



/ Corona Fictions as Cultural Indicators of Social Cohesion and Resilience in the Wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Julia Obermayr* und Yvonne Völkl**

Abstract

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, many Europeans have turned to preexisting written and audiovisual pandemic fictions for better sense-making and as a coping strategy. Two years into the crisis, on a cultural level, numerous European countries have since actively produced their own Corona Fictions offering narratives that deal with the current pandemic. On a societal level, these narratives early on hinted at potential ruptures in social cohesion. Cultural productions commonly function as an enabler of social cohesion, fostering mutual understanding and a feeling of togetherness, particularly when considering the participatory nature of narratives on the internet or in literary anthologies. Originating in a research project of a much larger scope, this article explores the following questions in two francophone cultural productions of the Covid-19 pandemic. In which areas is social cohesion shaken or fractured? How is social cohesion experienced, processed, and expressed? Does the reception of Corona Fictions function as a coping strategy? How do gender issues/inequalities aggravated by the pandemic translate into the representation of female characters in Corona Fictions?

Keywords: Corona Fictions, pandemic, social cohesion, resilience, gender

Corona Fictions als kulturelle Indikatoren sozialer Kohäsion und Resilienz im Zuge der Corona-Pandemie

Zusammenfassung

Seit Beginn der Covid-19-Pandemie haben sich viele Europäer*innen auf bereits existierende schriftliche und audiovisuelle ‚pandemic fictions‘ zur Sinnstiftung oder als Coping-Strategie gestützt. Auf kultureller Ebene produzierten zwei Jahre nach Beginn der Krise zahlreiche europäische Länder ihre eigenen Corona Fictions, die Narrative zur aktuellen Pandemie bieten. Auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene deuteten diese Narrative bereits früh auf mögliche Brüche der sozialen Kohäsion hin. Kulturelle Produktionen dienen in der Regel dem sozialen Zusammenhalt, indem sie gegenseitiges Verständnis und ein Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit fördern, insbesondere wenn man Narrative im Internet oder in literarischen Anthologien im Hinblick auf ihren partizipativen Charakter betrachtet. Als Teil eines größeren angelegten Forschungsprojekts geht dieser Artikel folgenden Fragen in zwei frankophonen Kulturproduktionen der Covid-19-Pandemie nach: In welchen Bereichen ist der soziale Zusammenhalt erschüttert oder zerbrochen? Wie zeigen sich die durch die Pandemie verschärften geschlechtsspezifischen Probleme/Ungleichheiten in der Darstellung von Frauenfiguren in Corona Fictions?

Schlagwörter: Corona Fictions, Pandemie, soziale Kohäsion, Resilienz, Gender



* Mag. Dr. phil. Julia Obermayr, Graz University of Technology, julia.obermayr@tugraz.at

** Mag. Dr. phil. Yvonne Völkl, Graz University of Technology, yvonne.voelkl@tugraz.at

Acknowledgments: This research was funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): P 34571-G; Project team: Julia Obermayr, Elisabeth Hobisch, Yvonne Völkl. Website: www.tugraz.at/projekte/cofi



1. Introduction

The pandemic offers a glimpse into the strengths and weaknesses of our social fabric across Europe and beyond. The understanding of cohesion among European nations has suffered a fundamental rupture, particularly during lockdowns, due to increasing fears of illness and decreasing feelings of belonging to a nation state, the European Union, or the world in general (cf. Singer et al. 2021). While women and marginalized groups such as migrants have suffered many additional disadvantages in their everyday lives, Corona Fictions,¹ i.e., cultural and literary productions emerging during the current pandemic, have demonstrated their potential to represent togetherness and a—sometimes even seemingly utopian—social cohesion. Simultaneously, Corona Fictions function as a coping strategy to deal with the stress and burdening of the pandemic, while strengthening resilience.

Numerous films, TV and web series, music videos, but also literary texts published as an immediate response to the Covid-19 pandemic indicate the human need for connection, face-to-face communication, feeling the presence of the other in the room, essentially inhabiting the same space, and the need for physical touch. In this sense the pandemic has significantly influenced our social behavior, human interactions, and mental health.

Popular culture may function as an early warning system for societal grievances, e.g., bad preparation for future pandemics (cf. Newiak 2020: 21), if we are able to decode it correctly early on. Moreover, pandemic films and series have the potential to offer some guidance on how to confront real-life challenges during a pandemic by acting them out in a fictional world for the viewers first (cf. *ibid.*).

Arguably, a comparative perspective throughout Europe may be useful for certain research questions regarding Corona Fictions. However, we argue that in this case the similar collective experience (e.g., five pandemic phases according to Žižek 2020) of the first lockdown following a stay-at-home policy among the Romance-speaking countries equalizes any cultural differences. As Romance studies scholars, in this article we will examine in what ways Corona Fictions portray

social cohesion and its fractures using the example of the French feature film *8 Rue de l'Humanité* (Engl. *Stuck Together*) from 2021 and the French anthology *Les femmes écrivent le monde de demain* (2020) (Engl. *Women Writing Tomorrow's World*), which are representative of numerous European Corona Fictions.² The investigation of the francophone examples seeks to answer the following questions:

1. In which areas is social cohesion shaken or fractured?
2. How is social cohesion experienced, processed, and expressed in francophone cultural productions of the Covid-19 pandemic?
3. Does the reception of Corona Fictions function as a coping strategy?
4. How do gender issues/inequalities aggravated by the pandemic translate into the representation of female characters in Corona Fictions?

We will primarily focus on the representations of female³ characters since (the) female experience(s) during the pandemic differ/s greatly from the male, as several studies (cf. Lazar et al. 2020; UNDP/ UNICEF 2021) have indicated a deterioration of multiple burdens on women that already existed before the arrival of Covid-19.

1.1 Social Cohesion and Resilience in Europe during the Pandemic

While the origin of social cohesion has been “based on citizen well-being, shared responsibility and the integrity of civic values since the 21st century,” as mentioned in the *Methodological Guide on Social Cohesion Policy* (Council of Europe 2005: 63), “[a]ccording to Durkheim, a cohesive society is one that is marked by the abundance of ‘mutual moral support, which [...] leads [the individual] to share in the collective energy and supports his[/her] own when exhausted’” (Manca 2014: 6026). During the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic,

² As previous findings suggest, Spain, for example, opted for the release of a comedy called *¡Ni te me acerques!* (cf. Obermayr/Völkl 2022) as the first post-lockdown feature film addressing the current pandemic. Similarly, as one of the first literary responses to the sudden pandemic lockdown, publications of so-called Corona Fictions anthologies emerged in Spain, France, and Italy alike (cf. Völkl 2022).

³ To avoid any misunderstandings, this particular lens does not suggest social cohesion as a female responsibility but rather focuses on women due to their own unique set of pandemic experiences.

¹ Corona Fictions do not explicitly comprise the circulating social media texts or any political discourse in media per se; however, projects such as the Spanish Covidteca (covidteca.org) already dedicate their research to this field.



the cultural representation of social relations shifted significantly (cf. Borkowska/Laurence 2021; Singer et al. 2021). Therefore, one can argue that the pandemic crisis can be understood as a sociocultural indicator (German original: “Seismograph des Sozialen,” Thießen 2014: 13), shedding light on the underlying fractures of patterns in “social tectonics.” Similarly, Corona Fictions function as cultural indicators, meaning a seismograph underlining early on the aggravating social developments facing the pandemic challenges.

Regardless of nationality, however, both mentioned studies on changes in mental health and social cohesion during the Covid-19 pandemic, Borkowska’s and Laurence’s study from England and Singer’s (and colleagues’) study from Germany (specifically from Berlin), show certain tendencies for social cohesion in Europe as a whole. Primarily, the effects of lockdowns on mental health and social interactions stand out. “[M]ental well-being, resilience and social cohesion declined during the first lockdown in March 2020” (Singer et al. 2021: 102); thus, the Germany-based research group conducting the CovSocial project termed this phenomenon “the acute first lockdown shock effect” (ibid.).

“[D]espite the [initially] positive prognoses across media/political narratives” (Borkowska/Laurence 2021: 631f.), as the creators/ authors of cultural productions as well as the protagonists in the selected Corona Fictions corpus are, in reality and in fiction alike, confronted with this effect, *cohesion appeared to decline quite substantially around the pandemic, compared to pre-pandemic periods [...]: both behavioural dimensions of “talking to neighbours” (which might be expected given requirements to socially distance), but also perceptual dimensions, such as neighbour-trust. (ibid.)*

How individuals cope with crises is related to their degree of resilience. Psychologists of the American Psychological Association define resilience “as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress” (APA 2020). As socio-psychological studies (cf. Engelhardt 2005; Kast 1990; Cyrulnik 2002) have shown, some people survive the same crisis better than others because they exhibit different degrees of resilience. Thus, the relativity of crisis situations depends not only on one’s perception, but also on certain innate resilience factors, e.g., optimism, creativity, or extraversion, and acquired resilience factors, e.g., education, friends/family, or social environment. Furthermore, individuals can train their resilience by adopting

certain coping strategies, such as (re)activating their social networks, regaining the certainty of having problem-solving skills at their disposal, taking breaks from the news, maintaining a realistic-optimistic perspective, or paying specific attention to their physical needs for regular food intake, sport, or relaxation (cf. LIR 2021).

Another essential coping strategy to activate and increase resilience, which has been studied in depth by the French neurologist and psychiatrist Boris Cyrulnik, is the act of narration: “In order to activate resilience, we have to reexamine our world and give it a coherent form. The tool with which to do so is called narration”⁴ (Cyrulnik 2005: 49; authors’ translation). As Cyrulnik (cf. 2002: 110; 2004; 2005; 2008) points out, the narrative act lends the world a certain coherence and establishes a logical narrative link between different experiences and events in one’s life. Hence, in short, narrative acts have a sense-making function, especially in situations of crisis.

1.2 Methods

In times of lockdowns, isolation due to quarantine, and other physical distancing practices seemingly unavoidable during the pandemic, storytelling and particularly its participatory nature on the internet is one way of actively connecting and establishing social cohesion. Through narrating similar experiences, inscribing oneself into the collective memory, and demonstrating strategies for more individual resilience in real life, pandemic narratives offer support and guidance for their audiences. After all, “[s]torytelling is essentially about creating community. Stories provide for exchange and contact”⁵ (Zag 2010²: 16; authors’ translation). Thus, we argue that narration itself functions as a cohesive act, especially when taking into account the broad variety of media texts publishing, distributing, and/ or streaming their Corona Fictions’ content.

The multimodal and pluralistic cultural approach applied to the audiovisual and literary corpus plays a significant role when investigating fictional narratives of social cohesion and other sociopolitical issues. Thus,

4 French original: “Pour amorcer un travail de résilience, nous devons à nouveau éclairer le monde et lui redonner cohérence. L’outil qui permet ce travail s’appelle ‘narration.’” (Cyrulnik 2005: 49).

5 German original: “Erzählen ist im Wesentlichen das Herstellen von Gemeinschaft. Geschichten sorgen für Austausch und Kontakt” (Zag 2010²: 16).

when analyzing Corona Fictions, it is necessary to identify what kind of narratological and visual key themes emerge rather than establishing how often, although the frequency adds meaning to each of them. From a cultural studies and anthropological point of view, the ‘mode of representation,’ the medium itself, is undeniably linked to its created content (cf. Geertz 1973: 16), and nowadays even more so to the recipient—readers or audiences—as electronic media can be considered an ‘extension of our bodies’ (cf. Bociurkiw 2011: 53).

In this article, we understand Stuart Hall’s ‘circuit of culture’ (cf. 1997: 1)—a closed circuit comprising identity, production, consumption, regulation, and representation as interacting concepts—as an attempt to approach the complexity of meaning-making, including its encoding and decoding processes. In his circuit model, Hall (cf. *ibid.*) also emphasizes that shared meanings are not only constructed by language (operating as a representational system), but by a whole set of cultural practices (of which language is only one). Additionally, film analysis is carried out on female protagonists considering factors of characterization according to Faulstich (cf. 2002: 97ff.). For the analysis of the literary texts, a gender-oriented narratological text analysis and interpretation (cf. Nünning V./Nünning A. 2010: 251–269) concentrates on the narrative representation of the female characters and their coping strategies, pointing to social cohesion.

In his book *Pandemic! Covid-19 Shakes the World*, Slovenian philosopher and psychoanalyst Slavoj Žižek (2020) points out five phases of epidemics—also applicable for pandemics. Based on Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’ five phases of how individuals confront terminal illness and their own mortality (cf. Žižek 2020: 49–52), he similarly observes these phases—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—when a society deals with a traumatic rupture such as the current pandemic. Therefore, it is the responsibility of governments to recognize such ruptures within the social fabric and counteract them to nurture and establish an even stronger cohesion and collectively navigate their people through the pandemic. If left undealt with, when anger, depression, and anxiety levels are on the rise, leaders leave the subject of resilience up to each individual, even though it is necessary to strengthen it on a collective level.

When we consider film, as Turner (2006: 60) suggested, and also literature “as not so much a separate discipline [but] as a set of distinct social practices, a set of languages, and an industry,” the importance of also

depicting these social practices within the common social norms of a society to constantly reinforce them in its audience, facilitates a better understanding of characters breaking these societal rules. Bronfen (2020: 57) thus concludes that “female stubbornness must be punished in the end, that’s the only way the audience gets to enjoy it on screen”⁶ (authors’ translation). Similar to lesbian characters in classic Hollywood cinema disturbing the heteronormative societal peace by falling out of range by loving differently, heterosexual female protagonists who do not conform to the traditional representation of femininity, motherhood, or wife, are also prone to filmic punishment to reestablish social order within the fictional world. Whereas with regards to lesbianism, this order was often encoded in the respective character either complying with her heteronormative role, being sent to a psychiatric ward, or following the path of the phenomenon typically known as the lesbian death trope (cf. Obermayr 2020: 122), the femme fatale in outbreak narratives takes on a different role yet experiences similar punishment.

In her classic monograph, Priscilla Wald (2008) explores the conventions of the ‘outbreak narrative’ through media and their amplification in popular fiction and film. Therein, she foregrounds the repeated use of the healthy carrier narrative to depict the spreading of a communicable disease through a healthy person, mostly in the form of a self-confident, promiscuous female super-spreader (cf. Wald 2008: 68–113). The femme fatale, not fulfilling her socially determined destiny of and within heterosexual marriage, similarly to

natural viral outbreaks [...] [,] call[s] attention to the significance and power of networks in contemporary life. [A] viral outbreak can (and often does) travel the world via networks (both visible and invisible) and becomes nearly impossible to contain. [I]t is the standardization of networks in the twenty-first century that facilitates the effective spread of contagion [...]. (Schweitzer 2016: 120)

2. En-/Decoding Social Cohesion, Resilience, and Gender in Corona Fictions

The concept of the femme fatale is often used to embody the rupture of social cohesion in pandemic fictions, as explained by Bronfen (cf. 2020: 60). Inte-

6 German original: “[w]eiblicher Eigensinn muss am Ende bestraft werden, nur so darf das Publikum diesen auf der Leinwand genießen.”

restingly, the (potential) femme fatale also emerges in present Corona Fictions, as one of many diverse female characters, as we will demonstrate in the following.

2.1 The Femme Fatale as a Rupture of Social Cohesion in Cultural and Literary Production?

*The moral contagion [...] has seamlessly transformed into the deadly infection of the plague.*⁷

(Bronfen 2020: 56; authors' translation)

Elisabeth Bronfen (cf. 2020: 61–63) discusses three cases of female super-spreaders underlining the importance of networks, one a historical media spectacle and the other two embodying a femme fatale in film: Firstly, the real case of an Irish immigrant to the USA around 1883, called Mary Mallon but better known as “Typhoid Mary.” Due to being asymptomatic, she unknowingly spread typhus to locals until health officials locked her up. Similarly, in the Corona Fictions film *8 Rue de l'Humanité* (2021), the Hispanic concierge called Paula hardly plays an active role in the movie except for being the lingering representation of the possibility of death. Her health status and progression while at the hospital stands for the viral threat coming from outside the home/the building. As seemingly an immigrant to Paris, someone from the outside bringing the virus in to the ‘locals,’ she recalls the archetype of “Typhoid Mary.”

Secondly, the film *The Killer That Stalked New York* (1950) deals with Sheila Bennet, a nightclub dancer, spreading smallpox but, according to Bronfen (cf. 2020: 65–67) at the same time symbolizing vulnerability and a gullible American woman. Telling the story of a plague spread by a female seductress represents danger where no one expects it. In the end, she changes the image of the femme fatale by atoning for the harm she caused through her own death, recalling the above-mentioned death trope to reestablish social order. On the other hand, a self-confident female protagonist who defies social conventions, such as the prostitute Julie in the melodrama *Jezbel* mentioned by Bronfen, poses a moral threat to society. In *8 Rue de l'Humanité* the lawyer and the owner of the building kiss, leading her husband to throw her out of the shared apartment into the hallway. From this moment on, to him she poses not only a moral threat to their

⁷ German original: “Die moralische Ansteckungsgefahr [...] hat sich nahtlos in die tödliche Infektion der Seuche verwandelt” (Bronfen 2020: 56).

family unit but moreover a potential risk as she may have contracted the virus. Erotic liberties combined with a virus already dates back to the whore of Babylon in the Revelation of John (cf. Bronfen 2020: 54).

Thirdly, Steven Soderbergh's much cited pandemic film *Contagion* (2011) supports the narrative of a confident manager, a businesswoman traveling and frequenting bars—another femme fatale unknowingly spreading a deadly virus (cf. Bronfen 2020: 65–67). This film similarly provokes a paranoia in the viewers' gaze⁸ by depicting the potential contact traces its female protagonist Beth Emhoff leaves behind by being, in fact, human. Again, sexual permissiveness is used to portray a female protagonist as a threat to society, not only due to her morally reprehensible behavior by having a secret affair outside her marriage in a pseudo-monogamous society but also by infecting others in the process.

In the case of pandemics, the permissive woman in combination with a potentially deadly virus in a morally questionable part of town (cf. Bronfen 2020: 58), or in *8 Rue de l'Humanité* an unclean part of the building next to the garbage bins, female protagonists are dramaturgically prone to some sort of punishment to reestablish social order. The ‘human factor’ (cf. Zag 2010²: 14), an invisible contract between the film and its audience that functions due to moral codes and emotionally predictable reactions in the viewers, usually plays with these dynamics rooted in sociocultural and sociopolitical practices. The unruly woman gets what she (according to societal rules) morally ‘deserves.’ In the latter, however, certain male rather than female characters experience punishment in the end. In their ways, they pose a threat to the moral codes of society.

The French anthology chosen for this study lacks the archetypal character of “Typhoid Mary” common for pandemic narratives, as well as the classic femme fatale. This absence of traditional female characters may be attributed to the fact that *Les femmes écrivent le monde de demain* was written by women imagining the future from a female, if not feminist, point of view. These projections of the future include women acting as responsible subjects in all levels of society. Therefore, the “male gaze” (Mulvey 1975), which depicts women as sexual and rather passive objects—and still prevails in Western cultures—, would be out of place,

⁸ “[T]he exchange of looks that takes place in cinema” (Hayward 2013: 173f.).

leading to the only logical option being to depict these women through the “female gaze.”

2.2 En-/Decoding Social Cohesion and Resilience in Corona Fictions

During the global crisis caused by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, governments mostly consulted virologists and ordered lockdowns to ‘flatten the curve,’ while citizens turned to existing pandemic fictions or started to produce their own Corona Fictions to understand the crisis (management), distract from pandemic fear, or better endure confinement. Audiovisual and written narratives are not only a means of dealing with change and making sense of facts, they also enable us to make sense of the past and to make plans for the future; they help us understand the thoughts and emotions of others and ourselves, and more importantly in times of crisis: they enable us to adopt the perspectives of others (cf. Nünning V. 2020: 36–38)—essential when it comes to establishing social cohesion.

In films, mentioning the social consequences of the waves of disease increased in the last decade (cf. Newiak 2020: 17); hence, movies could have been an early indicator of what was to come if politics did not take action and meticulously prepare for potential pandemics. In narratives

[t]he virus pandemic [...] becomes on the one hand an allegory representative of other undesirable social developments, and at the same time an expression of a real danger, of which similar warnings have always been issued by virologists, epidemiologists, and civil defense experts anyway. (Newiak 2020: 18; authors’ translation)⁹

Particularly cinematic films and television series may effectively help to correct outdated moral concepts, clichés, and prejudices by presenting the audience with a different set of options for one’s actions in challenging contemporary life situations (cf. Newiak 2020: 20).

In a similar way, literary pandemic texts—although lacking any historicity—can provide some sort of guidance to today’s readers on how a pandemic crisis can take place and on how it can be witnessed, remembered, and assimilated. For example, Albert Camus’s

⁹ German original: “Die Virus-Pandemie wird hier einerseits zur Allegorie, die stellvertretend für andere nicht wünschenswerte gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen steht, und zugleich zum Ausdruck einer realen Gefahr, vor denen in ähnlicher Weise ohnehin schon immer von Virologen, Epidemiologen und Zivilschutzern eindringlich gewarnt wurde” (Newiak 2020: 18).

novel *La peste* (1947), which tells of the fictional plague epidemic in the Algerian city of Oran, has been read until recently as an allegory about the German occupation of France in World War II (cf. Bronfen 2020: 21–22). In 2020, however, the new ‘horizon of reception’ (Ger. ‘Rezeptionshorizont’) of the audience results in a new reading; a reading in which a realistic interpretation of the protagonists’ coping strategies comes to the fore and in which the allegorical interpretation is pushed into the background or even left aside. While *La peste* describes general coping strategies and demonstrates how the community of Oran fights the plague together, the female perspective on the epidemic crisis and its aftermaths remains underexposed. Although the narrator tells of his loving, reserved mother who runs his household in the absence of his sick wife, the public space is reserved for men and their ‘revolt’ against the plague. ‘Voiceless’ and without any significant agency, the women remain in the background as weeping, suffering, and above all helpless characters facing the illness and death of their families.

2.2.1 En-/Decoding Social Cohesion and Resilience in Film using the Example of *8 Rue de l’Humanité* (Engl. *Stuck Together*)

In this French Netflix original Corona Fictions comedy *8 Rue de l’Humanité*¹⁰ (2021) social cohesion is primarily established by the governmentally forced lockdown situation: all tenants are confined to their apartments and shared spaces within the building, including the courtyard. Although every family and/or couple is affected differently by the lockdown due to their status/apartment size and job situation, etc., the social rupture of their everyday lives before the confinement catapults these characters into each other’s lives more intensely than ever before. Dynamics of following or breaking the new rules demanded by the government come into full view the longer the lockdown continues.

Dany Boon, writer and director of the film as well as actor of one of the protagonists, Martin the hypochondriac, starts off by setting the location in Paris by showing the Eiffel Tower and River Seine (cf. 8RH [00:00:25]). We hear the voice of French president Emmanuel Macron and parts of his speech address-

¹⁰ The abbreviation of this film throughout this article will be 8RH in brackets, including relevant time markers. The film’s production companies were Inver Tax Shelter and Netflix Studios, where it was also streamed.

sing the French nation on March 16, 2020, in which he declares war against a virus: “Nous sommes en guerre.” Simultaneously, the visuals focus on empty streets and on the right side of the frame the Hotel du Louvre (cf. 8RH [00:00:25]). Dagmar Schmelzer (2020) draws a discursive performance comparison between German, French, and Spanish speeches addressed to each nation at the very beginning of the pandemic in Europe. Each of these speeches’ rhetoric had the same goal: to foster social cohesion in a time of crises to obtain a behavioral shift within the population in order to contain the spreading virus. Constructing the virus as the collective enemy, declaring war, and building on a collective ‘we,’ as Marcon did, aims to (re)establish a sense of social cohesion necessary to introduce harsh containment measures such as a lockdown, restricting freedom of movement outside of one’s apartment building. Similarly, other prime ministers and presidents across Europe have called on social cohesion but used a softer tone of voice and more emotional, empathetic language, with Schmelzer (cf. 2020: 133) pointing out Chancellor Angela Merkel’s discursive performance.

Interestingly, *8 Rue de l’Humanité*’s comedy genre (not a catastrophe movie even though there is a viral outbreak) and its humor unify all three levels of filmic perception (rational logic, sensual excitement, and socially conditioned emotion) when it comes to the ‘human factor,’ meaning the emotional resonance characters and their story can create in their audience (cf. Zag 2010²: 28). Hence, the selected genre itself implements the educative factor of outbreak narratives in catastrophe movies regarding hygiene, physical distancing, and lockdowns, as well as the threat of a potentially deadly virus, for example, while at the same time maintaining a lighter tone in dealing with human behavior, the vulnerability of supposed safety aspects implemented, and offering numerous moments of comic relief for the audience.

8 Rue de l’Humanité presents seven female and six male main protagonists, two of them being children and one a teenager, not counting police. The film is set in a residential apartment building. Female roles range from the elderly woman Louise, who usually runs the café Bar de l’Humanité on the ground floor of the building, to Claire, a lawyer juggling her job via online sessions whilst being disrupted by family life, and her daughter Louna, a young girl. The narrator is a young boy called Basile, the building owner Tony’s son, who is falling in love with Louna and trying to win her over.

Even though throughout the film neighbors get to know each other more and more, approaching and supporting each other, sharing the same space in the courtyard, hallways, and stairs of the building as spaces of meeting, interacting, clapping together on the balcony for all essential workers, sharing lockdown experiences, etc., the family unit remains the most stable unit. Tony’s wife Isabelle, mostly absent or only noticeable when on the phone with her husband, indicates that even couples who are currently separated may get back together after the lockdown ends, realizing (and possibly idealizing?) how important their family and living together under one roof really is (cf. 8RH [01:52:38]).

To decode the five pandemic phases mentioned above (cf. Žižek 2020: 49–52)—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—on the basis of the main characters in *8 Rue de l’Humanité*, the phases of anger and acceptance play the most significant roles in terms of social cohesion, in the first case functioning as an indicator of fractures, while in the second functioning as social ‘glue,’ strengthening the social fabric.

Denial vs. Bargaining

While Tony, the owner of the building, feels entitled to leave as he pleases and is in complete denial of any threats, the scientist, Gabriel, feels entitled to test his new vaccine first on the animals in the building (cf. 8RH [00:56:46]), then later even on people (cf. 8RH [01:48:24]). Both times police officers intervene and stop him in his actions. Therefore, social order is kept by the police, e.g., by punishing the scientist for using Martin and Diego, two of the building’s residents, as human guinea pigs in the process of finding a new vaccine against Covid-19. In this sense, Gabriel portrays the bargaining phase as we understand it, by focusing all his time and energy on his research: *If only I can find the cure, everything will be over soon.*

The cohesion of the couple Claire and Martin is fractured when he kicks her out of the apartment into the hallway after kissing Tony next to the garbage bins in the courtyard (cf. 8RH [01:35:53]). In this scene, Claire briefly takes on the role of the femme fatale by letting this kiss happen seemingly due to being attracted to Tony’s unbothered handling of the pandemic, completely ignoring any risk of contracting the virus due to her actions. After observing them both through the window, Martin throws Claire out of their apartment with her blanket and pillow (cf. 8RH [01:36:20]). Her husband’s intense fear of infection even increases as a result, even though it was already at a high level before this femme fatale event, with him even refusing

his wife's sexual advances early on during the lockdown (cf. 8RH [00:54:12]). Here Claire entered into a bargaining phase, again using sexuality as a potential femme fatale regardless of the risks: *If only I enjoy myself one more time, life cannot be that bad.*

Furthermore, fear functions as a motivational factor in counteracting it with behavioral changes. As can be observed in the character Martin, as a male hypochondriac he is behaving very fearfully, significantly stressing out more about potential health threats than his laid-back wife Claire. During the first lockdown, levels of fear of running out of food, toilet paper, and disinfectants or soap was higher than during the second lockdown, as studies have shown (cf. Singer et al. 2021: 60). Although being afraid of becoming infected with diseases in general or viruses in particular was very similar for men and women before the pandemic fully hit Europe, fears were reported more strongly by women compared to men during both of the lockdowns (cf. Singer et al. 2021: 65). This could very well be due to different cultural gender-related expectations/practices of reporting or dealing with emotions, however does not particularly find matching representation regarding gender in Boon's French comedy. His character Martin rather embodies the following attitude: *If only I behave as I am told and strictly obey to all the new rules, I will be safe.*

Anger

Police are also used to demonstrate the ability of the executive powers to decide who 'deserves' punishment according to the law when Martin and others in the building believe that his neighbor, Leila, an emergency room physician in the hospital where the concierge's wife Paula is being treated for Covid-19, does not obey the lockdown rules by regularly sneaking out the door. She represents people working in medicine being exhausted by the amount of work during the pandemic. Since her neighbors think she does not comply with the lockdown rules, not knowing she is a doctor running off to work, they eventually involve the police in their suspicions and denounce her behavior. The police and Leila both clarify that she is only on her way to work in the hospital (cf. 8RH [01:34:37]). The process of suspicion, anger about someone else's freedom, and ultimately denunciation demonstrates the vulnerability of social fabric in times of tension, anxiety, enforced changes in overall social behavior, and a heightened level of everyday worries, questioning how much you can trust your own neighbors. This notion is confirmed by the CovSocial project's findings, concluding that

"[t]he sense of belonging towards family among the participants remained relatively stable throughout the pandemic. Participants reported a decline in their feeling of belonging towards friends during both of the lockdowns, along with a slight decline in belonging towards neighbours. In general, participants reported less belonging to their neighbours than towards friends and family" (Singer et al. 2021: 96). Here, anger functions as a destabilizer of social cohesion, which, according to Singer and colleagues (cf. *ibid.*: 85) comprises social participation, trust, social interaction, and belonging. The movie investigated in this paper shows how anger threatens the building's community (and consequently cohesion) by making mischief amongst the tenants: *If I must obey these new rules and restrict my freedom, so do you, otherwise I will become angry, detecting supposed injustice.*

Depression

In a small studio apartment on the upper floor of the Parisian building, the pregnant woman Agathe lives with her partner Samuel, an online fitness instructor. "At pre-lockdown time, everyone reported spending similar amounts of time socialising online, but during the lockdowns *women* reported spending *more time* than men on social internet use" (Singer et al. 2021: 94, emphasis in the original). Agathe uploads a song about the pandemic, singing and playing the guitar (cf. 8RH [00:32:28]), which goes viral while her partner continuously loses followers who watch his workout videos less and less, leaving him somewhat depressed and ultimately unmotivated to keep up with sports himself, resulting in his visible weight gain with him e.g., eating marshmallows (cf. 8RH [01:07:39]) or whipped cream (cf. 8RH [01:21:43]) over the course of the lockdown.

Additionally, the film introduces the character of a girl called Louna to represent insecurities and anxiety emerging in (young) people during the pandemic ("Mum, I don't wanna die of Covid-19!" (8RH [00:04:23]); authors' translation).¹¹ While her father Martin typifies a fearful hypochondriac disinfecting everything and everyone, distancing himself from everyone including even his wife at times, her mother Claire, the lawyer, represents psychological stability with great stamina within the family and among her neighbors, decorating the courtyard of the building, etc.—until one day she loses her job. However, this enhances viewers' emotional response to the character

¹¹ French original: "Maman, je veux pas mourir du coronavirus!" (8RH [00:04:23]).

according to the ‘human factor’ because “those who lose the job to which their heart or livelihood is attached to pay a high price, and in this case, [the viewers’] empathy is high” (Zag 2010²: 98; authors’ translation).¹² Claire’s character, contrary to her scared husband, also embodies a high level of social cohesion, as she interacts with most other protagonists regularly and holds the building’s community together. Her negative image of a potential contemporary femme fatale due to her interactions with her neighbor Tony quickly fades when made particularly relatable for the audience in her other roles of kind neighbor, working mother, and loving wife. The depression phase here functions as a relatable catalyst for built up frustration: *Even if I do my best, I will not always be able to instantly succeed.*

Acceptance

Diego, the concierge’s husband who takes on her responsibilities in the building, such as distributing mail and packages, strengthens social cohesion among all the residents. Not only because he assumes the role of the concierge (including her duties), which in itself represents cohesion, but also because he simultaneously functions as a constant reminder of what could happen to all of them: being separated from the ones you love because they have fallen severely ill and been hospitalized with Covid-19 or contracting it yourself. By cheering him up, all characters involved seem to also cheer up a part of themselves that fears the virus and its effects. Regarding the illness itself, it remains an invisible threat throughout the movie, except for the character of the building’s absent concierge, Paula, who must stay in hospital due to having Covid-19. Both she and her husband Diego have Hispanic roots and speak Spanish among themselves when on the phone (cf. 8RH [00:52:17]). Her deteriorating health and ultimately her death, although not visible, are depicted indirectly by the doctor Leila returning home from work, looking at the concierge’s husband with sadness (cf. 8RH [01:54:43]) while all the other inhabitants of the building celebrate together in the courtyard. After realizing that Paula has passed, they mourn her death and support Diego by group-hugging him. At the end of the film, they honor his wife by holding up posters dedicated to her from the balconies (cf. 8RH [01:55:49]).

¹² German original: “Wer hingegen den Job verliert, an dem sein Herz oder seine Existenz hängt, zahlt einen hohen Preis und in diesem Falle ist die Empathie hoch” (Zag 2010²: 98).

The fitness instructor Samuel and his pregnant partner Agathe, on the other hand, are introduced as being emotionally further apart due to his rude behavior when in front of the camera streaming his live classes out of their small living room (the main room within the apartment) (cf. 8RH [00:13:25]). By the end of the film, however, both seem closer than in the beginning, having used the lockdown situation to strengthen their relationship, telling each other how much they love one another while Agathe is giving birth (cf. 8RH [01:53:02]). Later on, when all tenants celebrate together in the courtyard, Tony holds their baby, friends and families intermingle, and stronger social cohesion and trust are depicted (cf. 8RH [01:55:49]). The acceptance phase in this regard fosters and strengthens resilience: *If I accept life’s challenges—in this case, the pandemic—the best I can and nurture my relationships, I reestablish social cohesion and thus a sense of community, which in turn builds up my resilience.*

2.2.2 En-/Decoding Social Cohesion and Resilience in Literary Corona Fictions

In this section, we will demonstrate the portrayal of social cohesion and its fractures in the anthology *Les femmes écrivent le monde de demain* published by the Collectif Sororistas (2020).¹³ A particular focus will lie on the coping strategies depicted within the literary texts, which at the same time can be interpreted as suggestions to the readers as to how they can strengthen their own resilience.

As the title of the anthology indicates, the aim of this collection is to paint a vision of the world of tomorrow. The idea for the anthology emerged directly from the lockdown experience in spring 2020, during which a group of women, the Collectif Sororistas, realized that “[v]ery quickly the women seemed to disappear from the screens and the front pages of the newspapers that talked about the world of tomorrow”¹⁴ (LF 4; authors’ translation). They asked if “[t]heir hard-earned visibility could so quickly fade away under the pretext of the crisis?”¹⁵ (LF 4; authors’ translation). Hence, this idea for the collection stems from Žižek’s (2020: 49–52) last

¹³ Quotes from this anthology will be indicated by the abbreviation “LF” and the page number(s) in brackets.

¹⁴ French original: “Très vite les femmes ont semblé s’effacer des écrans et des unes des journaux qui parlaient du monde de demain.”

¹⁵ “Leur visibilité chèrement acquise pouvait donc si vite s’étioler au prétexte de la crise?”

phase—the phase of acceptance. Acknowledging the fact that the pandemic crisis and the lockdown are now the collectively shared current situation, allows the writers to shift their focus away from the experiences in the present toward a future in which this largely unsettling historical phase has already been overcome. Thus, the feminist impetus of the call for contributions was to visualize the world from the viewpoint of December 31, 2030, and to imagine how the Covid-19 pandemic will have impacted the world until then:

It is December 31, 2030... Put yourself in the shoes of the person you will be at the end of this decade that started with the Covid-19 pandemic, impacting the whole world. Through a free narrative (diary, short story, report, etc.), you share your imagination, your convictions, or your analyses. You say what you have experienced since the lockdown of 2020 and what the world has become thereafter. Through writing, you participate in the creation of a new world. (LF 5; authors' translation)¹⁶

The reason for this future-oriented focus can be found in the last sentence of the quote which assumes a close interconnectedness between discursive and social structures. Narratives not only describe existing social practices and structures, but also point toward those which dominant discourses overlook. Furthermore, they may even design new unheard-of social practices and structures. Especially during times of crisis, where the world at large and on a micro level seems to be crumbling, it is important to create new narratives that imagine a positive collective future because the world of tomorrow is already shaped by the words of today (cf. Hunter 2020: 11; Nünning V. 2020).

As interdisciplinary narrative research by Ansgar and Vera Nünning has shown, narration is not a specifically literary phenomenon, but rather it constitutes a central tool for generating identity, meaning, and reality (cf. Nünning A. 2013: 18). According to them, narration is a tool that allows us to truly understand experiences that are important to us, to give them a communicable form, and also to create the basis for remembering them (cf. Nünning V. 2013: 148).

¹⁶ French original: “Nous sommes le 31 décembre 2030... Mettez-vous dans la peau de celle que vous serez à la fin de cette décennie qui a débuté avec la pandémie COVID-19, impactant la terre entière. À travers un récit libre (journal, nouvelle, reportage, etc.), vous partagez votre imaginaire, vos convictions ou vos analyses. Vous racontez ce que vous avez vécu depuis le confinement de 2020 et ce qu'est devenu le monde. Par l'écriture, vous participez à la création d'un monde nouveau.”

In their textual contributions, the Sororistas women writers use the technique of narrative world-making in order to imagine and render better living conditions, especially for women, by contrasting current conditions with their own visions of the future. The textual forms in which these imagined worlds are designed, are heterogeneous and reflect the individualistic approaches of the female authors. Nevertheless, the anthology's twenty texts show certain common tendencies. Despite being free to choose the textual genre, the majority of authors (sixteen out of twenty) opted for the narrative genre, which seems most effective for an achronological narration from a future point of view. It is precisely this future perspective that most likely entails one dystopian and seven utopian narratives, since utopia and dystopia are well suited to giving optimistic or pessimistic accounts of future social cohesion or disruption. Interestingly, a total of twelve of the twenty texts were written in the first-person perspective of female narrators. These female characters come from different age groups and backgrounds ranging from the center to the margins of society. “Tchin” or “Les printemps des femmes,” for example, are told from the point of view of white middle-class women, while “Eldorado à quatre chiffres” is narrated from a female Arabian migrant's point of view who is stranded in a Greek refugee camp. The choice of the first-person perspective is significant in this context because it places the subject in the center and, moreover, allows the reader a direct insight into the emotional and mental world of the protagonists. The mostly achronological narratives (seventeen of the twenty texts) tend to begin in the future—a time when the pandemic is already over—and develop the pandemic events retrospectively from this end point in the future employing a “retrospective teleology” (Brockmeier 2001).

“Tchin”

The short story “Tchin” by Thaïs Bravot-Salihi invites the reader in medias res into the home of a middle-aged woman on the evening of December 31, 2030. While slowly putting on make-up and dressing up for New Year's Eve in front of her mirror, the first-person narrator takes a look at the pictures tucked into the mirror's frame. Looking at her haggard younger self and her family's faces in the pictures reminds her of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic ten years ago, which initiated a series of events leading to a new perception of herself—making visible the transformation from her formerly fragmented self to a strong and cohesive identity. Through the subsequently rendered

autobiographical account, we learn that she used to be a representative of the classic threefold female stereotype of spouse, housewife, and mother who, positioned at the center of the family, always held the family unit together. In several analeptic passages, she reveals that the lockdown in 2020 had been for her “a long period in hell with my three children”¹⁷ (LF 28), and describes the physical and psychological exhaustion (“épuiement,” LF 28) of this confinement in the private sphere while her husband continued to leave the house for work. Deeply unsatisfied with her life as a working mother of three even before the lockdown, this experience represented for her the straw that broke the camel’s back. Meaning that three days after the end of the lockdown, she decided to leave her family because she “was at the end of a process of self-sacrifice”¹⁸ (LF 29). Despite being severely reproached by her own relatives for abandoning her family, she informs the reader that she only adopted this coping strategy for the love of her children: “My love for my children compelled me to live”¹⁹ (LF 29; authors’ translation). Otherwise she would have opted for a terminal ‘exit strategy’: suicide.

In the course of her autobiographical account rendered while preparing for dinner, the reader follows the narrator’s transformation from the limiting roles of spouse, housewife, and mother into a free and self-determined woman. Not only has she rented a small apartment on her own and for herself, but she also (after being liberated from the family obligations) outgrew herself and wrote to the French president about her difficult situation as a stigmatized single working mother who is not fulfilled by the duties of motherhood imposed on her by society. She also added a legislation draft for a National Maternity Support Act (*Loi pour effort national de soutien aux mères*) to this email, which resulted in her starting to work as a consultant of the Ministry of Economics in order to draft this law in more detail. From there, the narrator jumps to a more recent memory about a conversation with her daughters on her outward appearance and then to the present moment, in which she is at the point of putting on her dress. Viewing herself in her dress in the mirror, she now ponders over her opulent body curves, which

she had hated for so long and only came to love in the past couple of years: “I am still corpulent [...] but I can proudly say that I have sculpted my curves and now I play with them!”²⁰ (FL 34).

As the narrator conveys by retelling her story, she has freed herself from the restrictions imposed by society and has found a way to be herself, and more so to be her happy self. Unsurprisingly then, the reader learns at the end that on this New Year’s Eve of 2030 she did not dress up for a party or a romantic dinner with her close friend Mike, but to dine on her own and celebrate her freedom. As the mirror metaphor (cf. Drynda 2012) suggests, we are witnessing instead the narrator’s self-awareness process. The careful and slow process of putting on make-up and dressing up in front of the mirror is her way of figuratively showing her family, represented by the pictures in the mirror’s frame—which are not surprisingly the only objects left attesting to her past—that she has finally regained her inner strength and cohesive identity after a decade of struggle.

“Le printemps des femmes”

In “Le printemps des femmes” by Pauline Girsch, we also encounter a female first-person narrator who remembers how the Covid-19 crisis impacted her personal life and the life of her French fellow citizens. In particular, the story, like many others in the anthology, evokes structural inequalities in the life of women and men that can be traced back to political failures and unwillingness for systemic changes. The narrator emphasizes how the Covid-19 crisis has changed the perception of the French people concerning the capitalist way of living and the exploitation of nature and people alike. She explains that during the lockdown, the traditional perception of work did not seem to make any sense anymore: “[Work] for what? Work for whom? To enrich the already rich?”²¹ (LF 69; authors’ translation). This general dissatisfaction led to a nationwide insurrection of women, the *Printemps des femmes*, and furthermore to the candidacy of the narrator herself for president. Becoming part of the activist movement, fighting with other women for the communal dream of a better future not only helped her to find meaning in the Covid-19 crisis, but also enabled

17 French original: “[L]’enfer vécu avec mes trois enfants [...], pendant la longue période de confinement.”

18 French original: “[J]’étais au bout d’un processus de don de soi.”

19 French original: “Mon amour pour mes enfants m’enjoignait à vivre.”

20 French original: “Je suis toujours ronde, [...] mais je peux dire avec fierté que j’ai sculpté mes rondeurs et que désormais, je joue avec!”

21 French original: “[Travailler] pour quoi faire? Travailler pour qui? Pour enrichir les personnes déjà riches?”

her to continue a self-determined life in the midst of a shaking world.

The now fifty-year-old narrator also recounts the difficult process of claiming her position as a woman in the world and of stepping out from the secure realm of the private into the public sphere, which happened on the prophetic day of March 8, 2021, International Women's Day. Yet, at that point, she was not ready to also lead her compatriots into the egalitarian future that was imagined by the growing feminist movement. She preferred to stay invisible in the crowd and prepare food in the background rather than speaking up in interviews. She then points out the importance of the media, which continued to only interview and publish male voices about the women's movement and only slowly gave voice to the women activists, including herself. Without being party to a detailed account of the specific events, the reader then learns that the narrator was elected the first female president of France. Rather than focusing on her steps toward the presidency, she stresses her achievements in the role and proudly recounts how she reorganized the distribution of wealth, reformed the education system, promoted green energy, overhauled the political party system, and even abolished the Vth Republic in the past decade. Thus, by rupturing established patriarchal forms of government, she created the room for a new form of social cohesion. To illustrate the success of this new society, she concludes that her daughter can now become whoever she wants to be, underlining her statement by enumerating a long list of inequalities women all over the world have been too familiar with for too long:

She grows up in a world where nature has regained an important place, where she can walk in the street without being insulted, where she has less risk of being raped by her partner—and if by misfortune it does happen, the police officers she meets will listen to her—, where, if she decides to become a nurse, she will be paid twice as much as my mother with same profession, where her word is heard, where her body is not systematically sexualized. (LF 72–73; authors' translation)²²

22 “Elle évolue dans un monde où la nature a repris une place importante, où elle se peut se promener dans la rue sans se faire insulter, où elle a moins de risques de se faire violenter par son compagnon – et si par malheur ça arrive, les policiers qu'elle rencontrera l'écouteront –, où, si elle décide d'être infirmière, elle sera payée deux fois plus que ma mère qui exerçait le même métier, où sa parole est entendue, où son corps n'est pas systématiquement sexualisé.”

3. Conclusion

Both film and literary examples have demonstrated how the well-being of ordinary citizens has been shattered by the Covid-19 pandemic and its political lockdown measures. Despite the political and societal goal of containing the virus and reducing its spread seemingly affecting everyone in the same way, the lockdown and its social, psychological, and economic effects do not translate equally into the ‘new normal’ for every individual. Entering the lockdown situation more burdened already, women have experienced an increase in negative effects, i.e., having to manage working from home while organizing family life, etc.

While catastrophe movies,²³ particularly from the last decade, and their outbreak narratives have become the go-to pandemic fiction films during worldwide lockdowns and offer their audiences a better understanding of the processes and containment measures during a pandemic, thus offering a coping strategy to and strengthening resilience in their viewers, the traditional narrative of the femme fatale undergoes a shift in Corona Fictions. Contrary to her character in pandemic fictions, Corona Fictions seemingly hint at a potential femme fatale in parts while moving away from the stereotypical female carrier narrative that closely links illness to promiscuity.

In Dany Boon's recent French comedy *8 Rue de l'Humanité* (2021), some traces of the femme fatale still prevail even today. The five phases of a pandemic according to Žižek (cf. 2020: 49–52)—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—are all encoded in Boon's diverse characters, demonstrating how the exceptional lockdown situation greatly affects the tenants of his fictional building in Paris. How the pandemic phases of anger and depression in particular contribute to fracturing social cohesion within the building's community, can be observed in

23 Although aware of the common terminology within the film and media landscape, the authors hereby consciously decide against the otherwise preferred genre term “disaster movie,” as “catastrophe movie” seems more appropriate for Corona Fictions in this case due to the recent discussions on how to fit the Covid-19 pandemic into the terminological differences between emergencies, disasters, and catastrophes. As originally suggested by the American sociologist Enrico L. Quarantelli (cf. 2000), emergency expert Samantha Montano (cf. 2020) further elaborates on these differences, clearly understanding the current pandemic as a catastrophe in need of its own category in the future.

Martin mistakenly denouncing his neighbor Leila who as a medical doctor is an essential worker, or in the character Samuel, the formerly muscular online fitness instructor, letting his own physical and mental health deteriorate in a depressive state of mind. Interestingly, the phase of acceptance, among other examples, stands out in Paula, the Hispanic concierge, who passes away due to Covid-19. As her husband Diego and the other tenants accept and mourn her death, Boon not only establishes the acceptance of the pandemic but, moreover, the acceptance of death in general, dedicating this comedy to all those who have suffered and to solidary humanity (i.e., social cohesion),²⁴ as indicated before the credits at the end of the film (cf. RH [01:57:28]).

In the literary examples of Corona Fictions from the French anthology *Les femmes écrivent le monde de demain* (2020), we observed an absence of the classic outbreak character of the femme fatale. Instead, in “Tchin” we see a female character who defies the social convention of remaining a spouse, housewife, and mother by turning into a self-sufficient woman. In “Le printemps des femmes,” we followed the female character from being a regular, adjusted citizen to becoming the first female president of France. In the first case, the traditional gender roles, which hardened with the lockdown induced by the Covid-19 crisis, affected the mental and psychological health of the protagonist to such an extent that she eventually left her family. In the second case, the Covid-19 crisis and political answers to it led to a painfully acknowledged step backward in gender roles and then to the uprising of a female collective. Hence, both cases show how women individually and collectively find resilience and empowerment in this time of crisis. Written from a ‘female gaze’ point of view, these women are portrayed as self-confident and self-sufficient subjects taking responsibility not only for their own lives and inner cohesion but also for the cohesion of the whole of society.

In conclusion, in both film and literary examples, the crisis functions as a catalyst since it limits people’s personal freedom to a minimum and thereby opens a space for reflection and, consequently, for action on an individual as well as on a collective level. Regardless of the medium chosen, the selected Corona Fictions strengthen social cohesion and function as a useful coping strategy to deal with the pandemic and as a significant factor in improving resilience in the audience.

²⁴ French original: “À celles et ceux qui ont souffert. À l’humanité solidaire.”

Bibliography

Corona Fictions Corpus

- Boon, D. (2021): *8 Rue de l’Humanité* (France).
Collectif Sororistas (ed.) (2020): *Les femmes écrivent le monde de demain*. Domont: Dupli-Print.

Cited Sources:

- APA – American Psychiatric Association (2020): *Building your Resilience*. Online: <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience> [Jun 22, 2021].
- Bociurkiw, M. (2011): *Feeling Canadian. Television, Nationalism, and Affect*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Borkowska, M./Laurence, J. (2021): Coming Together or Coming Apart? Changes in Social Cohesion during the Covid-19 Pandemic in England. *European Societies*, 23 (sup1), 618–636.
- Brockmeier, J. (2001): From the End to the Beginning. Retrospective Teleology in Autobiography. In: Brockmeier, J./Carbaugh, D. A. (eds.): *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*. Amsterdam [et al.]: Benjamins, 247–280.
- Bronfen, E. (2020): *Angesteckt. Zeitgemässes über Pandemie und Kultur*. Basel: Echtzeit Verlag.
- Camus, A. (1947 [1995]): *La peste*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Council of Europe (2005): *Methodological Guide on Social Cohesion Policy*. Online: Council of Europe http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/GUIDE_en.pdf [Jun 17, 2021].
- Cyrulnik, B. (2002 [1999]): *Un merveilleux malheur*. Paris: Jacob.
- Cyrulnik, B. (2004): La mémoire traumatique. In: Sillamy, N. (ed.): *Jeunes, ville, violence. Comprendre, prévenir, traiter*. Paris: L’Harmattan, 194–201.
- Cyrulnik, B. (2005 [2002]): *Le murmure des fantômes*. Paris: Jacob.
- Cyrulnik, B. (2008): *Autobiographie d’un épouvantail*. Paris: Jacob.
- Drynda, J. (2012): *Spiegel-Frauen. Zum Spiegelmotiv in Prosatexten zeitgenössischer österreichischer Autorinnen*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang.
- Engelhardt, D. von (2005): Coping. In: Jagow, B. von/Steger, F. (eds.): *Literatur und Medizin: ein Lexikon*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 159–163.
- Faulstich, W. (2002): *Grundkurs Filmanalyse*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
- Geertz, C. (1973): *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Hall, S. (1997): Introduction. In: Hall, S. (ed.): *Representation. Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. London/Thousand Oaks/New Dehli: Sage Publications, 1–11.
- Hayward, S. (2013⁴): *Cinematic Studies: Key Concepts*. London/New York: Routledge.

- Hunter, D. (2020): Telling a New Story. In: Parker, M. (ed.): *Life After COVID-19. The Other Side of Crisis*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, 11–20.
- Kast, V. (1990 [1987]): *Der schöpferische Sprung. Vom therapeutischen Umgang mit Krisen*. Solothurn: Walter.
- Koselleck, R. (2006): Einige Fragen an die Begriffsgeschichte von Krise. In: Koselleck, R. (ed.) *Begriffsgeschichten. Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 203–217.
- Lazar, M./Plantin, G./Ragot X. (eds.) (2020/21): *Le monde d'aujourd'hui. Les sciences sociales au temps de la Covid*. Presses de Sciences Po. Online: <https://www.cairn.info/le-monde-d-aujourd-hui--9782724626704.htm> [Nov 30, 2021].
- LIR – Leibniz Institute for Resilience Research (2021). Online: www.lir-mainz.de [Nov 25, 2021].
- Manca, A. R. (2014): Social Cohesion. In: Michalos, A. C. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Springer: Dordrecht, 6026–6028.
- Montano, S. (2020): Not All Disasters Are Disasters: Pandemic Categorization and Its Consequences. In: Social Science Research Council – SSRIC: *Items (Digital Forum)*. Online: <https://items.ssrc.org/covid-19-and-the-social-sciences/disaster-studies/not-all-disasters-are-disasters-pandemic-categorization-and-its-consequences/> [May 28, 2022].
- Mulvey, L. (1975): Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: *Screen* 16 (3), 6–18.
- Newiak, D. (2020): *Alles schon mal dagewesen: Was wir aus Pandemie-Filmen für die Corona-Krise lernen können*. Marburg: Schüren.
- Nünning, A. (2013): Wie Erzählungen Kulturen erzeugen: Prämissen, Konzepte und Perspektiven für eine kulturwissenschaftliche Narratologie. In: Strohmaier, A. (ed.): *Kultur – Wissen – Narration. Perspektiven transdisziplinärer Erzählforschung für die Kulturwissenschaften*. Bielefeld: transcript, 15–53.
- Nünning, V./Nünning, A. (2010): *Methoden der literatur- und kulturwissenschaftlichen Textanalyse. Ansätze – Grundlagen – Modellanalysen*. Stuttgart: Metzler.
- Nünning, V. (2013): Erzählen und Identität: Die Bedeutung des Erzählens im Schnittfeld zwischen kulturwissenschaftlicher Narratologie und Psychologie. In: Strohmaier, A. (ed.): *Kultur – Wissen – Narration. Perspektiven transdisziplinärer Erzählforschung für die Kulturwissenschaften*. Bielefeld: transcript, 145–169.
- Nünning, V. (2020): (European) Narratives as a Cultural Resource of Resilience. In: Polland, I./Basseler, M./Nünning, A./Moraldo, S. M. (eds.): *Europe's Crises and Cultural Resources of Resilience. Conceptual Explorations and Literary Negotiations*. Trier: WVT, 35–52.
- Obermayr, J. (2020): *Female Identities in Lesbian Web Series: Transnational Community Building in Anglo-, Hispano-, and Francophone Contexts*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Obermayr, J./Völkl, Y. (2022): *¡Ni Te Me Acerques! (Stay Away!)* Negotiating Physical Distancing in Hispanophone Corona Fictions. In: *Altre Modernità* 28, Special Issue on Words, Powers and Pandemics.
- Quarantelli, E.L. (2000): *Emergencies, Disasters and Catastrophes are Different Phenomena*. University of Delaware Disaster Research Center. Online: <https://udspace.udel.edu/bitstream/handle/19716/674/PP304.pdf> [May 28, 2022].
- Schmelzer, D. (2020): New We. Die diskursive Performanz gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalts in Corona-Zeiten – ein deutsch-französisch-spanischer Vergleich. In: *PhiN-Beiheft* 24, 129–148.
- Schweitzer, D. (2016): When Terrorism Met the Plague: How 9/11 Affected the Outbreak Narrative. In: *Cinema Journal* 56 (1), 118–123.
- Singer, T./Koop, S./Godara, M. (2021): The CovSocial Project: How did Berliners Feel and React during the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020/21? Changes in Aspects of Mental Health, Resilience and Social Cohesion. In: *The CovSocial Project*. Berlin: Max Planck Society. Online: https://www.covsocial.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CovSocial_EN_WEB.pdf [Nov 28, 2021].
- Thießen, M. (ed.) (2014): *Infiziertes Europa. Seuchen im langen 20. Jahrhundert*. Munich: de Gruyter.
- Turner, G. (2006): *Film as Social Practice IV*. Oxford/New York et al.: Routledge.
- Völkl, Y. (2022): Corona Fictions Anthologies. On the Compilation of Hispanophone and Francophone Corona Fictions in the First Lockdown. In: Butler, M./Farzin, S./Fuchs, M./Hempel, F. (eds.): *Pandemics Meets Fiction*.
- Wald, P. (2008): *Contagious. Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)/UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) (2021): *Progress at risk: Gender equality in COVID-19 response in Europe and Central Asia*. Online: <https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/gender-equality/gender-equality-covid-19-response-in-europe-and-central-asia.html> [Nov 30, 2021].
- Zag, R. (2010³): *Der Publikumsvertrag. Drehbuch, Emotion und der "human factor."* Konstanz: UVK.
- Žižek, S. (2020): *Pandemic! Covid-19 Shakes the World*. New York/London: OR Books.