

The interdiscursive communication between literature and bioethics

BOGUMIŁA SUWARA – JANA TOMAŠOVIČOVÁ

© Institute of World Literature
Slovak Academy of Sciences

© Bogumiła Suwara, Jana Tomašovičová 2024
Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Currently, we are witnessing not only dynamic changes in many scientific fields but also the crossing of boundaries between scientific and artistic discourses, which have become the subject of professional reflection in several concepts emerging in the last two decades, such as the theory of interdiscursive relations or narrative bioethics.

This issue of *WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES* explores the movements outlined in the example of interdiscursive communication between literature and bioethics. Their relationship has largely been reflected upon from the position of the traditional biomedical doctor-patient relationship. Today, however, bioethics is an interdiscursive field that interacts intensively with the cultural sciences, the arts, and the humanities, on the one hand, and very closely with the natural sciences and biomedicine, on the other. In contrast to the traditional topics of medical ethics, it introduces completely new themes for literature, such as regenerative medicine, gene editing, cloning, human enhancement, euthanasia, and many others, which are increasingly becoming motifs of contemporary literature, film, and visual arts. The contributions demonstrate the reciprocal transfer of literary and bioethical discourses and the emergence of a new interdiscursive space, which includes narrative bioethics. The moral dilemmas arising within the framework of accelerated technological development, which affect not only the individual but also society, need to be captured in their complexity, hence rationalist ethical rhetoric and normative argumentation should be extended to include narrative aspects.

The contributions to the topic of this issue reflect the interrelationship of literature and bioethics at multiple levels. They explore how literary portrayals of supporting bioethical themes enrich the discourse with exemplary instances of moral crises, conflicts of action, and modes of decision-making without which the theoretical bioethical perspective would remain significantly impoverished. At the same time, they depict human hopes and fears of new advancements through literary and artistic images and offer the opportunity to communicate and discuss them together.