



**The Institute of English and American Studies,
Faculty of Humanities, University of Debrecen, Hungary**

is organising an online conference in English and Hungarian entitled

Crises of Care:

Pandemic Culture, Biopolitics and the Medical Humanities

on 26–27 June 2021



Angela Canada Hopkins: Cell no. 4

Registration and abstract submission deadline: 30 April 2021.

How has COVID–19 changed our notions of care – whether it comes to the collective responsibilities of the welfare state or the individual anxieties of the citizen? Why does the ongoing experience of a pandemic challenge earlier ideas of crisis, retrospective analyses of past outbreaks and the future of policy-making? What does self-care mean right here, right now?

The crisis of care has been a widely discussed notion in bioethics and the social sciences since the 1990s as a critique of financialized capitalism and the emerging dilemmas of the helping profession (see Nancy Fraser and Susan S. Phillips, among others). Rooted in the Christian idea of “Deus caritas est”, i.e., “God is love/charity”, Western ideas of care have traditionally pedestals care as a virtue. At the same time, the political and economic dispositions of patriarchal societies have long devalued care as being the private, feminine and unproductive “labour of love”. Today, care is both a political and moral issue, as the growing corpus of care ethics shows (such as the works of Virginia Held, Nell Noddings, Selma Sevenhuijsen or Michael Slote).

This dilemma is also part of the current biopolitical discourse on death. According to Michel Foucault’s oft-quoted argument, the essence of modern biopolitical power is the right of “making live and letting die,” instead of the previously dominant paradigm of “making die and letting live”. Hans-Georg Gadamer points out that the modern era is characterised by a “systematic repression of death”, Norbert Elias similarly argues that “hygienic death” has become the norm, while Benjamin Noys talks about the dominance of unprepared death (*mors improvisa*) today. Citizens of first world countries now live and die in increasingly medicalized, normalized, and supposedly caring somatocracies, where they are first and foremost identified as bodies and are expected to master the art of “privatized risk management” (Isabell Lorey) in the face of neoliberal tendencies.

The conference addresses the ways COVID–19 has reframed the notion of care by mapping out the potential interconnections between 21st-century notions of care and medical, social, political, historical, artistic, and literary representations of and reactions to the pandemic.

We are expecting submissions related but not limited to the topics below:

- philosophical, bioethical, biopolitical approaches to the notions of care
- biopolitical theory and the ongoing global health crisis
- literary representations of epidemic disease and crises
- contagion and/or care in film
- the changing meanings of self-care and mental health in the pandemic era
- popular culture and social attitudes to the pandemic
- historical contexts for the management of contagion
- race, class, gender, and age as factors in pandemic care
- vaccination anxieties in the post-fact era, immunity as a metaphor
- changing attitudes to death and dying

Organising committee:

Eszter Ureczky, PhD (senior lecturer, Department of British Studies, IEAS, UD)

Anna Szirák (MA student), György Kiss (MA student), Anna Ware (teacher training student)

Confirmed plenary speakers:**Orsolya Varga, MD, ML, PhD**

Senior lecturer, University of Debrecen, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Public Health and Epidemiology

Premium post-doctor, Eötvös Loránd Research Network, Office for Supported Research Groups

Péter Kakuk, Ph.D. Habil.

Visiting Researcher, Center for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine, Central European University

Consultant, WHO, Geneva, Health Ethics & Governance Unit

President, European Society for Philosophy of Medicine and Health Care

Submission Guidelines

The conference will be held online, in the form of presentations streamed live via Webex.

We expect abstracts of maximum **250 words**. Those who will give presentations in Hungarian are equally welcome but are expected to provide an abstract in English as well. A 100-word bio is also required.

PhD students are also encouraged to apply, we are planning a dedicated session for their papers.

Please apply by filling in the Google form below:

<https://forms.gle/pCVogmjekXehcKB57>

Registration and abstract submission deadline: **30 April 2021**.

Notification of acceptance will be sent by **16 May 2021**.

Conference fee: there is **no conference fee to be paid**.

Publication

A selection of the papers based on the conference presentations will be published either in a conference volume submitted to an acknowledged publishing house in English or Hungarian or in the English-language, peer-reviewed scientific journal Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies, indexed in several international databases:

<https://ojs.lib.unideb.hu/hjeas>

For additional information, please contact the organizers at the following e-mail address:

ureczky.eszter@arts.unideb.hu

We are looking forward to welcoming you at the conference!

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