

The Limits of Communication and the Ethics of Suicide in Cultural Representations.

An International Interdisciplinary Conference (December 13-14, 2024, virtually)

In the past two decades, there has been a distressing rise in suicides worldwide. In what has been termed an “age of crisis” – encompassing economic, environmental, and health crises – these rising statistics may underscore the urgency of acknowledging the intersectional impact of these potential risk factors and may even require social and individual countermeasures.

Hidden behind these statistical figures are the individual life stories of those who choose to end their lives, the profound impact on their families and social networks, and the ensuing silences, whether caused by the traumatic aftermath or the conscious effort to prevent the emulation of suicidal behavior by others. Contrary to this cautious approach, there exists a plethora of cultural products that tackle the topic directly and, at times, insensitively, potentially leading to adverse effects. Examples include the novel and TV show "13 Reasons Why," the film "Heathers," and the novel and film "A Long Way Down."

Simultaneously, particularly in neo-liberal cultures, certain constructed values result in a form of suicide stigma that prevents help-seeking and thus may exacerbate suicidal ideation. As a result, the very system that, as may be argued, causes a high degree of mental distress, communicates a hegemonic ideology that counteracts any attempt at dealing with its impact.

This conference aims to discuss and re-evaluate the ethics as well as the historical and cultural roots of representing and communicating suicide across various media, spanning literature, film, television, social media, and digital games. The objective is to explore the ethics, boundaries, and potential of representing suicide within increasingly global and multimodal discourses to enhance mental health literacy.

Possible topics can include (but are not limited to):

- Literary representations of suicide
 - Literary styles and genres, intertextual dynamics, “poetics”
 - Collaborative intercultural literary work
- Suicide (including assisted suicide) in the visual arts, including film, TV
- Legal discourses and suicide
- Neoliberal values and suicide stigma
- Historical contexts, case studies
 - Historical fiction
 - Autofiction
- Suicide and music
- Postcolonial readings of suicide
- Decolonizing conceptions of suicide
- Suicide and social media
 - Cyber-bullying
 - Self-staging
 - “Tele-health” therapies
 - Mourning suicide on social media
- Suicide and mental health awareness in digital games
- Intersectional and intercultural dimensions of suicide
 - Suicide and minoritized groups
 - Suicide and gender/LGBTQAI+ identities
 - Suicide and migration
 - Suicide and incarceration
- Philosophical discourses on suicide
- (Critique of) psychiatry and suicide prevention
- Historical and sociological suicide research

We look forward to receiving your brief abstracts (two paragraphs suffice) by July 1, 2024.

Please send your abstracts to:

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We will notify you about acceptance of your proposal by July 20, 2024. A peer-reviewed volume is planned for 2025-2026.