



**Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft
München e.V.**

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**Tuesday 29. April 2025
19:00**

IBZ München

Amalienstr. 38, 80799 München

**THIS TALK WILL BE HELD IN
ENGLISH**

“Violence as Contagious”: Victorian Narratives of Violence and Disease

In 2002, the World Health Organisation declared violence to be a public health crisis. Since then, public health approaches to violence have proliferated globally, with many such initiatives positioning physical brutality as akin to a contagious disease. But the phenomenon of positioning violence as related to health and wellbeing is not new. Nineteenth-century writers of fiction and nonfiction alike repeatedly aligned violence with disease, at a time when the definitional parameters of violence, contagion, and public health were shifting and coalescing. Through consideration of novels by authors including Anne Brontë and Arthur Morrison, this talk traces the history of the “violence as contagious” narrative to the nineteenth century to show how narrative strategies became central to debates around public health, criminal responsibility, and the rise of violence as a cultural problem, with possible implications for ongoing global interventions.

Sophie Franklin

Dr Sophie Franklin is a DOROTHY MSCA COFUND Fellow at University College Dublin and the University of Reading. She specialises in nineteenth-century representations of violence and is currently pursuing a project on the history of the “violence as contagious” narrative from the Victorian period to the present. Her research has been published in journals including *Brontë Studies*, *Neo-Victorian Studies*, and the *Journal of Victorian Culture*. Dr Franklin has previously held positions at Durham University, the University of Tübingen, and LMU Munich. As a Brontë family expert, she is also the author of *Charlotte Brontë Revisited: A View from the Twenty-First Century* (Saraband, 2016) and an Associate Editor for the international journal, *Brontë Studies*. Her monograph, *Violence and the Brontës: Language, Reception, Afterlives*, is forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press in 2025.