

Ageing, Illness, Care in Literary and Cultural Narratives

Thursday 5th and Friday 6th September, 2019

University of Huddersfield, UK

Keynotes speakers:

Sally Chivers, Trent University, Canada

Amelia DeFalco, University of Leeds, UK

Margaret Morganroth Gullette, Brandeis University, US (by skype)

Stories about ageing, illness and care permeate ageing societies. Although illness and care are not an inevitable part of ageing, ageing, especially advanced ageing, is often associated with greater infirmity and increasing dependence on others. Common media representations evoke the apocalyptic effects of the burden of care as they pit a younger, able-bodied workforce against an ageing and frail population that threatens to bring financial disaster. And, yet, care is part of all of our lives: we live in a web of relations that support embodied life. As many in the field of feminist ethics of care have shown, serious illness and the care it necessitates focuses our attention on the very nature of selfhood and citizenship, as the prized neoliberal values of autonomy, independence and choice are undermined by intimate relationships between selves. Ageing, illness and care generate a complex nexus of affective, social and political relations and interactions that raise ethical questions about self and other.

Literary and cultural narratives negotiate, and help us to explore, this web of interactions and the complex questions about subjectivity that they raise. Reading and writing about ageing, illness and care also encourages us to engage with the challenges that these may pose to individuals and to society. As we do so, we inevitably consider the representational limits and the possibilities of literary and cultural narratives.

This conference welcomes papers that explore the intersections of ageing, illness and care in literary and cultural narratives in English and other languages; including prose fiction, poetry, life writing, comics, film and the media. Papers may engage with fields such as ageing studies, disability studies, queer studies, philosophy and creative writing, but are not limited to these areas of study. The language of the conference is English.

We invite proposals for:

- 20-minute papers. Abstracts of approximately 300 words should be accompanied by a short biographical note.
- 10-minute presentations based on a pre-circulated paper to allow for longer and more focussed discussion. Abstracts of approximately 300 words should be accompanied by a short biographical note.
- Workshops and panels. Panels should consist of three papers and the proposal should include abstracts for the panel and for each of the papers as well as the email address for correspondence. Workshop organisers should send an abstract outlining the scope and nature of the workshop along with details of all participants and the email for correspondence.

Submissions should be emailed to Katsura Sako and Sarah Falcus at ageing@hud.ac.uk.

Closing date for submissions: 11 February, 2019. Speakers will be notified of acceptance by 31 March.

