

Call for Papers

Guest Editors: Rabindra Chaulagain and Jesse Carlson, Acadia University

Disposability, Deportability and Death: (In)Humanities in Movement

In a recent interview, Cameroonian critical theorist and historian Achille Mbembe discussed his use of the architecture of *brutalism* to describe contemporary modes by which those in privileged spaces, positions, and social categories exert life and death power over others, their identities, bodies, movements, and consciousnesses. In what he calls the ‘computational turn,’ many of these new ‘mechanisms of domination’ are abstract, implicit and backgrounded, or dematerialized, as forms of surveillance, changes in laws and policies, ‘digital doubling,’ and so on, “even if matter, bodies and nerves are still their main targets” and “Predation, draining and extraction remain the rule, as does the recourse to brute force” (Confavreux 2022: 132). Mbembe’s claim starkly delineates contemporary social dynamics, ‘present crises’, future dangers (Booth and Wheeler 2023), and mechanisms of population control that have impacted ‘social life’ in various ways, by making certain bodies deportable, disposable, or subject to death, while others transcend borders, become importable, livable. The notions of human rights, peace, and social order are constantly inverted and stealthily exploited by hegemonic neoliberalism. On the one hand, levels of forcible displacement of peoples rise to new levels—according to a recent report from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, in 2023 there were 117.3 million forcibly displaced people in the world. This number is 8% higher than 2022 and continues a twelve-year trend of increases (UNHCR 2024). On the other hand, the rich and powerful carry out and threaten various forms of secession, even invoking interplanetary forms of retreat from this-worldly responsibility.

In analyzing various regimes governing the movement and treatment of peoples it is imperative to understand, for instance, how the naturalizing language of ‘collateral damage’ (Whyte 2017) plays a role in shaping various forms of violence that attend these regimes. *Collateral*, with its financial and military double meanings, has become a contemporary keyword to add to ‘migration’ and ‘borders’ (De Genova et al. 2015), and has now been extended to ‘collateral arrest’ of the irregular, the undocumented, and other deportable subjects (Rao 2025). Characterized by the capacity of state power to legitimize violence and normalize situations, such exploitation of the language has alarming social and political effects, threatening lives, humanity, and the mundane necessities of everyday social order, even as it upholds state and system level demands for boundaries and partitions, expulsion and abjection.

We invite contributions to a Special Issue in Critical Humanities exploring issues around Disposability, Deportability and Death: (In)Humanities in Movement. We encourage submissions from researchers that focus on empirical data, delving into the lived experiences of individuals and groups who have been deported, detained or displaced in some way. We also encourage papers with theoretical discussion on topics such as but not limited to necropolitics, bodies in the border, technology, surveillance, humanitarianism, or what Mbembe refers to as “dis-enclosure...the abandonment of the desire for borders, and the possibility of a world unlocked out onto the open” (Confavreux 2022: 128). Authors are encouraged to reflect on theoretical and empirical

perspectives, exploring the impact of shifting sociopolitical realities and contingent futures, whether at the global, national, regional, or local level. We are interested in papers from diverse perspectives and disciplines, whether theoretically or empirically focused, including but not limited to Anthropology, Critical Theory, Cultural Studies, Feminist Theory, History, Literary Criticism, Philosophy, Politics, and Sociology.

Scholars from around the world are encouraged to submit their Abstracts. Please submit your 500-word abstract by August 1st, 2025, to jesse.carlson@acadiau.ca or rabindra.chaulagain@acadiau.ca. The authors of the selected abstracts will be notified by 30th August 2025 requesting for the complete papers to be submitted by November 30th, 2025.

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