



**Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory
Spaces International Conference #2
Response, Repair, Transformation**

**Venue: Centre for the Study of Social Sciences (CSSSC)
Jadunath Bhavan Museum and Resource Centre, Kolkata, India**

Dates: December 12-14, 2022

Language: English

Deadline for submitting proposals: July 10, 2022

Notification of acceptance: August 10, 2022

- This conference will be held in person and participants will be expected to travel to the venue at their own cost, obtaining their visa as applicable.

Full description of the Thanatic Ethics Project: <https://www.thanaticethics.com>

Project Co-convenors:

Dr Bidisha Banerjee, Centre for Popular Culture in the Humanities, The Education University of Hong Kong

Dr Thomas Lacroix, Sciences Po-CERI / Maison Française d'Oxford

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“Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces” explores themes related to death in migration.

A transdisciplinary series of webinars, on-site workshops at University Paul Valery, and a first international conference held at the Maison Française d'Oxford, explored themes such as the longing to be buried at ‘home’ for diasporic people, body repatriation in the context of migration, the difficult identification of bodily remains in the context of the current migrant crisis and its political and personal stakes, death under surveillance and the necropolitics of invisibility vs visibility, migration at the border, narratives of death, the politics of grievability and spectrality, the liminalities of life, death and dying in migration, etc.

The migration crisis in recent years has modified our perspective on death in migration, at sea or on land. Recent works have sought to quantify the number of casualties (Heller and Pécoud 2017; Sapkota et al. 2006). Others strive to retrieve the identity of the dead in the thin traces they left behind

(Kobelinsky and Le Courant 2017; Cattaneo 2018). And when nothing material is left, what endures is the memory of tragic wrecking, commemorated by plaques, monuments or art pieces, in the wake of earlier dumping of bodies overboard in colonial and slavery contexts.

The inverted torch in the Thanatic Ethics logo is one of the symbols of Thanatos, it can be flaming or extinguished, symbolizing the flame of life or the extinction of life and mourning. But it also brings to mind the Hippocratic oath and the caduceus, referring to the dimension of care, which is one of the directions the Thanatic Ethics Project means to take eventually.

This call for papers is for a second international conference entitled “**Thanatic Ethics: Response, Repair, Transformation**”. After having explored the various facets of the question of death in migration, we wish to examine the responses that are articulated in such contexts of death in migration, with a specific focus on the modalities of hospitality, care and repair.

How might we respond to migrant deaths? How can literature, film, theatre and the arts respond to these tragedies? What literary modes, if any, are best suited to writing about migrant deaths? What role can academics and scholars play in going beyond increasing the critical attention to these deaths? How might we navigate the border between scholarship and activism? Between the arts and activism (Sievers 2021)? Can commemorative practices result in change-making activism? How can the arts offer a mode of “counter forensics” or “thanatopoetics”? What are the conjunctions between the responses offered by social and political organisations, and those offered by artists, writers and poets? What lessons has the Covid-19 pandemic taught us about death in migration? What role might sanctuary cities or humanitarian corridors play in preventing migrant deaths (Gois and Falchi 2017, Lippert and Rehaag 2013)?

We welcome contributions from the Humanities, Social Sciences and related disciplines (multi and transdisciplinary perspectives will be favoured) on the following themes in the context of death in migration (though not exclusively):

- Responses to death in migration (aesthetics, activism, social, political and associative mobilization, individual and collective modalities, etc.)
- Politics of rescue vs ‘death by rescue’ (different policies in different nation states, politics of deterrence and state violence vs politics of rescue...)
- Welcoming and hospitality vs left-to-die migrants (solidarity movements at the local, national and international levels)
- Emergence of empathy vs the end of empathy, and what comes after empathy
- Mourning as care and repair, as transformative process (individual and collective practices)

- What can literature and the arts do that scholarship and activism cannot? What common ground can be created and with what modalities?
- Mourning, grief, consolation, commemoration
- Case studies of instances when collaboration between rescue organisations and artists was particularly fruitful.

We invite contributors to **send their proposals** (a 250-word abstract, title, author's name, a 150-word bio, and contact information) to the Thanatic Ethics email address: thanaticethics@gmail.com.

Being focused on such an emotionally challenging topic as “Thanatic Ethics”, it would also be possible for the speakers to explore alternative ways of presenting their work and / or research that would be more sharing than presenting, adopting non-traditional modes of involving the participants. It may include open mic interventions, open discussions, group panels with participants coming from different disciplines who plan to prepare their panel collectively, artistic or staged presentations, creative workshops, performed talks, interactive and / or multilingual conversations, etc. Through these alternative modalities we hope to reflect the theme of care and repair in the organisation of the conference itself. In this case, a time requirement for consideration should be included in the proposal. Conventional 20-minute papers, followed by discussion time, are of course very welcome too, as are combinations of both.



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