INTRODUCTION
The study sheds light on the development of the cultural representation of HIV/AIDS in Germany, Austria and Switzerland from the 1980ies until present times. It analyses the contribution of literature, theatre, and film to the public discourse on HIV/AIDS and characterises the rhetorical and iconographic strategies used to construct, represent, and discuss as well as deal with the disease. The focus lies on the functions of literature, theatre, and film within the HIV/AIDS discourse.

METHODS
Micro level:
The research project uses methods from Cultural Studies, Theatre Studies and German Studies to analyse the reception of aesthetic strategies – the ‘what’ and ‘how’ – of literary, theatrical and cinematic representations of HIV/AIDS.

Macro level:
Interdiscourse analysis (Jürgen Link) and sociological systems theory (Niklas Luhmann) are applied to describe the dramaturgical development of the discourse on HIV/AIDS.

RESULTS
The development of the rhetoric and iconographic representations of HIV/AIDS in German speaking countries can be divided into seven stages:

1. Exclusion and Blame
2. Prevention
3. Integration
4. Refuse of Integration
5. Apocalyptic Scenarios
6. Thrill
7. Normalisation & Recurrence of Exclusion and Blame

The dramaturgy of the discourse on HIV/AIDS was initialised by the first occurrences of the disease in the 1980ies. In the first years, it followed the pattern of historical epidemic discourses such as the plague, leprosy, and syphilis. Two major plot points have changed the structure of the discourse altogether: the discovery of the HI-Virus and the introduction of combined antiretroviral therapy. In the 21st century, AIDS is no longer perceived as an epidemic, but as a chronic illness. This results in the normalisation of the discursive approach to the disease. Nevertheless, discrimination patterns known from the 1980ies resurface in the media today.

CONCLUSION
In the complex relationship between cultural and medical communication in the face of HIV/AIDS, literature, theatre, and film perform different functions of dealing with the disease:

The Cultural Dramaturgy of Disorder

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AIDS in German Literature, Theatre, and Film

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