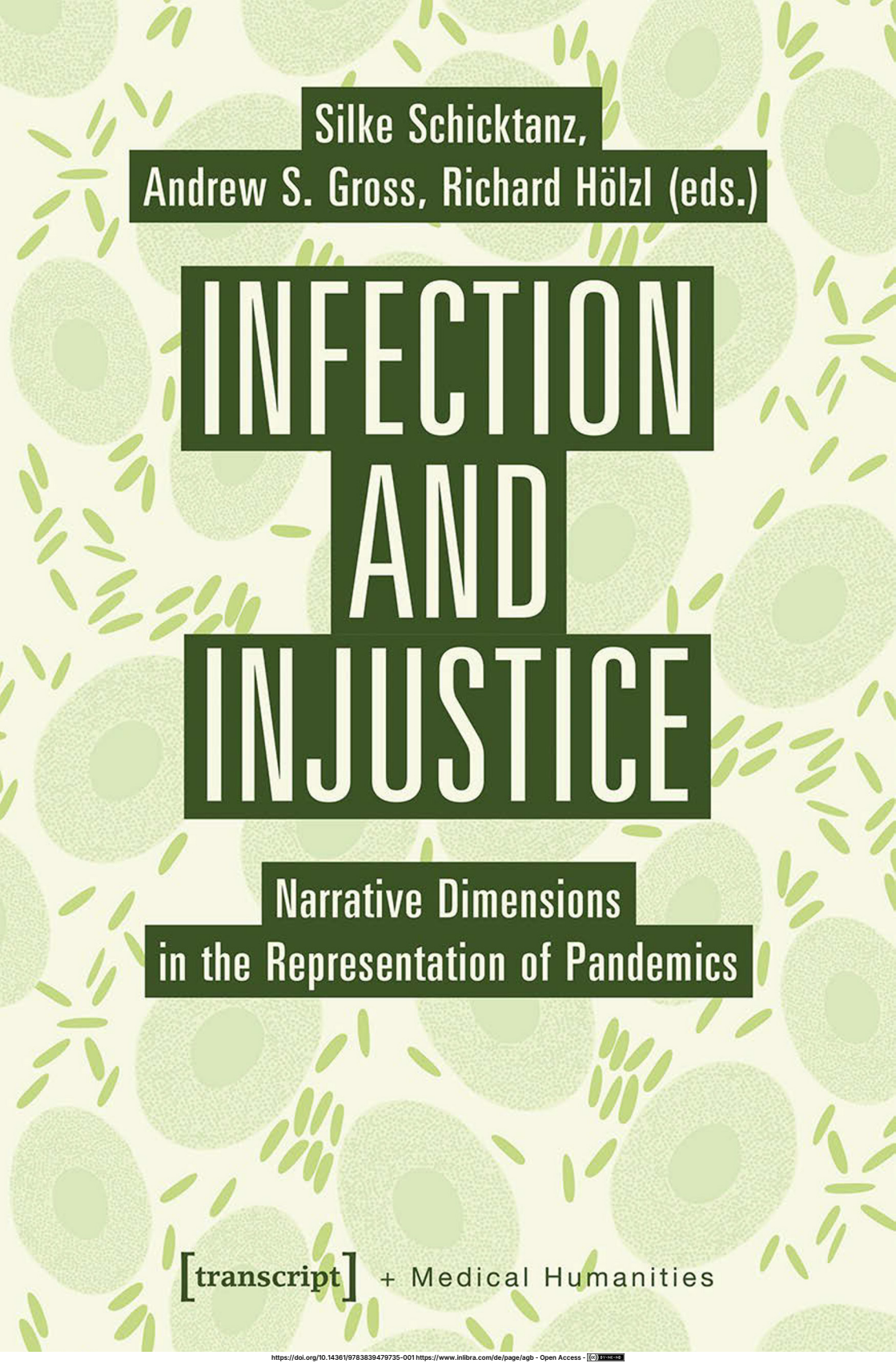


The background of the entire cover is a light green color with a repeating pattern of stylized, textured green circles and smaller green dashes, resembling a microscopic view of cells or bacteria.

Silke Schicktanz,
Andrew S. Gross, Richard Hölzl (eds.)

INFECTION AND INJUSTICE

Narrative Dimensions
in the Representation of Pandemics

[transcript] + Medical Humanities

Silke Schicktanz, Andrew S. Gross, Richard Hölzl (eds.)
Infection and Injustice

Editorial

Human beings are more than the sum of their organs and body parts: their roles in society, their (hi)stories, their living and economic conditions, but also their dreams, fears, and inventions impact their health.

The inter- and transdisciplinary edited series **Medical Humanities** will connect the perspectives of medicine, the humanities, and social sciences to gain new insights about how society, health, and the environment interact. Focusing on the living human body, the **Medical Humanities** series raises urgent questions on gender politics and bioethics, and mediates between care and health policies, technology and body images.

Silke Schicktanz, born in 1970, is a professor for Ethical and Cultural Studies of Biomedicine at the University Medical Center Göttingen, Germany. Her research focuses on cross-cultural bioethics, stakeholder engagement, as well as collectivity and responsibility.

Andrew S. Gross is a professor of American literature at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, vice president of the German Association of American Studies, and editor-in-chief of the *New American Studies Journal*. He writes about American poetry and post-WWII American literature and culture.

Richard Hölzl is a researcher at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich and teaches at the Department of Medieval and Modern History at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. His research focuses on environmental history, history of missions, and material cultures of colonialism.

Silke Schicktanz, Andrew S. Gross, Richard Hölzl (eds.)

Infection and Injustice

Narrative Dimensions in the Representation of Pandemics

[transcript]

Funded by the Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany



Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available online at <https://dnb.dnb.de>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons License BY-NC-ND 4.0. For the full license terms, please visit the URL <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.de>.

Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to any content (such as graphs, figures, photos, excerpts, etc.) not original to the Open Access publication and further permission may be required from the rights holder. The obligation to research and clear permission lies solely with the party re-using the material.

2026 © Silke Schick Tanz, Andrew S. Gross, Richard Hölzl (eds.)

transcript Verlag | Hermannstraße 26 | D-33602 Bielefeld | live@transcript-verlag.de

Cover design: Maria Arndt

Cover illustration: Nike Dietrich

Printing: Elanders Waiblingen GmbH, Waiblingen

<https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839479735>

Print-ISBN: 978-3-8376-8368-4 | PDF-ISBN: 978-3-8394-7973-5

ISSN of series: 2698-9220 | eISSN of series: 2703-0830

Printed on permanent acid-free text paper.

For Rebekka Habermas (1959–2023)

Contents

Illustrations 11

Acknowledgments 13

Introduction: Narrating Pandemics
Andrew S. Gross, Richard Hölzl, Silke Schicktanz 15

Literary Narratives and Metaphors

Pandemic Pastoralism
The Legend of the Lone Survivor in American Literature
Andrew S. Gross 33

Intertextuality and the Role of the Eyewitness in Plague Descriptions
Giovanni Boccaccio, Daniel Defoe, and Albert Camus
Franziska Meier 57

On Washing One's Hands of it
Holmes, Semmelweis, Céline, and "Virality" as a Metaphor
Pierre-Héli Monot 77

The Lockdown Diary
Crisis in Corona Fictions
Yvonne Völkl 93

Improper Bodies
Narrations of Immunity
Jan Hinrichsen 111

Social and Historical Narratives

Visually Narrating Disease?

Syphilis in the German Public Sphere During the Early 20 th Century	
<i>Victoria Morick</i>	133

Caring or Curing?

Social Practice and Narration of Leprosy Work in Colonial East Africa	
<i>Richard Hölzl</i>	161

“But We Were All in the Same Boat Anyway”

How Factory Workers in Austria Narrate the Covid Pandemic	
<i>Laura Bäuml</i>	189

The Jailbreaker

Exploring the Role of Social Figures in Pandemic Storytelling	
<i>Annerose Böhrer, Marie-Kristin Döbler, Larissa Pfaller</i>	207

Narratives and Morality

Don’t Judge Me!

Anti-Judgementalism and Anti-Moralism in the Corona Pandemic	
<i>Moritz Ege, Julian Schmitzberger</i>	223

Injustice Narratives of Vaccine Critics

Insights from German Telegram Groups	
<i>Julia Brose</i>	247

Personal Responsibility and Inequality

The Anti-Vaccine Discourse in the United States	
<i>Jennifer A. Reich</i>	271

Intergenerational Solidarity

The Normative Significance of Narratives in the Corona Pandemic	
<i>Niklas Ellerich-Groppe, Mark Schweda</i>	289

A Concluding Remark

Injustice in Pandemic Narrations

Philosophical Reflections

Silke Schicktanz 311

List of Contributors in Alphabetical Order 327

..... 327