

## Telling and showing dis/continuities: comics on dementia

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During the last 15 years, there has been an increasing number of fictional and non-fictional comics on Alzheimer's disease and other forms of (senile) dementia. Some address the illness from an instructive/ educational point of view; others tell tales of age, illness and disability. These are narratives of care and coping with partners and loved (or loathed) parents; they tell stories about the breakdown of both language and psychic cohesion; or adapt world literature's 'unconventional heroes' (e.g. Robin Hood or Don Quixote) and present them as displaying the symptoms of dementia.

To what extent do these diverse comics favor 'coherence' by describing demented protagonists as continuous with their 'former selves' and as holding a "selfhood beyond language" (Eakins 2008)? How do they negotiate the protagonists' identities – do they focus on 'ailing brains' or do they insist on gendered and embodied selves? To what extent do they counter or tie into recent debates on disability rights, critical gerontology, and person-centered care? Do they approach the – perhaps inexpressible – states of dementia-related disorientation by giving (fictitious) insights into the experiences of vulnerable minds and bodies? Do comics as a medium that relies on 'in-between spaces' have a specific capacity to tell and show dis/continuous life stories and identities, and if so, what are the artists' formal and aesthetic choices to represent dementia?

Possible comics to be discussed include: Manu Larcenet: *La légende de Robin des Bois* (2003); Paco Roca: *Arrugas* (2007); Thibaut Lambert: *Al Zimneur* (2011); Sarah Leavitt: *Tangles: A Story About Alzheimer's, My Mother, and Me* (2011); Flix: *Don Quijote* (2012); Thibaut Lambert: *Au coin d'une ride* (2014); Ephameron: *Wij twee samen* (2015); Lauren R. Weinstein: *Invisible Patients* (2015); Dana Walrath: *Aliceheimer's: Alzheimer's Through the Looking Glass* (2016); Alex Demetris: *Dad's not all there any more* (2016).

### Kurzbiographie

Irmela Marei Krüger-Fürhoff is professor of German literature at Freie Universität Berlin. Her main fields of interest include 18th-21st century literature with a focus on the interrelations between literary and medical knowledge. She is also interested in memory studies, body history, gender studies and intermediality. She is the academic lead of the research project "Graphic medicine and literary pathographies" (2016-2019; [www.fsgs.fu-berlin.de/pathographics](http://www.fsgs.fu-berlin.de/pathographics)), funded by the Einstein Foundation Berlin, which analyzes the aesthetics and politics of illness and disability narratives in contemporary comics and literature.