

2020

Stephen Buetow, *Rethinking Pain in Person-Centred Health Care Around Recovery* (Routledge, 2020):

This book explores how person-centred health care could be refined to help persons alleviate pain-related distress and construct pain as a potentially positive experience. *Rethinking Pain in Person-Centred Health Care* is a fascinating contribution to the multidisciplinary literature on person-centred health care, pain and ethics.

Ed. **Paul Crawford, Brian Brown, Andrea Charise**, *The Routledge Companion to Health Humanities* (Routledge, 2020):

Divided into two main sections, the Companion looks at "Reflections and Critical Perspectives," offering current thinking and definitions within health humanities, and "Applications," comprising a wide selection of applied arts and humanities practices from comedy, writing, and dancing to yoga, cooking, and horticultural display.

Emma Downing, *The Care Crisis: What Caused It and How Can We End It?* (Verso, 2020):

In this groundbreaking book, Emma Dowling charts the multi-faceted nature of care in the modern world, from the mantras of self-care and what they tell us about our anxieties, to the state of the social care system. She examines the relations of power that play profitability and care often against one another in a myriad of ways, exposing the devastating impact of financialisation and austerity.

Michelle Harper, *The Beauty in the Breaking: A Memoir* (Riverhead Books, 2020):

The Beauty in the Breaking is the poignant true story of Harper's journey toward self-healing. Each of the patients Harper writes about taught her something important about recuperation and recovery. How to let go of fear even when the future is murky: How to tell the truth when it's simpler to overlook it. How to understand that compassion isn't the same as justice. As she shines a light on the systemic disenfranchisement of the patients she treats as they struggle to maintain their health and dignity, Harper comes to understand the importance of allowing ourselves to make peace with the past as we draw support from the present. In this hopeful, moving, and beautiful book, she passes along the precious, necessary lessons that she has learned as a daughter, a woman, and a physician.

Anjali Fatima Raza Kolb, *Epidemic Empire: Colonialism, Contagion, and Terror, 1817-2020* (University of Chicago Press, 2020)

Terrorism is a cancer, an infection, an epidemic, a plague. For more than a century, this metaphor has figured insurgent violence as contagion in order to contain its political energies. In *Epidemic Empire*, Anjali Fatima Raza Kolb shows that this trope began in responses to the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and tracks its tenacious hold

through 9/11 and beyond. The result is the first book-length study to approach the global War on Terror from a postcolonial literary perspective.

Travis Lau, *Pairing* (Finishing Line, 2020):

Lau says: My work has long focused on embodiment, specifically disabled experience, but this book reconnects with my longer investments in thinking about queerness, intimacy, and care. This book centers on the image of pared fruit: what parts of the self do we pare away (or thought we have pared away)? how do we reconcile the violence of paring away even if it is to enable new growth? How does revisiting what has been pared teach us something?

Lisa Olstein, *Pain Studies* (Bellevue Literary Press, 2020):

In this extended lyric essay, a poet mines her lifelong experience with migraine to deliver a marvelously idiosyncratic cultural history of pain—how we experience, express, treat, and mistreat it. Her sources range from the trial of Joan of Arc to the essays of Virginia Woolf and Elaine Scarry to Hugh Laurie’s portrayal of Gregory House on House M.D. As she engages with science, philosophy, visual art, rock lyrics, and field notes from her own medical adventures (both mainstream and alternative), she finds a way to express the often-indecribable experience of living with pain. Eschewing simple epiphanies, Olstein instead gives us a new language to contemplate and empathize with a fundamental aspect of the human condition.

Also read an [interview with Olstein on *Pain Studies*](#) at *Synopsis*.

Sarah Ramey, *The Lady’s Handbook for Her Mysterious Illness: A Memoir* (Doubleday, 2020):

From the [review at *Synopsis* by Emily Waples](#): “Sarah Ramey narrates her unwitting entry into these perplexities in *The Lady’s Handbook for Her Mysterious Illness*, a self-described “gynecologic and colorectal memoir” (3) published this past March. Joining an expanding canon of contemporary annalists of the chronic and/or cryptic illness—Sarah Manguso, Jennifer Brea, Johanna Hedva, Porochista Khakpour, Esmé Weijun Wang, Meghan O’Rourke, Amy Berkowitz—Ramey (known in other circles as the musician Wolf Larsen) chronicles a years-long odyssey with inexplicable and excruciating symptoms, harrowing encounters with providers, and attendant medical trauma. Simultaneously sprawling and sparse—occupying hundreds of pages yet punctuated by terse one-liners—Ramey’s memoir contributes to a growing body of autobiographical work addressing the gendered dimensions of “mysterious illnesses”: in particular, the constellation of ill-understood autoimmune disorders and chronic pain conditions—fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) or myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), mast cell activation syndrome (MCAS), postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS), hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (hEDS)—that tend to disproportionately affect women.”

Lesley Stern, *Diary of a Detour* (Duke University Press, 2020):

Diary of a Detour is film scholar and author Lesley Stern's memoir of living with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. She chronicles the fears and daily experience of coming to grips with an incurable form of cancer by describing the dramas and delving into the science. Stern also nudges cancer off center stage by turning to alternative obsessions and pleasures. In seductive writing she describes her life in the garden and kitchen, the hospital and the library, and her travels—down the street to her meditation center, across the border to Mexico, and across the world to Australia. Her immediate world is inhabited with books, movies, politics, and medical reports that provoke essayistic reflections. As her environment is shared with friends, chickens, a cat called Elvis, mountain goats, whales, lions, and microbes the book opens onto a larger than human world. Intimate and meditative, engrossing and singular, *Diary of a Detour* offers new ideas about what it might mean to live and think with cancer, and with chronic illness more broadly.

2019

Amala Poli, *Writing the Self in Illness: Reading the Experiential Through the Medical Memoir* (Manipal, 2019):

Writing the Self in Illness: Reading the Experiential Through the Medical Memoir attempts to understand the contemporary turn to health narratives through closely reading medical memoirs. The author uses the term medical memoir for a narrative of illness that seeks to question, resist, and engage in a dialogue with prominent medical discourses and cultural perceptions. The book attempts to understand how individuals have reflected on their experiences of illness, redefined health for themselves, and responded to systemic and social depersonalization through the writing of memoirs. In turn, it invites readers to a deeper exploration of the spectrum of health and its meanings for each of us. (Flyleaf)

Jac Saorsa with Rebecca Phillips, *Like Any Other Woman: The Lived Experience of Gynecological Cancer* (Cardiff, 2019):

Like Any Other Woman speaks to the suffering that cancer causes, and to the profound human experience of renegotiating the physical and emotional balance between sickness and health when that balance is tipped by the onset of disease. As a moving collaboration between an artist and a young woman who has endured the impact of a cancer diagnosis and its consequences, this is not a book about the cancer itself, the medical world of causes, symptoms, interventions and treatment regimes. It is rather about what it feels like when all sense of normality, all the expectations of a future that accompany good health, suddenly become submerged in degrees of suffering that impact both on the individual and on the people who care for and about her.

Mohammed Abouelleil Rashed, *Madness and the Demand for Recognition: A philosophical inquiry into identity and mental health activism* (Oxford University Press, 2019):

Developments in mental health activism pose a radical challenge to psychiatric and societal understandings of madness. Mad Pride and mad-positive activism reject the language of mental 'illness' and 'disorder' and demand

recognition of madness as grounds for identity. This book examines and responds to the claims and demands of Mad activism.

Ed. **Olivia Banner, Nathan Carlin, Thomas R. Cole**, *Teaching Health Humanities* (Oxford University Press, 2019):

Teaching Health Humanities expands our understanding of the burgeoning field of health humanities and of what it aspires to be. The volume's contributors describe their different degree programs, the politics and perspectives that inform their teaching, and methods for incorporating newer digital and multimodal technologies into teaching practices.

Anne Boyer, *The Undying: Pain, Vulnerability, Mortality, Medicine, Art, Time, Dreams, Data, Exhaustion, Cancer, and Care* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019):

Award-winning poet and essayist Anne Boyer delivers a one-of-a-kind meditation on illness in the age of data—sharing her true story of coping with cancer, both the illness and the industry, in *THE UNDYING*. A week after her forty-first birthday, the acclaimed poet Anne Boyer was diagnosed with highly aggressive triple-negative breast cancer. For a single mother living paycheck to paycheck who had always been the caregiver rather than the one needing care, the catastrophic illness was both a crisis and an initiation into new ideas about mortality and the gendered politics of illness. A twenty-first-century *Illness as Metaphor*, as well as a harrowing memoir of survival, *THE UNDYING* explores the experience of illness as mediated by digital screens, weaving in ancient Roman dream diarists, cancer hoaxers and fetishists, cancer vloggers, corporate lies, John Donne, pro-pain "dolorists," the ecological costs of chemotherapy, and the many little murders of capitalism. It excoriates the pharmaceutical industry and the bland hypocrisies of "pink ribbon culture" while also diving into the long literary line of women writing about their own illnesses and ongoing deaths: Audre Lorde, Kathy Acker, Susan Sontag, and others.

2018

Howard Chiang, *After Eunuchs: Science, Medicine, and the Transformation of Sex in Modern China* (Columbia University Press, 2018):

From anticastration discourses in the late Qing era to sex-reassignment surgeries in Taiwan in the 1950s and queer movements in the 1980s and 1990s, *After Eunuchs* explores the ways the introduction of Western biomedical sciences transformed normative meanings of gender, sexuality, and the body in China. Chiang investigates how competing definitions of sex circulated in science, medicine, vernacular culture, and the periodical press, bringing to light a rich and vibrant discourse of sex change in the first half of the twentieth century. He focuses on the stories of gender and sexual minorities as well as a large supporting cast of doctors, scientists, philosophers, educators, reformers, journalists, and tabloid writers, as they debated the questions of political sovereignty, national belonging, cultural authenticity, scientific modernity, human difference, and the

power and authority of truths about sex. Theoretically sophisticated and far-reaching, *After Eunuchs* is an innovative contribution to the history and philosophy of science and queer and Sinophone studies.

Matthew Smith, *Another Person's Poison: A History of Food Allergy* (Columbia University Press, 2018):

Another Person's Poison parses the political, economic, cultural, and genuine health factors of a phenomenon that dominates our interactions with others and our understanding of ourselves. For most of the twentieth century, food allergies were considered a fad or junk science. While many physicians and clinicians argued that certain foods could cause a range of chronic problems, from asthma and eczema to migraines and hyperactivity, others believed that allergies were psychosomatic.

Ed. **Angela Ki Che Leung and Izumi Nakayama**, *Gender, Health, and History in Modern East Asia* (Hong Kong University Press, 2018):

This groundbreaking volume captures and analyzes the exhilarating and at times disorienting experience when scientists, government officials, educators, and the general public in East Asia tried to come to terms with the introduction of Western biological and medical sciences to the region. The nexus of gender and health is a compelling theme, for this is an area in which private lives and personal characteristics encounter the interventions of public policies. The nine empirically based studies by scholars of history of medicine, sociology, anthropology, and STS (science, technology, and society), spanning Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong from the 1870s to the present, demonstrate just how tightly concerns with gender and health have been woven into the enterprise of modernization and nation building throughout the long twentieth century.

Moira M. W. Chan-Yeung, *A Medical History of Hong Kong: 1842–1941* (The Chinese University Press, 2018):

This book tells the fascinating story of the development of medical and sanitation services in Hong Kong during the first century of British rule and how changing political values and directions of the colonial administration and the socioeconomic status of Hong Kong affected the policies of development in these areas. It also recounts how the bubonic plague of 1894 changed the government's laissez-faire attitude towards sanitation and public health and began sanitary reforms and developed public health infrastructure.

Johanna Emeney, *The Rise of Autobiographical Medical Poetry and the Medical Humanities* (ibidem Press, 2018):

In this fascinating book, Johanna Emeney examines the global proliferation of new poetry related to illness and medical treatment from the perspective of doctors, patients, and carers in light of the growing popularity of the medical humanities. She provides a close analysis of poetry from New Zealand, the U.S., and the U.K. that deals with sociological and philosophical aspects of sickness, ailment, medical treatment, care, and recuperation.

2017

Ed. **C. Pierce Salguero**, *Buddhism and Medicine: An Anthology of Premodern Sources* (Columbia University Press, 2017):

From its earliest days, Buddhism has been closely intertwined with medicine. *Buddhism and Medicine* is a singular collection showcasing the generative relationship and mutual influence between these fields across premodern Asia. The anthology combines dozens of English-language translations of premodern Buddhist texts with contextualizing introductions by leading international scholars in Buddhist studies, the history of medicine, and a range of other fields.

Anna Katharina Schaffner, *Exhaustion: A History* (Columbia University Press, 2017):

Medical, cultural, literary, and biographical sources have cast exhaustion as a biochemical imbalance, a somatic ailment, a viral disease, and a spiritual failing. It has been linked to loss, the alignment of the planets, a perverse desire for death, and social and economic disruption. Pathologized, demonized, sexualized, and even weaponized, exhaustion unites the mind with the body and society in such a way that we attach larger questions of agency, willpower, and well-being to its symptoms. Mapping these political, ideological, and creative currents across centuries of human development, *Exhaustion* finds in our struggle to overcome weariness a more significant effort to master ourselves.

Paula Knight, *The Facts of Life* (Penn State University Press, 2017):

April's dreams of motherhood come true before too long, but as Polly enthusiastically builds a career, her desire and hope to start a family become less firmly ingrained. Her struggles with chronic illness also have an effect on her choices and relationships, and she wonders whether motherhood will be in the cards for her at all. Soon she meets Jack, and together they start a fraught journey, first debating whether parenthood is right for them and then facing the heartbreak of repeated miscarriages and the effects of illness on their ability to have a child. Through it all, Polly is forced to reexamine what family can mean in a society that so often associates family—and womanhood—with children.

Beautifully drawn and poignantly honest, *The Facts of Life* is a funny, sometimes painful graphic memoir that explores what it takes to be a woman, a partner, and a mother . . . or not.

Ed. **Ann Burack-Weiss, Lynn Sara Lawrence, and Lynne Bamat Mijangos**, *Narrative in Social Work Practice: The Power and Possibility of Story* (Columbia University Press, 2017):

Narrative in Social Work Practice features first-person accounts by social workers who have successfully integrated narrative theory and approaches into their practice. Contributors describe innovative and effective interventions with a wide range of individuals, families, and groups facing a variety of life challenges. One author describes a family in crisis when a promising teenage girl suddenly takes to her bed for several years; another brings narrative practice to a Bronx trauma center; and another finds that poetry writing can enrich the lives of people living with dementia. In some chapters, the authors turn narrative techniques inward and use

them as vehicles of self-discovery. Settings range from hospitals and clinics to a graduate school and a case management agency. Throughout, *Narrative in Social Work Practice* showcases the flexibility and appeal of narrative methods and demonstrates how they can be empowering and fulfilling for clients and social workers alike.

Jenny Schreiber, *Politics, Piety, and Biomedicine: The Malaysian Transplant Venture* (Transcript-Verlag, 2017):

The discourse on transplantation and brain death has become emblematic of conflicts between certain perspectives on adequate medical care, death, and dying. Scientific and religious, modernizing and traditional as well as academic and popular voices debate how to approach these topics. This work captures the heterogeneous and often contradictory views on the Malaysian transplant venture and the treatment option of end-stage organ failure from the Malay and Chinese population, physicians, state officials, and Muslim, Buddhist, and Daoist clergy. It also addresses vital issues as to the use of and extent to which biomedicine and medical technology in contemporary Malaysia actually benefits its people.

MK Czerwiec, *Taking Turns: Stories from HIV/AIDS Care Unit 371* (Penn State University Press, 2017):

A shining example of excellence in the treatment and care of patients, Unit 371 was a community for thousands of patients and families affected by HIV and AIDS and the people who cared for them. This graphic novel combines Czerwiec's memories with the oral histories of patients, family members, and staff. It depicts life and death in the ward, the ways the unit affected and informed those who passed through it, and how many look back on their time there today. Czerwiec joined Unit 371 at a pivotal time in the history of AIDS: deaths from the syndrome in the Midwest peaked in 1995 and then dropped drastically in the following years, with the release of antiretroviral protease inhibitors. This positive turn of events led to a decline in patient populations and, ultimately, to the closure of Unit 371. Czerwiec's restrained, inviting drawing style and carefully considered narrative examine individual, institutional, and community responses to the AIDS epidemic—as well as the role that art can play in the grieving process.

2016

Dana Walrath, *Aliceheimer's: Alzheimer's Through the Looking Glass* (Penn State University Press, 2016):

Aliceheimer's is a series of illustrated vignettes, daily glimpses into their world with Alzheimer's. Walrath's time with her mother was marked by humor and clarity: "With a community of help that included pirates, good neighbors, a cast of characters from space-time travel, and my dead father hovering in the branches of the maple trees that surround our Vermont farmhouse, *Aliceheimer's* let us write our own story daily—a story that, in turn, helps rewrite the dominant medical narrative of aging."

Janet Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet* (Columbia University Press, 2016):

Through its unique focus and sophisticated reading of source materials, *Being Human* adds a crucial chapter in the larger historiography of science and religion. The book opens with the bold achievements in Tibetan medical illustration, commentary, and institution building during the period of the Fifth Dalai Lama and his regent, Desi Sangye Gyatso, then looks back to the work of earlier thinkers, tracing a strategically astute dialectic between scriptural and empirical authority on questions of history and the nature of human anatomy. It follows key differences between medicine and Buddhism in attitudes toward gender and sex and the moral character of the physician, who had to serve both the patient's and the practitioner's well-being. *Being Human* in a Buddhist World ultimately finds that Tibetan medical scholars absorbed ethical and epistemological categories from Buddhism yet shied away from ideal systems and absolutes, instead embracing the imperfectability of the human condition.

Henny Beaumont, *Hole in the Heart: Bringing Up Beth* (Penn State University Press, 2016):

Hole in the Heart is a moving and refreshingly honest look at raising a child with special needs. Henny doesn't shy away from the complicated emotions and challenges that affected her and her family. But her story also shows that fear can be the greatest of these challenges—and the most rewarding to overcome. Henny and Beth's journey speaks not only to parents of children with special needs and the medical and care professionals they interact with, but to all parents who wonder whether their child is loved enough and is reaching his or her potential.

David Låg Tomasi, *Medical Philosophy: A Philosophical Analysis of Patient Self-Perception in Diagnostics and Therapy*, (ibidem Press, 2016):

This innovative book clarifies the distinction between philosophy of medicine and medical philosophy, expanding the focus from the 'knowing that' of the first to the 'knowing how' of the latter. The idea of patient and provider self-discovery becomes the method and strategy at the basis of therapeutic treatment. It develops the concept of 'Central Medicine', aimed at overcoming the dichotomies of Western–Eastern medicine and Traditional–Integrative approaches. Evidence-based and patient-centered medicine are analyzed in the context of the debate on placebo and non-specific effects alongside clinical research on the patient-doctor relationship, and the interactive nature of human relationships in general, including factors such as environment, personal beliefs, and perspectives on life's meaning and purpose. Tomasi's research incorporates neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, and medicine in a clear, readable, and detailed way, satisfying the needs of professionals, students, and anyone who enjoys the exploration of the complexity of human mind, brain, and heart.

Donna Dickenson, *Me Medicine vs. We Medicine: Reclaiming Biotechnology for the Common Good* (Columbia University Press, 2016):

Personalized healthcare—or what the award-winning author Donna Dickenson calls "Me Medicine"—is radically transforming our longstanding "one-size-fits-all" model. Technologies such as direct-to-consumer genetic testing, pharmacogenetically developed therapies in cancer care, private umbilical cord blood banking,

and neurocognitive enhancement claim to cater to an individual's specific biological character, and, in some cases, these technologies have shown powerful potential. Yet in others they have produced negligible or even negative results. Whatever is behind the rise of Me Medicine, it isn't just science. So why is Me Medicine rapidly edging out We Medicine, and how has our commitment to our collective health suffered as a result?

In her cogent, provocative analysis, Dickenson examines the economic and political factors fueling the Me Medicine phenomenon and explores how, over time, this paradigm shift in how we approach our health might damage our individual and collective well-being. Historically, the measures of "We Medicine," such as vaccination and investment in public-health infrastructure, have radically extended our life spans, and Dickenson argues we've lost sight of that truth in our enthusiasm for "Me Medicine."

Ed. **Lorenzo Servitje and Sherryl Vint**, Foreword by **Steven C. Schlozman**, *The Walking Med: Zombies and the Medical Image* (Penn State University Press, 2016):

The Walking Med brings together scholars from across the disciplines of cultural studies, medical education, medical anthropology, and art history to explore what new meanings the zombie might convey in this context. These scholars consider a range of forms—from comics disseminated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to graphic novels and television shows such as *The Walking Dead*—to show how interrogations of the zombie metaphor can reveal new perspectives within the medical humanities.