

Re/Visioning Depression: Creative Approaches to "Feeling Bad"

Deadline: May 1, 2017

Robin Alex McDonald

Re/Visioning Depression: Creative Approaches to "Feeling Bad"

Edited by Robin Alex McDonald

What is depression? ... An "imagined sun, bright and black at the same time?" ... A "noonday demon?" ... A dead fish? In literature, comics, art, and film, we witness new conceptualizations of depression come into being. Unburdened by diagnostic criteria and pharmaceutical concerns, these media employ imagery, narrative, symbolism, and metaphor to forge imaginative, exploratory, and innovative representations of a range of experiences that might get called "depression." Texts such as Julia Kristeva's *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1989), Andrew Solomon's *The Noonday Demon* (2000), Allie Brosh's cartoons, "Adventures in Depression" (2011) and "Depression Part Two" (2013), and Lars von Trier's film *Melancholia* (2011) each offer portraits of depression that deviate from, or altogether reject, the dominant language of depression that has been articulated by and within psychiatry. Most recently, Ann Cvetkovich's *Depression: A Public Feeling* (2012) has answered the author's own call for a multiplication of discourses on depression by positing crafting as one possible method of working through depression-as-"impasse."

Inspired by Cvetkovich's efforts to re-shape and re-imagine both the depressive experience itself and the critical ways in which we communicate this experience to others, this anthology seeks scholarly and creative essays that rescue depression from totalizing psychiatric or psychological frameworks in order to produce new languages of and ways of thinking about depression. While psychiatric and psychological discourses on depression may offer valuable insights into depression's management or treatment, they cannot be the only discourses at our disposal – and though Cvetkovich's considerations of craft, memoir, acedia, and feminist consciousness-raising practices provide several useful alternative approaches to thinking through depression, there are surely many more that warrant exploration.

Contributions may choose to explore such lines of inquiry or themes as:

- engagements with or analyses of comics, sequential art, works on paper, installations, performances, theatre, architecture, video art, films, television shows, novels, short stories, or poems about depression
- creative and artistic approaches to inhabiting or working through depression
- approaches to depression within radical/anti-oppression politics
- depression as a "structure of feeling" (depression as a physical/affective experience of neoliberal capitalism, white supremacy, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny and other forms of oppression)

- how identity shapes the experience of living with depression (i.e. the resources one can or cannot access)
- depression as radical passivity
- depression as inherited trauma
- depression as a non-normative experience of embodiment
- depression and the social imperative toward "happiness"

Prospective contributors should send a 300-500 word abstract and C.V. to Robin Alex McDonald (robin.mcdonald@queensu.ca) by May 1, 2017. Accepted proposals will be responded to by June 1, 2017. Completed manuscripts will be due by November 1, 2017.

Robin Alex McDonald is a Toronto-based writer, independent curator and PhD candidate in the Cultural Studies program at Queen's University. Their research and artistic interests span feminist, queer, and trans theories; theories of relationality and collectivity; activist art and art-as-activism; and comics, illustration, and drawing. They were recently awarded The Writing in Bed Prize for Art Writing, which they dedicate to their lifelong on-again-off-again relationship with clinical depression.

Reference:

CFP: Re/Visioning Depression: Creative Approaches to "Feeling Bad". In: ArtHist.net, Jan 17, 2017 (accessed Jul 6, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/14531>>.