

THE WANDERING DEAD.

DISPLACEMENT AND THE CRITICAL MOVEMENT OF DEAD BODIES.

Nanterre, France, June 15th – 16th 2017

This workshop aims at questioning the relationship between death and mobility in situations of mass violence and international migration. It tackles both the treatment of corpses and the fate of dead people in the beyond.

The immobility of dead bodies seems so well established, so evident, that its mere questioning suffices to evoke the realm of (science-)fiction (Le Maître 2015). At the same time, death as an event is often construed as an arrival or a stop, the “end of the line”. However, we will explore in this workshop different situations in which death (for both dead people’s body and personhood) marks on the contrary a step within a journey, or even the starting point of a new itinerary. Additionally, the case studies presented will investigate the relationship between movement, death and what Veena Das (1996) aptly called “critical events”, namely here mass violence and international migration.

Societies facing the aftermaths of violence cope with dead bodies in multiple ways (cf. Anstett & Dreyfus 2014, 2015). Through the study of the trajectories of the corpses found and the trail of the “disappeared” ones, we will explore the ongoing negotiations between the dead and the living in the process of reconsidering the social and political legacies of the past.

Concerning migrants, whether they died in their host country – dead in migration (Lestage 2012) – or while trying to cross the borders – dead by migration (Kobelinsky 2016) –, a corpse has to be directed through institutions and sometimes borders, which alter their trajectory and accelerate or slow down their journey. Beyond the obvious question of the differential treatment reserved to the dead and the living migrants, we will examine in this workshop what death does to migration.

More broadly, we aim at exploring, from an eco-cosmological perspective (Despret 2014), what movement death might initiate. Apart from situations like in Vietnam, where dying “on the road” condemns ghosts to wander until they can settle back in a family altar (Kwon 2008), it seems that death is more rarely envisaged as a term than as a step (cf. Bloch et Parry 1982), both for the corpse and for the person of the deceased. What distinguishes the “wandering” souls through the human collectives who are (more or less) afraid of them, then, is less movement per se than a particular direction. The dead (their bodies in particular) are generally wandering beings.

If movement is coextensive to death and its treatment (Delaplace 2015), then what is so particular with the kind of movement “critical events” produce – i.e. displacement in particular, or critical movement as we might want to call it more broadly? Tracing the parallel geographies of the living and the dead, this workshop will shed light on the ways in which the journeys of the dead inflect those of the living, and vice versa.



Schedule

Thursday 15th, June

(Université Paris Nanterre, LESC, MAE - room 308)

1.30 pm – 2 pm Introduction

Grégory Delaplace (Université Paris Nanterre, LESC) & **Carolina Kobelinsky** (CNRS, LESC)

2 pm – 4 pm 1st Session – **Forensics**

Chair: **Carolina Kobelinsky** (CNRS, LESC)

Luis Ríos (Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales & Arazandi Society of Sciences): Wandering dead in XXIth century Spain: Mass graves, migrants, collections.

Kate Spradley (Texas State University): Forensic anthropological application to the humanitarian and human rights crisis at the South Texas border

Discussant: **Fanny Bocquentin** (CNRS, Arscan)

4.30 – 5 pm Break

4.30 – 6.30 pm 2nd Session – **In/Ex-humations**

Chair: **David Picherit** (CNRS, LESC)

Elisabeth Claverie (CNRS, ISP) : The body of evidence

Dorothee Delacroix (EHEHI, Casa de Velázquez) : Lives of the dead. Travels of souls and bones in times of mass graves' exhumations in Peru.

Discussant: **Antonius Robben** (Utrecht University)

Friday 16th, June

(Université Paris Nanterre, LESC, MAE – room 308)

10 am – 12 pm 3rd session: **Mediations**

Chair : **Grégory Delaplace** (Université Paris Nanterre, LESC)

Françoise Lestage (CEMCA- Paris Diderot- Paris 7): When the death of some produces the mobility of others: changes in life trajectories of migrants' widows and orphans (Mexico/US)



Paul Sorrentino (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity): Missing bodies, wandering souls, and a land to lose. Photography and other technological mediations between the living and the dead in the Vietnamese "spiritual sciences".

Discussant: **Elisabeth Anstett** (CNRS, Ades)

Lunch

1.30 pm – 3.30 pm 4th session: ***Dis/Re- appeared***

Chair: **Lilyane Rachédi** (UQAM)

Ivan Massin (LESC, Université Paris Nanterre): Variety of expectations. The double condition of disappeared in Colombia.

Valentina Zagaria (LSE): Absent ones, loved ones, unknown dead: migration and dignity in a Tunisian coastal town.

Discussant: **Jordi Moreras** (Universitat Rovira i Virgili)

Coffee break

4 pm – 6 pm Round table & General Discussion

Elisabeth Anstett (CNRS, Ades)

Fanny Bocquentin (CNRS, Arscan)

Antonius Robben (Utrecht University)

Jordi Moreras (Universitat Rovira i Virgili)

The workshop is organised in the context of the **ANR-FRSCQ project entitled *Morts en contexte de migration (MECMI)***; it is convened by **Gregory Delaplace & Carolina Kobelinsky** and will be held at the ***Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative*** (LESC).

For any question, please contact us at carolina.kobelinsky@cnrs.fr & gdelaplace@u-paris10.fr

