



IL PIETRISCO JOURNAL



FACETS OF THE
HEALTH
HUMANITIES

(ISSUE 2, 2025)

© Il Pietrisco Journal 2025
Edinburgh, U.K.

ISSN: 2635-165X



www.pietrisco.net

The Scientific Editorial Board and Committee is composed by well-known international academics listed at the following link: [Il Pietrisco Editorial-Board](#).

Front cover image: Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Creation of Adam* (1508-1512)

Facets of the Health Humanities

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Introductory Note

SELENE GENOVESI

Mis(sing)communication: deafness in a foreign environment

ALESSIO GIOVENE

Feminist Memoirs: Illness and Disability as Thresholds of Rhizomatic Subjectivity in Francesca Mannocchi's *Bianco è il colore del danno* and Claudia Durastanti's *La straniera*

EILIS MARGUERITE KIERANS

Eat Your Heart Out: Sexuality, Race, and Rape in Roxane Gay's *Hunger*

CAMELIA RAITA

Autopsie de l'ontologie schizoïde. Esthétique du miroitement du soi dans le roman graphique *Autopsie des échos dans ma tête*, de Freaks

ARIANNA SALOMON

The Hospital and the Wheelchair: Disability in Italian and Italian American Memoirs

JEROEN VANHESTE

The Mind as an Inner Fortress. Schizophrenia and Hyperreflexivity in Kafka's *The Castle*

Notes on Contributors

SELENE GENOVESI has an MA in Translation from University of Exeter and is currently an independent researcher, focusing on multilingual writing in Italy and Spain during the years of dictatorships. Her main interests are related to the translation of regional varieties, the use of dialect in literature and, more recently, theatre in translation. She is the foreign language programme coordinator at Edge Hill University and has collaborated as language tutor at Royal Holloway University of London. She is also a freelance translator and playwright.

ALESSIO GIOVENE is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Studies at Florida Atlantic University, where he also teaches Italian Literature and Cinema. He previously studied at the Università di Bologna, graduating with a comparative thesis on the influence of Bergson and Lacan in the works of Ungaretti and Zanzotto. His primary interests include contemporary Italian literature, comparative literature, and cinema. His research explores interdisciplinary topics at the intersection of disability studies, animal studies, ecocriticism, and gender studies. He has published articles on Italian literature and cinema in international journals such as *Gradiva* and *Italian Studies* and has presented his research at institutions like Yale, Brown, and UPenn. The upcoming article “Disability, Racism, and Sexism in Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*” is set to be published in the *Steinbeck Review* in Spring 2025. Since 2025, he has served as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Motorsport Culture & History*.

EILIS MARGUERITE KIERANS is Assistant Professor of Teaching in the Italian Department at Pennsylvania State University. She has published articles on the work of Gabriella Kuruvilla, Grazia Deledda, Dacia Maraini, Italian American writers, and Christian Petzold. Eilis is co-editor of the translation series *Other Voices of Italy*. Her co-translation of Anna Maria Gehnyei’s *Il Corpo Nero* is forthcoming with Rutgers University Press. Eilis is currently collaborating on an edited volume titled *Queer Eating: A Transcultural Exploration of Non-Normative Bodies, Sexualities, and Space*.

CAMELIA RAITA is a PhD student at the Doctoral School of Linguistic and Literary Studies at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Her thesis, under the scholarly guidance of Professor Simona Jisa, is titled *“Psychological Disorders in Contemporary Francophone Literatures”, and the authors she discusses are: Henry Bauchau, Claude Ber, Jean-François-Farid Boukraba, Abla Farhoud, and Freaks*. The thesis delves into the collapse of language in madness, exploring how it manages to transform into a narrative metadiscourse—one that challenges the asylum vocabulary perpetuating de-subjectivisation. Her research also engages with phenomenology as a framework to consider how illness is experienced by patients, and with the visual as a confrontation with the “phantasmatic concreteness” of psychosis.

ARIANNA SALOMON is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Studies and a Graduate Teaching Assistant at Florida Atlantic University, where she teaches Italian and Comparative Literature. Her research focuses on contemporary Italian literature and diaspora, with particular emphasis on Italian American literature. She has published articles in *Campi immaginabili*, *Italica*, and *Quaderni Veneti*, including 'La mano di Dante: La Commedia italoamericana di Nick Tosches' (2023), 'The Siren Song: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Tarchetti's *Fosca*' (2025), and 'Emigrazione da Piombino Dese: l'heimat poetico di Luciano Pallaro' (2025), the latter of which received an honorable mention from the Regione Veneto. Her current research, which forms the basis of her dissertation, applies Disability Literary Theory to contemporary Italian and Italian American prose, examining representations of physical and cognitive impairment.

JEROEN VANHESTE teaches philosophy and cultural studies at the Open University of The Netherlands. His fields of interest include philosophical anthropology, philosophy of culture, and the mental health humanities. His recent research explores the ways in which philosophy, literature, film, and other cultural expressions may contribute to our thinking about mental illness and mental health. Of particular interest in this research are the ways in which cultural developments and phenomena such as, for example, neoliberalism, social media usage, stigmatization, and the biological approach of psychiatric disorders, have an impact on mental health. Vanheste's recent publications in this area include articles on depression, stigmatization, autism and schizophrenia: J. Vanheste, 'Patches on the skin, patches on the soul. Coping with the psoriasis stigma in Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective*', *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 22: 3 (2025), 387-404; J. Vanheste, 'Half a Century of exhaustion and madness. The fiftieth anniversary of Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon*', *Soundings* 106: 1 (2023), 87-109; J. Vanheste, 'No pills, but letters. Saul Bellow's *Herzog*: The recovery of a depressed academic', *Journal of Medical Humanities* 44: 2 (2023), 129-144.

Introductory note

“There must be a way, I thought, that the language of life as experienced—of passion, of hunger, of love—bore some relationship, however convoluted, to the language of neurons, digestive tracts, and heartbeats.” (Kalanithi, 2016, p. 39) Thus does American physician Paul Kalanithi in *When Breath Becomes Air* hypothesise a powerful correspondence of the biological language of the human body, the very functioning and orchestration of its vital processes, and his attempt to find a narrative voice to linguistically and artistically record and recount one’s subjective experience of life with its repertoire of feelings, needs and challenges. His work, completed by his wife Lucy after his death, moves between three main phases of the author’s path along his terminal illness and poetically traces a journey of endurance, hope and legacy — a real phenomenology of his experience of writing his way through terminal illness. Whilst Kalanithi’s literary exploration shows the strength of auto-pathography written in prose, in a parallel manner another author, English living poet Myra Schneider, shows the efficacy of using an autopathography written in verse. Using her poetic voice to support herself emotionally, mentally and physically through therapeutic writing during the treatment of cancer, Schneider deposits in her autobiographical *Writing My Way Through Cancer* (2003) a collection of diary entries and verses, which was accompanied the following year by the publication of *Multiplying the Moon* (2004), a volume collecting the poems that were born out of that diary. Finally, an example from Film Studies, *Sur l’Adamant* (2023), a documentary where film director Nicolas Philibert observes through his camera how powerfully art therapy, community cooking and conversation sharing groups may change the life of vulnerable people who attend the barge on the Seine, purposely built in 2010 to host sessions and activities to support and validate the most fragile suffering from mental illness or trauma.

Il Pietrisco Prose launched a project which ran between March 2021 and April 2022 on the *Facets of the Health Humanities*, in collaboration with many expert researchers in various countries and universities. On researching the rich and variegated transdisciplinary field of the Health Humanities, which has emerged in the last twenty years, our project has explored a whole plethora of works and intersecting genres that pertain the relationship between Corporeality, the Humanities, Sociology of Health and Illness, and Philosophy of Healthcare. Other unsuspected areas of interest and study have come to the fore next to poetry, prose and cinema: comics and graphic novels, theatre and performing arts, new models of medical architecture, disability and children’s literature, visual culture, palliative care and end of life care. And potentially there is a lot more to explore in connection with culture and identity areas such as class, gender, sexuality, migration, health care structures. All recordings of the seminars and lectures are available on the *Il Pietrisco* platform at the following link (scrolling down to works completed in 2022): <http://pietrisco.net/Recordings-of-Events/>.

In order to continue with the next phase of this project, in 2024 the team decided to launch a call for academic articles to corroborate and create a strong basis to uphold the tenets of further research in the area of the Health Humanities in Anglophone, Francophone and Italian artistic expression (poetry, prose, cinema, theatre, visual arts, the performing arts) writing on the human condition and its intersection with illness, healing and healthcare. We were interested in researching further the transdisciplinary field of the Health Humanities to reveal all its facets, which still need to be researched more depth, and let wider echoes reach the readership, both

academic and non-academic, on what it means for a person suffering from illness or disability to meet with medical world, but also with the surrounding society at large.

The response to our call has been wide and varied within the academic world. The articles that have been selected and now are published for the first time in this Issue of *Il Pietrisco Journal* all look in an original manner at the paradigm of mental and physical illness or disability and the encounter of the person with a surrounding world and medical reality that are not always or not yet ready to accept, adapt, empathise and interact with the ill person which can still be perceived as a ‘threat’ to the construct of societal ‘normality’.

We sincerely hope that the research and literary examples offered in this second Issue of our academic journal may be of help and profit to other academics and non-academic readers for the advancement of support, service and empathy towards illness, disability and the dignity of the person within our society.

Rossella M. Riccobono, 22 December 2025