

## **Moralising psychiatric care. The case of psilocybin for the treatment of drug-resistant depression and the psychedelic paradox**

This talk focuses on recent research into the therapeutic use of psilocybin for the treatment of severe and drug-resistant mental conditions. The case of Shanti De Corte, a 23-year-old who died by euthanasia following a severe depression that traditional psychiatric-pharmacological treatment failed to improve, serves as a starting point for discussing the limitations of current psychiatric practices. By comparing suicide rates due to relapses of major depression and increasing drug resistance with the principles of psychiatric assistance, we examine the cultural stigma (moralization) surrounding the use of psychedelic compounds in mental health treatment.

The talk will review fMRI studies investigating the neural effects of psilocybin in healthy volunteers and describe the psychotherapeutic session modalities, including the setting and the role of the therapist in guiding the patient's experience during a "trip." Our analysis will highlight a unique aspect of these studies, specifically, the patient's phenomenological experience is the primary treatment, rather than the substance itself ("the psychedelic paradox"). Based on this observation, we will argue that the methodology of future studies in this field should be adapted accordingly.

Overall, this talk highlights the importance of re-evaluating the cultural stigma surrounding the use of psychedelic compounds in psychiatric care and encouraging further research to fully understand their potential benefits in treating drug-resistant depression and other mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder and substance addiction, as recent literature suggests.