen” Aunt Esther, who resorts to alcohol to deal with her desperate situation. Esther’s obsession with helping her niece is itself described as a kind of “monomania[...]”, a concept remarkably similar to Alexander’s broad understanding of

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'addiction' which is again gaining traction today. Alexander's conception offers a different perspective on phenomena such as the opioid crisis in the US, one that focuses less on chemical properties and more on the psychosocial dimension in the development of addiction.

Bio Note: Dr. Martina Allen is a post-doctoral researcher and lecturer for English literatures and cultures at the Institute of English and American Studies at Goethe University Frankfurt. Her dissertation thesis was published as *GenReVisions: Genre Experimentation and World-Construction in Contemporary Anglophone Literature* (Winter) in 2020. Her main research interests are genre studies, Victorian studies, medical humanities, discourses of pathology, as well as narratives of intoxication and addiction. She is currently working on a monograph tracing the rise of the disease paradigm of drug use through depictions of opiate use in Victorian literature.

James Dowthwaite (Jena): Pandemic and Individual Narratives – The Antonine Plague in Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* (1885)

Abstract: The body and the health of the body have an established place in aestheticist and decadent writing (See Kathy Alexis Psomiadis 1997, Alex Murray and Jason Hall 2013, or Spackman 2018). It is strange, then, that one of the central figures in English aestheticism should be underexplored in this regard: namely Walter Pater, despite notions of health and sickness pervading his work, from his treatment of the body in *The Renaissance* (1873) to his study of 'Hippolytus Veiled' in *Greek Studies* (1894).

In my talk, I will look specifically at Pater's use of the Antonine Plague (165-180 AD) in his only completed novel, *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), set in the time of that great pandemic of Marcus Aurelius's reign. In the novel, the eponymous protagonist, Marius, encounters 'the sickness' early on, noting its effect on the countryside as he travels to study in Pisa. During his studies, he loses his close, and brilliant, friend Flavian to the disease, nursing him through his death. Ascending through the imperial court, he sees the devastating effect it has on the emperor's family before, eventually, succumbing to fever at the end of the novel, and dying himself. The plague thus performs a narrativising role, serving as both a foreshadowing of its end throughout, as well as a dark, fetid atmospheric leitmotif. My argument is that Pater's treatment of the plague is instructive for the relation of the individual to a pandemic; particularly instructive in the relation between the narrative of a pandemic and the narrative of an individual life. This remains current for us today, and what *Marius the Epicurean* gives us is an insight into the way that individual narratives are related to broader, societal ones; there is no more pertinent example than plague, where the individual body is open to the health of the population as a whole.

Bio Note: James Dowthwaite is a lecturer in English literature at Friedrich Schiller University Jena, where he is working on a Habilitation project on the concept of fate in British aestheticism, having moved to Germany at the completion of his doctorate at the University of Oxford in 2016. His first book, *Ezra Pound and 20th Century Theories of Language: Faith with*

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the Word came out with Routledge in 2019 and was awarded the Ezra Pound Society Book Award. He is also an associate editor at *The New American Studies Journal: A Forum*. In addition to academic work, he has also published poetry at *Acumen*, *Allegro*, *The Dawntreader*, *The French Review*, *The High Window*, *Nightingale & Sparrow*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, and elsewhere.

Panel 2

Sebastian Domsch (Greifswald): I had a fall – Hanif Kureishi’s Social Media Narrative of Illness



Abstract: On January 6, 2023, the author Hanif Kureishi (*My Beautiful Laundrette*, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *Intimacy*) posted the following to his 37.000 followers:

According to his own description, after a stroll through Rome, “I began to feel dizzy. I lent forward and put my head between my legs; I woke up a few minutes later in a pool of blood, my neck in a grotesquely twisted position, my wife on her knees beside me.” He was certain that he would die, and the fall left him almost completely physically incapacitated. He was hospitalized with an at first uncertain prospect of recovery, undergoing major surgery. But since that January 6 tweet, the author, who is well-known for harvesting even the most intimate details of his own life for his fiction, has started microblogging his own illness, disability, and slow recovery (by dictating to his son), creating a fascinating discursive space on the social media site about these topics. In what seems like an eerily appropriate extension of his oeuvre, he narrativizes his experiences, but also uses the occasion to think about illness in more general term, and to engage with his audience in a way that only social media allows, with participants ranging from common readers to director Stephen Frears and fellow writer Salman Rushdie, who is himself still recovering from the 2022 attack on him (Kureishi: “He should know. He gives me courage.”). This paper wants to look both at the individual case of Kureishi’s shockingly honest, direct, and live-to-the-moment engagement with illness and

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health, but also investigate in a more abstract manner in how far this case can be understood as manifesting a completely new form for narrating health and illness.



Bio Note: Prof. Dr. Sebastian Domsch teaches Anglophone literatures at the University of Greifswald. He holds a PhD from Bamberg University, and a Habilitation from the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. His major fields of interest are contemporary literature and culture, graphic novels, the history and theory of literary criticism, Romantic literature and 18th-century literature. He is the author of books on Robert Coover (2005) and Cormac McCarthy (2012), as well as a book on *The Emergence of Literary Criticism in 18th-Century Britain* (2014), and a book in the series on "Future Narratives" on video games and narrative (*Storyplaying: Agency and Narrative in Video Games* (2013)). He is the editor of collections on American, Canadian and African 21st-century fiction (*Amerikanisches Erzählen nach 2000: Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (2008) and *Kanadische Gegenwartsliteratur* (2020), *Gegewartsliteratur aus Afrika* (2023)), and co-editor of the *Handbook on Comics and Graphic Novels* (2021).

Katrin Röder (Berlin): Probing the Relevance of Intertextuality and Creative Bibliotherapy for Autobiographical Life Storying on 'Mental Distress'

Abstract: Taking its cue from the exploration of the interaction of arts and 'health' in the field of medical humanities (Kirklin/Richardson 2001, vx), this paper examines contemporary literary autobiographies about 'mental distress' produced by feminist British authors. It focuses on the texts' representations of 'mental distress' in response to medical classifications/diagnoses of 'mental illness' ('manic depression', 'bipolar disorder', 'borderline personality disorder') and to concepts of 'mental health'. Adopting an interdisciplinary perspective, the paper combines methods and terminology from literary and cultural studies (cultural semiotics, narratology, auto/biography studies, reader/audience response theory), critical disability studies, medical humanities, gender studies and affect studies.

G. Thomas Couser has shown that the 1990s (at least in the USA) and the first decades of the 21st century have seen an unprecedented upsurge in autobiographical writing about

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what he calls 'physical' and 'mental catastrophe', especially in books/cultural texts produced by previously unknown authors (Couser 2012, 1; Couser 2012, 1-2; Couser 2021, 4, 64; Couser 2022, 301, 315). According to Couser, the '*some body* memoir' (a type of memoir that is not authored by VIPs, famous artists and established writers but by unknown/new authors) depends on 'difference for its genesis and momentum' rather than on complication, story and plot (Couser 2012, 3, 16), a statement that suggests that non-normative embodiment, 'illness', 'disability' and 'mental distress' seem to be more narratable than 'health', especially if 'health' is defined in binary opposition to 'illness' or 'disability'. Autobiographical writing about 'disability' (a term that for Couser includes conditions of 'physical' and 'cognitive impairment', 'illness' and 'mental distress') is described as a 'retort' to the often pathologizing and stereotypical representations of these conditions in medical discourse and mass media (e. g. in narratives of individual tragedy or heroic triumph), a response that gives authors an opportunity to reevaluate these conditions as well as their cultural representations (Couser 2012, 2, 7).

In my paper, I will explore autobiographical life storytelling about mental distress as an experimental, hybrid and highly intertextual/intermedial genre that combines elements of life narrative, diary, social and political commentary, media review and theoretical essay. My analysis concentrates on Jay Griffiths's *Tristimania: A Diary of Manic Depression* (2016) and on the video blog *Claudia Boleyn* (2013-2023). These texts negotiate their authors' (and their autobiographical narrators') reception of novels, poetry, TV series, films, pop songs & lyrics with their readings of psychoanalytic theory, philosophy, medical textbooks and manuals (esp. the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV*). I will ask if this creative intertextual reception strategy – especially the negotiation of readings of different fictional and non-fictional texts – can be regarded as a form of creative bibliotherapy and if it has an impact on the affective reader/audience response to Griffiths's and Claudia Boleyn's texts on popular digital platforms/social media (Goodreads and YouTube) (on 'audience emotions' see Kolesch and Knoblauch 2019). Specifically, I will explore if/how the intertextual reception strategy that is at work in autobiographical life storytelling can be compared with/related to the method of bibliotherapy, esp. to bibliotherapy's facilitation of readers' (and autobiographical-narrators-as-readers') abilities of 'identification' with fictional characters, their abilities of 'catharsis' (the determination and acceptance of feelings), 'insight', 'problem solution', reflection and 'projection' (envisaging 'a different identity for the future', Sevinç 2019, 485-487). I will examine in how far the desired outcome of creative bibliotherapy and of creative intertextual reception in autobiographical life storytelling is fixed or open and whether they enable a problematization/challenging of the binary opposition of 'health' and 'illness', of the medicalization, trivialization or invalidation of (female) 'mental distress' and of the stereotypes used and endorsed in dominant media narratives about 'mental illness'. This mode of challenging the stigmatization, medicalization, trivialization and invalidation of 'mental distress' in creative reception contexts, I contend, can produce significant relief and empowerment. Furthermore, I will discuss whether literary autobiographies (written and read inside and outside of medical institutions) provide readers with specific, alternative forms of

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'insight' and specific, alternative forms of 'embodied knowledge' (Avrahami 2007, 15).

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Bio Note: PD Dr. Katrin Röder is research assistant at the Department of English and American Studies at Humboldt University Berlin, Germany. She is principal investigator of the research project 'Shame as a Performative Narrative Affect in Automedial Art by Female British Authors with "Disabilities" and "Mental Distress"' (2020-2024), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Since October 2020, she has been a member of the editorial board of the book series 'Narratives and Mental Health' at Brill Publishers. Her research fields include early modern literature and culture, the development of the novel from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, contemporary feminist 'disability' and 'mental distress' autobiographies, gender, affect and critical disability studies, ethical criticism and the history of emotions.

Deborah de Muijnck (Gießen): Cultural Models of Narrative Identity as Sense-Making Strategies in Post-Trauma Storytelling

Abstract: Narratives about one's life are culturally and discursively situated, as individuals define and articulate their idiosyncratic and situation-specific versions of existence with and among others through conventionalized narrative forms such as literary genre, structure of plot, metaphoric themes, and rhetorical tropes that culture provides. In doing so, the story

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and its narrator are linked to an underlying psychological, linguistic, social and cultural-historical fabric, a transmitted repertoire of culturally conventionalized stories which serve as idealized models for the elaboration of our own experiences.

This paper looks at the functions, benefits, and risks of such a cultural conventionalisation in the context of autobiographical post-trauma narration. Rooted in cognitive narratology, this paper includes insights from the domains of narrative medicine, cognitive psychology, and cognitive anthropology by specifically focusing on the sense-making processes applied in non-fictional autobiographical narration. By looking at culturally conventionalized ideas and ideals of post-trauma personality development and their representation through autobiographical storytelling, I introduce the concept of cultural models of narrative identity (CUMONIs). I define CUMONIs as communally shared cognitive representations of personality development which members of a (sub-)culture apply to shape their individual life story according to culturally conventionalised ideals. They influence individuals' self-perception through intrinsically incorporated narrative scripts, mark them as members of a community in which these models are performed, and allow them to establish themselves as unique individuals in the frame of culturally accepted norms. CUMONIs connect the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of human life within autobiographical storytelling. In the case of (post-trauma) narration, such cultural models may support individuals suffering from (undiagnosed) mental health issues to find meaning and purpose in their autobiographical journey.

Discussing the results of close-reading analyses of 30 contemporary British military autobiographies and memoirs, this paper highlights the intrinsic connection between post-trauma realisation and -sense-making processes, and the functions and benefits of cultural models of narrative identity. Furthermore, it highlights the risks that exist when such models are mainly applied by homogenous groups. By discussing CUMONIs' benefits, risks, and limits in the frame of autobiographical narration, this paper furthermore discusses the necessity to continually re-evaluate, expand, and cross the boundaries of certain cultural models to allow for more inclusion beyond standardized autobiographical plots.

Bio Note: Deborah de Muijnck is a postdoctoral researcher at the Gießen Center for the Study of Culture, Justus-Liebig-University, Germany. In 2022, she concluded her dissertation at the Chair of English Literature (RWTH Aachen University, Germany). In her first monograph, she explores how individuals integrate traumatic experiences into autobiographical stories. She has organized a variety of conferences, academic workshops, and lecture series, among which *Pandemic Storytelling* (2020 - 2021) ranks as the most prominent. Hosting guest speakers such as Rita Charon, James Phelan, Ansgar and Vera Nünning, Monika Pietrzak-Franger and Jarmila Mildorf, the series explored the impact of the Corona Pandemic on Storytelling Practices. While her research interests include Narrative Medicine, Post-Colonial Storytelling and Victorian Literature, her Habilitation focuses on Ecocriticism and the representation of ecological values throughout the centuries. She is the author of *Cultural Models of Narrative Identity: The Case of Military Autobiographical*

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Writing (2022), and co-editor of the upcoming edited volumes *Pandemic Storytelling* (Brill 2023) and *Narratives of Non-Normative Bodies and Minds* (Brill 2023). In July 2023, she will be a visiting researcher at the Harvard Institute for World Literature.

Panel 3

Fraser Riddell (Durham): Autistic Perception, Decadent Style and the Sensory Description at the *Fin De Siècle*

Abstract: ‘A poet makes himself a visionary,’ suggested the French Decadent poet Arthur Rimbaud, ‘through a long, boundless, and systematized disorganization of all the senses.’ In recent years, work in neurodiversity studies has developed a framework for valuing the ‘disorganized’ sensory worlds of autistic perception (Bogdashina, 2016). This paper demonstrates the value of such work for literary studies by exploring the neurodiverse sensory logics of literary Decadence. The paper brings nineteenth-century literary texts into dialogue with the autobiographical works of autistic writers such as Donna Williams and DJ Savarese. In doing so, I turn to literary texts to challenge the dominant deficit models of autistic perception from psychology, reframing the sensory worlds of autism not as a pathology to be cured but as a form of diversity to be celebrated.

The focus of the paper is on the works of the cosmopolitan aesthete Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), who was among the most important writers in English on Japanese culture at the turn of the twentieth century. His works are marked by their fascination with the sensory overload of new material environments, an experience presented as simultaneously pleasurable and overwhelming. Like many Decadent writers, Hearn’s style moves between broad impressionistic description of synaesthetic experience and painstakingly detailed close description of minute phenomenon.

Reading his work in the light of contemporary accounts of neurodiversity allows us to think more carefully about the modes of sociality modelled in the forms of sensory description that are a stylistic marker of Decadent literature. In place of solipsistic withdrawal or anti-social refusal, for instance, we might find instead what Erin Manning has called ‘participation in a world more ecological than interpersonal’ (Manning, 2021). In this respect, neurodiverse theories of sensory perception allow us to rethink what is at stake in Decadent literature’s descriptive language: an attempt to make present to consciousness the vibrant intensity of non-human object worlds and to explore alternative modes of engagement between self and world.

Bio Note: Dr Fraser Riddell is Assistant Professor in English and Medical Humanities at Durham University. His research focusses on Victorian literature, queer cultures and theories of the senses. He currently teaches courses on nineteenth-century literature and disability, and on literature and embodiment. His first monograph, *Music and the Queer Body in English Literature at the Fin de Siècle* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2022. Other recent work has been published in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, *Journal of*

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Victorian Culture, The Oxford Handbook of Decadence and The Life of Breath in Literature, Culture and Medicine.

Christoph Singer (Innsbruck): “An Amorphous Sense of Dread” – Narrating the Temporalities of Depression

Abstract: In *Depression: A Public Feeling*, Ann Cvetkovich discusses the societal causes of mental distress. Her scholarly analysis is accompanied by the *Depression Journals*, a personal account of life with depression. Cvetkovich reflects in this “critical memoir” (2012: 23) how depression altered her perception of time and *narrative sense of self* and states that “my sense of time became very distorted, and I lost the ability to inhabit the normal rhythms of the day.” (Cvetkovich 2012: 42) Accordingly, her journal mirrors these disrupted temporalities by means of repetition, non-linear chronology, and the subversion of retroactive teleology.

Particularly, the journal’s central theme, the fear of being ‘doomed by heritage’, recalls Brydie Kosmina’s *hauntological* argument that the “cyclical loop of past and present feeds evolving discourses of each, blurring temporalities into a Möbius strip that draws the past into the present, and projects the present back into the past.” (Kosmina 2020: 905) Employing theories of *hauntology* by Ann Cvetkovich, Marc Fisher (2014) and Kosmina Byrdie (2020), this paper will explore the temporalities of depression and their representation. I will discuss the disruptions of biography and “chrono-normativity” (Freeman: 2010) in depression-narratives by Ann Cvetkovich, W.G. Sebald (*Vertigo*) and Zoë Quinn (*Depression Quest*).

Works Cited

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Bio Note: **Christoph Singer** is Professor for British and Anglophone Cultural Studies in the Department of English at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. His Habilitation discusses the temporality of narratives in times of crisis, particularly the experience of existential waiting. He also published anthologies on *Well-Being* (Brill), the *Heritage of Psychiatry* (Brill, 2023) and the forthcoming anthology *Narrative and Mental Health* (Oxford UP, 2023). Christoph Singer is one of the series editors of the book-series *Narratives and Mental Health* (Brill).