



TEL AVIV אוניברסיטת  
UNIVERSITY תל אביב

The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities  
The Zvi Yavetz School of Historical Studies

# Contextualizing the Self: Creating and Recreating the First Person

An Interdisciplinary Workshop 2018 – 2019

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Tuesday, May 21, 2019

16:15 – 17:45

Gilman Building, room 449

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Chairman: Prof. Aviad Kleinberg

Lecture by:

## Alicia Spencer Hall

Honorary Research Fellow, School of Languages, Linguistics, and Film,  
University of London

# Medieval Cures for Modern Crips: Confronting Chronic Pain and Illness in the Middle Ages

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For the most part, the field of medieval studies has avoided tackling the topic of chronic illness in any real depth. Why? The medieval conception of pain and illness is decisively impacted by the possibility of mystico-medical healing. This is emphatically the case in miracle stories, in which chronic pain and illness are evoked solely as conditions to be alleviated. Superficially at least, in miracle tales disabled bodies exist only to be annihilated, “fixed” into normative able-bodiedness, *cured*. This resonates all too well with the pathologizing medical model of disability. The question is not only: How do we deal with medieval sources which seemingly perpetuate the discriminatory medical model of disability? But how do we use these sources – so intent on highlighting cure as a possible and much desired outcome for desperate subjects living with marginalized bodies – to challenge our own limited contemporary frameworks? These are the core questions that this paper addresses, catalyzing a dialogue between critical paradigms drawn from twenty-first century crip theory and episodes of curative miracles found in the thirteenth-century Occitan hagiography of Douceline of Digne (ca. 1215-1274).

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\*\*\* The lectures will be held in English

<https://www.contextualizing-the-self-workshop.com/>