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Speculative Health

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The last thirty years have seen an intensification in ways of thinking about our health and disease in the future tense. Risk, precarity, subjunctivity — all three point to the ways that temporality shape human experience, subjectively, interpersonally, and institutionally. But what if we turn our attention away from the clinic and its therapeutic technologies — which focus on the unfolding everyday futures of therapy and the modest gains and losses experienced through aging, debilitation, and disease progression — and attend, instead, to the speculative futures of health and disease in science fiction, futurism, and other genres that creatively attempt to think through, conceptualize, and bring into being particular futures? These futures might operate at the level of the individual — different conceptions of the self and subjectivity — and they might operate at the level of society and its institutions, entailing new social orders as well as innovations in current institutions.

In this series we invite contributors to consider how speculation makes particular kinds of persons and social forms possible; to think through other models and modes of speculation about the body, health, and disease — in film, literature, and mass media; to consider how particular technologies and techniques create futures.

Possible topics might include:

–Fictional descriptions of novel social orders and institutions that produce new forms of health and wellness – or create new forms of disease, disability, and disorder

–Ethnographic engagement with emerging technologies of care, attending to the future-making of technologists, medical professionals, and the technology itself

–Historical descriptions of earlier forms of speculations, whether they be in the context of fiction in the strict sense or speculative policy making

–Considerations of how speculative genres come to influence the ways individuals conceptualize the future of health and disease

–Other explorations of how speculation operates, specifically in the contexts of health, wellness, disease, disability, and death

Contributions of 2,000-4,000 words are sought by June 1st, to begin publication by mid-June. Please send all contributions to the series editor, Matthew Wolf-Meyer, at mwolfmey@binghamton.edu.

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