



Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces

Workshop #4: In search of accountability

A partnership between International Research Centre for Cultural Studies (The Education University of Hong Kong), EMMA (University Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3) and The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM, Aix-en-Provence)

Venue: University Paul Valery Montpellier 3, France

Dates: October 5-6, 2023

Language: English

Deadline for submitting proposals: 1 May 2023

Notification of acceptance: 1 June 2023

Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces, began with a single question: What happens to the bodies of migrants who perish on foreign shores, often while making perilous journeys across land and sea in search of better lives? The migration crisis in recent years has modified our perspective on the deaths 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 these people 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 description of the Project can be found online:

<https://www.thanaticethics.com>

After several series of webinars, three workshops and two international conferences between October 2020 and December 2022, this transnational and transdisciplinary project is now seeking papers for Workshop #4, focusing on the specific theme of accountability, examined from different angles and disciplines, ranging from social sciences to the humanities and the arts.

Understanding the cause of, and holding to account those responsible for the death of any individual, from the basic acknowledgement and recording of a death, to the diligent investigation of the reasons for that death and attribution of any liability, are essential to the fundamental right to truth and justice. Without a proper attempt to understand how a death arose, natural or otherwise, there can be no real truth. Without a process of prosecuting to determine liability, no justice and no dignity is accorded to the person in death. Worse still, an absence of truth and justice creates a system of impunity and devalues and degrades human life itself.

Such impunity has been seen in many examples of egregious acts by authoritarian regimes, in civil conflicts and war, not least, the systematic disappearance of civilians, genocides and other war crimes. What is now being seen globally, is the increasing disregard for human life, demonstrated through the ways in which states pursue border security and immigration control policies. The high

numbers of deaths on border crossing journeys which result, are in effect, the use of death as a deterrent and as punitive measure for migrants who are unable to use safe and lawful migration routes.

Workshop #4 will explore what measures are needed to achieve accountability; their sources as rights and obligations, legal and ethical, to prevent impunity and to promote human dignity, truth and justice in the migration context and indeed, how prevention of impunity may be achieved in relation to all interactions between the individual and the state. The role of writers, activists and artists but also of community centres and art institutions in raising such awareness and reaching accountability should also be made central, as well as the role of literature and the arts in changing the paradigm.

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

20-minute papers, followed by discussion time, are welcome but speakers can also 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, artistic or staged presentations, creative workshops, performed talks, interactive and / or multilingual conversations, etc. In this case, a time requirement for consideration should be included in the proposal.

Proposals for group panels with participants coming from different disciplines who plan to prepare their panel collectively, are also welcome, including panels that would offer a follow up on papers / panels presented at previous Thanatic Ethic events. A selection of papers will be considered for publication.

Workshop Organizers:

Syd Bolton and Catriona Jarvis, *Last Rights*

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Prof Judith Misrahi-Barak, EMMA, University Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3

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