

Abstract

Dementia is a complex and pressing concern for 21st century Western societies: It is a challenge for health care systems, it remains medically obscure despite extensive research, and it fundamentally discomfits human assumptions of rationality, individuality and autonomy. Fictional literature reflects these current discourses, it makes inconceivable issues communicatively available and it interacts with cultural knowledges. The selected novels each approach dementia very differently. A narratological and rhetorical analysis with a focus on the texts' aesthetic techniques (especially metaphors), their narrative structure and their fictionality will show how literature makes dementia visible and allows recipients alternative access to a withdrawing experience as well as to the social implications of dementia. The aim of the project is to figure out how dementia is represented in fictional literature, which functions this has and to propose how fictional literature can add to existing images of dementia.