

**CFP for a peer-reviewed volume**

**“Caring for the Other/ the particular others in 21<sup>st</sup>-century narratives”**

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Care is fundamental to the development and well-being of any being as well as to fostering a compassionate and equitable world. Care as value serves as a moral compass guiding us toward respect and attendance to others. Going beyond personal relations and the household, care is a value also for society in which human relations may be thinner. Indeed, as ethicists of care suggest, the ethics of care can be a fundament on which morally satisfactory societies might hopefully be built. Care helps bridge gaps created by differences – whether cultural or biological – foster understanding and develop harmonious societies.

In contrast to focus on the human being's autonomy and independence typical of Western culture, care ethics claims to give primacy to human relationality and interdependence. As argued by Virginia Held, "the ethics of care values interrelatedness and responsiveness to the needs of particular others" (16), it "provides a way of thinking about and evaluating both the more immediate and the more distant human relations with which to develop morally acceptable societies" (43). Recognizing the needs of others and attending to them is at the core of the ethics of care, as is the assumption that we can never live in a void, that we need others to live and to thrive – as persons and as societies. Indeed others contribute to our identity, help us become who we are.

Caring might be one of the most meaningful actions – actions that make life meaningful. It might also be under some circumstances for beings capable of moral discernment a moral obligation. Caring actions may take various addressees – one can care for oneself, for one's family and friends, one's animal companions as well as the other. Various problems are involved in these variants of caring. Is self-care to be condemned as egoistic or is it a sine-qua-non condition of one's ability to care for beings other than oneself? Is caring first of all for one's family and friends morally acceptable, or should we care for all beings to an equal extent regardless of how we relate to them, regardless of whether they are human or non-human? Is caring for the other possible, given that the other is unlike oneself, along some authors (cf. Levinas) beyond one's cognitive capacities? There are further issues here: on relationality, if two beings are related to the extent that they constitute each other, is the notion of caring (in a caring relationship) for the other tenable? In other words, can the care ethical view of human relationality be reconciled with the Levinasian notion of the Other?

Introducing his concept of the Other, Emmanuel Levinas focused on another human being in their fundamental alterity, their irrefutable difference from the self, the Other's transcendence of the self. Most significantly, the face-to-face encounter with the Other creates an ethical obligation to protect them. Outside Levinasian discourse, the concept of the other has been used to denote the inferiority of those who are considered different, resulting in their marginalization and mistreatment. Determined historically and geographically, the concept assumes hierarchies and distance between humans rather than their community; it expresses the attitude of indifference and oppression rather than care and responsibility. Consequently, there appears another set of

issues concerning the caring for the rejected other of the feminist, post-colonial, post-humanist and the like discourses. Caring for the rejected other has its own social and political dimensions. Can commitment to caring (practiced in and beyond the sphere of family and personal relations) help dismantle systemic inequities and lead to more equitable societies? Furthermore, care has been typically associated with the female sphere; are practices of care still riddled with the injustices of gender? Also, do our academic practices manifest the stance of caring for the other: respecting their rights and contributing to their liberation?

In the proposed volume we would like to explore various aspects of caring for the other in 21<sup>st</sup>-century fiction and film. We thereby wish to explore contemporary fiction and film – their potential to delve into moral issues, develop the reader's empathy, challenge and re-design societal norms, exert political impact.

The editors invite chapters that one way or another consider 21<sup>st</sup>-century literary and film representations of the theme of care and caring for the other/the particular others. We welcome texts which respond to, among others, the following questions:

- How does fiction problematize the other in the context of care; is it a being that transcends me (as in Levinas's texts), is it the other who is marginalized and discriminated, is it another human or any cognitive being (animals, androids)?
- How does caring for the other/the particular others expose issues/problems of inequality and injustice: the need to redress the imbalances and harms?
- Is caring for the other/the particular others always beneficial to them or can it be abusive (domineering or demeaning)? Can such harmful effects be prevented?
- How does caring relate to responsibility for the other (all the others, the dependent others, the significant others)?
- Is caring for the other an antithesis to harming them; also, may caring involve violence and, if so, under what constraints?
- How does caring for the other today differ from caring for them in the past (cf. humans caring for the planet)?
- What new literary and cinematic techniques help to foreground or reconceptualize the issues of care, othering and caring for the other?
- How can contemporary fiction and film (re)configure the politics of caring for the other?

Held, Virginia. *The Ethics of Care. Personal, Political, and Global*. Oxford UP, 2006.

Please send your **abstracts** of 300-500 words and short bios for consideration by **November 10, 2025** to the editors: [i.filipczak@in.uz.zgora.pl](mailto:i.filipczak@in.uz.zgora.pl) and [jteske@kul.pl](mailto:jteske@kul.pl).

The abstract should indicate in particular the relationship with the theme of the volume, the methodology and the results of the research project, and the likely conclusions of the argument. We reserve the right to select the most relevant proposals.

For the **biobibliographical** note, please follow the prompts: Name, surname, academic degree (in which scientific discipline), current employment, main research areas, two most important publications or artistic achievements (title and date of publishing)

- Notification of acceptance will be sent by December 10, 2025.
- The final version of **the full article** of c. 6,000–8,000 words will be expected by **March 30, 2026**. Before publication, the contributions will undergo a double-blind peer review.
- Anticipated publication date: 2027
- Please follow the MLA stylesheet (9<sup>th</sup> edition) and use British English spelling.

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