

ANNALES UNIVERSITATIS APULENSIS

SERIES HISTORICA

Special Issue

Dying and Death in 18th-21st Century Europe
International Conference, Four Edition, Alba Iulia, Romania,
29th September - October 1st, 2011

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2012

National Authority of Scientific Research, ANCS – Romania granted some of the funds for editing these papers through the program:

Acțiuni suport: manifestări științifice – *Dying and Death in the 18th-21st Century Europe: Refiguring Death Rites in Europe*, contract no. 370/26.07.2011, program manager Marius Rotar, PhD.

These papers also were edited by the support of Alba County Council and CNCISIS-UEFISCDI, PNII -TE program, contract no.54/5.11.2011, program manager Marius Rotar, PhD., entitled:

Historical Dimensions and Contemporary Perspectives upon Cremation in Romania

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ISSN 1453-9306

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ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

FINNISH FUNERALS CUSTOMS IN MANNERS GUIDE

ILONA KEMPPAINEN*

Funerals are a multi-faceted phenomenon. People of today tend to look at them from an emotion-centred point of view and as some kind of group therapy session. Yet we are quick to criticise if someone behaves inappropriately or just does not know what to do and when. Few people attend funerals regularly, at least in their youth; the elderly, on the other hand, have this opportunity – or duty – more and more often until it is “their turn”.

Finnish funerals are quite traditional in their appearance. The dominant denomination of the nation is Lutheranism with an attendance of 80 per cent of the people.¹ Also other, smaller religious groups like the Greek Orthodox, Jews and Moslems hold onto their religious funeral traditions. Even if the person was not a member of any religious group, usually his or her family members are and they tend to decide for a religious ritual. In many other countries the role of religion is much smaller and there is more room for improvisation – and also commercial aspects. The Finnish funeral directors have their role in funeral rituals, but not such an overarching one like sometimes in Britain or United States.

Of course there was a time when there were no funeral directors and still people knew how to arrange funerals. Folk tradition, the church and general knowledge on “how things are done” guided people in this. When social change started to make things more complicated – and not only funerals but everything that requires social intercourse – more or less normative helpers like published manners guides came to the fore.

This text is part of a research project called “Finnish funeral customs from the 19th century to the present”. In this project I take a look at Finnish funerals – how they have changed through the years and what reasons there are for these changes. Modernization is a loose frame for the picture I’m painting – urbanization, secularization and medicalization are familiar as the “usual suspects” when people talk about changing death ways in Europe and also in other parts of the world.

Lately national differences have become a matter of interest in death studies. I hope that for its humble part this study may help to understand why we bury and mourn our loved ones so differently in places which are sometimes geographically or culturally not so far away from each other.

The research materials

The basis for this study is in oral history materials, which are an ample source

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¹ See for example http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Finland.

for Finnish traditions in the Finnish Literature Society's archives. For my purposes there are two essential collections: the Archive for Ecclesiastical Tradition (Kirkollisen Kansanperinteen Arkisto, KKA) and the collection called "I shall never forget this funeral" ("Näitä hautajaisia en unohda" in Finnish). The former was collected in the 1960's and 70's with the idea of "how things used to be" and its information covers the time from the end of the 19th century to the 1930's, with some remarks on the time of the interviews. The latter was collected in the 2000's and its stories cover the time from 1920's to the present.

Another source of material, which is the topic of this paper, is the manners guides. They have been published in Finland from the 1880's and have been a small yet influential and certainly interesting genre ever since.² Sometimes they give a similar, sometimes a bit different picture of Finnish funerals. They certainly concentrate on different things when commenting funerals and their traditions.

Methodologically it is essential to remember what discourse analysts always do: the manners guides do not describe the world simply as it was any more than do other texts. Less so, we are allowed to suspect. They are not in the position of law but they have a resemblance to legal texts: they tell people what to do and not to do, but when we stay in the world of texts we have no way of knowing whether people followed the rules. Comparison with other texts, such as oral history sources may shed some light on this matter.

What we do find out from laws and manners guides are the values. What was considered important, what was thought worth mentioning? What was ignored as unimportant or something everyone knew, what lawmakers and guide-writers spent a lot of ink on? Manners guides are practical to use because they comment more on their ideas than laws do. By the end of the 20th century they do this more and more – simple rules were not enough anymore.

The early manners guides, until World War II were clearly aimed at the urban bourgeoisie or people who would like to join that class. There are no mentions on agrarian traditions; actually there are few mentions on the general funeral process. The guides concentrate on matters of giving condolences to the bereaved family, on how to dress and behave at the funeral and how long and who should wear mourning after death in the family. There are also manners guides which do not mention funerals at all. They may have been considered as something in which an average person did not need guidance. An interesting thought to someone living in the 21st century: we usually need guidance especially in funerals and similar occasions.

² The sociologist Aino Sinnemäki has studied Finnish manners guides from a general perspective in 1988. Her study does not, however, mention death or funerals as a subject of particular interest. Aino Sinnemäki, *Käytösoppat tutkimuksen kohteena: lähikuvassa suomalaiset käytösoppat 1886-1986*, Helsinki, University of Helsinki, Faculty of State and Social Sciences, 1988.

Only in the 1970's does the funeral as an entire – and thoroughly explained – ritual enter the manners guides. Perhaps it was supposed that people did not attend funerals all that often anymore, or that the loosening of traditions made these kinds of rituals questionable to some people. Manners guides are always a bit conservative and do not prefer experimentation. They talk about making life easier for everyone but do also expect people to act “properly”, whatever that propriety may be in various times and situations.

The sociologist Norbert Elias is the most obvious name to refer to when talking about manners guides. In his major work *The Civilizing Process* (1939) he starts from the 16th century, when elite school boys were given guidelines on how to eat, drink and even urinate in public. Later many of these things became self-evident and good manners became more and more sophisticated. His thesis is not only about good manners but about the entire civilizing process, in which violence became monopolized by the state and people learned to control their impulses.³ Impulse control is present also in the advice manners guides give to Finnish mourners in the 20th century.

Philippe Ariès explained the changing funeral customs and attitudes toward death, to put it bluntly, with the aforementioned secularization, urbanization and medicalization. A newer aspect of this process, which also interests me, is people's own agency: how people really *wanted* to modernize. For example Julie-Marie Strange has pointed this out about the British death ways as well as Birgitta Skarin Frykman about the case of Sweden.⁴

It is simply not plausible that even the wealthy, enlightened and very self-conscious people of late 19th and all of the 20th century just adapted to some faceless modernization process without even asking why. Someone wanted simple funerals, someone wanted less emotional mourning, and someone wanted people to stop wearing mourning for many months. On the level of social classes and groups this “someone” may be found and also the reasons why these changes were considered necessary.

Traditional agrarian Finnish funerals

To understand how partial manners guides were in their description of funerals we must take a look how the funeral ritual was carried out in most parts of the country from the end of the 19th century to the World War II. According to oral history materials many older folk traditions were already losing their importance – after all, literacy was growing fast and new ideas and also religious

³ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, (1939) 2009.

⁴ Julie-Marie Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870 – 1914*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005; Birgitta Skarin Frykman, “‘Sista ordet.’ En revolution i stillhet. Arbetarbegravningarnas sociala språk.,” in *Arbetarrörelse och arbetarkultur. Bild och självbild*, Lena Johannesson (ed.), Ulrika Kjellman & Birgitta Skarin Frykman, Stockholm, Carlssons Bokförlag, 2007.

groups shook the basis for traditional Lutheranism as well as folk beliefs which had been able to survive alongside with it.

For example washing the body before putting it into the coffin is usually describes as a matter-of-fact situation in oral history materials, not loaded with importance as such anymore. On the other hand, the new idea of a corpse being somehow unhygienic was already present. Most people report someone else than a member of the family washing the body: “there were elderly women doing that” – also deaconesses, nurses and other health care professionals are mentioned. In books describing folk tradition “as it were” members of the family are usually the ones who washed the body.⁵

Handling the body does not belong to the sublime world of the manners guides. The few hints on the actual death are comments on whether the funeral procession begins from the home or shall people meet at the chapel where the coffin is already placed. Only some guides even mention the professionals preparing the body for the coffin.⁶ The usual expression is: “The funeral professionals take care of the funeral arrangements”.⁷

The funeral procession was a necessary part or the funeral ritual, to bring the coffin to the grave. Only when people did not die at home anymore or the funeral professionals took care of the body and also brought the coffin to the chapel, did this death ritual cease to be part of the landscape in cities and in the countryside.

Dress, decoration, dining

The early manners guides mention dressing for the funeral especially in the case of funeral processions. “A light or brightly-coloured coat will make a troublesome impression in a funeral procession”.⁸ The guides are not too severe in their demands: a dark or plain coat will do. People, especially men are also advised to uncover their heads when a funeral procession passes by. One reason the processions became less popular was the problems they caused to the growing traffic in the cities.

In oral history sources there are few mentions on dress. Poorer people did not own many pieces of clothing, so it would have been impossible for them to have a separate mourning outfit. In the cities, in the world of manners guides this was essential, however. The family was advised to wear all black until the World War II, at least in the funeral. After World War II the stricter rules on wearing mourning loosened, but only in the freer atmosphere of the 1960’s and

⁵ Ilmar Talve, *Suomen kansankulttuuri*, Helsinki, SKS, 1990, pp. 231–236.

⁶ Anu Seppälä – Anu Virkkunen, *Hyvän käytöksen kirja*, Helsinki, WSOY, 1978, p. 114; Agneta Uddenberg, *Hyvät tavat*, Helsinki, Otava, 1986, p. 119.

⁷ Helena Valonen, *Hyvä minä. Luontevan käytöksen kirja*, Helsinki, Kustannusosakeyhtiö Helena Valonen, 2010, p. 150.

⁸ Erkki Kivijärvi, *Seuraelämän säännöt. Aakkosellinen käsikirja*, Helsinki, Otava, 1930, p. 37.

70's did manners guides start to say that people need not wear black or dark colours elsewhere than in funeral. Men had not worn "full mourning" in many cases even before but a mourning band on their sleeve, or a mourning button on their front. But the coffin bearers were required to wear a tailcoat until 1930's, at least in the world of one guide.⁹

Women's mourning dress was described in more detail. Naturally it was black, not made of shiny materials and very decent. Only modest silver jewellery could be worn in funerals and with the mourning attire. The hat was part of a ladies' costume in those days and during mourning, at least for a couple weeks and especially in the funeral it should be worn with a veil. How older customs gave way to more modern ones was perceived in the way people could wear their veil: "In the old days it was thick and covered the entire face, nowadays it can be only a small piece of gauze to cover the eyes".¹⁰

Wearing mourning marked the mourners to the public. One may think that in the smaller communities in the countryside people knew about death in the family so telling about it with dress was of no importance. In the cities death still had to be marked – unlike in the last decades of the 20th century when it was preferred to be kept hidden. Mourners should of course not take part in the social life, at least the lighter parts of it. How long one should wear mourning was strictly defined in the early guides. One year for a spouse and parents, six months for siblings and so on. These rules concerned especially women.

Children did not wear strict mourning in the 20th century Finland and certainly not after that. Taking children to funerals has not been a seriously pondered question – in the 1970's the thought was that only if there were dramatic outbursts of emotion to be expected, children should be left home.¹¹ In manners guides in general children are "to be seen, not heard" and usually ushered out of the room until they could actually participate in the adult social occasion before the aforementioned 1970's.

In oral history narratives children have been left home because of weather conditions or because the funeral was such a small occasion. But they were usually present. On the contrary, many people remember their first funeral when they were some years younger or older than the age of ten. It is to be assumed that only children who "could behave themselves" were taken to funerals. It is a very neo-modern practice to bring babies and toddlers to all family occasions, as it is done at least in the Nordic countries in these days.

The mourning house and the cart which carried the coffin are mentioned to be decorated in oral history materials, while mourning dress is hardly visible. Spruce was and still is the "funeral tree" in Finland – wreaths are

⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁰ Seppälä – Virkkunen, *Hyvän käytöksen kirja*, p. 118.

¹¹ Ibid.

made of it and the grave may be covered with it before it is filled with earth. Spruce twigs were taken from the forest to mark the house in various fashion, sometimes even from the crossroads.¹² Nowadays spruce usually only belongs to the wreaths, which are also becoming rare and flower bouquets are more common to place on the coffin, especially in more informal funerals.

Why was spruce so abundant in traditional funerals? One reason is its availability. Before people learned how to make paper out of it, spruce was considered a useless tree. Conifers are not good to burn because they spark so much. Spruce also splits easily as a building material. Pine was and is more popular as a tree. Spruce is, however, very decorative and of course it is the traditional Christmas tree (which were not common in the Finnish countryside until the first decades of the 20th century however). Since people tended to live near forests, it was easy to get something to beautify the otherwise often plain yard and house. When hygiene became more familiar and also the smell of the body became more and more unpleasant to people, the smell of resin may have covered it to some extent.

In manners guides the memorial service – with which I mean the social event after the religious one in the funeral ritual – is mentioned to be a small one until World War II. “Large meals in funerals are a thing of the past”.¹³ This is quite remarkable, because in general understanding funerals became smaller only after that divide. Were the manners guides trying to “civilize” people and make them leave the provincial, large funeral feasts behind? Or was the urban middle class becoming relatively poorer and therefore unable to offer full meals to many people – the guides were only making a virtue out of necessity?

Death and emotions

Control of impulses is a central theme in Elias’ thesis on the civilizing process. It is also central, if sometimes only implied upon in Finnish manners guides. Decent, formal and ritualized intercourse with the mourning family was recommended in the age of official visits and visit cards. What one must always avoid was open and spontaneous expression of emotion. “Do not make your mourning an object of your vanity”.¹⁴ This was of course the norm also in other situations – for example it was considered unpleasant to others if an engaged couple touched each other freely in public.¹⁵

Controlling emotions in mourning rituals has long traditions. For example in Rome women’s dramatic behaviour in funeral processions was made illegal – tearing their face and clothes while wailing aloud was not considered

¹² Finnish Literature Society, “I shall never forget this funeral”-collection, entry 44.

¹³ Thérèse Mical, *Seurusteluopas*, Arvi A. Karisto Osakeyhtiö, 1931, p. 33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁵ Kivijärvi, *Seuraelämän säännöt*. Aakkosellinen käsikirja, p. 65.

proper.¹⁶ Yet the loud feminine mourning could remain alive until 20th century in more remote parts of the world, like in the Eastern Finland, in which the traditional laments or dirges were sung as a part of the funeral ritual.¹⁷

Emotions and especially individual emotions were important from the 19th century, when the Romantic age made them admirable. Young Werther got many imitators and powerful emotions were also aroused to fight for the country or class. Yet at the same time the society was tightening its grip: civilized people did not show open emotion anymore and this was also true in funerals.

I think this paradox is the main reason why “Western attitudes toward death” are so complicated. We have learned to appreciate emotions and that they are important to us even when we cannot or do not want to express them. But we live in such a world where delicate social norms define how we should act, what to talk about and how to talk about it. We cannot be satisfied with “worn-out phrases” as the saying went in Finland in the middle of the 20th century¹⁸, but we are too discreet to speak our minds or blurt out whatever comes out. We often end up saying very little and avoiding the subject of death altogether. Or we use the newest, yet already “well-worn phrases” of popular psychology about stages of grief or the importance of mourning.

Mourning is always also political and a chance to challenge the power of the rulers, be those rulers the government or just those who set the social norms. Lack of mourning, indiscreet mourning or mourning in any unc customary way can be a critique – against or on behalf of the deceased, his or her worldview, the way he or she died.

The manners guides know this just as well as the ancient Roman officials did. But modern people are supposed to express their – naturally well-modified – harm, anger or anguish in civilized ways and through official channels. If personal grief is too much to bear, there are therapists for that. The message in the manners guides published in the past thirty years is exactly this: one should not upset others with their emotions. Crying is not banned altogether, but the aim is for the funeral to become a harmonious, even aesthetic occasion, not to be disrupted with unexpected and uncontrollable incidents.

Manners guides do not mention the countryside as a place where funerals were very emotional, especially in an uncontrollable fashion. Neither do oral history sources point out crying aloud or people making scenes. They do not usually mention emotions at all, for that matter. Someone must have been

¹⁶ Aili Nenola, *Miessydäminen nainen. Naisnäkökulmia kulttuuriin*, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Tietolipas 102, 1986, pp. 118 – 126.

¹⁷ Unelma Konkka, *Ikuinen ikävä. Karjalaiset riitti-itkut*, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1985.

¹⁸ Ilona Kempainen, *Isänmaan uhrin. Sankarikuolema Suomessa toisen maailmansodan aikana*, Helsinki, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2006.

mourning too openly, somewhere, but my suspicion is it was the upper classes themselves with their modernizing ideas on family affection and marital love.

Women's traditional, powerful mourning may have gotten this kind of outlet. Yet there is a question which remains unanswered for me: were women present in funerals at all? Some upper class sources mention this but do not explain it in any way.¹⁹ When and where was this? In the 20th century women seem to have been present in funerals, sometimes to their own disadvantage because they were responsible for the food in the memorial service when it was held at home. Also the peasants do not seem to have been segregating people by their gender in funerals. Perhaps the elite had its own rules and the common people some others – but I'm still in the middle of this research and may come up with better answers.

1970's – a turning point

A historian always wants to find out about change: when and why did it happen. The loosening of the strictest etiquette happened gradually during the 20th century, but another process was also taking place. The manners guides did not only advise people about how to act, but also why to act in a certain way. This is especially true about funerals. While the earliest guides hardly mentioned them, from the 1970's on death, mourning and funerals are pondered upon as a cultural and life-changing experience. Good manners are no longer dictated from above the way they used to be, but a modern and certainly a neo-modern person needs to know why things are done.

"A schizophrenic attitude" is typical of the 1970's: old forms of behaviour were out-dated but too much informality was also bad in manners guides. After 1980's a certain understanding, compassionate attitude was found: the therapy culture had become the norm and even manners guides could not ignore it. But in the 70's the remaining rules were strict. It was understood that death was a dramatic change and people felt bad about it, but they should not show it any way they liked.

After 1960's many things in culture and social norms were in upheaval. This was not only the time of student protests but old formalities concerning dress, behaviour and rituals were also in focus. Should people behave the way they used to do? But the normative behaviour was said to be repressive and more "original" ways of conduct were being sought.

How did this upheaval apply to funerals? Oral history materials tell about less formal funerals, even atheistic funerals and also less impressive

¹⁹ Cf. Marja Pehkonen, *Hauraita muistoja Helsingin hautausmailta*, Narinkka. Helsingin kaupunginmuseo, 2006, p. 16.

funerals in which people did not seem to be able to carry out the ritual.²⁰ Manners guides clearly tried to prevent too much informality, which was considered disrespectful – to the deceased, to the mourners or to someone else, this is not always clear.

When rules and norms are set, there are always things to keep out and avoid with their help. In manners guides these enemies are vanity, vulgarity and self-aggrandizement in funerals, which is especially evident in the 1970's. On the other hand, the now traditional modern virtues of simplicity and formality in expressions of grief are preferred.

Although the guides from 1980's to the present are more understanding about people's personal feelings and expression of emotions, confusing sentences also appear. It seems that funerals are meant to be a beautiful occasion, and beauty in this case means uniformity. Not only in dress, like in the earlier days, but also rules of behaviour are justified with aestheticism. This can only be understood that the community, the way things look to others is more important than how people feel inside and how they would want to behave in a funeral.

During the World War II the Finns were able to bring their fallen soldiers home, and they were usually buried in their local graveyards. Larger or smaller military burial grounds were created and one thing that was demanded of them was uniformity. Individual expressions of grief were limited to bouquets of flowers.²¹

This kind of thinking seems to have been typical of all European countries which have experienced the World Wars, as Pat Jalland writes of the case of Britain. Mourning for the war dead was such an absorbing project that civil deaths just could not compete with it. If the families of the fallen could keep "the stiff upper lip", as it was demanded of them for the sake of the nation also in Finland, how could anyone else mourn more openly?²²

"Class war" in manners guides?

Good manners are never a world of their own, even if no manners guide writer would have thought to mention wars and sacrifices while writing about decent funerals. But we are talking about a bourgeois project, be it the nation or the civilized society. Some people have the power to define and some others to obey or to swerve.

Before the World War II urban upper classes could hold onto their own, even if changing, ideas on good behaviour. People who came to cities – or in

²⁰ Finnish Literature Society, "I shall never forget this funeral"-collection, entries 26, 29, 39, 40, 45. It is obvious that if the name of the collection is "I shall not forget this funeral" people would tell about more unusual funerals.

²¹ Kemppainen, *Isänmaan uhrit*, p. 168.

²² Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace. Loss and grief in England, 1914 – 1970*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

the Finnish case often small towns – soon became aware of the need to change. Political climate approved of the agrarian Finland and saw the cities as vicious and weakening the national character of the people. The upper classes were of course immune to this degenerative effect and good manners were clearly a sign of this strength.

Meanwhile back in the countryside country folk had their own traditions, waning traditions perhaps and affected by modernization. The urban working classes had often moved quite recently to the cities, in this generation or in the one before. This meant they had some agrarian, but also independent ideas on funerals. Socialism's negative attitude toward religion was not widespread before the civil war of 1918 and even after that atheism in the form of denouncing the church was not as popular as one would have thought. The working classes remained religious at least in name.

After World War II urbanisation and spread of higher education made it more difficult to dictate how people should behave. The general idea of a good citizen was changing – the romantic idea of a deeply feeling individual was finally reaching the general public in this respect. Modern psychology helped people to understand what was happening in the mourning process, although it was also insolently abused to keep people in their place, not discussing death out in the open but in a therapy group. Cities became more and more heterogeneous: it was impossible to maintain the old visit card culture because even the elites were changing and new people were forcing their way into them all the time.

“Class war” is a strong expression, but something like that seems to be going on in the manners guides through the decades. The war, to my opinion, is not so much between the bourgeoisie and the workers or even the city people and the country folk, but between the older and new elites. Upstarts are probably the ones to wail aloud in funerals, to give pompous speeches and make a scene where solemnity would be approved, at least in the fears of manners guide writers. Those only learning the ways of urban life are bound to make mistakes and must be showed how it is actually done. If they have something to complain about, they must (according to the bourgeois sense of decency) turn to the proper quarters and not to break the conduct in funerals.

DEATH – A FACTOR OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION IN THE PREMODERN ROMANIAN COUNTRIES

CARMEN ALEXANDRACHE¹

Man has always looked at death with fear, curiosity and devotion.² Seen in the limits of individuality or of the collectivity, this *event* from the human life has rapidly gained a social dimension with moral and religious nuances. This is why *death in itself* or the death of the Other, *the moral, physical or social death* are only forms which were generating gestures and attitudes meant to transmit not only religious convictions, but most of all, social and religious codes. If the rite of the big crossing over is religiously determined, for a foreigner, the way in which it takes place, it communicates to him details which define the ethnic identity. At least this is the perspective from which the *foreign travelers* have described the death phenomenon in the Romanian framework.

Starting from the intention to describe the particularities of the Romanian lifestyle, the foreign travelers have pin pointed some aspects which, even if they were not mentioned by the local chroniclers, maybe because of their obviousness, they still remained almost the same until now-a-days. Even though these observations are part of the ethnic characteristics, they allow to the analysts to reveal the intra-communitarian relationships, the attitude towards those that have a different religion or culture, the vision about the human life seen as a whole. This is why, this paper intends to emphasize the social dimension of the way in which death is perceived and manifested by the Romanians of the 17th century. In order to reach this goal, many references will be made to the foreign travelers' writings, those who have pasted or have lived for a while in the Romanian extra-Carpathian space during the historical time mentioned.

The Romanians' attitude towards death is more linked to the social than the religious aspect. For a society dominated by *the feeling of insecurity*³, and

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² The details to Philippe Ariès, *Omul în fața morții* (I, II), trad. Andrei Niculescu, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1996, the articles of François Lebrun, Michel Vovelle, etc. To see the Romanian historiography: Toader Nicoară, "Istoricul și moartea. Un itinerariu", in *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, anul III, nr. 1-2 (5-6), 2004, pp. 20-23, Violeta Barbu, "Sic moriemur: discours upon death in Wallachia during the Ancien Regime", in *RRH*, t.XXXIII, 1994, nr 1-2, Cristina Dobre-Bogdan, *Imago mortis în cultura românească veche*, București, Ed. Universității 2002; for theological perspective, too: Dumitru Stăniloae, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, Craiova, Ed. Mitropolia Olteniei, Craiova, 1987 și pr. prof.dr. Constantin Galeriu, *Jertfă și răscumpărare*, București, Ed. Harisma, 1991.

³ J. Delumeau, *Frica în Occident (secolele XIV-XVIII). O cetate asediată*, I-II, București, Ed. Meridiane, 1986 and for Romanian perspective to Toader Nicoară, *Sentimentul de insecuritate în societatea românească la începuturile timpurilor moderne (1600-1830)*, Cluj Napoca, Ed. Accent, 2006.

the fear of degradation *has dictated* the gestures and behaviors of social solidarity, of strengthening the links from inside the collectivity, the individual existing only by reporting himself to the community he is a part of. This is why, the imminence of death has not caused panic, it has not expresses only the pain of departure, but the fulfillment of some social duties, religiously justified. As a result, in the foreign travelers' writings the death is seen in the Romanians' life as having a social dimension, being presented in more than one perspective, each of which becoming a pretext for showing the relationships between the individual and the collectivity, and the relationships with others that are part of other cultural- religious arias. These perspectives will be described next and at the same time they will be offered some short explanations.

1. *Death seen as a sign of power and of victory of the main authority over the internal and external enemies*

Defeating the enemy that threatens the order and the peace of the country has always been followed by signs meant to maintain active the collective memory (mounds, crosses, churches, cemeteries, etc.). Thus, the death of the culprit, at which even the divine force has contributed, has become a moment for strengthening the social relationships.

The friar Niccolo Barsi of Lucca wrote during his two passing by through Moldavia, between 1632-1639 years, that when someone was punished and was beheaded, he "was left to lay for 3 days on the ground and whoever passes there had to leave money on the dead man's body, money which was used to burry him".⁴ In this situation, the capital punishment was preceded by the seizure of the fortune, the family of the culprit losing thus the rights over it. If the guilty one was a robber, a thief or a "men killer" and he was not taken "under the protection" of a land owner (a lord, a boyar, an abbot, a bishop, a metropolitan bishop) thus becoming a Romanian, he was becoming an outcast of the society, a society which at the same time will take the responsibility to do its *Christian duty* by contributing to the burial of the dead one. The aspect emphasized here is linked to the community's solidarity towards its duties, among which is the duty to burry the ones that do not have the financial possibilities to do so or the one that no one knows.

The public aspect of a *show* for fulfilling these sentences⁵, with the purpose of discouraging some similar actions of *wickedness* against the lord and

⁴ Niccolo Barsi, "Nouă și adevărată povestire a călătoriei făcute de Niccolo Barsi din Lucca, din anul 1632 până în 1639, în ținuturile tătarilor, cherchezilor și abbazilor și în Mingrelia, în care se povestesc multe întâmplări stranii și ciudate date la lumină", in *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. V, eds. M.Holban, M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, P. Cernovodeanu, București, ed. Academiei 1973, p. 77.

⁵ An applied analysis on this aspect, but included in the realities of the 18th- 19th Century la Gheorghe Lazăr, „Moartea ca spectacol. Cazul negustorului Ioan Băluță din Craiova”, in

the country, has constituted the occasion for imposing *the obedience and submission of others* by means of praising the “winner”, proven to be in the *Divinity’s grace*. Killing the adversary, by defeating him, was essential to last in the memory of the collectivity, this is why it was linked to the idea of humiliating the culprit’s body, but especially the family of the man declared guilty.

This *retribution- death* was close by its effects to the social death, because it involved the exclusion from the collectivity and the receiving of a bad name. It was a *bad death*, a harder one because it was a divine punishment, a retribution for sinning, a following of a sinful life far away from the church and God.

2. *Death as a factor for gathering the community*

The death of someone was announced by means of ringing the bells. This was preparing the gathering of the others and the fulfillment of the funeral traditions to which all were bringing a contribution (crying for and watching over the dead man, following him towards his tomb, saying the prayers needed for the dead man and attending to them, forgiving him, receiving the alms, singing the songs). Paying more attention to the whole ritual because of his clerical preoccupations, Paul de Alep (1636-1667), in *The Journey* made to Moldavia, while accompanying the patriarch of Jerusalem, Macarie, has noticed that “when the big bell is ringing it means that someone has died. If the family wishes to bury him in the monastery, it orders the church caretaker to ring the bells in order to call for all the priests of the town, to come to the funeral. This happens when the dead man is rich; when he is poor, they bury him without ringing the bells in order not to allow anybody to find out about it”.⁶ I am sure that the author was not referring, in the last case, at a *deaf death, with no audience* and without the gestures meant to ensure the dead man’s passing towards the other world. But, “to be buried inside the monastery” meant to be the founder of that monastery / church, a fact for which he “was mentioned in its diptych/ on its sacrificial altar”. The founder- dead man’s good deeds were recalled and an impressive religious ceremony was organized at which the whole monastic community had to attend or the whole clergy of the church. The dead man has thus escaped the collective forgetfulness and so, from a social death, a situation which was early clarified by him in his will, most of which were written on the death bed and were accompanied by curses.⁷

Spectacolul public, între tradiție și modernitate. Sărbători, ceremonialuri, pelerinaje și suplicii, București, Institutul Cultural Român, 2007, pp. 249-265.

⁶ Paul de Alep, „Călătoria lui Paul de Alep”, in *Călători*, vol. VI, , p. 123.

⁷ The observation is supported by a large number of documents which are part of the well-known collections: *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, seria A (Moldova), seria B (Țara Românească) and *Documente privind istoria României*, seria A (Moldova), seria B (Țara Românească).

The funeral ritual contains elements which need the presence of the other members of the community to which the dead man belonged to. Even if these were described sometimes ironically, their existence cannot be contested. Erasmus Heinrich Schneider von Weismantel (1688-1749), in *The Campaign Journal* writing between 1710 -1714 years was noticed, referring to the Moldavians' customs, as "signs of someone's death" (the lamentations, the candles), "the lack of water, of food, the presence of the paid mourners, the priests who sit next to the dead man" (where they are paid to do so) and "the presence at the dead man's feet or close to him of the fiddlers and of the gypsies who are always singing at their instruments".⁸ This image was completed by the Italian Friar, Niccolo Barsi:

"when someone dies, they use to keep him in the house for the next three days (...), they give food to the poor and travelers, they sing always to instruments (violins, bagpipes, flutes, drums, harps) while they stand next to the nasal (...) and than they bring the dead to the cemetery close to the church, they ring the bells, the dead man is followed by the priests, by a lot of men and women with their hair loose, mourning loudly and breaking their hair out. After the dead man is buried, in his house takes place a 'burial feast at which both men and women, rich and poor people attend and they call the priest to bless the food. At the table they eat only fish and they say that they do this in order to show the punishment of the body and to show their grief for the loss of the dead man; however, they drink wine and beer".⁹

A mention must be made, the display of the dead man's body is not a random act, but it was justified by the fear of not turning into a ghost or the fear of being buried alive (if the man was in a clinical death). Also, remaining unveiled until the burial moment, the dead man continued to remain among the livings, both as spirit and as a recollection and confirmation of his own deeds (what was happening to the body was a clear indicator of the way in which the dead man lived from the moral point of view), and implicitly the dead man's image had to remember the others of the human destiny, a fact which imposes at least a state of reconciliation between people (especially the dead man's forgiveness). Being an irreversible and painful departure, the relatives and those that knew the dead man, needed this in order to accept this irreparable fact. This custom was noticed also by Paul de Alep: "they were buried dead after 2-3 days and without covering him with a veil, they were lightening day and night candles around him".¹⁰ This idea is also present at the beginning of the 18th century in *The Journal* of Erasmus Heinrich Schneider von Weismantel: the dead man was remaining uncovered "for at least three days until he was buried".¹¹ Of course, the popular mentality gives some extra

⁸ Erasmus Heinrich Schneider von Weismantel, "Jurnal de campanie", in *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. VIII, , p. 363.

⁹ Niccolo Barsi, "Nouă", in *Călători*, V, p. 78.

¹⁰ Paul de Alep, „Călătoria”, in *Călători*, VI, p. 122.

¹¹ Weismantel, "Jurnal", p. 362.

explanations for watching over the dead man, but which were not discovered by the foreign travelers.

The sound details of the burial ritual were agitating the living ones that were staying around the dead man which should have not been left alone; the presence of the priest and of the poor was indispensable to every burial. It seems that in this way the people were warned about the need to correct their behavior, they were becoming aware of the unavoidable divine punishment, offering also some solutions: the curse and poorness are opposed to pray and mercy. Equally, the explanation resides in the conviction, more superstitious than theological, that the After World really exists; what matters for the Romanians of the 17th century was to fulfill some earthly obligations towards the dead man by helping him with *the great passage* and by protecting the family and the community by *the dead man's revenge* which was meant to bring fear and imbalances.

The food restriction mentioned by Niccolo Barsi it might be a generalization made by the author starting from the monastic life which he knew so well and according to which the pleasures of the stomach are repressed in favor of the spiritual fulfillment. But the idea of a collective sacrifice done in order to share the pain of the loss and the idea of emphasizing the dead man's qualities are easily accepted.

Another aspect described by the same young German officer, Erasmus Heinrich Schneider von Weismantel, which might be interpreted from different perspectives proves mainly that the community's preoccupation for the afterlife, was built also on the principle of solidarity. Even though it was presented as a stupid superstition, the Moldavians do not allow "for their dead to be buried next to one of ours; or even in the same cemetery with one of ours (...) even if they got convinced that in the end we are Christians also, even if we do not keep their fasts which show ostentatiously their quality of Christians (...) the fools were saying without doubt: when the dead man will resurrect, the locals will not recognize him and there will be a large fight between them".¹²

The connection with the dead man was still kept even after his funeral and the gestures were strengthening indirectly the relationships between the members of the community: "men's way of mourning was to wonder around for weeks bear-headed no matter the temperatures. For a while, women wonder around with black handkerchiefs. For the dead man's commemoration and redemption, they would ask the priests to make several religious services and to sing psalms, to burn up candles for which they had to pay, to send food to church for their dead man's soul: holy breads, boiled wheat with honey, dried plums, nuts. All of these were offered by the priest to those inside the church and to those present at the tomb, and what was left he took home for himself

¹² Ibid.

and they all eat these for the dead man's soul and considered this as being a very good and Christian thing to do. So, their superficial Christianity and their whole life have a sinful beginning, a sinful continuation and a similar ending".¹³

From all the quoted writings results only one idea, that of equality in front of death; the attitudes and the behavior are the same even if sometimes the burial ritual involved some showing of the richness and power of the one who just passed away. The repetition of the gestures regardless of the social status of those involved in the burial ritual has implicitly contributed to the strengthening of the social bonds.

3. Death and the way in which it reflects the social relationships (the way in which one indicates one's social status and the duty one has towards one's neighbor)

In general, the differences in the burial ceremony, as they were reported by the foreign travelers, were determined by the dead man's social status or that of the one who attends at the ceremony. For instance, Paul de Alep remembers such an episode:

"the alms is given to the poor people rapped in a paper bag or in clean handkerchiefs (...) and, when the dead man is rich, all those present are invited for dinner in the house of the dead man".¹⁴

Also interesting in this meaning is the episode which describes the death of Lady Balasa (Bălașa) (12/22 March 1657), the wife of Lord Constantin, which includes many new aspects: her body was

"gracefully put in a litter in the palace court yard (...) and it was carried around the church (...), everyone (the whole clergy) received a large reward in money and for all those present was given a large burial feast with bread and food; the same ritual took place also after nine days after the funeral".¹⁵

4. Death as an orientation towards the earthly life (as a factor of social solidarity and cohesion)

Taking part in a neighbor's burial ritual determines a series of gestures and actions which seem to be for the foreigner more oriented towards the living ones; saying good-bye to the dead man and his commemoration were all taking place in the community. The pain had to be shown, the ritual had to bring about the way in which the dead man has lived, the gestures were directed towards the living ones, and only thinking at the dead man and saying prays for his soul were the only factors which were recalling the main cause of all these actions. Thus is emphasized the aspect which indicates getting accustomed and reconciled to the idea of the dead man's departure from this world, being also a

¹³ Ibid., p. 363.

¹⁴ Paul de Alep, „Călătoria”, in *Călătoria*, VI, p. 170.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 174.

moment which should remember to all about their ephemeral existence and implicitly, not to neglect their own arrangements for this journey.

Here is a story told by an *observer* present in Vallachia at the middle of the XVIIth century: at the end of the religious service, the Lord of Vallachia, Matei Basarab, went to the tomb of lady Elina who passed away recently (august 1653), she was buried in the Princely Church), “they prayed at her tomb, than at the princely alms given to all those present”.¹⁶ Such gestures of commemorating the dead man are part of the days of funeral repast which are fixed with precision, at 3, 9 and 40 days after the funeral when candles are given to the priests and to all those present, songs are sung, alms are being given and incense is being light up.¹⁷ Another moment which shows the preoccupation for the forgiveness of the dead man’s sins was reported by the same observer regarding the customs involved by the third and nine day of burial feast.¹⁸ The dead man’s desire is to be dug up after three years in order to receive the forgiveness for his sins; for this the patriarch has to “say the usual prays for the dead”, “to say the pray for absolution, to sprinkle the body with holy water”; the burial feast takes place (“parastasul”) at the refectory where everyone was incensed and where prays were said for the dead man’s soul, and alms were given to all those present. Thus it can be seen the fact that the order of the services was more linked to the will of those present and that the alms or “the dead man’s feast” („ospățul mortului”) was very important in the life of the community as a way to buy one’s forgiveness. For the community, be it Christian or not, the preparations for the crossing over are not randomly done. The phenomenon was seen also by the Minorite Convent Friar, Paolo Bonnicio, who was passing by chance in Moldavia while traveling towards The College of Cracow where he was sent by the Congregation Propaganda Fide. He wrote to the patriarchal vicar of the Orient, Giovanni of Frata, at 24 April 1630, that “many of the Catholics convert to Christianity, especially close to their death, because they do not have a priest”.¹⁹ Even for the Catholic world the death was accompanied by rituals, but the episode mentioned above indicates the influence the Orthodox had over the others on what concerns the preparations done for the afterlife. Petru Bogdan Baksic, the Bulgarian friar, while in 1640 passing through Vallachia, noted referring to the lack of Catholic priests that “a couple a days ago, he saw one of them (chatolic) from Zelesna dieing without a priest and without the Holy Communion”.²⁰

In describing the burial of the Vallachian lord Matei Basarab, (1654), Paul de Alep recalled the ringing of the bells, the pain shown by crying and

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp.123-125.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁹ Paolo Bonnici, “Paolo Bonnici”, in *Călători*, V, p. 17.

²⁰ Petru Bogdan Baksic, “Călătorie în Țara Românească”, in *Călători*, V, p. 209.

lamentations (*which are specific for the women n.n.*), of the dead man's incensing, the dead man's kissing and the prayers said for his soul.²¹ The burial ritual is presented as being similar to that of Moldavia; he talks besides of the moments mentioned above, of the followings: the priests, even those who were not from that place, take part in the ceremony, big candles are being given to everyone, even to the poor ones, it is accustomed that the relatives remain bereaved for 15 days, the women loosen their hair without crying or mourning resoundingly (for this there were special paid mourners) and they dress in a corresponding way.²²

Besides, even if quite different, this way of manifesting at the funeral of an acquaintance, is a proof of maintaining an older tradition, an aspect pinpointed by the Englishman Robert Bargrave in his *Travel Book*: "the burial ritual is similar to that of ancient times when the dead man was taken to the burial site with singers. The dead man's sword, boots and hat were carried by a horse held by the rein; the singers were going in front of the cortege and they were singing; his relatives were riding along his side, while his body was carried in an open casket; when a young man or woman dies, his/her friends feast and party in his/her house for 3 days and 3 nights in a row".²³

Coming back to Erasmus Heinrich Schneider von Weismantel's descriptions from the beginning of the 18th century, one recalls, besides its connotation of a superstition, the care given to the dead man who is still part of the living's life: "they bury him with bread and wine or water and sometimes even some money so as not to die of hunger or of thirst on his long journey to eternal life; and in order for him to see even during the night, they put him a candle in his hand and they also bring to the tomb, at the end of the night, an ember so as to have with what to light the candle. And even if you do not find an ember on every single tomb, they are present on the tombs of the freshly dead; dead men do not hate each other so they allow others to lighten their candles from their own ember so as to start their journey together towards their resting place and their eternal life. And then, for the dead man's soul, at the burial place a large feast is held even if it means to sacrifice the last cow one has, and alms are offered to the poor so as to offer food to the dead man and to protect his soul. Four weeks afterwards and a year afterwards they repeat these burial feasts because the dead man must have arrived to his resting place in heavens no matter how long his journey was (...), they also ask the dead man why he died, if he lacked anything, if someone said bad things about him or caused him great pains; and most of all the women mourn their husbands and ask them

²¹ Paul de Alep, "Călătoria", in *Călătoria*, VI, p. 137, 139.

²² Ibid., p. 123.

²³ Robert Bargrave, "Povestirea unei călătorii pe uscat de la Constantinopol la Dunkircke", in *Călătoria*, V, pp. 494, 523.

from the grave sight: “My darling, my darling, why did you die? Was it because you did not have enough oxen or sheep?”²⁴

It seems that the Romanian burial rituals have become imagery stereotypes for the Europeans that are dominated by their rationalism and by their reformat ideas. Thus one recalls that they were rendered in a similar way in *A “Curious” Description of Moldavia and Walachia* (1699), by an anonymous writer, being actually a fragment from a brochure inspired by the political situation of the year 1699. He says that “before the funeral or burial takes place, the Romanians cry and mourn after their departed, than they take him to the grave with candles and icons and than they burry him while doing all sorts of gestures. Some place next to the dead man needles, cotton yarn, patches of cloth and linen, some money for the road ahead, bread and others so as to have with what to spend the time while heading towards the so called heaven”.²⁵

As a conclusion, in the premodern Romanian society, death was seen as a social fact more than a personal one. If for a historic time dominated by religious believes and credos, the preoccupations were naturally oriented towards obtaining the eternal life, still, it could not be obtained by the dead man without the contributions of his neighbours (the family and the believers from his community, those who accomplish these rituals with the occasion of the big events from the human life). This paper has proven, having as a support the most detailed descriptions offer by the foreign travelers regarding the feeling of death lived by the Romanians, that for the Romanian society, death did not arouse anxieties of a gothic nature as seen in the Occidental societies. This might be a result largely due to the social aspect of the burial ceremony. The passage towards the afterlife was *socially assisted*; the disappearance of one of the members of the community was actively and repeatedly triggering the social links. Thus someone’s death represented a way to transmit the social codes and to show one’s social status, a commemoration of the idea of disappearance and a possibility to manifest social cohesion.

²⁴ Weismantel, „Jurnal”, in *Călători*, VIII, p.362.

²⁵ *Descriere „curioasă” a Moldovei și a Țării Românești*, in *Călători*, VIII, p 634.

THE MEANING OF DEATH IN ALBANIAN BALLAD

OLIMBI VELAJ¹

Death is a well known motif in many ballads. In the Albanian folklore there are two ballads, where the motif of death prevails in particular: the ballad for the walled up wife and the ballad for the dead brother. Transmitted from one generation to another, both these ballads have been transformed. Their documentation dates since the nineteenth century and their recognition beyond the local Balkan borders dates in the same period. The ballad for the walled up wife is unknown beyond the Balkans, while the ballad of the dead brother is known through the similar motif of Leonora in the rest of the continent. Both of the ballads have a significant impact on literature. The Albanian author Ismail Kadare has brought two novels that contain the two above motives of the ballads: "bridge with three arches" and "Who brought Doruntina". In this paper we will take into consideration the relation with the death in these ballads according to the perception that appears in the Albanian versions. Death as a sacrifice required by the entity itself appears in the ballad of the walled up wife and the death as an impossibility to fulfill the promise shown by the entity itself in the ballad for the dead brother. In fact in both the ballads, the death is seen as a special relation with the life, sometimes as a service to life, sometimes as a hindrance to it. There are two ways of the relation between the life and the death. The wife is walled up and goes from life to death in order to fulfill the prophecy, while the dead brother is temporarily resurrected and passes from death to life to keep the given promise.

The ballad of the walled up wife

The ballad of the walled up wife is recognized with this title almost in every variant. Title specifies the strong perception in its subject, the moment that has left the biggest impression to the bards and to the listener. Immurement into the walls, the fear of young and innocent woman, who suffers a horrible death into the dark, is the image that had hit anyone. This horror is explanation for widespread of ballad motif. An unusual death and deceit may have fueled the spread of this motive in the folklore of the Balkans and beyond in Eastern Europe.

The walled up wife is the wife of the little brother or wife of head master of construction. Only in Serbo-Croatian variants have the subject for twins, Stoja and Stojan. Overall pain for the woman walled up in a build becomes stronger, because it leaves behind an immature baby.

If we look at variants² of ballad in Balkan region, the subject seems to focus on the decision to sacrifice the women, the walled up woman, and not too

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much to immurement itself. Dilemmas of builders, who in many variants are brothers, their anxiety until set, impatience, until the bride comes to the construction site, it seems that occupies more space in comparison with verses in ballad dedicated to the walled up wife.

The way how the masters walled up the wife, carries a great infidelity to her. It is sent to the sacrifice of deception.

In all variants talking about having a building while being built, but its foundations can not be held. This is a moment that is not lacking in any variant of ballad. Need to make a sacrifice is present in any variant. The way the message is given to sacrifice someone in foundations, it is always magical. A bird, the soul of the river, a voice from heaven, a dream of head master construction, or a saint alive, as often occurs in Albanian variants.

If we refer to Mircea Eliade, and his concept of "the sanctity of space", it is clear that the holy place is never chosen by man, but only discovered. Space which contains haunt of sanctification appears in some way, to the elected man, not in common people.

Eliade says:

"The man of the archaic societies tends to live as much as possible in the sacred, or as close proximity to consecrated objects. The tendency is perfectly understandable, because, for primitives, as for the man of all premodern societies, the sacred is equivalent to the power, and in the last analysis, to reality".³

Mihail Arnaudov is perhaps the scholar who has analyzed more deeply the ballad of the walled up wife, variants⁴ based on its published circulation a century before. For this researcher it is clear that there is a migration of motifs from the south towards the northeast. He beat the age of Greek variants and then gives a geographical move towards the Bulgarian Greek lands and Serbs from the Bulgarians to the Romanians. In connection with variants of dependency Greek, Albanian variants that order, and order in relation to mutual Albanian and Serbian versions. Under his scheme, unveiled Albanian variants Greek influences as well as Serbian.

Other scholars who have contributed extensively to this ballad, Baud-Bovin, Stefanovic, Kokiara, Vargiash, Megas, Diphil, etc., as Arnaudov, agree to respect the basic structure of ballad, the elements mentioned above.

While some deviations to this structure are: Besa's broken (broken promise). Sister in law tricks. The way the master cheat wife at the time when going to bring bread. Kind of requirements from walled up wife, fulfillment of

² Mihail Arnaudov, *Zhertva pri gradezh, dobavki këm baladata za vgradena nevesta*, Sofija, Akademično Izdatelstvo, 1996, pp. 1-35.

³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the profane: the nature of religion*, New York, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1987, p. 161.

⁴ Mihail Arnaudov, *V gradena nevesta, studi vërhu bëllgarski obredi i legendi*, Sofija, ISP, 1919, p. 483.

the requirements of the master builder. The attitude of women themselves to the build up (anathema or blessing or a damn objection)

How wife accept the immurement, how is her attitude towards death. Its behavior also brings Balkan differences between variants. Albanian women generally accept the sacrifice. But it perceives death as an event that came suddenly and not allowed her to fulfill its task of raising children. In Albanian variants, some verses are to regret that she immure herself in the foundation of the castle. In ballad is obvious the regret of wife. She is passing, but she didn't fulfill her duty as mother. Pity for her child, which will remain orphan, is really vibrant. And therefore it requires certain conditions in death, to leave out a hand, an eye, a breast to lactate son. In the Greek versions, wife curses especially the bridge where she is walled up, and a large part of ballad focuses on this point.

In Albanian variants the walled up wife perceives death as a continuation of life. Her concept of death is not one of another world, another reality, or the disappearance. It just would like to take a few functions after death, that it can perform its tasks unfinished in life.

Albanian and Serbian versions rather focus on the motive of Besa, or break of promise. Little brother keeps his promise, but not other brothers.

Romanian ballad focuses more on the fight that makes head master of construction, Manole. He makes everything to avoid sacrifice of his wife. But its fate can not be returned. Romanian versions have also the punishment for head of masters and for his friends. They sentenced to death because they dared to say prince were able to build a monastery more perfect than monastery of Argesh. Albanian variants and immurement into the castle

Researchers who have contributed to the ballad of the walled up wife in the Balkans have always had in hand an earlier version published by Vuk Karadzic about immurement in the castle of Shkodra. Ballad "The construction of the fortress of Shkodra" Goethe may have arrived in 1824, by Jakob Grim. He had translated this book of Karadzic.⁵

Zihni Sako, researcher, specifies that searches for the Albanian ballad of the walled up wife have launched precisely in the years 1868-1978 by Thimi Mitko, as well as its documentation in the "Albanian Bee".⁶

In studies conducted in recent decades by philologists and Albanian folklorist never be left aside ballad about the fortress of Shkodra. Almost everyone involved with the legends or ballads related with this motif, first refer to this legend. Shaban Sinani, scholar appreciates this fact of seniority and relation that Albanian ballad has with others. But he also brings a very

⁵ A. Klosi, "Mitologjia ne vepren letrare", *Nentori*, 1, 1991, Tirane, p. 144.

⁶ Zihni Sako, "Balada shqiptare për murimin dhe elementet e saj të përbashkëta me motërzimet ballkanike", *Studime filologjike*, 2, 1967, pp. 87-92.

interesting fact in terms of number. More of Albanian variants are about immurement in the castle.

Given a statistic of variants, he reaches the conclusion that Albanians dilemma between the bridge and castle have resolved in favor of the castle. He interprets the symbolism of closing the communication based on these objects, but also clarifies why Albanians "have made this choice." Albanian neighbors have not dominant variants of castle, but they dominate the variants to bridge and to the monasteries.⁷

The surveys and statistics to researchers, who rely on a classification of variants of ballad for the walled up wife, recorded in over 150 settlements in the country, shows that about 90 such variants are about fortress, while the rest of the bridge. There are two other data, to attract attention after statistical processing:

"First immurement in the castle has spread primarily in coastal areas, namely on the west side of the territory: from Myzeqeja (under Shkumbin) to depths of some Alpine further. This can be taken as a historical impression and experience: the risk that comes from the sea ..."

The origin and spread of ballad

In the Balkans this ballad is part of the folk repertoire very early. Along with the ballad of a dead brother, it is considered part of the repertoire with myth resource. All attempts to give a birth date or a certain country of origin seem failed.

Starting in the late nineteenth century, with the published variants, various local and international scholars are trying to shed light on the origin and time of birth of the ballad. Given the Romantic School and also the processes of forming national states, avoiding scientific trial seems to have dominated mostly.

Balkan scholars who dealt with the ballad, mostly in their works pay attention to facts or collection of facts, in favor of an argument fixed at the beginning, the origin of national priority and high-level artistic compared with its neighbors.

In studies of the ballad is not taking into account the motives pilgrimage to the east-west direction. It was for the fairy tales, after of classification by archetype, done by Vladimir Propp.

Alan Dundes⁸ stated that the motive for this ballad has also migrated as in fairy tales and direction of migration has been just as in fairy tales: From India to the areas to its west, until he arrived in the Balkans. Dundes on this

⁷ Shaban Sinani, "Murimi në baladat shqiptare, në urë apo në kështjellë?", *Perla*, 3, 1996, Tiranë, p. 52.

⁸ Alan Dundes, "The Walled-Up Wife. A Casebook", Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996, p. 24.

issue speaks to a seniority that exceeds 1000 years in terms of the ballad and its variants around 700 in the world.

In Albanian lands recognized collected 150 versions of this ballad. A spread of the motive for the walled up wife also notes the similarities with its neighbors.

Overall ballad is widespread throughout the Balkans and Hungary. Given the similarities and differences in its subject have such evidence: violation of the promise of two older brothers and keeping it from the younger are noticed in Albanian variants and in Serbian and Croatian? Masters attempt to stop women coming of variants found in Greek, Romanian or Hungarian.

While Serbian song requires sacrifice of Stoja and Stojan, twins. Albanian scholars have determined the ballad zone around the territory in which Albanians live today, territory that does not comply with state borders of the Republic of Albania.

In Albania ballad is widespread and has different object constructions. In the districts of Shkodra, Dukagjin, Puke, Mirdita Kruja, Durres and Elbasan ballad is for the foundation of a castle (Castle of Shkodra, Drishtit, Elbasan, Turrës). To the east of the country (Debar and Kosovo) and in all southern the ballad is about build of a bridge (Bridge Fshajit, Skiles, Qystendilit, Narta, etc.). But in Pogradec (Lin) is sung to build a church in the village and Pear Sinica (Korce) also sung for the bridge tower.

In connection with the same geographical zone around these areas coincide with the songs of this motif in neighboring countries: In the northwest, in the former Yugoslavia, we find the castle grounds (usually the castle of Shkodra), south (Greece, Macedonia and Bulgaria) we find the motive of the bridge (Bridge of Arta, the Struma) and Romanians to find the motive of the monastery (monastery of Argesh).

The immurement's issue

Various researchers shed light on the issue of immurement and often bring real facts. Publications of the 19th century contain numerous materials on this issue. Among them, there are data for walled up persons. These facts are almost known and spread in all the regions of the planet and it seems that the ritual of scarification existed everywhere in the pagan period. There is evidence concerning the existence of the ritual and then of the immurement's tradition from a range of Asian countries, such as: China, Japan, India, Semitic people of Africa, New Zealand, Tahiti, South America, etc.

In Balkans we can find more facts related to the immurement's traditions and rituals. Zihni Sako, the researcher of folklore⁹, in relation with this fact indicates that the tradition of the immurement of the women has been severed and wild. It turned gradually into the sacrifice of the animals and of the

⁹ Zihni Sako, *Çështje të folklorit shqiptar*, Tiranë. Akademia, 1987, p. 142.

birds. Despite this ritual, it passed in another form: the immurement of the alive person was replaced with the shadow's immurement. This new custom seems to have existed until nowadays in Albania. It has been told the fact of an immurement of a piece of rope in the size of a body of a sick man for the reconstruction of one block of the bridge in Gjirokastra upon the Drino river during the second half of 19th century. On Berat's Bridge upon Osumi's river, it has been immured a wooden bust of a young girl. People have been afraid of this practice as told in the Albanian proverb: "he is afraid of his own shadow". The Bulgarians measured the shadow of a man with a rope closed in a box located on the foundations. Transylvanian Romanians have also traded the shadow of the man" says the author.

Even nowadays this tradition is practiced in the construction of the Albanian houses. In every Albanian house foundation, it can be found rams' head as a sacrifice.

In the Albanian regions, the tradition of the sacrifice on the foundations and the place chosen for the construction are well known. There have been several expeditions and several publications on this issue. One of the Albanian researchers that have conducted studies on the rite of sacrifice is Mark Tirta. Some of his studies on this issue are almost exhaustive and serve as a support for the mythological and ethnological approach in relation with the ballad of immurement. In his researches Mark Tirta, brings and analyzes data on the sacrifices in the construction of the new houses.¹⁰

In this context it is clear that the ballad of the immurement is definitely the reality of the practice of sacrifice and the practice has existed since before the immurement rite, and as a consequence it evidences early times of the existence on the myths.

It is vague how and when it was finished the metamorphosis of the myth to the rite and from the rite to the costume. There have been passed centuries during these phases. And perhaps during one of these stages of changes it has been created the immurement ballad.

Nowadays it exist only the tradition of the immurement of an animal or of bird, so to stress the fact of the transition of the sacrifice from the humans to the animals. It is important to evidence that a man couldn't be sacrificed in the same way as it happened for the women, because of a lower status of the woman in the community, of offering the animal or bird, namely the transition from human sacrifice to a different sacrifice.

Something that makes evident the contradiction between the existence of the rite and the immurement ballad is the fact that in the ballad it is kept the side of the immured person.

¹⁰ Mark Tirta, *Mitologjia ndër shqiptarë*, Tiranë, 2004, pp. 340-347.

It is necessary the existence of the harmony of the wills of all the parties. If the sacrifice happens violently, than it doesn't meet the purpose for which the person is sacrificed. Perhaps, the ballad begins in such contradict. The wholly ballad evokes the pain for the sacrifice of the woman and this is an elegy for her.

Ballad of the dead brother

Ballad of a dead brother is well known in the Balkan region. The motif of the little brother, resurrected to bring home his sister, has left a strong impression on the people who have inherited the ballad.

In the rest of Europe, the ballad of the resurrection of the dead man is known as Leonora's motif, since 1773 when August Byrger, the German lyric poet, published the impressive ballad entitled "Lenore", based on a very popular motif known in the continent: A boy and a girl fall in love together and decide to marry each other. Meanwhile, the boy has to go to war. But the mourning of the girl and looking for her husband raised the boy from the grave.

The authors treat the difference between the Balkans and Europe as a difference of a social development of two kinds of societies. In some cases, the Balkan's motif is treated in the light of the incest and tendency for marriages in distance, in order to avoid this situation. The endogamy against exogamy is often interpreted as the essence of the ballad. The strong dominance of the patriarchal relations explains the difference. The difficult historical situation, the invasions and the battles have rendered the Balkan people more united in their families. It is created a unique concept of love that keeps together the members of a family. Fatos Arapi says:

"But this does not mean that the type of Balkan motif expresses content. We are dealing with a particular culture, the culture of Balkans' people".¹¹

Death, although irreversible, is perceived as granting of an "amnesty" for the dead man who has not been able to keep his promise. The ballad, itself, is based on the theme of the death. It begins with the death of the brothers and continues with the death of the rest of the family: mother and sister. In Albania, the first collection of its variants date back since the nineteenth century. After the walling up ballad, it is the most wide-spread and well-known ballad in the Albanian regions.

Let's see the basic structure of the ballad referring to the summary of its variants.¹² The ballad regards a large family, where the mother is a widow and has 9 sons and a daughter. When the sister is ready to be married and the guests arrive at her home, the little brother encourages her marriage far away from their home. The mother doubts that she could meet her daughter in such a

¹¹ Fatos Arapi, *Këngë të moçme shqiptare*, Tiranë, Studimeh, Botimet I-T, p. 11.

¹² Akademia e Shkencave të Shqipërisë, Insituti i Folkorit, "Kënga e vëllait të vdekur", vëllimi II, viti 1975.

distance, but the younger brother makes sure to bring home her daughter whenever she desires to meet her. While shortly after her sister's marriage, a disaster occurs. All the brothers die. Mother grieves and laments, at home and in the church cemetery, where her sons repose. She curses the little brother on the grave why she can not see her daughter anymore. On the other side her daughter married far away from her home feels sad and does not have news from her family.

The soul of the little brother does not find peace, until he meets the promise. His tomb is described continuously as wet and muddy. His desire to realize the infinite promise turns into reality in a magic way. The grave's stone turns into horse. He goes to the sister and convinces her to leave immediately in order to meet their mother. The sister doubts during all the time about his brother because he looks weird and has an earthy smell. Her doubts are reinforced by the songs of the birds along the way, wondered watching together a dead and an alive person. The little brother achieves to bring her sister up to the gate and then turns back to the cemetery. The drama concludes its last act on the threshold of the gate, in which mother and daughter die of longing and pain, and understand that the brother has done something beyond human limits.

The variants of the ballad are distinguished referring to certain moments of the saga. In some variants the brothers die of plague, in the others of snake poison and in some other variants of a battle in the war. In the great part of the variants it is not revealed the presence of the brides or of the sons at home. In some other parts, the mother is mourning and troubles the dead son, in some others the sister that is mourning. In some versions it is the God who raises the brother from the tomb.

Generally, the scholars have maintained a division between the two variants of the ballad. In the first typology, there have been included those ballads distinguished by the relationship between mother and the second typology those ballads where it is given more importance to the relationship between brother and sister. In the Romanian and Greek region prevails the first variant. The Serbo-Croatians have the second option. While the Albanians and Bulgarians have both of the options.

On of the scholar who has conducted a more detailed study of this ballad is Ivan D. Shishmanov.¹³

He said that this difference is so important, as it can rightly be defined the dividing principle. As a consequence, it makes it necessary to investigate how it was possible that the mother and sister could share their roles radically. Shishmanov, also stresses the relation of this motif with that of Lenore.

¹³ I.D. Shishmanov, "Pesenta za mērtvija brat vĕf poeziata na ballkanskite narodi", *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija, nauka i kniznina*, knj.XIII, 1896, pp. 474-569; knj. XV, pp. 449-600, 1-186.

Resurrection (related to the given promise)

Who stirs the soul of the dead brother; the mourning of the mother, the tears of the sister, or something else? In the Albanian ballad, both of the causes are present, but not determinant. He rises from the grave because of the promise none kept. In the Albanian language the concept of "*besa*" is the word given which should be definitely kept. This element is essential, and in the same time tragic for the Albanians. *Besa* appears as an institution in those statutes that regulate the social life during the period when the concept of the state did not exist.

The Albanian mother that cries for the loss of her sons, aims at the younger brother and saying: "Where is the promise you gave to me?". "This is the cause that forced Kostantin to make all the efforts in order to bring the sister home, as he promised".¹⁴

This appeal from the grave, reminding that he had not kept the promise, makes the boy turning back into life. And the resurrection lasts up to the moment he has to keep the promise. Then he returns dead again finding the peace with his soul.

It seems that the relation with the death in the ballad is negotiable. The dead boy must keep the promise in order to deserve the peace beyond the death. And thus death occurs as a surmountable obstacle. It permits for a while the dead person, to pay the debt in his life.

The variants gathered in all the regions in which the Albanians live today, are more than 100. The ballad is preserved in three well defined groups: The Song of Halil Garria, The Song of Dhoqina, and The Song of Constantine and Garentina. The Ballad is also well preserved by Arbëresh, (early Albanian immigrants in Italy since the 15th century).

¹⁴ Ismail Kadare, *Vepra letrare 12, Publicistikë*, "Autobiografia e popullit në vargje", Tiranë, 1981, p. 26.

RROMA COMMUNITY'S ATTITUDE FACING DEATH

GABRIEL ROMAN¹

Introduction

Along time, Gypsies represented one of the communities less accepted by history. Despite the fact they have always been traveling communities, Gypsies preserved their own customs and traditions. Roma render themselves evident by their behavior, the style of their dress and dramatic way to invade the hospital when someone from their community is suffering or the cemetery when someone goes into eternity. They remain an enigma of history, preserving their identity, although their cultural vein is not maintained by links with their motherland, as it is the case with other minorities, and their culture is not represented by cultural centers or cultural missions of their country of origin's embassies. Adaptive responses to different cultural patterns have created at the level of the individuals, as well as the whole community, a sense of living here and now, the guiding principle being the verb *to be*, in the sense of *to exist*, and not the verb *to have*, in the sense *to accumulate*. This has left its mark on the lifestyle, the way of thinking on relations with non-Gypsies ("gadji"), and the relationship with the transcendent. The result was a defensive-contemplative attitude to life and death.² Their specificity has led us to ask about the religious and socio-cultural differences that make it difficult to understand specific aspects of Roma culture and especially their attitudes towards death. Clarifying this issue will be the main purpose of our study.

Methodology

Zanea village, commune of Ciurea, 10 kms from the City of Iași, is one of the largest Kalderash Roma` communities (Kalderash is mainly the makers of cauldrons and pots) in Moldova. Originally, Zanea was a Romanian village, but after the establishment of Gypsies in the '60s and '70s, because of disagreements, the Romanians gradually left the area, so today there are two compact groups. Roma community, estimated at some 800 people, is divided politically, a fact revealed by the existence of two chiefs ("bulibașa"), one under the self proclaimed king of the Gypsies' authority, and one under the emperor's. The hierarchy of the social levels within the community is very strict.

The first direct contact with the Roma community from Zanea was attending a funeral. We found, from our part, the ignorance of the reasons that

¹ PhD., University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Gr. T. Popa", Iași, Romania.

² Vasile Burtea, *Rromii în sincronia și diacronia populațiilor de contact*, București, Lumina Lex, 2002, p. 151.

generated certain ritual acts. Interested in perceptions about death, we had to sink in among the population, knowing their own living environment.

In the community from Zanea, death and everything related to it represent a sphere difficult to approach and, moreover, it is not easy to get a realistic view about their opinion regarding such matters. And in terms of achieving their full adherence ... This topic is considered bad sign that can bring misfortune upon the house and family members. Pronouncing the word “death” can bring the death itself because the word is seen as a creative element, able to shape reality according to the will of the person who uses it. Avoid talking about topics like death or illness is a way to protect oneself, family and community from the bad destiny. This vision is based on the strong belief of the Roma in luck, chance or fate, but also in bad luck, misfortune or bad destiny.³

Lack of respect for the dead is the strongest offense. Only people who spontaneously approached the topic of our study were interviewed. Population remains very vigilant not to lose personal things of the dead in order to destroy or provide all that's left of him after his death. Hesitation when it comes to writing, audio-visual recording is linked to this fear. Ethnological and anthropological survey provides an ethical issue in this case. So I resorted to analyze any available recording material. Discussions have been rewritten by the method of immediate memory.

I tried to decode, understand and contextualize the data by two axes: the expression of suffering experienced by individuals faced with death (language and expression of sadness felt, psycho-socio-economic impact of death) and the behavior of the Roma community, whose beliefs and behaviors we have already mentioned and described.

The collected data do not have a universal value, because each cultural group is unique. The elements of Roma culture can be understood only when they are taken back to the sociocultural context in which they become meaningful. As observers, we did not intend to make value judgments on the elements of Roma culture, referring only to the norms and values that Roma population share with the native Romanian inhabitants, prevailing in our culture of origin, the Romanian one.

Finally, anthropological, folkloric, religious, sociological and historical research has brought light to us, allowing us to keep a distanced view on our observations in the field. The reflexive approach allowed us to control our own involvement - emotional, sensitive - from the subject of our study. To clarify some issues about which we was not sure, but we considered them as important, we turned to reliable and authentic references.

³ Ioan Androne, Radu Biza, Mihaela Gârlea & Maria Popianoș, “Obiceiuri și tradiții ale Romilor din Țara Făgărașului”, In Elena Macavei (ed.), *Țigani/romii. Realități și perspective. Lucrările Simpozionului „Educația și integrarea socială a populației de etnie romă”, Sibiu, 10-11 oct. 2008*, Sibiu, Editura Asociației Astra, 2008, p. 236.

Everything that follows relies on research and opinions of authors with authority in the area, known for accuracy and scrupulousness of their research.

Religious issues of Roma community

Although Roma from Zanea declare being Eastern Orthodox Christians, there are many religious customs and laws they do not observe. In general, Roma have "joined" the dominant denominations or religions in areas where they settled or have chosen to simply ignore the rules and practices of worship. Religion has always been regarded by Gypsies as a form of adaptation, adopting beliefs or rituals of the majority in order to avoid coercive measures.

Gypsies do not have a religion with specific and identity contours, their situation being atypical in this regard.⁴ Adherence to a denomination or religion does not enter into competition with Roma values and rituals. They have not applied all the precepts of religion that have embraced, but they have enriched them with specific rites and practices. They have added to the principles of the majority elements of their cultural inheritance, preserved and transmitted in conditions of great diversity.⁵

Roma have not developed any own religious life for several reasons. First, practicing their religion requires not only receiving the consent of indigenous peoples in times characterized by religious intolerance, but also elements of worship and buildings too costly and difficult to achieve. The necessary funds meant enormous efforts, impossible to rise by a scattered population, who is always on the road, not living in the same area.

Gypsies preferred the absence of religious institutions and practices of worship than the deviation from the tradition that is the leading principle of their existence⁶. Although there is a kind of Roma secular religion, named the Romany law (*Romany-pen*), a system of norms, values and community concepts that revolve around identity model of traditional culture: an enlarged family called "community-family".⁷ Roma family is a family-rhizome, which unifies its roots in a common stem. The community, an extended family, is based on three types of relationship: kinship, marriage and affinity. Sacred embodiments of the Roma religion are the children, clerical meeting – the "kriss" of the elders, the law – "phralipe" (brotherhood), the mystical practice – "ujipenaipakiv" (purity and honor) and the revelation – the family.⁸ Thus, *Romany-pen* is a religion

⁴ Vasile Burtea, *Rromii*, p. 151.

⁵ Annie Kovacs-Bosch, Jacqueline Charlemagne. "Étude exploratoire des représentations de la maladie et de la guérison chez les Manush" ("Exploratory study of the representations of illness and healing among the Manush"), *Études tsiganes* (Paris), n°2, vol. 14 (1999), pp. 89-90.

⁶ Burtea, *Rromii*, pp. 147-148.

⁷ Delia Grigore, *Romanipen-ul (rromani dharma) și mistica familiei. Familia tradițională în comunitățile de rromi din arealul românesc*, București, Miniprint, 2001.

⁸ Idem, *Tradiții rrome*, available at <<http://www.scribube.com/sociologie/TRADITII-RROME52734.php>>, 28.09.2011.

within the community, which does not urge Roma to build on earth, but to live in the everlasting present. Gypsies do not perceive the time as a period, as being linear, but as circular, anti-chronological. They relate to a continuous present, there is only today for them.

Moral is experiential, intuitive, based on the education of the feeling of shame ("lajavo") and preserving the tradition. This tradition, by its sacred and inalienable character, has the value of a dogma, in the center of which there are four key concepts: "phralipe" - community brotherhood, mutual aid, collective responsibility and shared destiny; "pakiv" - faith, respect, honor and mutual trust; "ujipe" - preserving the state of spiritual and bodily purity; "baxt" the cult of luck, the opportunity in life for those who follow the rules of "phralipe" and "pakiv", as opposed to bad luck ("bibaxt") and misfortune.⁹

Conservation of the purity laws is one of the most important factors of customary control and protection of community cohesion in the traditional Roma society. The principles of purity and impurity are undoubtedly Indian heritage.¹⁰ Even the terms "uji" and "marime" resemble Sanskrit (zuddhi, respectively maalinya).¹¹ The compliance with these rules is individual and collective responsibility and has as counterpart the shame feeling, which should not be violated, combined with the obstinacy of purity, creating and delivering of moral authority.¹²

There are a lot of purity rules, which can be classified by several criteria: bodily purity and moral law, prohibition to marry outsiders, non-interference of blood, customary conduct, responsibility to the community, law of honor and brotherhood – "pakiv" and "phralipe". All these are insurmountable limits. Breaching the customary law, a person is guilty of outrage against the community of ancestors and declared as impure or unclean ("marime") by the traditional court meeting ("kriss"), which leads to exclusion from the community, a punishment worse than death. The exclusion amounts to the dissolution of identity, the spiritual death, because the individual exists only insofar as he or she is accepted by the community. If such recognition is gone, man is considered dead. Traitors, adulterine women, those who steal from their siblings, those who transgress taboos and shame rule by behavior, costumes, language and attitude, those who despise the justice and the will of the elders become impure, by decree of the "kriss", punishment which often extends to the family of the offender.¹³ While the outlaw can continue to live in

⁹ Androne *et al.*, "Obiceiuri", p. 238.

¹⁰ Nicolae Achimescu, *India, religie și filosofie*, Iași, Tehnopress, 2005, p. 88.

¹¹ *Sanskrit Dictionary for Spoken Sanskrit*, available at <http://spokensanskrit.de/>.

¹² Delia Grigore, *Curs de antropologie și folclor rrom. Introducere în studiul elementelor de cultură tradițională ale identității rrome contemporane*, București, Credis, 2001, p. 131.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

the community area, he loses his identity, becomes a shadow, is avoided, it is not called to attend the meetings of community or family events.

Perceptions and attitudes over Death

The traditional culture of the Roma is a dualistic one, based on mental pre-Christian and Christian models. The world is divided into good and evil, God ("Del") and devil ("a Beng"), truth ("cacipen") and lie ("xoxavimos"), both sides are considered necessary for universal harmony.¹⁴

Perception of death in traditional Roma culture develops from the opposition between pure and impure. Fear of death is justified by the inability to comply with the rules of purity. Although we are tempted to suspect a fear of death, it seems that it derives from fear of contamination by impure elements. Touching the dirt - the dead and the remaining things from him - entails, through a process of empathy, a kind of contamination. The person is contaminated by the evil if he or she touches the body. The consequence is a sudden detachment of normal lifestyle and also the exclusion, for a time, from the community. Participating in a large number the community members guarantee protection against evil, so the death of a person engages the entire group.

The premonition is strongly valuable, with funeral messengers who proclaim the coming of the end of life: white dog (keeper of the dead's world who lead the dead to the afterworld), dead horse (decaying of the sacred animal in the traditional Roma culture symbolizes the impurity and contamination), the dream of putting of a fire (equivalent to destroying the community center), dirty water, ghost that calls you to join it in the world of the dead, tree struck by thunderbolt (referring to the stormy weather, the sorrow of nomads, but also bad sign brought by the heavenly fire hitting woods and causing fires that could destroy the camp stopped in the wood), blood (unclean element) or even an overturned cart (the equivalent of the threat hanging over the family and memory of the nomadic life when the cart was the house).¹⁵

There are rituals that try to ease the process of death, to make it less painful and avoid unnecessary prolongation of agony. We mention the ritual of mutual forgiveness, to release the dying soul of any regret or remorse. Another custom is to remove from the room of the dying person the objects which he prized most, so that he will not be influenced to turn back the way to death. On the same purpose, the relatives leave the room of the dying, to let him free to decide, without emotional coercion, the way he want to follow.

Although the Roma, as the priest of the community confessed, never voluntarily take the Communion, the dying relatives request to be given the Communion on the deathbed, the Sacrament being considered as a guarantee of

¹⁴ Androne *et al.*, "Obiceiuri", p. 237.

¹⁵ Grigore, *Curs*, p. 146.

passing away safely. It happened that the priest be questioned when a dying gypsy did not die immediately. The family was reproaching the priest that he gave him the “communion for alive, not for dead”.

Regarded as the end of the heart, or like endless sleep or road, death is the final separation of the physical body, which becomes unclean (“biuio”) or impure and soul (“o gi”), which begins its journey to the world of the dead (“o them e mulenqo”).¹⁶

In the collective mentality of the Roma, the fate of man is pre-established by divinit. Death is happening with divine approval. This mystery is not questioned, but only observed and respected. Roma does not resign in front of evil. They believe that the harmony of the world will always be safeguarded, that nothing can stop the universal dynamics which God has established.

The church of Zanea is located in the center or the graveyard. The Roma avoid participating at the divine service even on Sundays in that church because of its position in the cemetery. For other religious services, they prefer to address to the priest of Ciurea, the closer Orthodox community.

There are a number of superstitions about everything that comes into contact with death. Whoever takes a flower on the grave or passes over the shadow of a cross, will soon die. If he smells a flower on a grave, he will lose the smell.

On a visual level, the actual funeral signs are important indicators for the way the death is perceived in Roma area. More recently, the perception of death has begun to be determined by the status of the deceased and his family. Some rich members of the community, taking advantage of the town proximity, bought burial places in “St. Basil” cemetery in Iasi. I found expressed the belief that one who is rich in this world, he will be rich in the other world”. It is not negligible the proliferation of funeral picture made on ceramic substrate, uncommon for the traditional Roma community, which expresses a certain tendency of individualization of death, by setting the maximum element of the collective memory of individual identity (the face). Funeral image has important comforting facets, moving the focus from the grave as a place of decay, to recall a function of social destiny. Some innovations from urban area were received by some of the Roma, reflecting the perception that death is a matter economically manageable, even if these loans would be “a transfer of the desire for opulence from the village in the cemetery”.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁷ C.M. Bejinariu, *Moartea și murirea – de la paradigma tradițională la forme contemporane adaptate (Death and dying – from the traditional paradigms to adapted contemporary forms)*, Abstract of PhD thesis, Faculty of European Studies, “Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca, 2010, p. 9. Available at <http://doctorat.ubbcluj.ro/sustinerea_publica/rezumat/2010/filologie/BEJINARIU_CORINA_RO.pdf>, 27.02.2011.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to condense the perception of death through the funeral ceremony, despite the rich ritual. The Roma community is no longer claimed organically from the traditions that say it comply with, but actually performs them automatically, often without knowing the meaning. This situation is due to contact with the urban civilization.

Although one can talk about a detachment from tradition, but not an abandon of it. Gypsies live in that tradition because it is appropriate (evidence for this are many answers like "this is it with us" („așa se face la noi"), "it's the old who did that" („așa am apucat"), but not because it must, in the sense that they do not internalize this tradition, but observe it only as an external standard. However, the perception of death that Roma have continues to be a "tamed death", which is fully integrated into life and, moreover, necessary for life.

Rites and protective funeral measures

Unconscious repugnance and fear felt by living before the first signs of decay of the corpse are translated into mentally through fear of contamination with the body, and through faith in the aggressiveness of the dead who will return to harm the living. All cultures have a set of practices, behaviors, interdictions, rituals, aimed to avoid the death.¹⁸ For the Roma, for adjuration the evil, it is important the respect of the community rules, respect of customs and respect for the dead in particular. From this point of view, the Roma culture is a preventive one, if we define prevention as "a series of efforts made by a community in order to keep them healthy and to avoid problems".¹⁹

The corpse is washed with water, the water having purifying functions. Then it is dressed in new clothes, the best or favorite clothes of the person who has just passed away, a sign of honor the memory of the dead and a claiming of his status within the Community. The coffin becomes his eternal home, taking over tasks that the deceased residence have had during his terrestrial existence. Funerary furniture indicates a continuation of the deceased activities in the celestial existence.²⁰ It consists of: 1. bed accessories (pillows and blankets, "to warm him"), 2. Lighting devices (candle, "to get light") 3. Personal care articles (comb - one of the most impure personal objects, that community should

¹⁸ Adina Rădulescu, *Rituri de protecție în obiceiurile funerare românești*, București, Saeculum I.O., 2008, p. 133

¹⁹ Valentin Soares. "Notes sur l'importance de la prévention, la culture et les drogues dans la communauté gitane". *Études tsiganes* (Paris), n° 2, vol. 14 (1999), p. 111: "Un ensemble d'efforts qu'une communauté met en oeuvre pour promouvoir la santé de ses membres et ainsi réduire l'apparition des problèmes".

²⁰ Ion Ghinoiu, *Lumea de aici, lumea de dincolo*, București, Editura Fundației culturale române, 1999, p. 212.

discard the fastest - and scissors, made of iron, which protects from evil spirits through the magic of similarity).²¹

A common practice in both Romanian and Gypsy funeral rites is to cover the mirrors, motivated by the belief that the mirror, like any other reflective surface, is a communication path between the two worlds, so they must cover to close the path of the soul to return from the world of the dead as ghosts. This "coxano" is the spiritual entity that keeps the negative aspects of the physical body and the disharmony of the human mind such as hate, envy, revenge and may be a danger to the living, especially when the departed was a violent death, when life was interrupted prematurely, before wedding or when an unbaptized child died, without the ceremony required for the entry into the community.²²

In the community of Zanea, we can be witness of the traditional form of wake, anathematized as "pagan", which recalls the ancient funeral feasts of Dionysian nature and also the Dacians' religion for which death was an occasion to party. During the wake, which lasts three days, the Gypsies talk together around a fire, share their thoughts and emotions, eat, drink and sing along. They do not have a common meal in the memory of the one who leaves, like the Romanian people, but they eat separately. Even after the funeral, the so-called alms, the memorial ceremony, is not more than a cultural loan.

The vigil is a rite of protection which seeks the postponement, keeping at a distance and avoids direct confrontation with the idea of death. The existence of this ritual confirms that death is felt as a threat, as an act of aggression, fear, living under the rule of individual and collective fear. What we think the funeral Roma tradition offer to us through this vigil is an archaic form of psychological defense mechanism of the living, an example of taming the fear of death by a plenary form of affirmation of life and joy of living.²³

The presence of a fire in the middle of courtyard around which gathered those who come to the wake is a funeral ritual purification. The explanation of this custom - "to warm the dead" - seems simplistic, but perhaps the fire is perceived as having charm virtues, being a sacred element of the traditional nomadic culture.

There is no vigil services officiated by a priest, for the priest "not to come twice", which is interpreted as a negative sign. Some women give some magical and mysterious phrases that foreign people do not hear, nor understand.

On the day of burial, when the corpse goes out of the house, there are performed rites of separation, for breaking any ties with the dead, drawing a separating line between the world of the living and of the dead's, symbolic

²¹ Grigore, *Curs*, pp. 147-148.

²² Ibid., p. 151.

²³ Rădulescu, *Rituri de protecție*, p. 226.

deleting of the dead trace among the living and hindering his return at home. Rites of separation are meant to destroy the invisible and impalpable tie between dead and living. Those living are those who must give up the dead, an idea illustrated by Louis-Vincent Thomas, who compares the detachment of the dead by the living with a departure on leave, for which others have packed and carry the luggage: "the ceremonies that follow one's death should establish a distance between the living and the dead, it means killing death, or, better said, deleting any trace of life in his body and the connections with the community".²⁴

A specific ritual behavior is taking the corpse out from the house, not on the habitual door, but the window or back door, pulling the door from its hinges and putting it back after removing the corpse. The dead person, gone on the trip to the underworld, may face with states of fear, doubt, confusion, temptation to return to the previous state, that characterize the transition from an existential condition to another. Closing or deleting any path of return, any bridges connecting with the past and the previous status is tantamount to forcing the passage of the dead's soul beyond.²⁵ In Roma faith, the spirit sees and hears everything around; it is endowed with a good sense of direction and could find his way to the house if its spatial memory had not been impaired. The Roma community from Zanea resort to the described custom for its own protection, not to let the dead to know the usual entry into the house and to stop, thus, to return as the undead ("coxano"), to take someone from the family with him.²⁶

After removing the dead from the house, the door is slammed, pointing to the refusal of the living to follow the dead. The door gets a protective role, retaining the absorbing energy of death.²⁷

Different from the Romanian, after the overthrow of objects to support the coffin, the room where dead was set is treated by living as a dangerous and impure space, impressed by the energy of long illness or death. Gypsies remain abhorred by the place where the coffin stood. This place ceases to be attended out of respect, but also fear of dead ("mulo"). That is why the dead man is not put in the most aesthetic room of the house, but in more isolated one or more inner room, often dedicating it to another destination after the funeral. In one house, that room has been converted into storage timber.

²⁴Louis-Vincent Thomas, *Rites de mort. Pour la paix des vivants*, 2^{ème} partie, *Le rituel funéraire: finalité et perspectives*, Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1985, pp. 177-178: "les cérémonies qui suivent le décès ont pour but de consacrer la rupture entre les vivants et le mort, en signifiant à celui-ci son congé: il faut „tuer le mort”, autrement dis éliminer ce qui reste de vivant en lui en brisant les liens qui l'unissent à la communauté”.

²⁵ Rădulescu, *Rituri*, p. 221.

²⁶ Grigore, *Curs*, p. 148.

²⁷ Rădulescu, *Rituri de protecție*, p. 210.

The impure corpse turns into a danger to the community, so he must be given as soon as possible to the priest who is non-Roma ("gadjo"), therefore he belongs to the out-group. In that case, the Roma community depends on social actors delegates by the society, as priest, an impure outsiders, who are allowed to enter the privacy of the community, but who is kept at large mistrust. An interesting episode occurred when the priest, waiting for the arrival of the funeral car, approached the fence that demarcated the bereaving family's yard from their neighbors'. It was a prompt response from neighbors, but also the audience, the priest was asked to stay in one place.

For Roma, the priest remains a "gadjo", an impure person, even an evil person, so they are cautious. He retains an occult aura, being vested with magical and religious power. This representation is based on his ability to mediate between people and God, to loose sins and curses, but also on his social status and the ability to welcome a parishioner from a different cultural area, knowing how to comfort him and to use an efficient spiritual therapy.

The instrumental music is part of the cultural welfare, helping to preserve the poise, which removes the evil or keep it away. Fiddlers sing loved songs of the deceased.

The klaxon of the cars at the leaving the dead man's home is a contemporary adaptation of the old habit to announce the funeral event.

The dead must pass over some symbolic bridges, laid at the gates of the household, on the way to the graveyard, then at the church and cemetery gates. They place on the ground a white cloth and the dead or mortuary car passes over. On the way from the dead person's home to the church, it is prohibited for the funeral procession to stop in front of any Gypsy house, being considered a bad omen. Only after passing by the group of houses the assembly can make ritual stops, when the priest pronounces prayers for the dead. Death is paid and bribed not to come back in the community, by throwing coins or candies on the way to the cemetery and over the coffin down into the grave.

Only relatives take part in the funeral service in the church. The rest stay in the churchyard or at a considerable distance of the cemetery. The sequence of the "last kisses of the deceased", which is highly valued by Romanian as the last expression of the emotional ties with the deceased, as the last form of honoring, but also as a form of separation, through forgiveness, is absent from the Gypsies' funeral behavior. The refusal of this practice describes an increased sense of fear of the corpse as a "polluting source" or concerns "the powers" of the deceased. This is the fear generated by the state of extreme liminality, which takes an acute form until burial.

Before placing the coffin into the grave, it is wrapped in a carpet. They do not directly throw earth over the coffin, but some tiles are placed first to prevent the contact of the coffin lid with the earth and for the deceased "not to

be pushed down by the earth" („să nu-l apese pământul"). This custom expresses the belief in continuing living in the afterworld.

Expression of grief, between dramatization and theatricalization

Each burial requires a certain order, a pattern of organization and sequence of funeral customs. Exiting the house with the dead marks the end of this funeral period and the return to the previous order that of life can be done only by a break of pace, an assumed disorder that allows the resumption of the natural course of life. This short-term installation of the disorder, the inverted world, the inverse is a step required by the passage from death to life.²⁸

Submission to fate, this seeming fatalism, does not let the Gypsies passive in the face of adversity. They put into action a panel of strategies that is foreign to Romanians. A Gypsy will always go beyond the limits of conformity.

Placing the coffin in the grave raises a dramatically performance. Women and men hit themselves with violence in the chest or pull out their hair. Relatives do everything possible, sometimes violently, to defer as much as possible, sealing the coffin and put it in the grave. This freedom to be and to behave is more appreciated in such situations, especially in circumstances of a funeral. The definition of normal behavior or attitudes (ways of dress, language, tone of voice, facial expressions that could be considered appropriate in this context) is cultural. "Culture defines the way we could sometimes get out the norms and the contexts where we could do this".²⁹ Deviance is never an absolute rule. "Ethnologists who have worked in the field know that there are endless possibilities and variables according to the group. The limits vary according to the culture. The effort is non achievable, the grief unacceptable. These are personal characteristics and collective norms that are supposed to be agreed on when living in a community. Each approach, each behavior, acquired and transmitted traditionally, is based on series of neurological and muscular interactions that represent systems ultimately dependent on the sociological context".³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., p. 219.

²⁹ Cecil G. Helman, „Psyche, soma and society: the social construction of psychosomatic disorders", *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 1985, 9 (1), 13: "La culture définit les façons d'être temporairement anormaux et les contextes de tolérance".

³⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, „Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss", *Sociologie et anthropologie de Marcel Mauss*, Paris, Presse Universitaire de France, 1989, quoted by Cl. Fournel Bettendorff, «Dans la vie, faut pas gagner ... ». *La perception de la santé chez les manush' de La Loire*, thesis presented to the Faculty of Medicine "Jacques Lisfranc", University of Saint Etienne, 2008, p. 36 : "Tout ethnologue qui a travaillé sur le terrain sait que les possibilités sont étonnamment variables selon les groupes. Les seuils d'excitabilité, les limites de résistance sont différentes dans chaque culture. L'effort « irréalisable », la « douleur intolérable » le « plaisir inouï » sont moins fonction des particularités individuelles que les critères sanctionnés par l'approbation collective. Chaque technique, chaque conduite, traditionnellement apprise et transmise, se fonde sur certaines

Grief is expressed in a very demonstrative way. Verbal and the non-verbal communication are very important. Those coming from a different cultural background would characterize the Gypsies as violent in gestures and words. It is one of the scenes that seem to justify the synonymy of the expression "as at the door of the tent" with "to argue like Gypsies".³¹ Indeed, the Gypsies know how to provide a dramatic spectacle. We witnessed the same scene each time, which we hesitate to consider: theater or consequence of anxiety? We suspected a sensitivity of actors that decrypts the best way to attract pity, compassion, fear of "others". Exaggeration of symptoms, which puts in relief the abnormal intrusion in everyday life, is constitutive of the Roma culture.

Community attitude to the mourning family

In the Gypsy community, family, extended by its members living and dead who carry the same style of life, sometimes the same subsistence activities, provides a dense and highly reactive network. Social support is sufficient in most cases to mitigate the negative reactions of an individual and to resolve a stressful situation. The help of the others secures the individual against the potential consequences of the situation, reinforcing the sense that he can face this situation with skill, enhances self-esteem and sense of stability, acting as a tranquilizer.

When a person feels powerless before a critical event, community support may be enough to regain the poise. Social support is a repertoire of individual links that the individual weaves with those around him, to obtain various forms of help: cognitive, emotional, etc.

To understand what is happening, we need to enter into the psychology of Roma. Collective movements are not understandable unless we know how they think. When something happens between them, they are all united against the aggressor, information goes around the community very fast and there is an immediate reaction. The Gypsies are characterized by the feeling of belonging, of solidarity. When a member of it goes "beyond", the whole community is touched by the wing of death. The funeral rites, the symbolic and so complex practices are motivated by the generalization (a kind of contagion to the entire community life) of this difficult moment. Therefore, the whole community participates in liminal rites, whether or not relatives, friends or neighbors with the dead. Every other ceremony in the life cycle (birth and marriage) the same kind of relationship is established. Fear of death is of the whole community.

synergies nerveuses et musculaires qui constituent de véritables systèmes, solidaires de tout un contexte sociologique".

³¹ Iuliu A. Zanne, *Proverbele românilor din România, Basarabia, Bucovina, Ungaria, Istria și Macedonia*, 3rd vol., București, Scara, p. 130.

When a person disappears, everything that could remind him or her must disappear. Family seeks to discard as soon as possible of the personal things belonging to the deceased, considered now to be impure. In nomadic times, they were burnt, to avoid becoming a burden to the caravan, and now usually are dealt outside the community (to the gadji), excepting the gold objects, symbolic values of representation, which establishes status in the community.

In the period following his or her death, cease to pronounce the name of the deceased; it is not sympathetic, for fear of disturbing the dead silence, which could bring trouble to the living. Saying the name of a dead person can bring his ghost ("o coxano"), who will get someone in the family. That's why the dead is not named with his man's name, but with reference to its position within the family or community (e.g, my uncle, our boss, etc.), or simply by a pronominal substitute for him ("ov").³²

Any person who was under the same roof with a deceased is considered impure. Impurity is contagious and can also spread through food or achieving the objects of the dead by closer relatives. They must isolate themselves from the community during the 40-days mourning period.³³ Being "marime" is not just to be defiled, but dangerous to the community through powers that can become evil, threatening the poise of the community. The impure persons are excluded from community events, do not attend the weddings and do not eat with others.

During the period of mourning, some familiar gestures can be prohibited. Men leave beards grow, and women loose their hair, although they usually clinch their tails, as an erotic symbol. All opposed acts and actions create, from the ritual point of view, an opposition to slipping into death. There are protective behaviors for recomposing the coordinates of thinking death as a magnetic force that can aspired everything that gets carried in its direction.³⁴ Everybody complies with these prohibitions, without explaining them. The silence marks the irreplaceable uniqueness of each individual.

Communication with the dead through dreams proves the unbreakable connection between the two worlds. A Gypsy woman described a typical dream. Her dead husband came one night to her in a dream and announced her pledging of a golden chain, but to whom he pledged it, notifying him that his wife will come to take it. There is an interest of the deceased in the destiny of the living, illustrated by the formula "we talk" („stăm de vorbă”), describing a form of "cohabitation" in the case of a widow. Dreams acquire real facets of psychological support for the partner alive, confessed by our interlocutors as beneficial. This variety indicates "the quality of dreams as forms of

³² Grigore, *Curs*, 145.

³³ Ibid., p. 129.

³⁴ Rădulescu, *Rituri de protecție*, p. 152.

communication with world beyond and psychological value to the arguments of the life after death".³⁵

The living and the dead make together the community that take precedence over individuals. There is a Roma memory, a silent memory, but not an empty one, which does not seek to explore the past. Relationship between the living and the dead introduces a different concept about time. Respecting the dead opens to immutable. Anonymously and collectively, the dead guarantee for the status of Gypsy and the everlasting character of the community based on ethnic principles.

Conclusion

To what extent can talk about conclusions? We do not have decided to supply a final answer, but rather phenomenon radiography, to put specific emphasis on how it is structured a very important episode in the life of the Roma community from Zanea, making a comparison with a Romanian community in similar situation. This population has preserved most of their own rituals, values and cultural models. Our study aimed to clarify the socio-cultural and religious differences that make it difficult to understand specific aspects of Roma culture. Categorized as mere superstition, funeral rites have coherence, relevance and meaning if they are read in terms of magical thinking that created them.

Evil, in general, also death, there is a normal event. It causes anxiety only when it would endanger the continuity of the group and its identical cultural reproduction. But not observing the beliefs and practices connected to the rules of purity and respect for the dead and magical-religious forces is perceived as a threat and it is believed that the evil can invest the corpse with dangerous powers that cause pathology.

Firstly, aid is required from the community, reality with which the individual identifies intimately and where he/she finds his poise and social personality. Community is protected from the intrusion of the outside world, without revealing anything of it. Knowing the rules of purity and respect for the dead is the base of reporting to death in the Roma culture.

In the context of discussion about a certain specificity of Roma attitudes to death, it is present a strong valorization of traditional practices, especially of their symbolism. Unlike modern environments where it is considered indecent the public display of sorrow and grief, which is perceived as an unacceptable form of weakness that would affect the efficiency and dynamism of those around them, we must admit the superiority of Roma community in managing death, founded on the manner the Gypsies understand death as entering in the order of things, but also the advantage of a strong local solidarity networks, built during a life that takes place according to other rhythms and allows the establishment of closer and more "authentic" links.

³⁵ Bejinariu, *Moartea*, p. 20.

Certainly, the subject itself, serious and objectionable, is not yet able to foster optimism, but we can say that the sighting of these deep springs of relationship with death can render us more lucid, more tolerant and strong in our weakness.

Acknowledgments

This text was elaborated during the research within the postdoctoral scholarship in the program POSDRU/89/1.5/S/61879, „Postdoctoral Studies in Health Policy Ethics”, reseach theme – “Interdisciplinary Study of the Impact Factors on the Terminal Patients Dignity”.

LA SYMBOLIQUE FUNÉRAIRE ET L'IDENTITÉ CULTURELLE DANS LA RÉGION MULTI-ETHNIQUE. LES COMTÉS DE MUREȘ ET HARGHITA

DOREL MARC¹

Le folklore des coutumes liés à la mort, a conservé, plus que d'autres liés aux moments importants de la vie de l'homme, anciennes croyances et pratiques antérieures au christianisme. Dans le monde des villages les gens pensaient que par des gestes, mots, et chants on pouvait agir même à ce moment sur les forces bienveillantes ou hostiles et on pouvait préparer le grand passage. Dans toutes les pratiques anciennes, l'Eglise a introduit généralement quelques rites et pratiques propres, mais elle a cherché à donner au ceux populaires des sens appropriés aux dogmes chrétiens.²

L'ethnologue Romulus Vulcănescu soutenait, en citant Mircea Eliade, que la mort est «le premier mystère qui trouble profondément la conscience humaine», la mythologie de la mort étant en fait «la plus archaïque forme de mythologie possible»³, si la naissance de l'homme est le début d'une nouveau système de la vie cosmique en représentation terrestre, le mariage est l'intégration de ce système dans le rythme effréné de la vie terrestre et la mort, le retour du pèlerin dans le cosmos, aussi marquant la rupture brutale du corps humain et de «catapulter» l'esprit dans le cosmos. Par sa cruauté apparente, la mort frustre parfois la confiance de l'homme dans son propre destin. En autres termes, la vie terrestre est considéré comme un rite de passage du cosmos sur la terre et de la terre dans le cosmos, c'est à dire un rite qui respecte les trois étapes de la transition, selon la théorie de Van Gennep.

Chaque passage n'est pas un simple rite, mais un complexe de rites de passage, dans lequel elle, la transition, est exprimé par des rites d'intégration dans la communauté des vifs, des rites de séparation de la famille et la communauté des vifs et des rites d'intégration dans la communauté des morts, soit l'équivalent de la réintégration dans le cosmos. R. Vulcănescu conclut que «peut-être le rite le plus compliqué et difficile du passage de ceux que l'homme en avait intuit pendant toute sa vie matérielle et spirituelle est celui de la mort».⁴

Dans les coutumes liées à la mort nous rencontrons d'environ trois étapes principales, typiques pour toute cérémonie de passage à savoir: la séparation de la catégorie des vifs, la préparation de la transition vers l'autre monde et l'intégration dans le monde des morts, le rétablissement de l'équilibre social qui a été rompu par le départ de celui mort.⁵

¹ Phd. Researcher, Mureș County Museum, Romania.

² Mihai Pop, *Obiceiuri tradiționale*, București, Ed. Univers, 1999, p.178.

³ Romulus Vulcănescu, *Mitologie română*, București, Ed. Academiei, 1985, p.168.

⁴ Vulcănescu, *Mitologie*, p. 168.

⁵ Pop, *Obiceiuri*, p. 178.

L'ensemble des pratiques visant à rétablir l'équilibre social rompu par la mort dépassait bien les trois jours pour la cérémonie funéraire. Y étaient et sont encore toujours de quarante jours ou six semaines, après ce temps, la famille retourne à la vie normale, pourtant dans certaines régions seulement après un an.

Arnold Van Gennep a montré que dans le folklore d'aujourd'hui des peuples de l'Europe on ne peut pas parler d'un culte des morts, au sens du celui connu par les anciens peuples, cependant, nous pouvons considérer tel que culte des morts l'ensemble de pratiques et de rituels destinées à assurer le voyage du mort à l'au-delà et protéger les vifs qu'il retourne dans leurs vies dans une forme qui pourrait être dommageable pour eux.⁶

Le culte des morts, le culte des ancêtres, le contact avec eux est le résultat d'une série d'actes commémoratifs, en dehors des cérémonies funèbres.⁷

Mihaela Grancea, a montré qu'en Roumanie, les études de thanatologie historique, aussi que celles de thanatologie ethnographique et psychanalytique sont plus récentes, nombreux ont été publiés après 1990, ainsi éliminant la censure liée à l'enquête liée sur l'espace de la spiritualité. Soulever la censure « a offert aux thanatologues l'occasion d'examiner tous les aspects censés du système de la mort, surtout les discours existantes dans la société vis-à-vis du phénomène de la mort et le salut de l'âme (premièrement, le discours officiel de l'église aussi que celui populaire impliquant la redéfinition des croyances pré-chrétiennes dans les traditions des communautés orthodoxes roumaines), les solidarités et pratiques liés à l'événement funéraire». ⁸ Toutefois, l'accusé, non sans raison, que dans le contexte lequel les disciplines du social tentent se connecter à nouvelles approches trans-disciplinaires, les études ethnographiques roumaines restent tributaires au conservatorism, « captives dans une sorte de narcissisme qui refuse les rapports à d'autres références scientifiques et bibliographiques ». La critique était destinée principalement à l'autochtonie ou récemment au Dacianism qui caractérisent les efforts de certains ethnologues de «reconstruire » par la méthode récurrente, les traditions funéraires « daces » et « romaines », qui bien sûr ont glissé dans toutes sortes d'exagérations.⁹

Dans l'ouvrage cité, Mihaela Grancea identifie, pour les siècles 16-19, trois types de discours qui ont gardé les références aussi dans la période suivante: le discours populaire (laïque, traditionnel), celui de l'élite et celui eschatologique de l'Église, qui imposent à débattre, tant la mort de l'individu et

⁶ Voir aussi A. von Gennep, *Riturile de trecere*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 1998, pp. 131-147.

⁷ Gennep, *Riturile*, p. 180.

⁸ Mihaela Grancea (coordonator), *Reprezentări ale morții în Transilvania secolelor XVI-XX*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Casa Cărții de Știință, 2005, p. 6.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

celle de genre, qui voit l'individu analysé dans la société, sur un certain axe spatio-temporel.¹⁰

Valeria Soroștineanu montre que, suivant la typologie du discours officiel structure, on peut établir, premièrement, que chaque institution et d'abord l'Église a constitué un discours officiel, qui est devenu, par la force des circonstances, un clivage entre celui spécifique, faisant référence à la dogme et la partie donné au César, par rapport à la société. Mais pour l'église, la mort de chaque croyant a la même haute importance comme les devoirs de ceux qui sont avisés de l'importance des «prières pour ceux qui s'endorment dans le Seigneur». En citant le prêtre professeur Liviu Streza, on montre que les chrétiens sont en «liaisons de dialogue avec les morts et que toutes les coutûmes de l'église effectuées lors des funérailles ou mémoires sont moyens responsable et non pas des simples commémorations».¹¹

Du point de vue d'une anthropologie historico-religieuse, l'intensité avec laquelle est valorisé l'impératif de l'enterrement, respectivement l'impact sur la mentalité collective est déchiffrée dans les situations ordinaires aussi que celles inhabituelles quand la privation de tombe ou le retard intentionnelle de l'enterrement constitue une forme extrême de châtement, avec des répercussions à la fois dans les deux plans ontologiques (existence / post-existence).¹² Telles situations peuvent être données comme exemple aussi en Transylvanie de XIXe siècle, où la privation de funérailles signifiait une punition pour des actes considérés par les autorités hongroises comme «de trahison». C'est le cas aussi du chef de la légion du Mures Supérieur pendant la révolution de 1848-1849, Constantine Romanu Vivu, héros des Roumains de ce région, lynché par les opposants hongrois près de Tg. Mures, sur la route vers «jugement» au tribunal de Cluj.

La manque de rituel funéraire cependant peut avoir un caractère involontaire a cause des circonstances moins normales dans lesquelles le décès est survenu. C'est le cas de ceux qui sont morts, mais dont les corps n'ont pu pas être récupérés (y compris la mort à l'étrangère, à la guerre, par noyade ou d'autres morts considérés «violentes». Les rites, coutumes pratiquées afin de remédier ces situations, démontre l'importance d'un soutien matériel de la personne pour le sens commun.

Sur l'axe tradition-modernité, l'attitude face au corps est un exemple très illustratif de la manière dont se produit l'évolution des modèles culturelle. Le besoin d'accomplir le rite funéraire, quelle que soit sa nature, est resté une constante de l'humanité, à partir de la prémisse que «mourir est devenir un

¹⁰ Valeria Soroștineanu, *Manifestări ale sentimentului religios la românii ortodocși din Transilvania: 1899-1916*, Sibiu, Ed. Universității „Lucian Blaga” Sibiu, 2005, p. 142.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 143.

¹² Corina Bejenariu, „Implicațiile funerare ale corpului uman”, in *Marisia*, XXVIII, *Etnografie și Artă Populară*, 2005, p. 302.

corps», la mort soulève la question de «disposition de cadavre», mais généralement en formes rituelles.¹³ Les études consacrées à la problématisation tanatologique, avec une référence spéciale sur la société occidentale, montrent que l'évolution récente des rites funéraires portent à l'idée après laquelle la personne conserve le corps et ainsi la séparation devient plus difficile. Il y a, comme vous le savez, une offre très diversifiée de services funéraires qui comptent précisément sur l'importance du corps décédé dans l'esthétique mortuaire contemporaine, ce qui signifie le support des dernières échanges, d'une dernière relation.¹⁴

En l'enquête sur les implications funéraires du corps humain, il devient nécessaire d'utiliser plusieurs types de sources qui utilisent soit des éléments d'imaginaire, coagulés en structures narratives, soit des structures du comportement articulés par des pratiques à valeur coutumière et il y est également nécessaire l'exploitation à différents niveaux du discours sur la mort, par référence aux productions folkloriques, au praxis rituel comme indicateur de la perception collective, mais aussi aux éléments de genre contenus dans la rhétorique et la pratique religieuse.

Ainsi, nous trouvons dans les collections de croyances populaires des hypostases destinées à proclamer la fin par la symbolique des dysfonctionnements corporels, par des «signes» avec valeur prédictive. Les codes corporels fonctionnent comme la valeur prédictive depuis l'étape pré-agonique.

La perception sur le cadavre génère attitudes ambivalentes. D'un côté on trouve un ensemble de pratiques rituelles dont la finalité vise à contrer les menaces, la contagion due à l'impureté du corps mort, et d'autre part, les formes de dévotion requise par les rituelles funéraires confirment l'existence de dernières relations affectives avec le défunt, y compris le soutien matériel impliqué. Un exemple est offert par le coutume d'embrasser pour la dernière fois le mort. Dr. Vasile Popp, sans nous laisser trop de détails sur le symbolistique qu'y en emporte, déclare que

«embrasser le mort est un coutume si répandue, que l'on fait non seulement les proches, mais aussi les étrangers et même les inconnues et cela se passe non seulement pendant le temps quand le mort est dans la maison mais jusqu'il est baissé dans la fosse».¹⁵

L'origine pré-chrétienne de ce coutume a été signalé aussi par V. Popp, en l'attribuant à l'antiquité pré-romaine. Il avait la signification de solidarisation avec la famille du défunt, signification perdue aujourd'hui à cause

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 302.

¹⁴ P. Baudry, „Devant le cadavre”, in *Religiologues*, no 12, 1995, p. 11, apud Bejenariu, *Implicațiile*, p. 303.

¹⁵ I. Mușlea, „Viața și opera Doctorului Vasile Popp”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională*, 1928-1930, nr.V, p. 135, apud Bejenariu, *Implicațiile*, p. 304.

d'une mutation survenue dans la perception du cadavre, trouvé dans l'attitude de rejet de ce genre d'expression émotionnelle face à la personne décédée. Dans l'interprétation de certains ethnologues, le rituel correspond à une dernière forme d'«absolution», qui insiste sur la nécessité de séparation et pas nécessairement sur la besoin d'exprimer certaines émanations émotionnelles. En fait, la dissolution du coutume enregistrée aussi dans l'espace que nous concerne montre que nous sommes face à une certaine perte du sentiment de familiarité causé dans le passé par la proximité de la mort.

Le corps du défunt, en tenant compte de ce que nous avons mentionné ci-dessus, ne représente plus un danger potentiel en termes de contagion justifiée par magie, éventuellement, la menace de sa impureté vise seulement le segment de la prophylaxie médicale, le corps étant perçu dans la plupart des cas comme un possible agent de transmission de la maladie. Pour la zone soumise à l'enquête, nous rapelons qu'en Transylvanie, depuis le XVIIIe siècle ont été imposées par les autorités autrichiennes mesures de prévention modernes pour contrer les menaces de la maladie. Le texte d'une circulaire épiscopale en 1790 demandait le clergé d'exhorter les croyants pour ne pas baisser et embrasser les morts, respectivement le corps ne doit pas être gardé longtemps dans la maison.¹⁶ Toutefois, l'Etat autrichien a émis en 1778 un décret impérial concernant l'enterrement ou avait indiqué les précautions à prendre pour les cadavres suspectés d'être affectés par une maladie contagieuse, décret qui sera repris et popularisé dans les zones rurales par des circulaires épiscopales.

Certains historiens, qui ont été préoccupés par la lutte pour l'émancipation nationale des Roumains transylvains, ont interprété ces restrictions comme une excuse pour restreindre la socialisation des communautés qui utilisaient ces événements essentiels du cycle de la vie pour développer leur cohésion sociale dans les affrontements avec les autorités autrichiennes et hongroises, souvent hostiles dans l'espace qui nous concerne.

En 1788, un décret impérial a établi que dans les régions avec population mixte en termes de confession on maintienne des cimetières séparés, mais il était recommandé que dans l'avenir on établisse des cimetières communs pour tous les habitants.¹⁷ Cela a suscité des réactions vives parmi les populations qui réclamaient leur identité ethnique et religieuse aussi en fonction de leurs cimetières.

Une autre disposition prévoit que les cimetières soit situés à l'extérieur des localités: «... que les cimetières soient mises hors des villages et des villes, et que ni un homme, n'importe qu'il soit, dans les cryptes».

¹⁶ I. Gorffy, Em. Băcilă, *Circulare episcopale...*, apud Toader Nicoară, *Transilvania la începuturile moderne (1680-1800). Societate rurală și mentalități colective*, Cluj Napoca, Ed. Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1997, p. 211; Idem, „Epidemii și mentalități în societatea românească în zorii epocii moderne (1700-1830)”, în *Studii de istorie a Transilvaniei*, Cluj, 1994, pp. 152-164.

¹⁷ Nicoară, *Transilvania*, pp. 213-214.

Une autre circulaire, ce fois de l'évêque Gherasim Adamovici de Sibiu, donné en 1790, demandait au clergé d'exhorter les croyants pour ne pas baiser et embrasser les morts, que le corps ne soit plus gardé longtemps dans la maison. On prévoit aussi que la fosse soit «au moins 8 traces profonde» et aux prêtres était interdit sous sanctions sévères qu'ils «tiennent de cérémonies et des coutumes altérés». ¹⁸

Chaque moment de la grande cérémonie de passage était accompagné par une multitude de gestes symboliques, avec des fonctions magiques, ayant à faire avec le soin particulier face au corps qui trahit un sentiment de peur et un sentiment de malaise. Ils sont considérés comme des gestes qui sont destinés à assurer la sécurité et le confort pour la famille, les proches, mais aussi pour toute la communauté qui se trouve plus solidaire en ces moments. ¹⁹

Le problème de l'âme après la mort ouvre un chapitre important dans l'histoire de l'imagination. Au niveau de la mentalité paysanne, pendant des siècles de discours chrétien s'est installé la croyance en l'immortalité de l'âme. Une étude précieuse sur les attitudes envers la mort a été écrit par l'érudite Vasile (Ladislau) Popp (1789-1842), né à Chimitelnicul de Câmpie (aujourd'hui Cipăieni, village de la commune Sânger, le comté de Mures), médecin, thérapeute, bibliographe et éditeur roumain transylvain, dans sa thèse de docteur en médecine, intitulé «*De funeribus plebejis daco-romanorum sive hodiernorum valachorum et quibusdam circa ea abusibus perpetuo respectu habito ad veterum romanorum funera* », sous son nom latinisé «Papp Basilius».

Il présentait la vision paysanne qui resumait en proportions différentes les éléments présents de dogme avec les plus diverses croyances hétérodoxes: «Les paysans roumains croient d'une manière simple et sans d'autres recherches que l'homme est composé de corps et d'âme, que ce dernier est immortelle et après la mort il dépend de tous les actes accomplis quand il était encore lié au corps, pour devenir heureux ou malheureux». ²⁰ En outre, «les Roumains ont la foi que l'âme du mort après qu'il est séparé du corps, erre autour de la maison pour trois jours, où le corps gisait et qu'il va aussi à la tombe». L'âme suivait aussi un destin parallèle du corps, le dogme chrétien accréditant l'idée que l'âme peut être sauvée par ses bonnes actions, aussi qu'à travers une série d'offrandes et des gestes de charité effectués par les proches, au nom du défunt.

Les gestes de charité commençaient au cours de sa vie, mais ils s'intensifiaient surtout après la mort. Comme Vasile Popp y présentait, en termes de piété populaire, les gestes de charité ont été en très grands nombres et

¹⁸ N. Iorga, Studii și documente, XII, p. 112, apud Nicoară, *Transilvania*, p. 214.

¹⁹ Nicoară, *Transilvania*, p. 214.

²⁰ Mușlea, *Viața*, pp. 129-130.

imprégnait le comportement collectif chez tous les niveaux de la société roumaine.²¹ On croyait que

«Les pauvres sont les plus aptes pour en confier les choses des morts, des choses que plus qu'ils soient grand, plus qu'ils auront dans la vie après la mort. Le but de l'aumônes était de venir en aide aux besoins des morts et que tout sera bien pour ils et pour atteindre cet objectif sont utilisés les pauvres comme des médiateurs».²²

Ces donations et offrandes sont très présentes dans les environnements roumains de temps éloignés. Au XVIIe siècle, les calvinistes hongrois ont essayé les limiter, parce qu'en n'étaient pas conformes avec les préceptes de cette religion, ainsi comme on résulte d'instructions données par les principes calvinistes aux Métropolitains roumains:

«... ne faire pas la prière d'absolution (moli) aux os, vêtements, moutons ou vaches, pour les morts on ne donne rien, ou des poulets, mais en côtés ils peuvent donner, de ne pas laver les pieds des bêtes, ni les brûler avec la chandelle dans la tête, et la gimblette sur la fosse ne se donnera pas, dans la fosse ne se jettera pas d'argents, les femmes ne crieront pas dans la rue, les prêtres n'iraient pas à ceux qui ne veulent pas enterrer leurs morts lundi ou mercredi, les prêtres ne feront pas la prières d'absolution sur les bêtes...».²³

Le soin pour sauver l'âme, aussi que la croyance dans la possibilité d'influencer son état après la mort apparaît plus évidemment dans les prescriptions des testaments paysannes de XVIIIe et XIXe siècles, dans l'arc intra-Carpathique, le Sud de la Transylvanie s'est imposé avec des aumônes et le paiement des „sărindare”, (grosses sommes d'argent payés au prêtre pour la prière d'absolution faite pour une période de 40 jours) .

Le deuil, c'est une autre façon de marquer l'expression de regret pour celui disparu et implicitement une contribution à la mortification du corps et par abstinence des proches, pour faciliter le passage de l'âme par les douanes et trouver le repos dans le monde d'au-delà. Le deuil s'affirme aussi par des lamentations, vierșuri (poésies élégiaques à l'adresse de la vie de celui mort), pleurs, parfois crises de colère, en s'arrachant les cheveux ou la barbe - montrait encore Ladislau Popp. La durée du deuil se manifeste aussi différemment selon l'âge, le sexe du défunt et le degré de parenté avec lui.

Des exemples la symbolique et coutumes funéraires dans les communautés roumaines dans la région de Toplita du Mures Supérieur

Face aux coutumes funéraires de différentes parties du pays, celles de la région de Toplita du Mures Supérieur ne diffèrent pas beaucoup. Une fois mort un membre de la communauté rurale, son décès était annoncé en plusieurs façons:

²¹ Miha Elena, „Pe Mureș și pe Târnăvă. Manuscrise folclorice de la începutul secolului al XIX-lea », in *Marisia. Studii si materiale. Etnografie-artă-artă populară*, Tg.Mureș, 1996, vol.XXV, pp.127-188.

²² Mușlea, *Viața*, p. 220.

²³ Ștefan Meteș, *Istoria bisericii românești din Transilvania*, Sibiu, 1935, pp. 290-291.

on faisait sonner les cloches d'une certaine manière, (en fonction de l'âge des morts, était signalé par la taille du cloche - petite, moyenne ou grande - ou la durée de son battu), les membres de la famille du mort vêtaient en noir habits de deuil, les femmes portaient leurs cheveux ébouriffés et couverts de voile noir sur la tête et les hommes portaient le tête nue et marchaient non rasé (parfois ils pleuraient ainsi six semaines ou même un an).²⁴

Après que le rituel de lavage a eu lieu (et le rasage de l'homme mort), le décédé était vêtu avec les plus beaux vêtements et mis sur un «banc» (laiță) couvert d'un «drap» (lipideu). Sur les pieds était assis une faucille « pour ne pas engourdir du tout » jusqu'il était couché dans un cercueil (bière). Dans le cercueil utilisé comme mobilier funéraire était mis un toile blanc tissé de lin et chanvre, achetés du commerce (linceul), et un oreiller rempli de regain, plus récemment, avec le sciure résultat du rabotage du bois pour faire le cercueil. Au dessus du mort était placé un tissu rare, plus récemment en était acheté dans la ville (bruine). Comme dans autres zones, les miroirs dans les chambres étaient couvertes avec un voile noir. Après ces préparations minimale du mort et de la salle où il était mis, suivait un moment important du cérémonial funéraire à dire le pleurer ou le «parler». Selon la coutume, on pleurait le mort pour trois jours par les membres de sa famille et / ou par les pleureuses, reconnues dans le village pour la mise en pratique de ces rituels, le lieu de déploiement se succédait près du cercueil, en dehors devant la fenêtre et derrière le chariot quand il était transporté à la fosse.²⁵

Dans la zone mentionnée, était et est encore pratique la veille, qui a généralement le fin de ne laisser pas un mort seul pendant la période avant les funérailles et de réaliser un lien entre les participants plus approchés de sa famille, pour le conforter.

La veille avait lieu dans la salle où le mort était assis. À la veille dans le dernier soir on mangeait, on buvait, on discutait, on jouait le jeu avec des masques, y en représentant la dernière partie faite par ceux vifs pour le mort.

Les masques fréquentés pendant la cérémonie dans la zone du Mures Supérieur étaient celles qui représentaient la mort, le cheval, le singe. Le garçon, qui représentait la mort était déguisé en femme, vêtu avec une chemise longue, enveloppait avec une pièce longue de toile, avec le visage barbouillé de farine, en portant des grandes dents coupés de pommes de terre. Armé avec une faucille et tenant à la main une grosse tasse d'eau très salée, passait d'un homme à l'autre, «en l'embrassant» doucement avec la faucille après le cou. Les participants, surtout les enfants, assistaient assez tendus à ces moments. L'eau salée l'entraînait dans la bouche et l'humeur était grande. Qui goûta de la tasse

²⁴Voir aussi Eugen Nicoară, Vasile Netea, *Murăș, Murăș, apă lină. Literatură populară din Regiunea Murășuli de Sus*, Reghin, ed. Astra, Despărțământul Reghin, 1936.

²⁵ Dorel Marc, *Aspecte etnoculturale specifice zonei Topliței Mureșului Superior*, thèse doctorales, l' Université du Sibiu, 2008, pp. 387-396.

restait dans la maison. Celui qui ne le faisait pas était porté par la mort hors de la maison.²⁶

Le masque incarnant le cheval était plus gaie. Celui en front avait dans sa main un gourdin sur qui était placé à l'envers un pot d'argile. Celui en dos en tenait un objet qui improvisait la queue. Sur les deux ont été placés des couvertures. «Le seigneur» prenait le licol du cheval improvisés et le promenait autour de la maison en demandant qui veut acheter le cheval. Après nombreux négociations avec les «marchands» dans la maison, n'étant pas d'accord avec le prix, le seigneur frappe son cheval à la tête avec le pot qui se brise et le cheval s'effondre.

Le jeu des singes était un jeu de poupées. Un homme habillait ses mains comme des poupées représentant un garçon et une fille. Un autre chantait à un sifflet rudimentaire (trișcă) et le marionnettiste jouait avec sa paire de marionnettes à la manière des jeux roumaines de la zone du Mures Supérieur.

Les deux nuits de veille avaient lieu de telle sorte: si le défunt était un vieil homme, sa perte était considérée par la communauté rurale comme un chose commun. Mais si un garçon ou une fille mourait, à cette cause la douleur de la famille était immense et la veille avait un caractère plus sobre. Par ailleurs, dans le cas de l'enterrement des jeunes, le cérémonial funéraire subissait grands changements. Dans le jour de l'enterrement, à la maison du mort le violoniste chantait des chansons de jeu et de deuil. Les vêtements du jeune homme décédé étaient celles d'époux ou de épouse.

Les femmes de la zone de référence, pendant la veille, «parlaient» des lamentations adaptées à ce moment-ci. Aussi, sur la Vallée du Mures Supérieur, comme ailleurs, la foi du peuple sur la mort et sur l'implacable destin humain, le sentiment de la finitude humaine se trouve dans ces «paroles». Y en est exprimé le regret de la venue de la mort et l'installation d'une profonde solitude.

La révolte de celui décédé est traduite en malédictions contre le sapin ou la mort, la mort, revendiquée dans les paroles, peut être aussi dépeinte comme un havre de tranquillité. Par la voix des pleureuses, le plus souvent, le mort disait adieu à ses proches.

Dans le dernier soir avant l'enterrement un moment important dans le cérémonial funéraire était et est encore le «dîner du mort». Tenant en main la cuillère en bois rempli avec soupe des pâtes alimentaires faites à la maison ("buretiță" ou "bureciță"), un ou chaque membre de la famille appelait son époux, épouse, mère, père, soeur, frère, fils, etc. décédé, à dîner, trois fois, selon la formule:

"Vienne (le nom du défunt) a dîner
avec nous

"Hai (numele) la cină cu noi
C-asta-i cina cea de-apoi

²⁶ Florina Matei, „Semnificații ale ceremonialului funerar la români. Obiceiul de înmormântare în zona Topliței”, in *Angvstia*, Sf. Gheorghe, nr. 4., 1999, pp. 381-383.

Car c'est le dernier dîner
Ne dînerai plus avec nous".²⁷

Mai mult nu vei cina cu noi".

La troisième journée avait lieu l'enterrement proprement-dit, le temps d'affliction pour la famille et la communauté toute entière, qui n'a pas nécessairement l'obligation établie par la tradition d'assister aux funérailles, mais y en donnait l'aide nécessaire à la famille endeuillée, selon des règles de conduite imposées dans la vie sociale par la communauté. Certains membres de la communauté accomplissent des fonctions bien définies: pleureuses, ceux qui organisaient et supervisaient toute la cérémonie funéraire, ceux mis aux bannières, ceux qui emportèrent le mort à coté. Dans le jour de l'enterrement avait lieu la préparation de l'«arbre» qui habituellement était donné aux parrains de baptême et de mariage, mais qui parfois était partagé aux enfants aussi.

À la sortie du prêtre et du mort hors de la maison, existait le coutume, qui est encore pratique, de casser une tasse en le frappant sur le planchers.

Vers le lieu de dernier repos, qui longtemps n'était pas dans les cimetières près de l'église, mais dans le cour des fermiers, dans les cimetières familiaux ou on retrouvait l'arbre généalogique - marchaient avant le cortège quatre hommes portant des bannières décorés avec des serviettes tissées avec du noir sur fond blanche et des grandes gimbettes, magnifiquement tressés, faites dans le four, aujourd'hui y sont commandées dans le commerce spécialisée, de panification, aussi certaines boulangeries exécutent sur commande ces gimbettes et en général les aumônes (des petit pains). Derrière eux allait le chariot tiré par des bœufs avec des cornes décorées avec des serviettes et des gimbettes. D'un côté et de l'autre du cercueil étaient les membres de la famille du défunt. Derrière le chariot ou traîneau succède le cortège entier composé par la collectivité du village.

Après un dernier absolution prise par le prêtre au nom du mort d'au ceux restés en vie, la fosse est scellée, au passé y étant accompagné par le rituel de passage d'un poulet par-dessus d'elle et qui était offerte comme sacrifice aux fossoyeurs du lieu de dernier repos.

À la fin de la cérémonie dans le cimetière, la famille en deuil offre l'aumône aux participants à l'enterrement, commençant avec les parrains de mariage et / ou de baptême, les parents proches qui reçoivent des gimbettes et des serviettes tissés, étaient généralement aussi ceux qui portaient soit la croix, soit les bannières ou les chandeliers, pendant toute la durée de la cérémonie d'enterrement, donner l'aumône continue avec toute l'assistance. Dans la plupart des villages de la région de Toplita on donne cette aumône à la porte du cimetière. À Bilbor il y a encore l'habitude de donner l'aumône par-dessus de la

²⁷ Cf. inf. Truța Floarea, né à Gălăuțaș, en 1943.

fosse, comme sur la vallée de Mures, toujours ici, on donne aussi comme aumône au cahque petit-enfant du mort une tasse, dans les villages sur la vallée de Mures on donne aux fossoyeurs du lieu de dernier repos aussi un seau émaillé neuf, dans le passé des pots et vaisselle en argile.

À mentionner est aussi le fait que, comme en autres régions, les accessoires, l'inventaire lié à la cérémonial d'enterrement était soigneusement préparé conformément aux coutumes de chaque village, bien avant la mort réelle, les femmes tissaient des serviettes en rouleaux entiers, avec des motifs géométriques, sobres (en évitant les motifs floraux) d'ou sont coupés à une longueur d'une serviette, si nécessaire, mais aujourd'hui, parce que le tissage est très rare et moins les tisserands, les serviettes peuvent être achetés de commerce, celles en peluche, même si elles sont beaucoup critiquées par les femmes qui gardent la tradition. J'ai rencontré un tel cas pendant nos pérégrinations en terrain, à

Tulgheș il y a la croyance que ceux qui ne donnent pas comme aumône des serviettes tissées mais les achètent du commerce, en peluche, ainsi ils s'exposent « à la risée », « sont la risée » de la communauté, « sont pauvres ». ²⁸

Le cérémonial funéraire se termine généralement avec un requiem mis par la familles en mémoire du défunt comme un sacrifice, auquel participait dans le passé tout l'assistance, le plus souvent le village entier, mais dans certains villages comme Subcetate, Gălăuțaș ou Bilbor, lorsque la distance entre le cimetière et la maison du défunt est trop grande, ce dernier repas, qui représente en fait un moment de solidarité de la colectivité qui a perdu un membre avec sa famille - était pris avant le départ vers le cimetière. Préparer le repas en certains villages se faisait sous la stricte supervision d'un des cuisinières spécialisées pour tout le village, qui avait quelques adjoints, jadis y était le coutume qu'aussi aux mariages, chaque famille dans le village contribuât avec certains produits alimentaires, selon la coutume, « le mariage et l'enterrement avec des gens sont faites. »

Van Gennep a montré que pour d'autres aires culturelle ce repas, comme toutes les repas des rites de passage, représentait un moment de solidarité sociale de toute collectivité, signe de la conclusion d'une séquence du cérémonial, son rôle était l'union des survivants face à la douleur ressentie à cause de la mort d'un membre de la communauté et signe de continuation de la vie individuelle et collective, chose qui semblent évidente en observant l'atmosphère de l'événement, qui commençait avec une tristesse solennelle et se terminait par la joie. ²⁹

Les coutumes liés à la mort ne finissent pas immédiatement après l'enterrement, mais ils sont également manifestés pendant les six semaines

²⁸ Cf. inf. Lădăriu Aurelia, né à Tulgheș, en 1940.

²⁹ Pop, *Obiceiuri*, p. 182.

suivantes jusqu'au prochain requiem et la prière de déliement de 40 jours, quand les membres de la famille décédé, traditionnellement portent eau douce à la tombe. Il y a aussi la croyance que les âmes des morts se succèdent dans les lieux où ils ont vécu. Également, la préoccupation pour soigner les tombes des morts reste dette d'honneur pour la famille. Dans la région en qui nous sommes préoccupés, chez les roumains il n'y avait pas une préoccupation particulière pour la construction des tombes ou l'érection des pierres tombales spéciales jusque relativement récemment, comme cela arrivait à autres ethnies, en particulier aux Saxons.³⁰ La plupart du temps, les «monuments» funéraires étaient caractérisés, au contraire, par leur modestie.

Dans les coutumes funéraires étaient exprimées les douleurs de la séparation, les soucis, les peurs de ceux qui ont resté et de celui qui est parti et aussi des conseils pour son voyage vers l'autre monde ou habitent les grands-pères et les ancêtres dont leurs dyptiques «jalonnent» le cycle de l'année.

Bien que la cessation des fonctions vitales était évidente, dans les croyances et les coutumes, les deux composantes, le corps et l'âme, ne seraient séparées qu'aux funérailles. Pour cette raison, la veillée des morts, aussi que l'accomplissement des ordonnances traditionnelles pendant les trois jours après sa mort devaient être respectés scrupuleusement car on croyait que leur irrespect peut déclencher des catastrophes sur le ménage et ses membres.

Dans les trois jours quand le mort restait parmi les vifs, les préparatifs pour la réalisation du cérémonial étaient doublés par ceux pour son départ dans l'autre monde, de le protéger du surnaturel maléfique, ou survivaient, comme en autres moments importants dans le cycle de vie, de nombreux pratiques des fonds d'origine.

L'attitude face à la mort s'est distinguée, non seulement sur peuples et ethnies, mais aussi dans leur cadre de vie quand dans le fond culturel original ont été amalgamées des croyances et rites de passage spécifiques à diverses peuples plus anciennes, dont les traditions ont été repris et assigné au fond culturel spécifique des ethnies courants.³¹

La question des valorisations corporels, concernant spécialement les contextes funéraires est l'une des aspects fondamentales qui s'imposent à toute analyse qui vise à examiner les attitudes générés par la proximité de la mort.

Est connu aussi le fait que s'est accréditée l'idée que «les coutumes funéraires sont parmi les aspects durables bien connus par la plupart des cultures». Ce qui est aussi constante comme les pratiques elles-mêmes de respecter le rite funéraire est le «rôle comblant que la famille joue dans le soin pour les morts».³²

³⁰ Albu Ioan, „Iconografia monumentului funerar la sași. Tipologie, concepte și teme iconografice”, in *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Historia*, anul XLI (1996), pp. 41-62.

³¹ Valer Butură, *Cultură spirituală românească*, București, Ed. Minerva, 1992, p. 315.

³² P. Brown, *Cultură sfinților*, Timișoara, 1995, p.34, apud Bejenariu *Implicațiile*, p. 301.

Quelle que soit la zone géographique ou culturelle de l'enquête, la confrontation avec la réalité de la mort exige une préoccupation fondamentale concernant le respect des coutumes particulièrement du rite funéraire. Les deux rites spécifiques pour la mort dans l'acception de Arnold van Gennep se manifestent et sont respecté par le passage, respectivement l'acceptation du mort dans le monde des ancêtres, si la séquence d'enterrement n'a pas été ou n'a pas pu être respectée. C'est parce que l'âme du celui sans sépulture ne peut pas arriver dans les lieux de la résidence posthume, mais doit errer longtemps pour atteindre la destination finale - comme indiquait Simion Florea Marian.³³

L'option d'enterrement du corps défunt a une justification religieuse en tant que le discours chrétien sur la mort est coagulé autour l'expression «nous sommes nés de la poussière et à la poussière nous retournerons».

Enfin, nous rappelons que les enquêteurs de la culture et de la zone de référence de la Transylvanie, identifiant d'abord les situations concrètes, des gestes ou des actes destinées à prévenir tous effets négatifs, tant pour le mort que pour les vifs, dans les trois moments du rite funéraire, les rites de protection pré-funéraire (préliminaires), les rites de protection funéraire (liminaires), les rites de protection post-funéraire (postliminaires).³⁴

Le caractère multiculturel de la zone étudiée impose l'analyse des coutumes funéraires des ethnies des comtés Mureș et Harghita, tant pour éviter l'ethnocentrisme que pour mieux comprendre les spécificités de chaque culture et des liens mutuels dans le temps et l'espace. À côté des interférences ethniques et religieuses apparaît aussi une série d'interférences entre les différentes régions ethnographiques et entre les zones urbaines et rurales. Les principales différences dans les coutumes funéraires se trouvent dans les différentes régions ethnographiques: la Plaine de Transylvanie, la Vallée de Gurghiu³⁵, la Haute Vallée de Mures, la zone des Târnăvelor, la Vallée de Niraj, alors qu'on voit plusieurs similitudes dans le cérémonial funéraire entre les groupes ethniques différentes de la même région que dans la même ethnie située dans une zone différente à cause des éléments d'interférences qui apparaissent au fil du temps. Quel que soit leur origine, les interférences causent la modification de l'apparence des coutumes funéraires, non seulement des pratiques funéraires laïques, aussi que des rituels funéraires, ce que modifie, parfois fondamental, le comportements funéraires de ces zones. Souvent les pratiques funéraires prises

³³ Sim. Florea Marian, *Înmormântarea la români*, ediție de Iordan Datcu, București, Saeculum IO, 1995, p. 230.

³⁴ Adina Rădulescu, *Rituri de protecție în obiceiurile funerare românești*, București, Ed.Saeculum I.O., 2008, p. 7.

³⁵ Ion Mușlea, Dumitru Pop, Ion Taloș, *Valea Gurghiului. Monografie etnologică*, ed. II., Cluj Napoca, Ed. Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2008; pp. 124-158; Bot Nicolae, „Obiceiurile de înmormântare în Folclorul Văii Gurghiului (II)”, in *Marisia. Studii și materiale. Arheologie-istorie-etnografie*, Tg.Mures, 1977, vol.VII, p.359-439.

sont modifiés pour être adaptés au spécifique de chaque communauté, alors qu'elles arrivent d'être méconnaissable, étant assimilés et transformés, partiellement ou totalement, donnant une nouvelle apparence à l'identité locale.³⁶

Particulièrement intéressants sont les interférences subies par signes funéraires chez les Roumains et Hongrois où on trouve un série de formes et motifs décoratifs communs, à la fois parus tant par les interférences tels que certaines représentations des motifs solaire aux pierres tombales hongroises de Chendu ou des diverses représentations triconque de la Croix qu'on trouve dans la Vallée de Niraj en tant qu'aux roumains et hongrois catholiques. Certains des motifs décoratifs sur les signes funéraires comme la rosette, l'arbre de la vie, la tulipe, l'oiseau présentes tant aux roumains et hongrois ou saxons ont une plus large zone de diffusion afin que nous ne pouvons pas parler de la prise de ces motifs d'une ethnie à l'autre.

Le cimetière, l'espace des morts, pose divers problèmes d'ordre pratique, son mode d'arrangement et l'organisation sont soumises aux diverses interventions législatives de l'Etat, comme s'est passé à la fin du XVIIIe siècle et le début du XIXe siècle. Au-delà de ces influences de l'État, une série d'influences dans l'organisation des cimetières viennent de la religion, car la confession continue à diriger l'organisation des cimetières ruraux en Roumanie, mais en plus à la religion, le paysage géographique ainsi que divers changements socio-économiques affectent l'organisation du cimetière.

La typologie des cimetières diffère selon l'organisation du village, l'environnement géographique dans lequel se trouve le village, alors on retrouve souvent dans les villages dispersés des cimetières familiaux, situés dans le jardin. Nous voyons différentes façons d'organiser l'aménagement du cimetière en parallèle avec la disposition des maisons dans le village. Dans certains villages on préfère l'organisation des cimetières généalogiquement, en particulier dans les villages roumains, où tout le village était souvent organisé sur critères de parenté. Laurian Someșan remarquait l'organisation en parentés des villages dans la région collinaire de Montagnes Calimani, organisation qui se retrouve aussi dans l'organisation des cimetières. Le même système d'organisation était aussi à Zagăr et Dumbrăvioara, le cimetière étant une copie de la topographie du village, après les parentés.

La symbolique des piliers funéraires et pierres tombales dans le passé et le présent

Parmi les aspects symboliques funéraires monumentales, architecturales, dans la région dont nous référons, Mures et Harghita (mais aussi Covasna et d'autres comtés habités par des Hongrois), les plus importantes qui corrélient à leur

³⁶ Laura Pop, *Interferențe culturale în obicejurile funerare din județul Mureș, secolele XIX – XX*, résumé de la thèse doctorales, l' Université du Oradea, 2009, pp. 7-13.

importance l'appartenance identitaire à une ethnie est le pilier funéraire, ou le pilier de chevet aux Hongrois et Sicules et la croix en bois ou en pierre aux roumains.

Aussi dans les cimetières communs qu'en celles propres, le pilier funéraire souligne d'une façon intentionnelle directe l'appartenance à l'ethnie hongroise ou sicule. Significativement ce n'est l'épithète qui est souvent:

"Est-ce qu'on pouvait vouloir en plus un Sicule comme litière que la terre natale et l'ombre d'un pilier de chevet comme couverture...?"

À propos de piliers funéraires aux Hongrois et Sicules ont été écrites de nombreux ouvrages au fil du temps, mais en roumain ils sont encore sporadiques, c'est pourquoi nous y insisterons dans l'espoir d'édifier certains aspects liés à leur expression identitaire.³⁷

Les colonnes commémoratives en forme de pilier de chevet représentent preuves matérielles essentielles sur les coutumes funéraires anciennes pratiquées en région par les Hongrois, par qu'ils voulaient indiquer leur appartenance à autre ethnie face aux Roumains et Saxons avec qu'ils vivaient ensemble en Transylvanie.

Il y a des opinions que les piliers de chevet ont entrées dans notre culture sous l'influence turque, et ont longtemps été interdits par les préceptes chrétiens, ce qui explique pourquoi les plus anciens sont situés dans les cimetières réformés et unitariens, même si pendant ce temps ils ont été répandus aussi en ceux catholiques.³⁸ De l'opinion de Kupos Tibor nous citons plus ci-dessous, parce que est représentatif des Hongrois.

Le matériau le plus bon pour faire un bois de chevet est le bois de chêne. Initialement, il était attaché directement dans la terre de la tombe en l'introduisant en terre environ un tiers de la longueur. Dernièrement, il était plaqué avec une tôle en fer, comme les piliers de la porte cochère, étant montés sur un socle en béton. Le pilier de chevet est représenté, comme forme, d'une prisme quadrangulaire, rétrécie d'une manière spécifique, sur laquelle, à partir de la base au sommet, on peut distinguer trois parties: le tronc, qui est le plus développé, le registre ou on note la légende y compris le nom du défunt, les dates de naissance et de décès, éventuellement avec de brèves références sur les aspects de la vie de la personne décédée et / ou un pensé sur l'espérance de la résurrection, du salut.

Au sommet du tronc continuent les incrustations décoratives, la partie du col est étroite et sculptée sur toute sa surface. Les motifs traditionnels des décorations sont généralement les figures géométriques (différentes versions

³⁷ Péterfy László, *Maroszlék Régi Sírkövei*, Tg.Mures, Ed. Mentor, 2005, pp.132-151; voir aussi Novák László Ferenc, *Fejfá Monográfia. Monography of wooden grave post*, Nagykorös, 2005.

³⁸ Kupos Tibor, „Semnificația de odinioară a stălpilor de căpătâi și valoarea lor simbolică de azi”, en *Caiete Silvane*, noiembrie 2008, Zalău, le magazine électronique.

d'étoile, la croix de Saint André, en fait des "x" stylisés, la croix sicule (pour les romano-catholiques), le «bouton du meunier», etc.)

Le bout (tête) du pilier est l'élément final et le plus suggestif. Dans l'option pour forme et symbolique, les traditions locales jouent un rôle très important. Dans l'ancien comté Trei Scaune (aujourd'hui, comté Covasna,) mais aussi dans les autres habitées principalement par des Hongrois ou Sicules, dans le cas des hommes on coupait une couronne, une massue ou un casque, avec une référence directe à la qualité de guerrier, des gardes-frontière ou soldat; si c'était pour une femme âgée, on représentait un chignon et si c'était pour une jeune ou une fille, une tulipe. La tulipe a progressivement gagné prédominance dans la symbolique traditionnelle hongroise, ici y est en effet représenté la majorité des expressions plastiques de la culture hongroise, y en associant les éléments identitaires d'appartenance à l'ethnie hongroise, même si le symbole a longtemps été utilisé par les Saxons et roumains aussi.

Dernièrement, ont été sculptés en bois des colonnes commémoratifs à partir du modèle des piliers de chevet, où les éléments décoratifs peuvent être distingués radicalement des marqueteries traditionnelles.

En ce qui concerne la symbolique on peut ajouter que les quelques données existantes comptent principalement sur les traditions dans Le Territoire des Sicules (Secuime) transmises de génération en génération. Cependant, il y a des différences significatives selon la région ou la localité. Les symboles, aussi que les ornements transmetteurs des valeurs artistiques remarquables, sont nombreux et variées, un tel motif peut être trouvé en variations innombrables. Par stylisation ou polissage est révélée aussi la personnalité ou la créativité du maître sculpteur.³⁹

Les symboles religieux: la croix, le saule, la rose de Luther etc. sont généralement placés sous son nom ou sur le côté opposé du pilier.

Dans une mise en revue des symboles ont pu être identifiés aussi les symboles représentant: la fille, l'épouse, le fermier, l'homme riche, le soldat mort au devoir, la mère, le militaire, l'érudit, l'homme du livre, homme distingué en tant que serviteur ou par une vie de famille particulière. Les différentes formes et compositions des étoiles signifient la bravoure, les honneurs militaires, les vertus acquises ou l'existence des descendants mâles. Y peut également apparaître des symboles révélateurs de la situation de la stratigraphie sociale.

Au fil du temps, les étoiles mémorielles, les piliers de chevet, sont devenus expressions de l'identité nationale chez les hongrois. La colonne sculptée en bois, une fois trouvée seulement dans les cimetières réformés, respectivement unitariennes, est devenue au fil du temps un symbole national hongrois et a

³⁹ Voir aussi Cseme Istvan, *A Marosvásárhelyi református Temető 1988-ban*, Tg. Mureș, 1994, pp. 139-148.

gagné une place importante à la fois en Hongrie et parmi les parleurs de langue hongroise dans les pays voisins, parce qu'en est devenu l'un des moyens les plus importants d'exprimer l'identité nationale.

Hofer Tamas⁴⁰, suit le procès d'élaboration de la partie mythologique sur le pilier de chevet et, en se basant sur les sources bibliographiques connues à ce moment a conclu que le processus de mythification a commencé dans le début du XIXe siècle. Certaines des premières données sur les piliers, colonnes de chevet, nous nous sont restés depuis le XVIe et XVIIe siècle. Les termes « kapyá », « kopyafa », « temet fa » etc., apparaissent pour la première fois dans le Dictionnaire Hongrois de régionalismes (1838) et Le Grand Dictionnaire de la langue hongroise (1865) offre aussi une explication sur l'utilisation de ce syntagme. Conformément à l'article consacré, le nom provient du coutume d'enfoncer au bout de la tombe d'un guerrier qui est tombé dans la bataille sa lance, en fait, le cercueil était porté au tombeau toujours avec l'aide de lances. (La lance appelé « kopja » était 3,5 à 4 m long et était étroite au sommet. La lame avait une forme de petite épine ou de feuille. Plus bas, juste en dessous du bout, était fixé un étendard triangulaire ou avec l'extrémité fourchée). C'est intéressant à noter que l'expression « pilier de chevet » se trouve seulement dans une source sur la révolution « pachoptiste » de 1848, sinon personne ne l'avait rencontré dans le langage populaire, utilisé par les paysans. Partant de cette observation, Hofer Tamas doute qu'auparavant a existé un terme et attire également notre attention sur le fait que ni le travail de synthèse de Balassa István (Les cimetières des villages hongroises) n'a pas réussi de certifier l'existence de piliers de chevet avant l'époque de la Réforme. En outre, basée sur des sources historiques, on ne peut pas dire qu'il y avait versions richement décoré des piliers de chevet avant la fin du XVIIIe siècle – le début du XIXe siècle. La conclusion est étayée par la coutume médiévale d'enterrement des morts dans le cimetière (arch. "tintirim") trouvé dans le cour de l'église, d'où puis, après un temps relativement court, les os ont été retirés et déposés dans l'ossuaire ou dans une fosse commune, il n'y avait donc pas généralisés les tombes individuelles. Orban Balazs, qui a voyagé tout Le Territoire des Sicules autour de 1860, a publié quelques images des piliers de chevet acquises d'un seul village (et seulement parce qu'ils étaient attachés à la mémoire des quelques hommes importants), donc il n'y a pas donné aucune importance et il n'a jamais utilisé l'expression « pilier de chevet ».

Huszka Jozsef⁴¹ a écrit sur les piliers de chevet en sens de créations artistiques populaires. Dans le livre dédié aux portes sicules il a publié plusieurs illustrations avec des poutres en bois sculptées, qui sont en corrélation avec les piliers de chevet qui seraient en effet des représentations stylisées des lances

⁴⁰ Voir aussi Mohay Tamás (szerk.): *Közelítések. Néprajzi, történeti, antropológiai tanulmányok Hofer Tamás 60. születésnapjára*, Debrecen, Ethnica, 1992, p. 353–371.

⁴¹ Voir aussi Huszka József, *A turáni magyar ornamentika története*, Budapest, 1930.

enfoncées dans la tombe. Il n'a pas réussi soutenir sa théorie basée sur des sources écrites et n'a pas été surpris que les tombes des enfants et des femmes avaient été marquées de façon similaire. L'association des piliers de chevet avec les lances, avec l'histoire passée, a tournée l'attention vers l'aube de l'histoire hongroise, et les prismes carrées ont été taillées ont été considérés comme une tradition oubliée des anciens Hongrois, qui renaquit après la Réforme. Après le début du XXe siècle, le motif du pilier de chevet est devenu de plus en plus connu, donc dans la série de monographies (Art folklorique hongroise), repris en 1908 sous la coordination de Malonyay Dezs apparaissent déjà 740 représentations des piliers funéraires. La Biennale de Venise, Exposition Internationale des Beaux-Arts, Edition 1908, le chemin vers le pavillon hongrois a été encadré par une double rangée de piliers funéraires (entre qui y avaient été placée une série de mosaïques avec des sujets de légendes liés à Attila). Par conséquent, dans la conscience des hongroises a pris racine la conviction que le levée des piliers de chevet, respectivement le marquage des tombes avec des poutres sculptées, enfoncées dans les tombes, représente une renaissance d'une ancestrale coutume hongroise. Les piliers de chevet ont été progressivement transformés en symboles nationale hongroises et ont commencé à apparaître plus souvent aussi en dehors des cimetières, gagnant de nouvelles fonctionnalités, totalement différentes à celle initiale, comme des monuments publics. Actuellement, le nombre des monuments semblables, soulevés à diverses occasions, a considérablement augmenté, surtout dans la zone actuelle des comtés de Harghita, Covasna et Mureș.

Tout aussi intéressantes sont les pierres tombales des hongrois ou sicules et saxons, aussi que les croix en pierre et en bois chez les roumains de l'espace soumis à la recherche. Y cependant exige une étude comparative développée dans une autre oeuvre.

La symbolique et coutumes funéraires dans les communautés saxonnes

Dans les communautés saxonnes, la symbolique, la couverture chrétienne des coutumes funéraires s'impose sur l'ancienne coutume allemande de l'inhumation, mettant en évidence le soin pour parer le mort, la veille à sa tête, la plainte, le cortège funèbre, l'entour du tertre funéraire, l'offrande sur la pierre qui a servi d'autel, la charité. D'œuvres représentatives de Adolf Schullerus, nous citons plus ci-dessous.⁴²

Chez les Saxons, à l'enterrement était appelé «le cadavre», y on parlait d'un «enterrement choisi» si une grande foule a assisté aux funérailles, si des mots émouvantes ont été dites et la conduite des personnes en deuil a été bienséante.

⁴² Adolf Schullerus, *Scurt tratat de etnografie a sașilor din Transilvania*, București, Ed. Meroni, 2003, pp. 161-174.

Le symbolisme funéraire se trouve aussi dans la façon dont l'homme mort était habillé. Ainsi, l'homme était vêtu, dans le passé, avec la chemise d'époux, les vêtements choisis pour le Dimanche, un chapeau blanc sur la tête, dans le passé avec un bonnet de martre, au lieu de bottes avait des chaussettes en lin; la femme était enterrée avec ce chapeau-là et les rubans noirs reçues à la noce, ou avec le cylindre orné, en robe blanche de lin, la chemise de mariée et les chaussures de la noce. Les aiguilles du cylindre orné étaient retirées avant que le cercueil soit fermé. Les filles étaient enterrées avec cylindre, les rubans étaient alignées à côté, les petites filles portaient capuchon coloré. En ce qui concerne la plainte, elle commençait dans nombreux localités immédiatement après la mise du mort sur la table (năsălie - civière), y commençait la mère ou, si elle était morte, la fille aînée, puis les filles après l'âge et les belles-filles. Dans Ideciu de Sus, la plainte est représentée aussi par la manière comment en répond aux condoléances venant de parentes, connaissances et voisins.

Comparé à d'autres groupes ethniques, chez les saxons, la communauté apprenait de la mort qui s'est passée par le plus proche parent mâle qui allait à l'église portant un manteau de fourrure, qu'y en portait le Dimanche, il communiquait la mort au prêtre, seul ou accompagné par le père de voisinage, avec des formules établies dans la communauté, qui exprimaient le passage du décédé vers le monde de l'au-delà et la foi dans la résurrection heureuse.

À remarquer que chez les saxons, l'appel à l'enterrement était fait par les voisinages en annonçant le mort. À Sighișoara était la coutume que trois garçons de la classe secondaire de gymnase annoncent la mort dans la communauté.

Lors des funérailles, exceptés les proches, étaient toujours présents les voisinages, de chaque maison étant envoyé un représentant, ses statuts étaient très strictes et prévenant à préserver les coutumes funéraires. Les participants étaient tous habillés en vêtements foncés, de fête, les filles prisait leurs cheveux avec des nœuds ruban noires et les femmes de la maison portaient pour la dernier fois voile blanche, parce que pendant le deuil portaient conformément à la coutume seulement voile noire ou marronne.

Chez les saxons, dans le symbolisme des coutumes funéraires apparaît aussi l'usage que le père de voisinage, qui était un des hommes assis dans un demi-cercle allât à «demander» le mort de la famille, toujours par des formules verbaux établies. Les femmes restaient généralement dans la salle avec le mort, ensemble avec des parents proches.

Comme chez les autres ethnies, chez les Saxons aussi on prenait soin de présenter soigneusement le nécrologue.

L'enterrement se passait d'une manière différente d'une localité à l'autre. Cependant, le rôle du voisinage, cette vraie institution chez les saxons était impliquée aussi à ce moment des coutumes funéraires. Y jamais était limitée à la coutume bien-connu d'entraide. Une fois, les jeunes en proximité portaient le cercueil sur leurs épaules vers le cimetière, de la symbolique

funéraire chez les saxons on se rappelle que seulement chez les morts était l'habitude de décorer le cercueil avec une couronne de fleurs en qui accrochaient une poire dorée. Après qu'on disait les prières et la lecture du prêtre du petit livre liturgique, le père de voisinage (ou si le mort était un jeune garçon ou une jeune-fille - le plus aîné garçon, donnait le signal pour l'enterrement et disait un mot de clôture, de consolation, avec l'espoir de la résurrection et remerciait à la communauté pour participer à ce moment important dans la vie de la famille et du voisinage.

La symbolique funéraire des tombes chez les saxons connait des différences architecturales aussi qu'aux autres groupes ethniques de l'espace soumis à la recherche, de formules simplistes aux monuments tombales avec des réalisations artistiques particulières avec des épitaphes, en particulier pour les défunts qui ont eu un statut social important au sein de la communauté.

On peut conclure que, en termes de la symbolique funéraire mise en évidence par des rituels, coutumes, accessoires et monuments funéraires, il y a des différences nettes entre les pratiques des confessions chrétiennes des églises historiques et de celles réformées, entre celles orthodoxes et celles gréco-catholiques chez les roumains et celles catholiques, réformées ou unitariennes calvinistes chez les hongroises, aussi que celles évangélique luthérienne chez les saxons. Ces différences évidentes se produisent aussi dans le cas des monuments funéraires, mais y sont liées à plusieurs facteurs: religieux, sociaux, économiques, politiques, mais aussi à la mentalité individuelle et collective. Ainsi on remarque que les identités culturelles sont mises en évidence aussi par la symbolique funéraire des croix ou des pierres tombales, des piliers de chevet ou d'autres insignes. D'y en se détachent parfois par des stylisations plus artistiques réalisées, par des symboles transposées en bois, pierre, marbre ou en métal, des vraies déclarations des statuts, rangs ou de la position sociale détenues par le défunt pendant sa vie, qui devraient être marquées aussi par ces insignes funéraires. Parfois, au contraire, la symbolique funéraire se caractérise par une grande simplicité qui ne fait que nous envoyer, aussi de cette manière, le message de la nôtre précarité et éphémérité pendant le grand passage.

Le travail présenté n'est pas une approche exhaustive de tous les éléments et séquences appartenant au rite funéraire dans la région nommée, mais seulement quelques séquences que j'ai considéré plus importantes dans cette étape de la recherche.

Remarque

Ce travail a été réalisé dans le cadre du projet "Valorisation des identités culturelles dans le processus de globalisation", cofinancé par l'Union Européenne et le Gouvernement de la Roumanie, du Fond Social Européen, par le Programme Opérationnel Sectoriel de Développement des Ressources Humaines 2007-2013, bénéficiaire de l'Académie Roumaine.

RITUALS OF DEATH, FOOD AND LIFE IN GREECE

EVY JOHANNE HÅLAND¹

Food is very important both in modern and ancient Greek religion, because the religious rituals are principally performed to ensure the food. Since the dead control the fertility, the death-cult is also a central feature in all religious festivals. In modern times the festivals are dedicated to saints, the holy dead. In the ancient world, the *heroes* and *heroines* were important as well as the vegetation gods (desses) who perpetually oscillated between life and death. But the ordinary dead are and were also dedicated rituals and offerings at their tombs.

It is important to be on good terms with the dead, because they influence both the living and the stronger powers that control the fruits of the earth. The earth also must be regenerated annually. As the ancient vegetation gods (desses) and *heroes/heroines*, the saints become mediators on behalf of the living. The dead person was the wielder of a magical influence. He is also a mediator between even stronger powers in the underworld, who are responsible for the fruits of the earth. It is of great importance to manipulate these powers for the benefit of the living world. Before critical passages of the agricultural year, people pray to the dead for their help, and by way of their dead the farmers may communicate their wishes for a good supply at the next harvest. The article will compare the annual rituals dedicated to the dead to ensure the food in ancient and modern Greece.²

Modern and ancient festivals of the agricultural cycle

When we examine the various modern festivals, we encounter close parallels with ancient festivals. The modern liturgical year follow the seasonal rituals of

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² Since 1983, I have had several periods of fieldwork in the Mediterranean, mainly in Greece and Italy where I have also been conducting research on religious festivals since 1987. The problems and fruitfulness of working with anthropological comparative approaches (such as using material from Modern Greek civilisation as models) to Ancient Society are discussed in Evy Johanne Håland, *Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient: A Comparison of Female and Male Values* (in Norwegian), Kristiansand, Norwegian Academic Press, 2007 (an English version, tr. by Dr Marie Wells, is forthcoming: Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing), see particularly chs. 4-5, for comprehensive presentations of the following festivals. See also E. J. Håland, 'Rituals of Magical Rain-Making in Modern and Ancient Greece: A Comparative Approach', in *Cosmos: The Journal of the Traditional Cosmology Society*, XVII, 2 (2005), pp. 197-251, E. J. Håland, 'The ritual year as a woman's life: The festivals of the agricultural cycle, life-cycle passages of Mother Goddesses and fertility-cult', in G. Mifsud-Chircop ed., *First International Conference of the SIEF working group on The Ritual Year. In association with The Department of Maltese University of Malta, Junior College, Msida, Malta, 2005: Proceedings*, Malta, Publishers Enterprises Group (PEG) Ltd, 2006, pp. 303-326.

the agricultural calendar. This is a legacy from the pre-Christian cult, since the official Athenian calendar in the ancient world also was permeated by prehistoric agricultural rituals. The modern farmer performs the same ceremonies at the same time of the year as his ancient equivalent: before the sowing he prays to ensure a good crop and at the harvest he offers a thank offering by celebrating a festival. In that way the ancient farmer secured the future relations with his gods and goddesses, as the modern farmer does with the Christian saints and other deceased. The central act of the festival is the blood sacrifice or a bloodless offering for example corn cakes, the gift to the gods or the dead (Fig. 1), to secure that they will be generous and return the gift in the future. In other words, the dead receives the offering in order to provide for the fertility of society through communication with stronger powers, first and foremost Mother Earth.

Religious rituals in which food is a crucial factor are still important. These rituals are not only an excuse to celebrate and having a pleasant time, but are celebrated to secure the future harvest, or as the Greek say, **it is for the good** (*gia to kalo*). The significance of the food is a prominent feature in religious rituals in modern Greece.

In the following, I will focus on the importance of the food in some of the saints' feasts that I have visited during my fieldwork. I will also discuss the significance of the food in the ritual offerings dedicated at the tombs of deceased individuals. While exploring the seasonal festivals in modern Greece I will also present their parallels in ancient times in which food was crucial. The festivals will be discussed in the sequence which is established by the agricultural cycle. The festival calendar starts in late summer or early autumn after harvest and the threshing of the grain, and terminates around summer solstice and the grain harvest to ensure a good crop.

Religious festivals reinforce the bonds between members of a community and their supernatural patrons, celebrating the exchange of gifts that seal their relationship: the devotees bestow honours and offerings to their patrons who in their turn are expected to renew the protection they provide to the community. This means that the festival in general is an important means of communication, an offering or a gift, most often dedicated to a deceased guardian of society, for instance to the *Panagia* (i.e. The All-Holy One, the Virgin Mary).³

³ The Greek name of the Virgin reminds us that she is considered the most important intercessor and saint in the Greek tradition which emphasizes her maternal role as the Mother of God, rather than her Virginity. There are further theological differences in the way in which Mary is viewed in the Orthodox and Catholic churches. In the Orthodox Church, Mary is not seen as immaculately conceived and bodily assumed into heaven. Accordingly, the Orthodox Church celebrates her Dormition, rather than her Assumption, and she does not become a semi-deified human as in Catholicism, Jill Dubisch, *In a Different Place: Pilgrimage, Gender, and Politics at a*

The cyclical perspective is central in connection with the festivals of the agricultural year, and the official ideological rituals are adapted to the agricultural calendar. Thus, the orthodox liturgical year is established through the *Panagia's* biography. It begins around autumn, and several important moments in the life of the *Panagia* are celebrated during this period of the year, i.e. before and around sowing and during the germination and growth of the corn crops, when the “female”, wet and fertile period in the agricultural year's cycle replaces the “male” and dry period, because the woman is looked upon as the productive partner in a relationship in the Mediterranean area.⁴

The Panagia in the underworld and the transition towards the female, wet and fertile period

Generally, August and particularly 1st August is also considered the beginning of a new season in Greece. By the end of the dog days, by the end of August, the transitional period towards the “productive part” of the year is about to begin again when the “female”, wet and fertile period in the agricultural year's cycle is about to resume. At this time, the grain harvest is secured and followed by the “dead period” of its cycle, and the farmer as well as the resting earth starts anticipating the “first rains”, the early rains of autumn⁵ that fall from Heaven, so that the Earth conceives.

In Greece, the transition to the fertile and healing period starts when, according to popular belief, the *Panagia* descends into the underworld, and consequently ensures the future fertility in agreement with the divine underworld. The 15 August celebrates the “Dormition” or “Falling Asleep” (i.e. *Koimēsis*) of the *Panagia*, followed by her burial or the “9th day's ritual of the *Panagia*” on 23 August, thus, reflecting ordinary death-rituals and the following memorial service. The festival marks a turning point towards autumn, and one might also say that she falls asleep, before she is reborn in September, paralleling the earth that sinks to rest after harvest and is renewed in the autumn, since there is a correspondence between the earth and the *Panagia*⁶ as shown in her biography and the important phases of the agricultural year, from the sowing to the harvest. During the Dormition-festival on the Aegean island of Tinos, pilgrims arrive to the *Panagia* bringing with them offerings, as olive oil, bread, wine, or sheep (Fig. 2). People also wish each other a “happy winter” (*kalos cheimōnas*). The Dormition may also be regarded as a festival where the first fruits of the grain is offered, presented as the first loaf of bread made from

Greek Island Shrine, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 236, cf. Irene Economides, *Differences between the Orthodox Church and Roman Catholicism*, Athens, 1986.

⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Le Sens Pratique*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980, ch. 3.

⁵ Cf. *Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, tr. H. G. Evelyn-White, The Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, 1950 (1914), hereafter, *Hes. Op.* 414-419.

⁶ J. Du Boulay, *Cosmos, Life, and Liturgy in a Greek Orthodox Village*, Limni, Greece, Denise Harvey, 2009, ch. 2.

the harvest. At the island of Imbros, in the northern Aegean, the “*Tauros* (i.e. bull) sacrifice” is performed annually at the Dormition of the *Panagia*. Afterwards the dead receives food-offerings at their tombs. The kinds of food which are offered are season’s fruit such as watermelon and sweets.⁷

The Dormition of the *Panagia* is celebrated at the same time as the Panathenaia dedicated to the birthday of the protecting city Goddess Athena, the goddess of the olive tree, was celebrated in ancient Athens. In this festival the central ritual was a procession that carried a *peplos* (dress) through the city up to Athena at the Akropolis. The procession was followed by a sacrifice, in which particularly ewes and cows were dedicated to the virgin Goddess. When the animal sacrifice had been ritually dedicated to the goddess, the human participants consumed the meat through a communal meal. This ancient fertility- and healing-festival also initiated the transitional period towards the “female”, wet and fertile period in the agricultural year’s cycle, and it was celebrated in a crucial period for the olive crop.⁸

The ancient Greeks believed that the various agonistic festivals derived from commemorations dedicated to great men or women. We meet the pattern at the Panathenaia, because death-cults both in the *Agora* (market place) and on the Akropolis were of major importance in connection with the cult of the goddess. All the agonistic festivals in ancient Greece had their own *hero*, because they were traced back to some mythical death and burial, i.e. festival games originated as funeral games for *heroes*. The rituals re-enacted the ceremonies conducted at the burials and memorial celebrations for a deceased *hero*. The same picture emerges when we consider the Pan-Hellenic festivals and lesser local festivals, although the connections are more obscure. A putative tomb was a prerequisite for the festival site, and blood-offerings were made in honour of the *heroes* at the altar that was of central importance in the cult of the *hero*, a person who lived long ago and was still honoured. This dead person was the wielder of a magical influence. Like the dead *heroines*,⁹ he was also a mediator between even stronger powers in the underworld, who were responsible for the fruits of the earth. It was important to manipulate these powers for the benefit of the living world. Since this pattern can also be found

⁷ Cf. E. Psychogiou, “*Maurēgē*” kai *Elenē*: *Teletourgies Thanatou kai Anagennēsēs*, *Dēmosieumata tou Kentrou Ereunēs tēs Ellēnikēs Laographias* 24, Athens, Academy of Athens, 2008.

⁸ Håland, *Greek Festivals*, and E. J. Håland, *The Ritual Year of Athena: The agricultural cycle of the olive, girls’ passage rites, and official ideology*. Keynote address presented at the Third Conference of the SIEF Working Group on The Ritual Year, The Ritual Year and History, Stražnice, Czech Republic, May 2007. An article version, ‘The Ritual Year of Athena: The agricultural cycle of the olive, girls’ rites of passage, and official ideology’, is forthcoming in *The Journal of Religious History* (2012).

⁹ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, vols. 1 and 4, tr. W. H. S. Jones, The Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, 1955, 1935 (1918), hereafter, Paus. 9.17, 4-6.

in the modern religious festivals dedicated to dead persons, such festivals are connected with a cult of the dead, and may be referred to as *death-festivals*.

The death and resurrection of the personified meal

Modern Greeks on the island of Aegina, also worship a personified meal in a ritual which reminds very much of the cult dedicated earlier vegetation gods (dessess).¹⁰ When the summer half-year closes, the regular break at noon and late evening meals also come to an end. During the festival dedicated to the *Exaltation of the Cross* on 14 September, the sunny, and among the farmers very demanding period's supplementary evening- or afternoon-meal is literally buried during the ritual, *Leidinos* or *Deilino* (i.e. Evening-meal). The women gather and some of them boil Leidinos which is made of grain, grapes, pomegranates, almonds, roasted chickpeas and some parsley. Others make a doll which is dressed and decorated with flowers. This doll, Leidinos, personifies the meal which has now come to an end. Leidinos is laid on a table and is lamented by the women. Their laments also tell about his resurrection next spring: *With the dew in March, with the flowers in April, with the work in May you will return*. When they finish their lament, Leidinos is laid in a flower-decorated coffin. While, singing, they carry Leidinos in a procession through the village. Afterwards, he is buried, and when throwing earth in the grave, everyone say: *now Deilino* (i.e. the meal) *stops and the sleep will reign*. From now, they will not work from sunrise to sunset until next spring. After the burial of Leidinos, everybody return to their houses and eat the Deilino asking Leidinos his forgiveness. Then, the music and dance start.

The festival parallels ancient festivals such as the Dionysian cult particularly illustrated in a vase painting¹¹ on which the god is lying in a winnowing basket (i.e. *liknon*). But the ritual reminds especially of the ancient Adōnia although this festival was celebrated earlier during the year. The unofficial Athenian festival dedicated to Adonis, the Adōnia, was a women's festival and the essential ritual was to make a wooden image of the oriental vegetation god, which was laid on a flower decorated bier on the roof-tops. Then, they sang laments, danced, while beating and scarifying their breasts. Next, they buried the dead god. In ancient Athens, women celebrated Adonis during the ripening and reaping of the fruits of the earth, paralleling the celebrations of the Corn Goddesses, Demeter and Kore or Persephone. The Leidinos-ritual also parallels the myth about Persephone's annual descent to the underworld in the autumn and return in the spring.

¹⁰ The following description draws on Alkē Kyriakidou-Nestoros, *Oi 12 Mēnes: Ta Laographika*, Athens, Malliarēs-Paideia, 1986 (1982), p.111, pp. 113-116.

¹¹ J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, vols. 1-2, 2nd edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1963, hereafter, ARV 1249, 13.

Offerings of the crop to ancient gods, modern saints and the dead

The two most important moments in the agrarian cycle are sowing and spring, both for the modern and ancient farmer. At the festivals which are celebrated after harvest, in September, people take some of their crop to the church, and put it near the entrance to the sanctuary or iconostasis which separates the congregation from the Holy of Holies, to be blessed by the priest. Next, they take the blessed crop home, so the house will be protected towards the time of sowing in October-November. Then a handful of this consecrated crop is mixed with the seed corn, while the rest are buried in the field to ensure an abundant crop next year. This is a parallel to the ancient Thesmophoria festival when the decayed remains of the offerings (piglets and objects made from wheat into representations of snakes and male shapes) to Demeter were fetched up from underground "rooms", i.e. caves, the entrances to the womb of the earth, and mixed with the seed corn.¹²

Around sowing, on 21 November the Presentation of the *Panagia* in the Temple is celebrated. Her "Entry into the Temple" marks an important point in the period of winter sowing, and the festival celebrates the *Panagia* as the patroness of the sowing, by offering her *polysporia* or *panspermia* (*pan*: all, *spērñō*: to sow, "all seeds"), a boiled mixture of all kinds of crop and several varieties of corn, i.e. all sorts of the fruits of the earth. The ingredients are the same as in *kollyva* (a mixture of wheat, nuts and fruit), which is usually offered at harvest, to various other saints and to the dead during the memorial services at the tombs as in the ancient world. The mixture consists of boiled stewed wheat mixed with honey or sugar, pomegranate - the symbol for abundance - cinnamon, raisins, and minced walnuts - symbolizing the pleasures of life -, sesame, parsley, currants, etc. The mixture is decorated with powdered sugar, which in other situations symbolizes the pollen of the bees.

Also in ancient Greece during Demeter's festival at the time of sowing, a general mixture of the edible plants to be sown was boiled and offered to the Goddess, and her worshippers also partook of it, while praying for a renewal of these different crops next year. The ritual was repeated around sprouting in January and before the harvest in May-June. The fact that a similar meal is boiled on the festival dedicated to the Presentation of the *Panagia* in the Temple, illustrates that the mother of Christ has taken over the functions of an older pre-Christian Mother Goddess, and the ingredients in the mixture draw attention to the ancient goddess of the corn crop, Demeter.

The obscene reawakening of the "dead" earth

The female festival dedicated to the midwife, Babo, *Agia* (i.e. Saint) Domenika, is celebrated in the village of Monokklësia in Greek Macedonia on 8 January.

¹² Hugo Rabe, ed., *Scholia in Lucianum*, Leipzig, 1906, hereafter, *Schol. Luc. Dial. Meret.* 2.1, Rabe, 1906, 275.23-276.28, discussed in Håland, *Greek Festivals*, ch. 5.

Agia Domenika is the midwife who according to the tradition helped *Panagia* at the birth of Christ and until his baptism, but few women in Monokklēsia know this saint. In this festival we encounter obscenities and alcohol consumption (Fig. 3). This mid-winter festival is important to secure the harvest, because January is the time when it becomes clear whether or not the year will be a good one. If the cereals have not grown to a certain height when the frost sets in, they will need a lot of rain in the spring to “catch up” and not be burned by the hot spring sun before they are ripe. If only a small percentage of the seeds have sprouted by January, it is unlikely that the crop will be a good one. The farmer knows that the seeds which germinate after the frost in the spring rains are likely to be blasted by the sun before they are ripe and fail to produce grain. At this period, the fields are “dead”. The growth of the shoots is at a temporary standstill. Likewise, the sun’s power has declined each day. This kind of magical rite, in which people attempt to warm up or wake up the earth to stimulate its fertility by the magical manipulation of sexual or agricultural symbols, by merry feasting and obscene behaviour, is paralleled in the other modern celebrations and rituals which take place during the twelve-day period from Christmas to Epiphany and during the carnival season before the Lenten period and later during spring, but has also ancient parallels.

An ancient parallel is the unabashed nocturnal Haloa, i.e. threshing floor festival of the corn goddess Demeter celebrated by women in ancient Eleusis.¹³ It was also a mid-winter festival celebrated at the time of the solstice when the crops are seemingly frozen and arrested in their growth. At this time, the earth needs help “to wake up from the death’s embrace”. The importance of this stage in the grain’s growth explains why the Haloa festival of light, warmth, eating and drinking, ribaldry and fertility magic takes place at this time, and why it is dedicated to Demeter. Both today and in the ancient ritual, the fertility of the earth is stimulated by the magical manipulation of sexual or agricultural symbols. These rituals are not only performed as a reminder of natural events, but attempt to influence them, both magically and by propitiation of the deities concerned. During the Haloa festival a pregnant cow was also sacrificed to the earth in the fields; the growing seed and embryonic life are seen to be related, and according to the paradoxical logic of sacrifice one has to kill the one in order to promote the other.¹⁴

¹³ *Schol. Luc. DMeretr.* 7.4, Rabe, 1906, 279.24-281.3, discussed in Håland, *Greek Festivals*, ch. 5.

¹⁴ Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Basil Blackwell and Harvard University Press (original published in German 1977, tr. John Raffan), 1985; Allaire Chandor Brumfield, *The Attic Festivals of Demeter and their relation to the Agricultural Year*, Monographs of Classical Studies, Salem, New Hampshire, The Ayer Company, 1981.

“Kalogeros”: the carnival-monk’s or rainmaker’s journey to the underworld to ensure the crop

Carnival, *Apokreos*, takes place all over Greece, the Balkans and the rest of the Mediterranean every spring. The carnival season lasts three weeks, and is a time of gaiety and merriment before entering the Lenten period, which lasts until Easter. The first week is known as the “*Prophōnē*” (from *prophōnō*, to address, to announce), because carnival is announced; the second week is the “Meat Week” and the last is the “Cheese Week”. Masquerading during carnival is a widespread custom.

During carnival the farmer remains deeply aware that nature is undergoing a slow change. Thus, by means of various symbolic practices inherited from remote antiquity, he seeks to hasten the coming of spring and ensure the fertility of his land. So, in addition to the comic and satirical performances which take place on Cheese Monday in the village squares, we may also find other practices inspired by a very ancient sense of magic and usually people ring bells to wake up the sleeping earth and keep away evil spirits.

The carnival ritual known as “Kalogeros”, i.e. the monk, is celebrated on Cheese Monday, around the spring equinox, in the villages of Melikē and Agia Elenē in Greek Macedonia. In the ceremony rituals to promote rain and ensure the sprouting grain are important. Accordingly, during the main ritual of the festival they sow *polysporia*, a mixture of grains, while invoking the buried grain so that it may come back to life again. The festival also includes unrestrained alcohol consumption, singing of obscene songs, particularly during the ceremony of ploughing and sowing, a mock wedding, phallic symbols and a procession which lasts 5-6 hours. The ceremony ends as it started: the person who is chosen to be the Kalogeros for the year is fed in front of the church dedicated to *Agios* Athanasios. The ritual meal always consists of three mouthfuls of each of their most important articles of food: blessed bread, cheese and olives (Fig. 4). By giving this to the rainmaker, the villagers give what they wish to receive in abundance the following year. Afterwards, the Kalogeros is carried to the mud. Here, they immerse him three times. To do the ritual properly, he is laid on his back in the narrow trench or furrow, which they have ploughed in the field. It seems difficult to carry out the ritual properly in the mud, but the mud is in fact of the greatest importance. This act symbolises the death and resurrection of the Kalogeros, and is the most important and tragic of the play. When he has been in the underworld fighting with the evil forces, i.e. death, and comes back to life, he is washed with water from the village’s water-tank, *so it will rain during the summer*, everybody says while completing the ceremony.

During the procession they pay visits to all the houses in the village and are treated with wine, ouzo and food. In all the houses the owner offers some

raisins and a sip of alcohol *to ensure the good*. Equally, every housewife is offered a mouthful of wine by one of the visitors, “the little Prince”, before sprinkling the Kalogeros with *polysporia*, a symbolic mixture of grains from her sieve, as a return gift (Fig. 5). The Kalogeros ritual has many parallels with the ancient Athenian Anthesteria festival which was dedicated to the wine god, Dionysos. The wine-drinking during the Kalogeros, for example, parallels the drinking contest during the Anthesteria which was celebrated when the new wine was opened in the spring month *Anthesterion*. This festival lasted three days, and was dedicated to the new wine, but the festival was also the festival of the ancestors. During this festival the first shoots of blossom were celebrated at the end of February and beginning of March, but the temporary return of the spirits of dead was also necessary. It was supposed that the spirits of the dead returned to earth when the wine-jars were opened. They came from the shrine of Dionysos in the Marshes, *en limnais*, and it was opened only once a year to facilitate the arrival of the dead. The third day of the festival was dedicated to the spirits of the dead. During a ritual which was the concern of the individual householder, the dead were offered a boiled mixture of all kinds of grains along with honey, *panspermia* (“all seeds”). The meal was cooked in *Chytroi* (“Pots”), from which the day took its name. On behalf of the dead, the meal of pottage was offered to the god Hermes who conducted the dead to and from the underworld.

The Resurrection of Christ and the ripening and growth of the grain

In the village of Olympos on the island of Karpachos in Southern Greece, the Orthodox Easter season celebrations are celebrated as a healing spring festival which also includes death- and fertility-rituals. Central is the ritual lament performed by the local women on Good Friday in front of the *Epitaphios* (Christ’s funeral), while tearing their loosened hair. Attached to the *Epitaphios* are written letters, i.e. *moirologia*, laments written in memory of the dead. The written laments are accompanied with pictures of the recently deceased, and the women are not lamenting Christ; they are lamenting their own dead family-members, particularly those who died most recently, and who are represented in the pictures.

During the Easter season in Olympos, the villagers also conduct an important ritual of rain magic, manifested through a rain litany and a procession with their principal icons: Besides the death and Resurrection of Christ, the most important ritual during Easter is performed on Tuesday after Easter, when the Resurrection of Christ is proclaimed from the cemetery. To honour the dead and celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, on “New” or “White” Tuesday in the “White Week”, the people of Olympos carry icons of saints from the main church to the cemetery for services honouring the dead. The farmers believe that the icons can ward off drought. Thus, in addition to regular

religious services at the graves, the priest says prayers for rain. The priest says a prayer over each grave, where the housewives have placed dishes of different food as offerings to the dead, dyed eggs, elaborate cakes, wine, orange-juice, cheese, sweets, fruits, etc. (Fig. 6). After the blessing of the priest, the food is finally passed round and eaten. In this way, they have a meal with the dead. There is an apparent competition between the leading families in the village to offer the most elaborate grave-gifts. Animal-sacrifice also belongs to the ritual. Then they take the icons, which are wrapped in bright cloths, into the fields to pray at the small private chapels to ensure good crops. They carry the icons in procession over the fields in the neighbourhood of the village, and they have a special service at the river, which is almost dry, during which the Panagia is immersed in the water in front of one of the many chapels. The background to the procession with the icons happened during a time of drought many years ago. Then, the priest prayed to the icons for rain. Afterwards, they have always carried the icons in procession on Tuesday after Easter. The icons preside over everything: prosperity, fertility, plentiful rain, harmony between the members of society and protection against all aggression from outside.

The Greek Orthodox Church, since Byzantine times, has celebrated Easter on the first Sunday after the appearance of the spring full moon. This is a favourable time for fertility and the growth of the crops. As already mentioned, the first week after Easter is known as the "White Week", another expression is the "Bright Week" (*Lamprē*, bright another word for Easter). These expressions have given rise to various beliefs: no work is allowed in the fields during this week for fear of hail, because hail is white. Further, women are not allowed to use a white distaff for their spinning, because the colour white brings hail.¹⁵ Instead of working, the celebrations during the "White Week" after Easter are important, since the whole crop may be lost if it starts to hail, and it is important to avoid this.

The Easter celebration offers parallels to ancient festivals dedicated to the vegetation gods or goddesses, such as the annual return of Persephone and Dionysos. The latter was celebrated during the aforementioned great spring festival the Anthesteria in Athens to guard the yearly renewal of vegetation while Persephone was celebrated with three different rituals in the same spring month *Anthesterion* when the flowers were blooming, for example the *Chloaia* (from an epithet of Demeter, *chloē*, i.e. young, green¹⁶), illustrating the importance of the spring and her yearly return.¹⁷ The ancient vegetation god,

¹⁵ Håland, 'Rituals of Magical Rain-Making'.

¹⁶ Paus. 1.22,3; Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, vol. 6, tr. C. Burton Gulick, The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1957 (1937), hereafter, Ath. 14.618e.

¹⁷ Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homeric*, tr. H. G. Evelyn-White, The Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, 1950 (1914), hereafter, *HHD*. 399-402, cf. Diodorus of Sicily, vol. 3,

Adonis was also celebrated in spring, before harvest, and today we find a parallel to the Adonis cult in modern Serres (Northern Greece) in connection with the *hassili* (the “gardens of Adonis”) which is believed to become holy during the Easter procession. Along with the flowers and candles decorating the Epitaphios they are believed to have miraculous power and produce the same fertilising effect as the “gardens of Adonis” on the spring feast of Adonis in antiquity. So, burying the *hassili* in the fields *is good for the crops*.

The festival with blood sacrifice and ecstatic dance

Today blood-offerings are made to the earth via the dead saints, *Agios* (i.e. Saint) Kōnstantinos and *Agia* Elenē, just before the grain harvest. The Anastenaria festival is celebrated 21-23 May in several villages in Greek Macedonia. I have visited the festival in the village of Agia Elenē. The festival is dedicated to the deceased saints, *Agios* Konstantinos and his mother, *Agia* Elenē. The Anastenaria festival presents animal sacrifice, holy water, and a communal meal when the black, fertile, male sacrificial lamb is consumed by the participants. The lamb is sacrificed by a freshly dug hole close to the tree and the *agiasma* (“holy water”) at the fringe of the village (Fig. 7). The throat of the lamb is cut, so that the blood will flow into the hole, so the earth and the tree get their share. The festival also presents ecstatic and healing dance over red-hot coals by the *Anastenarides* and the *Anastenarissas* (i.e. those who celebrate the Anastenaria) who are possessed by their saint, they are in a state of trance. Thus, the festival presents rituals, which in many ways are in opposition to the official ideology represented by the Orthodox religion, and at times it has been persecuted by the Church.

In addition to the animal sacrifice, other food rituals belong to the festival, as when the *Anastenarides* tour the village during the festival, visiting all the houses of the village bringing with them the healing icons depicting their saints and their other symbols. The *Anastenarides* purifies most of the houses in the following way: following their leader Tasos, with his two large *sēmadia* (large red kerchiefs which generally are draped over the icons), hanging from around his neck, thus symbolizing his status as *Archianastēnaris*, they enter the room where the family icons are kept. Here, the members of the family greet the procession of *Anastenarides*, treating them with what they might have to offer the visitors, nuts and raisins being an obligatory gift in all the houses. The offerings of coins, raisins and chickpeas, fruit or other sweets are met with wishes of *Chronia Polla* (i.e. Many Years) – that the Saints help them in whatever way they desire. In this way the houses are blessed and purified for the next year. The “treasurer” for the day collects the money, which will be counted and redistributed along with the raisins, chickpeas and other

tr. C. H. Oldfather, The Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, 1952 (1939), hereafter, Diod. 5.4,6; ARV 1012,1.

edible gifts to those present in the *konaki* (the shrine of the *Anastenarides*) at the conclusion of the festival (Fig. 8). Perhaps this is the most apparent illustration of the meaning of the communal meal in the Orthodox cult: when everyone eats with the same fork and drinks from the same bottle, paralleling the Eucharist in the church.

Several scholars, particularly K. Kakouri¹⁸ have argued that the Anastenaria has Dionysian origins. This is particularly due to the ecstatic dance we encounter in connection with the ancient Dionysian festivals, in which the *maenads*, the ecstatic women who participated in his cult, were seized by their frenzied god. According to descriptions of the maenads they tore to pieces a sacrificial bull which they afterwards devoured entirely raw. In this way they united with Dionysos, as the modern *Anastenarides* are seized with their saint during the dance and a sacred meal. So, today the saint seizes the participants as his ancient counterpart, Dionysos, seized his maenads during the Lenaia and other Dionysian festivals, and they begin to dance, and pray: *Agios Konstantinos, have pity on us, make it rain*. Through the communication with the holy figures in both festivals the crop is ensured as well as the fecundity of the cattle for the coming year.

The bull sacrifice to Agios Charalampos, the protector of the farmers

In the farming districts of mainland Greece and at the northern Greek islands, a festival dedicated to *Agios* Charalampos, the protector of the farmers is celebrated annually in the mating season of the horses. This saint, martyred in 235 CE, is particularly known for protecting bulls. But he is also known for protecting the fecundity of horses and offering immunity from the plague. Since he is expected to ensure a plentiful harvest, he is also celebrated later during the year with a popular festival in which a bull-sacrifice constitutes the climax of the festival. According to the popular belief the sacrificial bull also incarnates the saint. This popular festival of Ag. Charalampos is celebrated around summer solstice and the harvest in the male period¹⁹ and terminates the modern festival cycle which is determined by the agricultural calendar as presented here, and which started with the female fertility-festival dedicated to the Dormition of the *Panagia*.

On the island of Mytilini/Lesbos the Charalampos-festival is celebrated for four days in June-July, so most emigrants may return home for their summer holidays. With a laurel wreath around its neck and a "placard" commemorating the donor's father hanging on its flank, the bull is led up to the saint's chapel on the summit of *Tauros*, i.e. the mountain of the Bull, to be blessed by the priest (Fig. 9). Afterwards, the bull is tied to the sacrificial tree.

¹⁸ K. J. Kakouri, *Dionysiaka: Aspects of the popular Thracian Religion of to-day*, Athens, G. C. Eleftheroudakis, 1965.

¹⁹ Bourdieu, *Le Sens Pratique*.

Following is the auctioning of the honorary right to slay the blessed bull. The highest bidder is entrusted with the honorary task of killing the sacrificial animal. He traces a cross with a knife on the throat of the beast. The ox is shot, and the throat is cut immediately so that the blood will flow into the freshly dug hole close to the sacrificial tree and its roots, thus, symbolising fertility. Everyone who has bid to kill the ox has thereby *assured their right to be among the first to take the blood*, according to the local villagers. It is important to be drenched by the bull's gushing blood. By being drenched by the bull's blood, people are protected against all kinds of sickness the next year. Accordingly, everybody immerse their hands into the blood. The male pilgrims daub a cross on their foreheads and palms with the blood, while the women dip their handkerchiefs and pieces of cotton-wool in the blood, and draw crosses on the foreheads of their children. The same happens during other rituals on the island, because people are convinced that the blood has a healing function and wards off the evil. The bull is cut up. The meat is mixed with wheat, onions and spices, and left to cook all night long in great cauldrons as the ceremony demands. This traditional dish *kesketsi* is ready at noon the next day and they call upon the priest to come to the cooking-hut in order to bless the communal meal (Fig. 10), before people get their share.

The holy Charalampos does not only receive the bull, but also *kollyva*. *Agios Charalampos demands kollyva*, according to the local people. He is not the only one: As soon as the liturgy finishes Sunday morning, the decorated dish with *kollyva* is, literally, plundered by the eager pilgrims, rushing into the corridor to receive pieces of blessed bread and a napkin with *kollyva*.

The wine and blood-offerings to the earth during the festival of Ag. Charlampos reminds us that although the treating of the living is important during the passages rites, the dead, the earth and the tree also get their share, today, as in the ancient world, when a libation always was poured, i.e. dedicated to the god (s) before drinking one's fill.

As the Anastenaria, the festival of Charalampos presents a ritual, which several within the official Greek Orthodox Church still consider to be pagan, a sacrilegious survival of pre-Christian idolatrous rites. Particularly the animal sacrifice was a climax in the ancient cult, and many have seen the bull sacrifice at Tauros as a modern example of the ancient pagan bull sacrifices. A possible parallel may be the bull sacrifice, the Bouphonia, i.e. the slaying of an ox, a particular ceremony of the Dipolieia festival dedicated to Zeus in his special aspect as god of the city, Zeus *Polieus* (of the City), in ancient Athens.²⁰ This sacrifice was also performed at the top of a mountain, on the Akropolis, approximately at the same time of the year.

²⁰ Paus. 1.24,4 and 28.10.

In the Christian period, the official Church has, in every possible way, tried to abolish the rituals which they considered unacceptable to Christianity. The animal sacrifices headed the list of banned rituals. However, the Greek villagers did not stop sacrificing animals to their saints to secure various passage rites. Sometimes a new legend was invented to justify the continued existence of an important ritual, and since the Church did not manage to forbid the ritual, some priests tried to make the tradition legitimate by attaching the ritual to Hebrew cult, and we find prayers for sacrificing a bull in Byzantine writings from the 8th century CE, since prayers preserved in the Barberini Library in Rome, were brought to the council in Florence as authority manual within the Byzantine church by Greek priests who participated in such sacrifices. We also have prayers from the following two centuries.²¹ Generally, the upper clergy turned their back to the whole affair, thus letting people do as they wanted, and on Tauros the local priest even blesses the sacrificial animal. One might say that the pagan sacrificial ritual is replaced by a Christian. The modern ritual, certainly, is influenced by ancient Greek, Christian, Jewish and Islamic culture, and is therefore presented as a legalized Christian custom.²² In short, both the Anastenaria and Ag. Charlampos festivals are situated within the religious and cosmological context of the Orthodox Church, and they make extensive use of Orthodox symbolism, faith and ritual practice,

The communal meal during the festivals represents a particular close parallel to the ancient sacrificial meal. Then, the social structure decided how the meat was distributed. Although the contemporary meal is more egalitarian, we encounter parallels in the modern situation: at Tauros, as soon as the priest has finished the blessing of the food, he is the first person to get his plastic boxes filled to the brim with the holy *kesketsi*. Similarly during the Anastenaria a special table is laid for the dignitaries of the village in a small office inside the main room of the *konaki*, while Tasos heads the ritual meal which is laid out on the floor in the main room, and the other participants sit down on the benches that line the walls of the room.

The individual grave offerings

The individual death-cult also demonstrates how the deceased provide for the fertility. The standard offering at the tombs is the mixture of the crop, *kollyva*, which is always offered to the dead and distributed to the participants during

²¹ See F. Conybeare, 'Les sacrifices d'animaux dans les anciennes églises chrétiennes', in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, XLIV (=44) (1901), p. 109 for prayer for sacrificing an ox from the 8th century CE, see also pp. 108-110, cf. Håland, *Greek Festivals*, ch. 3-4. Cf. also Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans. The anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press (original published in German 1972, tr. Peter Bing), 1983, p. 8 f.

²² G. N. Aikaterinids, *Neoellēnikes Aimatēres Thysies. Leitourgia - Morphologia - Typologia*, Athens, Laographia - Deltion tēs Ellēnikēs Laographikēs Etaireias - Parartēma, 1979.

burials, the following ritual memorial services at the tombs, at the annual memorials for the death and at the annual collective festivals dedicated to the dead, the soul Saturdays, the *psychosabbata* (i.e. *psychosabbato*, *psychē*=soul, *sabbato*=Saturday), i.e. All Souls' Days (Fig. 11). They are celebrated at the end of winter and at the end of spring, i.e. during the sprouting of the grains, when the flowers and the green grain stalks are proliferating and at harvest.

The memorial rituals performed for the deceased are occasions for the gift-giving, and after the burial certain memorial rituals must be performed at the tomb, combined with the offering of more material gifts in order to receive return gifts.²³ Every Saturday morning, women wash their tombs at the cemetery, before they arrange their food-offerings at the tomb, thus maintaining the social relations with their dead. Today, the official mourning-period generally lasts three years. Memorial rituals are performed on the third, ninth and fortieth day following the burial. The deceased is also honoured every sixth months for three years, the anniversary is particularly important. In general the bones of the deceased are exhumed three years after death and placed in the *ossuary* (where the bones are placed after the exhumation).²⁴ After the exhumation, the livings are only responsible for celebrating the collective festivals dedicated to the dead. However, the dead are generally celebrated at the anniversary of their death, also after the exhumation and the second burial.

Nine days before the first anniversary memorial of the deceased Panagiotis Bidals, his father attach the announcement at the streetlamps in the village of Tinos the main township on Tinos island. The ceremony starts with a liturgy in the church dedicated to the patron saint of the family. Afterwards they distribute *sirtari* (*kollyva*), on the top of which has been placed the photo of the deceased during the liturgy (cf. Fig. 1). The visitors are treated with cakes, coffee and metaxa. The photo is generally found at his grave, and is returned after the ceremony.

The relations between the popular death-cult which is carried out within the domestic sphere and the official festivals, is clearly illustrated by the aforementioned "9th day's ritual of the *Panagia*" on 23 August which is celebrated annually nine days after the Virgin's death or "Dormition" on 15 August.

²³ E. J. Håland, 'An historical analysis of the relationship between Greek Death Cult, today and in the ancient world' (in Norwegian with English summary), in *Historisk Tidsskrift*, IV, 83 (2004), p. 559-591, E. J. Håland, 'Greek death-cult, modern and ancient. A comparison of a Mediterranean and Balkan cultural pattern', in *Venets: The Belogradchik Journal for Local History, Cultural Heritage and Folk Studies*, I, 2 (2010), pp. 213-255.

²⁴ Although the Greek state officially is in the process of instituting cremation of the dead (while the right to hold civil funerals is being required, however), with the prospect of complete secularization of the funeral service in view, in practical life people still carry out the traditional customs, cf. Håland, 'Greek death-cult, modern and ancient'.

The souls of the dead are thought to be set free during the first week of carnival. They wander among the living until they must go back to their dwelling on Assumption Day or during Pentecost. This means that they are thought to wander among the living from the sprouting of the grains until harvest time. During the ancient Anthesteria festival, the dead were also thought to visit their former homes and roam around the living for three days around the time of spring germination, as we have already seen. Today the two final Saturdays during Carnival and the first Saturday in Lent are called *psychosabbata* or "Soul-Saturdays". All Souls' Days are also celebrated on the Saturday of Pentecost (Rousalia) and on the Saturday after Pentecost. A long procession of black-clad women is moving towards the cemetery with dishes of food, particularly *kollyva*. The dishes are placed on the graves as an offering to the dead (cf. Fig. 11). The relatives light candles and burn incense over the family tomb. The food is blessed by the priest. Afterwards, it is passed round and eaten, so that the souls of the dead may be forgiven. Some of the food is left on the graves as offerings. As already mentioned, *kollyva* is the equivalent to the *panspermia* of the ancients offered at sowing, sprouting and harvest to assure the future crop. In the modern time, some people assume that the souls of the dead are set free by sacrificing hens-blood on the graves. At the ancient animal sacrifices, the victim was also killed so that the blood would flow into the earth and appease the souls of the dead. But it is also a sacrifice to the underworld accompanied with a prayer for a bountiful harvest, and might be compared with the way Odysseus by a similar sacrifice came into contact with the seer Teiresias in the underworld, Hades.²⁵ According to Homer, a person became a clairvoyant in the moment of death, and by being nourished with blood from the earthly world the dead could answer the questions of the living. Today, the bloody death of the sacrificial animal next to the tree, ensure the continuity of the vegetable life, such as in the villages of Agia Elenē and Agia Paraskeuē (cf. supra).

The ancient dead were buried along with gifts and offerings, for example libations and blood sacrifices corresponding to those dedicated to other chthonic deities. A new tomb was sprinkled with grain. The deceased duly provided for, is, correspondingly, often imagined at a banquet, as the large group of so-called *Totenmahl* relief's shows. After the funeral, the funerary sacrifices and funerary banquet are recapitulated at increasing intervals: on the third day and on the ninth day, food is brought again to the grave. On the thirtieth day a communal feast is held to mark the end of the official mourning period. As today, the anniversary ritual was celebrated, and there were other less formal visits to the tomb. To care for the graves is a duty which falls on the

²⁵ Homer, *The Odyssey*, vol. 1, tr. A. T. Murray, The Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, 1946 (1919), hereafter, *Od.* 11

descendants, as illustrated on the funerary white-ground *lēkythoi* (Fig. 12) deposited in or on the grave.

After the thirtieth day ritual, the official honouring of the deceased is incorporated into the general celebrations with which the city honours its dead every year: days of the dead, *Nekysia*, or days of the forefathers, *Genesisia*. *Nemesia* was probably an all-night festival dedicated to the dead. Another feast lasted nine days. Ceremonies dedicated to the dead were also celebrated within the domestic, familial sphere, paralleling the contemporary *psychosabbata* when the public rituals have finished. During these ceremonies, they had meals at the tombs and the relatives invoked the deceased by name (*mneia*), thus paralleling the modern letters, or *moirologia*, laments written in memory of the dead in Olympos. They also distributed food to the other participants. On such days the graves are adorned,²⁶ offerings are made, special food is eaten, and it is said that the dead come up and go about in the city. The offerings for the dead are pourings, *choai*: barley broth, milk, honey, frequently wine, and especially oil, as well as blood of sacrificed animals; there are also simple libations of water, which is why there is talk of the bath of the dead. According to Isaeus,²⁷ there is also *enagizein*, the consecration and burning of foods and sacrificial victims; but the living, too, have their feast, as in contemporary society. Indeed, it is through the meals of mortals ordained by custom, the enjoyable, fat-steaming, burnt offerings of the earth, that the deceased receives his honour. An epigram from the Hellenistic period tells about the dead Kleitagoras: being in the world of mother Earth and Persephone, he asks for flowers, milk and the playing of pipes. In return he will also give gifts.²⁸

On the second day of the Anthesteria (12 *Anthesterion*), around 1 March, it was supposed that the spirits of the dead returned to earth and roamed around the living.²⁹ Then the dead were honoured with an offering of *panspermia* (cf. *kollyva*), and libations as prescribed by customs, afterwards they were driven out. *Nekysia* and the Anthesteria, the ancient flower and death-festivals may be compared with the modern Rousalia, but the Carnivals as well – particularly the Kalogeros-festival and the Soul-Saturdays – celebrated at the same time of the year as the Anthesteria, i.e. around the time of spring germination as already mentioned. Initially the *Genesisia* was a festival celebrated within the domestic sphere at the anniversary of the deceased, but it was later transformed from a clan festival towards a common public citizen

²⁶ ARV 746,4, 748,1.

²⁷ Isaeus, *Orationes*, tr. Edward Seymour Forster, The Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, 1957 (1927), 6.51, 7.30.

²⁸ *The Greek Anthology*, vol. 2, tr. W. R. Paton, The Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, 1953 (1917), hereafter, AP. 7.657.

²⁹ Fr. Dübner, *Scholia Græca in Aristophanem*, Paris, Ambrosio Firmin Didot, 1855, hereafter, *Schol. Ar. Ach.* 1076.

festival ³⁰ celebrated before sowing in autumn, just before the Mysteries at Eleusis.

All the grave offerings which take place during the festivals demonstrate that there is a strong link between the official rituals and the domestic rituals people perform for their own dead, since the fertility-cult is permanently tied to the death. This is further illustrated by the blood sacrifice dedicated to the deceased, and the other offerings consisting of what one desires to obtain in return, for example, the various agricultural products that constitute the *kollyva*. Also the ancient believed that human being should return to the gods a part of what they gave him. The ancestors, who were and are mediators between humans and the more powerful deities, get periodic offerings of *kollyva* as the dead in Ancient Greece got appropriate offerings of food.³¹ The renewal of the fertility depends on a successful communication with the saints and the other dead, depending on that people gather to celebrate the renewal of the agriculture by a feast. Thus follow the significance of a successful communication with the deceased and the divine forces to which the festivals are dedicated. The dead are assumed to be mediators between the living and the stronger powers in the underworld, who are responsible for sending up a good yield. Thus the dead assist the living. The fertility of the renewable subsistence resources depend upon the collective ritual efforts of everybody. The fertility of the earth depends upon that people gather to celebrate the renewal of fertility. This is manifested by a communal meal, but to greet visitors is also important. To greet somebody by presenting her or him with food is to bless the guest with a wish for the kind of fertility that the actual food refers to. This is related to the relatives worrying that the visitors will not accept the sweets they distribute at the cemetery. If you don't accept, *something bad will happen*. You will then block the way or passage rite and the natural cycle will be obstructed. The natural cycle depends upon the deceased's participation but the living must participate as well. The efforts of the living are also necessary so the deceased will arrive to their final destination and be able to carry out their mediating role. During my first visit at the 1st Cemetery in modern Athens, I was told that I should eat the *kollyva*, but put the cake on the tomb. Hence I participated in a meal with the deceased and the living descendants.

Offerings and fertility, some conclusions

As the modern saints ensure the future fertility when they descend into the underworld either at the start of the fertile annual cycle or at the preparation of

³⁰ Plutarch, *Lives*, vol. 1, tr. B. Perrin, The Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, 1948 (1914), hereafter, Plut. *Sol.* 12B, 21.4 f.

³¹ Cf. Fig. 12; ARV 1227,1; Aeschylus, vol. 2: Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers (= *Cho.*), Eumenides, Fragments, tr. H. Weir Smyth, The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1946 (1926), hereafter, Aesch. *Cho.* 22 ff.

the grain's ripening and harvest, the ancient vegetation gods Adonis' and Dionysos' and the vegetation goddess, Demeter's daughter Persephone's, death and rebirth were important to secure the future prosperity.

The official rituals are influenced by the domestic rituals people perform for their own dead, in the same way as the domestic rituals and grave cult reflect the public performances. The cult of the dead presupposes that the deceased are present and active beneath the earth, and are ready to send good things up above. The connection between death and life is not only present in the cult dedicated to the dead mediators, but also the blood sacrifice dedicated to the dead, and other offerings. By giving these gifts to the dead, people give what they wish to receive in abundance the following year. These glimpses from the Greek worlds show how food and religion are linked and also establish the connection between the living and the dead and between the ancient and modern worlds (Fig. 13).



Fig. 1: The first anniversary memorial for Panagiotis Bidalēs. His photo and a wreath dedicated by his mother are placed on the *kollyva* during the liturgy. Tinos Island, August 1994.³²

³² All photographs are by Evy Johanne Håland.



Fig. 2: Pilgrims arrive to the *Panagia* bringing with them sheep, Tinos Island, August 1993.



Fig. 3: Feasting women celebrating the midwife, Babo, Monokklēsia, January 1992.



Fig. 4: Before the ceremony starts on Cheese-Monday, the Kalogeros is fed ritually in front of the church, Melikē, March 1992.



Fig. 5: The housewife with the sieve drinks the wine offered by the little Prince, before sprinkling the Kalogeros with *polysporia*, Melikē, March 1992.



Fig. 6: The priest says a prayer over each grave, where the housewives have placed dishes of different food, Olympos, Karpathos Island, April 1992.



Fig. 7: The lamb sacrifice during the Anastenaria festival, while people are dancing, Agia Elenē, May 1992.



Fig. 8: At the conclusion of the Anastenaria festival the food offerings from the villagers are redistributed in the *konaki*, Agia Elenē, May 1992.



Fig. 9: The local priest blesses the bull in front of the saint's chapel on the summit of Tauros, the island of Mytilini/Lesbos, June 1992.



Fig. 10: The priest blesses the *kesketsi* at Tauros, the island of Mytilini/Lesbos, June 1992.



Fig. 11: Memorial service performed for a deceased person with offerings of food at the tomb on the second of the three *psychosabbata*, during Carnival and Lent, Serres, March 1992.



Fig. 12: A black-clad woman with offering at a decorated tomb, funerary white-ground *lekythoi* National Museum, Athens 1991.



Fig. 13: Pilgrims sharing *kesketsi* at Tauros, the island of Mytilini/Lesbos, June 1992.

LITHUANIAN FUNERAL RITES: FROM TRADITION TO MODERNITY

RASA RAČIŪNAITĖ-PAUŽUOLIENĖ¹

Introduction

Death is the inevitable ending of human existence, frightening and at the same time fascinating with its mystery. It is one of few experiences that sooner or later fall to everyone – we undergo the death of a close person, finally, we will experience our own biological death. Since the oldest times people reflected a lot on the issue of death and made up different concepts of death. Religious and philosophical systems and ethnic customs of lots of ancient cultures would help the members of those societies to get ready for and accept death. Different traditional cultures usually treat death not as spiritual ending, but as reincarnation or transition from one state of existence to the other.

For the past two decades, the traditional funeral rite has undergone transition for various reasons: changes in social stratification due to a declining economy and shrinking resources; increased immigration and migration process; neo-local spread of the family to many geographic locations; increased demand for cremation; decline in religious practices and increased secular observances; and a shift from ancestral to contemporary funeral rites.² Today's death culture operates on different levels, includes details from various times, beliefs and cultures. Integration processes show the intercultural relations. This is connected with industrialization, urbanization, development of medicine³, and globalization process. Nowadays death culture becomes more individual and anonymous.

However, there are cultural universals that have remained consistent in funeral rites: the period of preparation for death, the mortal agony as well as taking care of the deceased person, and the last period, connected with rituals of commemorations. The first period prepares the dying person and his or her relatives for the future changes. The person's illness is connected with the omens of the inevitably approaching death. Thus, some rituals and omens became an inherent part of first period of funeral tradition. The second part of funeral rites deals with the person's biological death, involving washing, dressing of the dead body and the night wakes, involving chanting and lamentation. This period helps the deceased to leave home, prepare for the afterlife, and to settle in the other world. It also helps the relatives to resign themselves to their fate.

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² La Vone Hazell, *Funeral Customs – Cross-Cultural Funeral Rites*, 2011, in <http://www.funeral-wise.com/customs/cross-cultural-funerals>

³ Tiia Ristolainen, *Departing from this Life. Changes in Death Culture in Estonia at the End of the 20th Century, 2001*, in <http://lepo.it.da.ut.ee/~lehti/Oralhistory/3.4.Tiia.htm>.

The last period is subdivided into several parts, and, in the postliminal period, including the commemoration rites of the deceased a month, 40 days, and one year later. These commemorations are similar in nature to the rites of a wedding anniversary or that of birth, and sometimes initiations⁴ and symbolize a new social status of the deceased person.

This article presents a detail comparative analysis of Lithuanian funeral rites (end of 19th – 21st century) in the context of rites *de passage*. The work is based on field investigation materials gathered by the author in all ethnic regions of Lithuania. The *methods* of the research are historical comparative analysis and fieldwork research methods, such as conversation, structural interview and observation. The author presents the latest scholarly research on funeral rites in urban space⁵, weaving together predominant theoretical perspectives of historians, ethnologists, and anthropologists (Phillipe Ariès, Arnold van Gennep, Bronislaw Malinowski, Ernest Becker, Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Olson, Antonius C. G. M. Robben and others), findings from research, and interviews with respondents. The article is also based on the previous sources and field investigation materials gathered by the other Lithuanian authors. Nearly all Lithuanian folklorists and ethnologists have dealt with particular topics of the subject of death, for example Jonas Balys⁶ and Angelė Vyšniauskaitė⁷ (funeral customs), Edita Korzonaitė⁸ (human being treatment of deceased and ghosts), Radvilė Racėnaitė⁹ and Audronė Daraškevičienė¹⁰ (perception of death and the afterlife), Rasa Račiūnaitė¹¹ (the role of woman in the funeral rites), Regina Merkienė¹² and Rimutė Garnevičiūtė¹³ (changes in

⁴ Arnold Van Gennep, "The Rites of Passage", in *Death, Mourning and Burial. A Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. A. Roben, Malden-Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2010, p. 214.

⁵ This research was supported by a grant (No. LIT-4-22) from the Research Council of Lithuania.

⁶ Jonas Balys, "Mirtis ir laidotuvės" [Death and Funerals], in *Lietuvių tautosakos lobynas*, IX, Silver Spring, Md., 1981.

⁷ Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, "Laidotuvės" [Funeral], in Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, Petras Kalnius, Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė, in *Lietuvių šeima ir papročiai* [Lithuanian Family and Customs], Vilnius, Mintis, 2008, pp. 483-511.

⁸ Edita Korzonaitė, *Žmogaus elgesio su mirusiais ir vėlėmis raida sakmėse ir papročiuose. Daktaro disertacija*, Kaunas, Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2002.

⁹ Radvilė Racėnaitė, "Perception of Death in Lithuanian Traditional Culture", in *Pro Ethnologia*, vol. 17, *Perceptions of Worldviews*, Tartu, Estonian National Museum, 2004, p. 71-79.

¹⁰ Audronė Daraškevičienė, "Populiarių pomirtinio gyvenimo vaizdinių kaita XX a. Žemaitijoje" [Changes in the Popular Images of the Afterlife in the 20th Century Samogitia], in *Tautosakos darbai*, XXXVII, 2009, pp. 162-178.

¹¹ Rasa Račiūnaitė, *Moteris tradicinėje lietuvių kultūroje: gyvenimo ciklo papročiai (XIX a. pab. – XX a. vid.)* [Lithuanian Woman in Traditional Culture: the Customs of Life Cycle (End of the 19th – Middle of the 20th c.c.)], Kaunas, Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2002.

¹² Irena Regina Merkienė, "Mirties etika Lietuvos kaimo kultūroje" [Etics of Death in Lithuanian Rural Culture], in *Lituanistica*, 3 (63), 2005, pp. 15-37.

¹³ Rimutė Garnevičiūtė, "Katalikiškų laidotuvių papročių kaita XX – XXI a. sandūroje" [Changes in Catholic Funeral Customs at the Junction of 20-21th centuries], in *Žiemgala*, 2, 2010, pp. 20-27;

death culture in 20th- 21st c.c.), Aušra Žičkienė¹⁴ and Saulius Stumbra¹⁵ (lamentation and funeral chant), etc.

By analyzing the narrative folklore and ethnographic material, the author attempts to find answers to some questions: What are the differences between the traditional and post-modern society funeral rites? What are the new forms of funeral rituals in the 21st century? What are the new commemoration forms in post-modern Lithuanian society?

Death images

The complex system of funeral customs and rites reveals human aspiration to understand the fundamental problems of existence. Emotions, which are evoked by death, are quite contradictory: the mystery of death, on the one hand, stimulates natural curiosity; while on the other hand, it provokes fear in the face of the unknown.¹⁶

An increasing number of anthropologists (Bronislaw Malinowski¹⁷, Ernest Becker,¹⁸ Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Olson¹⁹) emphasize the relation between death and immortality. The psychological anthropologist Ernest Becker tries to show that the fear of death is one of the most important inner drives of human beings. He reveals two viewpoints about the terror of death. This fear is a social construct, as well as, a natural and universal phenomenon. "It is driven by people's instinct of self-preservation and their attempt to control life-threatening situations".²⁰ Very much like E. Becker and B. Malinowski, Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Olson postulate the universal fear of death and they consider the belief in immortality as its universal response. They paid attention to people's search for meaning and immortality through religious

Rimutė Garnevičiūtė, "Laidotuvių apeigų pokyčiai XX – XXI a. sandūroje" [Changes in Funeral Ritual Customs at the Junction of 20-21centuries], in *Kultūrų dialogas ir asmenybė*, Klaipėda, Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2010, pp. 254271.

¹⁴ Aušra Žičkienė, "Laidotuvių rauda ir raudojimas – atlikimas ar būseną?" [The Funeral Lament and Lamentation: Performance or a State of Mind?], in *Tautosakos darbai*, XXII (XXIX), 2005, pp. 154-165; Aušra Žičkienė, "Trijų muzikinės kultūros sluoksnių sandūra lietuvių mirusiųjų pagerbimo apeigose" [Combination of Three Layers of Musical Culture in Lithuanian Funeral Rites], in *Tautosakos darbai*, XX (XXVII), 2004, pp. 75-83.

¹⁵ Saulius Stumbra, *Šermeninės giesmės Telšių vyskupijoje: tarp tradicijos ir naujovių*, Magistro darbas, [Funeral Chantings in Telšiai Diocese: between Tradition and Novelty], Klaipėda, Klaipėdos universitetas, 2008.

¹⁶ Racėnaitė, *Perception*, p. 71.

¹⁷ Bronislaw Malinowski, "Magic, Science and Religion", in *Death, Mourning and Burial: a Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. by A. C. G. M. Robben. Malden-Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010, pp. 19-22.

¹⁸ Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*, New York, The Free Press, 1973.

¹⁹ Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Olson, *Living and Dying*, London, Wildwood House, 1974.

²⁰ Ernest Becker, "The Terror of Death", in *Death, Mourning and Burial: a Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. by A. C. G. M. Robben. Malden-Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010, p. 26; Antonius C. G. M. Robben, "Death and Antropology: An Introcuction", in *Death*, p. 3.

symbolization. R. J. Lifton and E. Olson find this symbolic immortality in five models of expression: 1) biological, 2) creative, 3) theological, 4) natural, and 5) experiential.²¹ “*Biological immortality* consists of extending life through one’s offspring, family names, tribe and nation. Art, literature, and knowledge lead to *creative immortality*. *Theological immortality* refers to beliefs in resurrection, reincarnation, rebirth and a spiritual life after death. *Natural immortality* makes people part of eternal universe and the interminable cycles of nature. Finally, *experiential immortality* concerns altered states of consciousness such as ecstasy, enlightenment, drug-induced highs, and collective effervescence. The fear of death impels people to procure these five models of symbolic immortality to overcome their innate death anxiety, and live meaningful lives in the promise of continuity with others”.²²

It is easy to see that, from this point of view, different death images and perception of death in the traditional culture belongs to creative, theological and natural immortality groups. The traditional death perception is a creative human interpretation of supernatural events interpreted as omens of death.

The way death was interpreted by Lithuanian ancestors is conveyed by death images that we come across in Lithuanian folk tales, legends and beliefs. It was thought that death is blind, i.e., when sent to any house by the Highest Being, it does not always succeed in sapping the one that was intended.²³ People’s consciousness would identify death with the terminated “share” allotted to the person by the Highest Being. This is exactly why the community members would consider it a duty to render service to the deceased person – to help him/her morally as if compensating the loss of their “share.”

In Baltic mythology, the mystery of death is interpreted by means of animation or personification of other worldly occurrence. In Lithuanian legends and fairy-tales, death is mostly depicted as being of the female sex dressed in white, whereas the widespread European perception of death, as a skeleton with a scythe, is not so popular there. Personified death is called by few different names (*Giltinė*, *Mirtis*, *Smertis* in Lithuania)), *Māra* (in Latvia)), which are of feminine gender. Death may also appear as a man, a child, or other animate phenomenon (e.g. a ghost), living creature (an animal).

As for the world outlook of ancient Lithuanians, they would believe that the souls of the dead climb a high mountain or fly to the skies along the Milky Way. They would localize the posthumous world, “the most beautiful

²¹ See Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Olson, “Symbolic Immortality”, in *Death*, pp. 32-39.

²² Antonius C. G. M. Robben, “Death and Antropology: An Introction”, in *Death, Mourning and Burial: a Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. by A. C. G. M. Robben. Malden-Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010, p. 3.

²³ Balys, *Mirtis*, pp. 15-16.

garden,” as being somewhere far away, on a high mountain or even at the bottom of the sea.

The traditional culture of the Lithuanian countryside has lots of beliefs and omens which warn about the approaching death. They include the cues of one's home environment (cracking logs, windows, doors, breaking dishes), unusual behaviour of animals (howling dog hanging its head, a crowing hen, anxious horses, a bird knocking on the window with its bill, crows crowing around the farmstead, a cuckoo calling by the window or a mole nuzzling under the threshold).²⁴ Especially Lithuanians would believe in dreams – some of your relatives would definitely die if you dream of a pulled tooth or a herd of cattle with little sheep, also, someone cutting rye crops.

In older times Lithuanian country people would receive death calmly. Most old people would get ready for it beforehand: they would have shroud made for them, also, save money for the funeral. There was an old custom in west Lithuania, especially at the seaside, to keep the coffin ready-made in some nook, for example, in the church loft.²⁵

The formation of funeral rites in Baltic folk belief was the result of the understanding of death as a turning point in life, the passage of a person from one form of existence into another. Even in their modern form the funeral customs of many nationalities are complicated and multifaceted, containing various components: customs, lamentation, beliefs, taboos, etc. This is complemented and significantly influenced by the psychological state of people – worry, sympathy shock, stupor, perception of eternal separation.²⁶ The death-related rituals cannot be defined by the funeral rituals only. These actually cover all the stages of the process of death: physical death, disposal of the corpse, social death.²⁷ In this connection three kinds of death rituals can be prescribed: death, funeral and commemoration rituals.

The role of community

In Lithuanian traditional funeral rites, as well as other Balts, a special role is ascribed to community. This institution helps a dying person to prepare himself for his death, performs lavation, sings lamentations, and plays an important role of mediator between the sphere of this world and the world of the dead. Latvians traditional burial rituals are accompanied by songs, dances, especially, if the deceased was not married, and on the way home a small fir tree is cut off -

²⁴ VDU ER (Vytautas Magnus University, Archive of the Department of Ethnology and Folklore), no. 11/ 33, inf. A. Jezerskienė, born in Mikališkiai, Lazdijai district, recorded by J. Goštautaitė and L. Janeckaitė in 1994; VDU ER, no. 1 /12 (V), inf. K. Banionis, born in 1907 in Egliniškis v., Marijampolė district, recorded by R. Račiūnaitė in 1989.

²⁵ Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, “Lietuvinių šermenys ir laidotuvės”, in *Mūsų kraštas*, 1 (6), 1995, pp. 107-109.

²⁶ Tiia Ristolainen, *Departing*, 2001.

²⁷ Ibid.

it symbolizes the lost member of the family.²⁸ So an individual was considered an integral part of the community and not isolated both in this life and after death.

The traditional Lithuanian society would see death as a natural phenomenon of human life that is why they made their children know it since early age. When coming to attend a dying person women would take children with them. In Viekšniai country-side district of Akmenė region, women would gather together with their children and grandchildren. They would stand around the bed of the dying person to make his/her death easier. It was thought that little sinless children are like angels, thus, they help “the soul to separate itself from the body and go to heaven.”²⁹ Here an analogy can be drawn with the customs in Western Europe – there until 18th c. one could not imagine the room of the dying person without a few children. However, our society nowadays puts too much effort to remove children from the matters related to death.³⁰

The village community felt it their duty to take care of its member, they would nurse him/her when he/she was ill and would maintain the relationship until the person's last breath. Ph. Ariès remarks that nowadays the dying person is isolated in a hospital, is deprived of a close relationship, is not listened to as a sane person but watched as a clinical object, is treated like a child whose speaking lacks sense and authority. He/she has no social value and, consequently, no dignity. In earlier times the dying person would retain his/her value until the very end and even in the other world because he/she would take it to the future world which he/she believed in.³¹

Rites of lamentation

Since old times Lithuanians would observe the custom to lament for the deceased person. The first time it was mentioned in the “Rhymed Chronicle of Livland” of 13th century.³² At the beginning of 20th c. the practice of singing lamentation songs was widespread throughout the whole of Lithuania – they were sung by women or hired weepers, sometimes beggars. The traditional Lithuanian world outlook would identify beggars with the priests of the pagan religion and were considered to be “mediators” between this and that world – their most important function was to pray for the dead. Thus, weepers rendered

²⁸ Margers Grīns, Mara Grīna. *Latviešu gads, gadskarta un godi*, Rīga, Everest, 1992, p. 452.

²⁹ ES (Institute of Lithuanian History, the Manuscript Depository of the Department of Ethnology), no. 640/26, p. 68, recorded by A. Urbienė in Viekšniai, Akmenė district in 1975.

³⁰ See Phillipe Ariès, *Mirties supratimas Vakarų kultūros istorijoje*, [*Perception of Death in the History of Western Culture*], Vilnius, Baltos lankos, 1993, p. 27.

³¹ See Ariès, *Mirties*, p. 276-278.

³² Livländische Reimchronik um 1290, in *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai: Nuo seniausių laikų iki XV a. pab.* [*Sources of Baltic Religion and Mythology. From the Oldest times to the end of the 15th century*], sud. N. Vėlius. Vilnius, Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1 (1996), p. 297; 301.

service to the soul of the deceased person: weeping they would help him/her to leave the world of the living ones and reach the refuge of the other world. At the beginning of 20th c. there still prevailed the way of thinking that it is not enough to sing funeral songs by the laid out corpse – it is only lamentation songs which make a proper funeral. The special role of hired weepers should be mentioned here. At critical moments of life it was difficult for a stressed person to cry out their tears. They needed other people to help them. This function was performed by hired weepers who represented the mourning relatives and wept for them thus making others weep. Thus, professional weepers not only made the transition of the deceased from one status to the other easier, but also performed the psychotherapeutic function for their relatives.³³

After the Christian world outlook became dominating, the function of lamentations was as if carried out by chants (although for a long time the traditions of lamentation and chanting coexisted). The function of accompanying the deceased person to the other world, characteristic of the old world outlook, was changed by an analogous function of a priest's prayer and the chants of singers who were men. It was the priest, helped by professional chanters, who became the main performer of the funeral ritual.

Bread in funeral rites

Until the first decades of 20th c. women in southern Lithuania would still observe the custom to take a loaf of bread wrapped in linen to the wake. Taking bread to the wake was an exclusive right of women. A woman would put the bread on the table beside the laid out corpse. During the funeral women would distribute it to beggars asking them to pray for the soul of the deceased person. Having finished their prayers, people attending the wake in Perloja, Varėna region, would break off a piece of bread and eat it as an offering on the behalf of the deceased person. At the beginning of 20th Century here was a custom in Dzūkija (the South of Lithuania) to distribute slices of bread not only to the beggars sitting at the church door, but also give it to the priest.³⁴ That is an example of syncretism between the old Lithuanian religion and Christian customs. As we have mentioned, the old Lithuanian religion identified beggars with priests. Later the function was performed by the priests of the Catholic Church who would render service to the soul of the deceased person. As for bread, it had a ritual function in funeral customs. That would be the offering of the whole community for the soul of the deceased, also, for the souls of the ancestors of that family and the whole kin. Also, bringing bread was a way to

³³ Rasa Račiūnaitė, *Moteris*, p. 129.

³⁴ VDU ER (Vytautas Magnus University, Archive of the Department of Ethnology and Folklore), no. 1/13, p. 11, inf. G. Aleksandravičienė, born in 1913, recorded by R. Račiūnaitė in Perloja, Varėna district in 1994.

ingratiate oneself with the soul of the deceased person at the same time being a means to protect oneself against their possible harm.³⁵

Mourning

Grief may be universal emotion of bereavement, but its social expression in mourning is culturally specific.³⁶ Mourning is a traditional way to honour the deceased person. During the period of mourning the deceased person and his/her relatives find themselves in the undefined passage between life and death. At that critical moment there arise certain limiting situations between the world of those alive and that of the dead, which is reflected in popular beliefs and prohibitions that would protect the living ones against the negative influence of the dead. Respect for the deceased person was shown by certain external and internal signs. Mourning relatives behaved in a reserved way, avoided entertainment, did not arrange baptisms, weddings nor took part in them. At the period of mourning they seemed to be isolated from the whole village community by means of prohibitions. One of the most important signs of mourning was wearing mourning clothes. According to the old Lithuanian world outlook, white was considered to be the colour of mourning. "It was not long ago that women in Dzūkija would wear white headscarves when going to funeral".³⁷ However, it was black which the dominating mourning colour became in 20th c. (see 1-2 photo). During the period of mourning black clothes are worn, women cover their heads with white scarves or shawls and wear black tights. When the period of mourning ends, the relationships between the living ones and the dead are not broken off. Spiritual ties remain: relatives continue praying for the dead, they have Mass celebrated, remember them on All Saints' Day or on Christmas Eve and during other calendar holidays. There still exists a belief that the souls of the dead come home to visit their relatives on All Saints' Day or its eve.

According to Baltic folk belief there was no definite border between the living and the deceased. These two worlds existed side by side. The living and the deceased could communicate in two ways. One way was the homecoming of ancestors during the time of the souls; the other one was visiting the graves of one's ancestors in the cemetery. The visits on the All Souls' Day have declined into visiting the graves of one's family members, burning candles, bringing flowers and kindly remembering the deceased. These are the traces of old sacrificial customs, which aimed to conciliate death by means of sacrifices. The former animal sacrifice has changed into a symbol: a flower, a candle, a

³⁵ Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, "Laidotuvių papročiai Lietuvoje XIX a. pab. – XX a. pirmaisiais dešimtmečiais", [Funeral Customs in Lithuania: the End of 19th - the First Part of 20th c.], in *Iš Lietuvių kultūros istorijos*, Vilnius, 3 (1961), p. 147.

³⁶ Antonius C. G. M. Robben, *Death*, p. 7.

³⁷ Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, *Laidotuvės*, p. 504.

branch of a fir tree, etc. The form of expression has changed over the years but the idea has remained the same.³⁸

On the one hand, people tried to avoid any contacts with the dead; on the other hand, they made sacrifices to keep good relationships. Even today it is believed that one must not take anything with him from places that are associated with the dead. For example, picking flowers or berries in the cemetery is not allowed. Such prohibition exists up to now.

All over Baltic countries it was believed that the last wish of a dying person is sacred and, if it is not fulfilled, it will bring misfortune to the person ignoring this rule.³⁹ The same belief also prevails today. Funeral customs includes an ethical norm not to speak badly of the dead (in such a case it is better not to speak at all).

Postmodern funeral customs

By analyzing this ethnographic material, the author attempts to find answers to such question: What are the differences between the traditional and post-modern society funeral rites?

Postmodern funeral customs are modified under influence of rise of individual values. Mourning customs were strictly defined and regulated in the traditional village culture. Family of a deceased must wear particular mourning clothes. Nevertheless, it is not appropriate to show emotions openly.

Funerals have seen different changes in post-modern society: the space of dying and laying out from private living place of the deceased was shifted to public places, namely, hospitals, mortuaries, cafes where funereal meals or commemoration of the deceased are held after the funeral rites.

Shroud. In the end of the 19th century older people were laid-out dressed in dark clothes; women's heads were with shawls while these days even elderly women are laid out with light shroud, their head is covered with a hood, coif or a shawl. The dead are dressed according to their social status: priests are laid out dressed in priestly vestments, monks in habits, soldiers in uniform, young girls as brides in white dresses.

Religious signs that are used for shroud express the religious identity of the deceased. Following the traditional world-outlook, it was believed that these tokens will be useful in the after-world. Rosary, pictures of Jesus and Mary are put in the hands of the late body. In the end of the 19th c. – middle of the 20th c. they would keep the picture of their heavenly patron, the Rosary, scapular, a holy medal and a handkerchief. In the secular world nowadays the

³⁸ Ristolainen, *Departing*, 2001.

³⁹ Račiūnaitė, *Moteris*, 2002; Ristolainen, *Departing*, 2001; Māra Mellēna, *Latvian Traditions: Family Ritual Ceremonies, Seasonal and Other Holidays. The last Family ritual Ceremony: Funeral Customs and Rituals*, 2000-2008, in: http://www.li.lv/index.php?Itemid=226&id=41&option=com_content&task=view.

function of religious tokens is changing, and their esthetic function becomes more important than their religious meaning. Sometimes other things are placed in the coffin as well, symbolizing the interests of the deceased: a youth is given a basketball, a violinist – his violin, a child – some toys, a smoker – a pack of cigarettes, a drinker – a bottle of his favorite drink, elderly people – their prayer books, glasses, hair comb. They also might be useful in the future world.

New customs appear in funerals, while the ancient customs disappear, e.g. almost nobody brings bread or other food to the funerals, but it is appropriate to bring flowers or money, as a sign of relieving the financial burden for the relatives of the deceased. The staff of mortuary bureau provides with the candles, thus the custom of bringing candles nearly has vanished. The above mentioned changes have been determined by the value system of the modern consumer society and by rational approach to death.

The differences of rural and urban funeral customs are obvious. More and more often people reject traditional chanting in urban funerals while in rural areas live chanting still exists as a quite popular custom. Despite essential changes in folk chanting (both of repertoire and of performance), singers are invited to chant in rural funerals, especially in those cases when an elderly person passes out. Urban citizens argue that traditional chanting “induces extra dirge” for the relatives and friends of the deceased. They search for new alternatives and select calm classical opuses by J. S. Bach, H. Berlioz, F. List, V. A. Mozart, G. Verdi, Gregorian plainsongs or the pieces of Grand Duchy of Lithuania (LDK) of 17th c. music, modern youth chants⁴⁰, meditative or electronic pop music, charismatic chants. Sometimes the relatives of the deceased play different records (e.g. jazz, country, folk dances or pop music); according to them, the deceased loved such music.⁴¹

Funerals of state leaders, eminent figures of culture and society, national prize winners (poets, professors, writers, and actors) are attended by professional music groups; e.g. the choir of the Company “Lietuva” dressed in national folk costumes performed Lithuanian choir music at the funeral of Lithuanian President A. M. Brazauskas in 2010; actors read the verses by national Lithuanian poet J. Marcinkevičius at his funeral in 2011. One can notice a common trend: the use of national symbols (flag, national chant, and folk costumes) at the funerals of renowned people. The coffin is covered with Lithuanian flag, after the burial the National hymn is performed; guard of honour dressed in national folk costumes keeps vigil in mortuary and accompanies the coffin into the cemetery. (See 3-4 photos) These symbols convey the national identity of the deceased.

⁴⁰ Garnevičiūtė, *Laidotuvijų*, p. 261; Stumbra, *Šermeninės*, p. 55.

⁴¹ Žičkienė, *Trijų*, p. 77.

Catholic funeral chants had an important function in traditional rural culture: they had to help the soul of the deceased to move from this world to the life beyond. Chanting was considered as an intercessional prayer for the deceased. The present-day funeral music is living and not late-oriented. Thus the esthetic and psychotherapeutic function of the funeral music in post-modern society becomes more important than its ritual function which existed in traditional culture.

The individualism in funeral rites

Nowadays the individualism shows up in funeral rites. The young generation discusses in online forums the best way of burial. Coffin burial in ground is by far the most spread funeral rite in present day Lithuania, however, two other alternatives are available – cremation and donation of some body parts and organs.

Individualism takes up the most important place in all customs of life-cycle events (christenings, weddings, and funerals) for the post-modern society. Individualism is especially important for the wealthy relatives of the deceased, as they take the funeral as the opportunity to demonstrate their advantage against the others. They attempt to hold solemn funeral which would be distinguished for its luxury.

The funeral rite in post-modern society can be distinguished for another aspect, namely, the syncretism of the elements from different cultures. It can be illustrated with an example taken from an online discussion forum. A talker shares their opinion and describes their funeral image in the following way:

“I would educate my children so that they accepted my death calmly. I wouldn’t like to get wreaths with doleful inscriptions. No wreaths. Let the attendants to be dressed in pastel, not black. Clothing style: usual, free. I wouldn’t like to listen to singers chants. I’d rather listen to same New Age pieces which are my favorite ones. I wouldn’t like the people around me to be sad; they’d better share joyful memories about me and even gradually delete me from their minds. I wouldn’t mind to listen to “The Tibetan Book of the Deceased” read by somebody at my side. Let everyone feel as if they are accompanying me into some wonderful journey and wishing me good success and nice impressions”.⁴²

The given example shows that with the usage of different forms of cultural syncretism post-modern society tries to emphasize the particularity of the deceased and of its funeral.

Cremation Rites

The one way to deal with the fear of death that the society has found was denying its existence. Cremation is an example of aspiration to destroy everything that reminds of death and the thoughts of death in everyday

⁴² Laidotuvės: religija, [Funeral: religion], in <http://chatas.lt/religija/laidotuv-t10779-html>. 2007-09-28.

experience. Cremation is one of the most recent ways of burial in Lithuania, but not so popular with any age group. In this country body cremation started only in the middle of the first decade of the 21st century. Although the Catholic Church does not object to this custom, only 1% of the population of Lithuania would consider cremation as possible funeral choice.

Along the changing ways of burial, changes of laying-out rites and customs are inevitable. Traditional rural culture would bury the corpse on the third day after death. Today Catholics try to observe this custom, however, due to different reasons (secularization and globalization of the society, and difficult economic conditions) the laying-out time is shorter: one day or even only 4 hours (in case of cremation) in the mortuary. Thus, we can see that changing ways of burial affect the laying-out time.

There are no firmly established funeral customs in case of cremation so far. However, the deceased usually is laid-out, after paying respect and bidding farewell, the deceased is accompanied to the cremation site. The relatives receive the mortuary urn only the next day because the cremation usually takes place in neighboring countries (Latvia or Poland). The only crematorium in Lithuania (in Kėdainiai) will soon be opened.

Mourning and commemoration rituals

In modern society death has become a taboo, a phenomenon unlikely to be named, to be revealed in public. Postmodern period is characterized by elimination of mourning in order to avoid the death. Today the place of dying is no longer one's home, but a public place, as hospital or nursing home. So the process of death is given into medical and burial office's staff's hands. The society requires its members to die decently and respectably and not to lose temper after experiencing a grieving loss of your dearest and nearest. Demonstration of your feelings is considered as improper behavior at the moment of leaving this world and after that.

Traditional rural culture accepted the need of mourning and contributed to it by compulsory visits of condolence, aid to the relatives of the late person, observance of religious rites on the 30th day and anniversary of death. Today the mourners are attributed to asocial people. In order to avoid social exclusion it's better to stay in public with a mask of indifference and take it off only in the circle of the closest friends and relatives.⁴³ Ancient customs guarded the person suffering the death of his beloved; at present our society abandons the mourner and refuses to come to their aid. Due to total denial of mourning, the relatives of the deceased face up with psychologically unhealthy alternatives: workaholism or testing the limits of insanity by quasi-existence with the person who has passed away.

⁴³ Ariès, *Mirties*, p. 237 – 238.

Commemoration rituals form the constituent part of funeral rites denoting the end of the shift of the deceased into the world beyond. Catholic tradition holds the following compulsory commemorations of the deceased: on the third and the thirtieth day after death, in 6 months and the anniversary. Some regional traditions recommend remembering the deceased on the seventh or ninth day after death; solemn commemorations might be held on the 5th or 10th death anniversary. Usually on these occasions people go to the Holy Mass where they pray for the deceased, visit the grave, showing respect to the departed by lighting candles and adorning the burial place. At the commemoration meal table the relatives and friends share their memories about the departed. All Saints' Day (and All Souls' Day (1 November) is a special time when people visit the graves of their relatives and friends, express their respect to them by lighting candles and intercession of prayer. Also it is common to visit the graves of loved ones at birthdays.

Two forms of commemoration might be distinguished: individual, taking place in the family circle, and shared, taking place in the social group milieu. Different social groups have designed distinctive rites for commemoration of their departed. For example, sailors place wreaths in the Baltic Sea for those who failed to come back to the shore. Lithuanian pilots commemorate their colleagues who suffered a jet crash above the Baltic Sea in 2003: after landing wreaths in the sea, they visit their memorials in Nemirseta, Panevėžys and Šiauliai year by year.⁴⁴ (See 5-7 photos) Such commemoration feast is ended with the reminiscences party and shared meal. In short, the contemporary commemoration customs help the same social group to sense a deep affinity with the deceased, as well as, the rural communion to feel community of feelings in traditional culture.

Conclusion

1. In summary, the topic of death and related events is an illustrative example of changing process from tradition to modernity. In Lithuanian traditional funeral rites a special collective role was ascribed to village community. This institution helped a dying person to prepare himself for his death and played an important role of mediator between the sphere of this world and the world of the dead. Nowadays Lithuanian funeral rites become more individual and anonymous.

2. Today's death culture operates on different levels, includes details from various times, beliefs, and cultures. The funeral rites in post-modern society can be distinguished for syncretism of the elements from different cultures.

⁴⁴ VDU ER, no. 1/33, p. 3, inf. A. Griškus, born in Jurbarkas, recorded by R. Račiūnaitė-Paužulienė in Kaunas in 2011.

3. Funerals have seen different changes in post-modern society: the space of dying and laying out from private living place of the deceased was shifted to public places, namely, hospitals, mortuaries, cafes where funereal meals or commemoration of the deceased are held after the funeral rites.

4. The differences of rural and urban funeral customs are obvious. More and more often people reject traditional chanting in urban funerals while in rural areas live chanting still exists as a quite popular custom. Thus the esthetic and psychotherapeutic function of the funeral music in post-modern society becomes more important than its ritual function which existed in traditional culture.

5. In the secular world nowadays the function of religious tokens is changing, and their esthetic function becomes more important than their religious meaning. The above mentioned changes have been determined by the value system of the modern consumer society and by rational approach to death.

6. Commemoration rites of the deceased form the constituent part of funeral rites denoting the end of the shift of the deceased into the world beyond. Today two forms of commemoration might be distinguished: individual, taking place in the family circle, and shared, taking place in the social group milieu.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by a grant (No. LIT-4-22) from the Research Council of Lithuania.



Fig. 1: Funeral in Vabalninkas district in 1920s-1930s, photo by J. Daubaras, *BKM (Biržai Region Museum), neg. no.1795/13.*



Fig. 2: Funeral in Lithuania in 1901s-1910s, unknown photographer, *LNM (National Museum of Lithuania), neg. no. Ft 1514.*



Fig. 3: Funeral of Lithuanian poet Justinas Marcinkevičius in Vilnius, unknown photographer, 2011.



Fig. 4: Funeral of prof. Arvydas Žygas in Kaunas, photo by R. Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė in 2011.



Fig. 5: Commemoration rites of Lithuanian pilots in Šiauliai, photo by R. Svaldenis in 2006.



Fig. 6: Commemoration rites of Lithuanian pilots in the Baltic sea, photo by R. Svaldenis in 2006.



Fig. 7: Flowers for deceased pilots in the Baltic Sea, photo by R. Svaldenis in 2006.

CULTURAL HISTORY OF DEATH

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BURIAL PATTERNS BEING REPEATED – MANNERISM OR SPECIFIC MEANING OF DEATH

AGNIESZKA KOWALSKA, JOANNA POPIELSKA-GRZYBOWSKA¹

The pyramids in Poland as a study topic need a short reference to the original pyramids, namely the ones that were the most vital symbol of ancient Egypt. The Egyptian pyramids had been the tombs of the rulers and their families in Egypt since ca. 2700 BC.² The first pyramid was built for the King Netjerikhet known better under the name Djoser (**photo 1**), given to him by the Greeks. He was the second ruler of the 3rd dynasty of the Old Kingdom (ca. 2740 BC-2131 BC).³ His – the oldest in the world – pyramid is a step pyramid (61 m high; 6 steps); designed by famous architect Imhotep, a person with many talents. Next well-known pyramids were constructed for the Kings of the 4th dynasty. The first Seneferu ordered to build him three pyramids – using over 9 mln tones of stone – two in Dahshur, one in Medum. The most famous are three pyramids of Giza, today part of Cairo – of Khufu/Kheops (146,5 m high) (**photo 2**), Khaphra/Khephren, Menkaure/Mykerinos.

Last true pyramids were built in the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2008 BC-1759 BC),⁴ not out of stone blocks, though, but of Nile silt clay bricks and debris inside the walls.⁵

Later, the tombs of the New Kingdom (ca. 1539 BC-1070 BC) were surmounted by small pyramids.

The latest pyramid tombs, but not so grandiose, can be found in the south of Egypt, in Meroe in the country of Kush (6th century BC).⁶ Those tombs were lower than their Egyptian prototypes (10 to 30 m high) and their shape was copied in Europe and Poland⁷ on the turn of the 18th century.

The pyramids were intended to guard the corpses of the deceased pharaohs and their wives from devastation and destruction. Unfortunately they failed. Most of such tombs were entered by force and robbed. The mummies were destroyed.

Fashions for Egypt were coming to Europe many times. Despite of distance Egypt was not unknown to the Europeans of Renaissance, baroque and later epochs. Pilgrims going to the Holy Land were visiting not only Jerusalem,

¹ Polish-Egyptian Archaeological Mission in Saqqara, Egypt, Pultusk Academy of Humanities.

² See e.g.: I.E.S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, London, Penguin Books, 1993; R. Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden. Vom Ziegelbau zum Weltwunder*, Mainz, Phillip von Zabern, 1991.

³ T. Schneider, *Lexikon der Pharaonen*, München, dtv, 1996, pp. 492-493.

⁴ Schneider, *Lexikon*, p. 494.

⁵ Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden*, pp. 229-257.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 258-263.

⁷ K. Ostaszewska, W. Lewandowski, *Polskie piramidy i 40 innych osobliwości*, Warszawa, Rój, 2000.

but also Egypt that was for them a land sanctified by the fact of being the refuge for the Holy Family when it was escaping from the Herod troops, but also as a scene of other Biblical stories and as a place of Joseph's stay and his interpretation of the pharaoh's night dreams. The travellers were coming to Cairo from where they easily could reach – visible in the horizon – pyramids of Giza. Most of the travellers did not know what the pyramids are, hence when they came back to Europe there appeared stories as if they had seen the granaries of Joseph, which had been used to protect Egypt from starving to death:

“And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold onto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn; because the famine was so sore in all lands”.⁸

Ancient Egypt was also fascination of Napoleon, whose expedition there brought to light much information on splendid ancient culture, the Rosetta stone, unearthed in the Nile Delta, which became the key to deciphering hieroglyphs in the 19th century. Many representations and drawings were made based on Egyptian tombs originals and were showing the tombs themselves, the pyramids included. This started the so-called egyptomania, manifestations of which one can find especially in architecture, but also in some everyday used items. It was fascination with “culture of death” – as Egyptian civilisation happens to be named and what turned to be just opposite and what left its impress on the 18th, 19th and 20th century European funerary customs as well. Some monuments, however, were planned for the living, as e.g. the Giraffe-house in Antwerpen or the Carreras Tobacco Factory in London, but most were – as originally in Egypt – for the dead. Consequently, there appeared tomb monuments inspired by old Egyptian art or being its direct imitation as in case of the pyramids. Due to the inexactitude of the pictures brought from Egypt, the pyramids constructed in Europe resemble rather those of Meroe and not those of Giza.

Ancient Egyptian monuments were admired and copied started from antiquity, e.g.: a pyramid (*Pyramide Cestia*)⁹ of praetor of Rome in 12 BC Gaius Cestius Epulon – later devastated. Furthermore, the Romans constructed or brought (8 ancient ones) from Egypt the obelisks surmounted with pyramidia in the shape of the pyramids. 5 obelisks were done during Roman reign in Egypt. The most famous is this on Lateran (Thuthmoside period in Egypt, 15th century BC) or the one in Vatican brought to Rome by Caligula in 37 AD. One another stands in front of Basilica di Santa Maria Sopra Minerva; brought to Rome by Dioclecian, and built by order of the pharaoh Apries, ruler of the 26th dynasty.

⁸ Bible, *Genesis*, chapter 41, 56-57.

⁹ J. Śliwa, “Two pyramids in the 17th Century Poland: Krynica and Bresteczko”, in *SAAC* 10 (2007), p. 155, p. 157.

In 16th century the base depicting an elephant was added. It was a project of Gianlorenzo Bernini who took as a model one of illustrations from the novel by Francesco Colonna "Hypnertomachia Poliphili" (= "Poliphilo's Dream of the Strife of Love"), being a description of an allegoric dream with images of fantastic architecture, as for example: pyramids, obelisk and huge monuments as well as hieroglyphs made up by the author, but treated as genuine ones in the 17th century. Similar monument, but using no original obelisk, was constructed in Poland in small village Grodzisko too. In the years 1677-1791 Sebastian Piskorski (later Rector of Jagiellonian University) founded complex of buildings (e.g. hermitage of blessed Salomea¹⁰) and sculptures including the mentioned above elephant monument being a fountain. Elephant symbolised glory and restrain, generosity, justice, benevolence and gentleness and its connection with Saint Mary was shown by her figure surmounting the obelisk with obvious references to the Bible – its height is 12 elbows – biblical number of fulfilment (3 x 4; Holy Trinity and creation of the world: 4 quarters of the globe).¹¹

The Polish travellers were fond of Egypt even before Napoleon's expedition. One of the first Polish travellers to go solely to Egypt was count Jan Potocki, who set out in 1784. However, the most interesting account of the journey is by the prince Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł-Sierotka, who visited Giza and Memphis in 1583. He even mounted up the Khufu pyramid. Interesting enough that he thought Sphinx to be a portrait of the harlot Rhodophis. He bought two mummies in Alexandria with intention to bring them to Poland, but they were thrown to the sea during storm on the Mediterranean Sea, because those pagan bodies were disturbing a priest to pray.¹²

At the end of the 18th century was built a tomb – not existing any more – of Johann Friedrich Waltsgott (1695-1780), senior of the town of Wrocław Council. His daughter founded such sandstone monument for him – on the plinth with relief depicting cranium with two crossbones there was set a pyramid. It was designed by Karl Heinrich August von Lindenau – designer of the Berlin Brandenburger Gate.

The other pyramid worth mentioning is the one in Rożnów.¹³ It was constructed ca. in mid 18th century. It was founded by the family von Eben. As first there was buried Krystian von Mohring, who died before finishing building, but his wife moved his body when it was done. It measures 9 m and is a brick construction. Inside there were niches, but visibly less than in the

¹⁰ J. Dreścik, "Kwiatki Świętej Pustyni B. Salomei Panny, na Skale S. Marey. Treści barokowej pustelni bł. Salomei w Grodzisku koło Skały", in *Folia Historiae Atrium*, XXIII (1987).

¹¹ J. Lipińska, *W cieniu piramid (In the shadow of the pyramids)*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków, Ossolineum, 2003, pp. 221-222.

¹² Ibid., pp. 219-220.

¹³ J. Śliwa, "The tomb pyramid of the von Eben und Brunnen Family in Rożnów/Rosen near Kluczbork/Kreuzburg", in *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization*, 12 (2008), pp. 119-126.

pyramid of Lindenau from Germany (built near Leipzig). The vaults are different too (groined in Rożnów and copula/dome in Lindenau). The pyramids have also similar proportions, but the German one is higher (German 11 m 45 cm). It is known that there were at last 27 people buried in the pyramid in Rożnów. Regrettably these terrestrial remains were cast in same lot as the Egyptian ones in the pyramids. After the World War II they were devastated by soldiers, but local hooligans were entering the tomb and destroying what was left till 2005, when it found itself under the care of conservator, and the parish-priest informed about possibility to get sick because of contact with the corpses containing old microbes. The place was set in order.

Larger pyramid 15.9 m high with square base with side 10.4 m is in north-east Poland in Rapa.¹⁴ It was designed by well-known sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, who studied e.g. at the Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, and is author of many monuments well-known in Poland, as for instance monument of the Polish prince Józef Poniatowski standing in front of the President's Palace in Warsaw. The artists' patrons were, among others, the Family Fahrenheit.¹⁵ Baron Fridrich von Fahrenheit was a collector of works of art, who loved antiquity was very open-minded, a listener of lectures by Immanuel Kant. He had been under big impression of Egyptian culture since his stay in France where he met a new scholarly branch – Egyptology, developed after The Napoleon's expedition (1798-1801). The pyramid under discussion was constructed in 1811, but its proportions are very different from those of the Giza pyramids, and although its outer walls have angle of inclination of 70 degrees, the architect made a nice 'reference' to the Khufu pyramid constructing in such a way that the inner walls of tomb chamber had angle of inclination of exactly 51 degrees 52'. To the pyramid there is leading an intentionally built route/pathway. The soil is wet there, and next to it there constructed canals to drain off water. All those undertakings brought desired results; the corpses did not decayed, but to the contrary and surprisingly underwent natural mummification process. Regrettably, as in Rapa, the dead bodies were profaned. The corpses lack heads. It is said in local legends that at the end of the 19th century there raged a cattle plague. Local people decapitated the old corpses, because they thought that the dead bodies were rising from the grave and causing death of animals.¹⁶ The Rapa pyramid is probably the best known Polish pyramid. In 2007 there was the film called "Children of the

¹⁴ <http://www.wolczyn.pl/gmina/roznow.html> (accessed 10 October 2011); <http://opole.gazeta.pl/opole/1,35106,4285988.html> (accessed 10 October 2011).

¹⁵ B. Piątek, „Piramida z Luschnitz czyli egiptomania jako epizod w XIX-wiecznej historii wschodniopruskiej rodziny von Fahrenheit”, in *Światowit* II (XLIII), part A, Warsaw, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Archeologii UW, 2000, pp. 166-171, pp. 43-41.

¹⁶ http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piramida_w_Rapie (accessed 10 October 2011).

pyramid” made, showing children from a local village acting as guides of the pyramid and its surroundings.

Later, but equally imposing, is the tomb built for the Skrzyński Family in Zagórzany;¹⁷ designed by Teodor Marian Talowski, well-known Polish architect, designer of many churches and other buildings, the ones of ‘Under Spider’ and ‘Under Singing Frog’ in Cracow included. Moreover for his family he designed a tomb with a sphinx (**photo 3**) in the Rakowiecki cemetery. Coming back to the pyramid in Zagórzany, it was 10 m high and its base was 12 m long. Its proportions resemble those of the Khufu pyramid, but this pyramid is surmounted by the Christian cross with Jesus Christ facing down to the people, visitors coming to the tomb, the pyramid. In this pyramid there were 6 people buried, last in 1994.

One of the oldest Polish pyramid is the so-called “arianka (she-Arian)”¹⁸ constructed in Krynica, 20 m high, not far away from Krasnystaw. It was erected by wish of Paweł Bogusław Orzechowski, Arian, cup-bearer and later chamberlain of Chełm land, before his death in 1632, but it is not known when exactly. In accordance with Polish law of those days, it was forbidden to bury non-catholic in the cemetery adjacent to a church. Therefore he ordered to build his last abode next to his terrestrial abode. It is difficult to prove that he was actually buried in this pyramid, as no signs of burial were found inside. One another example of a Polish pyramid is the tomb of one of Napoleon’s captain of horses Franciszek Łakiński (**photo 4**) with baroque column constructed in Łaziska in 1845. The pyramid is 6 m high and built of field stones.

There are also quite many other pyramids built in Poland starting from the 17th century and meant to be the tombs. There was risen a tomb shaped as platform with a very steep brick pyramid. There exists a pyramid of Prince Alexander Proński close to Beresteczko¹⁹ after 1631, of count Władysław Trojanowski, and other of Edward Mycielski, a traveller to Africa. Since the 2nd half of the 19th century there were more and more pyramids built in Poland: the pyramid or obelisk of Franciszek Łakiński the pyramid of Kulczycki family in Międzybrodzie,²⁰ last of the family – professor of archaeology at the Warsaw University is buried there too and many others (over ten).²¹

There are very many tomb monuments inspired by Egyptian art, and the pyramid form especially, in Polish cemeteries, namely in Warsaw Powązki

¹⁷ [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zagórzany_\(powiat_gorlicki\)](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zagórzany_(powiat_gorlicki)) (accessed 10 October 2011).

¹⁸ Śliwa, *Two pyramids*, pp. 155-163; Lipińska, *W cieniu piramid*, p. 221.

¹⁹ Śliwa, *Two pyramids*, pp. 155-163.

²⁰ J. Śliwa, “Egipskie piramidy w polskim krajobrazie. Grobowiec rodziny Kulczyckich w Międzybrodziu koło Sanoka”, *Rocznik Biblioteki Naukowej PAU i PAN w Krakowie*, in *RLII* (2007), pp. 499-503.

²¹ Lipińska, *W cieniu piramid*, pp. 219-226.

cemetery.²² They are being built up until present, though nowadays they fulfil other than funerary functions, as for instance a glass pyramid in Połczyńska street housing financial centre or restaurants, as in e.g. Bolesławiec.²³

It is extremely difficult to name the reasons why Polish aristocracy of the 18th and 19th century wanted to be buried in pyramids. Did they want to secure immortality for themselves? Was it overwhelming, worldwide human need to be closer to the real mystery? They were different people, followers of various religions. Certainly, much inspiration came from Italy. Some role played fascination for originality and uniqueness of ancient Egyptian culture. The Greeks believed that ancient Egypt was the source of all knowledge.²⁴ Most probably of some inspiration and use were religious mysteries of Isis and Osiris which – as we know for sure – were conducted in ancient Greece and Rome too. It is highly probable that its fame reached Europe or some social circles in 18th/19th century Europe as well. Moreover, due to the fact that the pyramid was a symbol of immortality and its aim to guard terrestrial remains of the deceased for ever and ever. Thus, the founders of the monuments hoped for natural mummification. Interestingly enough it did occurred from time to time. It is widely known that the greatest fear of humanity is fear of death.

Although no unmistakable interpretation can be made if it was just a mannerism or expressing some specific meaning of death or rather of life perhaps for those who wanted to have a house in the shape of the Egyptian pyramid in the beyond. In some cases naturally it was just manifestation of extraordinary fancies of a human. One needs to mention, however, that many of the men buried contemporarily in the pyramids were linked to freemasonry and Rosicrucians. This fascination and philosophical approach was going back to Aristotle's philosophy and then changed into esoteric and hermetic science based on the Sacred Book of Egyptian god of wisdom and moon Thoth – *Tabula Smaragdina* and later was connected with the image of Hermes Trismegistos and the faith in mysterious power of hieroglyphic script.

Fascination with the Egyptian pyramids still lasts and takes its harvest.

²² B. Piątek, A. Ćwiek, "Egiptyzujące grobowce na cmentarzu Powązkowskim w Warszawie", in *Meander*, 9-10 (1992).

²³ <http://www.tvp.pl/wroclaw/aktualnosci/rozmaitosci/piramida-do-wyburzenia/4378101> (accessed 10 October 2011); <http://www.centrumpiramida.pl/piramida.php?pid=11&id=58> (accessed 10 October 2011).

²⁴ On these and other aspects of Polish fascination by the land of the pyramids, see: L. Zinkow, *Imhotep i pawie pióra*, Kraków, Księgarnia Akademicka, 2009. The present authors would like to thank Dr Leszek Zinkow for rendering them photos and for all his invaluable remarks.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BURIAL PATTERNS BEING REPEATED – MANNERISM OR
SPECIFIC MEANING OF DEATH



Fig. 1: The ancient Egyptian pyramid of King Netjerikhet in Saqqara, Egypt.
Photo by A. Kowalska.



Fig. 2: The ancient Egyptian pyramid of King Khufu in Giza, Egypt.
Photo by A. Kowalska.



Fig. 3: The sphinx being a part of the tomb of Teodor Marian Talowski's Family in the Rakowiecki cemetery. Photo by L. Zinkow.



Fig. 4: The pyramid of Franciszka Łakiński in Łaziska. Photo by L. Zinkow.

THOUGHTS ON DYING AND SUICIDE AT THE TURN OF THE 18TH-19TH CENTURY: A TRANSYLVANIAN GIRL OF CAPULET-DESTINY

NOÉMI TÜNDE FARKAS¹

The young girl dropped the glass from her hand with some arsenic-stream on its side, and she fell onto the floor. The events of the previous summer and spring rolled over in her eyes: her stay at Cluj, her secret correspondence and meetings, and she greeted death with a sarcastic grin. For a passing moment she realized the astonishment on the faces of the guests and relatives flooded to Micăsasa and also the funeral grandeur of her own burial organized by her father that she had wished for so much. In this moment, suddenly a scream broke her pleasant state expecting death; her mother was entering the room and glanced at the girl waiting for death on the floor.

The girl, Polyxénia Radák, was only seventeen when György Bánffy, much older than her and widower, asked her for engagement.² From the family correspondence³ reveals that her father, Ádám Radák (II) forwarded the aspirant offer-maker to her mother: „*The girl belongs to her mother, my answer is the last*”⁴. This way the burden of reply fell on the mother and, as it also reveals from the letters the answer of Polyxéna also mattered. The mother writes to her daughter⁵ to ask for advice from a relative, the much experienced Mrs. Istvánné Dániel⁶ and take into serious consideration the idea of marriage:

„So, my beloved Daughter (...) chew this issue well and digest all the possible burdens of a marriage you can imagine (...) and do believe my dear Daughter that even if you were the wife of Empereor Francis, yet you would never reach that calm and silence you leave behind at your poor and stricken mother’s home”.

The idea of our paper was inspired by the print preserved in the Teleki Téka Library of Targu-Mures that we found there with the title „Poems made on the death of Polyxéna Radák”.⁷

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² Éva Knapp, *Az elfátyolozott arckép. Kis István Bárá Radák Polikséna haláláról készített verseinek életrajzi és irodalomtörténeti háttéréhez*, Budapest, Zebegény Borda Antikvárium, 2003, p. 29.

³ Éva Knapp „De jaj keservimben pennámat szalasztom”, in *Magyarbényei báró Radák (II.) Ádámné, Kemény Druzsiana kesergő versei (1796-1808)*, Lymbus, Magyarságtudományi Forrásközlmények, Budapest, Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2004, pp. 187-203.

⁴ Reference made by S. Sárdi: *Az elfátyolozott arckép. Báró Radák Polyxéna kisasszony emlékezete (Szemle)*. *Magyar Könyvszemle*, 120. évf. 1. szám, p. 99. and Éva Knapp, *Az elfátyolozott*, p. 31.

⁵ In a letter wrote on 17th March 1803; reference made by Knapp „De jaj”. *Magyarbényei báró Radák (II.) Ádámné*, 188.

⁶ Mrs. Istvánné Dániel born Anna Mikes, double widow of first husband count Pál Bornemissza, second husband Gyula Benczúr.

⁷ Teleki-Bolyai Library call number: BO nr. 14298.

This farewell poem, second edition review of it, as it later on has been revealed, issued at Cluj in 1804, gives homage to the death of Polyxéna Radák. Neither on the print nor on the six editions of the poem is indicated the author's name, the scholars assume that his identity can be revealed from a fractional travel diary put down by László Kővári in 1822.⁸ He attributes the lines to a Cluj student, later Calvinist minister of Breaza, Mures County, István Kis. According to this, Kis, as a student of the Reformed College, put down the poem respecting the tradition of his age implying that the students usually recited homage poems over the deceased members of the Transylvanian aristocracy.

In fact, the status, social positioning and role of the deceased used to determine the funeral rites and well-orchestrated ceremonies and in reverse, as well, the aristocracy represented themselves in front of the masses through the well-choreographed solemn funeral rites, strengthening their position and status of their family members and descendants. The farewell proved to be well-prepared and inherited, furthermore the funeral speeches and laudations all consisted part of the representation. The orators had to compile their speeches according to the prerequisites of the family representation: they had to be informed about the geneology, present the walk of life of the deceased emphasizing his/her good and outstanding deeds.⁹

In our case, the family representation is quite unlikely since the family attempted to veil away the true story of Polyxéna Radák.¹⁰ The suicidal-girl from the turn of the 18-19th century proved to be the member of such a family, which indirectly had various and large kinship links with Wien and Pest, as well. They played a significant and decisive role in the social-political life of Transylvania; they constituted an ancient family who supported the Prince in the 16th century: in 1562 Prince Zsigmond János of Transylvania sent a battalion of horsemen led by Gábor Pekri and László Radák against the rebellious Szekler army. The Pekri and Radák families were in kinship, too.¹¹ Kata Szidónia Petróczi married Lőrinc Pekry of Petrovina in the summer of 1681, a daughter of theirs Terézia Erzsébet Pekry used to be the wife of Ádám

⁸ Reference made by Margit S. Sárdi, *Az elfátyolozott arckép. Báró Radák Polyxéna kisasszony emlékezete (Szemle). Magyar Könyvszemle*, 120. évf. 1. szám, p. 97.; and Éva Knapp, *Az elfátyolozott arckép. Kis István Báró Radák Polixsena haláláról készített verseinek élettrajzi és irodalomtörténeti háttéréhez*, Budapest, Zebegény Borda Antikvárium, 2003, p. 34.; and Zsófia Borbála Nagy, „Erdély Júliája. Történet a 19. századból”, *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 2004, 1-2. szám, p. 95. László Kővári, *The most prestigious families of Transylvania*, Kolozsvár (Cluj) 1854, pp. 209-210.

⁹ Gábor Kecskeméti: *Prédikáció, retorika, irodalomtörténet. A magyar nyelvű halotti beszéd a 17. században*, Budapest, Universitas, 1998, pp. 162-209.

¹⁰ I use the name-form which had been used by the letter-writing girl, and not the contemporary version or Polika nickname form used in the verse, which conveys empathy through its belittling from and which was most likely applied by the author out of mere sympathy towards her.

¹¹ See the attached family tree.

Radák (I), and she was the one who inherited part of the Pekry-Petrőczy fortune and the castle of Ozd and the library, wherein later on countess Klára Rhédei duchess Istvánné Radák spotted the poems of Kata Petrőczy.¹² The Radák's proved to be in kinship with almost all the Transylvanian aristocratic families who married endemically in that time; Polyxéna, presumably inherited her mythic name from her maternal grandmother duchess Polyxéna Wesselényi, however this Christian name occurred in the family on paternal wing, too, since one of the grand-daughters of Kata Petrőczy, Polyxéna Dániel, Mrs. Istvánné Wesselényi wore this first name, as well.

Stemming from their status, it is likely that they tried to hide and push back the rumors, gossips around the death of their daughter, and practically based on the short kinship memorialia notes, she was buried soon, three days after her death and, moreover she was missing the final funeral rite later one, too. It is more interesting for us, how could the print get listed among the funeral oration speeches collection of the Teleki Téka Library, since the present farewell poem authored by István Kis, can not be considered a funeral oration: it does not consist of a geneological description, Biblical parables or even elements of a sermon; neither it is a secular laudation, lacking basic information, the cover-page of the print lacks the name of the author, the date of funeral, too, only, presumably the date of the poem's creation is provided. Consequently, the scholar can take it for granted that the poem had not been ordered by the mourning family; that is why the author's identity is concealed and there are parts blaming most likely the parents' responsibility for the suicide of the girl.

We can also be absolutely sure about the fact that the four issues of the poem on the death of Polyxéna within a year in the same city, could not be done on the family's expenses. Furthermore, since there are two other late print editions of the same poem from Cluj also available this time from Oradea, it is evident that its bestseller popularity stems from the mystic feature of the story. Based on our researches, carried out in the field of funeral oration and laudations, not even in the case of our great deceased personalities such as, Emprice Maria Theresia, count István Szécheny, or in Transylvanian context count György Bánffy or Sámuel Teleki, were the laudations, farewell poems issued many times or if they were at least not the same versions. As we have already mentioned before, the Radák family was in kinship with almost all the Transylvanian aristocracy, thus the news and possible causes of the suicide of Polyxéna could have spread really swiftly. The family owned properties out of Transylvania, too, so the flash news' wild-fire-like spreading and nation-wide popularity of the tragedy „threatened” them pretty much. The relatives, acquaintances were all curious about the events, since, as we know from the

¹² Knapp „De jaj keservimben”, p. 187 and several monographies about Kata Petrőczy.

studies describing the effects of the funeral laudations, it consisted organic part of the court-culture of aristocracy and depicted a kind of manifestation form of public life for them. Besides, the religious life had also been somewhat public affair manifestation, thus we can state that participating on clerical rites, especially on funerals became part of the public life.¹³ The viewer of the final honouration becomes witness of this representation, eager for the grandeur and spectacular elements of the rite.¹⁴ During the well-orchestrated, splendid and in terms of gender democratic farewell rites, the aristocracy represented itself successfully in front of the mob of common people, thus the homage speech fulfilled its primary task that of „good remembrance”. Since throughout the ceremony, not only the deceased but also his/her micro and macro environment has been unveiled as well as the family members, friends, acquaintances, relationships, positions, basically the whole life of the deceased. Due to the inconvenience of the tragic death of Polyxénia Radák, this rite was not subservient to be organized. During the ceremony and the farewell oration, the deceased and her family were exposed as much it was utmost necessary by the inspection, however in this particular case it would have been necessary to conceal too many issues and not only hiding some unpleasant events, as they usually had done in the special cases of the inconveniences of the naturally deceased.¹⁵

So, Polyxéna, provided she let herself be inspected, since as we referred to it, she made death grab her on the same day her father was mourned and was to be buried, from the only one farewell speech delivered we can conclude that her family did not want to have a proper ceremony for her and held a quiet, private family funeral instead. It is not our objective to decipher the decision of the girl, however thinking over the contemporary social conditions, the dating of her act by Polyxéna could have been a sheer flip towards her closest family, or rather this was the only way she could demonstrate that there is something, at least up only to her and no one else to decide. As a young girl, she could grab the public attention upon herself from mere exhibitionism since she blew off her life on the very last honorary farewell day of her deceased father. In our viewpoint, it must have been crucial the time and presence of the prestigious mourning guest who just arrived at the funeral. The plan of Polyxéna, based on

¹³ Gábor Várkonyi „Nekem azt kell tennem, amit mások akarnak...” Arisztokrata nők és közélet a kora újkori Magyarországon, in Fábri Anna-Várkonyi Gábor (eds.), *Nők világa. Művelődés- és társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, Budapest, Argumentum, 2007, pp. 124-126.

¹⁴ Using the term of Jonathan Crary a new „observant” has appeared at the turn of the 18-19. Century Transylvanian death rituals, which becomes an important part of this rite.

¹⁵ Noémi Tünde Farkas „Et moriemur”. Az halálnak képe, halotti beszédben lerajzolva. A megfigyelt és a megfigyelő helyzete a halotti beszéd és a temetési szertartás reprezentációin keresztül, in: *Látás-Tekintet-Pillantás. A megfigyelő lehetőségei*, Éva Kovás, Jolán Orbán, Veronika Kasznár (eds.) Budapest-Pécs, PTE Kommunikáció-és Médiatudományi Tanszék, 2009, pp. 234-235.

these assumptions, would have been fully accomplished supposing the news of her death had been released just before the beginning of the funeral rite of her father. The researcher scholar may take two other scenarios into account: perhaps the girl wished to take a vengeance on her father this way for forcing her to marry the elderly aspirant. Was she planning to deprive her father from an honorary, splendid farewell rite, and this way to reveal the injustice she had to bear? Or, maybe she expressed her remorse over the death of her father in this manner? There are numberless assumptions, theories and rational arguments no scholar can find the proper answer for, thus any of it may be relevant, yet provided the devastated state of mind and soul of a suicidal teenager girl, perhaps it is not of utmost importance to find a puzzle-like logical explanation behind her act. After enlisting so many mysteries and mythic strings, let's get to know briefly the poem itself and the novelty about it:

„That's how you also passed away following the road of your father” implies that her father passed away due to some sort of important act. Naturally, we can only presume what could have that important act been which caused the sudden death of Ádám Radák (II), when four days before his death he had not had any complaint on any disease, when he informed his wife about her task of decision-making on their daughter's marriage by replying the aspirant.¹⁶ From his laudating orator's speech it reveals that „some sort of pressing damn suddenly ended his earthly life within few hours”.¹⁷

The poem and the found letters together do enlighten the events, since from these letters reveal the marriage proposal of the much older widower, György Bánffy. The farewell poem provides us some other information; however neither from this nor from that source the full picture comes together. The young heart of Polyxéna proved to be busy, but not unrequited though, but secret love, which had been hindered by the ambition of the 18th century. We can be utterly certain about the assumption that she desperately fell in love with a sub-rank young man, and based on the previous idea her parents or only her mother objected or forbade her from this love relationship.

The Radák's were part of the great Transylvanian reformed protestant families, thus we may truly consider that they were familiar with the teachings, manners and sermons of contemporary 18th century protestant prayer-books, life-guidebooks, and the aristocratic families, especially the women handed over and over to the next generations these basic findings and disciplinary manners.¹⁸ We know that the mother, Drusiána Kemény wrote poems, Ádám Radák (II) started his education in the famous Reformed College of Aiud and

¹⁶ Knapp, *Az elfátyolozott*, , 2003, p. 30.

¹⁷ János Bodola, *Halotti predikáció... melyet néhai I. b. m.-bényei Radák Ádám... utolsó földi alkalmatosságára készített és el is mondott...* 1803. szept. 4. Kolos'várt, Ref. Coll. Betűivel, 1810, Teleki-Bolyai Könyvtár (Library) call number: 16535/V.

¹⁸ Rózsa Bellágh „A jó és bölcs asszony” a 18. századi halotti beszédekben, *Erdélyi Múzeum* 3-4, 2004, pp. 94-105.

went on studying in the University of Göttingen,¹⁹ so both of them came from educated protestant Transylvanian families and enlarged and handed over the family library from one generation to the other. Ádám Radák (II), supported science just like his descendants, his brother-in-law Simon Kemény had offered to his good friend, Farkas Bolyai to send him to Engineering Academy on his own expense. His son István, and his wife, supported and contributed to many school and church-construction and restoration works, furthermore they donated various books and paintings to libraries and to the Transylvanian Museum Association.

Almost all the Hungarian protestant prayer-books written for mixed public, dealt with the set „politically and clerically correct” norms and manners of appropriate marriage, marriage proposal, engagement. Polyxéna could have been fully aware of the expectation that „for a maiden it is not allowed and it lacks good manner to look for a husband”.²⁰ It had been obvious for her, as well that a maiden, unmarried woman was in a transitory state between girlhood and married womanhood. Until she got married, the girl belonged to her parents’ household with certain duties, namely to obey her father’s will and decisions. At the turn of the century (18-19th century) this attitude reveals from the prayer-books, too, and this is also underlined by diaries, autobiographies and letters, as well. In the middle of the century, a new sort of trend of sentimentalism and rationalism was emerging representing the ideas of theological liberalism. This coincided in Hungary, though, presumably with some delay in Transylvania, too, with the age of transition to civilian code of ethics from the norm of social states. Stemming from our topic, the changes around wedlock seems to be interesting. In the prayer-books from the mid-19th century, moreover the emphasis shifted towards the importance of love and bondage among the marrying partners. These books confirmed that love is the sign and good-will of God.²¹ In the age of Polyxéna, though, when talking about marriage the utmost social prerequisite and good-manner was still to obey the will of parents, therefore we can be totally certain that the „winds of change” had not affected the lives of the Central-Transylvanian households at the very beginning of the 19th century.

Although the 18th century consultancy proved to be a new genre emerging from the formal structures of ministers’ preaching’s, yet the works

¹⁹ Péter Egyed: *A nemzeti filozófia kezdetei. Filozófiaoktatás a protestáns gimnáziumokban Erdélyben a XVIII-XIX. század fordulóján.* <http://adatbank.transindex.ro/vendeg/htmlk/pdf6442.pdf> (Downloaded: 13.10.2011.)

²⁰ The teachings of György Szikszay quoted by Juliane Brandt: „egy és ugyanazon felséges célra vagyunk mindnyájan teremtve” A 19. századi protestáns imakönyvek nőképe, in *Nők a modernizálódó magyar társadalomban*, Gábor Gyáni, Beáta Nagy(eds.), Budapest, Csokonai Kiadó, 2006, p. 98.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 96-120.

originated mostly from clergymen's pen. Its topics mostly dealt with the necessity of educating the girls, women and little kids, clerical and religious education, lamenting about the different roles of a mother, housewife, landlady, maiden, spinster, instructing good manners, and basic ideas about wedlock preparations. In this latter field of topic, the West-European author, with Hungarian translation even from the 18th century, regards marriage in an alarmingly „liberal” way as the true choice of the engaged partners.²² According to this, the girl should check her marriage purpose thoroughly and then should and does not have to ask for advice from her parents in this matter. This already consists a shift from the total subordination doctrine to the parental will of the prayer-books' yet, it does not reach the norm of emotion-based wedlock of the 19th century. The parents, here are still present, although as experienced consultants and not decision-makers. In the case of Polyxéna, the experienced parental consultancy was present from both parts, as it reveals from the correspondence when her mother suggest her ask for the advice of an experienced widow, Anna Mikes. In the light of our resources, in the other issue we can not be cocksure, since as for their correspondence Polyxéna was in position to decide on her marriage, quite „liberally” and her parents took into account her opinion at least suggested from the letters. Yet, according to the farewell poem „our dear POLIKA” was forced to make it „which in our interpretation is not about the purity and good-moral of a girl but something about the forcing parental attitude against her will.

Polyxéna could have been aware of the rights of women of her age, taken into account that „if a noble woman married a non-noblesse or civilian man, she did not lose her nobility provided she had the approval of her family, moreover she raised even the social rank of her husband”.²³

The author of the farewell-poem, after reciting the tragic story of Polyxéna, harshly criticizes the social expectations of the age, the mindless rank-seeking attitude of the parents and in the second part of the poem calls the parents' attention upon the latest girl-educational principles and ideas.

The author expresses his ardent critique and even considers fools those who regard social rank the most important category and neglect to judge humans based on their humanity. He charges those who pardon the ones in velvet-garment and despise the people in shabbier clothing just because of their origin. This is also emphasized by mentioning Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, who

²²Zsófia László: „Aszszony-népnek meg-kivántató tudomány...” Női életvezetési tanácsadókönyvek a 18. századi Magyarországon, in: *A nők világa*, Anna Fábri - Gábor Várkonyi(eds.), Budapest, Argumentum, pp. 241-242.

²³ Gabriella Gáspár quotes Erik Fügedi. Gabriella Gáspár, „A női jogok a magyar rendi társadalomtól a Horthy-korszak végéig”, n: *A nő és a politikum. A nők politikai szerepvállalása Magyarországon*, Mária Palasik(eds.), Budapest, Napvilág Kiadó, 2007, p. 65.

rejected the idea of judgment of humans on origin and status. However, there may be some other arguments close to the one of the author who forewarns the parents through entire pages from something that had been done to „Polika”. He considers to be mindless and senseless a marriage concluded with handshake of the parents, to knot together opposing parties and thus: „both engaging partners look at each other/ as Judas would do at his preaching Master”. In his opinion, such wedlock can not be fulfilled in happiness and even the offspring of such a relationship can not be but unhappy. Presumably, these lines are the criticism of Polyxéna’s parents.

He recalls the attention onto the responsibility and attitude of the parents. He stands on an enlightened viewpoint similarly to the prayer-books, casting his vote for consultancy versus arbitrary orders or forcing. He considers of utmost importance, just like the authors and translators of prayer-books, life-guidebooks, the education and teaching of women, and particularly that of the young girls in order to avoid such sad cases as the one of Polyxéna.

Since the poems written on „The death of Polyxéna Radák” whip predominantly the family and the aristocracy, blaming them not only for her death but also for their noble lifestyle, mentality, consequently we can recognize that the poem had not been written from the family’s wish, thus it is certain that it does not fit into the representation-theory. The farewell-poem is usually inspired from the request to define, maintain and raise the social position of a noble family in the society, outlining the good-deeds, moral and positive traits of the deceased, honoring his/her glorious life and death, namely to provide an iconic example of his/her deeds and noble character. Contrary to this, the poem crabs the mentality which smoothes out the rival families’ problems via marriage, rejecting the rank and prestige-based attitude which is eager to sacrifice even their kids’ happiness making decisions on their lives, neglecting their will.

We have not wished to investigate and roll up the true story of Polyxéna’s death or to find any more details to it. The literary resource has stirred up our attention because it provides a kind of picture of the mentality, lifestyle, walk of life of the Radák family, which could have been similar unless identical with the attitudes of the Central-Transylvanian upper-nobility, atypical of the contemporary farewell funeral speeches. We have neglected on purpose to reveal the identity of the secret sub-rank lover of the girl; who could have been the young gentleman Haller, who wrote love-letters to Polyxéna signing only his first-name; and we have not gone into details on analyzing the „speech, hearsay” of the mid-century either the literary work describing the story issued in the following year after the death.

It is noteworthy, though that the act of Polyxéna proved to be very unfortunate for her family, since the head of the family Ádám Radák (II) had passed away few months before and there was nobody to preserve the good-

fame and reputation of the family. The two brothers of Polyxéna, were still studying on academy: István at Târgu Mureş, Ádám in Wien, thus their fate could have been affected by the events and the spreading rumors, and furthermore the after-life, reputation and rank of the widow mother Drusiána Kemény was likely to be affected, based on the mystery and charge pouring from the poem blaming her for the death of her daughter. She herself might have felt this responsibility when she put down the poem revealed later on.

However, Polyxéna's death perhaps had deeply affected her family's life, from the remaining data appears that her brothers successfully graduated from the military academies and achieved nice careers: Ádám Radák (III) completed a military career, did not establish a family, count István married duchess Klára Rhédey. Their son Ádám (IV), the last Radák male-offspring proved to be listed among the duke members of the Hungarian Parliament Upper-House at the late 19th Century.

COMMEMORATING DEATH IN EUROPEAN ARTISTIC MUSIC

ANNA G. PIOTROWSKA¹

Music – as a form of art – has always been associated with human emotions and hence its close links with the issue of death occupy an important place in many musical works. The topos of death in music is not only present throughout the epochs, but it also entails a number of interrelated motifs, creating in a consequence a vast network of mutual influences. The variety of associations between music and the theme of death not only includes musical pieces referring to this subject, but also stretches as far as to the literature, e.g. in the form of poems linking these two motifs (see the sonnet by Geoffrey Hill entitled *Funeral Music*²), additionally it involves considering other phenomena combining music and death literally – like near death experiences and the problem of music heard during this extreme moment. Indeed, according to Gilles Bedard who has been researching the topic for years, not only does music accompany NDE but in fact the sounds heard then are similar to music of Steve Roach.³ Obviously the question of musical background of a given individual as well as his/her preferences rises, however, the crucial factor remains the very association of NDE with music, be it heard as soothing harps, tinkling bells or new age synthesized sounds.⁴

Death as an ultimate emotional experience has been long associated in European culture with musical activities on the basis of contrasting them: on one hand there is the joy of life expressed with music and dance and on the other hand there is the sadness of passing away. The close links of music and death were highlighted by medieval artists willingly undertaking the topic of so called *Dance of Death*, known also as *Danse Macabre*. The allegory of the death inviting people from different walks of life to dance their last dance towards the grave had multiple meanings. Most obviously it referred to the collision of systems: dancing was considered in middle aged Europe as a symbol of celebrating life, sexuality, joy whereas death symbolized the end of these activities. The death was seen as moment of silencing music and dance. Dance meant 'here and now' while death referred to 'there and forever'. Furthermore, dance was associated with pagan rituals and the moment of death was clearly seen as the ultimate moment of getting closer to the idea of Christian God.

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² Steven Meyer, 'Funeral Music', in *Grand Street*, 7, 2 (1988), p.244.

³ Gilles Bedard, 'Near-Death Experience Music. Gilles Bedard's NDE and music research', at: <http://www.near-death.com/music.html> accessed 24.06.2011.

⁴ Kevin Williams, 'The NDE and Music. Kevin Williams' research conclusions', at: <http://www.near-death.com/music.html> accessed 24.06.2011.

The dance-with-death idea turned out inspirational for some composers, too, although it never became very popular. The most famous examples come from the romantic era celebrating the eeriness and medieval associations alike. *Totentanz* (1849) by Franz Liszt, *Danse Macabre* (1874) by Camille Saint-Saëns, or 20th century examples – by Arnold Schoenberg (*Totentanz der Prinzipien*, 1914), by Benjamin Britten (*Dance of Death* from *Ballad of Heroes* Op. 14, 1939) or by Dmitri Schostakovitsch (*Dance of Death* from *Piano Trio in E minor* Op. 67, 1944), and Eugen Suchon (*Poème macabre* for violin and piano, 1963) attest the significance of the *Danse macabre* as an influential factor fertilizing composers' imagination. Since one of the persons depicted in the *Dance macabre* (reflecting the medieval hierarchy of the world) was a maiden, the motif of the Death and the Maiden was later developed and mostly represented in fine arts but also featured in romantic music (in 1817 Franz Schubert composed the song *Death and the Maiden*). Between 1875 and 1877 his cycle of songs dealing with death and dying presented Modest Mussorgsky under the title *Songs and Dances of Death* for the voice and piano.

In the 19th century the celebration of dead composers took also additional dimension in the form of producing posthumous masks or life casts of famous instrumentalists' hands (e.g. the cast of Chopin's hand was taken by the young sculptor Auguste Clésinger).

Arguably the most spectacular associations of the theme of the death and music are to be observed in musical pieces, especially

(I) instrumental or vocal compositions where dead people are deplored by means of (purely) musical tools.

(II) musical stage works such as operas and ballets where extra – musical, i.e. textual and visual factors play important role: the portrayal of death in these works concentrate not only on capturing the moment of dying but also on circumstances leading to it

Composers often engaged in works commemorating the death. In Italy more popularity gained songs of grief and mourning called laments or lamentation, while in France instrumental forms were cultivated. Funerary music was also performed in Lutheran Germany.⁵

Compositions can be divided into two types:

- a. honouring the life of deceased and
- b. the ones composed for funeral services.

(a)

Compositions deploring the death of notable people and dedicated to them were often written by composers for their own families, friends and thus

⁵ Renate Steiger (ed.), *Johann Sebastian Bachs Kantaten zum Thema Tod und Sterben und ihr literarisches Umfeld*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2000.

often referred to musicians or their relatives. Franz Liszt is supposed to have had around 1882 a hunch about the approaching death of his son in law Richard Wagner (who died in 1883). The composition *La lugubre gondola* is hence associated with this haunting feeling. Arthur Sullivan – the British composer known for his operettas honoured his father in *The Overture in C- major, In Memoriam* (1866).

Other composers honoured their fellow composers, like Arvo Part – an Estonian composer celebrating the memory of his British colleague by composing in 1977 a short canon in A minor *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten* for string orchestra and bell. Often these compositions were titled as hommages. Andrzej Panufnik's *Hommage à Chopin* (1949, orch.1966) for flute and small string orchestra commemorated the 100th anniversary of the death of the great Polish composer. Lionel Rogg (b. 1936) composed *Hommage à Messiaen* (1992) for organ and Nam June Paik (1932 – 2006) authored *Hommage à John Cage – Music for Tape Recorder and Piano* (1959 – 1960).

There are also compositions honouring famous people, for example Paul Hindemith composed a suite for viola and orchestra *Trauermusik* (1936) to honour the death of British king George V. As the title suggests vocal *Elegy for J.F.K.* (1964) by Igor Stravinsky – introducing elements of twelve-tone music – commemorates the death of the American president. *Song for Athene* (known as *Alleluia. May Flights of Angels Sing Thee to Thy Rest*) for a four part- choir a cappella by a British composer John Tavener was performed at the funeral of princess Diana in 1997 and is mostly associated with this event.

As far as the genre is concerned the most common type of musical compositions commemorating the death of a notable individual was – especially in the period of baroque – so called tombeau. The peak of its popularity dates back to the 17th century when it was composed usually for lute, harpsichord, or viola da gamba. In the 18th century the popularity of tombeaux faded to lose the importance at all in the 19th century. In the early 20 century – together with the idea of resurrecting 'old' music – some composers came back to them, but the genre never regained its status. The tombeau predominantly was modelled upon German dance called allamande set in 4/4. This baroque dance influenced also the older, renaissance dance pavane which was too used in tombeaux alongside rarely introduced dance of English origin – gigue. Seldom if ever composers referred to courante in triple metre as a source of form (e.g. in Johann Jakob Froberger's *Lamentation on the Death of Ferdinand III* or *Meditation sur ma Mort Future*). Music of tombeaux was characterized by the employment of rhetorical figures. The most typical included the repetition of motifs imitating the knocking of Death at the door as well as depiction of the soul's peregrinations achieved by means of introducing ascending or descending scales, both diatonic and chromatic (and in vocal music *prosopopoeia* was used

to denote rhetorical personification of the deceased⁶). Moreover the so called 'sighing' or 'breathing' figure – *suspirans*⁷ was used (a three-note upbeat) alongside dotted rhythms particularly often encountered in repeated notes. The minor harmonies and slow changing functions deepened the feeling of sadness. With time also the lamento bass was introduced featuring chromatic progressions.

When tombeaux were losing their popularity their place was taken over by marches composed for funerals, which soon gained the status of artistic compositions, often featured as part of larger, cyclic compositions. Called *Marche funèbre* or *Trauermarsch* were invariably set in minor key and of solemn character. Already G. Handel composed *Dead March* included in his oratorio *Saul*, yet they gained much more popularity in the era of classicism (e.g. L. van Beethoven – in his 3rd Symphony *Eroica*) and romanticism (the most famous example being F. Chopin's *Funeral march* from his *Sonata B flat minor*). Gustav Mahler also featured funeral march (*Trauermarsch*) as an opening movement of his monumental 5th *Symphony*. The trumpet solo at the beginning is associated with the death.

Marches as well as some other forms (e.g. motets) were composed originally for the ceremony of funeral. Heinrich Schutz for example composed *Funeral motet on the death* of Johann Hermann Schein, who lived between 1586 and 1630 — *Das ist je gewißlich wahr*. Musicians actively prearranged their own funerals, including the musical aspect. H. Schutz asked his former pupil Christoph Bernhard to compose a five-part motet (to the text "Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes tuae" from Psalm 119:54) for his funeral – furthermore, the composer even approved the composition two years before his death in 1672.⁸

(b)

In the Christian church the tradition of musical mass performed during ceremonial funerals was developed and known as Requiem or Requiem Mass, alternatively Mass for the dead (Latin: *Missa pro defunctis*) or Mass of the dead (Latin: *Missa defunctorum*). The words Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine (Grant them eternal rest, O Lord) which actually open the introit used in this particular mass lent the name to the whole mass comprising of Introit, Kyrie eleison, Gradual, Tract, Sequence, Offertory, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, Communion, Pie Jesu, Libera Me, and In paradisum.

⁶ Gregory S. Johnston, 'Rhetorical Personification of the Dead in 17th Century German Funeral Music: Heinrich Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* (1636) and Three Works by Michael Wiedemann (1693)', in *The Journal of Musicology*, vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring 1991), p. 187.

⁷ Peter Williams, 'Figurenlehre from Monteverdi to Wagner (3. The *suspirans*)' in *Musical Times*, 120/1638 (August 1979), p. 648.

⁸ Johnston, 'Rhetorical', p. 194.

Originally requiems were sung to Gregorian chants. In the second half of the 15th century Johannes Ockeghem composed the first surviving polyphonic requiem. In the next centuries it became more and more popular and in the 18th century aristocratic families commissioned requiems to be performed during the funerals of their relatives. Such is the origin of the famous requiem by W.A. Mozart from 1791. *The Requiem Mass in D minor* was unfinished by the composer himself (who died while working on the piece) but – finally – by Franz Xaver Süssmayr. It was anonymously commissioned by Franz Count von Walsegg (1763 – 1827) who wanted to commemorate the death of his beloved wife Anna. The aristocrat was well known for his musical taste and organizing house concerts, and was reputed to be paying composers to produce works he would present as his own during these private music-making meetings. The myths and controversies surrounding composing the requiem, as well as Mozart's own death added to the popularity and the mystery of the work. W.A. Mozart also composed *The Maurerische Trauermusik* (Masonic Funeral Music) in C minor in 1785 based primarily on Gregorian chant hailed by some as "one of the greatest works of its meaning".⁹

The *Requiem* by Mozart is often performed as a concert work. In the 19th century requiems were composed more often for public presentations (e.g. by G. Faure, G. Verdi, A. Dvorzak). In the romantic era some requiems lost their religious relevance, remaining however the works deploring the death and mourning the deceased. The Biblical texts on death and dying were used by J. Brahms who assembled Biblical verses and used them in his *Requiem* op. 45, the composition bearing some resemblance to the work *Das Gedächtnis der Entschlafen* (The Remembrance of those Who Sleep) with the subtitle *Oratorium für die Todtenfeier am letzten Sonntage des Kirchenjahres* (Oratorio for the Celebration of the Dead on the Last Sunday of the Church Year) composed by Friedrich Wilhelm Markull around 1847.¹⁰

The tradition of commemorating the death in requiems departing from their religious roots survived in the 20th century (see B. Britten War Requiem or K. Penderecki's *Polish Requiem*). These compositions usually require large orchestras as well as considerable virtuosity of performance which is difficult to ensure during a private funeral, especially organized shortly after the death of a person.

Compositions dedicated to death alone and celebrating it are rare, yet *Death and Transfiguration (Tod und Verklärung)* op. 24 by Richard Strauss needs to be mentioned. The poem in 4 movements was finished in 1889 and was

⁹ Philippe A. Autexier, 'L'ode funèbre maçonnique (Maurerische Trauermusik) de W. A. Mozart', in *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, T. 22, Fasc. 1/4 (1980), p. 255 (pp. 255-261).

¹⁰ See Ernest Newman, 'The Music of Death', in *The Musical Times*, July 1 (1915), pp. 398-399.

supposed to depict the moment of dying by an artist. The idea of composing a work celebrating the end of human life appeared in the head of a very young, just 25 year old composer.

II.

Death appears an omnipresent theme in most operas, and many ballets. Hence the strategies of its presentations vary considerably depending on the times as well as stylistic preferences. One of the common threads in depicting death in operas is the individualism of these portrayals: consequently in operas as well as in ballets death of a single hero is shown rather than of a group of people. Even if the subject of an opera suggests the death of number of people, the dramatic considerations required focusing on individuals. For example in *Les Huguenots* (1836) by Giacomo Meyerbeer it is the death of the main protagonists in the last, fifth act that draws the audience's attention rather than the awareness of the religious massacre.

Furthermore, careful examination of topoi involved in presenting the moment of passing away in musical stage works reveals the tendency of depicting it coupled with other tropes. The most often encountered pairs include showing death and love, death and the issue of honour, as well as death versus redemption of sins. Needless to say these motifs are often closely tied forming a unity of sub-plots.

Death and love

Death and love seems the most common topic of various operas and ballets stemming its popularity from the early Baroque operas depicting the story of Orfeo and Eurydice. Already the first opera (born as a reincarnation of Greek drama) which has survived to the present day – Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* (rarely if ever performed nowadays, and treated rather as a kind of musicological curio) introduced the topic of death following the principles announced by Plato claiming close connections between music and affections. In the theory of ethos inherited from the ancient times it was believed that certain types of music can be associated with particular states of mind and soul (i.e. sad music evokes sad feelings whereas joyful music incites happy emotions): accordingly in the light of the doctrine of affects musical works were interpreted in the seventeenth century music theory (especially in the theory of opera). Early operas were additionally influenced by an Aristotelian concept of ecstatic catharsis, thus composers would choose suitable topics enabling spectators to undergo moral purification by experiencing feelings of fear and pity. Hence the earliest operas derived their topics from both ancient mythology and the history of Greece or Rome, and the topos of death seemed an indispensable element of these stories. Also another 'orfeian' opera *L'Orfeo, favola in musica* – being an example of the early baroque opera by Claudio Monteverdi (with surviving fragments containing singing, dancing and

instrumental passages) – proves the relevance of choosing the proper subject. Not only is it based on the Greek myth, but it also features the issue of death and coming back from the Underworld. The potential of the weepy story of deceased Euridice and her distressed husband deciding to bring her back alive was exploited also later by the librettists. *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) by Christopher Willibald Gluck to the libretto by Ranieri de' Calzabigi again employed a mythological subject: due to the musical reforms the composer was trying to implement it was characterized by the absence of vocal virtuosity. The simplicity was astonishing in the times when castrati and female singers alike competed with each other specializing in long phrases on one breath, prolonged notes, improvisational and ornamental demonstrations¹¹, but the composer chose to treat the topic in a simple manner alluding perhaps to the naturalism of the act of dying. The popularity of the 'orfeian' topic was asserted in the 20th century by Ernst Krenek in his 1921 *Orpheus und Eurydike*.

In the classical period the topic of death seemed less popular, yet its few significant portrayals deserve closer investigation. Don Giovanni in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera under the same title not only provokes the death, but in fact invites his own end. The new pair of motifs, namely 'death and fear' associated with the axis 'love and death' appears in this opera playing equally important role in the construction of the dramatics. Don Giovanni obviously is not afraid of the death. His sacrilegious provocations invade the sanctified taboo of the untouchable dead when the womanizer overtly mocks at the dead Commendatore. An unabashed Don Giovanni invites his victim to dine with him, and much to his surprise the bold offer is accepted when the statue of the Commendatore in the graveyard nods affirmatively. The act of animating the statue in the opera (unlike in *Pigmalion* by Jean-Philippe Rameau) is sometimes interpreted as "a trope of release from death".¹²

The romantic era marked the explosion of presenting on stage motifs of death and love, alongside jealousy, despair and tragedy. Death and love appear in French grand-operas, historical operas and accompany musical stage works throughout the whole 19th century. The love-death junction expands by incorporating variety of presented dying forms featuring dying from love, murder, or suicide. The almost inseparable in operas link of Thanatos and Eros was often tightly connected with violent emotions leading to killings, stabbings and other treacherous methods of taking somebody's life.

Composers whose operas seem to exploit the love – death relationship especially dramatically are Italians: Giuseppe Verdi and Giacomo Puccini. For example *Rigoletto* (1852) by G. Verdi based on Victor Hugo's play *Le roi s'amuse* (*The King's Fool*) features the idea of death in various dimensions.

¹¹ Patrick Barbier, *The World of Castrati. The History of an extraordinary operatic phenomenon*, London, Souvenir Press, 1996, p. 53.

¹² Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of a Moving Statue*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992, pp. 9-10.

There is man-slaughter represented by a brutal murderer Sparafucile willing to kill anybody as long as he is well paid for it contrasted with Gilda's scarifying her own life in the name of love. Love, too is depicted in the opera on one hand as a beautiful, pure feeling leading to the death for the beloved and on the other hand shown as a mere sexual drive associated with assassination. The juxtaposition of these themes makes the dramatic impact of the opera even more powerful.

In G. Puccini's opera *Tosca* (in three acts to libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, based on Victorien Sardou's play under the same title (1887) different types of death are contrasted: the execution (enforced), stabbing (murder) and suicide (self-imposed). Furthermore, the plot not only features the scenes of death by stabbing, execution by shooting but also an attempted rape and torturing. Already after the premiere of the opera in 1900 voices appeared against its violence and sadism¹³, however the depiction of murder and suicide in the opera is counterbalanced with the lyricism of love arias. As mentioned the opera presents three types of death: the crime on Scarpia committed by a famous and piteous singer Floria Tosca enamored with a painter Mario Cavaradossi, who is shot by a platoon (even though the execution was supposed to be a mock one), and Tosca's suicide. The affection between Tosca and Cavaradossi is presented in a positive light as a feeling shared by young people, whereas emotions which Tosca raises in Scarpia are pictured as merely biological desires. Due to these juxtapositions the plot of *Tosca* carries strong melodramatic potential, with the topic of dying overtaking other aspects of the work. Hence many critics saw the opera as "airless, violent, tightly wound melodrama that had little room for lyricism".¹⁴ It was also noted that the death of Scarpia at the end of Act 2 culminated the emotions to such a degree that the following Act 3 could add little, if not – in fact – diminish the achieved effect. The finale of second act in any opera is crucial: by that time the most dramatic events need to take place, yet there should be some space left for anticipating the last act to bring the final solution. In case of *Tosca* in the last act the main protagonists are eliminated – ironically their death helps to finish the opera as with no – one left there is no need to continue the spectacle.

Tosca reveals one more motif closely related in operas with death and love: madness. In the opera the singer dies after jumping off the parapet of Sant'Angelo Castle (in fact it was also ridiculed by the critics as the Tiber is too far from the building and Tosca would be unable to drown in the river). While working on the opera librettists suggested changing the end and instead of dying Tosca were supposed to go mad. The change was not approved by Sardou: nevertheless the discussion behind the libretto shows the close link between

¹³ Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, *Puccini: A biography*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 2002, p. 118.

¹⁴ Phillips-Matz, *Puccini*, p. 115.

loosing sanity and the death. Being lunatic was often treated as a prelude to the act of dying in operas as for instance in a *dramma tragico* entitled *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1841) by Gaetano Donizetti – the story of love and death as the only way to save the honour and remain truthful. Although the libretto was based on *The Bride of Lammermoor* by Walter Scott it is more compact than a book and differs in a few details making the story even more melodramatic and tragic. Lucia who gave her word to the beloved Edgardo is capable of such actions as killing her despised bridegroom imposed to her by her family: however, such an act of cruelty by a gentle girl needs to be explained in the opera. Bloody and terrible murder committed by fragile and sensitive, weak woman did not comply with the operatic convention and called for justification by the madness. Exhausted mentally (and possibly also physically) dying Lucia in the scene called “Mad Scene” epitomizes convention of presenting the moment of death in romantic operas. This paradoxically innocent assassin, the heroine –usually wearing white gown covered in blood for the more striking visual effect –manages to show off her singing mastery making her passing away even more pitiful. Insane Lucia –an allegory of a concept of dead man walking – demonstrates her singing abilities and although she is dying, yet she is able to sing in coloratura soprano and presents a very demanding technically aria “Il dolce suono...Spargi d'amaro pianto”. Following the tradition of bel canto – whose master G. Donizetti was – this aria is rarely performed in its original form (*come scritto*) since it was common tradition to add trills, mordent, runs and other ornaments in order to prove technical mastery. Originally the composer wanted to introduce to the aria the sound of glass harmonica – quiet well known due to Benjamin Franklin’s invention of 1761 – whose unusual sounds were believed to intensify the weirdness of the scene. Eventually the aria is accompanied by two flutes. The expressiveness of the scene based on the technical abilities of the singer is the culmination of the opera and turns Lucia’s death into the ultimate solution to all the earthly trouble. On hearing of her death the beloved Edgardo unable to live without her, commits suicide by stabbing himself with a dagger.

Love leading to death presented in operas is not always associated with pure affection but sometimes is shown in its dirty version where sexuality roars its ugly head. Although in romantic operas eroticism and dying seem to be usually sprinkled with some dose of perfume, there are some exceptions like opera *Carmen* (1859) by Georges Bizet featuring the opposition of two words – liberated and free as represented by the girl and confided, closed full of regulations as evident in Don Jose’s behaviour.¹⁵ Eventually it is Carmen who gets killed, as it is her who chooses to die rather than to be obliged to live in oppression.

¹⁵ Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet. Carmen*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 9.

In the 20th century hideous murders and bodily love-making were actually shown in a considerably more number of operas or ballets. *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* Op.29. from 1934 by Dmitri Schostakovitsch to the libretto by the composer and Alexander Preis (based on Nikolai Semyonovich Leskov's idea) tells the story taking place in the 19th century Russia. Katia Izmailova – the wife of the wealthy merchant is cheating on her absent husband, but her father – in – law aware of her actions disapproves of her romance. In the course of dramatic actions, Katia decides to help her lover by getting rid of the old man. Thus by killing her chaperon she frees all sleeping daemons: especially basic instincts of erotic and cruel nature. The dramatic scene of poisoning Boris with rodenticide added to his favourite mushrooms involves a simple, domestic dialogue about 'gribki', i.e. mushrooms. Boris is glad Katia prepared them and mentions them with the intention of praising her, whereas in her mouth the same word sounds completely different. The double meaning hidden behind the naïve conversation makes the scene so tragic. Katia manages to talk into everybody that her father – in – law died because of wild, poisonous mushrooms. Unfortunately one thing leads to another, one death entails another. The course of events resembles an unstoppable avalanche. When Katia's husband returns home, he is choked to death by his unfaithful wife and her ruthless lover – Sergei. They are soon denounced to the militia and find themselves on the way to Siberia, where the only method of solving problems is again by killing. Katia jealous (not without reason) of a young girl pushes her into icy river, falling down with her. The death of Katia as well as her husband and father – in – law, immersed in primitivism of feelings¹⁶, is leveled in this opera with other biological acts, especially those of sexual nature. Hence the most striking feature of this work is its unquestionable veristic character.

Death and honour

Death and honour – constitutes another symbolical pair of motifs often accompanying the topic of love (as in *Lucia di Lammermoor*), but even more frequently associated with portraying historical events. Death symbolizes then the ultimate solution and as such is reserved for the very end of works. Franz Erkel's *Huynadi Laszlo* (1844) to the libretto by Béni Egressy based on a play by Lőrinc Tóth presents artistic vision of the life and death of a real Hungarian hero. In the very last scene of the opera the young man is about to be executed but somehow the executioner is not able to perform his task until the fourth attempt. These failed attempts to cut Laszlo's head off are obviously interpreted by the gathered crowd as a divine sign and immediately incite the hope especially in the heart of his mother. Alas, the very last moment of the opera

¹⁶ Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 69.

leaves no illusions as to what must happen – in accordance with historical events also in the opera Laszlo dies. Music pompously illustrates this moments – full orchestra playing tutti underlines the tragedy of the young man, his mother and the folks.

In the opera *Ariodante* (1735) by Georg Haendel the honour is saved not only by the means of dying but also by confessing the bad deeds before passing away. Although the opera features other symptomatically popular motifs of dying on stage, most notably being reported to be dead and the spurious resurrection and additionally partly bases its action on the rumour of the death as a catalyst of events, most importantly it shifts its focal point to the last words uttered by Polinesso. His intrigues fail and after being mortally wounded in a tournament he eventually dies. Before actually passing away he is able to confess his guilt and erase this way his sins – once revealed they can be forgiven. The significance of last words is obviously inherited from the Gospel tradition. In musical culture the last words of Jesus Christ were also frequently elaborated. The most famous compositions featuring meditations on the Last Words uttered by the Savior on the Cross include *Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz*, SWV 478 (1645) by Heinrich Schutz and an oratorio by Joseph Haydn *Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze* (1786). During the romantic era, among others, Saverio Mercadante composed oratorio *The Seven Last Words of Our Savior* (1838), Charles Gounod – *Les Sept Paroles de Notre Seigneur Jesus-Christ sur la Croix* (1855) and Cesar Franck – *Paroles du Christ sur la Croix* (1859). In the contemporary music examples can be also found, e.g. Sofia Gubaidulina's *Sieben Worte* for cello, bayan, and strings (1982).

Death and evil

Death and evil is connected in musical stage works again with depiction of murders, suicides but also quite often linked with redemption of sins. The death – evil pair is associated with love and jealousy. G. Verdi's *Traviata* provides an example of an opera where only death can counterbalance the evil life led by the heroine as even her conversion cannot redeem her sins. Originally the opera was supposed to be entitled *Amore et morte*¹⁷ as the importance of these two motifs cannot go unnoticed. The death is inevitable and can be interpreted as Violetta's fate. Her death as a consumptive is somehow brought to her by her own sins. Vivacious and gracefully gentle instrumental introduction to the Act 3 makes Violetta's death in that act even more convincing. Furthermore, in most performances she is featured on her bed death as a ghost-walking creature, writhing and crawling. Although the death is not a character in that opera, its ominous presence makes some directors introduce it as a silent role. During the Salzburg Festival in 2005 the director

¹⁷ Lesław Czapliński, *W kręgu operowych mitów* (Among operatic myths), Kraków, Rabid, 2003, p. 83.

Willy Decker added this figure – the constant reminder that Violetta is approaching the end of her life. The death symbolically becomes her shade – and in a broader sense allegory of the fact we all live in the shadow of the death.¹⁸

Evil and death were inseparable in musical dramas by Richard Wagner. In the cycle of four operas *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*) death characterizes this 'hochdramatisch' story line, for example Brünnhilde's death on the pyre in flames symbolizes magical cleaning of the sins by means of fire and as well as by redemption in the act of self-destruction. One of R. Wagner's followers – Richard Strauss, composed the opera about the death *Salome* (1904) featuring the famous *Dance of the Seven Veils*. The key words of the opera seem music, dance, banquet, celebrating youth and love and on the other side death, night, moon and desire. Feelings associated with the events have in the opera their own leitmotifs, e.g. *Yearning*, *Anger*, and *Fear*. The plot taken from the Old Testament tells the story of proud Salome falling in love with the Prophet Jochanaan: she humbly begs him to kiss her. Enamored with Salome Narraboth witnessing the scene cannot stand her humiliation and kills him. Salome seduced Herod with her sensual dance and makes him promise anything she wants: her wish is to kiss Jochanaan's lips. Salome passionately kissing the lips of the head brought to her on a silver plate. Terrified and outraged Herod orders to eliminate her as well.

The inevitability of the death in many operas – like in the case of *Salome* – constitutes the core of their dramatic appeal. In Erich Wolfgang Korngold's opera *Violanta* (1916) the fateful song symbolizing the approaching death lays the musical foundation not only for the score itself but also for the plot.

Musical means of portraying death

Musical tools used in attempt to capture the moment of death in musical works are various, ranging from the extreme dynamics (very loud or very quiet) and/or tutti of the orchestra, to the use of carefully selected instruments supposed to harbingers the death. Alternatively, the act of dying is left without musical accompaniment, silence being the only corresponding musical device to the death. Sometimes composers assigned separate motifs for the death.

In romantic works such as *Laszlo Huynadi*, or *Tosca* the moment of death is illustrated pompously with loud dynamic. Quite opposite Aaron Copland in his ballet *Billy the Kid* (1938) decided to use very quiet dynamics and introduce a moment of pause to mark the moment of Billy's death. In the 20th century composers often decided to introduce the motif of death with the

¹⁸ Barry Bassis, 'Death Doesn't Take a Holiday in 'La Traviata'', in *The Epoch Times*, February 10 (2011), p.B2, at: http://epoch-archive.com/a1/en/us/nyc/2011/02_Feb/10/B2_eet-20110210-nyus.pdf accessed: 22.06.2011.

means of instruments. In the ballet *El Amor Brujo* (1914) by Manuel de Falla the sound of the trumpet symbolizes the death, sadness and grief. In Danza *del terror* from this ballet the trumpet is contrasted with an oboe associated with the lyricism and sentimental love. The appearance of these two instruments does not equal dialoguing but rather allegorically represents the combat between the world of the living and the world of the dead. In the opera *Nightingale* by Igor Stravinsky (1908-1914) on the story by Ch. H. Andersen the death is personified and possesses its own motif performed by viola and pianoforte. The role is sung by the alto – the low female voice, as Stravinsky stemmed from the Slavic tradition where death is depicted as a woman, e.g. in Poland, or in Lithuania (Giltinė). The part of death is full of contrasts: leaps in melody alongside repetitions of one pitch. In Act 3 the death comes to the Caesar accompanied by the spectres. The chorus of ghosts sings homorhythmically in unison, whereas the dying emperor uses the technique called *parlando*. The exploitation of the minor second in the motif suggests the moaning and scowling of the spectres. The crucial moment of the encounter between death, Caesar and nightingale climaxes the opera. When the nightingale sings its song for the death it is unlike anything else the bird has sung so far in the opera, the difference shown in the formal structure (stanza schemata) as well as the motives correspondence between the nightingale and the death. The monotonous refrain lulls listeners as if Morpheus was taking control over their minds leading peacefully towards the death. The refrain is based on the motif associated in the opera with the death (this time, however, it is presented by the flute, clarinet and guitar). Also Erich Wolfgang Korngold in his opera *Die Tote Stadt* (1920) used the death theme based on the descending chromatic scale, with disturbing syncopated rhythm, led in the deep bass range.¹⁹ This motif was re-used by Korngold in his film music scores: *The Sea Hawk* (1940), he also introduced the motif of death in *Deception* (1946).

The inevitability of death makes it so fascinating for artists and musicians. The possible ways of approaching the theme seem inexhaustible, yet one thing remains true: death will never stop to inspire musicians and music about/on/of death will continue to be created.

¹⁹ Jessica Duchén, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, London, Phaidon Press Ltd, 1996, p. 78.

CATEGORIES OF DEATH IN ROMANIAN RURAL WORLD OF THE LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY AFTER PARISH REGISTERS IN SEVERAL VILLAGES FROM MUREȘ COUNTY

LAURA POP¹

Death is the final event for everyone, but not everyone have the same death from a cultural point of view. The parish register for the deceased is one of the important sources for discovering the cultural meaning of the death in the local eye, because the local priest was that who fills it. In 19th century, in Romanian rural world, the local priest was totally dependent on the local community and he must to obey to local customs according to the Christian Church statutory. The historians consider the parish registers like primary sources for genealogical research, family history, demographic history, medical history or baptize customs.² The ethnographers and anthropologist tend to use the parish registers like qualitative sources for a history of rural mentalities³, for an inside approach of life major events: birth, marriage and death.

In particular, the parish registers of the deceased are important sources for researching the inside perception of different types of death in local communities and for the Christian Church perspective of death, because the local priests used to complete them. The records about the causes of death are especially important for discovering the local understanding of the different kinds of death. For comparison, in Mures County, the area proposed for research, there are others important sources for studying the local death perception in the 19th century: the funeral sermons of Greek-Catholic archpriest of Gurghiu, Petru Maior, printed in 1809⁴, and the manuscript of Vasile Popp

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² Arnold Radtke, "Rethinking the medical causes of infant death in early modern Europe, a closer look at church registers and medical terminology" in *The History of the Family* (2002), 7, pp. 505-514; Sorina Bolovan, Ioan Bolovan, „Registrele parohiale de stare civilă din Transilvania. Izvoare de demografie istorică” in *Revista Arhivelor*, Cluj-Napoca, 1995, 1-2; Camelia Stanciu, „Aspecte ale mortalității reflectate în registrele parohiale din Orăștie (1870-1900)” in *Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studentești. Arheologie Istorie-Muzeologie*, Alba Iulia (2008), 14, pp. 61-82; Sabina Mihai, „Dimensiuni ale morții în registrele parohiale de la sfârșitul secolului XIX – începutul secolului XX” in *BCSS*, Alba-Iulia, (2000), 6, pp. 163-165.

³ Ioana Purcar Rustoiu, „Naștere, căsătorie, moarte. Considerații asupra mentalităților rurale a secolului al XIX-lea în satul Laz pe baza registrelor matricole” in *Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei*, Cluj-Napoca, 2000.

⁴ Petru Maior, *Propovedanii la îngropăciunea oamenilor mori. culese de Petru Maior de Diciosântmărtin, paroh Sas-Reghinului și protopot Gurghiului în Ardeal, precum și la înălțatu crăescul locumtenențiale Consilium al Ungariei crăesc cărților revizor, la Buda în crăiasca tipografie a Universității ungurești în anul 1809*, Buda, 1809.

about common funerals at Romanians, dating from 1817.⁵

Generally, there are two kind of death in Christian point of view: a good death and a bad death. The opposition between two is expressed earlier since St. Basil: „there is a death of the righteous, which for its nature is not bad, is good. Because those who dead together with Christ had a good death, but those who dead in sin didn't have a good death and the salvation”.⁶ We'll see that, in parish records, the unusual death weren't always the bad death, like in Christian Church representation.

In the Greek-Catholic Church perspective, in 19th century, the bad death continue to be the sudden death, that *mors improvisa* or *mors repentita* as Philippe Ariés has said⁷. The archpriest from Gurghiu, Petru Maior distinguished four kind of death: “the ordinary death” (“moartea firească”); “the premature death” (“moartea fără vreamă”) or the death of the youngest; “the unexpected death” (“moartea grabnică”) and “the forced death”⁸, the death of the criminals. The four types of death described by Petru Maior could be reduced at two: “the ordinary death” and “the unusual death”, the second included all the last three kind of death named by him. For him, the types of good death depends not only by the moment of death, but also by the way of life, because there is an “art of good dying” that is “the craft of the craftsmanship” (“meșteșugul meșteșugurilor”) and in his view, the proper preparation for death is the good life⁹ („gătirea cea adevărată de moarte, iaste viața cea bună”) and that means to preserve the body health and a true spiritual life, like Christian life. In this perspective, someone must to eat enough to be strong and must to be a good Christian doing confessions, good deeds, fasting, mercy and prayers.¹⁰ In the beginning of the 18th century, we find some provisions in Romanians Greek-Catholic Church for the burials of that who didn't do their usual confessions at Eastern: the priest were not allowed to confess them at death and to burial them in the cemetery.¹¹

These ideas about the two kind of death („bad death” and „good death”) we find also in the Greek-Catholic parish registers, where there is a heading

⁵ Vasilie Popp, *De funeribus plebejis Daco-Romanorum sive hodiernorum Valachorum et quisbusdam circa ea abusibus* – Despre înmormântările comune la Daco-Romani sau românii de astăzi și câteva superstiții, Viena, 1817, translation from latin Andreea Marza, Alba Iulia, Aeternitas, 2004.

⁶ Apud Toader Nicoară, *Transilvania la începuturile timpurilor moderne (1680-1800). Societate rurală și mentalități colective*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 2001, p. 185.

⁷ Philippe Ariés, *Omul în fața morții*, translation in Romanian, Ed. Minerva, Bucuresti, Minerva, 1996, vol.I, pp. 20-21.

⁸ Maior, *Propovedanii la îngropăciunea...*, p. 84.

⁹ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 75.

¹¹ Barbu Ștefănescu, *Lumea rurală din Vestul României între medieval și modern*, editia a II-a, Oradea, Editura Universității din Oradea, 2006, p. 194.

CATEGORIES OF DEATH IN ROMANIAN RURAL WORLD OF THE LATE 19TH –
EARLY 20TH CENTURY AFTER PARISH REGISTERS IN SEVERAL VILLAGES
FROM MUREȘ COUNTY

referring to „the kind of death” („feliu morții”) and here the usual record is „ordinary death”. At the first half of the 19th century the heading named “the kind of death” is divided in two headings: common death (“de rând”) and unusual death (“afară de rând”). From here we can imagine what people understand, in the 19th century, by natural or ordinary death. In the parish register of death from the village Cozma, Mures County, from 1834, at the heading named „common death” appeared the word „ordinary” („ordinară”) or some illness like chickenpox, smallpox, fury (“vărsat de vânt”, „vărsat”, „oftica”)¹². We can see also what they understood at that time by „unusual death”: drowned¹³, flood, “bad heart”¹⁴, childbirth¹⁵, cholera¹⁶, killed after drunkenness¹⁷. In the parish records or death from village Socolu de Câmpie, Mures the sudden death of a 65 years old man in 28th September 1880 is scoring like “extraordinary death” and there is a little description of it: “while mowing hay he dropped with the face on the ground and he suddenly died”.¹⁸

The accidental death, a type of sudden death, is constant noted like extraordinary death but not changes the type of funeral. About this kind of death we found a lot of narrative text that described the circumstances of death. So a 12 years child died in 1873, in village Filpisu Mare “run over by a cart”.¹⁹ The same death had a young man in 1892 in village Urisiu de Jos who died after a cart was overturned.²⁰ A 9 year child suffered an extraordinary death being stroked by lightning.²¹ A man from village Socolu de Campie, Mures County, died on 1st august 1860 drowned in Mures River and the priest made a description of the death conditions: he had been going with the horses and the cart to a mill and he drowned together in the whirlpool near the mill. This extraordinary death doesn’t generate extraordinary burial because the man was buried in the village cemetery like others dead.²²

¹² National Archives Directorate Mures County (from time bieng DJMAN), Civil Records fund, nr. 202/1834-1849, Dead record from Greek-Catholic parish Cozma, f. 122, 143.

¹³ Ibid., f. 127.

¹⁴ Ibid., f. 45.

¹⁵ Ibid., f. 122, f. 152.

¹⁶ Ibid., f. 164.

¹⁷ Ibid., f. 156.

¹⁸ DJMAN, Civil Records fund, nr. 793/1857-1888, Dead registry book from Greek-Catholic parish Socolu de Câmpie, f. 108.

¹⁹ DJMAN, Civil Records fund, nr.269/1869-1882, Greek-Catholic parish registry book from Dambu and Sanpetru de Campie, f. 73.

²⁰ DJMAN, Civil Records fund, nr.991/1870-1872, Dead record from Greeek-Catholic parish Urisiu de Jos, f. 81.

²¹ DJMAN, Civil Records fund, nr.793/ 1857-1888, Dead registry book from Greek-Catholic parish Socolu de Campie, f. 79.

²² Ibid., f. 81.

In the Orthodox parish registers there is a special column about the spiritual care for the deceased in the moment of dying ("Fost-au mortu grijit sufleteste sau nu?"). Naturally, that person who had a sudden death didn't make confession to a priest and take the communion before dying. In 1871, a man suffered an unexpected death at 58 years old, he drowned and the parish register mentioned that he didn't benefit from spiritual care before dying²³. In several parish registers we find that some persons died without confession and communion, but that's not been considered an unusual death because in other column we can read the text "ordinary death". The death without confession and communion is not always connected with "sudden death" and accompanied with the prohibition of buried in the Church cemetery. A man who died in 1872 without confession had been buried in the old village cemetery and his death was considering an "ordinary death".²⁴

We didn't found anything about the religious services for dead persons who suffered an unusual death in the parish records, so we must seek that information in other sources like Church legislation. For example, we discover in Orthodox Church legislation another kind of unusual death like suicide, not christened child and criminal's death. People used to make some donation for the Church in order to avoid the negative impact of a sudden death without confession. The religious books are very expensive, so in the 18th century, a man donated a Gospel to the local Church for the soul of his son who died without confession and wake.²⁵

We didn't find anything about suicides or criminal's death in parish registers, but there's something about the death of two very young children in 1875 in the village Dambu.²⁶ In case of two children, one dead at 5 days and others at 10 month after birthing, we suppose they were not baptized, because isn't passed the name of the priest who buried them like in other cases. Nevertheless, these children were buried in the village cemetery, so their death couldn't be considering an unusual or a bad death.

At the middle of 19th century we found at first time in parish registers the term of „natural death”, but aren't connected yet with disease, because disease is not looked still like some natural condition of death. In 1852, in a parish register of dead from village Cozma we found the first mention about „natural death” („morte naturală”)²⁷ instead of „ordinary death” („de rând” sau

²³ DJMAN, Civil Records fund, nr.801/1851-1883, Dead record from Orthodox parish Stanceni, f. 30.

²⁴ Ibid, f. 69.

²⁵ Nicoară, *Transilvania* p. 147.

²⁶ DJMAN, Civil Record fund, nr.269/1869-1882, Dead registry book from Greek Catholic parish Dambu, f. 81.

²⁷ DJMAN, Civil Records fund, nr. 202/1859, Dead record from Greek-Catholic parish Cozma, f. 176(v).

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„firescu”). In the second half of 19th century we found the first connection between natural death and disease. In 1865, in a parish register from village Socolu de Campie the natural death is related with the disease, so instead of „ordinary death” appeared the term „natural disease” („cu morbu naturalu”) ²⁸ for cause of death. Marius Rotar showed that there many understanding of the concept of „the natural death” in the 19th century according to the type of discourse: religious, medical, legislative, literary or folk pattern. ²⁹

It's very difficult to know what they understand, in 19th century, by the actual term of „natural death”. After archipriest Petru Maior, the natural death is dying of old age ³⁰ and we find some records about this kind of death in parish register. So is the case of 60 years old women and a 71 years old man that died in 1876 in the village Dambu. ³¹

We don't debate here the common folk perception of death because the parish registers aren't the primary sources for that. The local priests, who recorded the general information about deceased in the parish registers, knows the local perception of death and the local customs related to death, but they reflected first the Church opinions about death and secondary the local view about it. The archpriest Petru Maior, in his famous burial sermons, noted the great differences between Church perception of dying and folk feeling about it. He sees that ordinary people aren't interesting in the moment of dying in the salvation of the soul as in the preparation for a glory funeral. ³² He didn't notice that, in the people's eye, the fulfillment of all burial rites were the essential thing for avoiding the unusual dead, the return of dead person like ghost, for the peace of the dead and for the comfort of the living, like Louis-Vincent Thomas ³³ demonstrated already. Jean Claude-Schmitt observed that „the dead returns when the funerals and mourning rites where not performed normally, in case of a lost drowned person, a crime, a suicide, the death of a female at birth, a death of a child at birth... these are harmful dead”. ³⁴

In the parish records we don't find the compensatory rites they must doing for unusual death, that rites where mentioned in the work of Vasilie Popp about common burial at Romanian people in 19th century and other contemporary sources like folk records, testaments, notes from old books. A

²⁸ DJMAN, Civil Records fund, Dosar nr.793/1857-1888, Dead record from Greek-Catholic parish Socolu de Campie, f. 85.

²⁹ Marius Rotar, *Moartea în Transilvania în secolul al XIX-lea. Volumul II 11 ipostaze ale morții*, Cluj napoca, Accent, 2006, pp. 54-55.

³⁰ Maior, *Propovedanii la îngropăciunea*, p. 94.

³¹ DJMAN, Civil Records fund, nr.269/1869-1882, Dead record from Greek-Catholic parish Dambu, f. 83.

³² Maior, *Propovedanii*, pp. 88-89.

³³ Louis-Vincent Thomas, *Rites de mort. Pour la paix des vivants*, Paris, Fayard, Paris, 1985.

³⁴ Jean Claude-Schmitt, *Strigoii. Vii și morți în societatea medievală*, translation in Romanian, București, Ed. Meridiane, 1988, p. 11.

special case, like death in the field, is considered ordinary death in the parish register, but in the folk collection that who died on the field, struck by lightning, aren't buried in the cemetery, the usual habit was to bury them on the place of dying because they are afraid to transport them in the village. In the 19th century, the general believe was that such kind of dead bringing hail to the village.³⁵ We can find also in the parish registers unusual place of burial, besides cemetery or garden, but they aren't connected with the unusual death. So, in 1857, a man named Maier Iuon a lui Iuoan from village Socolu de Campie was buried at the watermill³⁶ and in 1890, an old woman from village Sincai had been buried in the place named „the Greek well”.³⁷

The parish registers, besides the information about the categories of death, give us a lot of information about the place of burial. This place is usually the common cemetery, but not only that, so we found a lot of case of people that are buried in other places, like garden or field. Unfortunately, we can't connected the unusual place of death from the parish registers with extraordinary death, although we know from other sources that some kind of unusual death (suicide, unbaptized child, criminals) lead to different places of burial, outside the ordinary cemetery of the village. In conclusion, we can see that after parish registers from Mures County area, the „unusual death” were not always the „bad death”. The death of a priest is also an „unusual death”, but not a „bad death”, because the burial of a priest is different from a layman and the priest was always burial near the church, often in the churchyard, close to the building of the church, or in the parish garden. So, we found a lot of case, like the case of the priest Aron Simon, from village Socolu de Câmpie, who died in 1837 and was buried near the church building („lângă beseriche”)³⁸. Others priest, like the Greek-Catholic priest from Dâmb, a village from Mures County, who died in 1875 was buried in the parish garden.³⁹

³⁵ *Obiceiuri de înmormântare la românii ardeleni. 1817. Vasilie Popp și disertația sa medicală, Wien, 1817, Györffy István Néprajzi Egysület, Muzeul Etnografic al Transilvaniei, Temetkezési szokások az erdély románoknál, 1817, Vasilie Popp orvosi diszertációja, Bécs, 1817, Cluj-Napoca, Budapest, 2006, p. 229.*

³⁶ DJMAN, nr.793/1857-1888, f. 80.

³⁷ DJMA, nr.22/1901, f. 78.

³⁸ DJMAN, nr.793/1857-1888, f. 82(v).

³⁹ DJMAN, nr.269/1869-1882, f. 82.

DEATH AND DYING AS WAR EXPERIENCE IN THE WAR-DIARY DOBERDO. THE BOOK OF A HONVÉD OFFICER FROM THE ISONZO FRONT OF ISTVÁN SZABÓ

ÉVA KÓSA¹

Introduction

In general people would think that war is equal to death and dying. Scientific works about death and dying mostly also avoid investigating the connection between war and death, as if it were normal for those who fight in war to die. War-diaries and memoirs also not often contain long lines about the experience with death. People did not want to write and talk about such experience. A further reason for the lack of this kind of reports was censorship.

The war-diary *Doberdo. The Book of a Honvéd Officer from the Isonzo Front* of István Szabó² is one of the exceptions. Szabó was fighting at Doberdo; Doberdo is a karstplateau a few kilometers away from the river Isonzo in Italy, where the Austro-Hungarian Army suffered a crushing defeat.³ The author István Szabó was an educated man. He was injured in the battles in the Carpathians and after his recovery he took part in the battles at the river Isonzo as a journalist.⁴ The diary had already been published in 1917 and describes the experience of the author and his comrades with death, dying, killing and mourning. These are rather detailed descriptions and worth an analysis, in which point of view the author does investigate the topic and how his attitude to the much death on the battlefield is reflected in his lines.

The main points of views regarding the appearance of death, dying and mourning in the diary are the following: Expectation of death, Dying of heroes, The experience of killing, Cemeteries, Funeral and Mourning. It is not easy to divide this huge topic into these certain parts, because the borders of these fields are sometimes impossible to separate. Although these fields are described rather detailed in the book, this paper only wish to give an overall review about how they are dealt with at all in a diary in the First World War. The book is written in a language that is rich in old-fashioned and poetic expressions. The author quotes here these passages in a simplified translation.

Expectation of death

The expectation of death which can be observed in several passages in the book is against the evidence that war is on the one hand equal to death, and on the

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² This is the Hungarian soldier, word by word it means "the protector of the land".

³ István Ravasz (ed.), „Mire lehullanak a levelek...”. *90 esztendeje ért véget a Nagy Háború*, Budapest, HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, 2009, pp. 9-21.

⁴ Gyula Sipos (ed.), *A m. kir. székesfehérvári 17-ik honvéd gyalog- és népfőlkelő ezredek története*, Székesfehérvár, EHS, 1939

other hand the expectation of death emerges from this idea. This means that the soldiers on the battlefield are completely aware of the fact that they can die in any moment and they may never see they loved ones again. Besides, the soldiers had seen so much horror in the war that they are often – apparently – indifferent of it: “*In the mouth was the bitter taste of the expectation of death*”.⁵ They are apparently indifferent of the horrors of the war, because despite the fact that death is evident in war sometimes the soldiers are concerned unexpectedly by the death of a comrade: “*You poor, happy fellow, you didn’t guess this beautiful, serious and epic end the day before yesterday*”.⁶

How does the expectation of death appear in this diary? One example is when the soldiers write home letters and they do not know whether this will be the very last letter to their family. It is also a sign of the expectation of death that more and more graves have to be digged in advance, so they have to face continuously the new death cases. Sometimes were these in advance prepared graves not enough. This continuous defenselessness of death made the soldiers hard and cold like the stones of the karsts:

“Some of them became fatalists; they are waiting for their turns”⁷; “Some of them only lie down and look in a fatal motionlessness at the stars and they are expecting when their star falls down”.⁸

Sometimes they say in the diary: “*It comes as it has to come*” or: “*It’s all the same*”. Another feature of the expectation of death is that the soldiers speak about it “*very naturally and in a flat voice*” or “*with a fatal calmness as if they told about grape-growing at home*”.¹⁰ A further description which expresses this expectation is when Szabó writes:

“The soldiers spend their time in the shadow of the death, they are floating on the verge of the grave and they couldn’t know in which moment their power begins to fail”.¹¹

Dying of heroes

In wartimes it was important to give the much death and killing a sense, respectively to consider these on the battlefield as a heroic feat. This idea made the work and life of the soldiers easier and for the mourners at home it was a kind of comfort. But the heroic self-sacrifice did not make any sense at all: “*Innumerable Italians gave their lives for this shell-hole but none of them could ever reach it alive*”.¹²

⁵ István Szabó, *Doberdo. The Book of a Honvéd Officer from the Isonzo Front*, Budapest 1917 p. 95. All the quotations are translated by the author of this paper.

⁶ Szabó, *Doberdo*, p. 105.

⁷ Ibid, p. 109.

⁸ Ibid., p. 131.

⁹ Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 33.

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Doberdo became a synonym of heroic defense for the Austro-Hungarian command. Lot of people died there in the senseless battles. The heroism of the soldiers plays in this diary a crucial role. In the preface of the book Szabó emphasizes that "*this book tells about the faded and hardened Hungarians, about the Honvéds of Doberdo. Fame, appreciation, gratitude, remembrance, medals and crosses, all these are only words, they can't express what we owe them, because they are still lying there on the stones or under the stones*".¹³ For Szabó it is also very significant and it is in connection with the heroism of the soldiers, that they are Hungarian soldiers who were fighting at Doberdo and died as thousands for their fatherland. The name Doberdo became a sad concept for the Hungarians, "*where the cemeteries eat the Hungarians*".¹⁴

The way Szabó speaks about his comrades in general expresses that the author considers these soldiers as heroes, who hold on even "*in the most colourless hell of the war*"¹⁵ and went on fighting among their dead comrades on the stones. "*Not the shadow of the death, but the death itself could put them away*".¹⁶ He respects his comrades and he speaks especially about the young soldiers with lots of love: "*dear fellows, they all should be embraced*".¹⁷

The soldiers are getting used to the permanent danger and the deadly fusillade on the battlefield and this is also apparent on their faces. Being accustomed to this or even the indifference towards the lot of horror means for Szabó heroism as well: "*The floating on the verge of the grave is on the face of everybody, it hides in the wrinkles and in the little holes of the eyes. [...] This heroism deserves all the golden medals and crosses*".¹⁸ Despite the many depressing and naturalist descriptions of the dying and the dead cases in the book there are also passages where Szabó writes about these heroes with a respectful remembrance:

"They undertake this deadly piece of work voluntarily. The hand-grenades fall from two sides in vain on them, the machine-guns shot in vain on them, in every minute glided the death above them, still they stayed there".¹⁹

Not only have the Hungarian soldiers died heroically for their fatherland but also the Italians:

"The Italian youth hang dead on our wires with mouths which are getting black for the town Triest, the fruits of the death ripen due to this. Scarcely begun, flaming, young lives became shabby corpses for this town".²⁰ And after this senseless

¹³ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 92.

death “remain only dead, graves, rag, smoke, smut, the widows of Michele²¹ and the orphans of the karsts”.²²

A significant expression of the appreciation of the heroism of the fighting soldiers is the handing out of medals. At this ceremony the soldiers forget the losses of the war for a short time. But the medals do not sparkle for a long time so beautifully, because the memory of the fallen soldiers is present all the time:

“The newly beaten silver is shining cold on two big trays, the ribbons are lying next to each other, their colour is paler, paler than the colour of the blood that gushed forth on the stones for it”.²³

It is also said, that many of them who got this orders could not be present because they either had been lying in a hospital or they were dead. The soldiers do not like to speak about the horrors of the war. When the general asks them at this ceremony, why they received the orders, all the soldiers give only a very short answer: “*Because I had always fulfilled my duties*”.²⁴

The expression of heroism also appears on the epitaphs, even when the one who makes this epitaph did not even know the fallen soldier: “*Here rests one of my heroic comrades. Unknown. 1916, he died at Doberdo for his fatherland*”.²⁵ At burials Szabó speaks about the fallen soldiers as heroes.

The experience of killing

As far as the experience of killing is concerned not much is reported about it in the diary. There are mostly only short and brief sentences about the fact that the soldiers have to kill on the battlefield. Such short sentences are for example the following: “*The Italian brains can be beaten out only from a short distance*”²⁶ or: “*The Italians broke into the Honvéd lines and they let themselves beat to death with a war hammer*”²⁷ or: “*A direct hit killed six people*”²⁸ or: “*Lakner shot down four Italians just the way, on his duty*”.²⁹ These short and brief sentences express the pure fulfillment of the soldiers’ duty, without any feeling and without having bad consciousness. They only do carry out a command and protect their life, because if they do not kill the enemy, they will be killed by them: “*We have to kill, to destroy them until we have some bullets*”.³⁰ Taking revenge for the fallen soldiers can be a reason for killing as

²¹ Michele or San Michele is a mountain at Doberdo.

²² Szabó, *Doberdo*, pp. 92-93.

²³ Szabó, *Doberdo*, p. 108.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 39.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 83.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 112.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 148.

well: "*Our dead comrades are crying out to us for revenge*".³¹ Or at another passage:

"If only it was already noon then the attack would go on and we could play back all pain, suffering and each drop of blood and the deads too".³²

Szabó asks the Duke of Aosta, one of the officers of the Italians, how he is able to live with the experience of killing, how he can bear all the awareness of the many commands of killing and if he had any bad consciousness because of that. He asks him:

"Can he hide from the ghosts, are his dreams calm? Do the mangled ghosts of the tenthousands of deads not seat on the verge of his bed; and does he hear the sobbing of the orphans; and is he not drowning in a sea that is salty and bitter because it is full of tears?"³³

The technical weapons played a crucial role in the First World War. These killed not only the people but also destroyed the wide landscape. The technical instruments pushed the human value such as strength or holding out into the background: "*The technical attack worked very well and the rest was finished by the bayonet, gun-stock and war hammer. But this is not always necessary; the trenches are full of corpses with yellow faces*"³⁴ – due to the poisonous gas attack. These technical instruments had been here unknown till then:

"The technology brought the mass murderous and human-destroying poisons from the age of our grandchildren, and the Honvéd who lives and suffers here among the stones first got a war hammer then a gas mask next to his weapon".³⁵

Cemeteries

Cemeteries – "*the big gardens of the death*"³⁶ – are rather often described and detailed in the diary of Szabó. The reader gets some information about the important cemeteries of soldiers at Doberdo. One of the chapters is completely devoted to a cemetery. The reader gets an impression of how the cemeteries of the soldiers looked like and how the grave crosses were decorated.

The soldier cemetery is situated next to the civil cemetery of the village. The crosses are well arranged, they are lying next to and behind each other, in approximately eighteen rows. There is also a grave plan which contains the numbers of the graves and the name, birth date, the unit, the residence and the place where the person died and where he was buried. With the help of this plan "*the fallen soldiers can also be found later when the rain has washed up*

³¹ Ibid., p. 120.

³² Ibid., p. 130.

³³ Ibid., p. 125.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 41.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 87.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 143.

the names from the wooden crosses".³⁷ The graves of the officers are lying separately from the graves of the common soldiers.

The decoration of the graves and grave crosses is described in details. The demand of man to decorate the graves of the deceased had not been diminished, even in case of war. When the soldiers had some time and opportunity they decorated the graves or rewrote the epitaphs in case they had faded away, even if they did not know the person who had been buried there. One kind of the decoration is the symbol of the different religions: crosses, half-moons or six-pointed stars. Another kind of decoration is the epitaphs in different languages: Slovenian, German, Italian or Hungarian. The soldiers from different nations are lying here in peace next to each other. Both the religious, the language and the national differences are getting unimportant by the dead. Although they are part of the commemoration of the dead, they are not enemies for each other anymore. There is neither any individual difference among the deceased. As they fought in their life not as individuals but soldiers, heroes, they also died as soldiers and heroes. They will be commemorated as heroes who sacrificed their life for their fatherland. For the Hungarians it is also important to adorn the cemeteries where Hungarian soldiers were buried with Hungarian motives: "*Beautiful Hungarian patterns are on the wooden fence, Hungarian gates at the entrances of all the Hungarian regiments*".³⁸

The graves of the officers are much nicer decorated as the graves of the common soldiers: "*These [the graves of the officers] are more decorated, there are more braids and more flowers on the uniform of the graves, such in life*".³⁹ This reflects the social order as well. The soldiers regarded their troop as a community or a big family as it appears in the diary of Szabó too: "The deceased of a big family are sleeping here their eternal dream".⁴⁰ The graves are sometimes decorated with flowers. If they have nothing else, the soldiers plant flowers in a piece of a bomb on the grave of their fallen comrades.

Szabó means that a particular cemetery cult had been developed on Doberdo and on the basis of the dates of the deaths on the head stones the story of the battlefield of Doberdo can be compiled:

"The rich material and the idea of this cemetery cult had been produced by Italian attacks. Every date of a dead case is a chapter in the history of Isonzo".⁴¹

Funeral

Before a funeral in a cemetery the soldiers had to be identified and selected according to their unit. Sometimes there were some peaceful days when the fallen soldiers could be buried. However, the bad quality of the ground of the

³⁷ Szabó, *Doberdo*, p. 52.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁴¹ Szabó, *Doberdo*, p. 145.

karts made the funerals more complicated.⁴² The fallen soldiers were not always buried in cemeteries, due to different reasons. One reason was that sometimes the body was very badly mangled so that it could not be taken out of the ground:

“A sergeant wants to dig out his comrade from the ground. He finds nothing else only a head, a grenade ripped it off, he doesn’t have to dig out any more”.⁴³ Or on another passage in the book: “*There are some people who could only tell about Michele, the grenade had hit him into the ground so it was impossible to bury him*”.⁴⁴ Another reason might have been that the body was so much destroyed that the soldier could not be identified. In that case they were buried as unknown soldiers. Some fallen soldiers were buried on the place they had died and not in a cemetery: “*There are everywhere lonely crosses or sad Honvéd graves*”.⁴⁵ Some soldiers lie in mass graves.

By the end of the book there is a chapter where the author gives a detailed description of the funeral of his officer Gyula Pour. This is the second funeral of the officer, “*at home, in the fat, black and dear soil*”⁴⁶. The reader gets an impression how a funeral those times took place in the hinterland. After the transport and the laying out of the corpse the mourners sang some songs and prayers. It was a very splendid funeral with many candles on nice candelabrams, flowers, laurel wreaths and lots of people. Many of them were nobles and officers in full dress uniform. There was also a military band which played music. It had been taken leave of the deceased with a glorious speech at the funeral and later with loud articles in newspapers.

Mourning

The funeral of Gyula Pour is a good topic to demonstrate how mourning is featured in the diary as well. In the detailed description of this funeral of a comrade of Szabó is the mourning of the author and through this the commemorating of the fallen soldiers very well introduced. Even the music, “*the crying horns and the mourning drums*”⁴⁷ expresses mourning. After the splendid funeral had ended and Szabó had stayed alone at the tomb of his fallen friend, his memories about him emerged in him. This remembering is a part of mourning. But unfortunately as well as life these memories are also fleeting. “*It occurs to me...*”⁴⁸ writes Szabó and begins the long description of his memories about the deceased. He remembers the last evening they spent together and

⁴²Stencinger, *Temetkezés Doberdón*, pp. 1382-1385, and Pintér-Rózsafi-Stencinger, *Magyar ezredek a Doberdó-fennsík védelmében*, pp. 158-163.

⁴³ Szabó, *Doberdo*, p. 130.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 110-111.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 142.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 137.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 138.

some events from the life of his comrade. He praises him: “*and I shook hands with a particularly great man for the last time*”⁴⁹ and he remembers the last memory of him: “*I heard these words from you the last time and as if the echo of these words were still floating in the air*”⁵⁰. He recalls the moment when he received the news of his dead, how shocked he was by the news and he didn’t want to believe it.

“As if that dawn hadn’t existed, when I was awakening by a scared Honvéd who said to me with shaky voice that our captain had died he had to be buried. As if the death itself had been standing in front of me. It was terrible, the broken sentences and confused words, they fell on me as if they wanted to choke me”.⁵¹

With these memories of the fallen comrade the events of the world war that they had experienced and suffered together are connected. He ends his memories with the following painful words:

“All these memories occur to me now on this autumn evening among the still graves in front of your new tomb. We should forget about the why because it hurts much. One more saluting my dear captain, it will be the last one and after that I will leave with lower head...”.⁵²

Although at this second funeral of his late officer Szabó is alone and speaks about his own mourning and own feelings, after this description he also writes about the funeral of the officer on the battlefield and in connection with this he tells about the mourning of the other comrades:

“We were standing at your wagon for a very long time without saying any words and his tears didn’t wipe any of the soldiers. After we had buried you the Honvéds ran back to the starting line and started a counterattack. Their rage was unbridled and their entire stroke with an axe was death”.⁵³

Some of the wounded came to the funeral too and they left the place sadly. These lines make it clear that the soldiers did not really have time for mourning on the battlefield. In a description about another funeral Szabó tells about how the comrades experienced mourning: somebody took it with pride, with tears or others indifferently. Another situation which describes the mourning of a comrade is where Szabó tells in a very moving way about a soldier who puts some flowers on the grave of a fallen comrade before his unit passes on.

In connection with mourning it is also the last but one chapter in the diary which deals with All Souls’ Day. In this chapter Szabó emphasizes the importance to remember and commemorate the fallen soldiers and he also calls upon the reader to commemorate the fallen soldiers on this day, “*on the black*

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 139

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., p. 141.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 139–140.

holiday of autumn"⁵⁴. He adds that he will never forget the much dead and horror he had seen in the war. This idea that people are unable to forget these terrible and shocking experiences is mentioned in the diary several times: "*The heavy rucksack presses the soldier but also life, and the yesterday*".⁵⁵

Conclusion

All in all we can say that both the author of the diary himself and the described soldiers get partly accustomed to the terrible circumstances of the war but the sad human feelings and the fear are always present in the background and they time after time occur in the lines and in the thoughts of this diary. The most often mentioned feelings are enthusiasm, duty, despair, rage, revenge or indifference.

In some passages Szabó goes into the details of the report about the dead soldiers. He also tells about the feelings and thoughts, these sad sights risen in him. He thinks about the sense of life and the fleeting things: feelings and values which people consider to be important in their life:

"There are lying so much suffering, joy, sigh, desire, wealth, dream, poverty, misery, love, memory of kisses, fever, plan, work, knowledge, result and beginning next to each other. So many young and broken lives. All these are lying here in the dirt of blood or in the glory of the wounds. For them it is all the same, the sun is shining in the same way above them".⁵⁶

At the end of the analysis of this war-diary which is about a rather detailed death and dying, it can be concluded that the demand of man to bury the deceased and to mourn over them is not diminished, even in case of war, where death and dying became a mass phenomenon. This diary is a very good proof of it. In the middle of the mass death on the battlefield and despite the continuous killing, the fear of dead, the feeling of mourning and the respect was present not only for the fallen soldiers of the own unit, but for the enemy as well.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 142.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 102.

V. I. LENIN – HISTORY OF A POLITICAL RELIC

OLGA GRADINARU¹

The role of the well-known Russian communist leader Vladimir Ilych Ulianov (known as Lenin) is clearly established in history, considered one of the most prominent figures in world history and the one that established the basis of the first socialist state. Not only his birth data was celebrated, but also his death date, in a complex system of a cult of personality with traces and consequences in nowadays Russia in need of „decommunization”, not only „destalinization”.² As Winston Churchill put it, underlining Lenin’s role in Russian destiny:”He alone could have found the way back to the causeway... The Russian people were left floundering in the bog. Their worst misfortune was his birth... their next worst his death”.³

These aspects contributed to the idea that the great leader mustn’t be buried as a simple mortal (although his last years were spent away from the political activity and he himself expressed his wish to be buried near his mother and sisters in Saint Petersburg). Moreover, in the context of harsh anti-religious propaganda and destruction of Orthodox relics, the embalmment of the greatest leader seemed convenient for a small group of communist leaders, which presented the idea as if being the concern and desire of the masses. It was said that soon after Lenin’s death 10,000 telegrams from all Soviet Union were received begging the authorities to do something to preserve the body of the great communist ruler for posterity. The first idea in order to respond to this supposed urgent request of the newly formed Soviet people was cryogenic⁴, but somewhere in the process embalmment occurred as a proper solution.

Lenin’s death was presented as a mere surprise for the so-called Soviet people and the fact that the newly born citizens of the Soviet Empire would desire to preserve the body of the ruler who forced them to enter this socialistic machine is at least questionable. The idea to plead for a radical and harsh ruler’s embalmment may be regarded as bizarre or at least masochist for those whose fate was cruelly changed overnight or whose relatives were killed, imprisoned,

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²The idea is supported by Andrej Zubov in *Russian Journal* - <http://www.russ.ru/pole/Dekommunizaciya-a-ne-destalinizaciya>, accessed on October 2 2011.

³ Elizabeth Mauchline Roberts, *Lenin and the Downfall of Tsarist Russia*, New York, Roy Publishers Inc., 1966, p. 92.

⁴ Alexander Bogdanov and Leonid Krasin proposed cryogenic solution for Lenin’s body so that his resurrection would be possible before ruler’s death, in early 1920 and even though the necessary equipment was bought, the project wasn’t finalized either due to the fall of the Russian cosmism movement or due to other political reasons. The social and cultural, as well as political aspects of this movement are analyzed by A. Lazarevich in his book *Sovetã, chapter Sovetskij proryv v kosmos* - <http://technocosm.narod.ru/> accessed October 2 2011.

sent away to Siberia due to their „unhealthy” bourgeois origins or their relatives’ wealth. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the possibility of receiving those 10,000 telegrams from all the territories occupied by the „red fever”, the sudden preoccupation of communist authorities to please the crowd is again suspicious. Iu. M. Lopukhin in his book analyzed the fact that telegrams and letter from all over the Soviet territories asked to do something for honoring the memory of the communist leader and if other types of requests were present they might be regarded with skepticism, as creating such documents was nothing but a routine for Dzerzhinskij who was responsible for this department.⁵ Matjushin is another scholar doubting the „people’s will” concerning Lenin’s body, considering it an absurd theory and mystification of real facts, transformed into a myth.⁶

The „surprising” death of the great Bolshevik leader wasn’t surprising at all for connoisseurs of political world and there was plenty of time to analyze the options for a newly formed exceptional state close to its crash due to the inconvenient death of its godfather. Lenin’s image was maintained as if nothing has happened during his illness period and the myth of the kind; loving and almost omnipresent and omnipotent ruler was nurtured and developed partly due to the fear of popular disapproval of the ruling committee, partly due to another fear of losing the entire accomplished „red dream”. The myth making capacity of the masses was used in order to help the communist leaders to keep together the newly born state by maintaining the illusion of a present absence, of a guiding protector beyond death, embalming the corpse and pretending honour and worship.

Ulianov’s embalment wouldn’t have been seen possible or necessary without a starting point of some myths regarding his life, death and way of living. The communist political leader became a radical since his brother’s death punishment in May 1887 due to his involvement in an attempt to kill the tsar Alexander III. Volodea Ulianov himself participated in a similar popular movement, being excluded from university and forbidden to become a student again for several years, fact that determined him to become a radical cruel adept of new progressive philosophy. Due to his revolutionary activity Ulianov was arrested and exiled in Siberia where he wrote more than 30 works during the three years of exile and where he chose his political name – Lenin, due to Siberian river Lena where he spent several years. Other years after 1900 were spent in England, Switzerland, and Finland, organizing the basis for a social-democratic party in Russia and fighting for a proper preparation for socialist movement among workers and peasants due to the newspaper *Iskra* and journal *Zarja*, where he worked with his master Plekhanov and his friend Martov until

⁵ Iu. M. Lopukhin, *Bolezn’ i smert’ i bal’zamirovanie V. I. Lenina*, Moskva, Respublika, 1997.

⁶ S. Matjushin, *Mumia Lenina*, *Historicus* online project - <http://www.historicus.ru/509/> accessed on October 5 2011.

the political and administrative separation.⁷ Another break happened due to a misunderstanding in naming *Iskra* editorial board, as well as Lenin's plan of installing the revolutionary change, regarded as a "sect of schemers"⁸ and an attempt to install dictatorship. The appropriate timing for another revolution (successful and much violent for this time, opposed to the revolution of 1905 organized by Lenin, illegally returned to Russia installing the beginning of the "Red Terror") seemed to be in the context of the 1st World War, and February revolution 1917 was a surprise even for Lenin⁹, although he was talking about the necessity to transform the imperialistic war into a revolutionary war.

Lenin with his wife Nadezhda Krupskaja traveled to Russia in a special secured train in April 1917, being met at the railway station by a group of enthusiastic workers and peasants. Since the beginning of "socialist construction" – October 1917 – Lenin became a prominent political figure, offering even the philosophical basis for a special type of Russian socialism, called „Leninism“, taking into account the peculiarities of Russian social, political and cultural context. The banners presented Marx, Engels and Lenin as geniuses of the newly established first socialist state in the world.¹⁰

Bolshevik leader and his special policy for the Russian land replaced the strong and powerful profile of the tsar in the Russian mentality with some substantial changes. Since Middle Ages the Slavic and Russian leader – be it the case of *tsar* or *kniaz* – benefited from two types of representations in the perception of the masses – kind and loving figure of a father (*bat'ka* or *otets*) or cruel and harsh figure of a tyrant.¹¹ The perception of the last Russian tsar was negative due to many social and political circumstances, among which the Russian involvement in the 1st World War in an unfavorable social and economical context. A negative newspaper campaign with caricatures (along with a campaign in theaters and street representations with songs and poems) against the royal family involved the disputable implication of a so-called monk

⁷ Martov was representative and leader of *Menshevik* (from the Russian *meshinstvo* meaning "minority") wing of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, Lenin being the leader of *Bolshevik* (from the Russian *bol'shinstvo* meaning "majority") wing, having opposite opinions in 1903 at the 2nd Congress of the Party.

⁸ Isaac Deutscher, *Vooruzhennyj prorok*. Moskva, ISTS, 2006, p. 92.

⁹ His speech in January 1917 in Switzerland is famous for his doubt to be a witness of the Russian Revolution. After finding out about the beginning of the Revolution he considers this due to the French and English imperialistic plan.

¹⁰ Several years later Stalin was the fourth profile on the banner to join that select company. However, after the official recognition of Stalin's crimes and terror, his profile disappeared and the banner with the three important philosophical figures were present on papers, magazines, flags, posters until the mere fall of the Soviet Empire.

¹¹ The perfect example in this case would be Ivan III, known as Ivan the Terrible, whose life and character was subject to various artistic and literary representations.

Rasputin¹², who contributed to a severe damage of the royal reputation. Tsar Nikolai II was considered unfit for ruling also due to his spirit of independence showed to European powers and due to the fact that he was supposedly influenced by Tsarina Alexandra and again by the same Rasputin, considered a close friend of the royal family or at least a protégé.

Lenin's personality – with his so-called caring attitude for peasants' and workers' fate – transformed him in no time into the desirable leader for the masses, especially in a harsh social and economical context where changes were required. Although the communist leader wasn't the main fighter for social equity and rights, his figure imposed step by step together with Bolshevik party supremacy and then in the process of building the new "bright golden future". A contemporary comrade Potresov wrote about Lenin: „this unobservable and tough man, with no charm, exerted a hypnotic influence: Plekhanov was respected, Martov was loved and only Lenin was followed unconditionally, as if being the only unquestionable ruler”.¹³

The image of the infallible ruler was consolidated due to the two attempts of killing him¹⁴, as he survived them, although with severe damages – one bullet in his lung and another one in his throat, being removed long after the attempt. This image was not only exaggerated by the masses in need of another type of leader closer to the father's image – kind, loving and understanding – but also nurtured by the party, interested in hiding the real state of the great ruler.

On the other hand, historians link the first killing attempt with a change in Lenin's politics regarding the radical fight against the opposite political and social movements. It is after that date a complex fight began and it is not until that event the royal family was murdered – 16-17 July 1918. Although there are not clear documents of Lenin's command¹⁵ to kill the tsarist

¹² For more details see Olga Gradinaru, *Two Deaths and Two Destinies: Rasputin and Imperial Russia* in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica. Dying and Death in 18th-21st Century Europe*. International Conference, Third Edition, Alba Iulia, Romania, September 3-5, 2010, pp. 129-147.

¹³ A. N. Potresov, *Iz neokonchennykh vospominanij. Izbrannoe*, Moskva, 2005.

¹⁴ The first attempt took place on 14th of January 1918.

¹⁵ Historians agree on Lenin's involvement in regicide, but the actual existence of instructions or command in murdering tsarist family is a complicated issue, as some consider this as an established historical fact (Iu. A. Zhuk, *Ispoved' tsareubijts. Ubijstvo tsarskoj sem'i v materialakh predvaritel'nogo sledstva i v vospominaniakh lits, prichastnykh k soversheniu etogo prestuplenia*, Moskva, OOO Izdatel'skij Dom "Veche", 2008, pp. 4-5), while others don't recognize their existence (G. Ioffe, "Filippov sud". *Po ch'emu rasporezhnui byla rastreljana tsarskaja sem'a?*, *Nauka i zhizn'* journal, No. 8, 2010 <http://www.nkj.ru/archive/articles/18458/> accessed on October 2 2011).

family in their exile¹⁶, there are enough indirect evidence to conclude that this wasn't made at least without Vladimir Ilyich's knowledge and confirmation. The act of killing the tsar and his family may be perceived as a personal act of revenge for Lenin's lost of his elder brother Alexander or as a necessary political act in order to put an end to the series of killing attempts and to silence the monarchical movement in the context of the Russian civil war. It represented metaphorically the final act of replacement in the mental mind of the masses the cruel image of the tsar with the image of a great simple man (although with noble origins) with a heart for the people (working class and peasantry), even if this act was a gesture of cruelty and in Orthodox perspective is considered a great sin killing the anointed by God to rule the country. Soon after the royal family murder appeared a myth that Ekaterinburg authorities decided in a hurry to kill the tsarist family, being frightened by the White Army vicinity, fact accompanied by the absence of a written command or signature for the murder.

Nevertheless, the image of a kind and loving leader opposed to the tsar was a monstrous lie, as Lenin was the initiator of the Red Army, the establisher of the "Red Terror" and commander of extreme measures regarding the peaceful but suspected inhabitants in order to ensure the final triumph of the Bolshevik Party. The 1st Russian Revolution 1905-1907 revealed the radical and cruel character of the Bolshevik leader, transformed during the Austro-Hungarian imprisonment in 1912-1914 from a social-democrat into a communist. Even after the end of the social war in 1922 Lenin supported the idea of a necessary continuation of the „Red Terror”, and the necessity of finding a legal support for this process of maintaining the order of the state.¹⁷ The image of the „good” Lenin was an attempt to impose a different type of figure in people's mentality after the difficult times during Nikolas II reign.¹⁸ Moreover, even the Western perception of the Bolshevik leader has been perverted, giving the impression of a good basis on which Stalin's murders took place. One of the books that analyze this „blind spot” is Dmitri Volkogonov's *Lenin: A New Biography*¹⁹, offering the distinction between the two leaders and an insight into Lenin's flaws. The „Bolshevik barbarism” is considered to have started with Lenin and continued by Stalin in Robert Gellately's comparison between communist and

¹⁶ Historian Latyshev considers that clear and direct speeches calling to destroy tsarist family are serious evidence in order to demonstrate Lenin's personal involvement in regicide - A. G. Latyshev, *Rassekrechennyj Lenin*, Moskva, Mart, 1996, p. 336.

¹⁷ Lenin's letter to head of justice Kurskij on 17 May 1922 expresses this idea - S. Tatarnikov, *Pytki: proshloe bez nastojaschego*, KODEXinfo No. 19(151), 12 April, 1996.

¹⁸ Extreme poverty of the masses and high mortality rates, Jewish pogroms and war involvement, as well as difficult Siberian gold exploitation were just some of the aspects that contributed to people's discontent and rise of the revolutionary driven people.

¹⁹ D. Volkogonov, *Lenin: A New Biography*, New York, The Free Press, 1994.

Nazis dictatorships.²⁰ New archival sources are exposed in another biography²¹ offers the reader some horrifying aspects, revealing Lenin's personality, attitudes and ruthlessness.

The second attempt to kill Lenin had serious consequences on his health, but on the second day newspaper Pravda announced leader's fabulous recovery as if nothing happened: „Lenin, shot through twice, with pierced lungs spilling blood, refuses help and goes on his own. The next morning, still threatened with death, he reads papers, listens, learns, and observes to see that the engine of the locomotive that carries us towards global revolution has not stopped working...”.²² This event is considered to be the origin of a cult of personality, the basis on which many other mythical aspects were added later on, even after his hidden aggravated health.

Even when Lenin retrieved from the active political and social work he was used to after 1922, his image, name and presence were presented as if nothing was changed. It is true that during the first period he was still involved in his work due to his wife's help and support, but his last period lacked any activity, as he was unable to speak or move at all. His death news was perceived as an unexpected tragedy by most people unaware of his real state, but this secret must have provided the necessary time for communist leaders to think about the means of maintaining peace and order with no red terror, offering a quiet and calm opportunity to mourn for decades the one who made the Soviet era possible.

Lenin died on 21th January 1924 at Gorki estate and his body was brought in Moscow and installed in the Hall of Columns, Soviet House. The mourning process had lasted for 5 days, period in which more than 900,000 people had visited ruler's body. His body was embalmed and exhibited in Lenin Mausoleum on 27th January 1924. Only three days after his death Petrograd was renamed Leningrad until the 1991 USSR dissolution.

The construction of the first wooden mausoleum had lasted for a month, built in January 1924, soon enough after Ulianov's death, although his name would be replaced with his political nickname. The second wooden mausoleum was another temporary shelter for the bodily remains of the Bolshevik leader, built during the same year in August, probably due to the necessity of space for the great number of mourning people. The sarcophagus was designed by Konstantin Melnikov, replaced in 1973 by another version of sculptor Nikolai Tomsky. During the first month and a half of the first mausoleum more than

²⁰ R. Gellatery, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.

²¹ R. Service, *Lenin: A Biography*, London, Pan Books, 2002.

²² Dr. V. Bonch-Bruevich, *Lenin's attending physician*, Moskva, Tri Pokusheniia na V. Lenina, 1924.

100,000 people visited "father Lenin", fact that contributed to the idea of building a final stone mausoleum that would last for generations, „for ages" or „for ever". The last stone mausoleum was built in 1930, using marble, granite, laboratories, porphyry and the entire building period had lasted for 6 months. The same architect Shchiusev worked in order to offer the most memorable mausoleum for the most deserving communist Soviet citizen. The tribunes on the stone mausoleum were installed in 1944 and all important political leaders were waving to the masses during parades and important political events, celebrating the honor of being Lenin's followers.

During the 2nd World War Lenin's embalmed body was transferred in Tjumen` and the mausoleum was masked looking as a regular building. Stalin's body had rested near Lenin's remains for 8 years, being transferred on the Red Market due to a political decision in 1961 (although this transfer was discussed soon after 20th Party Congress, being given Stalin's atrocities and massive murders) presented as in he case of Lenin's embalmment as people's decision.²³ Nevertheless, the action was done secretly on 31 October 1961, fearing a popular riot but Soviet population received the news calmly and no mutinies took place.

There were eight official attempts to harm or destroy the mausoleum or Lenin's remains, most of them being just throwing a stone on the sarcophagus, starting in 1934 and ending in 1973. Several attempts harmed other people – the one in September 1967 when Krysanov exploded a belt near the door of the mausoleum (several people died along with the terrorist) and another one in September 1973 when an unknown man provoked an explosion inside the mausoleum and the terrorist with a couple died, while several people and children were wounded.

The discussion regarding Lenin's burial had started in 1963, being an ardent issue even nowadays or especially nowadays in the context or Russian spiritual, religious and cultural revival. But Lenin's burial is a complex issue, taking into account the fact that Kremlin's wall may be considered a Soviet necropolis, where revolutionaries, important Soviet leaders and statesmen, as well as Soviet personalities as Gagarin, Dzerzhinskij, Frunze, Brezhnev, Stalin, Andropov, Chernenko and many others were buried. The complexity of the issue was perceived during the '60 when a project of Soviet Pantheon was proposed and many architects presented various projects. However, the project was forgotten and its question is raised again nowadays when Lenin's burial

²³ Workers from Kirov, Moscow and Neva proposed Stalin's body transfer from Lenin Mausoleum i autumn 1961, before the XXII Congress of the Communist Party. The proposal came from a Leningrad representative, supported by Moscow, Georgia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Altai region, Saratov region and others. <http://ria.ru/spravka/20051031/41941588.html> accessed on October 2 2011.

seems to become an ardent social question.²⁴ Another radical proposal is to bury Lenin and all other Soviet citizens buried on the Red Square, while other proposal is building a park-pantheon, reminding the case other beautiful Russian cemeteries and bringing other Soviet personalities Novodevichij cemetery and others. This would be - in Egor Kholmogorov's opinion - „the only worthwhile, non-scandalous and non-disgraceful decision of the present historical collision”.²⁵

Nevertheless, Putin stated while being President that Lenin is not to be touched, as “this is our memory, this is our history and this is our life.. so let him lie there”.²⁶ Gorbachev, ex-president of USSR and the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990, mentions the matter, being of another pacifist perspective: „I think we'll come to this (Lenin's burial), but there's no need rushing things. Society will understand this sooner or later”.²⁷ This perception is not shared by the Head of Synod department who called believers to pray for destroying Ulianov's mummy and communists: “Lenin is an apologist of terror on a large scale. Anyone may admire his masterpiece, where he is presented as the inspiration and organizer of red terror on our land, and we mustn't forget this”.²⁸ Orthodox monarchists situate themselves on the same radical position, organizing a manifestation on 21 January 2009²⁹, wearing mummy costumes and caring a sarcophagus on the Red Square, offering a visual comparison with ancient Egyptian cult of personality reloaded on the Russian land in communist times and continued in specific “Russian democratic”³⁰ times. The same opinion is shared by some members of the party *Edinaja Rossia*, although Lenin's burial is not the official party policy. Vladimir Medinskij, deputy of *Edinaja Rossia* party transformed the issue into a social debate, supporting the idea that Lenin's burial has the potential of becoming “the project” of a presidential campaign, be it the case of Putin or Medvedev, offering the opportunity of remaining in Russian history as “the one who buried Lenin”. Medinskij has said in a recent interview that “This is a stupid, occult –necrophilia mission on our Red Square.

²⁴ The subject *Komu segodnja nuzhen Mavzolej?* (*Who Needs Mausoleum Nowadays?*) was discussed by Radio *Ekho Moskvy* on 10 January 2007 with deputies Tamara Pletneva (Communist Party) and Vladimir Ryzhkov (independent deputy) - <http://www.ryzhkov.ru/pg.php?id=7594> accessed on October 2 2011.

²⁵ <http://www.prof-ritual.ru/news-view-461.html> accessed on September 19 2011.

²⁶ <http://www.newsru.com/russia/21jan2011/leninleave.html> accessed on September 19 2011.

²⁷ <http://www.newsru.com/russia/21jan2011/leninleave.html> accessed on September 19 2011.

²⁸ <http://www.newsru.com/religy/28jan2011/smirnov.html> accessed on September 19 2011.

²⁹ A. Mel'nikov, *Telo Lenina zhivet i pobezhdaet. Nuzhdaetsia li bolshevistskij vozjd' v khristianskom pogrebenii?* (*Lenin's Body Lives and Wins. Does Bolshevik Leader Need a Christian Burial?*) <http://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=154435> accessed on September 19 2011.

³⁰ The term “Russian democracy” is not a new term, being invoked especially by Putin during his presidential mandates and becoming an issue for scholars and simple citizens alike. At the core of this notion lies some of the basic principles and components of the “Russian Idea” – a variant of the “American Dream”, although with a philosophical and complex background.

There's no Lenin's body left there, and specialists know that only 10% of his body is preserved, but the essence is the spirit, and not the body. Besides, Lenin is a controversial political figure and his presence in the heart of our country is a horrible fact".³¹ *Edinaja Rossia* party initiated a website where people are welcome to express their option regarding Lenin's ("golden") future – <http://goodbyelenin.ru/>.³² Another deputy Serghej Vostretsov sustains the necessity of burying the communist godfather: "Keeping Lenin's body like saint relics is not acceptable. Lenin isn't considered a saint in any religions and keeping him like relics for honouring isn't correct. Anyone can keep a bright memory about him, as I do (I was *oktjabrjonok*³³, pioneer and I am proud of this). And anyone could visit Lenin at the cemetery".³⁴ Vladimir Kozhyn, president's secretary, proposed to organize a referendum with this subject, mentioning that 80% of the votes would actually matter enough to bury Lenin.³⁵

The Russian Center of Studying Public Opinion³⁶ organized some research on the matter, asking if Lenin is a monument, idol or touristic attraction. The results are rather interesting, revealing that the same subject at three year distance makes the difference: "body of the ruler of our people deserves to be on the Red Square" – 15% in 2008, 22% in 2005 (19% village inhabitants, 31% Communist Party, 24% pensioners, 29% graduated school), while those who consider "Lenin's exposure in the Mausoleum on the Red Square is unacceptable and wrong" – 41% in 2008 (53% from Moscow and St. Petersburg, 48% Liberal Democratic Party, 45% middle age, 48% graduated university) are growing. The others regard Lenin's exposure on the Red Square from a practical angle – "Lenin became a simple touristic objective, as many other objectives in other countries" (31% in 2005, 37% in 2008). The generic question "What is to be done?" in Lenin's issue was answered "Let it in the Mausoleum!" 25% in 2008 (30% in 2005) and "Bury it in a cemetery!" 66% , with two alternatives – "immediately" 38% or "later, after the generation that cares about him would pass away" 28%. The latter category is open to the possibility of coping with the situation 10-20 years more, waiting for the perfect quiet opportunity about which Gorbachev was talking, when no ardent communist believers would oppose to this necessary step.

³¹ <http://www.trust.ua/news/38698.html> accessed on September 19 2011.

³² There are other online projects that support the idea of maintaining the present state of Lenin's body, offering various arguments and documents that bring honour to the Bolshevik leader. <http://www.aha.ru/~mausoleu/index.htm> accessed on October 2 2011.

³³ Communist honourable category for pupils of the primary school, who wore signals with Lenin's portrait at the age of three. The ceremony of becoming *oktjabrjonok* was a festive one, honouring Lenin's memory, singing songs and proclaiming poems dedicated to this Soviet ruler.

³⁴ <http://www.glavport.net/lastnews.php?id=1969484> accessed on September 19 2011.

³⁵ <http://www.newsru.com/russia/21jan2011/lenin.html> accessed on September 19 2011.

³⁶ <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=268&uid=11242> accessed on September 19 2011.

Why Lenin's controversial personality and questioned political and social activity exerts such a strong influence through its deadly (eternal?) presence in the heart of the Russian land may remain a mystery and may be treated as such.³⁷ It seems that Lenin's body exerts a hypnotic influence on the spectator³⁸, as he had done during his life, leading a sectant political group, imposing his radical perspective and changing the Russian path from monarchy to dictatorship, pretending a socialist democracy. Ardent communist believers offered a solution for the nowadays oppressive campaign on their leader's burial, surprising even their party members and leaders. The proposal of a group of communist party members from Kursk was to start a journey with Lenin's remains throughout Russia, in a desperate attempt to demonstrate and to ensure Lenin's presence on the Red Square. The newspaper articles³⁹ ridiculed the proposal, suggesting the Christian inspiration for maintaining Lenin's cult of personality, while the leaders of the party criticized this uninspired proposal and expressing their distrust in such an adventurous initiative.

Nevertheless, Lenin's issue remains a fierce, complex and complicated issue and the solution for Lenin's burial discussion may be found only after the suggested "decommunization" and reshape of the Russian mentality, as well as historical establishment and popular rooting of the historical truth regarding Vladimir Ilyich Ulianov.

³⁷ Some present the occult background of Lenin's mummy and ziggurate, as well as its negative destructive influence under Moscow and entire Russia, pointing out the necrophile meaning of the phrase "Lenin is still more alive than all live ones" - <http://pomnimvse.com/28.html> accessed on September 20 2011. The occult background of the Red Square is highlighted by various websites, underlining the astonishing resemblance in the construction of the mausoleum with the ancient ziggurates and their significance - <http://ari.ru/news/2765> (accessed on October 2 2011) is just one example.

³⁸ His brother Dmitrij was shocked during his visit in the mausoleum, extremely excited by the offered view, this being the common reaction of the visitors during the first (and probably not only then) visits.

³⁹ <http://orthomed.ru/news.php?id=6271>, accessed on October 2 2011.

MEDICALISATION OF DEATH AT THE TURN OF THE 18TH TO 19TH CENTURIES. THE MOMENT OF DEATH, APPARENT DEATH AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE DEAD FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

VÁCLAV GRUBHOFFER¹

Medicalisation of death in the medical discourse of the long 19th century

As shown by both current and older foreign historiography of the 18th and 19th century considering various aspects of the last affairs of a man, the form of dying and perceiving the human death were, since the middle of the 18th century at the latest, influenced mainly by two closely related factors: the change of spiritual experience of death, and the gradual professionalization of medical science and its representatives.² While historians traditionally pay great attention to the religious images and spiritual aspects of death³, current anthropologists of death emphasise the fact that the biological dimension of human death in different historical eras has been rather neglected.⁴ Closest to the topic are, naturally, the historians of medical science. They can study the progress of last diseases, the position of a doctor at the deathbed, the way of communicating with patients, and the effectiveness of the period medical care.

Among the crucial issues connected with the history of medicine and dying in the 19th century belongs, for instance, the conflict of increasingly progressive medical care and the early modern times ideal of “good death”, which was based on the positive value of physical suffering on the deathbed. Other very important death aspects of the modern times were: the increasing frequency of dying in hospitals, the newly postulated ethical questions related to prolonging of life or quickening of death, and also the paradoxical increase in the prestige of medical profession, whose feasibility to cure the dying people remained in the course of the 19th century very limited.⁵

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² Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996; Michel Vovelle, *La Mort et l'Occident de 1300 à nos jours*, Paris, Gallimard, 1983; John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment. Changing attitudes to death in eighteenth-century France*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981.

³ Apart from the classical works of the historians of the Middle Ages and the Modern Times such as Norbert Ohler, Jacques Le Goff, Aron Gurevič, Philippe Ariès and Michel Vovelle, let us mention, as an example for the 19th century, Michael Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell, and the Victorians*, Cambridge 1994.

⁴ Adriano Favole, *Resti di umanità. Vita sociale del corpo dopo la morte*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2003; Marina Sozzi, *Reinventare la morte. Introduzione alla tanatologia*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2009.

⁵ As to the aforementioned aspects of death, e.g. American historian of medicine Sherwin B. Nuland, *Davanti alla morte. Medici e pazienti*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2007.

For the purpose of studying the period medical norms, the ideas of medical profession representatives considering death, and their practical implementation, there seem to be three independent key categories connected with human dying. The first observed aspect can be the attitude towards the dying and its changing during the medical discourse of the long 19th century. For instance, the newly defined role of a doctor as a part of the deathbed ritual can be considered essential.⁶ It is linked to the changing approach to dying, the development of palliative care, and the increasing professional and social prestige of doctors.⁷ Another principal category is undoubtedly studying the development of the attitude towards dead bodies and its gradual disciplination by means of norms of the medical police and communal hygiene. Furthermore, an elementary aspect of dying and death in the medical discourse is the very moment of death and the development of the viewpoints of medical profession representatives considering its time status and the modality of transition between life and death.

In the history of medical disciplination of death, the key role was played namely by the category of so-called apparent death. It dominated the medical discourse approximately in the middle of the 18th century and the following discussion about premature burials within the Enlightenment intellectual circles, which led to the reforms of funeral services as well as to practical arrangements, proceeding from the conflict of controversial opinions on the time and spatial dimension of death. They eventually defined a new approach to a dead human body - from now on, an object of disciplination and desacralisation; and we can see them as expressive manifestations of secularised

⁶ As an example of a fundamental issue appears the relationship between the role of a doctor and a priest, and their mutual interaction. The existing knowledge of historiography, as well as the author's research, show not only gradual changing of these roles, but also reciprocal adoption of behavioural patterns – certain “spiritualization” of the doctor, who in his therapeutic impotence took refuge as the comforter of the soul; and, on the other hand, “medicalisation” of the spiritual persons, who were supposed to be able to give first aid. Apparently, there was cooperation rather than animosity between the two estates, although medicine kept increasing its monopoly as the guide of the dying in the course of the 19th century. Compare Giorgio Cosmacini, *La religiosità della medicina. Dall'antichità a oggi, Roma-Bari 2007*, Laterza, pp. 109-123; p. 192-201.

In Czech lands, education of the clergy considering the questions of physiological signs of various types of illnesses and oncoming death was dealt with in practical handbooks of catholic origin on care about the dying as soon as in the early 19th century. The priest is often called “the doctor of the soul” and, if necessary, he was supposed to encourage the sick to be checked or operated on by a physician. Cf. Václav Grubhoffer, “Poslední věci člověka v diskursu katolické církve v době předbřeznové. Rituál smrtelné postele mezi barokní zbožností a osvíceným rozumem”, *Historie - Otázky - Problémy* 1 (2009), No. 2, pp. 175-185.

⁷ Olivier Faure, “Der Arzt”, in U. Frevert – H.G. Haupt ed., *Der Mensch des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main, Campus Verlag, 1999, pp. 86-120.

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Medicalisation of Death in the sign of a Paradox I. The Moment of Death and Living Dead

“What is the reason that only a civilised man must die with such an equipment of horror? The entire living nature and almost all civilisations, which we call barbarian, await the last heartbeat peacefully, without experiencing those sorrowful premonitions that shroud our whole life; they await a natural end of their days without adding any artificial agony to it”.⁹

Such was the beginning of a chapter concerning mental injuries related to excessive fear of death, which was written by the outstanding German doctor of French origin Johann Peter Frank at the end of the 18th century. *The equipment of horror* meant not only the inherited and traditional world of ideas about the underworld and afterlife, but explicitly the transitional ritual of Christian death, namely the Roman Catholic one.

This leading medical authority of the Enlightenment Europe paid considerable attention to dying, death and burial grounds in several volumes of his voluminous work *System einer vollständigen medizinischen Polizey*¹⁰. The propagator and realiser of several Enlightenment medical reforms offered his coevals a very comprehensive view of the last affairs of a man, which was intentionally aimed towards its application into the practice of his coevals and followers. The work is imbued with binding measures of the medical police of the end of the 18th century and can be understood, in the context of historiography, as a discourse text, influencing the space of life and death of each individual in the time of “de-enchanting of the world” as well as in several following decades. Death in J. P. Frank’s conception is already a medicalised death, bound with firm rules of communal hygiene, on its way to the future secularisation.

The key term medicalisation of death can be in this context understood as the birth and gradual development of a scholarly category of death which is

⁸ Medical or scholarly Enlightenment concept of death and its exerting and development in the 19th century was closely observed by mainly the French, but also British and – to Czech environment not so familiar – Italian historiography. This study can be understood as an introduction to its point of view.

⁹ Johann Peter Frank, *Sistema compiuto di Polizia medica*, IX, Milano 1827, pp. 223-224.

¹⁰ J.P. Frank, *System einer vollständigen medizinischen Polizey* (I-IV, Mannheim 1779-1788; V, Tübingen 1813; VI, Wien 1817-1819. Published in Italian translation in Milan as *Sistema compiuto di Polizia medica* in two editions in 1807-1818 and 1825-30. The author used for his study the following Italian editions: I-III, 1825-1830; IV-VI, 1826; VII-X, 1827; XI, 1818; XII, XIII, 1825; XIV, 1826; XV, 1827; XVI, 1828; XVII, 1829. The monumental work of Frank was after his death extended with two more volumes by Giovanni Pozzi, *Sistema compiuto di Polizia medica di G. P. Frank. XVIII, XIX. Polizia degli spedali scritta dal dottor Giovanni Pozzi*, I-II, Milano 1830.

no more closed in the sacral sphere, but gradually becomes an interdisciplinary topic in which the privileged position belongs to a doctor, “a specialist on death”. Yet the foundation of medical disciplinisation of death, and of coming very critically to terms with the spiritual tradition of dying in the older historical eras, were laid several decades before publishing Frank’s work. The Italian historian Claudio Milanesi¹¹ considered as the milestones in the history of creating the Enlightenment medical discourse on death, and perhaps even the notional roots of its medical disciplinisation process, to be the work of the Danish anatomist Jacques-Bénigne Winsløw *Quaestio medico-chirurgica*¹² from the year 1740 and primarily its revised edition *Dissertation sur l’incertitude des signes de la mort* by Jean-Jacques Bruhier.¹³ He not only translated the work of his predecessor from Latin to French, which brought it closer to lay readers, but above all significantly extended its second edition and shifted the work into a deeper interpretation level, urging application of some of the theoretical conclusions into practice.

The principal topic of J. B. Winsløw, who was inspired by his predecessor, founding personalities of forensic medicine Paolo Zacchia and Giovanni Maria Lancisi, was the uncertain nature of the signs of death. As the absolutely reliable indicators of the physical end of human existence he considered only body decomposition, after-death spots on skin, and deathly smell. He challenged the reliability of the commonly accepted signs, among which were deathly pallor of face, cold body, limbs stiffness, motionlessness, and absence of senses. He claimed insufficient any non-chirurgical means of death verification which were usually related to the effort to revive the dead – irritation of nostrils with salt, liquors or mustard, stimulation of tactile organs with nettles, insufflating of smoke, forcible stretching of limbs, or loud shouting. In his opinion, the only reliable means were chirurgical death verifications, such as punctures and cuts, and fire or pouring of boiling water.

The cardinal contribution of Winsløw’s work was warning against the danger of premature burials, which was to become the first impulse for his

¹¹ Claudio Milanesi studied death in the scholarly discourse in the mid-18th century and its influence on the change of collective mentality. He analysed and interpreted medical records and dealt namely with the category of apparent death. Claudio Milanesi, *Morte apparente e morte intermedia. Medicina e mentalità nel dibattito sull’incertezza dei segni della morte (1740-89)*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1989; C. Milanesi, “Tra la vita e la morte. Religione, cultura popolare e medicina nella seconda metà del ‘700”, *Quaderni storici* 17 (1982). 50, pp. 615-625.

¹² Jacques-Bénigne Winsløw, *Quaestio medico-chirurgica. An mortis incertae signa minus incerta à Chirurgicis, quam ab aliis experimentis?*, in F. Chaussier (ed), *Disputationis in Academia Medicinae Parisiensi discussae*, III, Paris, 1740; J. B. Winsløw, *Terrible supplice et cruel désespoir des personnes enterrées vivantes et qui sont présumées mortes*, Paris, 1752.

¹³ First published in 1742-45. The key publication is the second, revised one that changed the spirit and purport of the original work. Jean-Jacques Bruhier, *Dissertation sur l’incertitude des signes de la mort et l’abus des enterremens et embaumemens précipités*, I-II, Paris 1749.

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colleagues to have a more active approach to a dead human body. It was, from now on, to be thoroughly examined, massaged, warmed up, and wounded. The core of the new view of death was actually the question of its time status. Doctors were supposed to counter the uncertainty of death by practical measures – postponing the funeral (2-3 days after death), leaving the deceased on the bed and visiting him or her frequently.¹⁴

While Winslōw had a quite neutral attitude towards the conception of death and understood life and death as two opposite existences, the populariser of his work postulated a brand new approach to the time dimension of death. The transition from life to death was not, in Bruhier's point of view, a moment, but a period, during which it was possible to return among the living. Particularly associated with the new concept of death was therefore the category of apparent death and its nature. Bruhier, as the first person, tried to classify the reasons of such imperfect deaths according to the type of incident which caused it most often. Apart from plague, acute, spasmodic, faint and infectious diseases he marked as a typical cause namely suffocation (by water, noose, or noxious fumes), both voluntary and non-voluntary ecstatic states, and injuries of various kinds. He substantiated his research by studying a wide range of sources of various degrees of credibility, from personal witnessing, chronicles, travelogues, and miracle stories from the 17th century to juridical and medical works.¹⁵

C. Milanesi performed a discourse analysis of the cases of miraculous recoveries published by Bruhier, and created a typology of stories representing similar topos. The saved victim was usually a woman, from which Bruhier deduced a special female proneness to apparent death. Apart from an enamoured woman buried by her husband and found in the tomb alive by her lover, there was an abundance of the character of a revived wife whom her husband considered to be a ghost, a dead woman woken up by thieves, and a saved hanged woman. The rare occurrence of a doctor in this collection of "clinical cases" shows not only mainly folk origin of the stories, but also the fact that at the beginning of the 18th century a doctor appeared at the deathbed rather sporadically.¹⁶

In Bruhier's treatise, the credibility of the used sources, often quite unbelievable stories, is not important from the view of creating a new discourse. What matters is the brand new frame of perceiving the issue of uncertain nature of death, which entered medical categories thank to rationalisation of

¹⁴ Milanesi, *Morte*, pp. 15-28.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 30-64.

¹⁶ On the history of medicine of the observed period e.g. Mirko D. Grmek ed., *Storia del pensiero medico occidentale 2. Dal rinascimento all'inizio dell'Ottocento*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1996; M. D. Grmek, *Storia del pensiero medico occidentale 3. Dall'età romantica alla medicina moderna*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1998.

miraculous stories. The work, enthusiastically accepted in the scientific circles, triggered a debate on the danger of apparent death and meant the beginning of the medicalisation process of death, i.e. its subordination to medical science which made death a subject of its intensive interest. Soon two great dominia opened: the research of the bordering states between life and death, and searching for new methods of diagnostics and reviving the subjects of apparent death. In the history of medicine, rationalisation of “the old” stories meant a turning point towards the category of death, to which doctors, and later the whole living society, were to take an active and concerned attitude. Several decades later, death was to be disciplined not only by reforms of the health police, but also by the new approach of doctors to the dying.

However, Bruhier’s treatise had a rather controversial impact on its readers and their descendants. While on one hand he tried to reduce the metaphysical fear of death by explaining it and dispelling its irrational dimension, on the other hand he drew extraordinary attention towards the phenomenon of apparent death, so far firmly acclimatized in the form of miraculous resurrections or horrible returns of “unclean” dead only in collective ideas of European countryside.¹⁷ During a few decades, the terror of being buried alive pervaded the whole social spectre.¹⁸ The general and extensive familiarity and the length of terror of being buried alive, which doctors rationalised in the 1740s, are also manifested by the popularity of the topic in fiction and fine arts of the 19th century. An eloquent example of using the topic of apparent death as a source of horror plot is the well-known short story *House of Usher* by Edgar Allan Poe.

The preoccupation with the topic in the period belles-lettres suggests that the fear of apparent death was parodied already in the first half of the 19th century; therefore it must have been a well known phenomenon. The popularity of the motif and its frequent artistic interpretation during the whole 19th century give the impression that the danger of apparent death already aroused rather the shivers than the existential horror typical for the end of the previous century. It is also possible to encounter the motif of apparent death in Czech fiction of the 19th century. For example, it was used by Karel Sabina in the romantic short story *Hrobník* (The Gravedigger) published in magazine *Květy* in 1837, Jan Neruda in the short story *Doktor Kazisvět* (Doctor

¹⁷ Alfonso M. Di Nola, *La nera signora. Antropologia della morte e del lutto*, Roma, Newton & Compton, 2006, pp. 201-218. In relation to apparent death, Di Nola pays attention also to ritual measurements of the Catholic Church. He points out the formula from pre-trident *Rituale Romano* that prescribed sprinkling of the dead with holy water not to clean them from the sin, but as a method exorcising the demons in the case of living dead. (*cadavere vivente*).

¹⁸ Detailed analysis in Milanese, *Tra la vita*, pp. 622-625; Philippe Ariès, *Ďejiny smrti II*, Praha, ESK, 2000, pp. 126-138.

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The evidence of persistent obsessive character of the given issue in at least the first half of the 19th century lies in the tens of medical records as well as its new interpretation in the educational periodicals of that time. Although the topic of apparent death meant a certain kind of sensation, journal fiction of the Enlightenment approached it seriously and reflected actual cases of unexpected “resurrections”. The topic was largely popular with the writers of the Enlightenment for its experimental essence; it neatly joined the period interest in sensual experience and physical manifestations of emotions. Apparent death became a sentimentalistic topic in which emotions of a seemingly dead person, particularly the auditory perceptions, were analysed and described in detail. Apparent death was in a sense psychologised, interiorised, concretised, and – characteristically for the Enlightenment mentality – moralised. The seemingly dead suffering feelings of loneliness, lack of love, unable to communicate with the surroundings and left at its mercy, became an ideal indicator of moral qualities of his or her related ones. Such a stereotype and popularisation of the period medical findings in the given topic can be also found in Czech magazines of the early National Revival (e.g. short stories published in *Hyllos*, *Vlastenský zvěstovatel*, *Rozmanitost*) that usually offered their readers unoriginal stories in translation or adaptations of foreign templates.

According to Philipp Ariès, apparent death interested virtually three generations of doctors.¹⁹ Whereas doctors of the 16th and 17th century assumed that a dead body or a mummy show certain signs of life and they did not think possible that death should overlap to life, the opinion of their successors in the 18th century was completely different; death overlapped to life, since the seeming death occurred in the case of living people. The miracles of the dead (*De miraculis mortuorum*) by Christian Friedrich Garmann²⁰, a Lutheran doctor from Dresden of the second half of the 17th century, were in medical literature replaced by seemingly dead several decades later. Both phenomena caused similar existential confusion, from the 1740s even intensified by rational arguments of the arising scientific medicine, which presented its findings on apparent death to educated public. Doctors of the end of the 19th century already totally denied any real and mass danger of apparent death; they refused the idea of a mixed state of life and death, and by approaching them both as two opposite states of existence actually returned to the pre-Enlightenment understanding of the category of death.

At the end of the 19th century, the fear of apparent death was seen as an anachronism and readers were being ensured that medicine is able to recognise

¹⁹ Ariès, *Dějiny*, pp. 134–135.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 76–84.

the living from the dead also by Czech doctors. Hynek Pelc, one of the significant representatives of Czech medicine of late 19th century, the first city physicist of the capital of Prague since 1882, later the director of its General Hospital, realiser of new medical reforms and organiser of Czech health service, aptly resumed opinions of his colleagues:

“...the stories about apparent death and the terror of it are prevailing. Only in case of sudden death, poisoning, bleeding, and internal disasters might the recognition of actual death be difficult within the first hours. The cases frequently claimed appeared to be fabrications and groundless figments of imagination”.²¹

Medicalisation of death in the sign of a paradox II. Time and space

In the 1740s, medical discourse on death changed the paradigm of miraculous dead bodies into seemingly dead living people, which defined anew the attitude to a dead human body as well as the category of physical death. The object of interest of Winsløw's and Bruhier's predecessors was actually death itself, and dead body as a source of knowledge on life and health. The indifference towards the causes of death and the connections between illness and physical death logically led to a passive approach to the dead. Only challenging the border between the living and the dead, findings on the seemingness of death, efforts to classify the causes of such state, and even attempts to cure it, created preconditions to an active approach of doctors to the dying and the dead, although it found its tangible and practical application in the form of various reforms as late as in the 1770s and the 1780s.

The first to put forward a proposal of burial reforms based on creating particular legal norms was Bruhier himself. In his project *Projet de règlement* which he introduced to Louis XV., his ministers, foreign ambassadors at the French court as well as all the French ambassadors abroad²², urged radical changes of the burial customs left so far to the arbitrariness of family members and parishes. He criticised the indifference of the Church and the state to premature funerals, the absence of burial rules in royal ordinances, and the disrespect of the 24-hours interval between death and burial set by the Church. The author formulated the obligation to leave the dead on the deathbed, forbade to block his or her respiratory orifices and to put the body into a coffin before the signs of physical decay arrive. In thus specified time, all known diagnostic and reviving method of the period medicine should have been applied. In Bruhier's concept, which prefigured the reforms executed several decades later, a substantial change of the period mentality is already evident; close to the dying, the personality of a priest fades away and a doctor becomes the main character.

²¹ Hynek Pelc, “Pohřbívání”, in *Ottův slovník naučný*, XX, Praha 1903, pp. 2-5.

²² Milanese, *Morte*, p. 29.

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Asserting new safety measures into everyday life of the second half of the 18th century met certain barrier of disinterest of the secular and ecclesiastical power, which did not offer any particular answer to the medical reforming efforts, and at the turn of the 18th and the 19th century also the force of habit and negligence of the bereaved themselves. The practice of burying the dead on the day of their death continued, only the fear of awaking in the grave grew and the number of requests in testament to postpone the funeral increased. The real success in the form of issued legal measures specifying the time limit between death and funeral (usually 48 hours) and related obligatory medical examination of the dead, which enabled certain medical disciplinaton of dying, did not come before the 1770s.

Among the participants of successful propaganda in France were for example a surgeon and ophthalmologist Jean Janin from Montpellier and his compatriot Joseph-Jacques de Gardanne, in Austrian lands aforementioned J. P. Frank. In his conception, the issue of apparent death became an inseparable part of a wide complex of reforms of the health police; the fight against premature funerals found a base in a programme which related public hygiene, prevention, and a health education system. Frank paid great attention not only to the signs of death, the most frequent causes of death and its different levels, but above all to preventive and legal measures in various European regions, rescue companies, techniques, and newly also electrical devices.²³

A light tone in the dark topic of apparent death, which was paradoxically born in the Enlightenment era, was undoubtedly the birth of rescue companies, predecessors of the First Aid and Emergency services of today. The first rescue companies focused on the drowning and the drowned began to form in France after the year 1770. The Philipp Nicolas Pius institute for the support of the drowned was established in Paris in 1772.

Moreover, each of the newly established companies developed rescue techniques in their original way and contributed to the dissemination of public health education. While the specialty of Hamburg was a mass production of new rescue devices, London's Royal Human Society focused on introducing the new rescue methods to the study plans of medics. Reviving techniques, usually aimed at warming up and restoration of breathing of the drowned, were thus systematically enhanced with devices such as pumps, needles and bellows. The mouth-to-mouth method, described in 1772, was supplemented with the outer massage of heart by an English doctor William Buchan. About the year 1780, medicine began to pay intensive attention to apparent death caused by suffocating with smoke or various dangerous fumes, and soon there were the first reviving experiments with electrical current.²⁴ Thank to public health

²³ Frank, *Sistema compiuto*, X; XI.

²⁴ Milanesi, *Morte*, pp. 221-228.

education and the period journalism, new findings on the danger of apparent death were spreading throughout the European society.

The care of saving the seemingly dead became a practical and theoretical medical discipline in Prague, where specialised lectures designated also for public were taking place in the years 1790 – 1848. The first lecturer was the main scientific authority of the field in Czech lands, a professor of health police Vojtěch Zarda (1755-1811); his successor became Josef Bernt, the author of the treatise *Vorlesungen über die Rettungsmittel bey dem Scheintode und in plötzlichen Lebensgefahren* from 1819.

The paradox of Enlightenment medicalisation of the last matters of a man was not only the birth of collective terror of apparent death and following burying alive; the new medical discourse on the time status of death met within its environment a discussion, generally known in historiography, which at the same time and with no lesser intensity concerned the issue of harmfulness of cadaverous smell. The other side of the same coin thus was the space of death, the dead and buried bodies. Dead human body became a real danger, a source of infectious diseases and mephitic fumes, which endangered the society of the living, and in the period ideas as well as medical records often killed by tens. The fear of pernicious influence of the deeply rooted habit from the Middle ages to bury *ad sanctos et apud ecclesiam*, which was born thank to Philipp Ariès in France and in most European countries it led to moving the burial grounds beyond the city walls, contrasted sharply with the requirement to leave the dead body close to the living and under their control. In this context, the appeal for postponing the funeral until the moment of physical decay became a fundamental complication. Prosaically spoken – where to put the deceased person who can wake up, but is threatening public health? It is obvious that in the Enlightenment discussion as well as in practice a dead body was not only disciplined by the rules of the health police, but also desacralised, as manifested in the Czech lands by many notorious burial measures of Joseph II; it became an object of many questions of hygienic, technical, and even economic character.

In the Czech Kingdom, new burial measures were applied shortly after France²⁵ in the frame of the reformation efforts of the Enlightenment absolutism of the Austrian Hapsburgs.²⁶ The Terežian legal norms setting the shortest interval between death and burial and an obligatory medical examination of the dead preceded the introduction of real spatial reforms. The empress Marie Terezie, with the auspices of her court doctor Gerhard Van

²⁵ Detailed in P. Ariès, *Dějiny*, pp. 223-246; Marina Sozzi – Charles Porset, *Il sonno e la memoria. Idee della morte e politiche funerarie nella Rivoluzione francese*, Torino, Pavarium, 1999.

²⁶ Johannes Wimmer, *Gesundheit, Krankheit und Tod im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, Wien – Köln 1991; Claudia Denk – John Ziesemer ed., *Der bürgerliche Tod. Städtische Bestattungskultur von der Aufklärung bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, Regensburg 2007; Grazia Tomasi, *Per salvare i viventi. Le origini settecentesche del cimitero extraurbano*, Bologna, 2001.

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Swieten, began realising the reforms in the 1770s; however it concerned “only” the end of burying in the church crypts. The true and consistent realisation of burial reforms in the spirit of the Parisian parliament in the Hapsburg monarchy began after the death of Marie Terezie, in the years 1781-1785. Joseph II established common burial grounds for Catholics and Protestants in the Edict of Tolerance, in the court decree of 7th February 1782 he issued an order forbidding burials in church crypts inside towns, which concerned Vienna and a year later was extended to all Austria. After that the well-known order of 23rd August 1784 followed concerning the transfer of all the deceased outside inhabited settlements, which was valid for the whole Hapsburg territory, and from 2nd September also for Bohemia. Part of the order were some new, to put it mildly radical, norms concerning dealing with a dead body that met a stout resistance from the government organs, Episcopal consistory, and the inhabitants.

The deceased were, in the frame of burial project of Joseph II., interred naked in a bag, transported to the cemetery in state coffins with a tilting bottom which should have been on disposal at particular in adequate number and various sizes, and after disposing into a hole at the cemetery – a place not allowed to visit as a safety measure of the health police – covered in quicklime. There was not supposed to be any a chapel at the cemetery, just a simple cross which was to also decorate the coffin to fulfil the religious dimension of death. As a memory of the deceased there were supposed to be only stone slabs crammed on the wall of the new cemeteries. The goal of these measures was the quickest possible decay of the body. A solid coffin and a tombstone significantly complicated the desired aim of recycling the bodies.

A cemetery during the Joseph II period was a true fulfilment of the ideas of the Parisian parliament as well as the ideals of Franz III. d'Este, who tried to realise a similar vision in Italian Modena. It perfectly separated the dead from the living to whom the dead body had nothing to say anymore and was supposed to be understood as a mere “reeking carrion” that should be rid of as soon as possible. The measures of Joseph II. thus invaded the very cult of the dead and their remains. Following radically resistant reactions, the Emperor was forced to revoke the ban of burial with a coffin in 1785 and soon after that he yielded to privileged social classes which demanded building of their own funeral monuments or at least family tombs.²⁷ The brutality of the reforms had in the end quite an unexpected impact; it provoked the birth of civic cult of an individual grave, a place where the lay memory of a family replaced the religious memory *ad sanctos et apud ecclesiam*. Even though the most radical points of the burial reforms failed, the Joseph absolutism succeeded in two aspects: dead bodies of the subjects were ousted from churches, and newly

²⁷ G. Tomasi, *Per salvare*, pp. 211-216.

deceased rested at new cemeteries – places of decay outside the city walls. Their geographical location, spatial layout, height of walls, depth of graves and appropriateness of certain types of verdure were in the centre of interest of the period research of the health police, as can be also learned from J. P. Frank.

The endeavour to strictly eliminate dead bodies from the society of the living naturally encountered the problem of apparent death. It was necessary to invent a bordering space which would link this clash of views and function fully at the same time. A place that can accommodate a body of a seemingly dead person, and provide as good conditions as for any other sick person as well as a disposal site for a dangerous dead body. It was necessary to invent a space where life and death could coexist in a safe distance from the living society. On 7th March 1771, a new “institution” of mortuary came into existence. Every church is obliged to have at least a wooden one for a start.

The development of real “houses” of the seemingly dead (*Azylum dubiae vitae*) occurred at the turn of the 18th and 19th century in Germany.²⁸ The dead were placed in heated rooms and equipped with a sophisticated system of bells that should ring in case of any movement, however slight. Pietro Manni, a Roman doctor of medicine and surgery, still praised this German forethought in 1835 in his treatise on apparent death: “...a custom full of humanity. It would be really favourable if it spread into our country. The deceased is carried to the presbytery and placed into a clean room with a pleasant temperature, on a soft and made-up bed. On each finger they put a ring connected via a metallic string with bells, which make a penetrating sound with every tiny movement. The guard is present at all times to give first aid, and the deceased is kept in these conditions until the physical decay begins”.²⁹

During the 19th century, providing certain deposits for the dead in hospitals became topical. There the measures of the health police concerning the dead naturally demanded even stricter requirements of protection of the hospital patients. According to Giovanni Pozzi, an Italian scholar and follower of J. P. Frank, a modern hospital should be endowed with two different spaces. One of them, visited by a doctor twice a day, should accommodate the deceased who, based on the cause of their death, were likely to be seemingly dead; the other should accommodate the dead without any hope of revival. Both the rooms well ventilated but with windows never facing the treatment rooms,

²⁸ In 1791 on impuls of Christopher-Wilhelm Hufeland in Weimar, in 1797 in Berlin. Usually they were buildings with two separated rooms. One of them was intended for seemingly dead people, the other – separated by a glass wall – served as a room for the guide, a specialist on diagnosis and revival of apparently death by suffocation. See Milanese, *Morte*, pp. 236-237.

²⁹ Pietro Manni, *Manuale pratico per la cura degli apparentemente morti. Alcune idee generali di polizia medica per la tutela della vita negli asfittici*, Milano 1835, pp. 23-24.

MEDICALISATION OF DEATH AT THE TURN OF THE 18TH TO 19TH CENTURIES. THE MOMENT OF DEATH, APPARENT DEATH AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE DEAD FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE should be in appropriate distance from the sick and their sight – behind a barrier of trees.³⁰

The roots of today's fully medicalised and secularised hospital death without witnesses reach the furthest to the 1740s. Medicalisation of death proceeded in the sign of paradoxes from the second half of the 18th century. Its pioneers in effort to rationalise dying and reduce the fear of mortal agony assisted at the birth of a collective nightmare of apparent death. Several decades later, their followers in attempt to protect the society of the living from dangerous fumes of dead bodies helped a perfect separation of the worlds of the living and the dead and supported significantly the processes of secularisation of the transitional ritual and desacralisation of dead body.



Fig. 1: A sudden awakening of a young girl in the morgue at the Prague cemetery, *Giornale illustrato dei viaggi*, the 1880s, adapted from Alfonso M. Di Nola, *La nera signora. Antropologia della morte e del lutto*, Roma 2006, p. 209, exact dating not available.

³⁰ Pozzi, *Sistema compiuto*, XIX, pp. 157-159.



Fig. 2: A period leaflet depicting a woman delivering in the coffin an armless child, adapted from Alfonso M. Di Nola, *La nera signora. Antropologia della morte e del lutto*, Roma 2006, p. 207, exact dating not available.



Fig. 3: The Capuchin crypt in Vienna, in the background a sarcophagus of the Emperor couple Marie Terezie and Franz Stephan I. Lorraine by Balthasar Ferdinand Moll from 1754, adapted from James Stevens Curl, *Death and Architecture. An Introduction to Funerary and Commemorative Buildings in the Western European Tradition, with Some Consideration of their Settings*, Stroud 1993, p. 127.

MEDICALISATION OF DEATH AT THE TURN OF THE 18TH TO 19TH CENTURIES.
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Fig. 4: A Joseph period coffin with a tilting bottom, Das Wiener Bestattungsmuseum,
source: [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Bestattungsmuseum_ Wien](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestattungsmuseum_Wien)

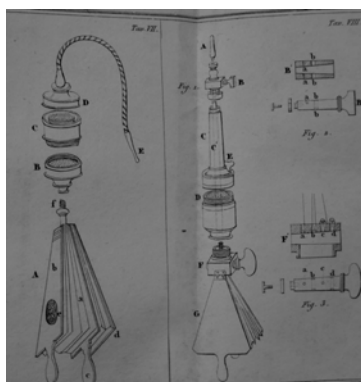


Fig. 5: Tools used for reviving the drowned and suffocated in the 1830s (VII – a bellows for insufflating of tobacco smoke into intestines, VIII – a device for performing enemas with the help of tobacco smoke), adapted from Pietro Manni, *Manuale pratico per la cura degli apparentemente morti. Alcune idee generali di polizia medica per la tutela della vita negli asfittici*, Milano 1835, p. 229-230.

DEATH AND THE BOOGEYMAN

AUDUN KJUS¹

I work at an institution called Norwegian Ethnological Research (hereafter NEG). We document and do research on various subjects of cultural history. Our most important method for documentation is to send questionnaires to a regular corps of respondents. We have been doing this since the institution was founded in 1946. Last winter, when preparing a new questionnaire on how children are brought up, I went through some of our previous material on the same subject, from 1963. The answers report childhood memories from the last decades of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th. I was then made aware of some peculiar cultural connections. Our point of departure will be punishments and child-scares. First, let us consider one particular sort of punishment: being thrown out the door, or down the cellar, or into a dark closet. Being thrown out the door is the form that is reported most frequently. I will give three of the quotes that put me on the track we shall follow now².

1) "Sometimes children were put in a dark place and told to listen to the Cellar-man or to the Goats until they promised to be good and to listen." (NEG 93, 17628, Møre og Romsdal, Volda)

2) "Different child-scares were used. The Boogeyman [*Bussin*] was used a lot. "If you don't behave, the Boogeyman will snatch you." You could hear this often. And we were so afraid of the Boogeyman that we hardly dared to cross the doorstep when it was dark outside. A nasty way, and fortunately you won't often hear this anymore. The Christmas goat was also a good scare, particularly around Christmas." (NEG 93, 17627, Møre og Romsdal, Heme)

3) "In the old houses there was only a small, dark cellar beneath a hatch in the kitchen. This was a good arrest for children who were brought up to be afraid of the dark. Children were scared with the rats, the tramps [*fantane*], the sheriff [*lensmannen*], the angry schoolmaster, and a troll they called the Boogey [*Bøsen*]. "The Boogey will snatch you." In the river lived an ogre [*nykkjen*] with two long arms. He grabbed the children who came to close and dragged them into the cold water." (NEG 93, 17673, Rogaland, Bjerkreim)

Not all parents would agree with scaring children like this, making them afraid of the dark, punishing them by isolating them in dark places. Still, we have reports of this from all different parts of the country and from different social layers; it was practiced by priests and peasants alike. We can conclude that around the turn of the century the practice was considered normal. How was it

¹ Audun Kjus PhD., Senior Curator at Norwegian Ethnological Research at *Norsk Folkemuseum*, Norway.

² Quotes from Norwegian are translated by the author.

used? We can draw inferences by comparing with other normal ways to scare children. Most of the respondents who report that they have been birched by their parents, can only recall that this happened one or two times. Several respondents describe how the birch was used:

“The birch would be kept in the kitchen, stuck behind the frame of the door, high up. If it was used, the pants had to be dropped and the child was spanked on its bare behind. The next time the child was naughty, it could be enough for the adult to hark and look meaningfully at the birch. Often the child would calm down and listen, and it would be spared from doing something harmful. I guess that it was on display, behind the frame of the door, that the birch was most useful.” (NEG 236, 39680, Nordland, Bø)

The respondents tell that people in general did not approve with the parents who used the birch or the cellar a lot, though it would be extremely rare that people meddled in the domestic affairs of others. The birch was deemed necessary, not really for the purpose of terrorizing the children, but to keep them out of harm’s way, and this also went for the other child-scares. Now I must mention a striking feature from our 1963 questionnaire on children and childhood. This was a six page questionnaire with 67 questions, most of them quite specific and closed, like: Should children not tickle each other, would this make them stutter? Still, a few questions are more open, and among these we find question 61) Can you tell of any incidents that made a great impression on you as a child? With astonishing concord the respondents tell about their first meetings with death. And it is easy to see that compared to the experiences of children nowadays; children at the turn of the 19th century were facing death both more often and in profoundly different ways.

One obvious reason for this is that mortality and particularly child-mortality was higher. In the 1890s almost a third of all who died were children under the age of 15³. The respondents tell many heartbreaking stories about how a sibling a friend died, from a disease or in an accident. In Norway today children are guarded and protected in ways that were unknown when the respondents were growing up. When the adults were working, and the children were not participating in this work, they had to fend for themselves, mostly without adult supervision and without helmets or life-vests. The ogre that lived in the river and the ogre that lived by the cliff and the boogey that lived in the cellar (we should remember that the cellar was just a whole in the floor covered by a hatchet, and dangerous to fall into) these child-scares were ways to care for the children, to keep them alive until they would understand the dangers in such places.

Did the grown-ups believe in these beings? They certainly did not have to for the scares to be useful. There is evidence that the water-ogres were

³ *Dødeligheten og dens årsaker i Norge 1836 – 1955*, Oslo: Statistisk sentralbyrå, 1961.

believed in by some grown-ups. The cellar-man, on the other hand, and the bucks and the boogeyman, seem mostly to be used by the grown-ups to control the children, and they seem to be concrete expressions for the more abstract and difficult concepts of danger and death. They belong to the dark and damp and dangerous places. They will try to snatch you, and if they do, you are gone for good. When using these beings to control the children, the grown-ups would at the same time make use of and contribute to shape the children's concepts of death.

These children knew death. In 1875 the average child, between the age of 5 and 15 would experience the deaths of 7 close relatives (Hodne 1980, 17)⁴. The corresponding number a hundred years later was 1. When considering the children's concepts of death, we must dwell a little longer on question 61 and the incidents that made a great impression on you as a child. Today in Norway you can expect that you will die at an institution. Around 80% do (40% in hospitals and 40% in care-homes). The respondents describe quite a different situation. They were children at a time when most people would die in, or close by, their own home. The dying member of the household was nursed and the dead body was washed and dressed at home. The burial ceremony started out from home, and at the departure from home, the most important rituals were performed. And the children of the house, and the children of the neighborhood were a part of all this.

Children would often have duties in the care for the dying. While the grown-ups had to do productive work, a mature and sensible child could sit by the bed and give the old grandfather some company in his last struggles⁵. Neighbors would soon get a solemn and official invitation to the burial, but the first message of death could often be brought by a child. When the dead body had been washed and clothed and placed in its proper position, it was customary for family members and neighbors to come and look at the corpse. This custom is described quite vividly in the responses to our questionnaires. Also at the day of the burial, before the coffin was carried away to the churchyard, it was customary that the coffin was taken into the living room, the lid was taken off, and all who were present, and particularly the children, were to take one last look at the dead body. One respondent remembers the burial of a neighbor: "The maid lifted me up so that I should get to see the dead body. I was terrified and the image stayed with me for a long time." (NEG 91, 18015) Another tells of how the children were taken out to the barn to look at the dead body. The children were told to live good lives, like this person had done before he died. Then they would fare well, in this world and in the next.

⁴ Bjarne Hodne, *Å leve med døden, Folkelige forestillinger om døden og de døde*, Oslo: Aschehoug, 1980, p. 17.

⁵ Ibid., p.136.

The respondent tells that some of the boys seemed a bit dizzy after this⁶. It has been argued that death was considered more natural before it was given over to the hospitals and the burial agencies, when the dead bodies were still cared for in the households and in the local communities. Death was probably less of a social taboo at that time, but judging from autobiographical memories it does not seem to have been any less terrifying. Seeing the dead bodies before they were carried away to be buried, imprinted lasting images in the minds of many children.

While the cellar man, the boogeyman and the goats were ogres mainly for children, grownups would fear other ghosts. Many of the old customs observed at funerals were clearly purposed to avoid the diseased returning as a ghost. And regardless of whether they personally believed in ghosts, many grown-ups would take delight in telling ghost-stories, both to other grown-ups and to children. I quoted one respondent who claimed that children were brought up to be afraid of the dark. In the responses to another question in the questionnaire we can see some traces of such a strategy. The question goes: "What can you remember from listening to the grown-ups talk after the day's work was finished?" Here are a few typical answers:

1) "We children listened attentively to the stories that the grown-ups told in the evenings. It was most fun when strangers like the tailor or the shoemaker, came to the house. Mostly it was tall tales and supernatural experiences, meetings with fairies and such. The stories could frighten a child and the fear could follow you into grown age and be difficult to overcome." (NEG 93, 17624 Kvernes)

2) "When mother was in the cow-barn other people would tell stories, and they would often be ghost stories. They were great stories, but the children were scared witless. I remember sitting on the bench all ears. I was so scared I didn't dare letting down my feet. I was sitting on them so they wouldn't get snatched." (NEG 93, 18015 Rauland)

3) "Next to our farm there was a churchyard. Of course there were told many ghost stories. Once I thought I saw a ghost, and it bothered me for a long time. After visiting neighbors in the evening, I dreaded going home. I was afraid of meeting the dead. (...) Many people would tell stories like that, but it was stupid to let small children listen to them." (NEG 93, 17665 Vestre Slidre)

To sum up preliminary: I have tried to show three cultural traits that many children growing up in the period from 1890 to 1910 would be exposed to:

- Child scares involving dark places, isolation and boogious creatures liable to snatch children.
- The natural, yet terrifying presence of death.

⁶ I manns minne 1972, p. 123-124, quoted from Hodne, *Å leve med døden*, p. 137.

- Recurrent situations for telling ghost-stories, often with children as a target audience.

What I am aiming at now cannot yet be a thorough analysis; it is more like an analytical suggestion. I would suggest that the phenomena I have presented were historically connected, not in the sense that one was the cause of another, but in the sense that they were lending meaning to each other, and if one of them were to change, the others would be affected. When thrown out the door you would fear ghosts and you would fear death the way you knew them.

I have mentioned some clues as to how the material organization of death changed, mainly during the first part of the 20th century. The changes were gradual. The first burial agency in the Norwegian capital was established in the 1870s. In the 1920s and 30s such agencies were established in many cities and towns. But even in the 50s and early 60s the agencies would often transport the corpses after they had been washed and dressed in their own homes. The washing of the dead was only gradually left to the hospitals and care-homes.

As for the storytelling situations in the evenings, before the lamp was lit, both electric light and the advent of the radio must have contributed to change this. Electric light gradually gained significance in the cities. In the 1920s many new power stations were built and in the late 1930s approximately 75% of the households had gotten electricity. (On the other hand it lasted until the 1960s until 90% of the households in the northernmost county were supplied with electricity.) Radio broadcasting was introduced in Norway in 1933 and it proved its worth during the 2nd world war. In the 1950s it was the dominating mass media, and it filled much of the time in the evenings that previously would give occasions for telling ghost stories. Also the industrialization of crafts like tailoring, shoe making and baking would reduce the number of occasions for ghost stories.

Threats and scares are certainly still used in the upbringing of children, but it seems reasonable that the nature of the threats and scares will change along with the cultural circumstances. I will finish now with a quote from one respondent who experienced such a change. She was born in 1949.

“When I was small, the birch was in the kitchen, but it was never used. The Boogeyman could come, but that didn’t scare us. But one thing I was afraid of was being sent to an institution. My mother would often threaten with this, and I think it was common, because my friend would also hear this. I was afraid, because I wasn’t always good. A boy in our street was sent to an orphanage. He hadn’t been naughty, but his mother was ill. In the books we would read, there were often orphanages, and they were sad places.” (NEG 236, 39709 Skien)

In this memory from the late 50s or early 60s, the birch is still on display, but it is dry and barren. The Boogeyman is no longer the master of dark and

dangerous places. He is not scary any more. The real and productive child-scare is the institution, the orphanage. The mothers collectively conjure this scare, and at the same time the theme is developed in literary texts that the children find exiting.

LAY SAINTS.
REMAINS, RELICS AND MOURNING IN VENICE AFTER ITALIAN
RESURGENCE (JUNE 1867)

PIERO PASINI¹

After the unification of Italy (which occurred in 1861 and was completed in 1870) there remained in the country a number of unsolved political issues related to the Risorgimento (the Italian Resurgence) which, to a certain extent, were worsened by the establishing a monarchy. There was also a lack of social – and therefore cultural, linguistic and economic – homogeneity. These conditions led the government of the time to believe that the most important issue was to make its power legitimate using every possible method, more so than in other European contexts.²

Celebrating the Risorgimento and its heroes was obviously the best way to achieve the moral unification of the country under the sovereignty of the Savoy house. It also tended to depict the Risorgimento process as being always characterised by a unified and monarchic spirit, as well as being the result of the even and unanimous efforts of the people living in the various parts of the Italian peninsula.

The main expression of the issue of adjusting the experience of the patriots to the official version of the history of the Risorgimento was in the ceremonies held for the dead (specifically in the speeches of the authorities) and in civil ceremonies. This particular issue will not be fully addressed and only the role played in the process by the mortal remains of patriots, their ability to unify and to create holiness, will be examined here.

The case I am going to examine regards the mortal remains of the two main groups of Venetian patriots, whose funerals were held at the same time (between 16th and 18th June 1867) in Venice, which became part of Italy in 1866. I will speak about the Bandiera brothers, Domenico Moro and the so-called Belfiore martyrs. The first three led a revolt in Calabria, the region of south western Italy with Cosenza as capital city, which failed because they were betrayed by one of their own men and for lack of support from the locals.³ They were executed in 1844. The Belfiore martyrs, after being found guilty of pro-

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² Cf. George L. Mosse, *La nazionalizzazione delle masse. Simbolismo politico e movimenti di massa in Germania dalle guerre napoleoniche al Terzo Reich*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1975; G. L. Mosse, *La cultura dell'Europa occidentale: l'Ottocento e il Novecento*, Milano, Mondadori, 1986; Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio. La sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista*, Bari-Roma, Laterza, 1993

³ Piero Pasini, "Fratelli Bandiera", in M. Isnenghi and E. Cecchinato ed., *Fare gli Italiani*, Vol. 1, Torino, Utet, 2008, pp. 791-792.

Italian and republican treason, were executed by the Austrians near Mantua in 1852.⁴



Italy in 1861 (in red). Other dates indicates the year of unification of north-east (previously under Austrian sovereignty) and of Rome region (previously Church's State).

The story begins in 1866, with the unexpected finding of the remains of the Belfiore martyrs in Mantua⁵, when the town was still part of the Austrian empire. One of the men working on strengthening the walls of military buildings was convinced that the remains in the site were those of the Belfiore martyrs, buried in unconsecrated ground. On the night of July 5th, he and the master builder secretly met to collect the bones, with the aim of burying them in the churchyard nearby. The bones actually belonged to a horse but, digging deeper, the two men found five human skeletons. Each skeleton was placed in a sack and taken to the churchyard. The bones were safe and they were soon to become the bones of martyrs and not the bones of rioters. In October 1866, the unauthorised burial of the martyrs ended with the unification of all north eastern Italy.

Many letters regarding the exhumation and recognition of the patriots' bodies in the presence of doctors, historians and political representatives were

⁴ Maurizio Bertolotti, "Congiura di Belfiore", in Isnenghi and Cecchinato ed., *Fare*, pp. 795-796.

⁵ Municipal Archive of Venice (ASMVe) 1865-69, IV/1/29, *Martiri di Belfiore e Cosenza*.

exchanged between the towns of Venice and Mantua until February 1867.⁶ On 9th April 1867, the municipal committees of Mantua and Venice agreed on moving the remains of the Venetians. On 27th April a councillor and the vice-secretary of the town council were sent to Mantua to recognise the bodies of the martyrs. A magistrate, a doctor and a Mantua councillor went to the churchyard with them. The bodies were exhumed and examined by the five men in the presence of the brother-in-law of one of the martyrs, sent by the family. The bodies were put together, packed in three coffins and sealed with the seals of the town of Mantua and Venice. Mr Nardi claimed the remains of his brother-in-law so that they could be buried next to his mother in the graveyard in Vicenza. The towns on the road to Venice and the ones the patriots were from had to decide how and when to transport the remains. This involved Brescia, Mantua, Revere, Verona, Vicenza, Noale and Venice.⁷ Transport was arranged for halfway through June.

Venetian newspapers were the first to raise the question of remembering, suggesting that building memorials with the names of the people who died "under foreign or home tyrants" was a "sacred duty". This was true for all the Italians who died for the cause, especially so for the martyrs about to be honoured because, as the newspaper observed, "the eloquence of a few words... will forever be a lesson to our people, continuously educating them and filling them with pride".⁸

At the same time, the remains of the Bandiera brothers, buried in the chapel of the Arciconfraternita della morte e orazione in the duomo in Cosenza in 1848, were moved when the political climate was appropriate, went exhumed. As happened for the other martyrs, the bones in the coffin were recognised and the coffin keys handed over to a representative of Venice.⁹

The matter of memorials to remember the patriots, first mentioned by the newspapers, rapidly became a problem related to the presence of the remains. It is not a trivial matter. Even though a memorial to martyrs can be built without mortal remains, the division of the bones was a problem. Whom did they belong to? To the family, the national community, the town the martyrs were from or the towns they died in? To claim ownership, the towns immediately placed their seals on the remains. Then a family member requested the remains of his brother-in-law, while the city of Venice asked to have the bones of that man moved to the city. Meanwhile, the families of the other two martyrs allowed the town of Mantua to keep some of the bones. Mr Nardi

⁶ ASMVe 1865-69, IV/1/29, *Martiri di Belfiore e Cosenza*.

⁷ ASMVe 1865-69, IV/1/29, *Martiri di Belfiore e Cosenza*.

⁸ «Gazzetta di Venezia» May 7th, 1867.

⁹ ASMVe 1865-69, IV/1/29, *Martiri di Belfiore e Cosenza*.

offered some of his brother-in-law's bones for the same memorial. This is no less than a division of bones, which makes some explanations essential.

The cultural elaboration of death always implies – as shown by hundreds of examples from different cultures and ages – a manipulation of the body in order to allow the deceased to “survive”. In every funeral process something material is preserved or removed. In some cases the body is kept intact, in others internal organs are removed or the body is dismembered. Every kind of process is related to how the remains are laid to rest. Burying a body in an unmarked grave is a way of disposing of it or – as in the case of the martyrs discussed here – it can be a temporary solution before finding a permanent resting place for it. In the examined cases, burial was the only solution, as the enemy would not have allowed the deceased to be given the honours people felt they deserved. The somatic parts of the body have a representative function and bones have the most important role. Although as dead as flesh, bones are preserved as an incorruptible part of life in which there is no uncertainty. If, when alive, the deceased represented and served an idea, if this idea – unity – is the foundation of a national issue (as it is in our case), then the bones must be a reminder of it. They must execute their task in an incisive and widespread manner; ensure the permanence of the dead among the living.¹⁰

Normally, as Alberto Mario Banti observes, stress is placed on how the political rites (funeral and otherwise) of national and patriotic movements aim at ensuring that the (deceased) symbols are remembered for ever by creating a cult around them. This is more than fair and certainly applies to the martyrs that the city of Venice was about to add to its pantheon. However, there is another kind of elaboration as well as this more obvious one. It is a different (and more demanding) aspiration to immortality, which comes out as a permanent reminder of the dead among the living. Evoking the dead, other than stressing their legacy and inheritance, also focuses the mind on the deceased's physical corporeity.¹¹ Many cultures express the deep need to stabilise the essence of the dead in an indestructible support (such as ashes, relics, mummies, effigies). As well as a memorial, a gravestone, a grave, the presence of body remains is needed to create the deep bond between the living and the dead. If the ideas that inspire actions and determine the sense of life (in this case, life dedicated entirely to one's country) are to be remembered as the essence and the soul of the dead, then this soul is in the bones.¹² This ancestral bond was part of mankind long before the concepts of “homeland” and “independence” were developed. Moving the bones, as was done in 1867, played

¹⁰ Manuela Tartari, “Metamorfosi del corpo” in M. Tartari ed., *La terra e il fuoco. I riti funebri tra conservazione e distruzione*, Roma, Meltemi, 1996, pp. 22 – 46.

¹¹ Alberto Mario Banti, “La memoria degli eroi”, in A.M. Banti and P. Ginsborg ed., *Storia d'Italia. Annali 22, il Risorgimento*, Torino, Einaudi, 2007, p. 646.

¹² Cf. Tartari, *Metamorfosi*; Louis V. Thomas, *Le cadavre*, Paris, Editions Complexe, 1980.

a rather important role that, among other things, stabilised the relationship between the living and the dead. A second burial ended the separation between private mourning (caused by the death of relatives) and the mourning of the community for the death of the martyrs. I am convinced that anthropological knowledge must be taken into account when examining matters in which history and anthropology are intertwined (such as death and the rituals related to it). This conviction, as well as studies that have shown that many different cultures share a similar feeling about the relationship with bones, are behind all I have said above. With regard to the relationship with bones, in Africa (for example) a man is truly dead when his skeleton has vanished completely. Bones contain marrow, which in many cultures is considered the core of immortality.¹³

The emotions linked to moving the bones of the Bandiera brothers and of Domenico Moro are even more evident. The legacy of these three men, with regard to their love for their country, had already been celebrated in the 1848 riots in Venice and Cosenza.¹⁴ In 1848 the men's bodies were moved from the place of execution (the Rovito valley) to the duomo of Cosenza. A good way to understand the great, spontaneous emotion of the people watching the ashes of the Venetian patriots being moved from the grave to the port (to be transported to Venice) is provided by the *Relazione presentata al Sindaco di Venezia dalla Commissione Municipale reduce da Cosenza* [Report presented to the Mayor of Venice by the Municipal Committee returning from Cosenza].¹⁵

In an unknown, impervious country, as Italy was at the time, the two Venetian officers were the vanguard of the first contact between parts of Italy that had never been so close politically and emotionally before. For the first time they were united as a nation, mourning for the same men. They were pilgrims welcomed with respect in their noble quest of retrieving the holy relics, "adored" by the locals. As they arrived and returned, the remains, often called "holy bones", were the object of extreme veneration. On the morning of 11th June 1867, after visiting the patriots' place of execution, the municipal committee went to the duomo in Cosenza, which had been lavishly decorated with mourning emblems. The bones were taken out of the coffin they had been in since 1848, with the bones of other patriots and Calabrians "previously sacrificed for the cause of freedom". The bones were placed in a very elegant coffin (with three chambers of the same size) which was then put on a funeral stand. Many local ladies laid wreaths of flowers on them while the speech held

¹³ J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, *Dictionnaire des symboles*, Paris, Ed. Seghers, 1974, pp. 334-337.

¹⁴ *Ventidue anni e un core. Orazione agl'Italiani in suffragio dei martiri fratelli Bandiera e i loro collegati*, Venezia, Andreola, 1848.

¹⁵ *Relazione presentata al Sindaco di Venezia dalla Commissione Municipale reduce da Cosenza*, Venezia, Tipografia della Gazzetta, 1867.

in 1848 by the mayor, who disobeyed orders and refused to scatter the ashes in the waters of the Crati river¹⁶, was read out loud. In the evening, after a brief religious ceremony and a short farewell speech, the coffin was put on a high and richly decorated hearse, drawn by eight horses under a shower of flowers... the coffins, escorted by national guards on horseback and on foot, by the *Carabinieri* [police force] and by delegates of various kinds, were transported to the port of Paola and loaded onto the steamboat *Europa*, headed for Venice. The journey to the boat lasted one day. The emotion and disbelief at the nature of southern Italy, a kind of sacred fascination that involved the municipal officers as well, can be gleamed from the report. The ceremonies for the Bandiera brothers are, in a certain sense (including geographical), Italy's first "national" ceremonies, because they involved two distant towns in the peninsula, united by the grief for the death of the same men. The procession started in Cosenza, moved to Paola and reassembled in Venice. The remains were never alone and the very action of being escorted this way gave them a holy status. At the end of every leg of the journey towards the final resting place there was a speech or a eulogy. The climax of this crescendo was the ceremony outside the church in the lagoon. In the Calabrian town, every stage of the procession can be characterised by ritual practices similar to praying and reading psalms that, however, have political and patriotic contents, giving them a strong lay dimension or - better still - making them sacred in a lay manner.

There were four speeches.¹⁷ The first was read by the Venetian committee when the bodies were exhumed and the second was a eulogy read in the *duomo* during transport. The third was the "*Commiato di Cosenza alle ceneri*" (a farewell speech to the ashes from the town of Cosenza), read by a lay person, and the last was another funeral speech. Furthermore, while the Venetian ceremony was taking place, solemn funerals were held in Cosenza. I have no intention of comparing this double funeral with the many other ceremonies that, in later years, were held at the same time as the funerals of famous men such as king Vittorio Emanuele II and, in particular, Garibaldi. The aim is to draw attention on how the conventional image of southern Italy - or possibly all Italy - is maintained.¹⁸ The country appears enveloped in the practices of piety and popular religiosity (close to the rituals taken from religious traditions and the veneration of the saints). The roots of popular

¹⁶ After 1848 riots, the Bourbons ordered to the mayor of Cosenza to scatter the ashes of the martyrs in the Crati river, nearby to the city.

¹⁷ All these speeches are collected in *Raccolta degli scritti che si riferiscono al trasporto delle ossa dei fratelli Bandiera e di Domenico Moro da Cosenza a Venezia*, Giobatta Giustinian ed., published by the City of Venice, 1867.

¹⁸ Cf. D. Pizzuti, G. Di Gennaro, S. Martelli, C. Sarnataro ed., *La religiosità nel Mezzogiorno. Persistenza e differenziazione della religione in un'area in trasformazione*, Milano Franco Angeli, 1998.

religiosity are deep and ancient and one of their main features is the singular involvement of individuals, of their body and soul together. In the farewell to relics, this involvement seems to lead to words such as:

“son desse, che noi veneriamo da quando il solo pensiero avrebbe potuto esserne severamente punito ... che nei momenti di periglio e di terrore infondevano in noi costanza ne’ propositi e costanza nell’eseguirli.” [They, which we have been venerating ever since merely thinking about them could mean severe punishment... that in times of danger and terror, gave us the strength to keep believing and to persevere].¹⁹

Inspiring relics, then:

“Qui, nella cappella della sacra morte, ... accorrevano giovani volonterosi ad ispirarsi: qui venivano dolenti madri e giovani spose a piangere per le atrocità che contro i loro più cari si consumavano: qui accorrevano tutti a pregare affinché quelle avesser fine una volta” [Here, to the chapel of Holy death, ... came willing young men in search of inspiration, here came grieving mothers and young wives to weep for the atrocious treatment of the ones they loved most, here they all came to pray that those atrocities would come to an end].²⁰

Holy relics and, therefore, untouchable:

“Ed ecco iniquo comando [l’ordine borbonico di esumare e disperdere le ceneri dopo il ‘48], perché quelle ceneri da colà fosser tolte e si sperdessero fra i gorgi di quel fiume [...] al barbaro comando fremendo si tacque, e non [si] esegui” [“Then came the cruel order to remove the ashes from here and to scatter them in the waters of that river [...] Trembling, no one obeyed this barbaric order”. The ‘cruel order’ mentioned here was the order given by the Bourbons, after the 1848 riots, to exhume and scatter the ashes].²¹

Messianic relics:

“Sì, foste voi o ceneri sacre, che guidaste il Re a Milano, a Firenze, a Modena, a Lucca; foste voi che poscia il guidaste a Napoli ed a Venezia, e sarete ancor voi che tra poco e più gloriosamente lo guiderete in Campidoglio” [“Yes, it was you, o holy ashes, that guided the King to Milan, Florence, Modena and Lucca. It was you that guided him to Naples and Venice and it will be you yet again that, soon and more gloriously, will lead him to the Capitolium”].²²

The physical division of the relics of the Bandiera brothers was not possible (and was pointless). However, there were conflicts regarding ownership and their burial place. In 1867 the cemetery in Venice was about to be built so it was not yet in its final form. It had not become a site to remember the deceased, famous ones in particular, partly because of the problems linked

¹⁹ “Commiato di Cosenza. Speech pronounced on June 11th 1867 in the duomo of Cosenza by Alessandro Conflenti”, in *Onori funebri resi alle ceneri di Attilio ed Emilio Bandiera e Domenico Moro dalla città e provincia di Cosenza nel di 11 giugno 1867*, Cosenza, Trajano Ippolito editions, 1867, p. 26.

²⁰ *Commiato*, p. 27.

²¹ *Commiato*, p. 27.

²² *Commiato*, pp. 29-30. Capitolium here means Rome, that still was not reunited to Italy.

to establishing the layout of the monuments and partly because of the city's inhabitants themselves. The Venetians had always been very attached to the devotional aspects of religion, including honouring the dead. This actually hindered the legitimisation of the cemetery that, in turn, caused a loss of holiness. Churches, which had always been where all things official occurred in Venice, seemed able to ensure the presence of the martyrs among the living. There were no doubts about burying the Belfiore martyrs in the Basilica dei Frari but the dispute over the Cosenza martyrs was more difficult to settle. The Department of the Navy, with the authorisation of the War Ministry, first suggested that they should be buried in the church of St. Biagio, where Venetian naval officers were traditionally buried. The town council and the Italian ministry both objected on the grounds that the church was too small and much decentralised. This objection also reveals the desire to transform the Bandiera brothers and Moro into national heroes, more than just heroes of the navy. Many councillors and men in the higher positions of the government felt that it was important to find a church in which honouring the martyrs would be easy for the city's inhabitants. At one stage the church of S. Giovanni di Bragora – the parish church of the brothers and possibly the one of Moro, who was born nearby – was put forward as burial place. The reason for choosing this church was to allow old Mrs Bandiera to visit the grave of her sons.²³ The parish priest made no objections. However, it was unlikely that Mrs Bandiera, given her considerable age, would have visited the grave for very long. The Department of the Navy insisted on burial in the church of San Biagio, probably because it wished to include the Bandiera brothers in the golden roll of the navy instead of that of patriots. The brothers represented an opportunity to build patriotic ethics in the force. Eventually the men were laid to rest in the church that is the symbol of the political and military greatness of Venice, the basilica of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, where the dogi were buried.

The physical presence of the bones had created a kind of adoration cult of the relics of lay men and this cult had, to a certain extent, spread to the people in the administration offices and the government involved in moving the remains and organising the ceremonies. The return of the bones to their homeland was transformed into a pilgrimage and the people involved into priests, taking part in a liturgy that had been gradually forming after the country's unification. Significant precedents can only be found in Piedmont, under Savoy rule. The translation of the remains of the brothers and their most famous companion are intermingled with many political, geographical and even mystical themes, even if the lay mystical element is not, at its highest point (the funeral in Venice), completely detached from Catholic religious tradition. The

²³ Filippo Nani Mocenigo, *La marina veneta e fratelli Bandiera. Appunti*, Venezia, Pellizzato, 1907, p. 18.

underlying idea that in these “national funerals” the Church and its elements should, in some way, provide “funeral ceremonies at the service of the state” and its celebrations, does not seem fully expressed. Priests continued to have an important role.

At the end of this paper I would like to resume some fundamental concepts. The unexpected finding of the bodies in Mantua represents a good occasion for a great celebration and it triggers an ideological investment process in the physicality of the remains. This investment is expressed in the “creation of holiness”, which is achieved by transporting the remains along a route established for unifying purposes and by dividing the remains. The aim of the division is to give the bones sacred, magical and mystical value, because they are divided almost as if their presence in more than one place ensures a connection and a greater presence of the deceased among the living.

A “race for relics” ensued, leading to the exhumation of the remains of the Bandiera brothers in the spring of 1867.

This exhumation represent a new occasion for big celebrations that aims to a mystical investment in the relics for geographical unifying purposes. In this case is not possible – and no one is prepared – to divide the remains, just because such division cannot be justified. But the memory of the brothers is easier to adjust and change.

Anyway, if a division of remains is not attempted, we assist to an appropriation of bones. The first claim on the bodies – by the state – had already occurred (which is actually quite obvious).

The appropriation appears clearer if we examine the issue of the burial site, and therefore the celebration site. It led to the exchange of opinions and debates over the appropriation of the memory site. Finally, only one combination, site/memory, is chosen. It is the most closely related to the institution of the state, as well as the one that most ensures the achievement of the unifying aims in a political sense. Concluding we can argue that mourning in particular is the occasion of a unanimous emotion, in which a special collective permeability takes place. The governing class used this permeability to assert its vision and version of the memory of the people it was celebrating.

Relics, that, mainly in Italy, are traditionally the subject of special religious attention and veneration, are also used to allow mourners to communicate with the subjects they are mourning. The reason behind the division of the bones and the disputes on the burial, therefore, is that remains (as relics) are the bearers of the message to be offered.

THE CLERICALISATION OF PROTESTANT FUNERAL CEREMONIES IN 19TH CENTURY GERMANY: FROM SILENT BURIALS TO MOURNING ACTS

FRANZISKA REHLINGHAUS¹

1. *Statistical surprises*

Church statistics in German Protestantism was established in a time in which pastors and theologians were seriously concerned about the future of the churches: the religiosity of the society seemed to be on the lowest possible level, the sanctions of church discipline were completely lacking and traditional Protestant rituals had been forgotten and were being replaced by secular festivities. In the first half of the 19th century the Pietistic resurrection movement and neo-orthodox church-men shared the opinion that the rationalism of the Enlightenment had left behind only ruins at the beginning of the century. In order to quantify and qualify the status quo as well as to receive insights in the religious practices of the contemporaries and to adopt appropriate measures if necessary, the Protestant Conference of Churches started in 1862 collecting data in all German states. The pastors of all of the Protestant parishes had to fill out a form in which they were to document the numbers of conversions and resignations, the numbers of attendants of the Sunday services and the communion, and data about baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals.² Taken together, the survey presented the status of public participation in church life,³ ignoring not only private forms of religious engagement but also individual convictions and beliefs. Nevertheless, the results of this survey, which was repeated periodically from that moment on,⁴ reinforced the anxieties of the churchmen and in the long run provided the basis for the secularization theory.⁵

According to Max Weber's thesis about the disenchantment of the world⁶ and the theory of the privatization of religion,⁷ the data visualized the

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² „Erlaß des Consistoriums zu Königsberg vom 10. November 1862, betrifft die Gewinnung einer brauchbaren Statistik der deutsch-evangelischen Kirche“, in *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 12 (1863), p. 55.

³ Gustav Hermann Zeller, *Zur kirchlichen Statistik des evangelischen Deutschlands im Jahr 1862*, Stuttgart, Cotta, 1865.

⁴ Summarization and documentation of these surveys in: Lucian Hölscher/Tillmann Bendikowski eds., *Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie im protestantischen Deutschland. Von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 2001.

⁵ See as overview: Manuel Borutta, „Genealogie der Säkularisierungstheorie. Zur Historisierung einer großen Erzählung der Moderne“, in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 36,3 (2010), pp. 347-376.

⁶ Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf*, München, Duncker & Humblot, 1919.

decline of Protestant customs in many fields. In fact, people tended more and more to avoid churches on Sunday mornings and to celebrate their rites of passage outside the pastoral sphere of influence. Political decisions, like the decree of the civil marriage in 1875, supported this development. Legitimately, the opponents of the secularization theory insist that the decline of church rituals cannot indicate sufficiently a growing irreligiosity of the population and that we have to take the personal religious system of the believers into account, in order to answer this question adequately.⁸

Nevertheless, it is all the more surprising that even the scholars who argue against a necessary interconnection of modernism and secularization have so far been unaware of a remarkable development:⁹ Unlike the numbers of attendants of the Sunday services or of the communion, the number of Protestant funerals grew steadily since the 19th century. Starting in the mid of the 19th century in some German states from fifty per cent and less, the number of Protestant burial ceremonies ultimately reach the peak of nearly hundred per cent at the beginning of the First World War. The gap between the call for pastoral care at the cemeteries and the usage of other ecclesiastical services had never been so wide as 1914. As of yet, this significant phenomenon has received only few explanations.¹⁰

⁷ See for the difference between the three master narratives about secularization (differentiation, privatization, disenchantment): José Casanova, *Public religions in the modern world*, 6th edition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008.

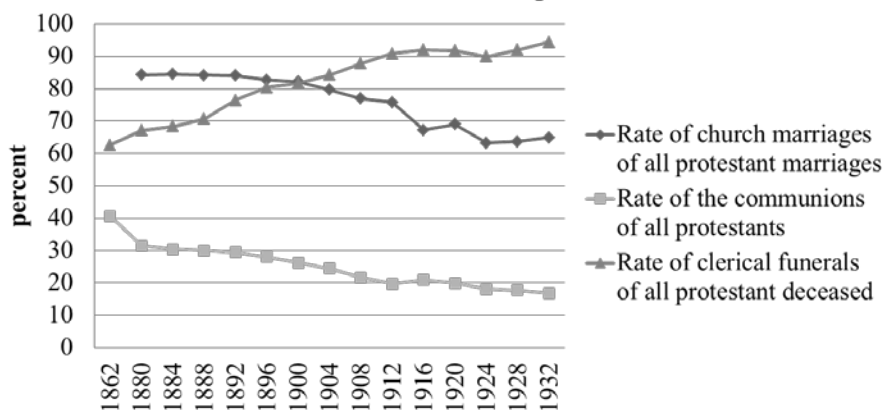
⁸ Detlef Pollack, *Säkularisierung – ein moderner Mythos? Studien zum religiösen Wandel in Deutschland*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2003, p. 79; Rodney Stark/William Sims Bainbridge, *The future of religion. Secularization, revival and cult formation*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, p. 431; Niklas Luhmann, *Funktion der Religion*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2004, p. 239; Thomas Luckmann, *Lebenswelt und Gesellschaft. Grundstrukturen und geschichtliche Wandlungen*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 1980, pp. 161-173; Peter L. Berger, *The desecularization of the world. Resurgent religion and world politics*, Washington, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 1-18; Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Die Wiederkehr der Götter. Religion in der modernen Kultur*, München, Beck, 2007 and many more.

⁹ Exceptions are: Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, „Dechristianisierung“. Zur Problemgeschichte eines kulturpolitischen Topos“, in Hartmut Lehmann ed., *Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung, Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997, pp. 32-66, p. 53; Lucian Hölscher, „Die Verkirchlichung des protestantischen Begräbnisses im 19. Jahrhundert“, in *Sociologia internationalis*, 42 (2004), pp. 181-197; Martin Kazmeier, *Deutsche Grabrede im 19. Jahrhundert. Aspekte ihrer Funktion innerhalb der bürgerlichen Bestattungsfeierlichkeiten*, Tübingen, 1977; Wilhelm Rauls, „Das Begräbnis in der Geschichte der Evangelisch-lutherischen Landeskirche in Braunschweig“, in *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte*, 78 (1980), pp. 115-143.

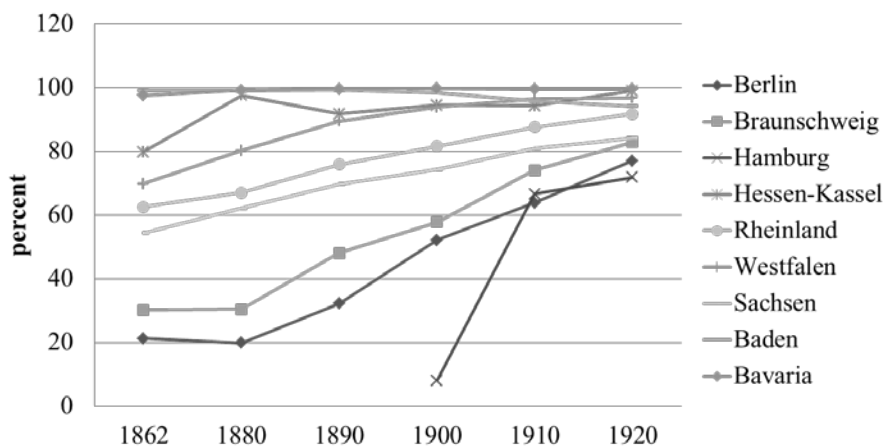
¹⁰ A cultural approach provided: Hölscher, „Die Verkirchlichung“, p. 181 f.

THE CLERICALISATION OF PROTESTANT FUNERAL CEREMONIES IN 19TH CENTURY GERMANY: FROM SILENT BURIALS TO MOURNING ACTS

Marriages, communions and funerals in the Rhenish Church province



Protestant funeral rates of German states



The purpose of this article is to reveal and discuss some of the reasons for the clericalisation of Protestant funeral ceremonies in 19th century Germany, and this with a special focus. It will concentrate on the clerical reform efforts which have been undertaken to recapture the ecclesiastical authority over death.¹¹ These efforts can be divided in the politics of

¹¹ The focus is on the Protestant Church in Rhineland, based on the sources of the Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland.

concessions, restrictions and incentives.¹² They were implemented in a situation in which the so called silent and nocturnal burial had become the common funeral practice in many German states.

2. Preconditions: Nocturnal burials in 17th and 18th century Germany

Compared to the rise of Protestant burials in 19th century Germany, the history of silent burials in the 17th and the 18th century are well examined.¹³ The practice of burying the dead body at night without any ceremony and without the participation of a pastor, the parish community and even the bereaved evolved in the 17th century from a socially disgraceful practice to a distinction of honour.¹⁴ First the nobility, later the urban elites¹⁵ dispensed with the traditional Lutheran funeral rituals which had become more and more luxurious during the baroque era and staged their attitudes toward death and sorrow in an irritating manner. Since the Middle Ages, the silent burial had been a social, political and religious punishment for suicides, criminals, dissidents, heretics and heathens, assuming that this practice was an expression for the damnation of the deceased in the hereafter.¹⁶ This interpretation was not valid any more.

There is a whole set of reasons which promoted the advancement of silent burials without clerical participation in the Enlightenment. The social context points to the rise of absolutism which forced the nobility to reconsolidate its political power and status – especially in comparison with the townspeople. The traditional funeral had to be public and required the whole religious community to be at the graveyard. Therefore the ritual equalized the

¹² See concerning the mental and social reasons: Franziska Rehlinghaus, *Die Verkirchlichung der protestantischen Bestattung im bürgerlichen Zeitalter*, Kassel, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Friedhof und Denkmal, 2010, pp. 85-97.

¹³ Craig M. Koslofsky, *The reformation of death. Death and ritual in early modern Germany, 1450-1700*, New York, Palgrave, 2000; Craig M. Koslofsky, „Nächtliche Begräbnisse im lutherischen Deutschland (1650–1700)“, in *Historische Anthropologie*, 5 (1997), pp. 350-369; Rehlinghaus, *Die Verkirchlichung*, pp. 38-61; Klaus Fitschen, „Die Vernunft und der Tod. Das Begräbnis im aufklärerischen Mentalitätswandel“, in Albrecht Beutel/Volker Leppin eds., *Religion und Aufklärung. Studien zur neuzeitlichen ‚Umformung des Christlichen‘*, Leipzig, Evangelische Verlags-Anstalt, 2004, pp. 229-241; concerning the Protestant Church of Braunschweig: Rauls, *Das Begräbnis*, pp. 125-138.

¹⁴ Koslofsky, *The reformation of death*, p. 133.

¹⁵ Bruno Bürki, *Im Herrn entschlafen. Eine historisch pastoraltheologische Studie zur Liturgie des Sterbens und des Begräbnisses*, Heidelberg, Quelle & Meyer, 1969, p. 192.

¹⁶ Philippe Ariès, *Geschichte des Todes*, 2nd edition, München, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980, pp. 59-62; Kazmeier, *Deutsche Grabrede*, p. 23; Koslofsky, *The reformation of death*, p. 134 f.; Richard van Dülmen, *Der ehrlose Mensch. Unehrlichkeit und soziale Ausgrenzung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Köln, Böhlau, 1999, p. 83-95; Vera Lind, *Selbstmord in der frühen Neuzeit. Diskurs, Lebenswelt und kultureller Wandel*, Göttingen/Kiel, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, p. 35; Sylvina Zander, „Von ‚Schinderkuhlen‘ und ‚Elendenecken‘“, in Norbert Fischer/Markwart Herzog/Dorle Dracklé eds., *Nekropolis: der Friedhof als Ort der Toten und der Lebenden*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 2005, pp. 109-124.

participants in a certain manner. After 1650 the nobility asked for private ceremonies not only for burials but also for confirmations, communions and marriages which excluded the participation of the common people.¹⁷ A growing fascination of the contemporaries for darkness and symbols of the night¹⁸ contributed to the practice that more and more burials took place after sunset. Regarding the middle classes, a new culture of emotions emerged within a modified sense for familiarity.¹⁹ These tendencies demanded a new privacy of grief which did no longer rely on the public sphere but on the intimate circle of close family members.²⁰

Theologically, on the one hand, the pietistic movement supported the individual piety instead of clerical demonstration of belief and therefore encouraged silent ceremonies as expressions of humility and humbleness.²¹ On the other hand, the theological neology and rationalism of the Enlightenment quitted step by step fundamental Protestant convictions concerning death, the hereafter and the Last Judgment, like the existence of the hell²² and the reality of the devil.²³ Oftentimes the pastors could not give any theological contribution at the graveyard,²⁴ particularly as the middle class established its

¹⁷ Koslofsky, *The reformation of death*, p. 140-144; Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft. Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2003, p. 252 ff.; Fitschen, „Die Vernunft und der Tod“, p. 240.

¹⁸ Richard Alewyn, *Das große Welttheater. Die Epoche der höfischen Feste*, München, Beck, 1989, p. 26-39.

¹⁹ Lucian Hölscher, *Geschichte der protestantischen Frömmigkeit in Deutschland*, München, Beck, 2005, p. 124; Bernd Roeck/Lothar Gall, *Lebenswelt und Kultur des Bürgertums in der frühen Neuzeit*, 2nd edition, München, Oldenbourg, 2011, p. 20, 33 f.

²⁰ Achim Aurnhammer, „Verinnerlichung der Trauer – Publizität des Leids. Gefühlskultur, Privatheit und Öffentlichkeit in Trauertexten der bürgerlichen Aufklärung“, in Achim Aurnhammer ed., *Gefühlskultur in der bürgerlichen Aufklärung*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 2004, p. 47-74, p. 60 f.; Kazmeier, *Deutsche Grabrede*, p. 89, 96 ff.; Eva Horn speaks in this context of an „requirement of silence“, the acceptance of the „ineffability“ which characterized the attitude towards death in the 18th century: Eva Horn, „Düsterer Pomp und stiller Schmerz. Trauer-Texte zwischen Barock und Goethezeit“, in Jan Assmann/Rolf Trauzettel eds., *Tod, Jenseits und Identität. Perspektiven einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Thanatologie*, Freiburg, Alber, 2002, p. 337 f.

²¹ Koslofsky, *The reformation of death*, pp. 144-148.

²² Lucian Hölscher, „Aussichten in die Ewigkeit“. Jenseitsvorstellungen in der neuzeitlichen protestantischen Theologie“, in Lucian Hölscher ed., *Das Jenseits. Facetten eines religiösen Begriffs in der Neuzeit*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2007, p. 25.

²³ Michael Maurer, *Die Biographie des Bürgers. Lebensformen und Denkweisen in der formativen Phase des deutschen Bürgertums (1680-1815)*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996, p. 177.

²⁴ An illuminating example for this problem is: Anon., „Angehängte Anzeige einiger Prediger“, in *Zeitschrift von und für Dortmund*, 1 (1796), pp. 161-162; Kurt Nowak, *Geschichte des Christentums in Deutschland. Religion, Politik und Gesellschaft vom Ende der Aufklärung bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, München, Beck, 1995, p. 16 f.

own unchristian symbolic system with reference to antiquity.²⁵

The displacement of the cemeteries outside the city walls for hygienic reasons and the lack of cemetery chapels were topographical and organizational reasons for the rise of silent burials.²⁶

Taken all these elements together it is not surprising that around 1800 even such prominent men as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart or Friedrich Schiller were buried at night without a pastor, without mourners, without spectators and in common graves.

3. *Pastors at the grave*

But even around the turn of the century opposition began to rise against the clericalisation and depopularisation of the Protestant funeral. Concerning the burial of Friedrich Schiller in 1805 for instance, we find a broad press campaign in which the authors complained about the inadequacy of the procedure and the lack of sensibility of the Weimar townspeople.²⁷ A new idea of solemnness arose which asked for emotional involvement and the right of a personal valediction.

At the same time as romanticism and idealism took the place of the Enlightenment and rationalism, the Protestant churches started substantial reform processes to initiate a religious renewal in Germany.²⁸ In connection

²⁵ Typical is: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet*, Berlin, Christian Friedrich Voss, 1769; Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim, „Der Tod der Alten und der Neuen“, in *Der Teutsche Merkur*, 2,5 (1774), p. 32; Hans-Kurt Boehlke, „Der Zwillingbruder des Schlags – Der verdrängte und der angenommene Tod. Zur Ikonographie sepulkraler Zeichen im Klassizismus und in der Romantik“, in Hans Helmut Jansen ed., *Der Tod in Dichtung, Philosophie und Kunst*, Darmstadt, Steinkopff, 1989, pp. 337-361; Eckhardt Treichel, „Erinnerungskultur und Repräsentationsstreben. Begräbniskultur in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts“, in Dieter Hein ed., *Bürgerkultur im 19. Jahrhundert. Bildung, Kunst und Lebenswelt*, München, Beck, 1996, pp. 289-306; Martin Scharfe, *Über die Religion. Glaube und Zweifel in der Volkskultur*, Köln, Böhlau, 2004, p. 47.

²⁶ Franz J. Bauer, „Von Tod und Bestattung in alter und neuer Zeit“, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 254 (1992), p. 9; Norbert Fischer, *Vom Gottesacker zum Krematorium. Eine Sozialgeschichte der Friedhöfe in Deutschland*, Köln/Hamburg, Böhlau, 1996, p. 8-23; Barbara Happe, „Ordnung und Hygiene. Friedhöfe in der Aufklärung und die Kommunalisierung des Friedhofswesens“, in Norbert Fischer ed., *Raum für Tote. Die Geschichte der Friedhöfe von den Gräberstraßen der Römerzeit bis zur anonymen Bestattung*, Braunschweig, Thalacker-Medien, 2003, pp. 85-92.

²⁷ Johann Wilhelm Archenholz, „Schillers Beerdigung. Vom Herausgeber der Minerva“, in *Minerva*, 2 (1805), pp. 548-556; Stephan Schütze, „Fragmente zweier Briefe aus Weimar über Schillers Tod“, in *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 61 (21.05.1805), pp. 487-488; Max Hecker, *Schillers Tod und Bestattung: nach den Zeugnissen der Zeit im Auftrag der Goethe-Gesellschaft dargestellt*, Leipzig, Insel-Verlag, 1935.

²⁸ Erich Beyreuther, *Die Erweckungsbewegung. Ein Handbuch*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977, pp. 22-45.

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with this „inner mission” (Innere Mission)²⁹ the funeral practice was also brought into view again.

Already in the 1830s, the religious government authorities urged the leading churchmen to restore the classical funeral ritual with all the elements that had been established during the reformation period.³⁰ In this sense the Rhenisch consistory declared in 1837 that the emergence of silent burials had nothing in common with progressiveness but, on the contrary, infringed on the sense of civility and custom. It was inopportune to bury a Christian in complete silence – or, in the words of the contemporaries, without a song and a ring („ohn Sang und Klang”). On the contrary, the pastors were supposed to use the opportunity at the burial to console the bereaved and to teach, to warn, to waken and to uplift the congregation. The church was responsible for permeating family celebrations with the spirit of the gospel. Subsequently, the consistory instructed the superintendents to undertake greater efforts in promoting the Christian funeral practice.³¹

Even if the consistory here aimed for a restoration of the Protestant burial in the sense of a return to its original teaching function, we find additionally new strategies of justification: the idea gained relevance that the involvement of a pastor should ornament the grief of the family by sacralizing the ceremony through the Holy Spirit.

In order to put the restoration process systematically forward, the churches first had to develop a general idea about the extent of the damage – that is about the distribution and organization of burials in the different parishes. At the request of the consistory of Bernburg the Protestant Conference of Churches started a survey in 1855 of all German pastors in which they had to legitimate the practice of burials in their parishes.³² It was one of the most extensive clerical enquiries at the time and the response rate was relatively high,³³ so that the results were not interpreted until 1858. In this survey the

²⁹ Hartmut Lehmann, „Die neue Lage“, in Gustav Adolf Benrath/Martin Sallmann/Ulrich Gäbler eds., *Der Pietismus im neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhundert*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, pp. 2-26, p. 9.

³⁰ In Braunschweig the leading churchmen forced the clericalisation of the Protestant funeral since the 1850ies: Rauls, *Das Begräbnis*, p. 139.

³¹ *Verlautbarung des Königlich Rheinischen Konsistoriums* (Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland), AEKR Düsseldorf Kirchenkreis Aachen 3MB 003 (Aachen) C-271.

³² „Protokolle der deutschen evangelischen Kirchen-Conferenz in Eisenach“, in *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 4, pp. 38-46 (1855), p. 403 and 432.

³³ For the Rhenish Church Province of Kreuznach there exist still eight response letters. Among others: *Antwortschreiben des Pfarrer Leschh[...] an den Herrn Superintendenten Eberts Hochwürden zu Kreuznach* (Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland), AEKR Düsseldorf 3 MB 001 (Kreuznach) 23-4; *Antwortschreiben aus Mendel an den Herrn Superintendenten Eberts zu Creuznach* (Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland), AEKR Düsseldorf 3MB 001 (Kreuznach) 23-4; *Antwortschreiben aus Hu[...]heim an den Herrn Superintendenten Pfarrer Eberts Hochwürden zu Kreuznach* (Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland), AEKR

Conference gave a prototype of the Protestant funeral including the participation of the pastor, a sexton, the parishioners and the schoolchildren, the funeral procession with the ringing of bells, a chant and a funeral sermon at the graveyard. Furthermore, the Conference formulated suppositions about the reasons for the decline of the tradition, such as the laziness of the clergymen, and thus forced the pastors to justify themselves.³⁴

The results of the survey were as follows:³⁵ the silent burial was a phenomenon in the major cities, and that in the states in which Protestantism was the main religion. The pastors emphasized the organizational reasons for the decline of the Protestant funeral traditions, namely the spatial distance to the graveyards, the growing population on the one side and the shortage of pastorates on the other, the funeral-costs and the expenses for the funeral meals, the unwillingness of sextons and teachers to fulfil their duties at the processions, the lack of chapels and the existence of anticlerical cemetery regulations.

The measures which were taken by the pastors to remedy the deficiencies concentrated therefore on the reorganization of the funeral practices: in their replies to the survey the pastors spoke about recruitments of curates who were specialized on burials, about the building of chapels and the waiver of funeral fees for poor people. Additionally, some of the pastors intensified their preaching against unchristian customs. There was a rising awareness of the problem concerning the burials as a first step of a mental change in 19th century Germany. But did these efforts suffice to explain the broad re-clericalisation of Protestant burials until the First World War?

Substantial reform efforts were not mentioned in the final report of the Conference of Churches in 1858, but in fact the churches did much more to regain the authority about death matters. They pursued politics of concessions, restrictions and incentives. And the interaction of all these elements made the Protestant funeral to the most successful product of the Protestant Churches in the second half of the 19th century.

Düsseldorf 3MB 001 (Kreuznach) 23-4; *Antwortschreiben aus Laubenheim [?] an den Herrn Pfarrer Eberts Hochwürden zu Kreuznach* (Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland), AEKR Düsseldorf 3 MB 001 (Kreuznach) 23-4; *Antwortschreiben von Pfarrer Scholl, betrifft die Form des Begräbnisses* (Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland), AEKR Düsseldorf 3MB 001 (Kreuznach) 23-4.

³⁴ *Protokolle der deutschen evangelischen Kirchen-Conferenz in Eisenach*, p. 432.

³⁵ The results of the survey were printed in: „Nachtrag zu dem Protokoll der sechsten Sitzung der Eisenacher Kirchenkonferenz vom 17. Juni 1857“, in *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 7,27 (1858), pp. 229-244, p. 229-240; Nachtrag zu dem Protokoll der sechsten Sitzung der Eisenacher Kirchenkonferenz vom 17. Juni 1857 (Schluß)“, in *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 7,28 (1858), pp. 245-251.

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3.1 *The politics of concessions*

The distribution of the silent burial in the 17th and the 18th century delegitimized its function as clerical punishment. It became less productive to withhold unbaptized children, suicides, heretics and dissidents from clerical burials. During the 19th century, one can observe that pastors had to justify themselves to the family members and to the church authorities if they refused to participate in burials of these people. Even the church authorities demanded tolerance and mildness because they hoped to bring some of the lost sheep back within the pale of the Church.

Thus, pastor Stierle of Oberdiebach had to give a detailed report about the circumstances of the silent burial of a certain Phillip Jaeger in 1838.³⁶ The family members of Phillip Jaeger had asked the pastor to celebrate the funeral ritual, whereupon pastor Stierle enquired more information about the deceased. He informed the consistory that Jaeger had neither attended the Sunday service nor the communion for fourteen years and that he furthermore had not accompanied the coffin of his wife when she had died. Jaeger had not only been indifferent concerning religious issues but was rather a convinced hater of the church. Even his son had to admit that he could not say anything encouraging about the character of his father.

Unfortunately the sources did not say anything about the outcome of the case. But the fact that the pastor here had to justify his decision against an honourable funeral for Jaeger, who was apparently an enemy of the church, is symptomatic for the strategic change of the churches.

In the negotiations of the eighth Rhenish Provincial Synod the church authorities discussed about the funerals of persons who had broken with religion during their lifetime.³⁷ Remarkably it was not debated whether such persons should be excluded from the Protestant ritual, but, instead, which liturgical elements should be used in such a case. The churchmen decided that a special prayer was not necessary, because the Prussian liturgy provided enough possibilities regarding this question. All participants agreed that the pastors had to use these opportunities to bear witness of the Protestant belief and to affect the community.

Six years later the question was taken up again.³⁸ The pastors of the synod St. Wendel regarded such a tolerant attitude as inadequate and pleaded that the provincial synod might prohibit the clerical burial of dissidents. The

³⁶ *Verweigerung der feierlichen kirchlichen Beerdigung des Philipp Jaeger in Oberdiebach betreffend. Brief von Pfarrer Stierle* (Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland), AEKR Düsseldorf 1OB 002 (Rheinisches Konsistorium) B IX b 07 Bd. II 2059.

³⁷ *Verhandlungen der achten Rheinischen Provinzial-Synode, gehalten zu Elberfeld vom 6. bis 26. Oktober 1853*, Elberfeld, 1853, p. 66.

³⁸ *Verhandlungen der zehnten Rheinischen Provinzial-Synode gehalten zu Neuwied vom 10. bis 28. September 1859*, Solingen, 1860, p. 106 f.

pastors mentioned four reasons for their request: the restrictive handling of the Catholics, the dignity of the Protestant church, the church discipline and the embarrassment of the pastors if they were forced to preach for a dissident.

The president rejected these arguments. He refused the orientation to the Catholic Church and reminded the pastors of their duties, namely to speak the Christian truth at the grave of the despisers. The pastors themselves had to carry this duty as a cross for God. Additionally, the president reminded the attendees that the churches had to be more tolerant if they did not want to lose their influence.³⁹

The president gave priority to the requirements of the bereaved instead of supporting the objections of the pastors. Furthermore, the responsible commission regarded the very existence of silent burials as a failure of the priests. They should have brought the dissidents back to the Church already during their lifetimes.⁴⁰ The silent burial was here interpreted as a sign for the disability of the pastors, not as a rightful punishment for the sinners. Consequently, the pastors had to fear complaints of the bereaved if they refused the honourable funeral. If they did not want to admit their defeat and be treated as criminals,⁴¹ they were forced to overstep the bounds of their religious convictions.

Conversely, the churchly and state authorities tried to meliorate the conditions for the pastors with a politics of restrictions. These prohibitions aimed against unwanted rivals at the graveyards.

3.2 The politics of restrictions

Since the 1830s the consistories implemented several laws which prohibited the speeches of laymen at cemeteries.⁴² In the 18th century the funeral oration had often been held by a friend of the family instead of the pastor.⁴³ On the one hand, the pastors had appreciated this relief of the annoying funeral sermons; on the other hand, they had to waive the financial compensation for this service.⁴⁴ In the 19th century the churches insisted that only clergymen were entitled to speak at the graveyards.

This law appeared to be absolute and rigorous, but in fact there were many special cases. In 1824 the royal government of Königsberg decided that

³⁹ *Verhandlungen der zehnten Rheinischen Provinzial-Synode gehalten zu Neuwied vom 10. bis 28. September 1859*, p. 107.

⁴⁰ *Verhandlungen der zehnten Rheinischen Provinzial-Synode gehalten zu Neuwied vom 10. bis 28. September 1859*, p. 108.

⁴¹ Gottlieb Lüttgert, *Evangelisches Kirchenrecht in Rheinland und Westfalen*, Gütersloh, Bertelmann, 1905, p. 698 ff.

⁴² E. g.: *Verhandlungen der zweiten Rheinischen Provinzial-Synodal-Versammlungen gehalten zu Koblenz, den 29. August bis 11. September 1838*, Koblenz, 1838, p. 63.

⁴³ Kazmeier, *Deutsche Grabrede*, p. 98.

⁴⁴ Anon., „Ueber die öffentlichen und stillen Begräbnisse“, in *Schlesische Provinzialblätter*, 29 (1799), pp. 213-224, p. 215.

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friends or family members of the deceased who wanted to give a speech at the graveyard had to present the manuscript to the local priest and must seek his permission.⁴⁵ Five years later the speeches of laymen were only permitted in the house of mourning.⁴⁶

In 1837 the Rhenish consistory decided that only the pastor was authorized to choose the sermons and prayers for the funeral even if he was not able to accompany the coffin to the graveyard.⁴⁷ In 1842 the secular speech at the cemetery became a punishable crime. It was considered to be a disturbance of religious practices. The perpetrators could be imprisoned.⁴⁸

Generally these regulations were limited to confessional cemeteries. The churches and even the state could not prohibit the speeches of lay persons or dissidents on municipal graveyards. Moreover, since the German constitution of 1871 the freedom of religion was legally liable. This regulation became problematic when the social democrats used the burials of their members for demonstration purposes.⁴⁹

In the smaller towns and villages, where the cemeteries were in the hand of the Church, the prohibition of secular orations was an effective measure for the clericalisation of the Protestant funeral. Those who did not want to refrain from some consoling words at the grave had to approach the pastor. And the requirement to celebrate the death of a beloved one in an adequate manner became more and more important for the middle classes in the 19th century.

We know that the authorities had to bring the regulation to memory time after time.⁵⁰ Probably it did not suffice alone to explain the success of the clerical handling. The churches had to offer more than tolerance on the one side and restrictions on the other. One of the most important elements of the reform process was the implication of new liturgical elements which made the

⁴⁵ Johann August Ludwig Fürstenthal ed., *Repertorium über sämtliche, durch die Gesetz-Sammlung und die Amts-Blätter der königlichen Regierungen (excl. der zu Posen, Brandenburg und Gumbinnen) seit ihrer Begründung bis 1836 publicirten, das Kirchen- und Schul-Verfassungs-, Verwaltungs- und Polizei-Wesen betreffenden Verordnungen. Ein Handbuch für die Geistlichkeit beider Konfessionen, Kreis-, Stadt- und Land-Polizei-Behörden, Kirchen- und Schul-Patrone, Deputationen und Vorstände in den Königlichen Preußischen Staaten*, Neisse, Breslau, Friedländer, 1837, p. 139.

⁴⁶ Fürstenthal ed., *Repertorium*, p. 139.

⁴⁷ Georg August Grotefend, *Das Leichen- und Begräbniswesen im Preußischen Staate. Besonders für Polizei- und Medicinalbeamte, Pfarrer und Kirchenvorstände*, Arnberg, Grote, 1869.

⁴⁸ *Amts-Blatt der königlichen Regierung zu Düsseldorf*, 52 (23.09.1842), p. 392.

⁴⁹ „Erlass des Königlichen Ministeriums der Geistlichen-, Unterrichts- und Medizinal-Angelegenheiten a. d. Reg. Kobl. vom 16. 6. 1877“, in: Lüttgert, *Evangelisches Kirchenrecht in Rheinland und Westfalen*, p. 701; Sebastian Prüfer, *Sozialismus statt Religion. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vor der religiösen Frage 1863-1890*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002, pp. 314-324.

⁵⁰ *Amts-Blatt der Königlichen Regierung zu Aachen*, 9 (16.02.1860), p. 48.

clerical funeral more attractive. With the adoption of intercessions for the soul and the benediction of the dead body the churches pursued a contested strategy.

3.3 *The politics of incentives*

One of the main differences between the Catholic and the Protestant belief about death refers to the connection between this life and the hereafter. In Catholic belief the living can influence the salvation of the soul by performing religious acts on the dead body, by praying or by donating a requiem. The belief in a purgatory and the historical selling of indulgences belong in this context. The reformers criticized these practices according to their religious conviction that the salvation of the soul depended entirely on the will of God.⁵¹ Especially in Calvinism the belief in predestination forbade human intervention in divine providence. A religious act pertaining to the deceased was in this sense not only impossible but sinful.⁵² Therefore, the funeral act in Protestantism had always been an act for the living, an opportunity to advise the bereaved and the religious community.⁵³ The entombment of the corpse was not to be a religious act but an act of charity.

Already in the 18th century we find funeral elements which disregarded the Protestant principle that humans could not influence the salvation of the soul. There was a Saxon prayer from 1732 for instance which asked God for a peaceful sleep and a happy resurrection of the deceased.⁵⁴ This prayer has never been part of a liturgical formula, even because the church orders of the

⁵¹ Martin Luther, „Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis (1528)“, in Arbeitsstelle Weimarer Luther-Ausgabe ed., *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar, H. Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1906, p. 409; „Dem nach haben wir in unssem Kirchen die Bepstlichen Grewel, als Vigilien, Seelmessen, Begegnis, Fegfewr und alles ander Gauckelwerck, fur die Todten getrieben, abgethan und rein ausgefegt.“, in: Martin Luther, „Die Vorrede zu der Sammlung der Begräbnislieder (1542)“, in Arbeitsstelle Weimarer Luther-Ausgabe ed., *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar, H. Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1906, pp 478-483, p. 478.

⁵² Hugo Maser, *Die Bestattung*, Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlags-Haus G. Mohn, 1964, p. 3.

⁵³ In this sense the Church order of Brandenburg of 1540 proclaimed that the funeral was not benefiting the dead but the living: „... So kan es vor kein begengnis der verstorbenen, sondern den lebendigen zu gute geachtet werden...“, in: „Kirchen Ordnung im Churfürstenthum der Marcken zu Brandenburg, wie man sich beide mit der Leer und Ceremonien halten sol. Gedruckt zu Berlin im Jahr MDXI“, in Aemilius Ludwig Richter ed., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts. Urkunden und Regesten zur Geschichte des Rechts und der Verfassung der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*, Weimar, Verlag des Landes-Industriecomptoirs, 1846, pp. 323-334, p. 330. Nevertheless, there were also few Protestant funeral orders of the reformation era which included intercessions for the deceased: „Die Württemberger Kirchenordnung (1563)“, in Hansjakob Becker/Dominik Fugger/Joachim Pritzkat/Katja Süß eds., *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes. Reformatorische und katholische Traditionen der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main, A. Francke, 2004, pp. 43-44.

⁵⁴ Christian Gerber, *Historie der Kirchencereemonien in Sachsen*, Dresden/Leipzig, 1732, p. 712.

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Enlightenment did often not imply any funeral instructions.⁵⁵ But nevertheless it became relevant in burial practice in Saxony.⁵⁶

In the 19th century the reform efforts of the Protestant churches produced an amount of new church and funeral orders. The changes in funeral liturgies were to some extent extreme. It became obvious that the clericalisation of the Protestant ritual was the main aim even if one had to deny the traditional Protestant convictions. The funeral order of the Church of Prussia started in 1834 with the implication of intercessions for the deceased and made them to the most emotional elements of the funeral ritual. After he had casted the earth upon the coffin the pastor had to pray in a really catholic manner:

„Almighty God, [...] we do not doubt that you took the soul of our brother, upheld him in faith and that you now have received him in your glory. Enjoy his soul at the seat of your kingdom with thousands of angels and the chosen saints, and let his body rest peacefully until its resurrection.”⁵⁷

Even if this prayer formulated very carefully the hope of human influence in the salvation process, it broke a taboo in a liturgical and theological sense. As a result, also the Protestant Churches of Württemberg⁵⁸ and Bavaria⁵⁹ included intercessions in their funeral orders in which the pastors tried to save the soul from torture and pain.

The Churches wanted to regain their influence on the issue of death – but not only with reference to the living. They wanted to take action upon the deceased. This brought about a fundamental change in the Protestant concept of an afterlife. The reformers had believed in a judgment which took place immediately after death. The single criterion for the salvation or damnation of the dead should have been his development during his lifetime – *sola fide* – and the mercy of God – *sola gratia*.⁶⁰ The supposition that there was a timeframe in

⁵⁵ Theodor Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen. Die Einsegnung der Ehe. Vom Begräbniß. Von der Ordination und Introduction*, Schwerin, Stiller, 1854, p. 311; Ottfried Jordahn, „Das Begräbniß im Zeitalter der Aufklärung“, in Hansjakob Becker/Dominik Fugger/Joachim Pritzkat/Katja Süß eds., *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes. Reformatorische und katholische Traditionen der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main, A. Francke, 2004, p. 61.

⁵⁶ Other intercessions for the deceased are documented in: „Die ‚Allgemeine Sammlung‘ (1788-1804)“, in Hansjakob Becker/Dominik Fugger/Joachim Pritzkat/Katja Süß eds., *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes. Reformatorische und katholische Traditionen der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main, A. Francke, 2004, p. 64.

⁵⁷ Evangelische Landeskirche Preußen, *Agende für die evangelische Kirche in den Königlich Preussischen Landen. Mit besonderen Bestimmungen und Zusätzen für die Provinz Westfalen und die Rhein-Provinz*, Berlin, Dieterichsche Buchdruckerei, 1834, p. 18 f.

⁵⁸ *Kirchenbuch für die evangelische Kirche in Württemberg*, Stuttgart, Belser, 1843.

⁵⁹ „Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses (1844)“, in Hansjakob Becker/Dominik Fugger/Joachim Pritzkat/Katja Süß eds., *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes. Reformatorische und katholische Traditionen der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main, A. Francke, 2004, pp. 106-112.

⁶⁰ About the eschatology of Luther and Calvin see: Erhard Kunz, *Protestantische Eschatologie. Von der Reformation bis zur Aufklärung*, Freiburg, Herder, 1963, pp. 15-22 and 31-41; Robert

which the living could pray for the salvation of the deceased made the traditional salvation doctrine implausible.

Beside the intercessions, some Protestant Churches went even further. Since the turn of the century several Protestant pastors began to bless the dead body.⁶¹ As well as the pastor converted the newborn child into a Christian, the confirmed into a full member of the community, the lovers into a married couple by benediction, he consecrated the dead body out of life and into eternity.

The benediction of the body was firstly written down in some private funeral orders.⁶² The third edition of the Bavarian Church order adopted this element in 1852 and made it official.⁶³ The benediction of the dead body emerged as the most important part of the funeral ceremony. The Bavarian funeral order quitted the procession and divided the ceremony in two parts, one in the house of mourning, the other at the cemetery. These two parts were entitled with the notions „consecration of the deceased“ („Aussegnung des Verstorbenen“) and „benediction“ („Einsegnung“). In the house of mourning the pastor should speak with Psalm 121:

„May God, the Father, who made you in his own image, bless you. May God, the Son, who purchased you with his blood, bless you. May God, the Holy Spirit, who has prepared you for the holy temple, bless you. The graceful and merciful God who blessed your coming will also bless your going, now and forever.“

At the graveyard the pastor completed:

„I bless you to rest in the name of the triune God, of the Father, the Sun and the Holy Spirit.“⁶⁴

Kolb, „Life is King and Lord over Death'. Martin Luther's View of Death and Dying“, in Marion Kobelt-Groch/Cornelia Niekus Moore eds., *Tod und Jenseits in der Schriftkultur der Frühen Neuzeit*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2008, pp. 23-45.

⁶¹ Joseph Edmund Jörg, *Geschichte des Protestantismus in seiner neuesten Entwicklung*, vol. 1: Der Aufschwung seit 1848, Freiburg, Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, 1858, p. 528-528; about the function of the funeral ceremony during the reformation period see: Austra Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying. The ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519-1528)*, Aldershot, Burlington, Ashgate, 2007, p. 257: „Reformation death culture focused on proclaiming the gospel of justification by faith.“

⁶² Wilhelm Löhe, „Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses (1844)“, p. 107; „Agende für die evangelische Kirche (1843)“, in Hansjakob Becker/Dominik Fugger/Joachim Pritzkat/Katja Süß eds., *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes. Reformatorische und katholische Traditionen der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main, A. Francke, 2004, p. 104; Ludwig Adolf Petri, *Agende der Hannoverschen Kirchenordnungen. Mit historischer Einleitung, liturgischer Erläuterung und ergänzenden Zugaben*, Hannover, Hahn, 1852.

⁶³ *Agende für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, München, Literarisch-artistische Anstalt, 1852.

⁶⁴ German text: „Aussegnung des Verstorbenen: Es segne dich Gott der Vater, der dich nach seinem Bilde geschaffen hat. Es segne dich Gott der Sohn, der dich mit seinem Blut erkaufte und erworben hat. Es segne dich der heilige Geist, der dich zu seinem Tempel bereitet und geheiligt hat. Der gnädige und barmherzige Gott, der deinen Eingang gesegnet hat, segne auch deinen

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In both cases the benediction was the culmination point of the ritual. The pastor treated the dead body just as the living; he took action upon it, he removed it out of this world and put it into eternity.⁶⁵ Concerning the clericalisation of the Protestant burial, the benediction of the corpse had two advantages: Firstly, the new ritual enabled the pastor to act effectively at the graveyard. He undertook a new responsible task which seemed to decide about the salvation of the soul. Secondly, the benediction enriched the mindless and boring Protestant ceremony and made the liturgy more emotional and therefore attractive.

However, there was no dogmatic basis, neither for the intercessions nor for the blessing of the corpse. Before a theological debate emerged about these new rituals, they were established in the funeral practice. The bereaved insisted on the benediction of the deceased. A funeral without blessing was supposed to be incomplete and ineffective. The peace in death, the salvation or even the resurrection of the soul seemed to depend on the blessing of the pastor.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, a certain resistance among the theologians grew.⁶⁷ The leader was the Lutheran superintendent Theodor Kliefoth. He believed that the benedictions were absolutely senseless. Moreover, he regarded them as a danger for the faith of the religious community. The ritual seemed to be a magical act and thus supported superstition. The common people believed that the blessing pastor provided the deceased with certain goods which he would not receive if the benediction would be omitted. The churches which had integrated the benediction in their funeral ceremony, had offered a service which was theologically unjustifiable. It was no wonder that the people chose their private explanations for the blessing act.⁶⁸

Kliefoth's argumentation was supported by a prominent Calvinist theologian, Johannes Heinrich August Erbrad, who argued against intercessions for the deceased as well as against the benedictions:

„We would only become hypocrites if we were to ask God for something that had already been decided in the past. [...] The grave of the dead is not the place to make intercessions for the living for whom we failed to make intercessions earlier.”

And he added concerning the benedictions: The benediction purported that the salvation of the soul was warranted, but human beings were not

Ausgang von nun an bis in Ewigkeit. Amen. [...] Einsegnung: Ich segne dich ein zu deiner Ruhe im Namen des dreieinigen Gottes, des Vaters und des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes. Amen.“

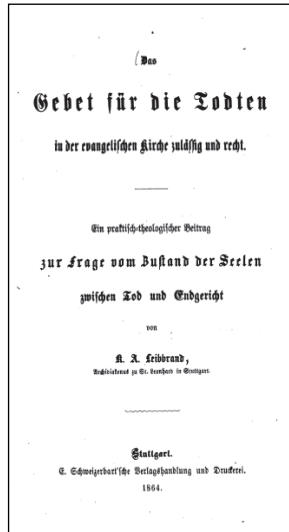
⁶⁵ Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, p. 322.

⁶⁶ Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, p. 318.

⁶⁷ Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen*; Johann Heinrich August Erbrad, *Vorlesungen ueber praktische Theologie*, Koenigsberg, Unzer, 1854, p. 274; Otto Thelemann, *Handreichung zum Heidelberg Katechismus. Für Prediger, Lehrer und Gemeindeglieder*, 2nd edition, Detmold, C. Schenk, 1892, p. 183; Wilhelm Rohnert, *Die Toteneinsegnung, eine Neuerung des 19. Jahrhunderts. Historisch-kritisch beleuchtet*, Leipzig, Böhme, 1887.

⁶⁸ Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, p. 330 ff.

allowed to interfere in the handiwork of God.⁶⁹ Other theologians emphasized that the dead body was not worthy to be blessed, because it did not need any divine Protection and was not capable of receiving the glance of the divine eye.⁷⁰



Front page of K. A. Leibbrand, *Das Gebet für die Todten in der evangelischen Kirche zulässig und recht. Ein praktisch-theologischer Beitrag zur Frage vom Zustand der Seelen zwischen Tod und Endgericht*, Stuttgart, 1864.

Nevertheless, there were several theologians and pastors who justified the benediction of the corpse by redefining the concept of blessing.⁷¹ The theologian Wilhelm Otto for instance discussed in detail the argumentation of Kliefoth and argued that the benediction neither referred to the deceased nor to

⁶⁹ Ebrard, *Vorlesungen ueber praktische Theologie*, p. 274.

⁷⁰ Claus Harms, *Pastoraltheologie: in Reden an Theologiestudierende*, vol. 2: Der Priester, Kiel, Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1831, p. 356.

⁷¹ Carl Immanuel Nitzsch, *Der Dienst am Wort oder die kirchliche Rede und der kirchliche Unterricht. Ein Lehrbuch der Homiletik und Katechetik*, 2nd edition, Bonn, Marcus, 1860, p. 460; E. Graf, „Das liturgische Gebet für die Verstorbenen und seine Berechtigung“, in *Vierteljahresschrift für deutsch- und englisch-theologische Forschung und Kritik*, 4 (1871), p. 128; H., „Die Einsegnung des Auferstehungsleibes noch einmal“, in *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche*, 40 (1860), pp. 186-194. Concerning the legitimization of intercessions see among others: K. A. Leibbrand, *Das Gebet für die Todten in der evangelischen Kirche zulässig und recht*, Stuttgart, Schweizerbart, 1864; Alexander Frantz, *Das Gebet für die Todten, in seinem Zusammenhange mit Cultus und Lehre, nach den Schriften des heiligen Augustinus*, Nordhausen, Adolph Büchting, 1857; Carl Heinrich Stirm, „Darf man für die Verstorbenen beten?“, in *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, 4,2 (1861), pp. 278-308; Richard Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, vol. 3, Wittenberg, Hermann Koelling, 1870, p. 495.

the bereaved but to the changes the death has brought into the divine world order. The act of blessing was meant to purify and sacralise the civil life in all its aspects. Additionally, the dead corpse was the grain for the resurrection and therefore indeed worthy to be blessed.⁷²

Parallel to the clericalisation of the Protestant funeral the benediction of the corpse and the intercessions for the soul advanced to indispensable pastoral acts and became central elements of the Protestant burial ceremony.⁷³ Accounts about the funerals of members of the Prussian royal family reveal how usual the benediction of the dead body was in the second half of the 19th century. The benediction was in several cases the outstanding highlight of the ceremony, accompanied by gunshots,⁷⁴ famous hymns of Paul Gerhard⁷⁵ or the kneeling of prominent representatives of the royal family.⁷⁶ It is self-evident that the performances of the court were an inspiring example for the common people. And even in novels from this period we find descriptions of Protestant funeral benedictions and intercessions.

The benediction of the dead body was a magical and meaningful element in the Protestant funeral ceremony. It corresponded with the requirements especially of the middle classes in the 19th century. Unlike the earlier generations, they articulated the wish for a glossy and emotional ceremony that staged the mourning of the family in a public manner.⁷⁷ The churches contributed to these desires by implementing new ritual elements. Furthermore, the pastors gained a new authority at the graveyard by performing a task that nobody else could undertake.

4. Funeral traditions and the question of secularisation

At the end of the century the Protestant funeral was firmly in the hands of the Protestant Churches. Nevertheless, it was not a reconstituted tradition but a new invention. The clerical burial had become a service of the churches which had been adjusted to the requirements of the customers. That means also that the church had lost its position as an institution which encompassed the

⁷² Wilhelm Otto, *Über die Einsegnung der Leichen. Als Denkschrift des Herzogl. Nass. evangel.-theol. Seminars zu Herborn für des Jahr 1858*, Wetzlar, G. Rathgeber, 1858, p. 43 f.

⁷³ Nitzsch, *Der Dienst am Wort oder die kirchliche Rede und der kirchliche Unterricht*, p. 469.

⁷⁴ Anon., „Zum Tod des Kaisersohnes Prinz Karl“, in *Provinzial-Correspondenz*, 21,4 (24.1.1883), pp. 3-4.

⁷⁵ Anon., „Die Feier der Beisetzung der Königin-Wittve Elisabeth“, in *Provinzial-Correspondenz*, 11,52 (23.12.1873), p. 1.

⁷⁶ Anon., „Die Trauerfeierlichkeiten für die Kaiserin Augusta“, in *Neueste Mittheilungen*, 9,4 (11.01.1890), p. 2.

⁷⁷ Bernhard Lang/Colleen MacDannell, *Der Himmel. Eine Kulturgeschichte des ewigen Lebens*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1990, p. 366; Kazmeier, *Deutsche Grabrede*, p. 328; Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, 6th edition, Neuwied, Luchterhand, 1974, p. 60.

full life. In the 19th century Germany it was a state-guaranteed service company and the funeral was its most successful product.

To this day, the Protestant Church has successfully defended its monopoly. Even today the majority of the Protestant Church members are buried with the clerical ritual. It is needless to say that there is a remarkable decline in Church membership. Nevertheless, the Church has succeeded in retaining its believers in death issues. There is no doubt that the stability of the Protestant funeral is the product of clerical reforms in the 19th century. The Churches had to find new solutions for the challenges which had supported the silent burial in the Enlightenment.

In theological regard, they must deal with the traditional doctrines about death and the hereafter, especially with the Protestant principle that human beings were not able to influence the salvation of the soul after death. The implementation of intercessions for the soul and benediction of the dead body quitted reformatory convictions but at the same time enriched the ceremony and legitimized the role of the pastor.

With a growing tolerance concerning suicide, dead criminals and dissidents, the churches adjusted the funeral practice to the fact that the silent burial was no longer a punishment but a normal convention. In doing so, the churches enabled the bereaved to return to the churches and their spiritual guidance.

In organizational respects, the topographical changes of the cemeteries demanded structural and liturgical modifications. The building of cemetery chapels on the one hand and the abandonment of the procession on the other hand created the basis for the participation of the pastor. The prohibition of secular orations promoted the clericalisation of the funeral furthermore.

The clericalisation of the Protestant funeral in 19th century Germany challenges the secularisation theory in several regards. Both developments deal with the relationship between society and church, religious belief and religious practice, the private and the public sphere, tradition and modernity. The results of this research reveal the necessity to redefine the classical concept of secularisation: seen as the gradual decline of religious belief or even withdrawal in privacy,⁷⁸ it consequently runs counter to the advance of the Protestant funeral. The clerical funeral arose in the 19th century, turned back from privacy to the public and even incorporated new religious elements.

I would argue that the development of the funeral culture is more than an irritating exception. On the contrary, with its satisfaction of the desire for spirituality and transcendence it is an expression for the urgent requirements of the century. And furthermore: the changes of the Protestant funeral could help

⁷⁸ Peter L. Berger, *Zur Dialektik von Religion und Gesellschaft. Elemente einer soziologischen Theorie*, Frankfurt am Main, Fischer, 1988, p. 14.

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CENTURY GERMANY: FROM SILENT BURIALS TO MOURNING ACTS

to quit the linearity of dechristianisation for a cyclical theory of secularisation to consider that „the process of removing the sense of the sacred from society contains the seeds whereby religion is eventually revived and revitalized.”⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Jeffrey K. Hadden/Anson D. Shupe, *Prophetic religions and politics*, New York, Paragon House, 1986, p. XV.

DYING AND DEATH AT WAR – CONCENTRATION ZONE:
THE PLACE OF (SPECIAL) DYING

MANCA ERZETIČ¹

*What did I do to deserve life so I can think about them like they are
standing on the other riverbank of a destroying major river while they are lying
in and on the crates?*
(Boris Pahor)

The question about what has been left by the past in the space, that we can consume or not in the 21st century is actually fiction in people's mind. There is nothing left to remember, even memories on concentrations are nowadays like monument to those, who must live with that memories every day. Cultural history of death in the period of 18th-21st century had many *special* places in war time, where people died in concentration zone. For rest of others who have no experiences like that, is this something that could represent a fiction. But in reality it is far away from fiction. The history is *regresus infinitum*. Terror(ism) exists, lives in daily life and consist a part of daily news. This part is often described in the books, mostly by author experience. Death and dying in literature can be described as sexual terror, gender terror, nation terror etc. One of them is also terror(ism) at concentration camps, in my case of study written by author's memories. There is no time that could be called *dogma*, because we do not know the answer to the question how is life given (or not) to somebody and there is no key to resolve this mystery. Also we can't judge to whom life belongs and who doesn't deserved to live. Brian McHale's concepts of theory are putting questions into field of metafiction and postmodernism, but there are concepts about ontological insecurity in novels, written by an author who can understand the military zones and concentration camps. We can't say that there is any meaning of this understanding. Meaning of non-sense, unreasonable facts which have been done during the Second World War and also in the nineties in the Balkans to the innocent people, are placed in time, when the *great stories* already have been told and when the ontological insecurity is not a new object of discussions in the field of philosophers. Nowadays, the so-called *great stories* can't be re-told with the same effects. But there is the question, where and when we lost or left the spatial and temporal alternatives. The literature of the world known Slovenian author Boris Pahor can give one point of the view with his novels, written mostly from his experience in the concentration camps (*Nekropola* or *Pilgrim Among the Shadows*), memories on ghettos (*Tržaški odzivi*), occupied territories, frontiers in Africa (*Nomadi brez oaze*), problems with passing borders etc., and his critical, objective and subjective point of view

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on the problematical relations, made by people (*Ladja brez krmarja*, *Grmada v pristanu* etc.). My research is based on analyzing his literature and in observation is taken the most famous book *Nekropola*, which gives, in some point of view, the answers to McHale's theory, and makes open conclusions. Comparative literature and literary theory can show the line very clearly with Pahor's character(s) as individual men, everymen nowadays, which show that not human nor zones aren't changed more than sixty years later. Today we almost can't distinguish fiction from reality, because most of the things which were fiction in the past (space and time), became a reality in the modern world. And we can't believe anymore a tragedy that had happened behind the concentration door, sadly. But the terrorism is still alive. With that we also come to the question about reality of our realistic gestures, their meanings and point of view what means *living dying* in the modern world, with thesis that *a history is repeating!*

Author of a novel *Nekropola* (Boris Pahor), who manage to survive in concentration camp, was born in 1913 to a Slovene-speaking family in Trieste. He lives near Slovene-Italian border and worked till his retirement in his native city of Trieste as a teacher. On the 21st of January in 1944, he was captured by the Slovene Home Guard that handed him over to the Nazis who first imprisoned him in the Coroneo jail in Trieste and one month later sent him to Dachau. From there he was transported to concentration camps (Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines and Natzweiler-Struthof) in Alsace, then to Dachau, Mittelbau-Dora, Harzungen and finally to Bergen-Belsen, which was liberated on the 15th of April in 1945. We can compare his concentration experience to experienced that had also Primo Levi, Imre Kertesz or Jorge Semprun. Some facts from the position that has been described in Pahor's most famous book *Nekropola* or *Pilgrim Among the Shadows* and written evidence how is the field of concentration camp *special* place of death and dying can remove the invisible border between the writer and the reader, but can't produce the same feelings and views, because of the main reason: live and fictional experience. In the field behind the concentration door the God never appeared. In this area ontological truth does not exist. Pahor's statement is comparable with McHale's and Lodge's theories at some point², but at the same time that theories does not have a direct influence on the Pahor's work, even thought can be shown and defined the main ontological question for the place in the cremation cone. This theory can be presented at its finest with help of another era – a postmodernism – in theories of Brian McHale and David Lodge.³ Virk's words, which put the

² Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*. New York & London, Methuen, 1987. See also Neubauer, John, "Ungleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen or literary History with Multiple Timelines", in *Neohelicon*, 30, n. 2 (2003), pp. 65-70.

³ Brian McHale, *Constructing Postmodernism*, London & New York, Routledge, 1992.

statements of McHale's theory very clearly, in translation can be use as a plot to a basic thesis in particular discussion.

... Brian McHale – in context of discussing postmodernism – named it **ontological scandal**; however David Lodge (in the same context) called it **short circuit**. This means that author enters in his own fictional world as a real person and can cause »ontological distractions«, because fiction is suddenly tightly connected with reality ...⁴

In *Pilgrim Among the Shadows* we can notice author's description, which suits to the fact above; that author put a subject in a certain area and observes that subject and his behavior, but at the same time he interferes with this story as the first-person narrator or omniscient narrator. Because of the fact that the story was written by author's memory, we know that the subject is author itself. Author does not cause an ontological distraction known to the readers by the concepts of postmodernism, but causes this distraction to himself by knowledge and experience he got in the concentration camp. Author has a problem with re-socialization after the reservation and for that reason, he writes. During the text we can find several descriptions of differences in his mental perception of certain objects in concentration camp (furnace) or any other camp's visitors. This is called *short circuit* and suits the theory of David Lodge. For understanding that is necessary to be familiar with the place of death and dying through the eyes of Slovenian author.

The place of death and dying inside of the concentration camp

The state inside of concentration camp was a completely different then in daily life. But for the prisoners became that world the only option they had. Pahor reports that in the world behind the main door of the concentration camp also existing rules, which have to be followed. As a negative consequence author gives one example:

Someone squeezed himself in a corner, just to rest, lied down and had no control over his eye shadows closing. Furious men were looking for him on bunk beds and in restrooms... we were never thinking so much about the punishment which will befall to the unlucky one, we were only looking out for the moment when it will come – with instant noise of heavy boots it will burst and find itself all alone in the hollow atmosphere.⁵

But at the same time he shows also other part in the system.

The blond vice officer, who was sitting at the foot of the table, had pointed in my direction with a spoon. I had nodded, very slightly and almost tiredly, and returned into the corner with my cup made of cardboard. It was half full of rice, this white cup. I thought it was ridiculous if young Siegfried thinks that it is possible to redeem with a cup of rice like this ... I thought I got it out of respect, because I did such business, and also that in his respect there was no respect toward ruined people.⁶

⁴ Tomo Virk, *Izleti čez mejo*, Ljubljana, Literarno-umetniško društvo Literatura, 2008, p. 63.

⁵ Boris Pahor, *Nekropola*, Ljubljana, Mladinska knjiga, 1997, p.50.

⁶ Ibid., p.51.

He also reports about the system that exists like in every normal circumstances and places, just with one tiny little difference. The system is made for human destruction and not creation. As Pahor wrote, the destruction was floating in the air.

You were breathing it. It was not even dawning yet when our shaved, lubricated and washed bodies were standing on German snow of February. Bodies walking and running on the snow, waiting in the barracks in the draught, running on the snow again and then you are taken away woolen underwear, winter clothes and a jacket ... in green army trousers, which reached a point slightly below the knee, in short socks and wooden clogs I went out of the barracks in front which we were standing for what seemed like an eternity.⁷

He accepted that world which was putted into and just that world compared with another place in other concentration camp. He wasn't thinking of the world, family, friends', that he knew before he was putted in concentration camp. The world there was the only he recognized and his friends were other prisoners. Author says that elsewhere the devastation was far worse:

An image of stairway in Mauthausen, for example. One hundred and eighty-six stairs. Nine floors. Zebra patterned bodies have to climb to the top of the stairways six times a day. With a heavy stone on their shoulders. It has to be heavy, because there is an officer standing at the end of the narrow path on the top and pushes everyone with a small, light stone into the abyss. The cliff is called The wall of fallen. But a body can fall on the stairway already since it is so scrawny and the stone is so heavy and the stairs are so crooked... The officers on the top sometimes, when they feel like it, push back the ones who had reached the top so they fall on the ones behind and then there are only white stones and striped mass rolling down ... Of course this killing was not different from the one in our quarry, but the horror of that stairway was so powerfully terrifying that... a man... so helplessly small.⁸

Like we can observe that place had just one intention: to produce death and dying following by the system. Killing wasn't different from the quarry, but the horror of that stairway was so powerfully terrifying ... The fact is, that prisoner's had no fear of death or dying. Much worse than quick death can be psychological game in the place of death and dying behind the doors named *Arbeit macht frei*. That is a concentration camp like a place of world in disorder with intention of order. This can be defended also by author's question which we're pointing out – the question about the purpose of the concentration camps and human evil. Author agrees that *we should find germs of these horrible crimes, because only economical and sociological analyses will not satisfy, neither will Chamberlain's racial theory*.⁹ But how could be explained all those deaths? Literary field do not provide an explanation or an ontological answer.

⁷ Ibid., p. 170.

⁸ Ibid., p.178.

⁹ Ibid., p.232.

All other theses can only be subjectively oriented as the latter one, which could maybe be explained but in accordance with the cruelty of one's acceptance of the responsibility that there is ontological binarity: the evil that had happened during the war demanded changes, which guaranteed almost peaceful living conditions for particular part of the world. Today we find ourselves at the point of goodness, which is, however, according to theory of binarity only permanent. We often here the phrase that *a history is repeating! We recollect so it would not happen again*. This is one message that Boris Pahor sends to his reader.

In the place of death and dying applies the system of cause and consequences, absence of guarantee, crossroad of relations and an image of linguistic game

As I said above, the world behind the concentration door, made a system, at that worked minimum five years. The Nazi-fascists want to reach the goal they believe in it. So they made also a system of **crime and punishment** or better to say **system of cause and consequences**. The author reveals the fact that inside of the camp there is a true system of an *economy of destruction*.

I am sure that a man who has ever met Nazist knows that there is no good in the camp of theirs – but still, the shock after the entrance in the world of crematoriums is decisive. And economy of destruction demands that you are decisive too.¹⁰

In so-called normal world remains that if something bad happened, eventually it will become better. But in this world, through author description, exist only worse and death. And that's it. In normal world we can change the place if we suffer in some area, sooner or later, but I who did escape or change the place voluntarily in concentration zone in 1944? According to this the reader can find objective reason for an act or enforcement, but still there is no guarantee that by following the rules in the place of death and dying you will survive. This **absence of guarantee** was similar to ontological insurance about the God at that time. When author stops with recital of his memories and starts to return to his subjectivity, this previous order collapses. This world that author described is not manageable anymore. This world can be just coincidental. It is all about the facts that are not expected, even though we know there will always be a punishment for breaking the rules, the breaking point is unexpected and thrown over like a net. A net, which is well known in theories from postmodernism as net of ontological truths, because there is no one Truth, which can give answers to the ontological questions. Every truth can be The Truth. There exist a net, which represents all truths and at the same time no truth, because the answer is hiding under the linguistic game. It suits relativity, absence and plurality of truth. In this image we can also see the absence of the transcendence and ontological insecurity. This suits to the

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 180.

McHale's and Lodge's theories. And this suits to subject, which is not a substance anymore. In the place as it is a concentration camp an individual personality takes place in the middle of the **crossroad of relations**. The subject is not based on anything solid but is a perception of some relations. It is an individual on the crossroads of relations. It suits to quantum image, which request the theory that there is no living or dead matter, only relations between the particles. It suits to the **image of linguistic games**, to an intertextual net. One's again: It suits to the McHale's and Lodge's theory. The linguistic game - what a literary work is too - in science wants her statements to be considered as real. But science cannot legalize with its own means. It has to be understood. A story always legalizes knowledge. In typical theory of postmodernism this shows a different context based upon different examples, but this still is a fact which is, in today's spiritually-historical and philosophic frame known as the fact of cause and consequence, if the theory of Nietzsche is relevant.

Place of death and dying as a field where theoretically match the philosophy and literature: the God is dead, great stories are gone. It is time for dehumanization.

What Nietzsche verbalizes in philosophy with the verdict *The God is dead*, says Lyotard in literature with the statement *Great stories are gone*. Great story, which places a subject (i.e. faith, God, man) on the place of executive judge and man on the place of the executor, which falls into a given situation, is invalid in the area of the concentration camp. This means that the absolute guarantor of truth is dead in the eyes of a man. In another context Lyotard is finding out that sciences that want to legalize, use all three great stories that legalize the value: dialectics of spirit, hermeneutics of sense and emancipation of reasonable subject. The first great story (i.e. Hegel's story) talks about the world developing back to reasonable sense. This story is based on principle of theology, on belief that life is constantly developing towards the great perfection. But if we use only the objective facts and rational approach to ontological or theological discussion, we eventually come to the question where to find the explanation for the great story that, talks about the world developing to some reasonable sense. This is considered to be the consequence of question referring to Leibnitz's *Theodicy* or to excuse God from evil. Consequently to that these we can set an example of dehumanization. In a place that is dedicated to **dying alive**, the dark forces of human evil are present. They are described with help of imprisonment, torture, abuse, position of man prisoner, death, life, disappointment, betrayal and consequently emptiness and the guilt of the one who survives. The author of ethical relativism is actually indifferently bound to the period: ethical values are not universal, they change. In the time of holocaust we talk about Nazi-fascistic people, who never take a look in the mirror and ask themselves: *Am I doing the right thing?* And this perception of right and wrong starts to reel in prisoners' point of view. In concentration camp

a human was forced to turn off sensibility and compassion, but at the same time he needs to preserve ethical principles of human being. The dehumanization was held on three parts: **dehumanization of the body**, **dehumanization residence** and **dehumanization of soul**.

In first case are, as the theme of slaughter, described a hunger, a room of execution and physical torture. Pahor describe a hunger in a quote where he explains what man can become and what he can feel (i.e. jealousy on neighbor during the meal) in that area. ... *No panels will ever have the ability to explain the mood of a man who thinks that a man sitting next to him got for half of finger more yellow liquid in an iron pot.*¹¹ In a quote where he describes an execution room he remembers those who were victims of medical experiments. *Here it is, says the voice from the speaker, the room that had been determined for executions. The floors are, as you can see, a bit slanting so that victim's blood can flow away... In September 1944 one hundred and eight Alsatian members of liberation army died here. This is a table for dissection ...* In a quote where describes a physical torture he remembers that ... *whips had a unique style of falling on the shoulders, and they always did it in the same way...*

In the second case, is in the *Pilgrim among the Shadows* also description of a personality's disarmament in the world of the crematorium as a place of dehumanization or dehumanization residence. The author thoroughly describes everyday events in the world of the crematorium and warns that there everything is about paying attention and being inventive, physical power is redundant. If you lost your orientation spot in the world of the crematorium, chaos and destruction pulled you into death. The rhythm was destroying. Leaving quickly. Coming back quickly ... The body has lost its central point, had no feeling about vertical axis when it was up and not about horizontal position when it was lying on the pallet.¹² The prisoners were slept in paper bags outsides the doors at minus degree. Nor body nor soul had any value in the place of death and dying, there was only one intention: **dehumanization in the world of crematorium**. The other prisoners who were still alive must drag a gangling body for its feet over the cement. Other body's who were not buried into the ground, had been taken to the **gas chambers** or in the execution room. As we can see the human body does not have any value at all. Now I know that professor Hirt has been handed over eighty female and male bodies which commanding officer Kramer got from Oswiecim an suffocated them with gas between the walls of white ceramic tiles ... to make studies of somatological specialties of the inferior man.¹³

In a third case a disarmament of soul Pahor describe in a quote: ... *because disarmament of soul is far worse than hunger is and the hunger is at its*

¹¹ Ibid., p.14.

¹² Ibid., p. 49.

¹³ Ibid., p. 225.

*worst when it begins doing its most fatal job, the rotting of human personality.*¹⁴ In literature of this author who is still very active in daily life and at the symposiums, can find his way of action in concentration camp that he remained alive. The world inside the area of death and dying was the only world that a concentration camp prisoners thought existed. Any thinking different from this would be doomed. He did not think about the world behind the fence or the world alive. The author had consciously decided to try to forget former life and try to adapt himself to dying alive.

I cannot recall dreadfully declining any bonds with the Life before, I had separated from it in an insignificant moment, but the separation was firm ... Other responded casually. Some even declined thinking about present by living in the past for the whole time.¹⁵

Pahor in his book gives us some arguments why he was sure that he will not be noticed by death if he ever stepped that close. *If you are afraid of death in the place of death and dying you trip and that is when he slaps you. You have to be sober; all your moves have to be natural.*¹⁶ The author described that there is no system of choice in the concentration camp everyone is picked sooner or later. The area of the concentration camp is the area of dying alive. The author explicitly lists this in next sentence: *The crematorium cities were built to kill the children of mankind and it really does not matter which section's employee you were.*¹⁷ In literature is this explicitly described in chapter, which describes story about Mladen:

In Dachau Mladen did not want to observe dissection... in Dora we had to watch his heart being decomposed by a knife. Ironically, some of them, had to take a classed of anatomy and educate how to help prisoners if they need help. But in that area, everybody needed help.¹⁸

Pahor survived. But in that survival was also a piece of death and dying. Author as a member of concentration camp, as a piece of mosaic which represent the hole picture of a place of death and dying, must live with a feeling of guiltiness. Even though it seems that there is no guilty of being alive, Pahor thinks and feels differently. And like a survivor he must bear the burden of survivors' consequences. The feeling of entrapment in the dark world after he survived appeared because he was constantly remembering those who did not have that lucky. *I was trapped in the dark world of mine.* The feeling of guilt or the question *why me?* sneaks into author's subconscious, because he does not understand the principle of survival. Why did he survive while others did not? His book was written with a reason of an apology to others and to himself. He survived on the basis of coincidence.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 186.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.157.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp.176-177.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 188.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 176.

I would like to say something to all my former comrades, but I have a feeling that everything I will say in my thoughts will not be sincere. I am alive and that is why even my most real feelings are impure somewhere.¹⁹

The blame of knowing that someone is dead and you are given your last day by life: *What did I do to deserve life so I can think about them like they are standing on the other riverbank of a destroying major river while they are lying in and on the crates?*²⁰ That was one of many reasons of his asocialization after the 2nd world war. The place of death and dying behind the concentration doors caused not just death to those who were killed actually, but also left a stigmatization to those who managed to survive. For those who had to return in normal life after 1945, was the main problem re-socialization. Many of survivors did not manage to go through that, so many of them make a suicide. Other who decided to live further, were trying to overcome all feelings that were assassinated the suiciders. The distance between the writer and others was enormous, because visitors at the concentration camp have no experience how is to live inside this area: *I forgot ... Not all people are as familiar with evil as I am and I am wrongful for not taking that into account. They cannot remember it as lively as I do.*²¹ The function of normal living is only partly enabled to camp returnee, because the function of socialization has been taken away from him. He admitted that can't go even at the funeral because he saw too many corpses in the concentration camp and buried too many innocent people.

The main question is if today, more than sixty years later, a human understand the position of ontological position then and similarity now? Are we the generations that will forgot what had happened and repeat the same mistakes in slightly different variation? As said one of the world know Slovenian humanitarian worker Tomo Križnar for the main television about South Sudan in 2011 and also for the European position in the world:

We are already in 3rd world war, as we were in 1939, but nobody dear to spoke that clearly because of the fear that we already repeated the same mistake for the second time. Today is position the same, just that Europe does not want to see the reality. The heads falling down, the people screams, the children are dying, Dolar falls, Euro falls. But the Europe ... is bluffing.

Are we really standing on the ground of death and dying and do not see what is coming for the third time? The question that should provide an answer and must refuse some actions in advance, that are going to be repeated for the third time in the modern society, modern world. But still the same world where could not be created the great stories and still the same world at which the God still do not want to appeared. Ironically that the same point putted in words in his novel also Pahor in *Nekropola*, when he wrote in 1968:

¹⁹ Ibid., p.114.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 164.

²¹ Ibid., p. 51.

I think a long era of human dispersal is coming. Humanity will search for greens and forests and rivers again; and only then it will, in peace, settle accounts with all past delusions. I do not claim humanity will discard the manners, which it will reach; but they will become aware of the fact that giant city conglomerates are not a savor of our destiny, it will calm down by getting to know our earthly homeland from the beginning. If, of course, it manages to do that without decomposing it with an atom in the middle of its neurotic delusions²².

²² Ibid., p. 221.

MODERN STATE AND DEATH MATTERS: ISSUES ON ROMANIAN LEGISLATION CONCERNING BURIALS AND BURIAL GROUNDS IN THE 19TH AND AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY¹

MONICA MUREȘAN²

Death is perhaps the only certain invariable, though redoubtable aspect in the history of humankind, in the history of each individual and each group of individuals taken separately. It accompanied closely the great as well as the small history, it intimately followed their rhythms and timings and it also censored and tempered great passions of humankind.³ Nevertheless, the Romanian historiography concerning the matter of death, burial and burial grounds was shyly and hesitantly approached only after the events of 1989, when censorship was abolished.⁴ Some subjects which have been until then considered as “taboo” reappeared in Romanian historical writings. At the same time, new domains of research emerged: it was the case of thanatology (the scientific study of death) which used new methods of source inquiry and brought increasingly doughty and valuable contributions to the field of historical research. The history of death, the history of human attitude facing death, to be more accurate, is one of those domains of research which brought a great deal of novelty and challenged Romanian historians to deal with it, during the past few decades. It is also a domain which instigates at investigating a wide range of complementary aspects of history from which only few amounts have been analyses and theorized by our historians. Other aspects and issues are still to be debated, being regarded as an open and improvable area of research.⁵ The matter concerning death and its related issues has been analysed in close relationship with changes occurred in the Romanian legislation of the domain, especially during modern age. It brings into the spotlight a subject which has not really been the concern of historians, that is to say, the way in which the modern State understood to administer and solve the problems of death and the issues related to it. To be more accurate, it is about managing human bodies after death, in the first place, about establishing death causes and circumstances, closely linked to post-mortem examination process and to specialized sanitary

¹ This paper was supported by CNCS, PN-II-Idei, project number 2477 / 2008.

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³ Toader Nicoară, *Clio în orizontul mileniului trei (2). Noi explorări în istoriografia contemporană*, Cluj-Napoca, Accent, 2009, p. 63.

⁴ Marius Rotar, *Moartea în Transilvania în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. I, Cluj-Napoca, Accent, p. 126.

⁵ See Marius Rotar, “Preliminariile unei anchete. Atitudinea în fața morții în Transilvania la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului XX”, in *Caiete de Antropologie Istorică*, I, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, pp. 85-98.

services. Secondly, one should take into account the burial itself and the problem of burial grounds as public spaces.

In spite of the wide range of aspects which could be analysed within the field of death and its related issues, the present study rather aims at analysing the Romanian legislation regarding death, burial and burial grounds, issued during the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Given the peculiar situation of Romanian territories before World War I, we decided to tackle the legislation of the Old Wallachian Kingdom on the one hand, and on the other hand, we shall reveal aspects of domain legislation specific to Transylvania. Thus, we shall operate with and assume yet from the start the so-called “language error”, as the “Romanian legislation” in Transylvania is actually a Hungarian or an Austro-Hungarian one: in short, it is written in Hungarian. Nevertheless, we have chosen to take this legislation into account as being Romanian, because it has been applied to a population of Romanians who were in the majority in Transylvania. On the other hand, our analysis also focuses on the double sided problem of death at its related issues: it depicts aspects of laws related to human corpse comprising the investigation of death circumstances and the initiation of necropsy, as well as aspects concerning the condition of burial grounds, those spaces particularly assigned to burial.

For easily understandable reasons, among the sources specific to the history of death, more precisely to the history of human attitude towards death, we intend to privilege only objective sources indicating official documents issued primarily by institutions of Power: State, Church, sanitary institutions. Prudence is though required in the analysis of these sources, as the above mentioned institutions are often interconnected and more than that, some of them are subordinated to others. Moreover, each of these institutions may have different views on similar issues, which also requires a subjective approach and explaining of certain situations. Anyhow, in most cases, one can observe a vertical structure which emerges from the State (as various ministerial decrees and laws) and descends towards the Hungarian Parliament (also a “law producer”), then to the Transylvanian Government (which functioned for a limited period of time), to counties, to Prefect’s Offices, to small rural districts and finally, to local mayor’s offices, for instance. Likewise, another vertical model of legislating and disseminating authority is adopted by ecclesiastical institutions. The highest level is represented by the Metropolitanate, then comes the Episcopate, the Office of a Locum Tenens, Office of the Archpriest, and finally, local parishes. As a conclusion, one may observe at this level a certain model of information monitoring, of expressing and imposing *power*. This particular model would eventually determine the issuing of a hypothesis different from previous periods, in what the perception of death is concerned. Objective sources, namely state rules, leave no space for comments or personal emotions as they provide information on ways institutions are build and function, and on

the way law can be enforced. These sources are usually to be found in sets of laws published either on various subjects or reproduced at a local level.⁶ In the Old Wallachian Kingdom, the situation is obviously simplified by state secularization. Thus, legislative documents regarding death and practical matters determined by death are issued directly by the secular power and by sanitary institutions.

The progressive laic discourse imposed under a “scientific and civic” shape⁷ can be interpreted in the first place through the content analysis of sources derived from the legislative discourse, on the one hand and from scientific and medical discourses of that time, on the other hand. Among these sources, one can mention the following:

- *Laws Concerning Public Health* – made reference to the dead, burial and burial grounds.
- *The Collection of Laws, Regulations and Sanitary Instructions Currently into Force, with Specific Jurisprudence and Annotations.*⁸
- *Period III (1851-1875)*, the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine.
- *Period IV (1876-1900)*, issued by the Faculty of Medicine from Iași and the Faculty of Medicine from Bucharest, Appendix D, II, Sanitary services.
- *Penal Codes and Penal or Criminal Procedure Codes.*
- *Civil Codes.*
- *Statutes of Burial Societies.*
- *Statistics, laws, regulations and instructions provided by the Sanitary Directorate, counties, cities, societies, etc.*

The content of this type of sources must be analysed for each Romanian historical province taken separately and one should respect the specific of each region, given the implications and significations of death at a society level. Interpreting the amplitude and modernizing valences of the laic discourse concerning death and its related issues was an approach made possible only by adding up sources available in various Archive Departments in the country.⁹ At the same time, one must also analyse specific documents issued by ecclesiastical authorities¹⁰, namely

⁶ Rotar, *Moartea*, pp. 155-156.

⁷ Ibid., p. 124.

⁸ See Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Literatura medicală românească*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 1907, pp. 97-319.

⁹ In this respect, see the following archival collections: Direcția Municipiului București a Arhivelor Naționale, 1. *Fond Bellu B. Pachetul XCIV*; 2. *Fond Acte comemorative și de fundație, 1869 – 1942*; 3. *Fond: Mitropolia București (dosare), 1806 – 1890*; 4. *Fond: Mitropolia Moldovei (dosare), 1834 – 1888*; 5. *Fond: Ministerul de Interne – Direcția Generală a Serviciului Sanitar, 1830 –1854*; 6. *Fond: Cancelaria Regală - Oficială, Vol. I-IV, 1865-1947*; 7. *Fond: Colecția – Documente Muntenesti, filele. I – LIII, 1915 – 1930*, etc.

¹⁰ See: Fondurile Direcției Municipiului București a Arhivelor Naționale (mai exact: *Fondul Colecția Testamente, 1847 – 1947*; *Fondul Parohia Șerban Vodă, 1893 –1900*; *Fondul Parohia Sf. Spiridon Nou, 1634 – 1949*; *Fondul Revista Spitalului, 1916 – 1949*; *Fondul Societatea Anonimă de Antrepoziție Șerban Vodă, 1930 – 1940*).

circular letters, correspondence and canonical visitations.¹¹ Last but not least, one can submit to thorough analysis documents issued by the civil society. For instance, reunions and burial statutes¹² were set-up as to illustrate the community members' efforts in supporting each other in order to manage the most stringent problems concerning the prospective costs of funerals and burials.

The Modern State and the Corpse Problem

In order to understand what it was considered important, worthy of being observed or on the contrary, of being avoided at that time in what the status of the human being after death was concerned, we must make a review of the legislative evolution and changes which occurred in the second half of the 19th century. Thus, the most important matters concerning human body (corpse) from a legislative point of view have been included in the *Penal Code*, as well as in the *Penal Procedure Code*. These are the documents which determined the major lines of the juridical discourse on the above mentioned matter.¹³ In the 20th century Transylvania there were two Penal Codes: one in 1852¹⁴ and the other, in 1878.¹⁵ Both have been synthesized in the *Hungarian Penal Code* published in 1920.¹⁶ Except for the main corpus published in 1879, the Penal Procedure Code¹⁷ of Transylvania also comprises the *Law XXXIII* of 1896 concerning penal procedure, *Law XVIII* of 1907 on the modifying and completion of penal procedure and *Law XXXVI* of 1908 regarding the replenishment

¹¹ See Ana Victoria SIMA, *Vizitele nunțiilor apostolici vienezi în Transilvania (1855- 1868)*, 2 vol., Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, *passim*.

¹² See the series of articles published by *Tribuna* magazine on the same subject: Dr. G. Tripon, „Reuniunile de înmormântare”, in *Tribuna*, Sibiiu, marți 19 Februarie (4 Martie) 1902, an XIX, nr.32, p. 126; “Statutele Reuniunii I. de înmormântare a locuitorilor români gr.-...din...” (I), in *Tribuna*, Sibiiu, sâmbătă 30 Martie (12 Aprilie) 1902, an XIX, nr. 59, p. 235; “Statutele Reuniunii I. de înmormântare a locuitorilor români gr.-...din...” (II), in *Tribuna*, Sibiiu, duminică 31 Martie (13 Aprilie) 1902, an XIX, nr. 60, p. 239; “Statutele Reuniunii I. de înmormântare a locuitorilor români gr.-...din...” (III), in *Tribuna*, Sibiiu, marți 2/15 Aprilie 1902, an XIX, nr. 61, p. 243; “Statutele Reuniunii I. de înmormântare a locuitorilor români gr.-...din...” (IV), in *Tribuna*, Sibiiu, miercuri 3/16 Aprilie 1902, an XIX, nr. 62, p. 247; “Statutele Reuniunii I. de înmormântare a locuitorilor români gr.-...din...” (V), in *Tribuna*, Sibiiu, joi 4/17 Aprilie 1902, an XIX, nr. 63, p. 251.

¹³ Marius Rotar, „Cadavre, cimitire, crematorii sau despre corp ca și rest în Transilvania în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea”, in *Caiete de Antropologie Istorică*, an II, nr. 2 (4) / iulie-decembrie 2003, p. 60.

¹⁴ http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Strafgesetzbuch_1852_%28%2C3%96sterreich%29#C2.A7.500._Vergehen_und_Uebertretungen_gegen_die_C3.B6ffentliche_Sittlichkeit, accesat la data de 25 august 2011, ora 15.00

¹⁵ *Magyar Büntetőtörvénykönyv: a büntettekről és vétségekről. 1878: V. Törvénycikk*, Budapest, Pfeifer Ferdinánd, 1878.

¹⁶ See *Codul Penal din Transilvania cu toate modificările până la 15 martie 1920*, tradus de Ioan I. Petroviciu, Oradea Mare, Tipografia Adolf Sonnenfeld, 1920.

¹⁷ See *Procedura Penală din Ardeal conținând: legile și ordonanțele în vigoare*, România, Curtea de Apel Cluj, f.a.

and the modification of the penal codes.¹⁸ In the case of the Old Wallachian Kingdom, there is a *Penal Code* and a *Penal Procedure Code*¹⁹ of 1866 and a *Criminal Code* of 1858, all specific to the period investigated by the present research²⁰. Other useful addenda are also to be found in the *Romanian Civil Code* of 1897²¹. The analysis of discourses on death and mortality from a legislative perspective brings into the spotlight a first terminological difficulty, due to the fact that there was no legal definition of death at that time, although law and jurisprudence “fed” upon death. For instance, civil law was only concerned with death when a person lost his/her legal personality. As far as criminal law was concerned, death was directly linked to issues like burial, corpse and murder.²²

Some of the main concerns of penal and procedure codes above mentioned is the thorough examination of the corpse as “human remains”, as well as other details regarding necropsy in case of suspicious death and specific investigations of causes and circumstances of death. In Transylvania, the Ministry of the Interior and Justice issued yet since 1857 an “order” concerning “the initiation of necropsy in for judicial, police or sanitary purposes”. The order gave exclusive right to “political authorities” to initiate necropsy for “police and sanitary” purposes, in case there were “suspicions that unnatural death has been caused by penal action or in cases when the first external examination of the corpse performed by the authority in charge would not certainly confirm death by accident or suicide”. Authorities were equally allowed to initiate necropsy “every time public interest would require it”.²³ “Political authorities” were represented by judges or policemen, as it is explicitly instructed by another *Instruction concerning the examining procedure of corpses by the judge and by the policeman*, issued through an order of the Ministry of the Interior, in 1887.²⁴ The problem of corpse examination was definitely solved by the penal procedure code of 1879 which grants full authorization and gives an important role to the specialist (physician) in establishing the specific death circumstances through the use of the investigation technique called autopsy, in other words, necropsy. A series of hypothetical situations (at a first glance) have been therefore envisaged, but as

¹⁸ Rotar, *Cadavre*, p. 60.

¹⁹ Alecsandru I. Ioan, *Codicele penale și procedura criminală*, București, Imprimeria Statului, 1866.

²⁰ *Codul criminal al Prințatului Moldaviei*, 1858.

²¹ *Codul Civil Adnotat cu trimiteri la doctrina franceză și română și jurisprudență completă de la 1868-1925*, de Constantin Hamangiu consilier la Înalta Curte de Casație și Justiție, 4 vol., București, Editura All Beck, 1999.

²² Rotar, *Moartea*, p. 156.

²³ „Ordinăciunea ministerielor de interne și de justiție din 8 Aprilie 1857 pentru tote țerele imperiului afară de confiniul militar, despre întreprinderea spintecării cadavrelor pentru scopuri judecătorești or sanitari polițienesci”, in *Collecțiunea legilor*, Edițiune Oficială, Editura Ministeriului Reg. Ung. de Interne, Budapesta, 1857, p. 145.

²⁴ Rotar, *Moartea*, p. 68, apud Törvényészéki orvostan irta dr. Belky János a törvényészéki orvostan ny tanára kolozsvárt. A holttest jelenségeiro és a személfazonosságrol szóló részt kidolgozta dr. Generich Antal a kórbonczolástan ny r. Tanára kolozsvárt, Budapest, 1895, pp. 636-644.

hypothetical as they might have been, they were evident reality which generated regulations and a legislation specific to the procedure of necropsy and had to be applied in cases where urgent clarifying of a “suspicious death” required it: “In cases where the corpse has already been buried, it has to be exhumed and submitted to necropsy, if the experts consider that given the circumstances, the post-mortem examination of the body can lead to certain results”.²⁵ Except for the situations provided by articles 240 to 246, corpse profanation was strictly forbidden and was also subject to punishment by law. Thus, § 123 of the penal procedure code of 1879 foresaw pecuniary penalty of 50 fl. for those who “brake the regulations stipulated by law, referring to corpse necropsy and burial, to the burial ground, to the extraction of corpses from their grave and to transportation towards other places or rural localities of dead bodies”.²⁶ The *Austrian General Civil Code* of 1853²⁷ which has been translated and published into Romanian only in 1924 also brought important additional information to the existing penal procedure. It provided fully detailed description of cases when an individual close to someone who has been declared missing asked for that missing person to be declared dead (§§. 732-747). The procedure shall be finalized in 1914, when the *Mârzescu Law* passed. It provided regulations concerning the certification of hypothetical death of individuals missing during the war, as well as norms regarding the juridical settlement of their assets and the situation of their descendents.²⁸

One can find similar directives in the Old Wallachian Kingdom, namely in two documents called “*Regulation for the Examination of the Dead*”²⁹ published in 1886 and the “*Regulation for the Transportation of Corpses*”³⁰ published in 1877 (plus *Regulation for the Burials* from 1860). The former provided the obligation for the “examining physician” to establish death status by proceeding with the “corpse inspection”. Before fulfilling this stage of examination, necropsy, embalming or mummifying are absolutely forbidden (Art.5).³¹ The forensic examination report sent by the physician to the Register Office representative comprises, among others, aspects concerning the

²⁵ Rotar, „Cadavre, cimitire”, p. 61 apud *Procedura Penală*, pp. 71-74.

²⁶ “Articlu de lege din anul 1879, despre codicele penale ungaru, despre transgresiuni, (sanționat în 12 iunie 1879, promulgat în ambele camere dietale la 14 iunie 1879)”, in *Collecțiunea legiloru din anul 1879*, Edițiune Oficială, Editura Ministeriului Reg. Ung. de Interne, Budapesta, 1878, p. 583.

²⁷ See Ștefan Laday, *Codul Civil General Austriac. Partea I. Dreptul persoanelor*, pp. 57-62.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 62-68.

²⁹ „Regulament pentru verificarea morților”, in *Buletinul Direcțiunii Generale a Serviciului Sanitar*, nr. 2 / 15 ianuarie 1890, pp. 29-23.

³⁰ „Regulament pentru transportul cadavrelor omenești”, in *Monitorul Oficial*, nr. 3 / 5 ianuarie 1877, pp. 58-59.

³¹ *Legislația sanitară în România modernă (1874-1910)*, coord: Alina Ioana Șuta, Oana Mihaela Tămaș, Alin Ciupală, Vlad Popovici, Constantin Bărbulescu, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2009, p. 265.

hypothesis of violent death if the physician notices any suspicious injuries on the dead body. These can be lesions produced either by cutting or fire weapons, but also evident signs of food, beverage or medication poisoning. In addition, finding a dead body in the middle of the road, in water or in other hidden places is also considered suspicious (Art.24).³² Another subsequent regulation, sequent not necessarily from a chronological, but logical perspective, provided rules on the transportation of corpses on short or longer distances, but only with the permission of competent authorities and only in closed caskets.³³ As a first rule, “no corpse can be transported from a district to another, from Romania to another country or can it be brought from abroad to Romania without holding a proper bilingual corpse passport”³⁴, that is to say, written either in Romanian and French, in Romanian and Hungarian or in Romanian and German (depending on the destination). Without such a document³⁵, the corpse was to be detained and buried in the closest burial ground, after establishing the cause of death. In order to perform transportation of dead bodies during summer or during any other season when the procedure took longer than six days, additional security measures had to be observed, such as the air-proof closure of caskets and the filling of all air holes with lead. In other cases, embalming the dead body in antiseptic solutions was required.³⁶ Nevertheless, the corpse once buried, it “can not be exhumed from grave or tomb in order to be transported someplace else without special permit” (Art.2). Moreover, in case of suspicious death, “the forensic examination of the corpse shall be performed and at the same time, the formalities provided by the penal procedure code shall be observed” (Art.14).³⁷ The *Civil Code* brings additional provisions to the penal code in what the phenomenon of death in humans is concerned. Thus, a Register Office representative, in the presence of two witnesses elected from among the closest relatives or the neighbours of the deceased, has to ascertain death. A so-called “death certificate” is drawn-up on

³² Ibid., p. 267.

³³ A similar regulation for Transylvania is to be found in order no. 25194/1875 issued by the Ministry of the Interior concerning the exhumation of bodies or parts of bodies, as well as their transportation. The document was discovered by the researcher Marius Rotar at the National Archives, County Directorate of Alba-Iulia, in the collection of the Romanian United Metropolitan Church of Blaj, with the inventory numbers 8335/1908, ff. 1-6 (Törvényészéki orvostan irta dr. Belky János, p. 636).

³⁴ *Legislația*, p. 228.

³⁵ The “Corpse Passport” mentioned by the legislation of the Old Wallachian Kingdom is, in fact, the equivalent of the “accompanying letter for the dead”. The document was also discovered by the researcher Marius Rotar at the National Archives, County Directorate of Alba-Iulia, as a standardized form needed for the transportation of corpses. It was issued by the authorities in Budapest through the ministerial decree no. 11230/1865.

³⁶ *Legislația*, p. 229

³⁷ Ibid., p. 230.

this occasion, comprising the name, surname, age, profession and the domicile of the deceased. Other information on the certificate concern the name of the spouse if the deceased is married or a widower, the names, surnames, profession and domicile of those who testified and confirm death and the degree of consanguinity, if be the case (Art. 64-65).³⁸ The above mentioned analysis aims at illustrating the obvious parallelism existing between the laic legislations of Romanian historical provinces, in the 19th century. This phenomenon has largely facilitated the legislative integration process subsequent to the territorial and administrative unification of all Romanian provinces after 1918.

Modern burial grounds between public and private

The problem of civil and military burial grounds involves a large range of aspects, such as legislative issues concerning the modern State intervention in organizing and administering burial grounds. Other aspects concern the legislation on the medical management of death, the ways in which the State, the Church and the rural or urban communities knew how to handle this matter, and last but not least, civic and urban issues, matters of family, collective and national memory are also involved.

More important than the above mentioned aspects are those related to the burial practice itself and to the legislative discourse developed around the power relations that impose certain norms which are mandatory for all individuals and communities.³⁹ Thus, according to the provisions of *Law XVI concerning public health* of 1876, "corpse burial earlier than 48 hours since death is strictly forbidden". The same law provides that in case of outbreak of an infectious disease, the interval can shorten from 48 to 36 hours.⁴⁰ In accordance with civil legislative provisions, the Church representatives also believe that "a human dead body cannot remain unburied for more than 60 hours, except for the cases when it is destined to embalming".⁴¹ In the Old Wallachian Kingdom, the *Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes* of 1866 provided that those who "would bury a dead body without being previously authorised to do so by the competent representative of public authority when situation imposes it", would be sentenced to prison from six days to one month (§. 284).⁴² The same penalty, although extended from six months to two years was applied to individuals who broke rules and provisions regarding hasty burials, that is to say, to "whoever would hide the corpse of a person who was murdered or died from severe injuries or lesions" (§. 285).⁴³ Article 67 of the *Civil Code* also drew attention upon the situation when "any signs or indications showing violent death or other suspicious circumstances" would be

³⁸ *Codul Civil Adnotat*, p. 126.

³⁹ Rotar, *Moartea*, p. 70.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Tit Bud, *Indreptariu practic pentru pastorii sufletesci*, Gherla, Tipografia Arhidiecezană, vol. II, 1883, p. 240.

⁴² Cuza, *Codicele*, p. 65.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

noticed. This specific provision was made in order to prevent corpse burial without the closure of a so-called death record. The document was drawn-up by a police clerk in the presence of a physician or surgeon, in the view of determining "the state of the dead body, death circumstances and any other information on the name, surname, age, profession, birthplace and domicile of the respective dead person".⁴⁴ Therefore, "no burial shall be performed without authorisation. The authorisation shall be issued by the Register Office representative who shall not be able to hand it out until he personally attends the domicile of the deceased in order to persuade himself of that person's death. Moreover, no burial shall be performed before 36 hours from the moment of death, except for the cases provided by police regulations" (Art. 63).⁴⁵ As a peculiar aspect of the domain, a series of court orders established the exact amount of burial expenses, according to the assets of the deceased. Based on this sort of precedents, the practice of covering burial expenses both from the fortune acquired during lifetime and from the inheritance, in proportion to their value became extremely frequent.⁴⁶

Other laws and regulations were also designed to add up and facilitate bringing into force the above mentioned measures. Thus, special importance is given to several paragraphs of the penal code which provide penalties for graves and burial grounds profanation. These paragraphs also refer to other crimes concerning the mistreatment of the corpse. Article 418 in the Hungarian penal code of 1878 (completed by article 80 in the civil procedure code of 1879⁴⁷) provided up to three years prison penalty and a fine ranging from one thousand to fifty thousand florins for the crime of intentionally destroying goods belonging to someone else, whereas article 420 provided full details about the categories of goods to which the above mentioned penalty referred to. Among these goods one can notice graves, monuments or grave crosses.⁴⁸ In this respect, the penal code of 1852 was much more explicit as it provided that "individuals who would maliciously or out of mockery open or destroy places assigned to the burial of human corpses, who would illegally and arbitrarily take away dead bodies entirely or parts of these bodies, who would do wrong by using human corpses, are committing a crime and are subject to hard prison

⁴⁴ *Codul Civil Annotat*, p. 128.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴⁶ *Polgári törvénykezés* în *Büntető Jog Tára*, Vol XVI, supliment nr. 1, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁷ "Articlu de lege din anul 1879, despre codicele penale ungaru, despre transgresiuni, (sanctionat în 12 iunie 1879, promulgat în ambele camere dietale la 14 iunie 1879), in *Collecțiunea legiloru din anul 1879*, Edițiune Oficiale, Editura Ministeriului Reg. Ung. de Interne, Budapesta, 1878, p. 583.

⁴⁸ *Magyar Büntetőtörvénykönyv: a büntettekről és vétségekről. 1878: V. Törvénycikk*, Budapest, Pfeifer Ferdinánd, 1878, pp. 167-168.

penalty from one to six months”.⁴⁹ Article 306 of the same code provided further provisions concerning penalties for body theft or for stealing objects from graves with the intention of making profit. Irrespective of the value of the stolen good, a theft is a crime, because that particular good is considered “an object destined for the memory of the dead or situated on a dead body” (§. 336 in the penal code of 1878).⁵⁰ Another similar sanction concerns the arrest penalty up to six months of an individual who has been found guilty of displaying incorrect the time of death, in the view of an earlier burial of the corpse, thus preventing an appropriated necropsy to be performed, as provided by law (§. 375 in the penal code of 1852).⁵¹ The chapter called “*Crimes Against Public Health and Physical Integrity*” in the penal procedure code of 1879 also foresaw pecuniary penalty of up to 50 florins for “individuals who break laws regarding necropsy, burial, exhumation or transportation of corpses to other places or other rural localities” (§.123)⁵². The *Penal Code* and the *Criminal Procedure Code* in the Old Wallachian Kingdom also provides similar regulations concerning prison penalties from three months up to one year and a fee ranging between 26 and 300 lei, inflicted on those who “violate graves or commit actions of profanation upon them, or other crimes and criminal offence committed on the occasion of this violation of defenceless graves”.⁵³

Areas of burial grounds are considered a proof for the changes which became effective after the entering into force of legislative norms and regulations. Legislative and medical discourses as preventive actions fully covered by the media during the second half of the 19th century also has an impact upon the mechanisms and the dynamics of modernization which ultimately shaped the Romanian modern state. Between 1850 and 1918, urban civic spaces in Transylvania as well as in the Old Wallachian Kingdom had a certain general specificity and were gradually defined through the action of two active environments: the ecclesiastical and the laic institutions. The final goal of these actions and of the discourses at that time was establishing a certain mental model in what death and its related issues were concerned. There have been several large projects which determined the emergence of great Romanian burial grounds. Some of the largest burial grounds in the country are the following: “Eternitatea” in Iași, “Șerban Vodă” and the “Bellu Romano Catholic”

⁴⁹ *Büntető törvény: büntettek, vétségek és kihágások. Büntető biroságok illetőségét tárgyzó rendeletek és sajtórendtartás az Ausztriai Császárság számára.* 1852. május 27. Bécs, Császári-Királyi udvari és álladalmi nyomda, 1853, p. 112.

⁵⁰ “Articlu de lege din anul 1878, codicele penale ungaru despre crime și delicta (Sanctionat în 27 mai 1878. Promulgat în ambele camere dietale la 29 mai 1878)”, in *Collecțiunea legiloru din anul 1878*. Edițiune Oficiala, Editura Ministeriului Reg. Ung. de Interne, Budapesta, 1878, p. 110.

⁵¹ http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Strafgesetz_1852_%28%C3%96sterreich%29#.C2.A7._500._Vergehen_und_Uebertretungen_gegen_die_.C3.B6ffentliche_Sittlichkeit.

⁵² “Articlu de lege”, p. 599.

⁵³ Cuza, *Codicele*, p. 65.

MODERN STATE AND DEATH MATTERS: ISSUES ON ROMANIAN LEGISLATION
CONCERNING BURIALS AND BURIAL GROUNDS IN THE 19TH AND AT THE END
OF THE 20TH CENTURY

burial ground in Bucharest, the Lutheran Burial Ground on the Hillside of Sighișoara, the Lutheran Burial Ground in Bistrița-Năsăud, etc. They are all evidence of the projects which focused on moving confessional burial grounds outside living areas. These projects are considered part of the concrete efforts of modernizing the state and its structures, in accordance with the European state system.

There is a first level of pre-determining in the establishment of these projects. It has an official meaning and leads to the acceptance of the concrete situation which was about to be settled in the case of modern burial grounds, the so-called *necropolis*. The official aspects also involve the authorization process of the new burial grounds as a functional entity, in accordance with the European modern norms in use at the end of the 19th century. The projects through which modern burial grounds have been established can be validated from a comparative perspective which can be found in the discourses displayed within primary and specific sources, allowing us to understand the organizing and consolidation stages for the extended public burial grounds. The process of transferring burial grounds from central locations towards marginal areas of public spaces seems to take place sometime between the 16th and the 17th century, during the debates generated by the Reform and the Counter-Reformation. From the 17th century onward, "moving burial grounds towards the outskirts of living areas is determined by demographic reasons". In France, for instance, after the parish burial grounds stopped functioning, laic or public burial grounds have been established instead and moved towards the outskirts of localities, in spite of protests and rejection reactions.⁵⁴

Thus, the whole process of establishing burial grounds as public spaces can be found thoroughly regulated by legislative documents. In the Old Wallachian Kingdom one can mention, for instance, the *Regulations Concerning Burials* (1860), whereas in the case of Transylvania, similar documents have been issued, like: *Regulation Concerning the Establishing of the Burial Place* (1854)⁵⁵ or *Law XIV* of 1876.⁵⁶ The 15th chapter of the latter is built around the procedure applied to corpses, burials and burial grounds in Transylvania. These are, therefore, analogous contemporary laws to both historical spaces subject to the present study. A very special significance has the Transylvanian law of 1876 which comprises a few chapters (116-122) regarding the ratio between the rising population and the expending rate of burial grounds. The same law also brings into the spotlight aspects regarding the relationship between

⁵⁴ Rotar, *Moartea*, p. 64 apud Phillipe Ariès, *Omul în fața morții*, vol. II, București, 1995, pp. 32-39.

⁵⁵ See *Buletinul Guberniului Provinciale pentru Marele Principatu Transilvania. Cursulu anului 1854, II. Sentiune. Mănunchiul II. Estradatu si transmisu in 30 Aprilie 1854*, Sibiiu, 1854, p. 26-28.

⁵⁶ See *Corpus Juris Hungarici. 1000-1896. Magyar Törvénytár 1875-1876. Évi Törvényczinkkek*, Budapest, 1896, pp. 381-383.

confessional profile and burial grounds, ways of arranging them, setting-up new burial grounds on abandoned cemeteries, the building of tombs, the prohibition of burials within churches or around them inside a city area. Chapters 116 to 122 also reveal issues concerning authorisation conditions of burial within the space of a private property, cemetery administering norms, the distance mandatory between burial grounds and nearby houses, as well as aspects regarding the need of fencing in and planting trees within burial grounds. The most delicate problem raised by the above mentioned law was the proposition of setting-up a “burial place for all confessions in the community”. The small sentence marks one of the first efforts of transforming cemeteries into a public space destined for all confessions.⁵⁷

The new norms and civic expected behaviours have theoretically and factually been regulated by the *Sanitary Law* which aims at enhancing an obeying and constrained behaviour, as well as strict attitudes clearly argued also by the *Law Concerning Burials of 1864*. The latter was valid throughout the Old Wallachian Kingdom and had to be observed thoroughly by all confessional entities, irrespective of ethnic or rite affiliation. In Transylvania, the Austro-Hungarian Empire enforced the *Law LVIII of 1868, on the Reciprocity of the Accepted Christian Confessions* which stipulated that all citizens, irrespective of confessional profile, have the right to be buried in the burial ground of the community. Nevertheless, unfortunately, these legislative actions could not be applied and observed according to their legal requirements. Due to this fact, in multi-ethnic and multi-confessional cities of Transylvania, Greek Catholics and Orthodox believers claimed the right to be given burial spaces separate from each other.⁵⁸ All these actions and approaches show the sustained modernizing efforts at a state level, for demographic and medical reasons. Moreover, these efforts aim at consolidating the state position in the relationship between the Church and the burial grounds.⁵⁹

From 1860 onwards, burial grounds in the Old Wallachian Kingdom were taken under the authority of municipality. The Official Gazette of Wallachia issued in April 1860 provided information concerning the setting-up of other cemeteries outside city areas (to be more accurate, burial spaces were offered to Jewish, Catholic, Evangelist, Protestant, Calvinist, Muslim and Armenian confessional communities). Separate burial grounds were also assigned to the poor and to prisoners. The large approach of reshaping and moving the old ethnic and confessional cemeteries from the inner city towards the outskirts of living areas sometimes required the transportation of family remains from distant places to the new and modern burial grounds or to the spaces which would ultimately be claimed by the above mentioned

⁵⁷ Rotar, *Moartea*, pp. 65-66.

⁵⁸ See the thick dossier of the Romanian Greek-Catholic community from Bistrița concerning the setting-up of a confessional burial ground in Arhivele Naționale Direcția Județeană Bistrița Năsăud, *Fond Primăria Bistrița*, doc. 77/1894; doc. 127/1900; doc.120/1899 doc.37/1884 și doc. 44/1884.

⁵⁹ Rotar, *Moartea*, p. 66.

ethnic groups. At the end of the 19th century, the Romanian city authorities had partially managed to transform the various ethnical identities into a whole new one, a civic entity which assumed its status as a composite civic identity. The evolution and transformation of burial grounds show the intention of marking out the gap between the living and the dead. The modern burial ground went through a whole interesting and complex positioning experience. At first, it was a public space adjoining churches, bearing the holiness of the place, heavily attended by people. The nowadays modern cemetery, on the other hand, is located on the outskirts of cities, surrounded by walls and hidden by large trees. It is an image which implies a sort of mental closure and at the same time, the refusal of death.⁶⁰

As a conclusion, we want to underline the fact that analysing the Romanian legislation regarding death issued during the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century from a comparative perspective is only a small part of a more complex analysis in what solving death and mortality problems by the modern state is concerned. There are, nevertheless, many aspects left to be analysed. Among these, the medical management of death through the establishing of health and other specialised services. Other interesting aspects worthy of being examined are the systematization and reformation of burial grounds during World War I, an event which generated massive death rates throughout Europe and subsequently, new attitudes towards death. Therefore, many aspects can be developed around the legislative discourse which refers to the corpse and to burial grounds as “depositories” of human remains. Nevertheless, the essential is the multiple legal actions concerning the present subject of research during modern times clearly show new visions and behaviours related to the human corpse, transposed into mandatory norms. Still, as the legislative discourse in the domain is closely linked to direct relations of power, it rarely leaves room for further interpretations and explanations⁶¹.

⁶⁰ Louis-Vincent Thomas, *Rites de mort pour la paix des vivants*, Paris, Edition Fayard, 1996, p. 23.

⁶¹ Rotar, *Cadavre*, p. 71.

GERMAN WIDOWS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR: IMAGES OF RAGE AND REPRESSION

ERIKA QUINN¹

For the past twenty years, historians have observed that both their own work and contemporary understandings of the First World War have focused on the combat experience. As scholars began to investigate the home front, female experience of war, they investigated issues of food, clothing, citizenship, sexuality, and economics. When we look at contemporary sources from the war itself, we do see an overwhelming focus on the combatant experience, as evidenced by popular family magazines like *Die Gartenlaube* and *Simplicissimus*. They both provide heavy coverage of front line material with photos of artillery officers, infantry, field horses and pigeons, even down to mail delivery and most aspects of front line life, even some battlefield scenes, complete with corpses. Most of the serialized fiction published in these works also focused on male combatants.

Yet the popular press, as well as the visual arts and literature, did at times turn the lens to the home front. When they did, much of the attention was prescriptive, exhorting women to be quietly brave, to be willing to make sacrifices, to endure. To buy only German products, to cook creatively with rationed goods, to volunteer time and energy to support the war effort, to buy war bonds. For the most part, images and prescriptive literature kept a fairly cheery tone, even after 1916, when the slaughter at Verdun killed almost half a million German troops and real hunger set in at home.

Yet when we look for images of war widows—women who made the “ultimate sacrifice” for the war effort, we see very little portrayal of them. Official rhetoric praised these women as bonded to heroes, yet their pensions were meager and inadequate, and made dependent on the widow’s good (chaste and thrifty) behavior. This reluctance to portray those directly affected by the war clashed with an older set of values—the bourgeois cult of the dead of the nineteenth century. To honor the dead, women were “privileged mourners” who donned mourning costume, withdrew from society, and visited the cemetery frequently.² In this cult, bereavement and widowhood were very popular themes in the visual arts and literature of nineteenth century.³ A typical example is James Tissot’s 1868 painting “The Widow”, which depicts a woman in mourning dress, although with transparent black front panels above

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² Carol Acton, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain, Public Discourse*, Great Britain, Palgrave, 2007, p. 7.

³ Ursula Machtemes, *Leben Zwischen Trauer und Pathos: Bildungsbürgerliche Witwen im 19. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück, Universitätsverlag Rasch, 2001, p. 57.

the bust line—sitting outside on a bench with her child and handwork. The full color and realistic style of the work suggest that widowhood is a natural and even attractive state. Another example, this time from a less academic painting by Hermann Schlittgen, called “Grief” is much rougher; the women’s bodies merge into each other, their faces are drawn and emotional. The painter belonged to the Munich Secession of the early twentieth century, and his work, as well as that of other artists seems to suggest that only high art confronted the painful realities of widowhood in war or otherwise. Schlittgen’s work is remarkable also in that it depicts a group of women, whereas most depictions of widows or female mourners situate them alone.

When war broke out in 1914, the population of Germany labored, fought, waited and wondered under some central assumptions—that the war would be short and any suffering it caused would be equally distributed among all members of society. Within a year both assumptions were called into profound question. At least 600,000 women were widowed in the course of the war.⁴ Their social and economic status derived directly from their dead husbands’: widows’ pensions were based on the husband’s military rank as well as their class standing.⁵ As in the nineteenth century, the ideal for such widows was to live out the rest of their lives in chastity and unhealed sorrow. These provisions and prescriptions for war widows were inadequate and unfeasible: during the war, women had to head households, and step into other male responsibilities and activities. These disruptions of gender roles provoked anxiety about women gaining power. This anxiety and uncertainty, I argue, led to repression of any mention of widows or their experiences. Any faithful representation of their experience was repressed during the war: truth, critique, and even rage were possible to address or portray at beginning of the war and maybe afterward, but not during the war itself. Popular and high art bear this observation out: widows were depicted almost always alone, situated in domestic space and repose. They were not in action, nor in company. By containing widows’ pain through isolation and silence, its potentially disruptive power was repressed.

Before the war, Expressionist artists and naturalist writers had increasingly concerned themselves with psychological truths.⁶ This was evident in German Expressionism, one of whose main proponents, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, turned his attention to the war once it broke out. Prior to volunteering, Kirchner had studied street life in Berlin, and was particularly fascinated by the alienation he saw in the crowds. Once he had been dismissed

⁴ Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, London, Clarendon, 1993, p. 225.

⁵ Robert Weldon Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War, 1914-1939*, Ithaca, Cornell, 1984.

⁶ Wolfgang Langenbucher, *Der aktuelle Unterhaltungsroman: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theorie der massenhaft verbreiteten Literatur*, Bonn, Bouvier, 1974, p. 39.

from military service due to a breakdown, he devoted himself to depicting the war and its effects upon him and upon society. His early street scene, *Potsdamer Platz* (1915), uses sharp diagonals, heavy amounts of black and a vibrant green. It depicts two women in the left foreground, standing together on a circle of pavement. Behind them in the center of the image, a man steps off the sidewalk and his legs stretch across the street, straining toward the women, who nonetheless remain isolated and separate from him and other passers-by. The women are dressed elegantly, with one in full mourning garb. Scholars have suggested that the war widow likely is a prostitute using war widow's garb to evade police and provoke potential clients.⁷ For this study, however, it's the symbolic, not literal truth that's important: prostitutes and war widows were liminal figures who transgressed borders with their existences independent of male authority. Both widows and prostitutes bring into plain sight that which is not desirable, an observation borne out by the scarcity of depictions of widows after Kirchner's painting. Yet a study from 1914, *War Widows on the Street* (figure 1), plainly identifies the female figures as part of the public space. Their mourning garb is energetically sketched and Kirchner's portrayal of them is matter-of-fact; here he simply sees them as part of society, an unusual view. They are not isolated, nor are they situated in any kind of sacred space devoted to bereavement. This sketch suggests that life goes on, even for those directly touched by loss and the cult of the dead. Kirchner's own discomfort with the war allowed or even required him to confront it in ways others were unwilling to do.



Fig. 1: *War Widows on the Street*, Springer, p. 38.

⁷ Magdalena M. Moeller, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Die Straßenszenen 1913-1915*, Munich, Hirmer Verlag, 1993, p. 27; Peter Springer, *Hand and Head: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's Self-Portrait as Soldier*, trans. Susan Ray, Berkeley, UC Press, 2002, p. 37.

Popular magazines and newspapers paid but scant attention to women's plight during the war. The lack of images or news regarding widowhood is in some ways striking, since prior to the war it was a popular theme. Yet it also reveals the new priority of focusing on combatants on the front line. "The silence surrounding the hard, gray, everyday realities of wartime and postwar life is part of the pathos of hero worship."⁸ In literature as well as the visual arts, women's experience, particularly with death, was not a subject authors explored for the most part: their experiences were inferior or secondary to those of combatants and other men.⁹

The cult of death was propagated by the rhetoric of nationalism, which allegedly embraced the entire populace, elevating soldiers and their loved ones to heroic status. This nationalist belief required its participants to sacrifice for victory and honor.¹⁰ The glamour associated with combat did generate many war marriages, many of which ended in death or divorce.¹¹ "A War Wedding in Vienna" (figure 2), published in *Die Gartenlaube* in 1915, illustrates this glamorization of war weddings.¹² Despite the fact that the war has lasted well beyond original predictions, everyone is fit, well dressed, and clean. The male figure in the right foreground is likely a veteran of an earlier war, whose amputated leg serves as a reminder of the valor and righteousness of the nationalist cause and victory, perhaps. The older woman in the background, most likely the mother of the bride or groom, is a widow, a demographic commonplace, but nonetheless, her presence strikingly connects the bridal couple to death, despite the dashing uniforms of the officers and ornate sculptures of the church. This image, with its sentimental style, presents a sanitized, optimistic view of the war and of the young couple's future. Such traditional modes of seeing often led to acquiescence to the war.¹³ In order to curb the protest it feared as a result of war losses, the imperial state sought to contain information about the war's increasing cost and brutality. Statistics regarding battle deaths were suppressed after the initial phase of war, when casualty lists were posted at police stations and in newspapers. As they grew, communications about these death figures became more terse and private.

⁸ Karin Hausen, "The German Nation's Obligation to the Heroes Widows of World War I," in Margaret Randolph Higgonet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel, and Margaret Collins Weitz, eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, New Haven, CT, Yale, 1987, p. 140.

⁹ Catherine O'Brien, *Women's Fictional Responses to the First World War: A Comparative Study of Selected Texts by French and German Authors*, New York, Peter Lang, 1997, p. 1.

¹⁰ George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1990.

¹¹ Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918*, Cambridge, 1998, p. 118; Stephen Kern, *Anatomy and Destiny: A Cultural History of the Human Body*, Indianapolis, IN, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1975, p. 196.

¹² F. Doubek, "Eine Kriegstraumung in Wien", in *Die Gartenlaube* no. 1, 1915, p. 27.

¹³ Acton, *Grief*, p. 27.

Widows learned of their husbands' deaths either through the visit of their clergyman, or the delivery of official post. "The language of these letters validated the official reading of the war, but the ritual quickly lost its power to disguise the grisly circumstances in which soldiers were dying at the front."¹⁴



Fig. 2: "A War Wedding in Vienna".
Die Gartenlaube, 1915.

Widows also faced the painful uncertainty of waiting for news. That uncertainty, coupled with distrust of official sources of information, led to rumors and suspicions. "Assertions that many of the soldiers reported as 'having fallen on the field of honor' were actually terribly maimed or mentally ill and had been put into institutions, where they were to be hidden from their relatives" circulated widely, revealing the pain of loss and the intense difficulty of absorbing its reality, particularly when the bereaved had no bodily remains to confirm the death.¹⁵

Notification of a combat death is the subject of the drawing "Don't cry, be strong" (figure 3). The death announcement lays abandoned on the floor as the younger woman weeps in the older woman's – her mother or mother-in-law's arms.¹⁶ Again, this drawing is a bit more expressionist in style with rougher strokes and bolder emotion certainly than the "realist," sentimental style of "A War Wedding." This image portrays emotion and the darker side of war more directly. Yet the caption belies this image its message one of repression, to be strong. Why be strong? Because women were the moral

¹⁴ Chickering, *Imperial*, p.101.

¹⁵ Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War*, trans. Margaret Ries, Oxford, Berg, 1997, pp. 243-44.

¹⁶ J. Müller-Matzdorf, "Nicht weinen—stark sein!", in *Die Gartenlaube*, no. 50, 1915, p. 1059.

anchor in the separate spheres ideology—the nurturing, emotional heart of the family. Yet at the same time women were seen as dangerously weak, possibly hysterics whose constitutions were dangerously weakened by the strain of war.¹⁷ Yet women dominated the home front: they stepped into men’s jobs and also became heads of households, living in increasingly inter-generational, blended families. These new strains and responsibilities were seen as potential political threats, both to the war effort and the social status quo. As work by Belinda Davis and others has shown, women could mobilize and organize their discontent into political action that challenged the state and its legitimacy.¹⁸ Thus, government officials, pastors and nationalists all called on women to contain their grief; to prohibit it from polluting others and unhinging the bonds of silent suffering and stoic waiting and enduring.



Fig. 3: “Don’t cry, be strong!”,
Die Gartenlaube, 1915.

To this end, official state rhetoric claimed that all sectors of society bore equal burdens in supporting the war effort, and labored to convince citizens that rationing, conscription, and even battle deaths were affecting citizens in an egalitarian fashion. This fiction became harder and harder to sustain by 1916, as harsh winters and high death counts began to fracture the “civilian peace” into resentful, mistrusting groups. By then, most of the population did not want any more news of the war.¹⁹ Because they received state aid based on their

¹⁷ Jason Crouthamel, *The Great War and German Memory: Society, Politics and Psychological Trauma, 1914-1945*, Exeter, University of Exeter, 2009, pp. 39-40.

¹⁸ Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000; Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I*, Cambridge, 2004.

¹⁹ Daniel, *The War*, p. 233.

husbands' service, soldiers' wives were scrutinized for self-indulgence or disloyalty, to make sure they deserved help from the state. Widows, too, were subjected to harsh observation from pension bureaucrats and fellow civilians alike.²⁰

During the war, death and mourning were intensely politicized: the cult of the dead soldier arose 'in order to allow the personal destiny of each soldier to be subsumed and revalued under the destiny of the nation and to justify to their families the temporary or permanent loss of a son or husband in war.'²¹ This cult was collective and conformist: a man's own personality and life were consumed within the tropes of defensive war, self-sacrifice and redemption through death.²² Per official discourse, the death of a loved man was an honorable "sacrifice; . . . the gain was said to outweigh the personal loss."²³ Soldiers who subscribed to this understanding of their service in the war discouraged their loved ones from grieving: the sanctity and redemptive quality of their sacrifice would be undermined if the meaning of their death were called into question, or if mourners emphasized their own loss and pain at the expense of soldiers' heroism.²⁴ A German officer called on women to avoid mourning costume and in doing so to resist consumerism and "chicness". For him, wearing black denoted servility to French fashion and rendered its wearers unworthy of honoring the fallen. Purportedly a Berlin newspaper suggested the replacement of mourning clothes, which 'tend to depress the spirit' with a nationalist pin.

Thus, how those 'left behind' grieved reflected upon the war's meaning, and so shaping expressions of mourning became part of public policy: many pleas were made to women to cease their unscripted public displays of grief.²⁵

²⁰ David Crew, *Germans on Welfare: From Weimar to Hitler*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 206; Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 278. See also Bruno Grabinski, *Weltkrieg und Sittlichkeit: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Weltkriegsjahre*, Hildesheim, 1917.

²¹ Karin Hausen, 'The "Day of National Mourning",' in Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith, eds., *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations*, Toronto, The University of Toronto Press, 1997, pp. 127-28.

²² Bernd Hüppauf, 'Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg,' in *Ansichten vom Krieg: Vergleichende Studien zum Ersten Weltkrieg in Literatur und Gesellschaft*, Königstein, West Germany, 1984, pp. 55-91.

²³ Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 35.

²⁴ Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice and the Great War*, Chicago, 2004; Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18 Understanding the Great War*, trans. Catherine Temerson, New York, Hill and Wang, 2002, pp. 177, 225.

²⁵ Hausen, 'The "Day of National Mourning",' pp. 127-48; Audoin-Rouzeau, p. 225; 'Keine "Trauerkostüme",' in *Kunstwart und Kulturwart* 27, no. 24 (1914), p. 378; Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1983, p. 270; John Williams, *The Home Fronts: Britain, France, and Germany 1914-1918*, London, Constable, 1972, p. 166.

Ideally, survivors were to express loss through commemorative activities. These were public, ritualized events in which widows played a supporting role as proud witnesses to their husbands' heroism.²⁶ If they did mourn in non-commemorative ways, traditional, private forms were to be upheld, as this image of *Totensonntag* (a mainly Lutheran day of mourning) depicts (figure 4).²⁷ Cemetery visits were increasingly impractical or meaningless, as bodies were not shipped home even if they were intact. So while this image seems to address wartime losses, it frames the bereaved in a traditional setting—the church cemetery—mourning “normal”, i.e. peacetime losses. The sole female mourner in the image is both universal and contained within the sacred space, her disruptive powers tamed, as “graves essentially became extensions of domestic space.”²⁸ She is inactive, paying her respects to the dead.



Fig. 4: “Totensonntag”.
Die Gartenlaube, 1918.

Once the war ended, it seems that critique of its goals and policies became possible. Indeed, the political fragmentation of the Weimar era is notorious, as is the disruption the surrender and concomitant socialist revolution wreaked on the political and social landscape. While the newly elected representatives to the German Republic sought to hammer out a suitable

²⁶ Frantzen, p. 4; Annette Becker, “Remembering and Forgetting in the First World War in Western Europe,” in Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle, eds., *Ideas of Europe since 1914: The Legacy of the First World War*, Great Britain, Palgrave, 2002, p. 102.

²⁷ G. Schilling, “Totensonntag,” in *Simplicissimus*, vol. 23, no. 32 (5. November 1918), p. 387.

²⁸ The fact that this image was printed in the midst of a general German collapse, but one week shy of the official armistice, heightens its symbolic peacemaking power. Monica Black, *Death in Berlin: From Weimar to Divided Germany*, Cambridge, 2010, p. 34.

peace with the Allies at the Paris Peace Conference, caricaturists had a field day. A cartoon of a wealthy woman mourning her husband's sudden deaths in foxtrot class attacks the privileged of society and implies that they have not been touched by true suffering.²⁹ A drawing from 1919 makes the point even more explicitly: two widows converse on a balcony and say, "They argue over captured territory, and we don't even know where our husbands are buried."³⁰ Here again, the women are removed from the public sphere, yet they do present some criticism (figure 5). They illustrate the miscommunication between policy makers and those on the receiving end, as ordinary women accused (male) peacemakers of muddled priorities. The diplomats and politicians who allegedly are representing the interests of the nation seem to pay no mind to the suffering of their citizens. This image calls the priorities of the war into question and expresses a profound sense of betrayal by policymakers.



Fig. 5: "Die Witwen".
Simplicissimus, 1919.

Such critiques grew stronger as women sought to organize themselves, express their right to retain the employment they had gained during the war, and convince bureaucrats of their rights to war survivors' pensions. Such activities required strenuous effort as widows had to demonstrate fitness and desperation. The last images of study here are by Käthe Kollwitz, whose son Peter died in the first months of the war. Her pacifist and socialist sympathies were strengthened by this experience, and she became an active, vocal critic of

²⁹ J. U. Engelhard, 'Die trauernde Braut,' in *Simplicissimus* vol. 25, no. 17 (21 July 1920), p. 236.

³⁰ J. Wackerle, 'Die Witwen,' in *Simplicissimus* vol. 24, no. 3 (15. April 1919), p. 45.

the war and of postwar state policies. Among her other works are drawings calling attention to starving children and the need to grant abortion rights to women. In 1921 she embarked on creating a seven-piece study of war victims and survivors meant to bring home the costs of war. These seven woodcuts are her most important artwork of the Weimar years. They feature under the general title "War" images of volunteers, their parents, widows, mothers, dead infants, and hungry people. The series was published in 1923 and presented a set of thematic, symbolic works to the public.³¹ In both *Widow I* and *II*, Kollwitz presents isolated women in bold lines and shadows (figures 6 and 7). The first widow's pregnancy and the second's possibly dead infant portray the immediate consequences and costs of war upon vulnerable lives. In both prints, the women are alone and suffering. Their large hands and feet emphasize their life as laborers and imply the additional burdens the widows have borne as a result of the loss of male labor and contributions. Kollwitz was outraged about the paltry pensions such women received, particularly in light of earlier nationalist rhetoric.³² The widows depicted by Kollwitz, even though still contained in the private sphere, serve as reminders of vulnerability and loss during and after wartime.



Fig. 6: "Die Witwe I".

³¹ Amy Namowitz Worthen, "Käthe Kollwitz," in Louise R. Noun, ed., *Three Berlin Artists of the Weimar Era: Hannah Höch, Käthe Kollwitz, Jeanne Mammen*, Des Moines, IA, Des Moines Art Center, 1994, p. 59.

³² For information regarding pensions, see Bessel, p. 223; Crew, 222, 245, 563; Birthe Kundrus, *Kriegerfrauen: Familienpolitik Und Geschlechterverhältnisse Im Ersten Und Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Hamburg, Hans Christians Verlag, 1995, p. 152.

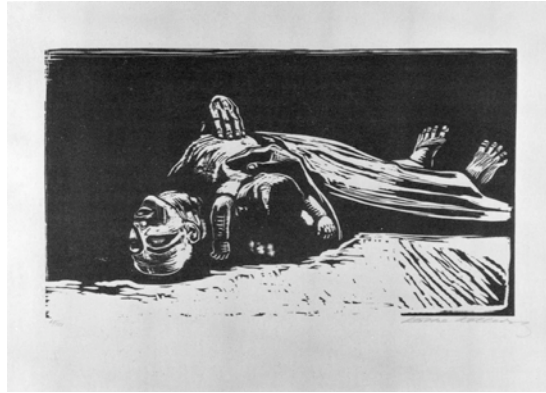


Fig. 7: “Die Witwe II”.
www.moma.org.

During World War One, much lip service was paid to war widows as heroic figures who willingly sacrificed those closest to them to the national cause. Such depictions drew heavily on the late-nineteenth century bourgeois conception of bereavement and widowhood. As the war made it increasingly impossible for women to conduct themselves in a manner deemed acceptable by the previous century’s standards, society faced some difficult cultural conflicts. Recognition about the sweeping social and cultural changes the war inaugurated was difficult for most to grant; instead, they focused on victory and the status quo at home. Images of mourning women and widows in particular point out these tensions. Widows were problematic figures: as seen in popular magazines and high art, society sought to contain their disruptive potential. Accurate depictions of the emotional pain or material deprivations of widowhood were not presented during the war itself, and afterward only by committed pacifists or political cartoonists. These images, while powerful critiques of the war and its effects, still portrayed widows in domestic space. The women are powerless and isolated victims whose plight needs resolving by others. In this way, even the scathing critiques continue to keep widows in their “place” and contain their potential disruptive power.

PLACES FOR A CULT OF MEMORIES IN THE ITALIAN POST-SECULAR CITY

LUIGI BARTOLOMEI¹

Foreword

I will approach the topic announced in the title from an architectural and liturgical point of view, in relation to my specific expertise. Therefore I will pay particular attention to the liturgical action of contemporary funeral rituals and to the spaces those ritual require or simply suggest.

Looking now to the spaces for death rituals in contemporary Italian cities, we can easily recognize a recent flourishing of new proposals both in relation to a new diversification of traditional elements, and in relation to a sudden emergence of building typologies previously unknown in our geographical context.

1.1 Traditional places for memories in Italian Culture

Since St. Cloud Edict, issued by Napoleon in 1804, the typical and Historical seat of physical memories, and the main spatial manifestation of funeral rituals in Europe is the network of cemeteries. Even their last and contemporary changes cannot avoid the deeply funded historical background whose first manifestation and figurative reference can be seen in Italy in the Tuscan tradition of “Camposanti”, and first of all in the one of Pisa, the first cemetery who has been called in this way since 1287.(fig.1)

Looking at this well-known cemetery, we immediately understand that the funeral traditions in Italy do not lead to the creation of grave-yards (in the etimological sense of the word) but to buildings, or even cloisters, always surrounded by important walls or arcades as we can see both in historical examples and in contemporary existing project (the Monumental Cemetery of Parabita² - fig.2- , or the well-known in Modena by Aldo Rossi³- fig.3-, or the one in Voghera by Antonio Monestiroli⁴-fig.4-)

Starting from these examples one can take the opportunity to elaborate some considerations by means of architecture, and, looking at European cemeteries, despite the discussed debate on the common Christian roots of the ancient continent, it is easy to recognize that the physical structures European peoples use to honor their dead show radical different solutions and conceivements, and even if both grass and natural northern cemeteries, and the built southern ones have been interpreted in the light of christian message as

¹ PhD. Associate Professor, Università di Bologna, Italy.

² 1967-1982 by Alessandro Anselmi and Paola Chiatante – Gruppo GRAU.

³ “San Cataldo Cemetery in Modena, 1971”; cfr. Arduino Cantafora (a cura di), *Necropolis: la città ideale della memoria*, Bologna, Clueb, 2008.

⁴ « V° Ampliamento del Cimitero Maggiore di Voghera, 1995 », cfr. Antonio Monestiroli, *Il cimitero maggiore di Voghera*, introduzione di Luciano Semerani, Milano: F. Motta, 2004.

the Garden of Even, in the first case, and the Town of God in the other, this does not stop to see in these “lieux des memoires”, that is in these “spaces of collective memory”, strong connections with pre-Christian traditions which funeral rituals absorbed and now convey.

The complex syncretism connected to funeral rituals and to their regional diversification is such an important and evident issue that is considered even by Catholic Church Official Documents. The continuity of local traditions and regional costumes toward funeral rituals has pushed the Church to write, in the actual official book for funeral rites, edited in 1974⁵, that

“Christians cannot neither ignore nor come up to eventual differences in the conceptions or behaviors of the people of their time or of their Country. It had to do with family traditions, with local customs or organized burial services, Christians welcome with pleasure what they recognize well in it....”

In relation to the stratification of regional and historical traditions about funerals, this document issued by the Italian Conference of Bishops in 1974 appears to be similar to the ones promoted by the Church of the 4th century, when gentile gestures and traditions began to be re-signified and absorbed in the Church life rather than destroyed. The attention the Church still deserves to different funeral rituals is an important sign of the anthropological depth of death rituals. In them it is possible to find signs of the most entrenched traditions, the most enrooted in the human behavior, up to remote ages of Neanderthal, or to the most deep and hidden layers of our psyche.

1.2 The book for catholic rites delivered in 1974: the church as the typical place for liturgies.

The new instructions for funeral ritual, issued by Catholic Church after the IInd Vatican Council have to be considered also from another point of view. In fact they substitute the old typology of funeral rite, with three new possible funeral typologies, with important changes occurred not only and not simply in the spaces, but also in the timing and rhythm of funeral celebrations.

The book for funeral ritual edited in 1974 has to be considered therefore one of the most important documents on the substantial changes occurred in the Italian society in relation to death and dead.

We can see in this diagram - fig.5 - the rule of a traditional funeral according to the only typology considered in the ancient *Rituale Romanum*.⁶ After death, the corpse usually was laid out in the same home in which the person lived, in order to create a possible visual contact between the dead and the bereaved surrounded by the objects which belonged to the person and were known by his relatives.

⁵ From the Italian “Rito delle Esequie”, approved in September 1974, the 29th.

⁶ Cfr. among many editions, we can refer to the one available on book.google.it: *Rituale Romanum*, Pauli V Pont. Max. Jussu editum, edito da Baldassarre Moreti 1688.

After the burial chamber in which the body was conserved a few hours, (nothing to do with contemporary embalming practices so common in USA and increasing in several European Funeral Homes), a first cortege with priests and deacons in black dresses took the corpse to the Church for the Funeral Mass and the Final Farewell, and then a second procession, with prayers and with the priest, was supposed to carry the casket to its final burial place inside the cemetery. The color of the celebration was black and the liturgical traditional equipments for this occasion were macabre, with floods of skulls and crossbones as we can observe in some hidden church storage room in which this furniture are still conserved.

A part from the dark and baroque scenery of this kind of exequies, the missal book of 1974 preserves this ritual (in three places and two procession) as the main and more traditional one, although nowadays it is practiced almost only in the countryside. In fact the 1974 book for ritual specifies two others way in which the funeral can be celebrated, thus underlining different places for it.⁷

1.3 The book for catholic funerals: the funeral ritual inside the cemetery chapel

The second typology of funeral ritual foreseen by the 1974 book of rituals, takes place in the cemetery and it forecasts only a procession between the cemetery chapel and the burial place.

Finally, the only place considered in the third and last kind of funeral ritual which the book envisages, is the dead's house, and the whole liturgy takes place in this space and in this space has its accomplishment.

We can therefore underline that the places that this document takes into account for the Christian liturgy, are only the ones which have been someway "consecrated": or by the Bishop (like in case of churches, Chapels, and so on) or by the believer's Christian everyday life, in compliance with his being Priest, King, and Prophet as the Christian believer is by virtue of the Baptism, according to the Christian theology.

Only the final farewell prayer can be made in front of the tomb or in front of the Coffin in cases of cremation.

These considerations lead to infer that every space which is not related with the liturgical and sacramental life of the person has not to be considered suitable for the celebration of his funerals according to the Catholic Church.

1.4 The new book for catholic rites and the introduction of crematoria as places for the last prayer

We have to mention again the 1974 book for funeral rituals, because, it is in it that is mentioned explicitly and for the first time the cremation building as a

⁷ The book for funeral rites delivered in 1974 by the Conference of Italian Bishops is available also on-line in this web-site: <http://www.liturgia.maranatha.it/Esequie/coverpage.htm>.

possible place for prayer. The possible option in favor of cremation has been accepted by the Catholic Church already in 1963 with the Instruction “De Cadaverum Crematione: Piam et Constantem”⁸ (by Paul VI), and remarked as an acceptable practice with *Ordo Exsequiarum* (15 august 1969, n.15)⁹ always underlining the traditional preference for inhumation.¹⁰

The 1974 book for Christian funerals quotes cremation, and admits the crematorium itself as possible place for the last Christian farewell prayer, permitting to celebrate in this place those rituals which were foreseen in front of the tomb.

Crematoriums are interesting cases of study from the architectural point of view because they went through a completely reinterpretation after the Second World War, that is after the Holocaust. Because of the shock the whole humanity and especially European people suffered after the divulgation of Bikernau’s pictures, the global perceptive approach to crematoriums has changed such in an irreversible way that not only and not simply nobody could see (for example) Peter Behrnes crematorium (1911-12 in Hagen, Germany – fig.6) with the same eyes, but even nobody could understand the reasons of his proposal. Especially the Florentine tower-bell of this pseudo-church, showing its function of chimney, after the dramatic experience of Auschwitz suddenly appeared almost permeated by an ambiguous and threatening atmosphere that the author could never have foreseen.

Contemporary projects for crematoriums have completely abandoned any reference to the aspect of incinerator, and have lost their chimneys. What they have maintained and even increased since Peter Behrens Project, is the connection with the architecture of temples, evident both in the New Berlin Crematorium built by Axel Schultes in 1998 – fig.7 - and in the Parma New one designed by Paolo Zermani and finished in 2009 – fig.8 - . In Italy even the official name of these spaces has gradually shifted from “crematorio” or “forno crematorio” (whose literal translation is crematorium oven) to the one of “Tempio della cremazione”, that is “cremation’s temple”, trying to completely delay any reference to mass exterminations.

In Ravenna, the new Crematorium (project by Bruno Minardi, 2008-2010, - fig.9 -) has been drawn under the inspiration of the architecture of humble fishing shed but it entrusts to its corten walls the evocative expression

⁸ SUPREMA SACRA CONGREGATIO SANCTI OFFICII, *Instructio Piam et constantem: de cadaverum crematione*, in «Acta Apostolicae Sedis» 56 (1964) 822-823; anche in EV II, pp. 106-109.

⁹ RITUALE ROMANUM *ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum, Ordo exsequiarum*, editio typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Città del Vaticano 1969 (OE); ed. it. RITUALE ROMANO *rimformato a norma dei decreti del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II e promulgato da Papa Paolo VI, Rito delle esequie*, Edizioni CEI, Roma 1974.

¹⁰ Felice di Molfetta, “Inumazione e Cremazione. Tradizione Cristiana, Ritualità, Legislazione”, in *Rivista Liturgica* n.5 (settembre/ottobre 2006), edizioni il Messaggero, Padova.

of its meaning. This is one of the most interesting examples to show the poetic contemporary use of this material which endures decaying, and in its decay is eternal. Also the new monumental access to the Jewish cemetery in Bologna, inaugurated in November 2010 by BETarchitetti (Daniele De Paz e Giacomo Ricci – fig.10 -)¹¹, uses the same material.

2.1 Others spaces for funeral rituals required by lay society: farewell rooms

We quoted the 1974 book for Christian rituals just to offer an overlook on the traditional places for burial in Italian society. However, nowadays, new spaces for funeral celebrations are making their entrance in the stage of contemporary society and especially we have to refer to *farewell rooms* and *Funeral Homes*.

Although we will underline a difference in these two families of spaces, with both these new kinds of buildings we are facing a revolution in the Italian history of funeral building typologies. The emerging of a new kind of building is a phenomenon that must be kept in the highest regard. It is a sign of deep changes in the structure of our society and in the collective consciousness.¹²

The difference between Farewell Rooms and Funeral Homes is not only and not simply related to their respective *uses*, but also to their *origins*.

The request for farewell rooms began, in Italy and above all in northern part of the country, with the pressing demand of many lay, agnostic and atheist associations which claimed for a specific space in which they could decently celebrate the last farewell of one of their member without recurring to a church. From the sociological point of view it is quite interesting to underline that people “without GOD”, (in the etimological sense of the word) are not people without rituals, and, (what may be a paradox), they need their own proper spaces as any other religion group wishes.

Municipalities in most cases supplied these spaces, providing and furnishing (or restoring) rooms already present in cemeteries but almost abandoned or forgotten.

In other cases municipalities decided to build up new spaces to allow lay funerals or rituals. In both cases, we are dealing with small interventions, relating to small building, according to the little economic investment a municipality can afford today.

The monumental Cemetery in Bologna is perhaps one of the best examples in our region, because its administration took the opportunity of this new request to launch the restoration of its ancient Pantheon and to call an

¹¹ Luigi Bartolomei, “Nuovo ingresso al Cimitero ebraico” in *Il Giornale dell'Architettura*, n.90, dicembre 2010 – gennaio 2011, p.6.

¹² Giorgio Praderio, Luigi Bartolomei, “New architectures for funeral houses in the contemporary secularized Italian society. Premises and results of an interdisciplinary university research activity”, in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis series Historica*, 2/2010, pp. 469-480.

artist (Flavio Favelli) to create a permanent set for lay celebrations. The Pantheon renewal has been inaugurated in July, 2008 – fig. 11 –.

On the average, if we speak from an architectural perspective, almost all the actions carried on by municipalities have reached good results in all Italian cities who promoted them, even if, of course, for the most part they pertained limited contexts and little architectural interventions.

Farewell rooms are quite customizable places, in which everyone can “invent” his own ritual, to entertain a visual relationship with the deceased and thus creating a space for private memories, inner dialogue, and for a calm elaboration of death.

Farewell rooms allow a funeral strictly “tailored” to the particular personality of the deceased. They are therefore the seats for a Personalization of death: affective and personal ties here emerge during the vigil; the singular personality of the deceased is remembered during the celebration. Farewell Rooms are the spatial evidence of a personalized eschatology.¹³

2.2 *Funeral Homes*

On the other hand, far away from the awareness of lay and atheist associations, an increasing disaffection towards traditional catholic religion and a growing religious indifference drive society toward new spiritual needs which require new spaces and new architectural interpretations.

The progressive modifications in human relationships towards death, up to its total ban from towns, go hand in hand with the progressive and global urbanization has we.

Dead cannot inhabit houses as death cannot inhabit towns.... Therefore between death and (lay or religious) funeral one can notice a sort of state on uncertainty: where to put the corpses, and where and how to give them their proper honor?

In addition we have also to consider that almost the 80% of European deaths occurs inside hospitals, where (at least in Italy) burial chambers immediately reflects death like a medicine's defeat and they find their collocations inside the basements, often not too far from trashcans and litter bins.

Funeral companies have noticed this “dead time” between death and funeral ritual, and they are giving answer to the implicit request for more decorous spaces for the vigil to the corpses with “funeral homes”.

One of the main differences between farewell chambers and funeral homes in Italy, is the fact that, while the firsts are provided by each municipality according to the needs of non-religious population, the seconds are provided by private funeral companies with the intent to supply the needs

¹³ Thomas Quartier, “Personalised eschatology. Crossing Borders in Dutch Death Rituals” ,*Annales Universitatis Apulensis series Historica*, 2/2010, p. 489.

of a whole population demanding for decent places for its dead, in order to permit to the catholic believers the ancient and traditional vigil, and to the lay citizens the celebration of a lay funeral in a decent place.

2.3 Italian Funeral Homes and their architectural interpretation

In the last five years in Italy, three new funeral homes opened their doors, all of them in the northern part of the country, where the population is less set in their traditions.

The first Italian funeral home opened its doors in Milan in 2006, promoted by Alcide Cerato (san Siro Funeral Company)-fig. 12 -; the second one appeared in 2009 in Serra San Quirico (Ancona) for want of Bodoni Funeral Company – fig.13 - , and the third and very recent one, has just been inaugurated in Modena, (not too far from Bologna) in June 2011, by Gianni Gibellini's funeral company, organizer of one of the most important funeral in our time, the one of Luciano Pavarotti – fig.14 -.

In the global uncertainty of their whole functional program, (for some aspects uncertain even to the same operators as I will try to demonstrate) we cannot ask to these new building to have a clear architectural care, and in fact they do not demonstrate to have any, except for Gibellini funeral home in which a certain attention to thresholds and paths shyly begins to appear. For all the rest, these buildings are nothing else than industrial sheds simply “dressed” in order to simulate possible interiors of different houses.

A certain uncertainty or ambiguity dominates both the functional program and the architectural one, and this means that is difficult to clearly understand what they are built for and which typological paradigm have they taken as model. For example, Gibellini's Funeral Home (whose name is TERRACIELO) has inside even a chapel, or a double-high space which everyone would read as a chapel, - fig.15 - also because it contains a beautiful wooden crucifix by the contemporary sculptor Flavio Senoner, an ambo and pews. The Bishop of Modena Mons. Antonio Lanfranchi, participated to the opening ceremony and blessed the building but, on June the 24th, he issued a document¹⁴ in which (in accordance to the documents that we have already quoted) he specifies that the funeral Mess can be celebrated only in a Consecrated Church, and so, we can deduce, not in Gibellini's building. Therefore, and probably in opposition to what this chapel was built for, this big aula inside the building will be used simply as a big room for lay funerals and the typical catholic signs in it must be removed, or they will be accepted simply like furniture, whose permanence during each lay funeral ritual will depend on

¹⁴ “Istruzione sul luogo di Celebrazione dei Funerali”, Modena, 24 Giugno 2011. Available also online http://www.webdiocesi.chiesacattolica.it/cc_i_new/documenti_diocesi/118/2011-06/23-334/Esequie.pdf.

the particular and personal religiosity of the deceased or on what the bereaved thought about it.

From the architectural point of view, looking for some inspiring models for these firsts Italian examples, we found a common reference in the north American tradition (explicitly confessed or even flaunted by the same promoters) and an interior design which shows its roots in the architecture for hotels or motel, in which is possible to rent a room.

The personalization of death toward which our society is setting off, entails a personalization of the spaces in which death is celebrated. This leads funeral homes to become a sort of thematic parks, in which a series of “rent-houses” can be arranged inside industrial structural framework and in the total independence from it. These “hotels for dead” try to imitate the atmosphere of each single private home, but, being definitely no one, they are simply a simulacrum, a fake copy. They will not be architectures, but rather curious “stratifications of objects and carpets”: an incredible heap of junks.

Compared to the personalization of the rite, architecture cannot offer the same possibilities of personalization unless becoming something kitsch, a simply amount of removable objects. The personalization of the ritual implicates the total loss of architecture.

The celebration of death will be snatched out of architecture’s hands, and will become matter for decorators.

Refusing architecture implicates the impossibility to celebrate the human essence which is the heart of every artistic expression. If (implicitly or explicitly) the death ritual aspires to concentrates itself simply on the celebration of the dead’s psychological personality, art and architecture are not invited, and they are definitely offside.

In the passage from hospital’s morgues to contemporary funeral homes, we have increased the quality and the cleanliness of spaces, but, from another perspective, we are simply passed from the ugliness of morgues to the falsity of pseudo-houses.

Personally, like designer and teacher of architecture, I think we need something different, a new aesthetical research. I think we all expect another kind of spaces to celebrate the final farewell to our beloved: something really different from the embalmed atmosphere of fake private houses.

What we do with our students is to study funeral homes like new occasions for true architectural expressions. In front of death, architecture becomes an interpretation of the whole human being that everyone can fill with his most intimate memories, creating a global surrounding atmosphere like music sometimes does.

Only an evocative atmosphere will be able to appease our grieves and comfort somehow our loss by means of the use of a language of signs and symbols so deeply en-rooted in our psyche which is able to generate a universal

and wrapping sense of beauty. What we ask for our funeral houses, is therefore a true work of architecture, an authentic work of art, like in the past each work related to death was: both in the Pyramids (“farewell rooms of the past”) and in the common cemeteries of our towns, in which, as you well know, almost each tomb is a sign of dignity and consolation by reason of its beauty, being simply an authentic work of art: because each work of art has an undeletable spiritual value.

In the pictures:



Fig.1: Camposanto, Pisa, 1287.



Fig.2: The Monumental Cemetery of Parabita, Lecce, 1982. Gruppo GRAU (Gruppo Romano Architetti Urbanistici) with Alessandro Anselmi and Paola Chiatante.



Fig.3: San Cataldo Cemetery in Modena, 1971, Arch. Aldo Rossi.



Fig. 4: Voghera Cemetery enlargement, 1994-2003, Arch. Antonio Monestiroli.

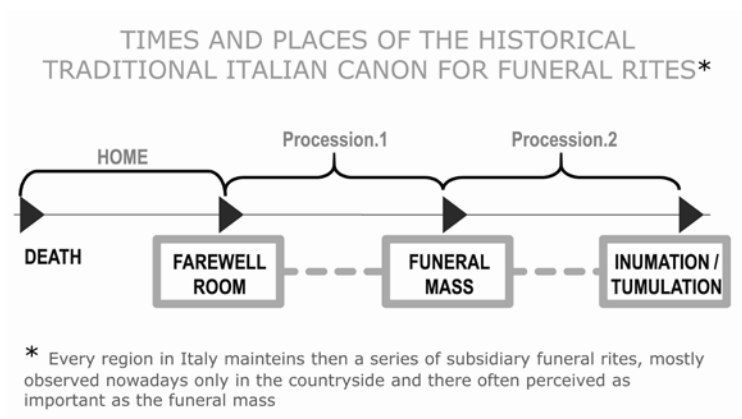


Fig.5: A diagram of the Italian traditional funeral.

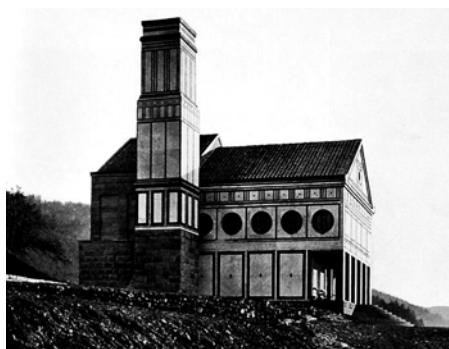


Fig.6: Peter Behrens Crematorium, Hagen, Germany, 1911-12.

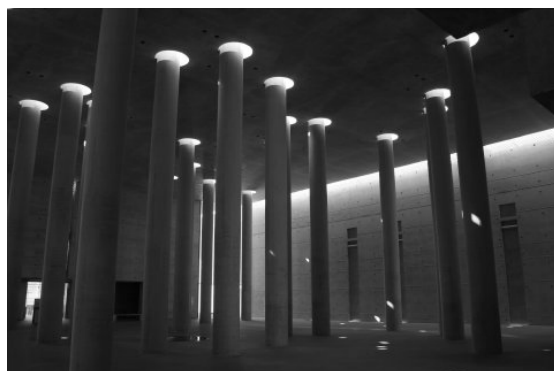


Fig.7: Berlin Crematorium, Arch. Axel Schultes, 1998.



Fig.8: Parma Crematorium Temple, Arch. Paolo Zermani, 2009.



Fig.9: New Crematorium in Ravenna, arch. Bruno Minardi, 2008-2010.



Fig.10: New main door to the Jewish cemetery in Bologna, BETarchitetti (Daniele De Paz e Giacomo Ricci), 2010.

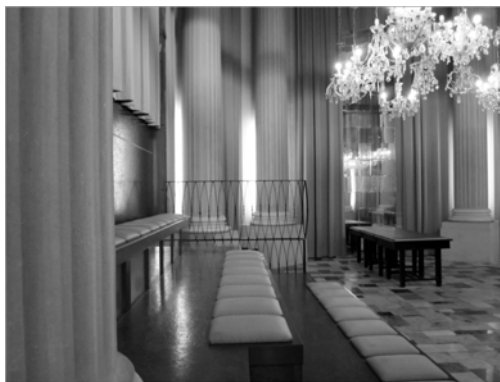


Fig.11: Pantheon: an ancient space restored to celebrate lay funerals in Bologna's Certosa. Flavio Favelli (Artist), 2008.



Fig.12: San Siro Funeral Home, Milan, 2006.



Fig.13: Bodoni Funeral Home, Serra San Quirico (Ancona), 2009.



Fig.14: Inner court of “Terraciello”, Gianni Gibellini’s funeral home, Modena, 2011.



Fig.15: The double-high room inside “Terraciello”, Modena.

EUROPEAN ECHOES UPON ROMANIAN CREMATIONIST MOVEMENT¹

MARIUS ROTAR²

Generally speaking, movements of ideas can be defined as functional structures at the society level. This means that such a movement with a very precise target would try to produce changes into the society. With its own group of supporters, or fanatics as some would argue, and also trying to increase its popularity, a specific movement also has grounds for action, among which propaganda is maybe the best tool for its aims. When discussing cremationism, different societies supporting this manner of disposal of the body could be integrated in the scheme described above. During the time between these cremation societies existed connections and mutual influence. The North American case is the most relevant example in this direction.³

In Romania, such a *cremation society* was established on March 7, 1923 in Bucharest. The society was initially entitled *Nirvana* and later changed its name into *Cenușa* (*Ashes*). The idea of establishing a society of this type was born in the private residence of the former Minister of Labour, Mr Grigore Trancu from Iasi. Over at tea, five people decided to make this happen. Ion Costinescu, Minister of Health in 1930 and twice mayor of the capital, was elected Chairman. Vice-Chairs were Grigore Trancu from Iași and Gheorghe Gheorghian (twice mayor of the capital).⁴

The great achievement of this cremationist society was the opening at a short time after its establishment, of the *Cenușa* Crematorium in Bucharest, with the financial help of the Bucharest Mayor's Office. As compared to other cremationist societies in Central and South-Eastern Europe, this was a performance if we consider what happened in Hungary, Yugoslavia or Greece.

- In Greece – a society established in 1946 – no crematorium has been opened yet
- In Serbia -a society established in 1904 – a crematorium opened in 1964

¹ This paper was supported by CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PNII TE 54/2011.

² Ph.D. Researcher, "1Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia, Romania.

³ Stephan Prothero, *Purified by Fire. A history of Cremation in America*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001, p. 9. See also upon the early age of modern cremation Alessandro Porro, Bruno Falconi, Carlo Cristini, Lorenzo Lorusso, Antonia F. Franchini, „Modernity in medicine and hygiene at the end of the 19th century: the example of cremation”, *Journal of Public Health Research* (2012), 1, I,

<http://www.jphres.org/index.php/jphres/article/view/jphr.2012.e10/pdf> ; Thomas Laqueur, “Form in Ashes”, *Representations* (2008), 104, 1, pp.50-72.

⁴ Marius Rotar, *Eternitate prin cenușă. O istorie a crematoriilor și incinerărilor umane în România secolelor XIX-XXI*, Iași, Institutul European, 2011, pp. 135-150.

- Hungary – attempt to establish a society at the beginning of the twentieth century, but the first cremation took place in 1951 in Debrecen.
- Austria -a society established in 1874 - 1922 opening of the first crematorium in Vienna.⁵

Despite the fact that the first ideas sustaining cremationism appeared in Romania in the second half of the nineteenth century, we cannot say that an organized movement in this direction was in place at that time. From the perspective of this paper, it is important to mention that these earlier cremationist ideas in Romania appeared as a direct influence of European developments in the field during that period.

For example, Gheorghe Vuia, holder of a Ph.D. in medicine, published a paper on cremation in 1874, and cited many European cremationist ideas for his work. Vuia used footnotes in his paper, mentioning the works of Fernandez Papillon, Fuguier, Wegmann Ercolani, Federico Brunetti, Paolo Gorini or Polli. Also, he used French and German newspapers as sources for his paper, mentioning at the same time the important works in the area of cremationism of engineer Siemens and of Sir Henry Thompson.⁶

In Gheorghe Vuia's opinion, the reactivation of cremationist ideas in Europe at the second half of the nineteenth century represented a genuine spiritual revolution and healing for the western civilization. Given these circumstances, the Romanian people had to adopt cremation in order to be in trend with this progress of the European spirit. This had to be carried out with utmost urgency, because Romanians were often "followers" of an indifferent manner to die. This kind of indifferent death, in Vuia's opinion, was not consistent with the Latin origins of the Romanian people and also with the living reason of human beings. To conclude, in Vuia's opinion, adopting an attitude of indifference in front of cremation as well was a step back for the Romanian people⁷.

Vuia mentioned four possible methods to incinerate the body: that of Professor Poll from Milan, the method of Professor Federico Brunetti from Padua, of Professor Gorin from Lodi and of the engineer Siemens from Leipzig. On the other hand, the ideas of Sir Henry Thompson to use the human ashes as soil fertilizer were considered to be too extravagant, arguing that it was a trait of British trading spirit.⁸

C. I. Istrati, holder of a doctoral degree in medicine, president of the Romanian Academy for a while, supported cremationism in his Ph.D. thesis

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ George (Gheorghe) Vuia, doctorand în medicină, „Diferitele datine pentru asiederea mortiloru, cu privire la arderea cadavreloru”, *Transilvania*, VII, 21, 1874, pp.258-264; VII, 22, pp. 265-268.

⁷ Ibid., p. 266.

⁸ Ibid.

published in 1877.⁹ In Constatin I. Istrati's opinion, cremation represented a natural stage of mankind's evolution with the same role as burial, from the point of view of public utility. He stressed out the importance of the earlier cremationist ideas during the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century and also the cremation of the English poet Shelly in 1822.

But in Istrati's opinion, the main models of development of cremationism in the second half of the nineteenth century was Italy. He considered the Italian professor Coletti with his writings upon the topic in 1857 to be the father of cremationist ideas propaganda. Istrati described the first cremation that took place in Italy, reporting from the German newspaper *Illustrirte Leipziger Zeitung* on the cremation of Albert Keller. Also, Istrati described the cremation unit. It was urn-shaped as a Roman sarcophagus, two meters high, built of smooth stone. It used gas as fuel. The cremation process took about one hour and a half and the resulting ashes weighed about three kilograms (some parts of the body - the teeth and jaw had not been completely burnt).¹⁰

It is also worth mentioning that Istrati presented in his Ph.D. thesis in medicine the status of the Milan cremationist society, considering it to be a valuable model for a future Romanian cremationist society. He mentioned the scientific journal of this society, the attempt to establish regulations for cremation together with the Milan Mayor's Office and also the fact that a contest had been organized to erect a Crematorium in Milan. Istrati also quoted the experiments of professor Brunetti presented at the World Exhibition in Vienna in 1873.¹¹

In Istrati's opinion, the progress of cremation in Italy of those times could prove to be the best model for Romanians, due to the same strong religious feelings present both in Italy and in Romania. Also, he mentioned the cremationist progress in Great Britain (he stressed out the major contribution of Sir Henry Thompson) and also the cremationist progress in the Netherlands, the United States, Switzerland, Austria and Germany. In his opinion, the progress of cremation in France was slow, due to the Christian opposition, but he considered the great writer Victor Hugo to be one of the most important French cremationists.¹²

Istrati considered that the main impulse in the development of cremationism in the second half of the nineteenth century was the Franco-German War in 1870, when the great number of casualties and bodies emphasized the need for cremation. Constantin Istrati adopted the miasma

⁹ Constantin I. Istrati, *Despre Depărtarea Cadavrelor. Studiu de Hygienă Publică*, tip. Al. A. Grecescu, București, 1877.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 144.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 147.

¹² Ibid., p. 134.

theory arguments sustaining the need for cremation. He talked about the danger of the body decay and also about the danger of cemeteries. To support his arguments, he reported the experiments of professor Selmi from Mantua, Italy: during the decay of the body in the grave, some gas, microorganisms and also small parts of the body were released into the air representing a danger for public health. According to professor Selmi, an organic particle called Septa-pneuma was discovered in the cemeteries, giving rise to various harmful germs. If this Septa-pneuma had been injected to a healthy person, symptoms of typhoid fever would have appeared in just a few days.¹³

Istrati took the economic argument of cremation illustrating through the methods of cremation proposed by Brunetti and also by Sir Henry Thompson. In his opinion, the price of cremation in Romania would have been cheaper as compared to that in the western countries, due to the oil richness of Romanian lands of those times¹⁴.

A very important work on cremationist issues in Romania in the second half of the nineteenth century belonged to Athanasie Economu. He gave several public lectures on cremation and published all of these in a book in 1876. In his writings, there were many references to the European cremationist movement of those times but his attention was focused especially on Italy, France and Germany. In Economu's opinion, Italy and France were the sisters of Romania, due to their Latin origin and, in the case of France, due to the essential influence of its culture upon Romanian culture.¹⁵ From this point of view, Economu considered that Romania had to take advantage from the cremationist experience of these two countries. In the case of Italy, Economu mentioned the fact that many members of medical elites supported the idea of cremation in this country, some of whom were Polli, Pini, Coletti, Gori and others, who advised Romanian physicians to support cremation.¹⁶

As France was concerned, Economu also noticed, as Constantin Istrati had too, that the progress of cremationism had been slow due to the one feature of French culture. In his opinion, the most important ideas of civilization usually appeared in France, but soon after these moments appeared in France, they were neglected for a while, which allowed other countries to develop them. Also, the outcomes of the Franco-German war from 1870 represented in Economu's opinion another situation explaining the weak progress of cremationism as compared to Italy. Also, Economu mentioned the progress of cremation in Switzerland, Great Britain, the Netherlands and the United States.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 90-91.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

¹⁵ Athanasie Economu, *Cremațiunea sau arderea morților. Conferințe publice ținute în amfiteatrul de chimie din Spitalul Colțea la 24 Mai și 13 Iunie 1876 de...*, tip. Alessandru A. Grecescu, București, 1876.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 100-108.

Before World War I, the public lectures and the writings of Pandale Silva, holder of a doctoral degree in Economics, were of utmost importance. For Pandale Silva, the most important model for the development of cremationism in Romania was France. With this in mind, he published at the end of his book three French laws regulating cremation in Paris, adopted at the end of the nineteenth century, namely *the law on the freedom of funeral services*, adopted in 1887, *the Minister's Notice of May 28, 1890, on the transportation of bodies to be cremated in the Paris crematoria* and a last annex with *formalities and requirements to be met for the purpose of cremation in Paris*.¹⁷

Silva considered these laws essentials because through them, anyone could understand that the cremation/crematoria had the same equal status with burial/cemeteries.

But Pandale Silva's pro-cremation argumentation was a simple one: for instance he minimized the stand of the Catholic Church upon cremation and he did not mention the rejection of cremation by this Church in 1886. Therefore, in his opinion, the Church should not even comment on the matter, leaving "*the people to decide, as they were the only ones entitled to regulate and decide what to do with the body after death*".¹⁸ In his opinion, the best argument for cremation was the idea of equality of people in death. Also, Pandale Silva used cremation statistics at the beginning of the twentieth century, taken from French cremationist periodicals.

After the First World War Romanian cremation movement became a functional structure, due to the different changes:

1923 – the founding of the Cenușa Society

Initially, this Society was named Nirvana, but the Romanian cremationists changed its name to *Cenușa* because they were accused of being freemasons. Among its members, we can mention the former Minister of Labour, Grigore Trancu-Iași, the physician Ph.D. Nicolae Minovici and Radu D. Rosetti. During the interwar period, there were four mayors of Bucharest who supported cremationist ideas: Ion Costinescu, Al. G. Donescu, Lucian Skupiewski, and Gheorghe Gheorghian. The last two were cremated at the *Cenușa* Crematorium in Bucharest.

1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
14	44	92	120	180	210	190	170	386	428	520	620	800	822	911	993

Fig. 1: Numbers of the Cenușa Society members

¹⁷ Pandale Silva, *Cremațiunea și Foloasele ei. Studiu Medico-Social*, București, Lupta, 1914.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p.28

1925-1928 – the building and opening of the Cenușa Crematorium in Bucharest
The *Cenușa* Society had begun building the Crematorium in Bucharest on July 7, 1925, using bank loans and also the financial assistance of the Bucharest Mayor's Office.

The initial building plan of the *Cenușa* Crematorium in Bucharest belonged to one of the greatest Romanian architects – Duiliu Marcu, who was selected for this purpose in 1925 by the Bucharest Mayor's Office.

It is important to notice that when the *Cenușa* Crematorium was opened, the building was not finished. It had no roof and no windows. This shows the determination, idealism and fanaticism of Romanian cremationists during the interwar period.

1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
262	266	297	332	470	602	580	480	364	581	230	261

Fig. 2: Numbers of cremations in interwar Romania

The *Foreword* for the first issue of *Flacăra Sacră*, published in December 1934, explained the aims and novelty character of the journal. The practical side of cremation and the need of it in Romania were emphasized:

“The release of the first issue of the journal *Flacăra Sacră* marks the beginning of an ideological activity in our country regarding cremation, of knowing its purposes and reasons that helped it impose itself as a perfect means of dissolving the dead human substance without intervening or influencing religious beliefs”.¹⁹

Regarding the number of copies, they increased up to 3,000 in 1936.

The journal was also meant to be a place for debate on cremation. Cremation was supported at six levels, summarizing old and new ideas:

1. “the idea and practice of cremation chooses its followers from all walks of life, and it does not discriminate between them;
2. because it better reconciles the ethical and the aesthetic sense of the superior human being;
3. because it amplifies the grandeur of the cult of the dead;
4. because it raises the level of religious mysticism, raising awareness of the spiritual life, clearly showing that the body is nothing but ashes and only the soul survives;
5. because it ideally satisfies the imperative demands of hygiene;
6. because it favours great economic and social advantages”.²⁰

At the same time, a special characteristic of the cremationist movement was emphasized, namely that “*the existence and evolution of cremation is independent of the religious or political trends, having no connection at all*

¹⁹ „Cuvânt înainte”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1934), I, 1, p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid., p.2.

with any religion or political party"²¹. The final purpose of their agenda referred to the path of a future fight, giving the opposition of the Romanian Orthodox Church:

"cremation should be considered equal to burials as utility and purpose, and thus there should be no restriction when it comes to carrying out the full religious service".²².

On the other hand, the interwar Romanian cremationists and the reporters of the *Flacăra Sacră* journal were seen as reformers, aiming at educating people and at "levelling" them. They operated differently from their opponents and considered to be carrying out a mission. Such an image was not an original one; it can also be found in most of the pro-cremation speeches in the late nineteenth century²³. Five years after the release of the first issue of the journal, Mihai Popovici, engineer and secretary general of the *Cenușa* Romanian Cremation Society, tried to make his own balance. After the satisfaction of maintaining the periodical at the same level as the rest of periodicals issued during the interwar period, despite the pessimistic predictions from the beginning, he mentioned the material support received from the *Cenușa* Society to publish the journal, as well as its internal and external contributors. The issues of *Flacăra Sacră* showed very clearly the fact that Romanian interwar cremationists paid much attention to what was happening in Europe in the field of cremationism at that time. For instance, the periodical *Flacăra Sacră* published an article on cremationism in Europe, about the progress of building crematoria and illustrated this information with statistics and many photographs. Also, many pages were published in *Flacăra Sacră* regarding the activity of the International Cremation Federation and the various cremationist congresses organized by ICF or organized in different countries.

Besides these articles, *Flacăra Sacră* published many papers about the development of cremationism in different western European countries, trying to slowly prove the irreversible development of cremationism in the world. Therefore, Romanian cremationists honestly believed that by showing this evidence, nothing could stop the victory of cremationism in very few decades.

Also, some papers published in *Flacăra Sacră* were translations into Romanian of different works written by the leading representatives of the cremationist movement in Europe. Most articles from *Flacăra Sacră* mentioned the situation of cremations in France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Switzerland²⁴ or the Soviet Union (the soviet realities of cremation representing a patern for Romanian cremationist movement, in spite of its atheist

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Prothero, *Purified*, pp. 90-94.

²⁴ V. I. Zorca, „Cremațiunea în Elveția”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1937), IV, 11, pp. 5-6.

elements).²⁵ Compared to the previous period, there were fewer references on the cremation realities in Italy. This fact could be explained by the lack of progress of cremation in Italy during the Mussolini regime.²⁶ Also, there were fewer references regarding cremation in Great Britain in spite of its progress in those times. This could also be explained by the weak influence of the British spirit upon the Romanian society and culture during the interwar period.

Some examples:

1. France: *Flacăra Sacră* published in 1935 an article on cremation written by Gustav Barrier (1853-1945), holder of a doctoral degree in Medicine. He was one of the most important French cremationists and was chairman of the French Academy of Medicine and of the French Cremation Federation. His article analysed the causes stopping the development of cremation in France during the interwar period, identifying four main causes: the conformity of the French population, who favoured burials; the rejection of cremation by the Catholic Church; some criticism on cremation and forensic medicine; the passive attitude of resistance of the state on cremationist issues.²⁷ V.I. Zorca wrote an article in September 1936 for *Flacăra Sacră*, analysing again the issues of cremation in France of those times. He noticed that cremationism in France was unable to progress quickly because the crematoria were state properties and the French cremationist movement did not have enough money for a real propaganda.²⁸
2. Germany – it is very relevant that in 1936, when a congress celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the German Cremation Federation was organised in Gotha, Germany, Mihai Popovici, the secretary of the *Cenuşa* Society was invited to attend and to give a speech. In his speech, Popovici praised the achievements of German cremationists considering cremation as a means of bringing people together around the world. But it is also relevant that Popovici ended his speech saying: “Long live modern Germany and his great leader, Adolf Hitler!”²⁹
3. Czechoslovakia – *Flacăra Sacră* wrote many times about the progress of cremationism in this country. For example, in 1937 a paper appeared

²⁵ Quido Bartel „Privire generală asupra activității crematoriului din Moscova pe anul 1932”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1935), II, 6, p. 4-6; Quido Bartel, „Istoricul cremațiunii în Rusia”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1935), II, 9, pp.2-4; Mihai Popovici, „Situția crematoriului din Moscova”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1936), III, 7, pp. 2-3.

²⁶ Fulvio Conti, „Italy”, *Encyclopedia of Cremation*, Douglas J. Davies, Lewis Mates (eds.), Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005, p. 275.

²⁷ C. Barrier, „Cauzele care stânjenesc dezvoltarea cremațiunii în Franța”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1935), II, 4, pp. 4-5.

²⁸ V. I. Zorca, „Cremațiunea în Franța”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1936), III, 9, pp. 4-6.

²⁹ Mihai Popovici, Cuvântare ținută la Congresul de la Gotha de delegatul Soc. Cenuşa, ing. M. Popovici”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1937), IV, 3, p. 5

about the progress of cremation in Czechoslovakia in 1936.³⁰ For Romanian cremationists, in V.I. Zorca's opinion, the Czech cremationist movement represented a model, taking into account the high number of Krematorium members (Cremation Society of Czechoslovakia – in 1936 there were 74,840 members), the high number of crematoria (12 crematoria in 1936). But the Romanian admiration for the Czech cremationist movement was especially focused on two points: 1. the fact that very small towns in this country started to build a crematorium (for instance Semily – 3,500 inhabitants in 1936) and 2. in spite of the Catholic ban on cremation in Czechoslovakia of those times, the feeling of bigotry was not so strong and people were more tolerant on cremation issues³¹.

4. Sweden – another model for the Romanian cremationist movement between the two world wars – in this case, what was relevant for Romanian cremationists was the fact that the Swedish crematoria represented perfection from a technical and artistic point view. Also, almost all the crematoria in this country belonged to religious communities.³²
5. Great Britain – as compared to the previous examples, there were few articles regarding the issues of cremation in this country. *Flacăra Sacră* published very scarce information about it. But some facts from this country were relevant for Romanian cremationists: the wealth of the Cremationist Society of Great Britain, the high number of built crematoria, the strong British cremation propaganda carried out through all possible means, the fact that during the interwar period, the local authorities encouraged the building of crematoria (for example, it mentioned the existence of so called regional crematoria, built around towns and villages 30-40 kilometres far from one crematorium³³). The strangest British fact seemed to be the scattering of the ashes in an open field, which was very popular in this country, which Popovici considered to be of Anglo-Saxon heritage, also mentioning the strong British tradition of cremation.³⁴

³⁰ Fr. Mencil, „Desfășurarea cremațiunii în Cehoslovacia”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1937), 4, IV, pp. 3-4.

³¹ V.I. Zorca, „Incineratiunile în Republica Cehoslovacă în 1936. Statistica după confesiuni”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1937), 4, IV, pp. 3-4.

³² Mihai Popovici, „Vicarul Mitropolitan John Hanson, precursor al cremațiunea în Suedia”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1937), IV, 11, pp.1-3. See also Oscar Ovdén, „Cel mai monumental și mai frumos crematoriu suedez”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1939), VI, 2, pp. 3-4

³³ V. I. Zorca, „Activitatea propagandistică pentru cremațiune în cateva state europene”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1938), V, 3, p. 5.

³⁴ Mihai Popovici, „Cremațiunea în străinătate. Mișcarea cremațiunei în Anglia”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1937), IV, 6, p. 5.

On the other hand, the European echoes and the ties of the interwar Romanian cremationist movement with Western Civilization could be also seen in the involvement of Romania in the establishment of an International Cremation Federation. At the 1936 International Cremation Congress in Prague, the Romanians were regarded as the pioneers of cremation in South-Eastern Europe. Compared to the other Balkan states, Romania at least had a functional crematorium, although the problems of cremation in Yugoslavia required more attention at this Cremation Congress. Popovici spoke at the congress trying to explain the issues of cremationism in Romania of those times, "the duty of the municipalities to support Cremation Societies". In Popovici's opinion, the poor development of cremationism in Romania was due to the popular misconception about the *Cenușa* Society. Unfortunately, Popovici was unable to attend the London Cremation Congress in 1937, when ICF was founded.³⁵ In 1939, Romania became a member of ICF until the communist takeover in 1947.

On the other hand, Romanian cremationist movement became a pattern for other European cremationist movements. This was the case of Yugoslav cremationist movement. Yugoslav cremationist considered Romanians a model because Romania was the first orthodox country in Europe where a crematorium was open during the interwar period. For this reason the journal of Yugoslav cremation society (Oganj) published some papers translated from *Flacara Sacra* journal.³⁶

Conclusions

It is obvious that different European models were decisive for the birth and development of the Romanian cremationist movement. Until the beginning of World War I, Italian and French models were powerful but during the interwar period, due to the establishment of the *Cenușa Society*, other models became active: the Swedish model, the Czech model, the German or the British model. But this European influence on the Romanian cremationist movement should be seen as background for the activity of cremation supporters in Romania. These brave men tried and succeeded in adjusting these influences to the Romanian realities of the time, and more importantly, they succeeded in opening in Romania the first crematorium in the Balkan area and in South-Eastern Europe!

³⁵ Lewis Mates, „Romania”, *Encyclopedia*, p. 364.

³⁶ „P.C. Arhimandrit C.I. Șerboianu, membru de onoare al Soc. „Oganj” din Belgrad”, *Flacăra Sacră* (1939), VI, 7, p. 5.

LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

THE ETERNAL TIME IN FAIRYTALES.
(THE DISSEMINATION OF THE *LAND OF YOUTH* THEME
IN VARIOUS CULTURES)

MARCELA CRISTINA IUGA¹

Sigmund Freud stated that man is pushed in life by two essential, contrasting desires: Life (*Libido* or *Eros*) and Death (*Thanatos*). The second, the fatal drive will endlessly keep him searching for the eternal life. It is, nevertheless, impossible to stop the passing of time because of its subjectivity and relativity. But there were *paradoxal travellers* whose journey to the *Land of Youth* proved that their search was pointless and that you cannot escape Death. Their only gain was a time suspension, a fall into atemporality, a costly pause in time. Because what seemed a beautiful dream at the beginning became a torment when the hero started missing his world. Returning to it, accelerated the *forgotten time* and brought back the burden of death.

People have realized in time that existence and death are nothing else than a falling into time. Man perceives temporality only with his coming into being. Time becomes dual: subjective and objective. The latter won't be dealt with because it passes regardless of the human being. Temporal subjectivity is foremost important because time passing is contextual and relative, passing slower or faster. In the fight to stop time pacts with the devil had to be made so that the hero could ask for a frozen moment in time. Today's scientific slang would call it relativity.

The relative time has been perceived different by various people. The dichotomy appears between the heavenly and earthly time in archaic, so called, fantastical structures. From another explanation arises the *twins' or travellers' paradox*. The paradoxical traveller arrives on another realm where he is subjected to this very relative temporality and at his return all he can find ruins, having jumped over centuries or even millenniums.

This theme firstly appeared in the Mesopotamian myth of Gilgamesh, *the one who has seen all* or *the searcher of immortality*; in the biblical *Book of Isaiah*, whose journey lasted 32 years but who still returned home untouched by time; in Roman antiquity in Plato's *Republic*; in Japanese mythology there is *Urashima Tarō*, a fisherman who visits the land of the Sea King and spends four hundred years there. The Celtic mythology thrives in such examples because there are two heroes who visit the People of the *Sidhe* in *Tir na nOg*: *Brain* and *Oisín* (*The Voyage of Bran, son of Febal* and *Oisín in the land of Youth*).

¹ Ph.D., "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia, Romania.

Washington Irving tells the fascinating story of a man, *Rip Van Winkle*, who falls asleep in the forest before the War of Independence and wakes up only after.

The Romanian fairy *Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte/ Youth Everlasting and Life without End* has a special position among these representations because it is the only story in which the hero is waited and slapped by Death at the end of time itself. It does not have a happy ending. Moreover it is totally unknown among European folk culture. This is a fairytale about wishing and disobeying.

Youth Everlasting and Life without End is a *bildungsroman*, a story about growing and searching for one's identity in the world, or it is what Noica calls a *coming into being fairytale (fiintare)*, an ontological story: "The myth is present in multiple mythological areas, and refers to the relative time and to the report between the objective time of the immediate reality and the hero's subjective time, who is transferred to the other side, where time passes slower than in the real world."² Therefore the classical fight between Good and Evil becomes secondary. The first form of the fairytale was published in 1986 in *Țăranul român* and its final draft appeared six years later in *Legende și basmele românilor. Ghicitori și proverbură*.³

Mircea Muthu emphasizes the dual character of *Youth Everlasting and Life without End*. He notices the Janus-like fairytale's structure because of the mixture of old (medieval social structure with kings and peasants) and archaic (the mythological nostalgia of a lost world).⁴

The reading key above mentioned comes from a philosophical background and more specific, what we are dealing with in the present tale is Plato's reverse pattern. He stated that the true, scientific knowledge comes from the world of Ideas which is "perfect, endless and unchangeable." Man is nothing but a copy of the Idea, he knows this and moreover he has the death consciousness. Consequently he will try to regain the *initial purity hypostasis*, and due to this he will leave the real world and through *anamnesis* he will try to access the vanished time: "As a matter of fact man lives only with the endless return's *nostalgia*, and Prince-Handsome arrives properly in a heavenly universe, were we to believe the teller".⁵

² Victor Kernbach, *Dicționar de mitologie generală. Mituri. Divinități. Religii*, București, Editura Albatros, 1995. p. 626.

³ Mircea Muthu, Maria Muthu, *Făt-Frumos și „vremea uitată”, o nouă interpretare a basmului Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte*, ediția a doua, revăzută și adăugită, București, EuroPress Group, 2008, p.7.

⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

The tale starts with an initial formula: "It happened once upon a time. For had it not happened there would be nothing to tell. It happened in the days when poplar-trees bore pears and willow-trees flowered into violets; when bears fought each other by colliding their tails; and when wolves and lambs embraced, kissing each other like true brothers. In those days a fly would sign its name on the wall. The bigger liar he who doesn't trust me at all."⁶

The action acts like a rolling stone. There are an "emperor and an empress. Both were young and handsome" but who could not procreate. They look into the matter by visiting wise men, who had defied the royal couple by refusing to go to the palace. From here on does the tale of desires starts. The couple wants an offspring and they do everything to get him. There are at least two very good social and cultural reasons. Joachim and Anne were not able to have a child but in their old age. In the Judaic society the absence of a child was considered a consequence to sin. Only the sinners are barren: «And Isahar, being and a bishop at the time, refused to receive Joachim and Anne's gifts, and slandered him, when he bought them due to his bareness: "It is inappropriate to receive gifts from your hands, because you are without a child, without a godly blessing, for some of your hidden sins."⁷

The second has to do with the blue blooded/royalty. A childless royal family is ephemeral; therefore the barren queen should fall in disgrace. The price paid, these parents sacrifice was enormous. The wise man warns them about two things: this child would bring them unhappiness "The longing you have shall bring sorrow"; the prince would not belong to them: "you shall have no joy of him."⁸ It is a visible perpetuation of the Saint Parents faith:" But one single child shall you beget. He will be Prince-Handsome the Well-Beloved, but you shall have no joy of him." The same destiny is shared with Oedipus who is born as a result of such struggle but due to a warning, the parents abandon him on a field: "Born (according to Diodorus Siculus) from a royal couple (Laius of Thebes and Jocasta, Kreon's daughter), although Pythia had warned the king not to have a child (because if he was to be born he would bring death to his father and misery to the household), Oedipus is abandoned after birth..."⁹

At the due date Prince-Handsome refuses to come into the world. There is a true imagery of crying: Prince-Handsome will cry at the beginning and at the end of his life, their parents will cry when they see him march searching for its death, and at his departure from the palace the sisters would grief. And

⁶ Ispirescu, *Basme*, p.5. Idem, *The Tales*.

⁷ Viața Sfinților, dreptilor și dumnezeieștilor părinți Ioachim și Ana)(Sfintul Epifanie și Sfintul Ioan Damaschin, Cartea 4, pentru credința, cp. 15.

⁸ Ispirescu, *Basme*, p. 5. Idem, *The Tales*.

⁹ Kernbach, *Dicționar*, p. 460.

besides that, Prince-Handsome himself would cry because he passes through the Vale of Tears:

“Deadly realm in Romanian mythology, taboo area, that separates the human world from the relative fairies’ world; this realm is occupied by the so called fairy of *Youth Everlasting and Life without End* (whose name matches that of the territory) [...]the Vale of Tears recalls the original habitat and the ancient tradition in the mortal”.¹⁰

At entering life, the Geto-Dacian was welcomed with grief and was take on his road to eternity with joy and happiness because he was relieved of pain. It was known that the brave warrior would gain everlasting happiness, if he fulfilled his duties. The Christian tradition changed this view on the world. It is a mirrored mutation. We are happy at birth, which is what happened at the heir’s coming into existence: “there was great rejoicing throughout the empire” and we cry at dying “the court and the empire were full of sorrow”. This is why we can place this tale culturally between pre-Christianity and Christianity.

The child nevertheless refuses to be born and as a result his father promises him *youth everlasting and life without end*. And from here onwards time elapses, because Prince-Handsome grows and learns faster than any child: “As he grew older so did the boy become more astute and more daring”. At a certain point he claims for the promise to be fulfilled, and his father admits of having made a false promise “If you, Father, cannot give it to me, then I must ransack the world in quest of that for which I came into this world.”

The preparations are customary to fairytales: a horse and armour. The horse is *skin and bones* and the armour, as a fulfilment of tradition, would belong to his father, but has to be cleaned by Prince-Handsome. The mere becomes an adviser. Up to this point his taken road is the same as Harap Alb. But his spiritual training is different:

“He began to clean off the rust with his own hands and after six weeks he succeeded in making them bright like a mirror. At the same time he tended the horse as he had been told to. Work he had in plenty, but no matter since he succeeded”.¹¹

Florica Bodişteanu argues that this is a period of transit, crossing and pre-crossing. Six weeks as a fix number, forty days is the precise time that has to pass for Judeans at leaving the present life (the departure and voyage of the soul), from birth to entering a social structure (Jesus is brought to the temple around this time) from sin to forgiveness (the duration, of the flood, of the new mothers purification).¹² Forty is also symbolically the number of waiting,

¹⁰ Kernbach, *Dicţionar*, p. 652.

¹¹ Ispirescu, *The Tales*, pp. 6-7.

¹² Florica Bodişteanu, *Literatura pentru copii şi tineret dincolo de „story”*, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, 2007, p. 46.

preparing and punishment. The recurring number in the tale is only three, which stands for perfection- the Trinity. Therefore “he was restless for three days and three nights” “we leave in three days” “the party lasted for three days” “the three girls”. The she-Scorpion has three heads. Youth everlasting has two sisters and the killed rabbit is hit only by the third arrow.

On his way Prince-Handsome defeats, with the horse’s help, two evil sisters: the Woodpecker, and the she-Scorpion, her sister. He does not kill them, he even cures their wounds. They invite him to stay and marry them but the chosen one is at the castle where *youth everlasting and life without end* lives. And she is unique and special: “Their mistress was a fairy; tall and slender; fair of face; and kind of heart. As soon as he set eyes on her, Prince-Handsome stood transfixed”.

Starting from here Prince-Handsome does not perceive objective time anymore but he falls into subjectivity, routine and more importantly he forgets to grow older.” He stayed there, forgetful of time and without ever noticing the passing of the years, for he remained as young as upon his arrival: „ He stayed there, forgetful of time and without ever noticing the passing of the years, for he remained as young as upon his arrival”.

After marrying Youth he gets to know the surrounding territories. He can go anywhere except for the Vale of Tears:” In one valley alone, which they actually pointed out, they forbade his going, for then, they said, it would fare ill with him. And they even told him that the valley was known as the Vale of Tears” This is the second warning after his parents told him not to set on this journey because it would lead only to death. The prohibition comes from the biblical tradition of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree caused the original death. He, of course wanders through the vale, but not on purpose. He is tracking a rabbit. The effect is not instantaneous but when he returns home he is suddenly struck by missing his mother and father. The days become hundreds of years:

“I have spent many days with you and have no cause for complaining. I will therefore go and see my parents once more and then return, never again to leave [...] do not leave us, beloved. Your parents have been dead these hundreds of years. We fear that you yourself, once gone, may never come back. Stay with us, for our heart tells us that you shall perish”.

By everything he does, this proves to be his formative journey. The hero is looking for an ideal. He finds it but his hopes and dreams are not fulfilled. He passes through all the hardships with his adviser’s help. But at the end the horse leaves him, and he has to become a responsible man:

"If you won't listen to me, Master, you alone must bear the blame no matter what happens to you. I have a word to say and if you accept my proposition I shall take you back home."

Responsibility comes upon having the power to return and therefore he decides to return. The road is retrospective and amazing.

Everything has changed, he does not recognise anything: "They reached the lands they had known as the Scorpion's. There they found towns. The forests had been turned into fields. He asked one man after another about the Scorpion and its dwellings, but all said that their grandparents had heard their great-grandparents tell of such far-fetched tales." Returning also means getting old because the road to death is possible only on that temporal scale which he cheats by a few hundred years "He, becoming angry, went on his way never noticing that his beard and hair had turned white" "Searching here and there, his white beard reaching down to his knees, propping up his eyelids with his own hands, and hardly able to walk upright, he found nothing but a ruined chest."

In the end he recollects the past "Tears stood in his eyes, and he tried to remember how they once had shone with light, and how he had spent his childhood in them. He went round two or three times seeking out every room and every small corner that would remind him of things past; even the stable where he had found the horse. He then went down into the cellar, the entrance of which had been blocked by the fallen ruins." Death waits for him at a precise place: his parents' castle. Consequently his road, hard as he would try, took him only to death." "Welcome. And a good thing you've come,"¹³ the voice sounded from afar. And as he had grown very old, he felt tired of life and was ready to pass away from this world"

Emil Lungeanu says that every attempt of Prince-Handsome to gain *youth everlasting and life without end* took him surely to death: "the only chance of gaining immortality remains, paradoxically death itself, understood as a transfer to an existence that cheats spatial-temporal determinism, in a world probably governed differently than gravitation and the principles of thermodynamics".¹⁴ The Romanian tale in its form is not known by European folk tradition: "In this fairytale's face you cannot but be astonished. It is an extremely balanced story, in it there is a strong ontological statement, - and, as we will see, an emphasis of the true being, not of that existing in a vein immortality zone- it is, in the end, such an accomplished expression, that you remain for a moment, as in the face of an hopeless, unexpected gift of our folk

¹³ Ispirescu, *Basme*, pp.8-12. Idem, *The Tales*.

¹⁴ Emil Lungeanu, *Ceasul lui Făt-Frumos*, Iași, Institutul European. 1997, p. 95.

culture. Who gave it life? Where does it have an equivalent? Because it, definitely, have one in the world fairytale literature”.¹⁵

Nevertheless it seems that there was an archaic consciousness, an Indo-European stratum but also an Assyrian-Babylonian because the Epic of Gilgamesh contains not only the formative journey but also the subjected temporality. Enkidu descends in the Inferno and returns to tell Gilgamesh who and what he had seen. The fragment is called *On That Who Had Seen Everything*. Gilgamesh is the one who “has seen hidden things”.¹⁶

Enoch has two apocryphal books: the Ethiopian *Book of Enoch* and the Slavic *The Book of Mysteries of Enoch*. These tell the story of his journey to Heaven: - Gods’ angels descend on earth to teach humans the laws of existence. Enoch is the one to whom the future of humanity is revealed, in a dream. He accompanied the angles who ell him that he had been with them *six jubilees of years*:

“in his days (Jared’s days) God’s angels descended the Earth, the ones who were called watchers, to teach the children of men and to fulfill the laws and justice onto the earth. [...] He (Enoch) was therefore the first of the children of men, born on earth that learned the written language, the science and the wisdom and wrote the signs of the skies, according to their word’s rules, in a book, for the children of men to know the years time, according to each of theirs passing. [...] And that which is to come, he saw it in a vision in his sleep, what is to happen to the children of men, across the ages, until judgment day; he saw it and wrote his confession and left it as a testimony on earth for all the children of men”.¹⁷

In another Slavic apocrypha, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, the traveller is kidnapped in the skies. When he returns he is told that he delayed *not two hours but 32 years*. The prophet is shaken by the physiological passing of time but the angel reassures him that he would not become old.¹⁸

The Devine journey does not mean becoming old but it is more a suspension of temporality. The heroes grow old. Prince-Handsome’s journey to the land of youth and of forgotten time resembles a *near death experience*. The concept has its roots in Plato Republic (Book X) when Socrates tells Glaucon *The Myth of Er*, the son of Armenios. This is the eschatological legend closing the book. Er has an experience similar to Enoch (it is of no wonder that the book seems to have a Christian moral), because this dies in battle and his body is found after ten days *unaffected by decay*. In the twelfth day, being still laid

¹⁵ Constantin Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1996.

¹⁶ Victor Kernbach, *Miturile esențiale. Antologie de texte, cu o introducere în mitologie, comentarii critice și note de referință*, București, Editura științifică și enciclopedică, 1978, pp.220-221.

¹⁷ Kernbach, *Miturile esențiale.*, p. 256.

¹⁸ Idem, *Dicționar*, p. 626.

on a rug, the hero resurrects. Er recounts his soul's voyage but also others souls voyage to the judgement place: there are two openings (one to earth one to heaven) through which the souls are sent for their deeds.

Er is not sent anywhere and he is told he would be a messenger, therefore an observer: "And arriving ever and anon they seemed to have come from a long journey, and they went forth with gladness into the meadow, where they encamped as at a festival; and those who knew one another embraced and conversed, the souls which came from earth curiously enquiring about the things above, and the souls which came from heaven about the things beneath. And they told one another of what had happened by the way, those from below weeping and sorrowing at the remembrance of the things which they had endured and seen in their journey beneath the earth (now the journey lasted a thousand years), while those from above were describing heavenly delights and visions of inconceivable beauty."¹⁹

The end of the souls' journey in the skies is on the Plain of Plane of Oblivion, where the River of Forgetfulness (River Lethe) flows. The place has reminiscence in the land of *youth everlasting and life without end*: "they marched on in a scorching heat to the plain of Forgetfulness, which was a barren waste destitute of trees and verdure; and then towards evening they encamped by the river of Unmindfulness, whose water no vessel can hold; of this they were all obliged to drink a certain quantity, and those who were not saved by wisdom drank more than was necessary; and each one as he drank forgot all things".²⁰

The Myth of Er has a Christian message because Glaucon has to learn something from this legend as people had to learn from parables "And thus, Glaucon, the tale has been saved and has not perished, and will save us if we are obedient to the word spoken; and we shall pass safely over the river of Forgetfulness and our soul will not be defiled. Wherefore my counsel is that we hold fast ever to the heavenly way and follow after justice and virtue always, considering that the soul is immortal and able to endure every sort of good and every sort of evil. Thus shall we live dear to one another and to the gods, both while remaining here and when, like conquerors in the games that goes round to gather gifts, we receive our reward. And it shall be well with us both in this life and in the pilgrimage of a thousand years which we have been describing."

Celtic mythology also has a realm of eternal youth and that is Tír na nÓg, *the Land of Eternal Youth or the Land of the Ever-Young*, situated

¹⁹ Platon, *Republica*, traducere și note de Andrei Cornea, București Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1986; traducere de Benjamin Jowett pe <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.11.x.html>.

²⁰ Platon, *Republica*.

somewhere beyond the map's borders. It could be reached only after a long journey or by being invited by the fairies. These are identified with Aos Sí/ Sidhe/ Side. It is a supernatural race whose world seems to be underground or an invisible world that coexist with the real world "The Side is distinguished primarily because of their power of transformation: they move invisibly, or they turn themselves (and others) into birds and animals".²¹

They are sometimes mixed with the Tuatha Dé Danann who was the Celtic *intelligentsia*. They have a Romanian counterpart in Blajini: "...mythological population composed, according to ancient believes, of the first people on earth. Blajinii live under the earth – in some variants at the end of the world or on the other side across the Saturday's water".²² The one who saw them was Zosim whose visit is recounted in his trip to the Blajini.

Another country that could be associated with this is the *Huasui* in the Chinese mythology. They also seem to be ascets:

"The country of the people Huaxu is in the west from Yang-zhou, but in the north from Daizhou, and far from Zhi kingdom, who knows how million *li* far [...] the local people don't have bad habits and live according to the ancient laws. They don't enjoy life, and do not fear death, consequently there aren't people who die before their time".²³

There are only two people who travel to *Tír na nÓg* and *Tir na mban*. The first is Brain who travelled to the land of virgins *Tir na mban*. The saga is called *Imram Brain maic Febail/ The Voyage of Brain Son of Febail*. There are many variations: Brain falls in a deep sleep. He first arrives on the Isle of Joy then to the Land of virgins. The isle of joy is crossed by the River of Happiness that appears in Greek mythology due to Silenus, a nymph's so. The fruits of the trees on the rivers bank activate the reversible time. Time goes backwards future-past-present: "if he liked something, he forgets what was that, he begins to grow young and he relives the past years. Forgetting the old age, he re-enters his youth, he becomes a young man then a teenager, a child and in the end he ceases to exist".²⁴

Brain arrives on the isle but does not want to descend on the shore and he is pulled. The Queen of the land invites him and seeing his indecision she throws a hank at him, the thread sticks to his hands and he is pulled. To him and other men restrained on the isle time passes but they don't realise. Many years go by until one of them, Nechtan misses home. The queen warns them

²¹ „*Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, Translated with an introduction and notes by Jeffrey Gantz, Middlesex, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1981, p. 15.

²² Kernbach, *Dicționar*, p. 84.

²³ Ibid., p.382.

²⁴ Idem, *Miturile esențiale*, p. 384.

not to step on their birthplace ground. Nechtan nevertheless enraged that no one recognises him steps on the ground and dies. Brain tells the inhabitants his adventures and leaves: "Nechtán jumped from a boat on the ground. But as soon as he touched Ulster's earth then he became a mound of earth, as if his body had been buried for hundreds of years. Then Brain told everyone present his adventures, from the beginning until the very moment. In the end he said his goodbyes; therefore his other trips are unknown".²⁵

The second hero is Oisín and he is the one who goes to *Tír na nÓg*. His voyage is called *Oisín in the Land of Youth* and is part of the Fenian or the Osianic Cycle. Oisín is the son of Finn Mac Cumhail who was considered Ireland's poet and a member of the Fianna. The whole Fenian Cycle is told by him. It is a custom to divide the Celtic ancient texts into four cycles: "Convention and tradition have classified the early Irish tales into four groups, called cycles: (1) the Mythological Cycle, whose protagonists are the Gods [...] (2) the Ulster Cycle [...] (3) the Kings Cycle which focuses on the activities of the 'historical kings'; (4) the Finn Cycle, which describes the adventures of Finn mac Cumhaill and his Fianna and which did not achieve widespread popularity until the twelfth century".²⁶

The story begins with the Fianna that goes hunting. From the far they see a young woman on the back of a stallion. The horse as a road companion can also be found here. The woman seems to be a princess because there is „a crown of gold" on her head. She goes straight to Oisín and declares her love for him: "From very far away I have come, and now at last I have found thee, Finn, son of Cumhal.[...] "My name," she said" is Niam of the Golden Hair. I am the daughter of the King of the Land of Youth, and that which has brought me here is the love of thy son Oisín."

Niam invites him to her father's castle situated in *The Land Oversea*, over all the dreams, inexistent on a map, where there is eternal spring, the fruits hang in a tree, the flowers are in bloom, the trees have wild honey. Those who inhabit this land suffer: "Nor pain nor sickness" and there is no death and old-age „Death and decay come near him nor more". There will be music, richness, gorgeous horses, brave dogs hundreds of people will serve you and hundreds of damsels will sing to you while sleeping. Oisín's birth and death are curious because he lived in the land of youth and came back and was able to recount the fabulous journey: "As his birth was strange so was his end, for he saw the wonders of the Land of Youth with mortal eyes and lived to tell them it with mortal lips." Oisín loses the track of time "Oisín lost all the knowledge of where he was" As soon as he arrives in the land over the fog he wonders at what he sees. Niam had told him the truth. The reason he had been invited there

²⁵ Ibid., p. 382.

²⁶ *Early Irish Myths*, p. 15.

was not only because of his faith and courage but also for the songs for the people of Erinn. Oisín becomes Orpheus counterpart because he is glorified by gods due to his music. His gift is Nímah herself. On the balance, upon arriving in this fabulous land Oisín loses his gift despite the fact he becomes *immortal among immortals*. After seven days- recurring figure- Oisín goes hunting. Nímah accompanies him. They remain in the forest for seven days and kill seven stags. In the forest there is a princess held prisoner in seven chains by Dún, the giant. They fight for seven days and after each of these days he cuts one of the restraining chains.

In the seventh day Oisín is wounded and Nímah cures him. After this woodcrafted adventure Oisín misses his friends whom he had left exactly at a hunting party. That is why he wants to return "Let me, for a short while return to the land of Erinn, that I may see there my friends and kin and tell them of the glory and joy that are mine in the Land of Youth." Nímah starts to cry and throws herself into his arms telling him not to think about the sad world where people leave and move under the auspices of death and where summer is killed by winter, youth by old-age and where love even when it does not perish because of falseness and mistakes vanishes because of complete happiness.²⁷

He returns in the end but he is prohibited to descend the horse if he ever wants to see Nímah again. Oisín comes back and on his road encounters a druid, a peasant and a group of people. But everything around had changed. And he starts to believe that this was some kind of spell cast by the fairies from the Land of Youth. And his knight's education forces him to descend the horse when people need a hand in moving a stone. The horse leaves and the warrior starts to age. The people help him and Oisín tells them his adventure. They identify him as being three hundred years old "his generation has been dead for three hundred years". The group decides to bring him to Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. This means that Oisín arrives in a Christianised world. He tells Patrick about Finn, Fianna but also about Tir na nÓg and Nímah.

The other hero that loses a piece of time is Rip van Winkle. *Rip van Winkle* is the homonymous story of Irving Washington. He is known for *The Legend of the Sleepy Hollow*, Washington Irving, being a 19th century American classic.

Rip's story is simple. In 1765 Rip lives with his family in a little village at a foot of a mountain. Rip's wife is very hard on him because he helps the others and forgets about his own family. Therefore, Rip spends a lot of time with his friends and his dog Wolf. One afternoon Rip goes hunting with his

²⁷ T. W. Rolleston, *The High Deeds of Finn and other Bardic Romances of Ancient Ireland*, ed. illustrations by Stephen Reid, London, G. G. Harrap & Co., 1910, pp. 154-157.

dog. The woodcraft motif is again present, every hero having the quality of a hunter. Rip meets a strangely dressed man in the woods and follows him. The man was wearing 1600 clothes, dating back to the time when the Dutch discovered this remote part of the world. Rip follows him and they arrive in a glade where there were more men drinking. Then the tracked man looks at Rip: "It was such a cold, dead look, with unchanging eyes, that Ripp was filled with fear".²⁸

Rip drinks from a barrel and falls asleep. He wakes up the next morning and hurries home. But something has changed because in place of his rattle there is now a rusted one and the dog had vanished. Another problem was apparently a physical one, his legs hurt: "He found it hard to walk: his legs were painful".²⁹ When he returns to the village he realises everything has changed. People were differently dressed and the village was bigger. Rip thinks he had missed only one day "Isn't this the village I was born in – the village I left yesterday?" At the hotel is the first time he identifies temporally. It is the year 1776, the year of The War of Independence. George Washington frees America from British ruling and King George III, becoming the first democratic state. Rip realises he had been gone for 20 years and his life changes for the best because he reunites with his son and daughter but he enjoys his wife's absence.

George Washington frees America from British ruling, King George's reign, and America becomes the first democratic state. Rip van Winkle realizes that time had passed him too quickly and he had missed twenty years. Luckily, Rip encounters his son, his younger brother, but also his daughter that gives him the good news of his wife's death. What Rip recounts is part of a local Dutch tale, Dutch who come on earth once in every twenty years to see the locals' faith. Rip's life changes for the better, his trip in a suspended time and his encounter with his ancestors saves Rip from a life full of unhappiness with his wife and give him a peaceful old age.

The last voyage would be that of Urashima Taro. *The Legend of the Fisherman Urashima Taro* could be one of the most famous Japanese legends. In this particular tale we encounter what critics have called the frozen time. The space is rural: Mitsunow village in Tanko County. As an element of novelty, compared to the other legends and fairytales mentioned, Urashima is neither a prince nor a knight. He is a simple commoner, a fisherman that used to fish everyday.

He is chosen due to the fact that he rescues a turtle. In some variants the turtle is caught in his nets in others little children play with it. As a result the

²⁸ Irving Washington, *Rip Van Winkle and Other Stories: And Other Stories*, London Published by Puffin, 1994, p. 4.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

daughter of the Sea/Dragon God pays him a visit. She takes him back to his kingdom under the sea. One of this simple fisherman lessons is that you are rewarded for your good deeds. His care for a little being places him on a superior human scale.

Urashima's journey resembles Oisín's because they both arrive on fantastic realms invited by the daughter of the ruler, whom they end up married with. Both kingdoms are of amazing beauty persuading the traveller to remain. It is not an act of conquering but more of being conquered: Urashima forgets all about the other world and time passes by unnoticeable. Consequently he cannot evaluate the duration: had he stayed there a few days or a few years. He begins missing his parents too therefore he wants to return. The interdiction lies in a box that must not in any circumstance be opened. It is similar to a Pandora's Box that would free, at its opening death itself. Both space and time mutate during the hero's absence. The native places are unrecognisable because he does not know any of the passers by. He tells his story and people do not believe him because it had happened four hundred or seven hundred years ago.

The box is seen again as the guilty one and he opens it. For the other travellers the descent represents a symbolic burial but in Urashima's case it is just a cloud and in the moment it vanishes the fisherman grows old "life passed over him" and dies exactly in his parents burial ground. It is therefore a return to his ancestral origin.

The texts are both different and similar in so many ways because nobody seems to be living in an immediate present. We connect the events in our personal and collective memory that we choose to call history or myth. Prince-Handsome's journey to the land of youth represented the fall itself into myth and his return home is the rebound with history.

DEATH, SUICIDE AND MOURNING IN HERTA MÜLLER'S *HERZTIER*. AKTIONSGRUPPE BANAT AND THE SECURITATE

ALEXA STOICESCU¹

“ein abstrakter Monster ohne Täter”²

Herta Müllers writing can be described, as the literary critic Cosmin Dragoste did with the words “the metamorphoses of terror”.³ Since her first collection of short stories, *Niederungen*, published in 1982 to her last novel *Atemschaukel* in 2009, she has been continuously focusing on the communism in Romania, especially on the human consequences of living in a dictatorship. Her work raises questions about theorizing cultural identity, the concept of ‘home’, negotiating with the past, the idea of trauma and amongst others the concept of courage. But far more than all this, she is an aesthete, playing with words, creating beautiful metaphors, personifying the words, making them almost human in a world where humans are reduced to an animal state. She is a very controversial figure, as she is known for expressing uncomfortable truths about the collaborators of the enormous apparatus of the Romanian Securitate and because of her stubborn unwillingness to let go of the past, translated in her constant insistence of the need for every society to come to terms with its past. Romanians and Germans alike are bothered by her sincerity and sense of morality. She has gained a wider public in 2009 when she was awarded the Nobel prize for literature and had since then been given more attention also in Romania. Only four titles of her 18 books had been previously translated into Romanian.

Maybe her most powerful novel concerning the Securitate and the terror it exerted is *Herztier*⁴, published in 1993. The poetic title of the novel – meaning ‘animal heart’ – was translated into English as *The Land of Green Plums*⁵ (1996). These titles have of course different connotations, the original title focusing on the people living in an animal state and the translation on the persecutors. The image shown in this novel is one of a hopeless, poor and cold society, living in fear and despair; a society ruled by a ruthless dictator, who demands a constant surveillance of its citizens. They fear interrogations, imprisonment and forced labour and live in a society of paranoia and mistrust even towards the next of kin, where even whispering was considered a crime.

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² “an abstract monster without someone to blame” (my translation). From: Herta Müller. “Die Securitate ist noch im Dienst”, in *Zeit Online*. 23th of July, (2009).

³ Cosmin Dragoste, *Herta Müller – Metamorfozele terorii*, Craiova, Aius, 2007.

⁴ Herta Müller, *Herztier*, Reinbeck bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1994.

⁵ Herta Müller, *The Land of Green Plums*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 1996.

People are not individualized and have reached an almost animal state, being only regulated by their hunger. From this mass, four friends arise – the (female) narrator, Kurt, Georg and Edgar –, who dare to use the word friendship and who try to restore a feeling of community. The four German ethnics live in the western town of Timișoara, in the 1980's, they study, read forbidden books and try to survive. The narrator first meets the three friends after the suicide of an acquaintance, Lola, as the narrator shared a room with the deceased and was in the possession of her diary. The friends suspect a cover up suicide and want to investigate her supposed murder. The investigation does not really take place, but instead the four become very good friends. The men were keeping forbidden books in a safe house, a summerhouse of an acquaintance and they allow the narrator to share their secrets. It is obvious that they are critics of the society and shortly after their encounter they become followed by the Securitate, personified through the character of Captain Pjele (skin). They talk about the government, of its crimes and of people fleeing the country illegally. House searches in their student homes and their parents' houses follow questionings at the police station, in cold and frightening basements and a general feeling of fear takes over. After they finish the university, the Securitate makes sure to separate them. The narrator gets a job as a translator in a factory in the city, Edgar and Georg become German teachers in two small industrial cities and Kurt gets hired as an engineer in a slaughterhouse on the outskirts of a village, relatively close to the city. Although the four friends try to see each other often, the separation, together with the fear that the secret police exerts upon them, takes control over them. The narrator becomes friends with Tereza, the daughter of a party member who literally helps writing the communist history by making statues for them. Edgar, Georg and Kurt do not trust her, but the narrator uses her as a confidant and stores books from the summerhouse and other important documents at her place. As the control of the secret police tightens, Edgar, Georg and the narrator lose their jobs and are prevented from finding new ones. After rounds of interrogations and the beating of Georg on the street, Georg, Edgar, Kurt and the narrator apply for their right to immigrate to Germany. The story ends with several deaths and suicides. Edgar and the narrator manage to emigrate but the death of their friends has a shattering impact on them. Tereza visits the narrator in Berlin, but soon after her arrival the narrator finds a duplicate key to her apartment in Tereza's luggage. She admits that Pjele had sent her and the narrator asks her to leave. She dies of cancer six months after her return. Georg commits an alleged suicide a few days after his arrival in Germany, while Kurt takes his life while waiting for his emigration papers. The novel ends with a curse on Pjele and with

repeating the same sentence it begun with: "When we don't speak, said Edgar, we become unbearable, and when we do, we make fools of ourselves".⁶

I will engage in this essay upon a close reading of the novel, concentrating on the notions of death and suicide as defined in the novel and zooming afterwards out on the broader context of communist Romania that is described in the novel, namely the literary dissidence in the German-speaking community of Timișoara, that manifested itself with the foundation in 1972 of the Aktionsgruppe Banat, a group of young writers, – mainly – poets, and continued with individual writers throughout the eighties until the fall of the regime. Before doing so, I will describe the general atmosphere of the novel, as they are decisive for both concepts: death and suicide. I will show some of the facets of the characters existence, concentrating on the lack of individuality, their lack of belief in the party or their work, the lack of love and feelings, the description of the closed German society and finally the sickness everybody is suffering from. The city is governed by coldness and fear, people are not individuals, and they have no freedom. They are workers, but this work turns them into shadows. A man, "on [his] way home from the late shift at the detergent factory or the slaughterhouse [...], he's nothing more than a shadow in clothes".⁷ People are doomed to live isolated existences in a society nobody believes in. The narrator calls the workers, 'the proletariat of thin sheep and wooden melons', because "all that was supposed to be great and shard-edged became a tin sheep in their hands. All that was supposed to be little and round, became in their hands a wooden melon".⁸ But most of the time they fake working, they steal from the factory and repeat the Party's message passively. At meetings nobody dares to contradict the official opinion and even decisions who are supposed to be made in a democratic manner end with the following message: "There's no need to count, of course we're all in favour"⁹. This lack of individuality transformed the people into living dead, into shadows of themselves. People are not given an identity, and are often referred to as 'someone'. Not even the personality of the narrator is certain as the following moment of reflection shows: "Maybe, in those first three years in the little room, I was that someone. Because, except for Lola, anyone could have been that someone. And someone in the bright cube did not like Lola. That meant everyone".¹⁰ Or in a different scene: "I could say to myself: Hey, you, someone. Or: Hey, you, one thousand".¹¹

⁶ Müller, *The Land of Green Plums*, p. 242.

⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸ Ibid., p. 29.

⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 41.

The lack of individuality is also expressed bodily. Lola, for example is only characterized by mentioning the region she comes from: "Lola came from the south of the country, and she reeked of poor province".¹² In the original text, the emphasis is put on Lola's face and how you can read the province on it. When the narrator is afraid that she will be imprisoned, she does not think of herself as a whole, but as

"1 forehead, 1 pr. eyes, 1 pr. ears, 1 nose, 1 pr. lips, 1 neck".¹³ They live in small boxes or cubes as they are being called, the girls in the student home have six identical beds and six suitcases, and they dress the same and use the same fake mascara. They have to eat at the canteen with only spoons; "our blindness [...] comes [...] from having to eat like beasts"¹⁴, explains the narrator. There were fleas everywhere and no warm water.

People have no feelings. For example when the narrator goes to the graveyard and examines the other people: "They didn't weep because they didn't want to make work for their cheeks. Because each of their faces was already on a tombstone".¹⁵ The narrator also associates herself with the dead, when she states that the graves and herself were watching the people.¹⁶ People are passive, living their lives in a mechanical way, they are sitting in the bus with their heads down¹⁷, they live in places where you can see Lola's diary everywhere.¹⁸ They are people with no future, people who, even if they had some individuality, "all it takes is a couple of days for them to get like the others, mute and addicted to drinking warm blood".¹⁹ The workers in the slaughterhouse, where Kurt was working, were apparently drinking the warm blood, but it can also symbolize the animal state that people had reached. Love feelings were impossible. The narrator was having an affair with a random man; Lola was sleeping with strangers at night in the park, Edgar en Georg were having relationships with two women, and the narrator calls them *the men on the side*.²⁰

The German society is described as being much closed, very traditional, very proud of its German legacy and at times racist. It is a community that neither of the characters wants to be identified with. The relationship of the narrator with her mother is quite suggestive. Her father was a former Nazi, who had 'build graveyards'; the grandmother and the mother believed in the superiority of the German race, insisting that the daughter may never marry a

¹² Ibid., p. 2.

¹³ Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 37

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 91.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 160.

'filthy Wallach'. The mother never shows any affection for her daughter, whom she even calls a whore. She is ashamed of the daughter when they fire her from the factory and only supports her from time to time financially. This community can also not be considered a source of love and affection.

The society is literally sick. There are always rumours of the sickness of the dictator, the mothers of the four friends are all sick, even Pjele from the Securitate is sick. The metaphorical sickness of this regime becomes a bodily one and infects every layer of the society. People can be identified through their illnesses, as Tereza's boyfriend does: "He had pointed to each person in line and told her what illness each had".²¹ Only one person actually dies of her sickness, namely Tereza, who had been diagnosed with cancer. The narrator condemns this illness, which she calls 'the nut' for destroying their friendship, as the following quotation show: "The nut grow against us. Against all love. It was ready to betray us, it was impervious to guilt. It devoured our friendship before it killed Tereza".²² But eventually not the sickness ended their friendship, but Tereza's visit in Germany and her betrayal caused by the collaboration with the Securitate. The end of their friendship is political. Not even her cancer is the one who actually killed her, because Tereza refuses treatment, so she finally dies of what Michael Church and Charles Brooks call 'subtle suicide'. She chooses her own death.

There is a constant concern in the novel with the notions of death and suicide, but at a closer look the definitions of these two concepts prove to be a laborious search. Death appears in all levels of the society and at all ages. From an early age 'a child', who always remains in singular and is always unnamed, is confronted with it. Death is rarely defined in the book with its conventional meaning, as biological death. Death is more a feeling that the characters carry with them, inside them, that is accompanying them in all their activities. Death is in the novel political, it symbolizes the end of metaphorical life. Sometimes in the novel the words death or dying actually appear, when it is described that a child knows what death means, as the following sentence depicts: "The child knows, if you bleed, you die"²³, but later in the novel this image is confused by the working men, who get drunk and fight each other. The quotation describes the cruelty of the scene: "The men staggered and yelled at one another before smashing each other over the head with empty bottles. They bled. If a tooth fell on the ground, they would laugh as if someone had lost a button".²⁴ The grotesque image continues with a search for the tooth and a mutual accusation amongst the men of having swallowed it. The bleeding is thus not decisive for one's death.

²¹ Ibid., p. 230.

²² Ibid., p. 147.

²³ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 30.

More often, when somebody dies, the narrator expresses that with the notion of the cemetery of the grave. The narrator's father, referred to as 'a father', who was an SS-soldier, is being described with the following words: "In that world he had made graveyards and quickly left them behind. [...] He had made graveyards, and now he quickly made the woman a baby"²⁵. The dictator and its guards are also capable of making graveyards: "Today and tomorrow and the next day they will make graveyards, with dogs and with bullets"²⁶. The narrator seems to insinuate with the use of the plural, that in the communist society death is also not individualized. It seems that living itself under the communist regime is under the sign of the grave or the cemetery, as the narrator quite clearly states: "Anyone [...] makes graves just because he walks, eats, sleeps, and loves"²⁷. The novel gives more than enough clues on how one is to imagine this living death and its causes.

It seems that the same activities that 'make graves' are also associated with fear, "because in this country, we had to walk, eat, sleep, and love in fear".²⁸ The constant surveillance of the Securitate and the fear that it spreads are the cause for this living death and for the suicides that occur. The friendship of the four characters was a very rare and actually impossible concept, and is the only glimpse of feeling in the whole novel. The motto of the novel, a poem of Gellu Naum, already explains the general belief on friendship: "Everyone had a friend in every wisp of cloud / that's how it is with friends where the world is full of fear / even my mother said, that's how it is / friends are out of the question / think of more serious things". The four friends started being persecuted by the Securitate because of this poem, who they taught of as being a popular song. Captain Pjele, whose name is very evocative of the fear that gets under everybody's skin, considered it an offence towards the state.

The big brother atmosphere is present from the very first pages of the novel: "Someone said the loudspeakers see and hear everything we do".²⁹ Everybody was "at home in their fear"³⁰, and everybody "lived by thinking about flight. They thought of swimming across the Danube until the water becomes another country"³¹. Not a lot of people made it though to the other countries, a lot were captured and the majority died. The novel also reflects on a similar incident, emphasizing the way the deaths were dealt with. A man and his wife tried to flee, but died on the way. On their death certificates though it was written that they both died in their homes, on the same day, of heart

²⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 31.

³¹ Ibid., p. 47.

failure. The system was trying to cover up their death to discourage other attempts. As one of the characters mentions, the Securitate was everywhere: "No cities can grow in a dictatorship, because everything stays small when it's being watched".³² In that society, everybody could have worked for the Securitate and be an informant.

The ones that are responsible for the fear and violence, the guards, operate with hatred. "I didn't know yet that the guards needed that hatred to perform their bloody work with daily precision"³³, the narrator states. The violence was random: "They would shout at one person because the sun was burning, the wind was blowing, or the rain was falling. They would grab another by the lapels and then let him go. They would beat up a third".³⁴ So that in the end it didn't matter if one actually did something wrong, one could be next. The four friends were constantly trying to make arrangements so that they could communicate with each other: "When you write, don't forget to put the date, and always put a hair with the letter, said Edgar. If there isn't one, we'll know the letter 's been open".³⁵ The Securitate was controlling the letters, were listening in on the people, and finally controlling every aspect of their lives. The only way that death could be conquered was reserved to the 'plum eaters', the guards, and here we return to the explanation of the English title. The father of the narrator teaches that "you can't eat green plums, the pits are still soft and you'll swallow your death".³⁶ But the guards were always eating them; they had the cruelty of controlling their own deaths and inflicting pain on others. The 'plum eaters' came from the villages, their suits didn't fit and they were everywhere. They were opportunists taking advantage of others.

Death appears in *Herztier* as a daily accompaniment of the people living in this society, and is not as much associated with biological death. Suicide on the other hand, seems to be a more appropriate way to express the end of life. The narrator never names the suicides of her friends' deaths. When Lola died, the narrator used the following image: "And Lola was hanging by my belt inside the closet".³⁷ About Georg, the narrator writes: "Early in the morning, six weeks after emigrating, Georg lay on the pavement in Frankfurt outside the transit hostel. Six floors up was an open window".³⁸ Kurt had asked Edgar and the narrator to send him pictures of Georg's death scene, and so the narrator writes: "The first time we could take any photographs for Kurt. The second time we were though enough to click away. But by then Kurt was already lying in the

³² Ibid., p. 44.

³³ Ibid., p. 50.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

³⁷ Muller, *Herztier*, p. 22.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 224.

graveyard”.³⁹ Suicide is never depicted directly, always already in relation to something that had happened before. There is always the obsession of the method that was used for the alleged suicide, which also leads in the direction of the suggestion of murder.

The narrator also fantasizes about suicide, for example when crossing the street: “I took a chance on whether I’d reach the other side or not. I let the wheels decide for me”.⁴⁰ She sees suicide everywhere – “Without the blanket in it, the blanket cover was a bodybag”⁴¹ also on her face – “The less I wanted to live, the more I wanted to make up”.⁴² Suicide had taken over herself, her mind, her sleep, her face, she even reads novels from the summerhouse on suicide. But she is not able to go through with it because of the friendship that she shares with the Georg, Edgar and Kurt, as the following quotations mentions: “Each of us imagined how we might desert our friends by committing suicide. And we each accused the other – without ever saying so – of being the sole reason for our not going through with it”.⁴³ It seems that friendship was all the characters of this novel had left, before even that was shattered and they finally remained only with their bare life – a bare life that Giorgio Agamben describes in his book *Homo sacer*.⁴⁴ Also in the novel *Travelling on one Leg* (1989) the narrator fantasizes about committing suicide.

There is a very interesting association in the novel of the political party and religion, or God, as Lola explains: “Someone said God takes care of you above and the Party takes care of you down below”.⁴⁵ Even though the communist party rejected the religion, people in Romania kept on going to church and praying. Lola explains that everyone did it, you just should show that you knew the other ones (cf. 21). Whereas suicide in the religious discourse is considered a sin towards God and towards the church and deprived of a place in heaven and of a proper burial, in the politic party, suicide was considered an offence towards the ideology and the country. Under Lola’s picture at the entrance of the dormitory, the following text was written: “This student has committed suicide. We abhor her crime and we despise her for it. She has brought disgrace upon the whole country” (23). Two days later, Lola was also evicted post-mortem out of the communist party and exmatriculated from the university. ‘Someone’ said: “She deceived us all; she doesn’t deserve to be a student in our country or a member of our party. Everybody applauded”.⁴⁶

³⁹ Ibid., p. 236.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 82.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 219.

⁴⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1998.

⁴⁵ Muller, *Herztier*, p. 22.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 25.

Even though there are so many differences between the communist ideology and the church, they have one in common: the sacred life. For Ceaușescu this meant a better chance for the 'new man', translated also in the Decree 77/1966, which interdicted abortion, a rule that caused the death of thousands of women, who tried to have an illegal abortion. The novel suggests that Lola may have been pregnant, which makes her eviction from the party all the more obvious.

Already from the beginning of the novel, the narrator states: "To this day, I can't really picture a grave. Only a belt, a window, a nut, and a rope. To me, each death is like a sack".⁴⁷ There is a clear distinction between the grave and the sack. The narrator introduces here the political death. For her, suicide is highly political. The narrator blames the dictator and its guards for the suicide of her friends: "Today and tomorrow and the next day they will make graveyards, with dogs and with bullets. But also with the belt, the nut, the window and the rope".⁴⁸ The belt is a symbol for Lola's suicide, the nut for Tereza's death, the window symbolizes the suicide of Georg and the rope refers to Kurt's hanging. The novel ends, as stated before with an explicit picturing of captain Pjele as the guilt bearer for the suicides: "I wished that Captain Pjele would carry a sack with all his dead. I wished his hacked-off hair would smell like a newly mown graveyard when he sat at the barber's".⁴⁹

As I mentioned before, *Herztier* allows an identification of the characters and the plot with the Romanian society of the 1980's. Such identification is clearly not without question marks. The subjectivity of the novel cannot be as such related with the reality. Arguments against such identification are also present, like for example the highly personal style of Herta Müller of the fact that she does not state that she is married to Richard Wagner/Edgar. There are though a number of clues that can make identification likely. Herta Müller's work is dedicated to the former communist regime, her books evoke the fear of that time, and she talks in interviews about the trauma she went through. Several chapters of her collection of essays *Der König verneigt sich und tötet*⁵⁰ (The King Bows and Kills) are dedicated to the persecution she suffered. In the novel itself, the narrator is female, she comes from a small German village, her father was a SS soldier, she studies in Timișoara, she works afterwards as a translator at the factory, she loses her job and finally emigrates. All these details correspond to Müller's own biography. I follow the work of two literary critics who have read the novel as autobiographic, such as – to only name two – Cosmin Dragoste in his work *Herta Müller – Metamorfozele terorii* and Valentina Glăjar in her study *The*

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 241.

⁵⁰ Herta Müller, *Der König verneigt sich und tötet*, Frankfurt: Fischer, 2003.

German legacy in East Central Europe.⁵¹ Besides Müllers own story, other signs are also easily associated with the Romanian reality of that time: the absurdity of the questioning, the threatening of the families, the informants in all layers of the society, the new socio-political class of the 'guards', the importance of an university degree, the mass displacement from the villages to the cities, the work in the factories, the bribes, the Marlboro cigarette packs, the lack of warm water and of food but also the fear. And the existence and persecution of the members of the Aktionsgruppe. Edgar can be associated with Richard Wagner, Kurt with Roland Kirsch and Georg with Rolf Bossert.

Although Herta Müller was not a member of the Aktionsgruppe Banat per se, she belonged to this group in an adjacent way, as she was friends with a lot of the members of the action group and was married to Richard Wagner, a former leading figure of the group and an important figure in the literary environment of the German speaking literature in Romania. To the history of the action group I turn to the memoirs of a former member of the group William Totok's called *Die Zwänge der Erinnerung. Aufzeichnungen aus Rumänien*, published in 1988 after his emigration. I will also use the essay of Mircea Rusnac about the group, published online and interviews of the former members. The Aktionsgruppe Banat was founded in 1972, after a round table with the title 'Am Anfang war das Gespräch' – 'the discussion came first'. As this title suggests, the group action wanted to engage in an honest confrontation with the Romanian society of the time. Richard Wagner, the proclaimed leader of the group, characterizes the young writers as the first generation of writers to have been born into the socialist realities⁵² and therefore as the ones who can comment on it. He makes a clear distinction between the young writers and the older generation, distancing the young writers clearly from 'the healthy literature' of the past.⁵³ They declared themselves Marxists, but declined the socialist realism, the common literary method of the time. They wanted to write engaged literature that should look at reality in a critical way. Its members were: Richard Wagner, William Totok, Johann Lippert, Rolf Bossert, Alfred Bohn, Wanton Sterbling, Gerhard Ortinau, Ernst Wichner and Werner Kremm, who is the only one who remained in Romania. This action groups could arise in the loosely period after the Prague spring, in the spirit of Brecht, Marcuse or Che Guevara, when the Romanian state had not yet tightened the surveillance methods and when some freedom of expression existed. With the Decree nr. 153 from 1970 that stated that every different-minded person can be

⁵¹ Valentina Glăjar, *The German Legacy in East Central Europe. As Recorded in Recent German-Language Literature*, New York, Camden House, 2004.

⁵² Mircea Rusnac, *Aktionsgruppe Banat, fenomen al disidenței minoritare din România anilor 1970-1980*. Web. 08 June 2011. <http://istoriabanatului.wordpress.com/2009/11/17/mircea-rusnac-aktionsgruppe-banat-fenomen-al-disidentei-minoritare-in-romania-anilor-1970-1980/>.

⁵³ See: Dragoste, *Herta Müller – Metamorfozele terorii*, p. 51.

put in trial and Ceaușescu's idea of the 'small cultural revolution' inspired by China, the situation started to change. The commitment of the members of the action group to the country they were born in is special considering how the Securitate treated them. Totok talks about their confidence in the change that had to come in Romania. The four friends in *Herztier* share the same opinion: "Edgar, Kurt, Georg and I didn't want to leave the country. Not via the Danube, not through the air [...] If only the right person would have to leave, everyone else would be able to stay in the country".⁵⁴

The authors of the group published in the newspaper *Neue Banater Zeitung* and were nonetheless allowed to publish their own works at different publishing houses. In April 1974 some of the group's works was published in the magazine *Neue Literatur*, that also contained the poem *Wäre Wegbereiter* – 'We, the trailblazers'. The collection was also supposed to include the poem *Commitment* but it was censored. In a short time, the whole collection was retracted by the censorship and the group came in the sight of the Securitate, which caused the group to end its activity in 1975. I will mention just a few of the actions that followed, which resemble strongly to the ones described in the book. The officer that the most members came in contact with was called 'Pele'. Müller transformed his name into 'Pjele', to make the effect even greater. There were house searches at Totok's family, his brother was arrested under the accusation of fascist propaganda, Totok himself was questioned and later imprisoned. In 1975 Gerhard Csijka, Gerhard Ortinau, Richard Wagner and William Totok, who were driving in a car to Großkomlosch, were arrested and accused of trying to leave the country illegally. William Totok describes the horrible details of their imprisonment, calling the action 'psychological terror' and explaining that "nobody who had to spend longer time in the Romanian prisons leaves the penitentiary without serious physical and psychological damage".⁵⁵ The Securitate officers were trying to make them admit to having plotted against the state and were spreading anti-communist propaganda. In the west, members who had managed to emigrate were reporting about the reality in Romania, and – Totok states – those actions impeded the Securitate to take even more serious actions against the group members. So much so that in 1982 Richard Wagner took over the lead of the Adam-Müller-Guttenbrunn literary circle, claiming for a new direction in the German-speaking literature – "committed subjectivity". Wagner publishes a 'minimal program' of the new literature: "We are bonded by a minimal program. [...] Our purpose is, beyond all existing differences, to advocate for a critical literature written in German".⁵⁶ That same year, Wagner was forced to resign from the literary circle, because he refused to write reports on the national day on the 23th august. He was

⁵⁴ Müller, *Herztier*, p. 60.

⁵⁵ Totok, *Zwänge der Erinnerung*, p. 92.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 143.

jobless since 1982 till his emigration in 1987. Herta Müller was also persecuted by the Securitate, as she reports with different occasions, for example in an interview with Gabriela Adameşteanu in October 2003, where she explains who the only job she could get was as a translator at a factory and she was asked to be an informant, but she constantly refused. She also states how she was called in for questioning and threatened.⁵⁷

The question that is impossible to answer but necessary to be put is what true value does the novel have? As I showed the four friends of the narrator could be associated with members of the Aktionsgruppe Banat and the suicides mentioned in the book actually took place. I will only give details about one of the suicides mentioned in the book, namely the one of Georg, to be associated with Rolf Bossert. The facts stated in the book confirm the statement of the other members of the action group. Rolf Bossert was finally given the approval to emigrate, where he was found dead. Herta Müller always insists in her interviews that his suicide was actually a murder. She states to be absolutely sure of that. Bossert gave an interview in the newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* 11 days before his “suicide”⁵⁸, is he extremely lucid. He had just escaped a regime that was driving him crazy and was enjoying the freedom West Germany was giving him to finally say what was going on in Romania. He uses harsh words like ‘psychological terror’. At the end of the interview he states the people who are in grave danger in Romania: namely Herta Müller, Richard Wagner and William Totok, asking the international community to help improve their situation. Even though his lucidity and concern for his friends cannot be considered proof that he was murdered, it does make it more likely.

Judith Butler discusses the relation between violence, mourning and politics in her book *Precarious Life* (2004), a study that is concerned with the effects of 9/11 and especially with the definitions of a grievable life. The points that Butler makes in her book are extremely helpful in understanding Herta Müllers writings. She talks about mourning the individual, about the undeniable loss of the other but also a deep loss in the person that is mourning, but Butler also is concerned with the community within which every individual lives.⁵⁹ Butler shows how violence, grief and politics are inextricably related to one another, how through politics and violence, mourning and grief can be regulated and how even death can be regulated. The context about which Butler is writing differs from Müllers, but Butlers definition of violence seems to correspond to the one shown in *Herztier*. “Violence is surely a touch

⁵⁷ Gabriela Adameşteanu, “Interviu cu Herta Müller”, in *Bucureştiul Cultural*, 13 Oct, (2009).

⁵⁸ See *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 10 of February, (1986), [”Der Exitus der deutschsprachigen Literatur Rumäniens. Ein Gespräch mit Rolf Bossert”].

⁵⁹ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, London / New York, Verso, 2004, p. 27.

of the worst order, a way to primary human vulnerability to other humans is exposed in its most terrifying way, a way in which we are given over, without control, to the will of another, a way in which life itself can be expunged by the wilful action of another".⁶⁰ Butler insists upon the unequal way that quality of life is distributed on the globe, and how some lives are more vulnerable than others, and this is exactly where Herta Müller also insists on, but within the particular situation of communist Romania. The suppression of the plumb eaters upon the people and especially the four friends present in the novel, made them live bare lives, made them become living dead, as I showed above. Another example of the way this negation of the right to live functions in *Herztier* is the refusal of the newspaper where Georg was working to publish an obituary, an action that refuses Georgs life as a grievable life, or with Butlers words, who asks herself "how the obituary functions as the instrument by which grievability is publicly distributed. It is the means by which a life becomes, or fails to become, a publicly grievable life, an icon for national self-recognition, and the means by which a life becomes note-worthy".⁶¹ It is, I believe on this point that Herta Müller also insists with *Herztier*.

This novel can be counted as an example of 'trauma literature', as the literary critics Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler argue, placing Herta Müllers writing together with that of Promo Levi, Paul Celan or Imre Kertész.⁶² Lyn Marven goes as far as saying that Herta Müllers entire creative work is an expression of the trauma she went through.⁶³ Even though these statements may be true, they focus very much on the psychological part and forget one of Müllers other great interests, namely politics, the suppression from the state, the bare life that a citizen and I emphasize the national character of the word, has to go through. In that respect, Herta Müllers *Herztier* resembles more with Assia Djabar's *Algerian White* since they are both concerned with the controversial death of their close friends and are both set in a country with an oppressive political regime. The two works, I would like to argue, are highly political statements of mourning. Assia Djabar's novel is a highly experimental approach to mourning lost friends. She focuses on Algeria, resurrecting her colleague writers whose artistic works came to be considered a threat by the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) which led to the persecution of her friends. Some ended up dead in dubious circumstances. I argue that *Herztier* is in the same way an attempt to express the phase of mourning.

⁶⁰ Butler, *Precarious Life*, p. 28.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 34.

⁶² Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler, *Contemporary Women's Writing in German, Changing the Subject*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

⁶³ Lyn Marven, *Body and Narrative in Contemporary Literatures in German*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 53.

The important question that this novel also raises is one regarding its function. What is the purpose of the purpose of the novel? Does it uncover a secret? Can it be considered a historical document? Obviously not. The novel is trying to describe the atmosphere of that time and insists on the cover-up suicides, knowing that there can be no proof, as in her Securitate dossier the important things are erased. Herta Müller often states that she writes because she has to, that she wished she would have never written one word.⁶⁴ She constantly states that her 'alien gaze', *Der fremde Blick* in German is not caused by her multi-ethnic background, but by the years lived in communist Romania. This is the reason why Herta Müller writes, because she cannot forget. But must also have a purpose in writing, perhaps she feels a responsibility towards her friends who are now gone to make their stories known and the realm of literature offers the possibility to do so. Literature does not need proof, because it is always already protected by its fictional character, but it is enough to gain the needed attention. Maybe literature is the only way a story like this one can be narrated, stating true facts in the novel and omitting other. Perhaps the novel is trying to make the lives of her friends note-worthy again, to re-establish their lives as grievable lives.

The question remains: What can this novel achieve? There is no answer to this question that I will only answer through a quote from *Herztier*, namely its first and last sentence: "When we don't speak, said Edgar, we become unbearable, and when we do, we make fools of ourselves."

⁶⁴ Cf. Müller, Herta. 'Aş fi preferat să nu scriu niciodată nici un cuvânt' in: *Dilema Veche*, nr. 347, 7 oct. - 13 oct. 2010.

DEATH AND WORK OR: DEATH BY WORK? A CLASSICAL CASE STUDY: MARX

ȘTEFAN BORBÉLY¹

I have chosen Marx as the subject of my presentation because his relation to death is not typical for the cultural economy of death in the nineteenth century, although we have to admit that his case is a strongly particular one, which cannot be omitted. In terms of death, the nineteenth century is scientifically dominated by the biological understanding of extinction and, in human and social terms, by the semantics of the so-called bourgeois death, which – according to Philippe Ariès – marks a shift from death to funeral, as a tendency to socialize death, to transform mourning into customary rite and spectacle. Let us take, as a counterexample, the two extreme understandings of death in the nineteenth century, which will become both typical and profound in the first half of the coming century: the first belongs to Darwin, the second one to Nietzsche. To Darwin – to whom Marx wanted to dedicate *Das Kapital* (1867), but the beneficiary kindly rejected the offer due to his ignorance in economics –, we owe the understanding that there are two kinds of death: the death of the errant individual, and the progressive death of the species, seen as necessary for the continuum of biological evolution. In the first of these two cases, we have an individual who becomes vulnerable to survival because of a feature which proves to be excessive compared to the average functional economy of the species. For instance, in an environment where all ants are grey, black or reddish, an albino ant is by definition more vulnerable than the rest of the swarm, because it is more easily spotted by an enemy. If we translate this understanding into a social norm of behavior, it becomes obvious that the non-typical or the errant individual has to restrain his excesses if he wants to survive. Going further, we encounter the bourgeois sense of living and death, where the norm – generally speaking: the ethical norm – functions as a coercion which represses the rebellious individual, the person who cannot obey the rules, a malignant dispossessed individual.

Darwin's second understanding of death is strongly related to the natural economy of the species, in their struggle to better adapt to an increasingly unfriendly environment. From time to time - Darwin suggests - the balance between the species and the environment is threatened by a large array of causes, such as the scarcity of food, the lack of water, errant weather, sudden climate changes, etc. In order to cope with progressive loss, the species develop individuals who are more adapted to the changes than the others. Within a few generations, these individuals become the norm; this condemns the species to

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extinction, in a continuous – and unbalanced – struggle between progress and conservation. According to this understanding, an individual is defined by his effort to surpass the medium; however, it is also significant to realize that the goal, in this case, is the species itself once again, the collectivity rather than the individual, which leads us to the idea of personal sacrifice, also widespread throughout the nineteenth century: an individual must live and die in such way as to help his species – i.e.: humanity – to be better than it was before, better adapted to the challenges and the gaps of destiny. Many battles – including those against Napoleon – were fought for such a noble ideal: rooting out evil, helping civilization to progress.

As you have probably kindly understood, in both cases death appears to be intrinsic of time: part of the running months and years, a tiny accident in the endless flow of eternity. It is a “must”, not an excess or an eccentricity; therefore, we tend to say that the nineteenth century’s understanding of death is governed by the ethics, not by the aesthetics of existence. Therefore, suicide – or the will to take death into one’s own hands – is culturally downgraded within the nineteenth century. Of course, this does not mean that we do not meet people who decide to take their own life, but suicide is regarded as contrastive to the generally admitted social norm. It hurts social feelings, it contradicts collective normality, and it labels people who commit it as unhealthy individuals, alien to the generally admitted social prescriptions, restrictions and conventions.

A completely different understanding of death comes into the nineteenth century with Nietzsche’s decadence or, a little bit later in time, with Freud’s psychoanalysis. For both of these titans of modernity, death is inner resurrection and awakening: one must kill something inside the individual in order to free him, to let him live a real and heroic existence. In Nietzsche’s terms, inner inertia is induced by conformity, the urge to live within society, by education and by the respect for the state and its idols (including the Church), which drives the individual into the commodity of the “Apollonian” existence, from which he can be resurrected by only a “Dionysian” revival. To achieve this, he has to blow up his former being, the cluster of his inertia, or – in other words – he must reach the tension to act against himself, which leads us to the formidable understanding of the “happy”, joyous death. As such, death ceases to be seen as a mere accident in the endless flow of beings, and becomes the glorious goal of existence itself: only people who *can* live death, who make death an apotheosis of their life deserve to exist, to provide norms for the others and to shine.

Nietzsche gets into a slight difficulty when he comes to the difference between exuberant death and Christian mortification, since both presuppose acting against being, sanctioning one’s external, less significant and inferior existence. The goal is different, but the mechanism of self-transcendence seems

to be the same. In order to avoid the similitude, Nietzsche proposes the death of God, as preceding the self-sacrifice of the individual: only people who already know that God is dead, who have acknowledged the absence of transcendence can turn their being into a superior energy, which is actually the godhead itself: but not the God above, who lives up in the skies, but the God within every individual, who lies inside man and waits to be awakened.

With Nietzsche, death and destruction in the nineteenth century become an exclusively personal business, reserved for the strong and the powerful. It is a death confiscated by the elite, anti-social in its functioning, and proud, powerful in its definition. Its core is the cosmic aesthetics of existence: living beyond ethics and restrictions. For Darwin, it used to be sacrifice, beneficial to the species. For Nietzsche, it is a form of axiological sanctioning: people who cannot live up with their death do not deserve to exist, since death is not survival, but heroic extinction and the surpassing of the narrow self – happy bursting into the transpersonal, cosmic energy of the universe.

With Freud we also have two different understandings of death. The first one is related, via Nietzsche, to the destruction of the principles and norms that encapsulate and block the free functioning of the psyche. It is also induced by education, socially instilled limitations and restrictions, but underneath it there lies something which is called the “pleasure principle”, a formless, plastic, expanding energy, which comes into being with the very birth of the individual, and is later restricted by the limitations induced by the educators. We reach this energy through uncontrolled, free behavior: through dreams, art, sexuality, conversational slips and generally through joy and play – but also through therapy itself. As such, Freud conceives psychoanalysis as a technique of dwelling in death, and it is not at all surprising to see that the father of psychoanalysis broadened very much the understanding of this complex, by saying that history is the neurosis of myth. If we want to reach myth – the inner energy within humanity itself –, we have to destroy history, to go beyond factual reality and feel its dead core, which is actually freedom.

The second understanding of death, according to Freud, is a setback, and it is related to the famous “Thanatos principle”. The process of individuation – Freud has suggested – is a difficult task for the being: arduous to start, to achieve and to maintain. As a consequence, the psyche constantly experiences a will to slip back into the informal, in order to escape from the tension of self-definition. This happens especially when the psyche does not meet a “plastic” support for its ever forging, positive or negative activity, and turns against itself, projecting onto itself feelings which are usually targeted against the others. For instance, let us imagine that the psyche is generating destructive energies and they do not meet a target to fix upon it: in this case, the negativity turns against the generating being itself, tending to destroy it, to annihilate the resistance found in such an unwanted introspection. I call this mechanism a “setback”

because it comes, again, with a negative understanding of death: self-destruction is wrong, a process one must avoid, in spite of the fact that nothing social functions here as a punitive factor, Freud's analysis being merely individual, proper to a being set in contrast with, or even opposed to the social body.

Marx's life has always been surrounded by death and misery. In his classical psychograph of 1966, Arnold Künzli enlists "*the suicide of two daughters and a son-in-law*" and "*three children who died of malnutrition*".² One may add the death of Marx's wife, which shocked him deeply a few months before his own death. In such a psychic context, it becomes clear why Marx generally alludes to death in his theories, as if he wanted to rationalize it and to contain it, in order to reduce its suddenness and uncertainty. Death belongs to the irrational and the unexplainable; or, as Marx wanted to demonstrate, secrecy and unexplainable drives play a minor role in the life of individuals, since the class, to whom an individual belongs, is a place of openness and of rational behavior. As Isaiah Berlin has brilliantly demonstrated in his monograph of 1939, published in Oxford³, Marx "was a man of unemotional, even frigid nature", who believed that the act of rationalizing without involving the transcendence, or the act of organizing things by rigid taxonomies can explain life itself and the transformations within it. "All his life – Isaiah Berlin writes – he detested two phenomena with particular passion: disorderliness of life and every form of histrionic display".⁴ In such a context, death has seemingly no place in a "clash between economically determined classes"⁵, since economy is the religion of life exclusively, not of death or extinction, which makes it cease to function.

Seemingly – one must repeat the word, since the common knowledge and Marx's Hegelian ascendance throw a different light onto the topic. It is almost common knowledge that for Marx the working class functions as the "*digger*" of capitalism. One class has to destroy the other in order to achieve the goal of the classless heaven, dominated by free and emancipated beings. The communist future envisaged by Marx bears the characteristics of a happy eschatology, which places death at the center of the rite of accumulative passage, or *Aufhebung*. Many scholars have remarked that the roots of Marx's idea of progress are deeply messianic and very profoundly Jewish, that is: they rely on the idea of the collective redemption through work and on the necessity to act against and to destroy the conservative, inertial parts of history, in order

² Arnold Künzli: *Karl Marx. Eine Psychographie*, Zürich, Europa Verlag, Zürich, 1966. Apud: Richard Wurmbrand: *Was Karl Marx a Satanist?* 5th, revised edition, Glendale CA, Diane Books Publishing Co, 1979.

³ Isaiah Berlin: *Karl Marx*, Oxford, Butler & Tanner, 1939, p. 85.

⁴ Ibid., p. 80.

⁵ Ibid., p. 121.

to leap forward. Its first textual expression is the famous forty-years wandering in the desert described in the Exodus, which ends with the joyous entering into the “promised land”. According to this understanding of history, leaping forward in time means accumulating a huge and perilous quantity of conservative forces, which can eventually block the functioning of a whole society, as plants and mud progressively kill a flourishing lake, condemning it to anorexia. So, from time to time society must act against itself, cut out the rotten branches and free evolution from inertial debris. Of course, no one can explain why the utopia of communism itself is envisaged differently by Marx than he sees the functioning of his whole system. It may indeed be the case that the goal of the struggle between classes is to achieve the “promised land” of a classless, happy society, whose self-definition and self-expression is work, but no one can say why this distant future is seen as a society which does not generate conservative, inertial forces. There might be an explanation: the working class is so much rooted in resentment, that the urge to move always forward, towards the future, exceeds rust and self-corrosion. But no one can say if Marx meant really that, or he had something else in his mind.

Let us now take a look at the evolutionary model itself, since the idea that history progresses through endless clashes between classes does not say that a few reminiscences of capitalist behavior will pass onto the new, communist order, that there will be survivors. On the contrary, Marx’s idea is that the whole conservative society will die, in order to free the place for the redemptive one. As such, death becomes essential to the whole progression, since only classes who inhabit “*diggers*” provide resources for the new, coming order. Accordingly, evolution appears as the continuous progression of death and killing, which also says that there is an economy of death within the universe: a dying that can be grasped rationally, can be predicted and can be explained, which also means that death is, in such an understanding, deprived of any kind of irrational fear or gothic terror. It becomes the mathematics of existence: the constant part of a completely transparent equation, the rational and luminous solution of something impossible to grasp since it is mysterious.

Therefore – Isaiah Berlin says – Marx hated any apotheosis of death: any attempt to make it the quality goal of life, to encapsulate it in the glory of a higher value or of the transcendent. For instance, in the *German Ideology* he rejected Max Stirner’s idea of the liberation of the individual creative powers violently, treating it “as a pathological phenomenon, the agonized cry of a persecuted neurotic, belonging to the province of medicine rather than to that of political theory”.⁶ Nevertheless “this view – Berlin says – had a great influence on both Nietzsche and Bakunin”, since

⁶ Ibid., pp. 125-126.

“Stirner believed that all programs, ideals, theories are so many artificially built prisons for the mind and the spirit, means of curbing the will, of concealing from the individual the existence of his own infinite creative powers, and that all systems must therefore be destroyed, not because they are evil, but because they are systems, only when this has been achieved would man, released from his unnatural fetters, become truly master of himself and attain to his full stature as a human being”.⁷

In a seminal paper presented at the 2008 Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting of San Diego, on 20-22 March 2008⁸, Olga Prokopovych wisely demonstrated that “Marx penned very little direct commentary on death and mortality, in spite of the death which surrounded his existence: four children dead in suicides or misery and the fatal cancer of his wife. Although we cannot neglect the fact that Marx directly linked capitalism to morbidity, talking – in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* – about «the effect of capitalism on morbidity and mortality among the working class», “Marx’s dismissal of death – Prokopovych asserts – as a source of conflict between individual and species is also at the same time a dismissal of death as an element of conflict between man and nature”.

As such, “Marx’s mature view on death is characterized primarily by silence”, as if work and death were not linked together. It might be so because, for Marx, work means subsistence above all, with all its harshness and misery. By working, men exist at the basic level of society, relatively close to the animals, by contrast with the aristocrats, for instance, who live in leisure chiefly because they have freed themselves from the strenuous necessity to work. Working sociality is and cannot be anything but gregarious: Marx will never leave this obstinate idea. On the other hand, he makes clear that nature – which involves death – must be perceived only as a socialized reality, writing in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* that “the human significance of nature is only available to social man, for only to social man is nature available as a bond with other men, as the basis of his own existence for other, and theirs for him, and as the vital element in human reality.” As a consequence, human excellence or death is never individual with Marx. Man works because he belongs to his class and to his species; accordingly, he never dies his own death, but the death of the species – a fairly strange conclusion drawn by a man who was obsessed by alienation, but refused to understand that the imperative of socializing, of “belonging” to something which is beyond you always functions as alienation: you set more values in the group or class you belong to, than in yourself as a distinct, different and unique individual. “Thus – Marx says – society completes the essential unity of man and nature, it is the

⁷ Ibid., p. 125.

⁸ *Death and Progressive Social Vision: Marx and Marcuse on Mortality and Medicine*. Downloaded from: www.allacademic.com/meta/p-mla-apa-research-citation/php (August 20th 2010).

genuine resurrection of nature, the accomplished naturalism of man and the accomplished humanism of nature.”

Olga Prokopovych is then right to say that “Marx’s dismissal of death as a source of conflict between individual and species is also, at the same time, a dismissal of death as an element of conflict between man and nature”, subtly concluding that “the romantic naturalism frames Marx’s view of death in the Manuscripts...”, due to “the effect of capitalism on morbidity and mortality among the working classes”. Let us see how this works effectively, in some essential excerpts of Marx’s *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844.

Two grim concepts reign over Marx’s considerations here: “alienation” and “objectification”. In order to introduce them, the author relies on a very modern understanding of time as existential quality. Two uneven dimensions of time control the existence of the individual, as well as the working class: the time dedicated to work and the time dedicated to leisure. While enjoying leisure, the worker grasps his inner being, living it as freedom. On the contrary, while working, the same individual is acting collectively as a function dependent to a value which is “alien” to him. The consequence is alienation, a negative human condition attained through excessive “objectification”. That is, by investing biological and intellectual effort in something which remains “estranged” to the worker, in the object of the work he is participating in, the worker finishes by being entrapped in “objectification”, which means, above all, that the worker voluntarily rejects his freedom in order to become a “function” of the job he is performing: “The product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object, which has become material: it is the *objectification* of labor. Labor’s realization is its objectification. Under these economic conditions this realization of labor appears as *loss of realization* for the workers; objectification as *loss of the object and bondage to it*; appropriation as *estrangement*, as *alienation*.”

As such, the working class is unequally divided between the shame of freedom and the hardship of subsistence: the more they enjoy life, the less money they get, the everyday economy of a worker and of his family being consequently determined by the will to narrow down leisure and to expand the time dedicated to work. But work is harsh, strenuous and self-destroying, a blind bet on the resistance provided by biology. By “realizing” his life because of the “objectification” provided by the necessity to continuously work as opposed to the life-giving energies of leisure, the worker pushes his biological resources to the limit, which shows that in Marx’s view the immediate result of work is not life, but death: “So much does the labor’s realization appear as loss of realization – he says – that the worker loses realization to the point of starving to death.” Accordingly, the workers work not *against* death, but *within death* itself. Death is the very substance of their everyday existence, life being

conceived as a humble reverence before death and its inevitability, not a value opposed to it.

Why is it so? Because – Marx suggests – instead of living life as a self-projection, the worker lives it as anxiety: not as a spiritual anxiety, but as a biological one, which links work to the fear that one may lose his biological forces and put in jeopardy his personal and his entire family's biological survival. In order to preserve the biological resistance which enables him to work, the worker has but one chance, that is: to live like an animal, to narrow down his needs to a level determined not by culture or spirituality, but by biology: "As a result, therefore, man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions – eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal."

However, due to his estrangement through work, the worker remains a paradoxical animal. "The animal – Marx says – is immediately one with its life activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. It is *its life activity*." On the contrary, man chooses between instinct and "consciousness": the first one is life preserving, while, on the contrary, the latter is life-destroying, nearer to death than to life. It is so, Marx argues, because the working class is biologically very active, which means, beyond other related activities, that it produces a huge number of children.

When they grow up, these children need jobs: for themselves, their families and for the subsistence of their children. But jobs are scarce, available in a very limited number, because their parents have already got them. Thank God, there is a regulator: work kills. Thanks to it, the children can take over the jobs freed by their exhausted parents.

Can you imagine a nicer domestic eschatology?

"I GAVE YOU WINGS BUT I COULDN'T HELP THE WINDS". CHILD'S SUICIDE EXPERIENCED BY PARENTS IN 1984-2010, FINLAND

ARJA RYHÄNEN¹

Introduction

When parents confront the death of their own child, the loss not only brings with it profound grief but also a deeply felt sense of parental incompetence.² Simultaneously the parents lose their dreams and expectations for the future, and their lives change totally. Especially in cases where a child commits suicide, the parents face a difficult task: how to separate their own dreams from those of their child.

My son committed suicide at the age of 17 in 2001, and since that time I have thought about death by suicide from several points of view. My son's death and my subsequent work as a volunteer in a small organisation called Surunauha³ have also led me to meet other survivors: parents or close family members who have lost children by suicide. Discussions with survivors, extensive reading, and my own experience have made me reconsider several issues concerning this kind of death.

As I started my MA studies in the faculty of Cultural History at the University of Turku in 2008 I knew exactly that I want to study suicides. At the beginning of my studies the goal was lost but the more I read the more aware I became from which point of view I would like to study this subject. In my research, my primary goal is to find out how this kind of death influences the way parents act. I also want to study how this kind of loss will affect parents as they try to situate themselves anew in their own surroundings and society. Does the experience change their attitude to life and especially their own lives? What kind of influence does the death of the child⁴ have on how the parents describe their own family history? If so, why? And, finally, is it possible to survive after the suicide of one's child?

In this study, I define the word *suicide* as Émile Durkheim did in his monumental work, *Le suicide: Étude de sociologie* in 1897, but I don't examine suicides from the social point of view. I'm more interested in what the stories written by parents and the studies made by experts tell about our culture. My

¹ MA (Cultural History), University of Turku, Finland.

² Hilkkä Laakso Hilkkä, *Aidin suru alle seitsenvuotiaan lapsen kuoleman jälkeen*, Tampereenm, Tampereen yliopistollinen keskussairaala, Vammala, 2000, p. 16.

³ The organization was founded in 1998 and run since then by survivors.

⁴ In my study the age of the child can be anything; I've met a mother whose child committed suicide at the age of 12 but my material also included material where the father of 41-year-old son describes his sorrow. There were quite few stories where the age was revealed clearly but mainly the age of the child in this study is between 15 - 41 years.

focus is in how parents have experienced child's suicide, and in this sense the key word is 'experience' throughout my work. Experience is today one of the most important core concepts in cultural history. I consider experience to be as follows:

“Experience is a process through which a human being as a social subject is connected to the surrounding culture, language and the world. Simultaneously, the experience is a process which makes a human being become a subject”.⁵

In my study, experience refers to the way that the suicide of the child as a very private experience of the parents takes a place in our culture by shaping, building, maintaining or perhaps changing it. Texts which parents have written about the experience not only tell about our time but indicate the interaction between the culture and a survivor when he/she tries to understand what has happened and how to survive.

In this study I see that the (death) culture consists of all those objects, structures and people which surround a human being when she/he meets the loss. But a human being is not only an object in this culture but an active subject when she/he by her/his own thinking tries to interpret (TULKITA) the experience and to integrate her/himself to the surrounding reality. Language used in the texts of parents does not only reflect the reality but also produce meanings and create this reality.⁶ Therefore we can say that the subjectivity is born in an attempt to cope with the surrounding world, understand that world and to be a part of that world⁷. Suicide as a way to die is like an earthquake – it destroys all you once had, leaves you only the ruins of your home and you must rebuild your own life from the very beginning without the possibility to forget once the life was totally different.

I am aware that the main reason I chose to carry out this study was not to reassess my own experiences but also to make sense of a contradiction: the picture of the parents I have met whose children have committed suicide did not match the one presented in many earlier studies made in this country. If one of the leading Finnish experts in the field of suicides says that, “a good life never ends to a suicide”⁸, what I should think about that as a mother? This was not only the reason to carry out this study, but in Finland, as in the rest of Western Europe, crucial changes in ways of thinking about suicides have thus far been insufficiently studied. It has been said that every study made in the field of history has its own political aspect. I also have one. It's very important for me to make people understand how for parents the short life of their child is

⁵ Kirsi Tuohela, *Huhtikuun tekstit. Kolmen naisen koettu ja kirjoitettu melankolia 1870-1900*, Vammala, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, pp. 29-31.

⁶ Tuija Saresma, *Omaelämäkerran rajapinnoilla. Kuolema ja kirjoitus*.

Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskus, Vaajakoski, 2007, p. 42.

⁷ Tuohela, *Huhtikuun*, p. 29.

⁸ Jouko Lönnqvist, ”Suomalaiset itsemurhat”, in *Särkynyt sydän. Omainen ja itsemurha*, Tarja Heiskanen (ed), Jyväskylä, SMS-julkaisut, Jyväskylä, 1996, p. 45.

as valuable as if she/he had lived longer. As important is to make people to understand that for parents it is very important that people remember their child not only by the way she/he died but by how she/he lived her/his life. I also insist those people to be considered as normal a parent as those whose children have not committed suicide. I want those parents to be seen and heard without people defining them by the way their child died. The child is dead, and nothing can be done now to change that, but the way how she/he died cannot be the reason why those people’s family history should be rewritten.

In this article I will review the results of my study and how the parents have described their experiences in the light of cultural history studies.

Research material and previous studies

As I started to collect material for my master’s thesis, I soon discovered that it was very difficult to find written material produced by parents on the subject which made me consider if death by suicide is still a taboo, although in Finland death by suicide is three times more common than dying by traffic accident. I contacted both the Lutheran and the Orthodox churches without results. I knew that the Lutheran church has loss support groups for the survivors, but because the groups handle the problem only by peer support and discussions, there is no actual written material available.⁹ The first book written about the issue was published by a father whose son had left this world by his own hands in 1984.¹⁰ At its time the book woke great attention but it took 11 years before another parent was able to write about the same issue. The third book, published not until in 1996 by the Finnish Association for Mental Health (Suomen Mielenterveysseura), contained contributions from both parents and experts and was meant to be a self-help book for survivors. I found a total of 12 books written either by a parent or by survivors and experts between the years 1984-2009.

Surunauha publishes once in every two months a leaflet meant for members. From the very beginning of the publishing the leaflet has contained stories written by survivors. Those stories could be anything from poems to maxims. I read all stories and picked up parents’ stories for my research. In total, I analysed 67 texts from Surunauha’s leaflets. These texts written by parents published in books, self-help books and Surunauha’s leaflets became my primary research and the other material written by experts as a secondary research material.

In order to correlate the above-mentioned texts to the surrounding world, I also wanted to find out what the Lutheran church has thought about

⁹ The Orthodox Church in Finland doesn’t have this kind of service.

¹⁰ My intention was to find all possible writings from parents throughout the time when Finland has been an independent country since 1917 but for my big surprise the book written in 1984 was the first one dealing with the issue of suicide committed by a child.

suicides, what leading Finnish experts in the field of suicides have written about the issue in those so called self-help books, and what other studies have said about sorrow. Throughout my study it was very important for me not to forget what I had learnt as I attended a rehabilitation program arranged by the Finnish Association for Mental Health after my son's death. But it was as important for me to understand that in this study I must forget my own grief and concentrate on those stories written by other parents in order to get an analytical picture of the experience. The task was quite challenging but interesting. For example the words such like 'mother' and 'suicide' are full-loaded by values. How could I forget the fact I am a mother and also a mother of a child who has committed suicide? I am sure that my own experience can be read between the lines but that was not my intention. My main focus is in the modern culture where parents including me have confronted the death of our own child by unacceptable way and how this culture has influenced the way how we have dealt with the death. In the presence it is very important to open your heart to everyone and make your life as visible as possible.¹¹ There is only exception in this field – dying by committing suicide.

There are only few studies in Finland concerning suicides made by historical perspective. That is the reason why I can consider my study very important if we want to open a new kind of discussion around suicide deaths. As long ago as when Luther (1483-1546) lived, suicide was described as an attack of the devil who wanted a poor man's soul.¹² Nowadays there are quite a few who believe this kind of explanation. But there is one connection between the middle age (and earlier times) and our time – the death by committing suicide is seen as an exceptional death.¹³

Suicide in history

The rituals arranged after the death in the honour of deceased can only be understood from the point of view of cultural context. The main aim of arranging the funerals is to re-organize the situation from the chaos following the death to become as normal as possible. But all deaths are not acceptable by communities; especially the deaths of children are those ones. Mainly exceptional death excludes the idea that your life was valuable and worth remembering.¹⁴ Many parents found to be left all alone after the funeral and felt nobody was interested in their memories. A mother wrote in her book that she felt the death of her son was like an episode in a poor soap opera. It interested a

¹¹ Saresma, *Omaelämäkerran*, pp. 112-113.

¹² H. Sorri H, *Itsemurha ja uskonnollisuus. Itsemurhan tehneiden jäsentyminen uskonyhteisöön. Kirkon tutkimuskeskuksen sarja A 61, Pieksämäki, 1993, pp. 12-13.*

¹³ Outi, *Fingerroos, Haudatut muistot. Rituaalisen kuoleman merkitykset Kannaksen muistitiedossa*Helsinki, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2004, p. 248.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

little while until something else happened.¹⁵ In order to understand how people have reacted to suicides I studied the past. There are four suicides in the Finnish mythological epoch called *Kalevala*. When a young beautiful woman called Aino is forced to marry an old man, she commits suicide, but instead of dying she is transformed into a fish and gets a new opportunity to live in the reign of fishes. This story reveals how people in the past (in pagan times) thought death could be a better choice than a miserable life devoid of possibilities. When an old man called Väinämöinen leaves the community for the last time in order to commit suicide, his death is accepted without question. It is considered appropriate for old people to step aside in order to give their place to younger ones. As Ilmarinen, a man who had raped his sister and killed other people, commits suicide, the death is welcomed by the others. Ilmarinen is seen to deserve his own death. When Ilmarinen’s sister commits suicide, she is seen as a victim of the circumstances and those circumstances make her death also acceptable.

Finnish historians have argued whether the stories in *Kaleva* reveal the attitudes towards life and death in pagan times. In this study I am not interested in if those attitudes were true or false. But when I compare Aino’s and e.g. Amy Winehouse’s death I find some similarities with both deaths – the desire to die is stronger than to the desire to live the life. As I read through all material I had one thing amazed me greatly. There was not a single story about the suicide of old people. Why? Are those old people so lonely that nobody misses them since they have left this world? Or do we accept suicide committed by old people acceptable? Do we think they are wise enough what is good for them? As I have written earlier in *Kaleva* old man’s voluntary death was acceptable and desirable because in wandering cultures old and sick people were a big threat for the whole community. Ilmarinen’s death has been analyzed that it reveals attitudes towards suicides by Christian people – sins are punished by the death. Finally if we think the death of Ilmarinen’s sister would it possible to find explanations which we quite easily also today give as a reason for the suicide?

Death by suicide has been considered exceptional throughout the Christian era. In Finland, as in many other western countries, suicide was a crime until 1869. The way, how the Church has treated people after the suicide in the past, lives strongly in people’s mind. Still today, many believe the church will not provide a proper burial to a person who has committed suicide or she/he will be not allowed to get a decent place as in the church yard but will be buried in the corners where murders and other anti-social people used to be buried earlier. In Finland the law which allowed a decent burial to everyone no matter how a person had died came into force in 1919.¹⁶ Despite that fact my

¹⁵ Arja Sihvola, *Jälkeen Kasperin*, Vantaa, Hansaprint Oy, 2008, p. 14.

¹⁶ Juha Pentikäinen, *Suomalainen lähtö. Kirjoituksia pohjoisesta kuolemankulttuurista*, Helsinki, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki, 1990, p. 127/128.

material included several texts where a survivor revealed his/her worry about the funeral and whether the deceased would be buried like everyone else. A mother wrote after her daughter's death:

My life is full of pain after the suicide. I am depressed and feel guilty. The hardest question is if she will be forgiven or punished because of the way she died. Where is she now? The priest could not give me answers.¹⁷ Many texts written by parents shared this concern. This concern reveals to me that especially after the deaths by suicide people are tend to believe there is afterlife. Many were also concerned with whether the deceased would be punished in the afterlife. Although the church tries to avoid speaking about the hell in the popular culture the idea of it still lives strongly.

In Finnish death culture there have been some typical ways to mourn and survive. Especially in the area of Karelia women used to sing crying songs for the deceased. By singing the deceased was led to another world. The other one was to believe that the soul of deceased moved into birds after the death. The tradition of singing has disappeared but could we consider women's willingness to talk about the deceased as a way to sing the late to the other existence? Is it possible to think that by talking the women – the mothers – take care of their families and place the deceased in the correct place in family hierarchy?¹⁸ I noticed that many mothers in my material wrote how they have made photo albums of their child after the death. I find these albums are not only stories about the past but the idea to collect deceased's life in the one and the same book also reveals the future which will not to come.

Although we live in the world surrounded by the knowledge of the latest scientific information, the belief that the soul will move to live in bird's body has not disappeared as my material revealed. Many get a big relief by watching birds and believing their beloved has got a new opportunity in the state of being a bird. Despite we know a lot about the world we are totally unaware what is death in itself.

Lost words

For parents who have lost a child through suicide, the death is experienced in two different levels. First, the standard of living in the Western post-modern culture makes it impossible to accept when a child dies before the parents. Second, parents must find a way to make some sense of their lives after their child has gone. For most parents the most important gift they have ever been able to give is the gift of life to their child, which is why they find it impossible to understand that the child did not respect and cherish this gift. Parents are unable to understand causes, sometimes there is the lack of words describing feelings.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Saresma, *Omaelämäkerran*, p. 188.

Many survivors would like to talk about the experience, but they can not find the correct words to describe their feelings. Many would like to share their innermost thoughts and the silence around the death, but once again there are no words to describe the feelings. This inability to communicate is one of the many miserable faces of suicide. Professor of medical anthropology Marja-Liisa Honkasalo has studied misery and defined it as confronting the extreme limits of your existence, i.e. finding it impossible to make sense to your experience. Misery also includes the idea that one must endure something without knowing the exact time when it will end. Hence the idea of the time will change. If earlier the time was unnoticeable now it shows its sentient presence.¹⁹ After the shocking news of death of the child many parents described how they only could breathe in and breathe out in order to try to understand what has happened. After several years of the death parents could find themselves in the same situation where they only could breathe in and out in order to survive in their own reality without the child. The loss is so great that when something awful will happen in the world e.g. the tsunami in Asia in 2004, it affects many survivors so that they need somebody to discuss with, no matter how many years have past since the death. Misery is like a cancer – you never can be sure what it is in store for you. In that sense modern culture is very demanding. At the present it is very important to move on no matter what has happened. Some of the parents wrote how the surrounding world expected they have recovered from the loss in few months – although in reality it would take at least several years to adjust the anew situation. Even in the writings of the specialists the sorrow is seen as a disease if it lasts too long.

Even in academic world it is very difficult to give an analysis to a word such as misery, without talking about an ordinary life where quite often it is difficult to discuss about it. In the modern world people try to avoid misery by all means possible and they would like spend their lives by moving from one enjoyment to another instead. People are afraid of misery. In our culture people who have met misery are considered “the second-class people” – failures as if the misery would have been their own fault. The only way to accept misery in our culture is to make it a part of your personality. The more awful the life has treated you the more interesting you are as a person – especially if you make your miserable life visible.²⁰ As the history of the Jews during the Second World War has shown us it is sometimes impossible to understand other people’s misery if you have not experienced it yourself. Sometimes you can tell your story but listeners might be incapable to share your experience. They might not believe or understand your experience. Sometimes it is even better

¹⁹ Marja-Liisa Honkasalo, “Elämä on ahasta täällä.” Otteita maailmasta joka ei pidä kiinni, in *Arki satuttaa. Kärsimyksiä suomalaisessa nykypäivässä*, Marja-Liisa Honkasalo, Terhi Utriainen & Anna Leppo (eds), Tampere, Vastapaino, 2004, p.54.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 250.

not to recall the past because the pain is so strong. Then the silence can be considered as a protective shelter against awful experiences²¹. After the suicide many parents wrote in their texts they were unable to say a word about the death. The only way to ease the pain was e.g. to listen to music, to wander in nature or just to be all alone with your own thoughts.

The otherness

Another key concept in my work also is “the other”. For the first we as human beings tend to think awful things e.g. suicides happen only to other people not to us. For the second the other is always somebody else who - in our own thoughts - differs from us. We imagine that others are different without asking, “Are they, or are they not?”²² My material includes a little information on what parents had thought about suicides before they met this kind of death. Those who had written down their thoughts described that this kind of death faces only people who are either outsiders in the society or people who have been strictly abused in their childhoods²³ (but in no way ‘normal’ people in ‘normal’ families. In this study I consider the parents who have lost a child through suicide are those others because since the days of Aristotle, western culture has accepted his idea of catastrophe as follows: We are afraid if a catastrophe befalls somebody who is like us. In order to avoid the same kind of catastrophe, we must create differences between “us” and “them”.²⁴

A mother after her son’s death wrote: “As I met familiar people to me outside my home many even didn’t say ‘hello’ as if I were a black”.²⁵ When a norm white woman describes herself black this must mean that she feels to be an opposite somebody else. In western cultures we describe things by using opposite words e.g. black versus white, visible versus invisible etc. White people have always had the right to be above the others. When a white person feels she/he is black she/he is beyond everything – as if she/he would not be a human being at all. The history of the black people can strengthen the fact; it took a long time before the white man could accept the blacks as human beings.²⁶ Professor of Cultural History at the University of Turku Marjo Kaarinen has written about racism referring Stuart Hall and said how we need the sense of security when we go from our own territory to other one’s territory

²¹ Marja Tiilikainen, *Kerrottuja ja vaiettuja tarinoita. Somalinaiset Suomessa. Arki satuttaa. Kärsimyksiä suomalaisessa nykypäivässä*, Marja-Liisa Honkasalo, Terhi Utriainen & Anna Leppo (eds.), Tampere, Vastapaino, 2004, pp. 120-122.

²² Marjo Kaartinen, *Neekerikammo. Kirjoituksia vieraan pelosta*, Keuruu, Turun yliopisto, kulttuurihistorian laitos, Keuruu, 2004, p. 22.

²³ Saresma, *Omaelämäkerran*.

²⁴ Kaartinen, *Neekerikammo*, p. 108.

²⁵ Saresma, *Omaelämäkerran*.

²⁶ Kaartinen, *Neekerikammo*, p. 38.

or if somebody strange to us comes too close²⁷ (In my work I am widening the concept to concern parents whose child has committed suicide, because they have experienced something that differs from our every-day-life. I agree with Kaartinen when she talks that racism has always something to do with the power. The otherness is never innocent but it gives the opportunity for the conventionality to control the difference (After the suicide many parents wanted to avoid contact with other people because of the shame. They shamed the way how the child had died, because that revealed they were unable to act as good parents. The speeches made by priests for the funerals of a person who has left this world voluntary have been studied in the University of Helsinki (faculty of theology). This study made me understand how priests in their speeches didn’t blame the late for the death but instead priests quite openly blamed the parents for what had happened. The more words used in psychological discourse have become a part of everyday-talk the more all difficulties a person meets in her/his life is explained by the acts of parents.

If a 12-year-old boy shoots himself after a fight with his parents, is it impossible for us to talk about an accident instead the boy had an idea to kill himself? When a man at the age of 41 kills himself, is it impossible for us to understand that he was responsible for his own life and decisions?

Professionals and suicide

One of tasks for the Lutheran church is to arrange sorrow groups for survivors. In these groups the church tries to give all the empathy it only can and the main message in these groups for the survivors is “don’t blame yourself what has happened. It was not your fault”. If I compare the speeches hold by priests in funerals and this message, I feel, our church should discuss deeply what kind of message it really wants to spread.

The situation is quite equal in the field of mental health care. On the other hand mental health workers arranged rehabilitation courses for survivors try to make people to understand the fact what has happened was the choice of the deceased. But as I analyzed the books published by the Finnish Association for Mental Health I realized the picture given about families where children commit suicide is quite stereotypical. According to our leading experts in the field “children commit suicides only in the families where they are abused by mentally, physically and sexually.”²⁸ I’m quite sure there is that kind of families and in these families children can commit suicide because of all the bad they have experienced. As well I believe there are many children who don’t commit suicide no matter in how difficult surroundings they’ve been raised. In western cultures one of the worst crimes is to abuse your own child sexually. To accuse

²⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁸ All those experts wrote their own article about suicide in a book meant for self-help and published by the Finnish Association for Mental Health. Lönnqvist, ”Suomalaiset”.

a parent of such thing might be the most terrible thing to do and does not help a bit a parent to become a productive member of the society. The very difficult question is why somebody survives despite the life has treated her/him badly and the other cannot stand “the normal life”. But what is the normal life? According the statics it is more probable that suicides are made in circumstances where there is a lack of money. That claim makes me wonder if it is impossible to have a good life without a lot of money.

One thing is more than sure. You can never run away from the fact your child has committed suicide. Those parents are never considered “normal” afterwards. If my son had died by an accident all what we as a family has met would led that people could feel sorrow for us. But as my son committed suicide all what we have experienced can be considered the reason why he did what he did. This fact makes me ask, why we still have two daughters who are alive. The explanation cannot be, he was the only son in our family.

When we meet something what we cannot understand we try to find an understandable explanation. The more I have read books about mental illness and suicides, the more I have found words such like dirty and sexuality combined together. There are not only experts who use these words but also parents. A mother explained that the reason for the suicide of his son was the fact the boy was a gay. I’m wondering if the homosexuality was a problem for the son but maybe it was a difficult issue for the mother. Who can tell the truth?

What if...

Death itself is a very difficult matter to understand. Especially it’s very difficult to understand the death of your own child. In my research I found the parents started to go through their controversial sorrow in the world which sent them very controversial information. Most parents started to rethink the past with the words – what if... “What if I had been another kind of mother – without knowing what kind of mother I should have been so that my child wouldn’t have made suicide”.²⁹ The idea of a good mother needs the idea of a bad mother. Nobody wants to define what makes a bad mother but we all know if there is a good mother there also must be a bad mother. This kind of mother is always something very scary. After the suicide of her daughter a mother thought that she must have been a bad mother, because “she was unable to keep her child alive”.. There was not as much written material from fathers as there was from mothers, but nevertheless the fathers felt as much guilt and despair as the mothers did. Guilt and despair are difficult feelings to live with:

The lost of your own child brings along the feeling, all is lost. Whatever or however you think about the suicide you cannot get rid of the idea – you were the architect of the death. Sometimes you feel you are fool when you are

²⁹ Sihvola, *Jälkeen*, p. 30.

thinking like that but sooner or later you find yourself sitting and thinking all what you have done in the past with your late child and the final result of this dialogue with yourself is – you were not good enough as a father.

There was only one article written by a mother who wrote: “I do not believe God is bad as he let my son die. I think if my son had not died there could have been something more difficult in store for us both us.”. If a mother says just like this mother wrote, should we consider that kind of mother a bad mother?

When the parents began to think about their lives with the words “what if...” at the same time they started to re-write their own family history. This is what makes the difference between the deaths by suicides and accidents. Accidents are acceptable and you don’t have to change the idea of your own life and past as people do when a suicide confronts them.

Conclusions

I would like remind my readers according to statics in families where there has been a suicide the risk that somebody else of the family will commit a suicide. So I find it very important how the surrounding world reacts to suicides. Nobody can be helped by blaming. As I said in the introduction I had a political goal when I did this work. And the goal is – to prevent suicides.

During my studies I have got to be introduced different cultures, different ways to think about the life. What I have learnt there is no culture where there are no suicides no matter how the society is led. The main question is how openly the societies can speak about suicides. E.g. our Orthodox Church thinks there is no reason to arrange sorrow groups for survivors of suicides because the Church thinks there are not so many suicides in the families of Orthodox origin. I find this kind of thinking only one way to avoid difficult question and does not help a bit those families where suicides happen.

The way how our Lutheran Church meets the question of suicide is controversial. On the other hand the Church seems to see the family members as a main reason for the suicide and on the other hand the Church tries to understand those who have met suicide in their own family. This controversial situation will not help anybody who is able to analysis the surrounding world. I think the only reason why the Church is not blamed for its attitude is the fact the survivors are so depressed and shocked after the suicide they are not able to listen what have been said to them. In Christian world suicide is a crime against God and those who are religious it is hard to accept another kind of attitude. Life is holy and everyone should respect their own life as a gift of God.

If our mental health care professionals try to give another aspect to issue they have failed also. The same hand hits and caresses. A careful watcher can see the issue of suicide as a very difficult one for those experts. Because I am the child of this time I can accept many explanations for the reasons of suicides.

The last ten years I have spent by asking myself – what if... despite I am strong enough to understand I was a good mother to my son. I can accept explanations where I am told this or that can cause suicide – because the culture where I live my life doesn't give me any other answers.

Despite that I want to ask – what if my son was ill. Maybe I got a healthy baby who became mentally ill at the age of 17 which is a typical age to get schizophrenia. I can admit the last year of my son's life was difficult. No matter if you said hello or good night the answer was the same – fuck you. First we thought our son is going through a very difficult puberty. Little by little we became aware everything cannot be right with our son and we asked him to contact the nurse at his school. He went to see the nurse and afterwards I discussed with her on the phone in late April 2001. The nurse said to me your son is not depressed, not suicidal, as a mother you are only overreacting. My son died on 13th July 2001. This story is not exceptional. These kinds of stories I have heard more than I have ever wanted. If it is difficult for professionals to understand what puberty is and what is depression, how normal parents can make the difference?

In this article I have written about our culture which is-concentrating on hedonistic pleasures. A good life consists of pleasures which make you “a normal person”. If you cannot feel pleasure, you are the outsider of you community. But what if a disease can cause the feeling you are an outsider? My late father had schizophrenia. Would it be possible that I carry the gene which can cause this disease? In the past people who had schizophrenia were sterilized, which is forbidden in our modern world. If I think my own life I am very happy that according the legislation it is impossible to get sterilization only because of the mental health. And I am very happy because once I was a mother to my son.

But as well I think there is something wrong in our way of thinking. Why it is so impossible to understand that a healthy child would become a sick child at certain age? Because I have lived my life with a person who had schizophrenia I have many times thought was my son's decision wrong? Life with a person who has difficult schizophrenia is not easy. In my material there was only one text where a mother expressed her big relief after her son had committed suicide instead – all the other saw they have done something wrong and that led to the suicide. This kind of thinking also led the idea parents lost their decent parenthood simultaneously.

In the world where we all are instructed by health care system in order to live longer and healthier the death of young people is not acceptable as if there is a proper time to die. The more I think that the more confused I'm. Who has the right to say when you should die?

According the experts most of parents will survive after the sudden death by suicide. My material gave totally another picture. You will learn to

live with the facts, but the question why will never ever leave you. At early stage of sorrow this question is quite hostile. Gradually the tone will change more gently, but you never get rid of. If I tell I have been the mother for three children but then my son died by suicide, what people think about me? They think only I am mother of son who committed suicide and forget totally, I am still a mother of two other children, who are very talent, beautiful, well-behaved and balanced with themselves. There were times when I also forgot that fact.

I find it would be very important to study suicides by many points of views. Theologies have their own truth, psychologists, psychiatrics; sociologists have the truths of their own. Quite often we focus our interest on present forgetting the past. Especially the death by suicide reveals we all carry long-lasting memories from the past. Because nobody can explain why people kill themselves, we try to explain this kind of death by the truths born a long, long time ago with the explanations our present culture respects as a truth. Today we can think people at Luther time were wrong with their thinking about Satan and suicide. What will people think about our attitudes towards/against suicides in the future when the time already has left us?

NEW RITUALISATION OF DEATH

AUDIENCES OF DEATH – BETWEEN REAL AND VIRTUAL FUNERAL WAKES

ANDRÉIA MARTINS¹

Introduction

The scenario is the one known: the dead is being veiled in the center of the room by friends and family. Some cry, others talk, embrace each other, stay for a while or just go away. Anyone who has had the opportunity to experience a wake knows that, in the Christian manner today, this formula remains almost throughout Brazil. The new element we want to address in this paper deals with the virtualization of this moment, its transmission in real time through a camera (or more), which allows it for viewing by people around the world.

Attending a funeral over the internet, however, is not enough: those who do often comment on what they are seeing in the community forums entitled *Dead People Profiles*², a community held in the social network called *Orkut*³, and monitor their achievement in several Brazilian cities. This community was created on July 23, 2007 and has 84.175 members.⁴ Which factors enabled the transformation of the wake into something that can be transmitted over the Internet? How can I be interested in watching the funeral wake of someone I never knew? A situation that is representative of this interest in death, also characterized as *morbidity*, can be represented by the accidents that occur daily on the roads. Besides the excitement to the rescue and removal of dead and wounded of the track, we also find people who come to the site just to *see*. These people are not only those originating from a nearby town, but also the ones passing slowly in their cars trying to capture some detail of the tragedy. If there was a death, it is normal that the traffic remains slow until the corpse and the scene of the accident have been removed. Besides this common scene in our daily lives, bereaved families are targets of the same curiosity when it is known that the deceased is being veiled at home, but this custom no longer remains as present in our urban environment as now we veil our dead in specific locals. Another very striking example to illustrate that the interest in death and the dead is not so strange can be found upon the death of a celebrity. We are bombarded by images of what happened, if any, and most controversial cases, such as accidents or crimes, to schematics, representations and reconstructions are presented in addition to the live broadcast of the funeral, where many people (fans or not) go, and the same happens to the burial. Therefore, we can say from the outset, that although viewing a Virtual

¹ MA, Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), Brazil.

² <http://www.orkut.com.br/Main#Community?cmm=993780>.

³ <http://www.orkut.com.br>.

⁴ In 13/10/2011.

Wake can be taken as a new attitude in relation to traditional ways of veiling a dead body and in relation to the morbid curiosity of individuals against any dead body, others may have similar behavior in several other situations. Even so, by tracing the trajectory of the traditional wakes up to the making of the Virtual ones, we will try to elucidate this virtuality, covering the funeral rites, especially the wake, as a specific moment in dealing with man's death through an anthropological view.

Since Philippe Ariès made one of the most comprehensive studies on the attitude of Western man before our final moment (1979), we can prove that our behavior towards the end of life has changed dramatically. From his ideas, followed other studies that corroborate our work: we are extremely sensitive toward death and the dead: with the increase in life expectancy and the possibility of curing most diseases, it was removed from the home tract and became less daily. Or in the words of the author, death, from "tamed" became "wild" (1979).⁵ We moved away from the approach of the deceased creating hospitalization of dying, which left us completely unprepared to deal with it. We will discuss this further away, so we won't get too chronologically. We will try to illuminate the path traced by the Brazilian funeral rites, from the more traditional formats of the home wake until its virtual form. How we move from the virtual to deal with death? To try to answer this question, we use more than a few candles: computer screens will provide the brightness needed for our journey since the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present to understand changes.

Mourir Autrefois or Following the dead

Preserve the image of a dead man seems strange to many people, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries depict dead relatives and friends was completely normal. With the advent of photography by Frenchman Louis Daguerre, photography became an economical alternative to traditional paintings on canvas. With the high mortality rate of time and short life expectancy, death was a trivial matter, for this reason, in the second half of the century, shooting dead relatives recently become an important practice to overcome the grieving process and accept the loss. The post-mortem photography, also called *memento mori*, was perhaps the only chance to retain the image of a loved one, which was then placed on a bed or sofa in order to appear to be asleep. Gradually, parents, siblings and other relatives began to pose next to their dead in order to make it appear that he was still alive, leaving us in difficulty, in some cases, to distinguish who is alive or not. We can find

⁵ Philippe Ariès, *O Homem perante a morte*, Lisboa, Publicações Europa América, Coleção Biblioteca Universitária 1977.

several photographs of them in Brazil, as in data collected by Koury (2003) in a research on image, memory and emotion with a sociological approach.⁶

So when we see photographs of this type, we ask the reasons for such a practice considered morbid to us. And if we know that today, instead of photographing the dead, and that we are shooting them and this footage is transmitted in real time over the internet, for people who have never seen that person in life? These are the Virtual funerals, one way to deal with death that has been widespread in the community forums in social networking site Orkut since 2007.

And how we passed from real to virtual wakes in Brazil? Who gives us a great deal of information is the historian Joao Jose Reis (1991) in the report of the customs of Bahia in the nineteenth century. We believe that these same practices were common in other Brazilian cities at the time and, despite the temporal distance, we can see almost the same things, reconfigured, in rituals today. First, it is important to note that one died at home, along with the family. The dying often had time to say goodbye to their relatives, to make recommendations, to apologize, pay off debts and provide other referrals, particularly those related to his funeral. The family was present in all these moments, including children. All this final ceremony of a lifetime was regarded as natural, even death itself. So, it was also natural that this same family took care of all necessary steps to ensure the loved one a smooth passage to *the other side*.⁷

The first step for the funeral of the nineteenth century was to have a *Mass of news* or bend the bells of the parish church. For the wealthy, it was common to send small invitations that slaves would distribute in order to draw everyone to “brighten”⁸ the wake. Thus, they also sent for the mourning women, the weepers, women who received money to weep copiously. This practice still exists within our country, but almost is no longer seen in the capital and became a curious thing, as shown in the special report displayed by the National Broadcasting System (SBT) for the Day of the Dead 2010.⁹

Then, it was necessary to prepare the body, wash it, comb it and dress it on, because the funeral was (and this idea remains) the last moment, the last meeting of the dead with their own. The choice of burial clothing or shroud was influenced by several things, because at the time, it was common to be a

⁶ Mauro Guilherme Pinheiro Koury, *Amor e dor: Ensaios em Antropologia Simbólica*, Recife, Editora Bagaço, 2005.

⁷ Ariès, *O Homem*.

⁸ This term was founded in an invitation analyzed by João José Reis, *A morte é uma festa: ritos fúnebres e revolta popular no Brasil do século XIX*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1991, from 1859 in occasion to the death of wealthy man from Bahia.

⁹ The report was exhibited in the TV show named SBT Reporter in 08/011/2010.

member of the Brotherhoods¹⁰, which had their own costumes for this moment. Reis, indeed, found 34 different types of clothing for the moment of death¹¹, which was also linked to the social condition of the dead: if he had possessions, if he was a widower, a child, clergy or virgin. But, anyway, was also common that the dying decide what clothes they like to use, decision extended to the family or executor, if there were. It was necessary that this outfit had no trace of earthly life, such as dust or sand, otherwise, the dead would come back. Therefore, depending on the possession of the family, it was common to buy shoes or a whole new outfit. Furthermore, it was commonplace, according to Greek custom, to put a silver coin in the mouth of the deceased so that he could pay St. Peter by his reception in the heavens.

The next step then was to arm the house. Yes, the house, because it was in his own residence that the dead was veiled, and preferably over the dinner table. But alternatively, it could also be built a *bunk* or *essa* (most used if the funeral took place in the church), where the corpse stood prepared, without the coffin, which was only used for transportation, since at that time it was common for the Brotherhoods to lend coffins to their brethren. These coffins were reused later and only at the end of the century it has become more common to use the single coffin. Other tools were also hired, as the silver candlesticks for accommodation of candles - many candles. After all, the word in Portuguese for candle is *Vela*, and the wake is called *Velório*. These candles were also distributed among the participants that, subsequently, took the opportunity to light their own homes, one of the reasons for the influx of people, even those who didn't know the dead.

Other items made up the symbolism of this moment, as the holy water that was used by visitors to sprinkle the dead. According to a Portuguese say, the eyes of the deceased without holy water were completely black, such the concentration of demons around him. It was for fear of these same demons - and the devil himself - that a body was never left alone, the more company the better. So it was the duty of the bereaved family to provide all items for the well-being of caregivers, including drink and food, so that they could face the night of prayers and requests addressed to other deaths, said in the ear of the deceased in question.

After following up all night, was made the commendation, which was also a possible prevention for the possible will of the deceased's soul to return. It was common for this part in the end of the corpse's stay to be accompanied by musicians, which was represented as a sign of respect and gave the event a

¹⁰ The Brotherhoods were corporative associations of solidarity, based on social hierarchy and means of cultural reaffirmation. This solidarity was mainly attached to the help provided in the hour of death, from the preparation of the body until the burial. The aim of the brotherhoods was to provide their associates a dignified funeral.

¹¹ Reis, *A morte*, p. 119.

solemn tone. The body should be removed from home with feet facing the street (and in this position the body should be placed during the funeral), according to Cascudo (1978), the dead must go "to the grave with the feet, as the inverse as he entered the world."

Procession and burial

Taking the deceased from his home to be buried was followed by the funeral procession, composed by family, friends and especially strangers and the poor, because it was good form to distribute alms for this event, like Reis (1991) explained in detail in the wills analyzed by him, showing that both rich and poor alike followed this recommendation.

But the most important of all these precautions was to be buried, and where the burial took place mattered deeply. Dying without a grave was something terrible (it is, still today) and the haunting ghosts probably came from the unburied, according to popular tradition. Death by drowning, then, was greatly feared, because the probability of finding the body and bury it was pretty remote, which immediately gave a malevolent status to the dead. Within the country they still pray for the souls of the dead at sea. Then the land had an important role at the time of acceptance of the lifeless body, and was necessary to rest in an appropriate place, preferably a saint one. The burial, then, happened within the Church, "one of the gateways of Paradise".¹²

The burial in the church, also called *Ad Sanctis* burials, as reported by Philippe Ariès, were intended to let the dead in the company of saints, martyrs and righteous, like the men of the clergy. Of course, it was not a company to be enjoyed by everyone: like everything else, a price should be paid and the closer to the altar, the higher this value. But even so, it was a very usual practice in Brazil, provided mainly by the Brotherhood membership we talked about earlier. Only suicidals were prohibited from being buried inside the church, a problem solved by the family, which moved to another parish, often at night, to ensure the burial in a consecrated land. But to wait for Doomsday in the company of saints and martyrs was also doomed.

The terror of the cemetery

The transition from ecclesiastical burial to the cemetery in Europe happened gradually: the outside of the church was considered as holy as the inside, hence the appearance of the cemeteries around them. After that, with the approach of the living and increasing population, it was necessary to transfer the place of death for a little further.¹³ In Brazil, as reported Reis¹⁴, this transition occurred sharply, as the prohibition of burial in the church came from the doctors, who

¹² Reis, *A morte*, p. 171.

¹³ Ariès, *O Homem*.

¹⁴ Reis, *A morte*.

presented the dangers of vapors coming from the decomposition of corpses, polluting the house of God, which should accommodate only the living.

However, to be buried in a cemetery was something of a tremendous shame, because there were only placed the bodies of foreigners, criminals, or suicides. So, the cemetery was seen as a harmful site, which housed the souls that were lost in their lifetimes. In Bahia, the construction of the first cemetery for general use caused the *Cemiterada*, a popular revolt that culminated in the destruction of the whole structure of the then pristine *Campo Santo* in 1836.¹⁵ The prohibition against burying within churches was a major reason for the change in the treatment of death.

Doctors against death - and the dead!

From the 1830s, the traditional format of dying began to be increasingly frowned upon by the medical behavior, supported by a European view of hygiene. As was customary to train Brazilian doctors abroad, especially in France, hygienists' ideas soon came to our country. The ban was enacted in 1828, by an imperial decree, strongly influenced by medical literature that since the beginning of that decade, had been pointing out several reasons for the change, such as claims that cities became sick due to the vapors of bodies decomposition that permeated the air and beat up the environment, causing the so-called miasma. The dead, for them, were a public health problem, and the custom of burying within churches was an atrocity. Perhaps the French situation was direr and really needed these changes, especially because the country has known much more wars and conflicts than Brazil. The Parisian population was larger (about one million) than the Brazilian in 1830, which resulted in clogging of the cemetery walls, such as *the Invalides*, *Madeleine* or *the Innocents*. The territory was also smaller and let's not forgets the epidemics, the custom of the public execution of criminals, things that Brazil, especially Bahia, in 1800 saw in much less frequently. There are many factors that differentiated ours condition from the French, and perhaps the time doctors do not realize it, adopting the French model as the ideal to Brazil. For them, keeping death close, even in memory, was not healthy because it invoked death itself. As the promised development of medicine of actually postponing the final hour, maybe there was already some conceit: they were, in fact, able to extinguish the death.

In addition to this public issue, doctors took the funeral rites to ridicule or mere superstitions and popular medicine was its strongest ally in the subjugation of religion by reason. So that even the doubling of bells to the announcement of someone's death was taken as a harmful, causing headaches and other ailments mainly to women because they were more sensitive, doomed to suffer. The doctor, in the nineteenth century, was regarded as a

¹⁵ Ibid.

"benefactor of mankind, the keeper of public health", reported Reis.¹⁶ Because of this quality so gratifying to the doctors, then they entered politics, further influencing the behavior of the population. From this moment, a backlash from the dead was created and we also begun to experience death differently.

Moving between devotion and reason - the law of death

Medical science has supplanted religion in the treatment of death, following the precepts of the Enlightenment. Since then, we have followed hygienists and practices devised by nineteenth-century thinkers. For them, the funeral rites were mere superstition. Even with popular revolts against the cemeteries, as the *Cemiterada* in Bahia, and after many years until the ban on burials within churches were actually enforced, the will was made and medical people then proceeded to bury their dead in cemeteries, strategically located outside the cities. The location of the cemetery should be chosen carefully, preferably in valleys, where the decomposition vapors would stay trapped by geography and could not be spread by wind. But the population, even though given the ban, saw many obstacles at placing the funeral so far from their place of living and they were pushed away from the increasingly deals with death.

With the emergence of the Law of 28 October 1828, that passed the responsibility for cleaning the cities to the City Halls - which encompassed the cemeteries - a very specific law in the treatment of death began to emerge. Rules were established to deal with the dead that included fines for any possible shift of a corpse in a public place, if not buried with due six feet deep and the prohibition of leaving holes open for more than 24 hours. Every burial legislation was created, and in Rio de Janeiro,

The magistrate and the doctor would then preside over burials: the first almost replaced the priest in the death register; this act shall require a medical certificate with the address of the deceased, the duration of illness, time of death and their cause. With sudden deaths, the judge would appoint a doctor to examine the body, a precaution against burying people alive. The dead had to be autopsied in the case of suspected crime. The doctor would also set the time elapsed between death and burial¹⁷.

The Brazilian population tried to resist and preserve their customs, but was supplanted by the promise of extending the medical sanitizing of life and death, which would no longer bother the living. Gradually, even the Church joined the new model of death, participating in the liturgy now offered in the cemeteries, leaving the house of God for the exclusive use of the living. The Brotherhoods lost a lot, but had to adapt to new models and many were left with the management of cemeteries, sanctioned by the Provincial Law No. 17 of 1835, which determined the private grounds and Cemeteries Business, initiating

¹⁶ Reis, *A morte*, p. 251.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

the well-known funeral industry, which we often see as something new, but in fact, already exists for more than 200 years.

The fear of death yesterday

Thus, the transfer of the death place out of homes and the location of graves out of churches, cemeteries increasingly standardized and governed by laws and organizational health workers had a gradual change in vision and sense of death in the urban Brazilian population. We can see this shift in popular discourse present in a chronicle of The Brazilian journal called The Official Censor of 1837:

Nothing we see now is more anti-Christian, more wicked and barbarous, or more contrary to the reverence due to the temple of God, and the health of the men that the savagery of Churches, and placing inside them what we would be disgusted to save in our homes. The dead body was the filth that polluted religion. Religion was a good thing, mobile of leading happiness to nations, but superstition is so contrary to religion than impiety.¹⁸

Another passage, which tells the plight of the population after an epidemic outbreak, shows us how ingrained fear became, this fear of dying, connected to the distance from death to the bosom of society:

The population now had a horror of the dead, according to the president of the province. In times of epidemic, writes Lebrun, death ceases to be a show or an event, it becomes a personal threat, separate, immediately. In August, the burials in churches were again banned, following recommendations of the Faculty of Medicine. No one protested. Before the plague, which was interpreted by many as a divine punishment, Bahia would conform to the idea of expelling the dead from the city, leaving values that were considered sacred before.¹⁹

Ready been done. The type of death that we follow, today, was molded over the past two hundred years of separation from it. It did not take much to spark the Funeralary Companies, ramifications of Cemetery Companies, in the form we know today, who take care of the dead from the moment of his death, cleaning them, dressing them, arranging the whole scenario we described earlier - now lit with lamps that mimic the so nostalgic candles - in an impersonal, standardized environment, which is dedicated to providing support for the family at this difficult time, where it is virtually impossible for the individual to deal with the end of life, something so common to our ancestors. Anyway, some customs prevailed, and one of them is the wake, redesigned in this business molds and, now, in virtuality.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 338.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The undertakers as places of death

As a result of this process of change in dealing with death, increased life expectancy and the possibilities of medical treatment and transfer of patients to hospitals, funeral companies were structured as we know: a cleaning, organization and preparation local for the dead until the time for the wake and burial. These companies are hired by grieving families to develop exactly the same role that we exemplified earlier, all related to the customs of the past, most of them refurbished. The undertakers are responsible for today's increasingly specialized services, and among them are the real and the virtual wakes. The funerals are held in specially acclimatized spaces to this event, also playing the same scenario as our ancestors organized in their homes. The memorial hall is composed of pedestals that support the coffin, replacing the dining table of households and other media that are intended for display of wreaths. Instead of candlesticks for wax candles, now they place light bulbs that intend to play them. Generally, we also have a room adjacent to this main space, for the family, taken for bereavement, so they may suffer from its loss in a more reserved area, because, as Bauman²⁰ and Koury²¹ put, mourning today is something shameful. The whole ceremony is organized under a commercial contract established between the family and the company. There are certain times of beginning and ending of the wake - and it is still common to last for 24 hours - but this period may vary according to the determination of the family. They are also provided for the cost of water and coffee or any other services that perhaps could be hired. At the end of the indicated period, the hearse is available, a mean of transport that will take the coffin to the cemetery where the burial will take place. In short, the rituals of death in urban Brazil can be described this way. And when the family chooses to broadcast, in real time, the wake? This is where the virtual collides with the reality once again.

The dread of death today

Irreparable ... Hopeless ... Irreversible ... Irrevocable ... Unable to cancel or to heal ... The point of no return ... The end ... The ultimate ... The *end of everything*. There is one and only one event to which you can assign all of these descriptions fully and without exception. An event that makes metaphorical all other applications of these concepts. The event that gives them primary meaning - pristine, without adulteration or dilution. This event is *death*.²²

According to studies by Zygmunt Bauman²³ on contemporary fears, the fear of death can be represented in different moments of our digital and virtualized life. When talking about the biggest of liquid fears - death itself - the author begins the discussion by addressing the functioning of *reality shows*, so

²⁰ Zygmunt Bauman, *Medo líquido*, Rio de Janeiro, Jorge Zahar, 2008.

²¹ Koury, *Amor*.

²² Bauman, *Medo*, p. 44.

²³ Ibid.

common in our time. For him, we construct a process of identification with the participants through their words and postures and the elimination of each one of them is an end, a closure that can be represented and is apprehended by us, viewers, as a form of the human finitude, one's own death. "What reality shows exposes is destiny", he trims, to highlight the effort we make today to keep death at a distance. And these efforts, in the end, will not mean anything, because death will come.

Likewise is the operation of the reality shows, where someone must be eliminated, without fail. This relation made by the author between our feelings about reality shows and death is interesting to think about the public character of the Virtual Wake. Although there are no microphones, we identify ourselves with the protagonists of the video exactly because they are in a situation that is familiar to us and because of the gestures and postures that we see. It is not necessary to speak to the identification to happen. This identification takes place by the fear of death, the "original fear," according to the author.

Death in virtuality

The transfer from various human activities to the computer has been strengthened daily. Today is where we study, work, begin relationships, marry, have sex and, now, veil for our loved ones, satisfying our curiosity about the human finitude. This change in perspective the issue that was turned into a taboo for some centuries. The cultural processes connected with it enabled companies to offer a funeral service that meets this virtual demand: the Virtual Wake.

We continue to reproduce since the break with the customs rejected by doctors, some remnants of the ancient funerary rituals in Brazil through the services offered by specialized Funeral Houses. We had more advances in medicine, which diachronically allowed, after a long period away, for the dying one to choose to go home and die in it. The medical discourse relied on human speech to give terminal patients the chance to choose the place of his death.

While families dealt with the strangeness of the assembly of an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in their houses, or the receipt of already banned being from their womb because of illness, advancing sociology, anthropology and semiotics²⁴ focused on the contemplation of everyday life and media, and made possible the recognition of media as irradiators of emotions, sensations and feelings, creating an aesthetic experience that structure mental life in cities.

One of these media is the global network of computers, powerful tool that, even with several possibilities, and would not only sustain the fiction: the telematics narratives must constantly include realistic representations of daily life aspects under the penalty of becoming obsolete. The images on the screens (television, computer, mobile) effectively promote seductive appearances,

²⁴ Lúcia Santaella, *Cultura das mídias*, São Paulo, Experimento, 1996.

because they show us "impossible" to be captured dimensions of "real world" without the looks of technology. This is possible in the network due to its hypertextuality (created by the conjunction of images, texts and sounds), the simulation of a "real" that rivals reality.

And one of these impossible moments to be personally accompanied is the wake, an intimate moment for family and friends of someone who died. To present oneself personally at the wake of a stranger for mere curiosity is something unusual, although we may find several characters who deliberately feed this practice.

But for the curious and the less courageous, it would be an impossible task to interact or simply observe the dynamics of this event untouched or unnoticed by those who are present.

Networks installed in everyday life a creational space of interaction and discussion of emerging issues in the ferment of this same everyday life, but also of extreme phenomena such as death. As the Internet is built by real organic, historical, deadly beings, it is understandable that the presence of individuals is noticeable in the thickness of the digital life. And you cannot talk about life without thinking about the experience of death. And it is in the interstices of the Telematics Narratives that the discourse driven by curiosity infiltrates the willingness to learn and interact with ideas like the radical experiences as death.

We believe it is the curiosity about these radical experiments of death that led to the creation of virtual community Death People Profiles within the social networking site Orkut, holding the sole intention of observing these wakes transmitted in real time.

How are the Virtual Wakes

The Virtual Wake is a online, real-time streaming of a conventional wake through previously installed cameras connected to the Internet, "a way of reducing the distance from family and friends who are away for any reason and cannot be present in the memorial site" as puts the Group Villa, owner of Abode of Peace Cemetery in João Pessoa, Brazil.²⁵ The user can view in the company's website a party or the whole place where a dead man is being mourned by his friends and relatives. The Virtual Wake is mostly paid: it can cost between fifty and a hundred and fifty dollars and is offered by about a dozen of Brazilian Funeral Companies, such as the Group Villa, which provides it since 2001.

The Municipal Urbanization S.A. or Urbam, which operates within the state of São Paulo, was the first company to offer free Virtual Wakes. It is through the institutional links of its website that many Internet users attend to Virtual Wakes punctually.

These free broadcasts sponsored by Urbam gained projection in the virtual community called Death People Profiles, in Orkut, a very popular n

²⁵ <http://www.grupovila.com.br/funerarias/moradapaz/velorio-virtual/>.

online relationship website in Brazil. In Orkut, each user has a profile where one can put the information he wants, as well as photos and video, and can interact with other users through messages and comments in the communities. The communities are spaces or discussion forums created by the user that involves almost every subject, even those who are not as discussed as death.

Thus was created the Dead People Profiles community in Dec. 23th, 2004, which lists the profiles of Orkut users who have died and are dying daily. Within this community, it began to be disseminated the Virtual Wake as a specific topic on January 18th, 2009. On July 23th, 2007, appeared the community entitled Virtual Wakes which currently has 3899 members, only for display and dissemination of this service and gather impressions about its achievement. In this community, you can also meet and discuss matters and other related to death issues: photos, Virtual Cemeteries as Père Lachaise, in France; photos of people naturally mummified in the Crypt of the Capuchins, in Palermo, Italy, and texts on the preparation of corpses, among other curiosities.

For each topic there is a funeral where we can make practically any kind of comment about the event. Some users also provide links to medical reports and newspaper articles that talk about the death of the one being veiled. These materials promote the discussion on the subject of death and, as the case may generate conflicts on other controversial topics, such as murder and suicide.

Ultimate Considerations

If, as described above, was always in good taste that the deceased was accompanied by as many people as possible, we can say that today, with the virtuality, we are safe as measured by the technological apparatus which our companions are hiding. Although today, it happens just the opposition of visualization and exposing of the death (beyond that daily, due to violence), there are people who want to see death, see his own death represented in the deceased being virtually veiled.

As Bauman put it

The warning *memento mori*, remember the death, which accompanies the proclamation of the eternity of life, is an affirmation of the awesome power that promise to fight against the paralyzing impact of the imminence of death. Once the announcement has been heard and absorbed, and who has believed it, there is no longer any need to try (in vain, so to speak!) to forget the inevitability of death. No more taking his eyes off his inevitable arrival. Death is not the Gorgon (*Medusa, slain by Perseus*²⁶), whose own vision would be able to take life, not only can face death, but must do it daily, 24 hours a day, unless you forget worrying about the kind of new life that will herald the impending

²⁶ Our highlight.

death. Remember the imminence of death keeps the lives of mortals on course - giving it a purpose that makes all the lived moments precious.²⁷

When we take Bauman's recommendations into account, we may say that virtually attend the wakes is a way of asserting the *memento mori*. The author uses this speech to show that we are, in fact, away from death the way it was experienced before. So if we need to incorporate the certainty of death into our lives, there are several ways to do it - the Virtual Wake is one. For this reason, the first idea that comes to mind is that we are redesigning, perhaps, this ancient custom of accompanying the deceased. But is this true? By providing a display of a wake over the internet, we open possibilities that would not be enforceable if we only had the option of viewing it in person.

By being able to attend a wake in our computer, without leaving our home, we open a range of variants: we can, yes, be thrilled by the death of another person, recognize the finitude of human being, think about our own death ... But we can also behave in a less orthodox way, generalizing the event that is being transmitted: we can make jokes, eat, talk, criticize, or even take other actions that would be impossible without the protection of anonymity and virtuality.

These opportunities characterized the fragmentation of the death of which spoke Bauman²⁸, transforming death into something saturated and diluted. This deconstruction of death prompted trivialization, represented here by the examples described earlier related to the different ways a Virtual Wake can be seen. Lost amid this trivialization expected to transform life with the knowledge of death into something tolerable, is the "absolute otherness"²⁹ of the unknown ability of death, which also transformed the death of others, unknown, into something devoid of mystery and that no more scares. Hence the visualization of virtual wakes of strangers has become a widespread practice in virtuality.

On the other hand, what is more interesting in the possibility of viewing a wake over the Internet is a chance to have close relatives and loved ones "present" when they could not get on time to follow this event in person, hence the greater importance of this "absolute otherness" that shows up at times when we could not be present bodily. And in the history of man's dealing with death, the other's presence is essential as it ensures that the departure was a dignified and peaceful one.

But the possibility of otherness and reflection or affection (similar to the proposed by Jeanne Favret-Saada³⁰ for the death of others is only valid when we are actually facing the death of a loved one. When the deceased is unknown, we

²⁷ Bauman, *Medo*, p. 47.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

³⁰ Jeanne Favret-Saada, "Ser afetado", *Cadernos de Campo* (2005), 13, pp. 155-161.

have other possibilities of behavior, such as that put before, which can be respectful or not. Even these other possibilities, even those disrespectful to the death of another person, can attest we are slowly approaching - somehow - this event, this fact so important in our lives, which was rejected and turned into a taboo: death.

For, according to the path we have set, both the death of a relative or of a stranger have become an apart event of our everyday lives, if we consider the behavior once accepted, in which funerals were moments of socialization and strengthening of emotional ties. Although we still have this functionality, the way we deal with human finitude always passes through the veil of shame, the shame of death that is made often as a failure or as something that could be avoided.

To conclude, it is worth remembering the situation imagined by Jose Saramago when death (who signed with a lowercase letter, as he put it) decided, first, to stop killing, and then, notify by letter, with one week advance, when a death would occur. The euphoria with the possibility of eternal life has been replaced by despair and the recognition that death is an essential step to maintain life.

We may not have to have a tragic situation like that to realize this fact and learn to deal with death in a better way, less embarrassed and more soundly, as it has been proposed by the medical aspect of care and palliative therapies, for example. Perhaps, too, we are in the path to reconciliation through this virtuality that, unlike other events, will allow us to do the opposite: by virtualizing a behavior, we are solidifying the reality of it.

RELIGION, NATION, MEDIA.
NATIONAL MOURNING IN POLAND AFTER 1989

RADOSŁAW SIEROCKI¹

Introduction: When the whole society is weeping. National Mourning in Poland after 1989

In the first days of the last and longest (9 days) national mourning in Poland after the plane crash in Smoleńsk on 10 April 2010 we could read in Polish newspapers (also on television and in radio) declarations of reconciliation:

“For everyday we live side by side, and so rarely together. The Smoleńsk tragedy has reunited us again as the society”²; “Let this death reconcile us. Every death is senseless and aimless. But Polish people have the opportunity to make meaning of this tragedy unprecedented in the Polish history”³, “In such moments we feel some unspoken spirit unity, solidarity, greater attention and care for the common good – Poland. The patriotism is awakening or is coming for the daylight, because we don’t want to suppress it in such a moment”.⁴

Tragedy, in which president of Poland Lech Kaczyński, his wife and other ninety-four passengers and the members of the plane crew, lost their lives, released the emotions on the scale, that let us think, that we – Polish people – “rediscover” our nation and patriotism. Sociological and anthropological comments appeared short after (and still appears), in which the ideas of community and Victor Turner’s community were recalled. Joanna Tokarska-Bakir in *Gazeta Wyborcza* was analyzing the mourning in terms of Turner’s concept of social drama and the rite of passage with the three phases: pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal. The liminal phase was the time when all of the society members were equal in grief, when the social structures were suspended, and the language of liminality (in this case the language of the mourning) gave the opportunity to look at ourselves with distance and reflexivity: “*members of the drama became the audience for themselves*”⁵. Grief, bereavement and unbelieving in what happened made us the community for few days. Community that – as was it said – re-discovered “the idea of nation”: some basic national/community values or – as Edward Shils would say

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² Redakcja, ‘Razem w hołdzie’ (Editorial staff, ‘Together in homage’), in *Dziennik. Gazeta Prawna*, 70 (12.04.2010), p. 1.

³ Jarosław Kurski, ‘Niech ta śmierć nas pojedna’ (‘Let this death reconcile us’), in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 85 (12.04.2010), p. 8.

⁴ Małgorzata Jędrzejczak, ‘Czas zatrzymał się w miejscu’ (‘Time has stood still’), in *Nasz Dziennik*, 85 (12.04.2010), p. 17.

⁵ Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, ‘Karnawał smutku’ (The carnival of grief), in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 96 (24.04.2010), p. 20.

– sacred centre of the society. It should be add in passing, that the atmosphere of the “sacred time” wasn’t long-lasting and some conflicts of political and world-view nature started soon in the time of national mourning. For example the conflict of the place of burial of Lech Kaczyński and his wife (should it or should’t it be Wawel in Cracow – the historical place of burials, where the most important persons for the history of Poland are buried) or the conflict of the holy cross in Krakowskie Przedmieście street in Warsaw – should it stay in front of the President’s Palace, where it was put in the beginning of the national mourning by the polish scouts, or should it be removed to the near church).

These first days of National Mourning of April 2010 reminded the days of national mourning after the death of the pope John Paul II, who was called in Poland “the polish pope” or “our pope”. In the day of death of the pope (2 April 2010) the second Easter started (the Easter was celebrated on 27 March). It was some kind of religious and spiritual awakening: people left their homes and gather in the street and in the churches to pray. In fact, the celebration (although it is not a appropriate word) had started on 1 April, as the information about the forthcoming death of the pope appeared, with the most dramatic hours on Saturday evening, when everybody was waiting for the final message about the death. It was so-called “Week of Vigil” that ended with the funeral on 8 April. *Communitas* – as Turner claims – “*has got some aspect of potentiality; it is often in subjunctive mood*”⁶; in the time of liminality (transitional space between separation and incorporation) the new definition (of how should it be) of reality are replacing existing one (of how it is). In the time of polish “Week of Vigil” even hostile fans of Cracow football teams “Wisła” and “Cracovia” announced “ceasefire”. Fans organized the holy mass jointly and gave each other the sign of peace. “Cracovia” and “Wisła” fans in comments used to say about the “the first decision of the Holy Father [the Pope John Paul II – RS] from the next world” and about the “miracle [of reconciliation – RS]”.⁷ Shortly after the “Week of Vigil” relations between fans returned to the regular hostility. The National Mourning had been announced on 3 April 2005 and lasted till the day of funeral (8 April 2005).

National Mourning in April 2005 and National Mourning in April 2010 were the greatest days of mourning in Poland for the last two decades. There were some similarities and differences between the social activities of mourners. These were the major days of mourning, if the measure was the number of candles lighted in the streets and also if to take the unmeasurable atmosphere of reconciliation and community (*communitas*) into consideration. The main difference is in the death and tragedy that should had been commemorated: the

⁶ Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, Chicago, EKS, 2008, p. 127.

⁷ Michał Olszewski, mibi, ‘Wspólna msza kibiców Cracovii i Wisły’ (‘Common mass of Cracovia and Wisła football teams fans’), (04.04.2005), <http://serwis.gazeta.pl/jp2/1,72542,2638031.html>, read on 23.02.2011.

death of president Kaczyński and 95 other people in the plane crash was unexpected, unbelievable (they crashed near the place, where the polish soldiers were executed by the soviet army in 1940 and whose death they were going to commemorate in Katyń) and unimaginable. Death of the “polish” Pope was expected. People in Poland were waiting for the information about the death for the whole day 2 April knowing about the relapse of John Paul II. It was the time of preparing, and finally, when the information came from Vatican, believers were prepared. The hour of the death of John Paul II became a symbolic number: “21:37”. On Saturday 2 April the media were transmitting the agony of the pope (with no pictures, just the information), and all of the media were prepared to announce the expected information. Special television team were – for example – waiting in the places connected with John Paul II (Wadowice – place of birth, Cracow, Rome) for the live broadcast showing the people gathering together for vigil and prayer. The two periods of national grief I’m calling “the major National Mourning”, when the whole society was weeping for the religious and national leaders. But there were also other national mourning days in Poland after 1989, which could be called “not-so-major” national mourning days in order to point, that they were not as important as the two mentioned above. Every death is equal; it only depends on meaning given in the time of mourning and after. So the question is, what was the meaning of the deaths of “ordinary” people (what means “not religious or nation leaders”) given in time of the national mourning declared after the tragedies that occurred? The next questions are: why there was national mourning declared? Are these tragedies – that I am specifying below – important for the national identity and in what way? It is interesting – I think – and also important to study the reasons for declaring the national mourning and the way it is experienced in different countries because of the idea of “soft” nationalism and national identity and solidarity but also for the international solidarity. The national mourning after the death of John Paul II and after the Smoleńsk plane crash was declared not only in Poland, but in several other countries. There was the national mourning designated in Poland after the tragedies that occurred not in Poland: after the terrorist’s attack in USA in 2001, in Madrid in 2004 or in London in 2005. In all of these tragedies some Poles died also, but it wasn’t the main reason. In Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 only one Pole died, but national mourning was also declared.

Let’s list the days of national mourning in Poland after 1989.

1) The first national mourning in Poland after 1989 was declared on 18 July 1997 after the flood that hit the southern and western territories of Poland, but also Czech Republic and Germany. It was called “the flood of millennium”: 56 people died in water. The previous national mourning was declared in 1964 after the death of Aleksander Zawadzki – the chairman of communist Council

of the State. Therefore the 1997 NM was – in some way – historical and special moment.

2) In 2001 the national mourning was declared for 12-14 September as a response for World Trade Center and Pentagon attack on 11 September. There were 5 victims from Poland.

3) National Mourning was declared after the Madrid bombing attack on 11 March 2004 in which 4 Poles died (Days of National Mourning: 12-13 March).

4) National Mourning after the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami on 26 December 2004. The national mourning was designed for 5 January 2005 because of the Christmas holiday and New Year Eve. Only 1 Pole died in disaster.

5) National Mourning after the death of John Paul II (DNM: 3-8 April).

6) National Mourning after the London bombing attack on 7 July (DNM: 14 July). 3 Polish victims.

7) National Mourning after the construction disaster in Katowice Trade Hall on 28 January (DNM: 29 January – 1 February). During the Pigeon Exhibition the roof of the building collapsed due to weight of the snow laying on the building. 65 persons died, while 170 was hurt.

8) National Mourning after the explosion of methane in coal-mine “Halemba” in Ruda Śląska in Silesia on 21 November (DNM: 23-25 November). 23 miners died. At the beginning (22 November) the three days of mourning was declared by the president of Ruda Śląska (local mourning), then on 23 November president Lech Kaczyński declared three days of national mourning.

9) National Mourning after the crash of the polish bus near Groneble in France on 22 July 2007 (DNM: 23-25 July). Victims (26 killed and 24 wounded) were the polish pilgrims coming home from Marian sanctuaries in Portugal and France (sanctuaries of Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of La Salette).

10) National Mourning after the crash of military plane CASA on 23 January 2008 (DNM: 24-26 January). There were 20 victims; almost of them were the high ranking air force officers (one non-commissioned officer).

11) National Mourning after the fire in block of flats in Kamień Pomorski on 13 April 2009 during the Easter (DNM: 14-16 April). 23 persons died, 21 got wounded.

12) National Mourning after the disaster in coal-mine “Wujek”-“Ruch Śląski” in Ruda Śląska on 18 September 2009 (DNM: 21-22 September after the weekend of polish folk harvest festival). 20 people died, but in the day of declaring NM, there were 13 victims.

13) National Mourning after the plane crash in Smoleńsk on 10 April 2010 (DNM: 10-18 April). 96 persons died including president Lech Kaczyński, his wife Maria, Ryszard Kaczorowski – last President of Poland in exile,

members of polish parliament, representatives of the polish army and army chaplains (of three denominations), members of polish association "Rodziny Katyńskie" and many others.

Short look at the list let us build six main categories of disasters being the reason for declaring the national mourning, therefore being the "national disasters". First of the death of the leader (religious leader John Paul II and national leader president Kaczyński with members of the polish Parliament and polish army). Then, there are natural disasters ("flood of millennium" in 1997 and "Indian Ocean Tsunami" in 2004/2005), building disasters (collapse of Katowice Trade Hall in 2006 and fire in Kamień Pomorski in 2009), coal-mine disasters ("Halemba" in 2006 and "Wujek"-"Ruch Śląski" in 2009), transportation disasters (pilgrims of La Salette in 2007 and CASA crash in 2008) and terror disaster (9/11 in 2001, Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005). Other classification could be concentrated on the numbers of victims (small number – large number). Regardless of reason or of the number of victims there are some cultural and social patterns of experiencing the national mourning and national trauma, which are connected with the idea of solidarity and usually with compassion and aid action. The beginning of the national mourning sets up different social discourses about the tragedy, unity, solidarity, guilt, reason, aid. These could be discourses and discussions marked with political, religious and worldview divisions. The conflicts that raised in the time of DNM in April 2010 are the best examples: there were in fact – if we would follow the discussions and even conflicts that broke out around the victims of Tu-154M (plane) crash – several different national mourning. It is also important in reporting of the days of national mourning (and national disasters), that Lech Kaczyński was declaring the national mourning most often: six times for 5 five years of term of office (2005 – 2010), while former president – Aleksander Kwaśniewski issued regulation about the national mourning three times for ten years of holding the office (1995-2005). The other regulations were given by the prime ministers.

Making sadness visible: national mourning in public sphere

National mourning – like every mourning – is a special time of bereavement and/or commemoration: the tribute to those, who died is being paid. There are several ways of celebration the national mourning: official and unofficial, predicted by law and dictated by custom. Like in the traditional cultures some act and gestures should be done, and there is also a number of forbidden activities. After the John Paul II death (April 2005) people used to gather in the streets bringing flowers, letters to the pope and pictures of him, lightning the candles and build sort of street shrines.⁸ These were the informal acts of mourning: people (mostly believers) just knew what they should do. The

⁸ Ewa Klekot, 'Mourning John Paul II in the streets of Warsaw', in *Anthropology Today*, 23, 4, August (2007), pp. 3-6.

special, ritual instruction was followed and there was no need to give the formal church or state orders for proper behavior and activity. In April 2010, after the plane crash in Smoleńsk, the situation was similar, people – especially in Krakowskie Przedmieście street in Warsaw, where the President's Palace is situated – used to put candles and flowers in commemoration for those who died. During the – as I called them – “not-so-major” National Mournings such actions were also taken but on smaller scale. It also should be mentioned that after John Paul II and Lech Kaczyński death the whole nation mournings started when the first informations about the tragedy appeared in the media. Spontaneous acts of bereavement appeared in the streets before the official designation of national mourning.

“National mourning” as the day (or days) of special mourning, memorial and funeral activities is declared by the government. Institutional and formal orders are given by the head of the nation (president or prime minister) in special dispositions or regulations, which recommend that: public and commercial television and radio stations should not transmit any entertainment, national flags should be lowered, there should be two (or three) minutes of silence, the media should commemorate victims of the tragedy. Not all of the recommendations occurs every time the national mourning is declared, but the official dispositions always say about: 1) lowering the national flag to the half mast, especially in the public places and buildings, such as building of state offices, buildings of the national authorities, buildings of state and local administration and government, 2) commemorating the passed away in public and commercial media; TV stations, radio stations, press and magazines editorials should consider the need to commemorate the victims. Therefore the most obvious spaces that we can observe the national mourning and signs of mourning are the public places (building) and the media. These spaces make the bereavement and grief visible even if the sense and the need for national mourning is contested.

There is no need – I guess – to demand commemorating victims in the media, because the media speak about death quite often, but the questions are “how to speak/write about the death and tragedy in this situation?”, “how to speak/write about the death in the way, to make people feel the special kind of the death?”, “how to speak/write about the death, to make audience weep and lament (and feel bereavement)?”. These are some practical questions and problem that every TV and radio station and every press and magazine editorial have to put and find the answer. The question of this paper is the question about the strategies chosen by the daily papers and magazines editorials for the time of national mourning. I would like to examine the ways of commemoration of victims of the tragedies that were important (more or less) for the society (nation). Two notices should be taken: first, I will focus only on these tragedies that have been raised to the range of national tragedy, after

which there was the national mourning officially designated. It would be interesting to study some tragedies that would be potentially the reason for the national mourning, but they were not: for example there was no national mourning after the death of polish soldiers taking part in the war in Iraq or in Afghanistan. Second, I will study the media coverage only for four cases which are the examples of the “not-so-major” national mourning days: after the “flood of the millennium” in 1997 (natural disaster), after the Katowice Trade Hall collapse in 2006 (building disaster), after the explosion in coal-mine “Halemba” in 2006 (coal-mine disaster) and after the crash of the polish bus in France in 2007 (transportation disaster).

Mourning, Communitas and Social Control

We could try to define “mourning” in terms of time and in terms of acts, but there is a risk that such a distinction would be artificial and unnecessary; mourning as much in contemporary culture as in native/traditional cultures is the special time fulfilled with special acts. Following Mircea Eliade the special time is sacred time no matter, if we consider contemporary, secular culture imbued with rational style of thinking or the traditional, religious/magic culture. For the time of “mourning”, which is the period of grief, bereavement, memorializing the dead person, special acts and gestures should be done, for example: wearing the black clothes. It could be also defined – in more sociological terms – as a social institution: relatively durable configuration of socially set means and rules of behavior legitimized by the social norms. Mourning is set of socially constructed means of dealing with the death, if we treat the death as the scandal that should never have occurred. The institution of mourning contains the instruction of what should be done, and what musn’t be done: obligations and prohibitions especially in traditional and archaic societies, where the death of one person was the matter of the whole local community. The whole society was obligated to experience and feel the bereavement or – maybe it should rather be said: to act the bereavement. Alfonso di Nola writes about the grief and mourning, that although in everyday language we use these two words alternatively, there is the difference. While the grief is described as psychical and internal experience of loss, mourning has got more social connotation: it is grief publicly exposed. In grief the feeling of loss is (or should be) eased. On contrary, in mourning public manifestation of grief is (or should be) strengthened.⁹ If the death in traditional cultures was the crisis for social life, there was the strong pressure for ritualization – as di Nola claims. The basic function of the mourning rituals was the transformation of disorder of crisis into the disorder of culture and repeated cultural pattern, that

⁹ Alfonso di Nola, *La morte trionfata. antropologia del lutto*, Roma, Newton&Compton, 1995, [polish edition : Tryumf śmierci. Antropologia żałoby, Kraków, Universitas, p. 13.

represents the rule: “it should be done, what should be done”.¹⁰ Émile Durkheim in *Elementary form of religious life* was analyzing the mourning rituals of Aborigines of Australia and he stated that there is mythological and social control that forces people to act in particular way. French sociologist studied inter alia the piacular rites, which are “*sad celebrations (...), whose object is either to meet a calamity, or else merely to commemorate and deplore it*”.¹¹ Mourning rituals are the first example of piacular rites: death of the member of the society was associated with described in details acts and gestures: fighting of the men on order to take a revenge on the death, silence of the women, cutting the hair or beards, covering heads with pipe-clay or cinders or even excrements.¹² According to the sociologist these acts and gestures (very common among the Australian tribes),

“mourning is not spontaneous expression of individual emotions. If the relations weep, lament and mutilate themselves, it’s not because they feel themselves personally affected by death of their kinsman. (...) It is more generally the case that there is no connection between the sentiments left and the gestures made by the actors in the rite”.

If – as he describe – we could speak to weeping and lamenting persons of “some temporal interest”, they would change their tone and voice and talk to us with cheerfulness and gaiety.¹³ Mourning is – then – not a natural impulse, but rather the duty imposed by the group:

“one weeps not simply because he is sad, but because he is forced to weep. It is a ritual attitude, which he is forced to adopt out of respect for custom (...). Moreover this obligation is sanctioned by mythical or social penalties”.¹⁴

The rites of mourning help to keep the society united for the time of the crisis, which – if we follow words of another French sociologist Robert Herz – deeply disturbs the social order by destroying the faith society has in itself. He argued that bereavement rituals serve to repair the damaged social fabric.¹⁵ For Arnold van Gennep mourning was transitional healing period for those, who survived; mourning rites let the members of society reunite.¹⁶ Victor W. Turner proposed the term *liminality* for the period of being in the transition between one stage of social life and another. According to Turner social life of persons and social groups is the dialectic process, in which the structure needs to be regenerated. Structure is in Turner’s theory – as Mathieu Deflem summarizes – “an

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

¹¹ Émile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 1915, London, George Allen&Unwin, 1915, p. 389.

¹² Ibid. p. 392.

¹³ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, p. 392.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 397.

¹⁵ See: Mervi Panti & Johanna Sumiala, “Till Death Do Us Join: Media, Mourning Rituals and the Sacred Centre of the Society”, in *Media, Culture & Society*, 2009, Vol. 31(1), p. 121.

¹⁶ Ibid.

arrangement of positions or statuses'.¹⁷ Structure is suspended sometimes and then there is transitional period when all people are equal (there's no any arrangement of positions and statuses). *Communitas* appears when structure does not – writes Deflem. The liminality (and *communitas*) appears periodically (i.e.: as a religious holiday) or is associated with some special moment of personal and group life – status elevation or reversal (birth, promotion, death, maturity, wedding). It could also appear as a result of tragic moment of crisis, disaster and death. Mourning is – therefore – a period of exclusion of some group (relatives, close friends, neighbors of the dead one) from everyday, routine life. Mourners become the community of those, who were joined by the loss. The size of the community depends on the relation to the deceased (wódcz jeszcze zajrzeć do van Gennepa [During mourning...214].

Community of mourners appears as much in archaic and traditional cultures as in nowadays, modern culture, but there are some differences, that are related to the changes of attitude toward death and imagination of death. Philipe Aries writes about the death that is no longer "tamed death" but "invisible death". We live in death-denying society": we don't want to talk about the death and to watch the death, so death is marginalized as the private issue of the family and relatives. And so with the mourning, as di Nola claims. There is a line of division between the forms and rites of mourning typical for the pre-industrial, rural and traditional societies and for industrial (and post-industrial) urban societies. In the first type the family affected by death was supported with solidarity and compassion of the whole local community that was taking part in ritual and cultural grief-healing activities. In the second type – with the disappearance of the local community and its functions – the right to demonstrate the feelings of grief is limited and sometimes forbidden according to the rule: "do not cry!". Denying of death, making death invisible and marginalization/privatization of mourning does not regard the famous or public persons. It should also be mentioned that death is quite popular theme for the media (mass media) and movies, and the Internet as the mean of communication offers great opportunities for experiencing the mourning and demonstrating the feelings of loss in "not-strictly-private" sphere.

How to make the whole society weeping: Emotions management

Paradoxically to the Aries statement about "invisible death" or "marginalized death" there is a plenty of information in the daily media (newspapers for example) in which the death plays some role: it's about the death and dying literally or metaphorically (about end of something). Let's consider the sample beneath.

¹⁷ Mathieu Deflem, *Ritual, Anti-structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Analysis*, <http://www.cas.sc.edu/socy/faculty/deflem/zturn.htm>, [read on 12.10.2011].



Pic. 1: Internet site of "Fakt" - polish daily tabloid, 25.09.2011.



Pic. 2: www.onet.pl, 25.09.2011.

These are two screenshots taken from the websites of two popular Polish internet portals *Fakt* (above¹⁸) – which is the internet portal of the most popular Polish tabloid daily paper, and Onet.pl (beneath¹⁹) – one of the most popular internet portal in Poland. These pictures were taken on Sunday morning on 25 September. My goal was to check, if there would be any information about the death on the first pages I open. There were (so I didn't make any methodologically grounded research). Both portals give some information from the country and from the world. The quality of the news are different: onet.pl is – let's call it – more serious “news portal”. On *Fakt* page there is a sensational news (in yellow frame about the family story: “She had killed her husband with the sandwich, and then she made her son a father-

¹⁸ www.fakt.pl, [read on 25.09.2011].

¹⁹ www.onet.pl [read on 25.09.2011].

killer". Headlines on Onet.pl tell us that (red frame) that: 1) there was "plane crash with tourists: 18 people died", and 2) that, there were "40 victims on Saturday: USA 'deeply upset'". These were not spectacular news, they hadn't had to be. I guess such everyday death-concerned information make the audience indifferent, both it comes about the "quality" of death and "quantity" of death. Therefore information about the death no longer is the reason for the mourning that includes the whole society into the mourner's community. National mourning after the death of the great leader is the exception: "major-NM" where fulfilled with the rites of *liminality*. "Not-so-major" NM was sometimes even contested with arguments, that we – the citizens of Poland – don't need special mourning days in any case of smaller and larger disaster. As was it written above, there are some commands and bans: what should be done in the time of mourning and what must not be done. One of the commands (recommendation) is to commemorate the victims of the disaster in the media. In fact it is the recommendation of the authorities, who design the regulation on the national mourning, but also some demand of the audience. The media – I would claim – "do" the mourning work for us and instead of us: reading watching/listening to the media (the press, television and radio, also internet portals and forums) "in the time of national mourning" is experiencing the national mourning.

What is the coverage of the media in the time of the "not-so-major" national mourning? How do the media make the whole nation weep? How do the media "do" the work of mourning for us?

De-privatization and individualization of death

If the contemporary, modern culture is indifferent for death, and death became invisible and private – as Ariés suggest – the best way (but not the simplest) is to make the death visible and not-private. Commemoration and formation of sort of *communitas* based on death and mourning needs inversion of the situation described by Ariés: victims should get the name and history. The history told is the history of dying or the history of participating in the disaster. Making death visible is hard and difficult because there is no public agreement for showing the real death in the media: it is almost impossible to find any pictures of corpses of particular corpses in relations from national disasters. Victims without the name and history are just the "corps" and no strong emotions and feelings we could connect with them. Those, who died in the national disaster, are the public victims, their death and the mourning of their families no longer is the private issue. In one of the articles published in July 1997 in *Gazeta Wyborcza* we can find a story of the man who lost his life in the great flood.

"A.P."²⁰ was probably the first victim of the flood. Anyway, he was the first, who the police gave the information about. Although that day, 7 July, when the wave

²⁰ Unlike *Gazeta Wyborcza* I do not give the names of the victim.

came, the highest number of the people died in Walbrzych region – it was 5 victims. »People called my husband a hero – Mrs. Barbara says – but I don't know. He was just driving the kids away from the little bridge near the house. He was afraid that something might happen to them«. In one moment Mrs. Barbara's husband came on the bridge. »It seemed that the water is coming down« -the woman despairing - »My husband was happy, he wanted to check it. And then the wave came. Suddenly. It has broken the bridge. It took my husband away«. A.P. was found out two days later”.²¹

It could be the everyday story published in one of the daily media telling about “another dead man” drown in the river. But in fact, the context of the story, the national mourning day edition makes the room for the pity and reflection. A.P. is not “another victim” of everyday disaster, but the victim of national disaster. We now his name and the names of the members of his family, we could also get know the situation of the family that lost the main bread-winner.

Although in the flood of millennium 56 people died, they are not portrayed as the mass, but rather as the individuals who lost their life in tragic situation. We cannot read about all of the victims – there is not enough space in the media – but when some examples given, the death is no longer as anonymous, as in other medial stories.

De-privatization of the mourning

In the situation of the de-privatization of the death and it's individualization in (what should be underlined) the media the grief of the family is also no longer private issue. Mourning becomes visible, what is important in the situation of not showing the real death. There is the lack of media representation of death; therefore the sadness and public mourning give us “the smell” of death.



Pic. 3: Relatives of the miner are praying in the coal-mine "Halemba", in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23.11.2006, p. 1.

²¹ Elżbieta Mosingiewicz, 'Był moim sercem', ('He was my heart'), in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18.07.1997, p. 3.



Pic. 4: The families of the disaster victims are leaving the coal-mine “Halemba” in the Thursday morning, in *Rzeczpospolita*, 24.11.2006, p. 3.

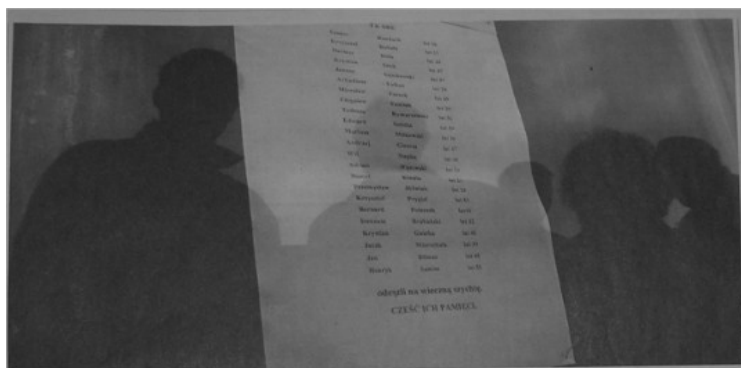


Pic. 5: In front of the coal-mine Halemba citizens of Ruda-Śląska light the candles all the time, in *Rzeczpospolita*, 25-26.11.2006, p. A3.

Death-rolls and statistics

Death-rolls published in the special mourning editions of the daily press give us the imagination of the range of the disaster and also they make us feel that something important and unusual happened. Death-rolls seem to be the list of the victims who becomes the national heroes. They might take different shapes: from the plain and modest list of those who died with just the names to the articles about the every victim containing the photograph, short biography and the story of passing away.

Some of the death-rolls are very closed in meaning-made to the articles that make death and mourning individual and – paradoxically – unprivate: they give us the names and histories, while other are based on listing the dead ones. They are close to the statistics in which everything (every dead body) is counted.



Pic. 6: Untitled. The picture of the article 'Cała Polska płacze po górnikach' (The Whole Poland Weeps for Miners'), in: *Rzeczpospolita*, 26.11.2006, p. 1.



Pic. 7: Death-roll in *Gazeta Wyborcza* 31.01.2006, p. 1.

Picture 4 (Untitled) is the illustration of the paper about the national mourning in Poland after the coal-mine “Halemba” disaster in November 2006. As it is seen, it presents the list of the names: these are the names of those, who died in methane explosion in coal-mine, and the shadows of those, who read the list. The sentence beneath the list tells us: “They left for eternal shift”. It could be said, that the pictures shows the dead miners (their names), and the

living people (their shadows), and as such, it is very metaphoric or symbolic representation of death and loss.

In less metaphoric manner the second example is being shown: the death-rolls given in *Gazeta Wyborcza* after the Katowice Trade Hall disaster, in which 65 people died. Death-rolls contained – in that case – the shorten biography with picture of the victim. The death-rolls were being published day by day, page by page, beginning in 31 January until all of the victims were presented.

The numbers are given in the case of disaster with big numbers of victims, for example in Indian Ocean Earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 there were information given about the numbers of died from different countries. The disaster was – in fact – as important for Poland and other European countries because of the European tourists who became victims in the catastrophe. In tsunami thousands lost their life, but the most important were the official information of missing:

“Sweden – 2915, Germany – 1000, Australia – 729, Switzerland – 595, Italy – 570, Austria – 468, Norway – 462, Holland – 230, Finland – 186, Great Britain – 159, France – 1000, Poland – 41”.²²

Victim-hero

It is usually being said (in further editions of the press, days and weeks after the disaster) that the accident (catastrophe) could have been avoided. Journalists are searching for guilties and things that should have been done in order to avoid misfortune and tragedy. But in case of finding the evidence of human's fault we stand in the face of question “was it stupid death?”, “how could it be let for it?” In few cases searching for fault and guilt has no sense (for example death of John Paul II or the flood in Poland in 1997 or earth-quake and tsunami in Christmas 2004). Every death – we come to conclusion – should have the meaning, national disaster especially. We are not agreed for any “stupid death” any stupid and avoidable national disaster. One of the ways for meaning-making and value-giving strategy is searching not only for guilties, but also for heroes who gave their lives for the others.

Like in 2001 in World Trade Centre building ruins there were the brave firefighters, in Katowice Trade Hall disaster we could have also find the brave rescue team. There was also – at least one – hero-victim: the policeman, who had the duty in the hall in the disastrous evening. He – as we can read in *Gazeta Wyborcza* – in the first seconds of tragedy run away with small boy (who survived thanks to him), and came back to save the wounded woman laying in the ruins. In that moment the steel pillar collapsed and crushed them both. They had no chance. In the same time – to make the story sadder – his parents

²² Katarzyna Tubylewicz, Fala zmieniła Szwecję ('The Wave Has Changed Sweden'), in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4.01.2005, p. 10.

were watching the television relation from the rescue action at home, having no idea, that they probably are watching their son's last moments of live.²³

Victim-symbol

In describing the national disaster and national victims it is not enough I guess to count those who passed away. Sometimes it is more useful to give the example of the victim who is metaphor and/or the metonymy of all of the victims and/or the whole disaster. In 11 March 2004 in bombing attack in Madrid rail stations 191 people died while plenty got hurt. Although the terrorist's attack was placed in the capital city of Spain, it was not only Spanish disaster. It showed the threat of terror for the whole Europe because it was not so obvious that ETA planned and carried out the assassination: Al-Kaida was also suspected. Therefore the national mourning was also designated in Poland. The second reason was the number of polish victims (four Poles died). It was similar to the case of the attack in USA in September 2001 and in London, England in July 2005.

The symbolic victim of Madrid bombing attack was death of seven-months-old polish girl:

"The death of seven-months-old girl on Friday became another symbol of pain of Spain after the bombing attack. – I am just coming back from the hospital. Polish girl is dead, my colleague was with her in the moment of death – polish priest Eugeniusz, who is taking care of the victims and their families, was telling us that in Friday evening. – She died in Baby Jesus Hospital. Her mother is laying in other one. Father was identified among the killed – he said. The grown up sister of her – Katia, who is living in Spain, with tears was informing the press about her family fate".²⁴

The little victim is not just the Spanish or just Polish victim: her death was symbolic for the contemporary world in which media, migrations and unpredictable threats have place. Therefore she is the metonymy of all innocent victims of disaster.

The other very symbolic example is the death of polish pilgrims who died in the bus accident near Grenoble in France in 22 July 2007. They were coming back from the places that are important for Catholic Church as the places of miracles and therefore they are important point on the European pilgrimage map. In religious (catholic) weekly magazine *Gość Niedzielny* (*Sunday Guest*) priest Tomasz Jaklewicz was telling about the pilgrims and their fate in parallel which is characteristic for religious language:

"Once there was a boy, who came for the meeting of teenagers that was conducted by me. He was there for the first time, so I remembered him and I was happy, that he came. When he was coming back home with bicycle he was hit by the

²³ Marcin Pietraszewski, Policjant z Bytomia zginął ratując kobietę, ('The Policeman from Bytom Died While Rescuing Woman'), in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30.01.2006, p. 1.

²⁴ Dominika Pszczółkowska, 'Polski ksiądz pomaga' ('Polish priest helps'), in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13.03.2004, p. 5.

car. Few days later I was conducting his burial. I was asking God, his relatives, his school, myself: would it be better if stayed home? Is it possible to live without setting up for school, friend's meeting, church, pilgrimage? Is it possible to live and avoid the death? The answer is: it is not possible, although we are trying to forget about it. Pilgrimage was always the creed, (...) that all of the ways are leading to the most important sanctuary: to God. I am sure, that pilgrims of La Sallete were full of that faith. And they were ready".²⁵

Solidarity: We are all New Yorkers!

After the World Trade Centre and Pentagon attack in September 2001 there appeared declaration in the press (titles of the papers) that we are all New Yorkers:

"those who attacked New York and Washington, they attacked the whole free world. They made, that people instead of stars will stare at the sky searching the torpedo-planes navigated by the madmen. They unleashed the new kind of war. Today the America is the goal, tomorrow – Europe. Anybody of us could be the victim. Today we are all New Yorkers".²⁶

The days of national mourning (the second case of national mourning in Poland after 1989) was declared as the sign of solidarity in the face of contemporary human-made threat. "We are all New Yorkers" occurred to be kind of paradigm sentence. After 2001 it was repeated often in the time of national disaster. After the Madrid bombing-attack in March 2004 we could read that "we are all Spanish"²⁷ (as Timothy Garton Ash has written for *Gazeta Wyborcza*). After the bombing attack in London, we all were Londonians. After the "Halemba" coal-mine disaster we were all Silesians, and after the Grenoble bus crash we – what is as I mentioned above, symbolic indeed – pilgrims. These sentences that appeared numerous times in the media seem to be some secular and media "creed" for the time of tragedy: we are all the victims but the condition is that the disaster has to be described in the media.

Conclusion

De-privatization and individualization of death and mourning, death-rolls, histories about the special victims: ordinary people who die as the hero-victims or symbolic-victims and the building the solidarity based on feeling of solidarity and/or conviction that the disaster could touch anybody is not the full list of strategies the media are taking in the time of national tragedies and national mourning. Examples given in the last part of the text are placed between the discourse of nation and religion.

²⁵ ks. Tomasz Jaklewicz, 'Droga do nieba', ('The way to heaven'), in: *Gość Niedzielny*, 29.07.2007, p. 5.

²⁶ Redakcja, 'Wszyscy jesteśmy Nowojorczykami' ('We are all New Yorkers'), in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13.09.2001, p. 2.

²⁷ Timothy Garton Ash, 'Europejski 11 września?' ('European 11 September?'), in: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15.03.2004, p. 11.

DISEASE AS THE PROCESS OF DYING. CULTURAL IMAGES OF AIDS AT THE TURN OF XXTH AND XXIST CENTURY

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*“The disease is not terrible itself, but life with it –
the time between a sentence and it’s fulfillment”*

A Man sick with AIDS, Poland 1995²

Images and representations of the terminal disease are the significant aspects of the cultural history of death. There is no doubt that AIDS is perceived and regarded as one of the *signs of our times*. Describing as the plague of the XXI century it is interesting example of the cultural perception of illness which is inextricably linked to a death. In my thesis I want to indicate that in many cases AIDS is presented as *the process of dying*.

Among many examples I selected two big fields that mix aspects of art and mass communication: social campaigns and movies. In my thesis I describe and analyze twelve social ads³, TV mini-series *Angels in America* (2003) by Mike Nichols and documentary *Blue* (1993) by Derek Jarman. They all have the important characteristic in common – they show AIDS as the disease closely related to the theme of death, but not only because it is the terminal disease. They include AIDS into the field of metaphors and symbols of death and dying. Of course, they are not only possible examples, but – in my opinion – they are very characteristic and they focus the most important trends of presenting AIDS as a process of dying.

Sex and death – social campaign on aids⁴

First of all, there is a characteristic group of social campaign where the images of places or objects which are associated with death occur; most are: grave, cemetery, ossuary, and catafalque.

AIDS kills was the campaign that took place in Brazil in March 2011; prepared by RGA Comunicação for CPD Prevention and Citizenship. The photos used on posters show a couple having sex in an unusual contexts – on catafalque or in grave. The slogan is: “*AIDS kills. Be safe*” and the goal of the campaign were to promote safe sex. What is interesting and also shocking in

¹ PhD., Warsaw School of Social Science and Humanities, Poland.

² Wojciech Muzyka, *Kulturowe przesłanki AIDS* [The Cultural Conditions of AIDS], in: Z. Czaplicki, W. Muzyka ed., *AIDS w świadomości społecznej* [AIDS in the Social Awareness], Olsztyn, Olsztyńskie Centrum Edukacji Zdrowotnej, 1995, p. 107.

³ These are not only European campaigns, because – in my opinion – social campaigns are global (as media are).

⁴ Writing „campaign on AIDS” I mean also campaigns on HIV. In most cases HIV and AIDS are strictly connected.

these images, it is the fact that sex without protection is associated with necrophilia. There is nothing erotic or exciting in this photography, although it shows sex scenes. Moreover, the message about the risk of terminal disease have been expressed here by using attributes that do not herald death (in the future), but are associated with death that has already happened.

The campaign *Knowledge protects* (prepared by German Michael Stich Foundation) is built in a similar concept. There were three kinds of billboard. On the first – the photo showing tombstone monument that is very unusual, because it represents a couple having sex. The inscription is: “*Unprotected love leads to eternity. Who will infected HIV, will die. Stop the virus. Use condoms*”. The second billboard shows the couple surrounded by candles – so it looks at first glance. But if we look carefully, we can see that these are special kinds of candles, which are used on cemetery. So – what is important – there is nothing in common with a romantic atmosphere; this picture is sad and depressing. The people portrayed here are alive, but we have the impression that we see the mourning photo. The inscription: “*Be careful if you want your love adventures to have happy ends. Who will infected HIV, will die. Stop the virus. Be informed*”. And the third billboard – perhaps the most shocking – shows the couple having sex in an ossuary (more specific: in a drawer of refrigerator for keeping corpses). The inscription warns: “*The first love can be the last. Who will infected HIV, will die. Stop the virus. Make a test*”. So again the concept was to connect the opposite feelings: happiness and grief, joyful hope and fear, vitality and infirmity. All that feelings are on the photos together, all at the same time and in the same picture. Receiver feels disorientation that leads to a shock and reflection.

Much less complex message can be found in the campaign *Unite for children. Unite against AIDS*. It had been released in South Africa in 2005 but then it became international dimension. On the one of posters we can see the image stylized to child's drawing. We can imagine that the task for some little girl was: “Draw your family, please”. There is a figure of a little girl and two graves instead of her parents. The combination of death issue and infantile sincerity is really impressive. The drawing shows childhood and death as two points – start and finish – and a receiver has to try to imagine, what happened in between.

Obviously, in most of the campaign on AIDS the serious message corresponds to the serious means of expression – as in the examples described above – but there are some exceptions, too. The Athens agency named Cream prepared the campaign *The Grim Reaper* (November/December 2007). There is a comic scene on the poster: we see the Grim Reaper falling down because of a condom, as if it was a banana peel. The comic element may be surprising, but on the other hand – can we imagine in XXI century, a serious poster with the image of this kind of allegory of death? There is no description or even slogan

on the poster, but the message is obvious and in fact it is the same as on the billboards I discussed above.

I would like to mention about another very interesting example in which authors propose very specific association between terminal disease and death. In this case woman who is infected with HIV during unprotected sex is compared to a murder victim; even more: she is compared to the victim of mass murder and because of that – the man who infected her is compared to a murderer. On the very controversial posters prepared by Regenbogen advertising agency in Germany (released in the September 2009) we see the couple having sex: the women are young, beautiful and anonymous, but we can recognize the men's face – they are famous dictators: Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Saddam Hussein. The slogan leaves no doubt: "*AIDS is a mass murderer*".⁵ In this case the images of dictators accused of genocide were used as the allegory of terminal disease or even – as the allegory of death from terminal disease. The association between AIDS and death has very unique sense. The authors emphasize that AIDS is not an individual but mass problem. They make the statement:

"The campaign is designed to shake people up, to bring the topic of Aids back to centre stage, and to reverse the trend of unprotected sexual intercourse. Because anyone can become infected".⁶

There is no doubt that this kind of message is strong and very important, but – on the other hand – the campaign has been condemned by many AIDS charities for stigmatizing people infected HIV and sick with AIDS. Of course, it is neither my intention nor ambition to settle this dispute, now.

The other interesting thing here is that we can see the strong reference to the frequent representation of death as a sinister and disgusting man, very popular in German and Dutch painting (we have to remember that the campaign was produced in Germany, where the word "death" is masculine in grammar). Moreover, there is strong connection between death and sexual tension. The death – shown as a man – manifests the interest in young woman. All of this we can find in some paintings of Hans Baldung Grin (eg *Death and the Maiden*, 1518-20; *The young woman and Death*, about 1517) or Niklaus Manuel Deutsch (eg *Der Tod als Landsknecht umarmt ein Mädchen*, 1517), where – as Jan Białostocki stressed: "*The manifestation of male lust emphasize the strong gruesome nature of this representations*".⁷

In sum, I find this campaign very interesting as it is rooted in local tradition and culture. Also, I think this campaign presents an interesting perspective on problem of AIDS as – first of all – an important issue with the

⁵ The campaign also features a TV and radio spots.

⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/6138037/Adolf-Hitler-sex-video-condemned-by-Aids-charities.html>.

⁷ Jan Białostocki, *Płeć śmierci* [The Gender of Death], Gdańsk, Słowo/obraz terytoria, 1999, p. 22.

global (mass) range and – secondly – a kind of crime on humanity (association with a dictatorship and terror).

In terms on this second aspect, there is one more campaign a little similar. In this case the initiative came from MTV and the commercials were intended to pay attention to three important issues of the present day: poverty, starvation and AIDS (USA, March 2007). The campaign features three kinds of poster adverts of the same scheme – the photo of the World Trade Center after the terrorist attack is used as a background and in the foreground there is the image of a homeless, starving child or a man sick with AIDS. On the poster about AIDS issue there is also information: *“2863 people died. 40 million of HIV infected in the world. The world united against terrorism. It should be also united against AIDS”*. As we can see, the AIDS issue is included among the tragedy caused by collective death. The controversy of the idea was the attempt to show how small WTC tragedy compared with AIDS issue is.⁸ 2863 people died against 40 million with terminal disease (that is to say – 40 million people waiting for death or even more: convicted to death by a terrorist-virus). An inexorable mathematics.

In December 2010 the organization Keep a Child Alive asked the question: How many real lives can be saved by sacrificing a few digital ones? The idea of the action titled *Digital Death* was simple – as organizers explained:

“Starting December 1 - World AIDS Day - the world’s most followed celebrity Tweeters are sacrificing their digital lives to help save millions of real lives affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa and India. That means no more Twitter or Facebook updates from any of them. No more knowing where they are, what they had for dinner, or what interesting things is happening in their lives. From here on out, they’re dead”.

The concept was that fans could resurrect them by payments on the special account. The organizers announced that when one million dollars is reached, everyone will recover his/her digital life and be back online. The list of celebrities who joined the action is long and impressive – including Lady Gaga, Alicia Keys, Elijah Wood, Kim Kardashian, Justin Timberlake, Usher and Serena Williams. Each of them wrote the short Facebook post; like Alicia Keys for example: *“Alicia Keys is dead. She sacrificed her digital life to help safe millions of real ones affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa and India. Watch her last Tweet & Testament then help buy her life back”*.⁹ The photos presented the image of the star in the open coffin; the strange impression that the person who is alive is somehow dead at the same time. So, the concepts of life and death were exceeded and multiplied; real life/death and digital life/death. Also, two aspects of this action seem to be interesting. Firstly, the tempting promise that death

⁸ The campaign had been forbidden and it had been shown in MTV only once. But then it started to be very popular in USA by some “unofficial” ways (like private e-mails that people sent to their friends).

⁹ <http://www.facebook.com/aliciakeys?ref=ts>.

can be revoked if we undertake certain actions and – secondly – the sense of community, because no one can offer million dollars but it is probable that the hundred thousand of people will pay 10 dollars.

So, apparently there is a large group of ad campaigns that show AIDS issue as strictly connected with the metaphors or signs of death (or even crime). In the other – second characteristic – group we meet with the metaphors of transience or of the processes: suffering, passing away, and aging. I selected four of this kind of ad campaigns.

It's never just HIV is the HIV-awareness campaign produced on behalf of NYC Health Department, released between December 2010 and February 2011, targeted to HIV negative homosexual and bisexual men. The campaign features poster adverts and TV spots of young men and some visualization of diseases that usually occur with HIV: osteoporosis, dementia and anal cancer. The message is: living with HIV is possible but it always is hard and painful, because – as the slogan says – **“When you get HIV, it's never just HIV”**. On posters and TV spots we can see X-rays of broken (or even breaking) bones, record of tomography of damaged brain or photograph of cancer-encrusted anus. They all are shocking, even disgusting and bullying of course; they make our eyes hurt and try to give an idea of possible pain. The disease is shown as a process of permanent suffering. There is no life with HIV, in fact, there is only the process of slow dying. Can you imagine this? – adverts ask, but then we see these shocking photos and this is a kind of answer: You don't have to imagine; you can see what you probably could not imagine. The campaign was criticized by some health charities and people infected HIV or sick with AIDS. One of the strongest voices of criticism was by British journalist Gus Cairns, who has HIV. On the blog he wrote:

“The message it gives – not factually, but with all the visceral power of that 5-frame shot of a ruined ass – is that if you're out on the scene, death and decay are stalking you and serves you right if they get you”.¹⁰

The metaphors of passing away were also used in French campaign *Sidaction 2008: for equality of opportunity*. TV spot presents a couple having sex. We see naked bodies laced in passionate embrace. After a while it turn out that there are more couples; we see the scene of sex orgy. The frame is full of warm, juicy colors and erotic tension. The next shot shows a wider perspective and we see that these images are located in the upper part of a huge sandglass, from which the bodies are falling to the lower part – like grains of sand; they are inert, lifeless and gray. The information at the end of the spot connects the ruthless statistics and the aspect of individual tragedy: **“Every 10 seconds someone dies from AIDS. Protect yourself”**. The idea of passing away is expressed on two levels here. Firstly, in terms of individual – every single body

¹⁰ <http://mpetrelis.blogspot.com/2010/12/sean-strub-v-larry-kramer-fearful-hiv.html>.

in the sandglass symbolizes one wasted life. On the other hand, there are lots of bodies, so the message is also about the collective problem; it is about the disease that is so horrible because it takes a heavy toll of lives.

I want to mention about a campaign *Let's not abandon Africa to AIDS* (TBWA agency, France, June 2003), which takes the issue of an old age in a very special way. It presents an old age as a value, what can be a little surprising in the reality of youth cult. Usually, it is told about a fear of an old age that is associated with an infirmity, loneliness and pain. But in this campaign an old age appears as a value that is unavailable for those who die young because of terminal disease. The campaign features press adverts and TV spot.

The press adverts contain photos of people sick with AIDS and poems written by them. The subject-matter of the poems was an old age and the process of growing old. A young woman – one of the authors – wrote: “*No one wants to grow old, but me. AIDS makes it impossible to me. Every wrinkle is my victory*”. In the TV spot entitled *The Village*¹¹, at first we see a little boy in village somewhere in Africa. Suddenly, people start to panic – they try to hide themselves from a danger. But we don't know what they are afraid of; we see that they are looking at something or someone what/who terrifies them. The next moment we find out why they fear and we are really surprised. We see an old man leant on a stick. He is completely helpless and – from our point of view – he is not danger, but on the other hand, we see the horror in the village. We are thrown out of balance. Then the inscription appears. It explains everything: “*The average life expectancy in Africa is 47. Soon, no one will even know what an old person look like*”. An old age is presented as something unknown and strange. We see the other aspect of AIDS tragedy – it is not only the individual or collective tragedy of death, it is also the problem of disturbing a demographic equilibrium of the society in Africa. If 47 mean the end of life, there is no space for an old age.

I want also present the campaign that brings optimism in the issue of AIDS. The aim of the campaign *Selinah has AIDS*¹² is not the prevention, but presenting the chances of treatment. The slogan is: “*The effects of AIDS can be reserved. Help us to provide the treatment can give someone a second chance*”. In the spot we can see the reserved process of emaciation the body because of AIDS, what is shocking but optimistic at the same time (as we see recovery). The character of the campaign is Selinah – woman sick with AIDS. It is a true story, what increases the effect of the message. Selinah was undergoing medical treatment for 90 days. At this time she was filmed – day by day. In the first part of the spot we see the process from the end: first the recording of the last day

¹¹ It was directed by Miles Goodwall and price during the International Festival of Advertisement in Cannes, 2003.

¹² The spot was produced by Ogilvy on behalf of Topsy Foundation and released in South Africa, in March 2003.

when Selinah looks healthy and happy; then recording of previous days – up to the first day, when the woman was skeletal and so weak that she couldn't even get up. The uniqueness of this spot results from the fact that the viewer can see the whole process – not only the beginning and the end, but also everything what happened between, in the meantime. I've written that we can find this spot optimistic, but there is something deceitful, too. There is a happy end in the real Selinah's story, but in the spot this real happy end is at the beginning and at the end of the spot we see the tragedy. If we didn't know that we see the reversed chronological order, we would see the horrifying process of dying. Besides the title of the spot disillusions us – Selinah has AIDS. She looks strong and healthy now, but she is still sick with terminal disease which will kill her. The process of dying – reversed now – will happen. No one knows when, but we know how – we see in the spot.

This kind of process of dying – without happy end – is shown on the poster advert by agency Cliff Freeman on behalf of health charity Youth AIDS (2006). White pictures against the background of black. They presents scenes: starting with a couple having sex (in many palaces and in many ways), then the scenes of one man seems seek and at the end there is a picture of grave. The slogan is: *"AIDS still out of there and it still kills"*. The poster shows the process of dying in a very simple way; we can even say – in a ruthlessly simple way.

Angels and devils are ill

"The patient is dangerous because he is expected to die the death to which he has been condemned, and because of the neutrality in which he is enclosed at the term of his cure"

Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic exchange and death*

Angels in America (2003) is TV mini-series directed by Mike Nichols, based on Tony Kushner's play that has also subheading: *A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*. Among many national themes, there are two key issues – AIDS and religion – both situated in specific political context, since the plot is set mostly in 1985 – the time of Reagan's policy. It is a strange time, when the plague has come and – as Harper, one of the characters said – *"Fifteen years 'til the third millennium. Maybe Christ will come again. Or maybe the troubles will come, and the end will come and the sky will collapse and there will be terrible rain and showers of poisoned rain"*. Reality coexists with metaphysical world, here; people coexist with ghosts and angels and come under natural forces and law.

Among the several characters, there are two sick with AIDS – Prior Walter, young homosexual, and Roy Cohn, based on the authentic person, crypto-gay and the ultra-right-wing attorney who became famous because of the cooperation with Joseph McCarthy. Roy Cohn was the one who sent to the electric chair Julius Rosenberg (accused of espionage) and his wife – Ethel (who

was not guilty, what Roy knew). Prior and Roy: their stories are very different but – on the other hand – somehow similar at some points.

First of all, the moment when they find out about their disease is a landmark in their life. Prior is left by his boyfriend and Roy's career is ended. But the most important difference is in the way they interpret the disease. Prior is awake to the fact that his disease will be the problem for Luis – his boyfriend – but he is absolutely convinced of the necessity to inform him. Prior is honest and sincere, even when Luis is trying to dispute. During a walk, Prior showed Luis a red spot on his torso. The first Luis's reaction is negation:

Prior: See?

Luis: That's just a burst blood vessel.

Prior: Not according to the best medical authorities.

Luis: What? Tell me.

Prior: Chaos, baby. Lesion number one. The wine-dark kiss of the angel of death.

Luis: Oh, please.

Prior: I'm a lesionnaire. Foreign lesion. The American lesion. Lesionnaire's disease.

Luis: Stop.

Prior: My troubles are lesions.

Luis: Will you stop?

Prior: Don't you think I'm handling this well? I'm gonna die.

Luis: Bullshit.

Prior: I can't find a way to spare you, baby. No wall like the wall of hard scientific fact. Chaos, wham. Bang your head on that.

Luis: When did you find this?

Prior: I couldn't tell you.

Luis: Why?

Prior: I was scared, Lou.

Luis: Of what?

Prior: That you'll leave me"

Prior's fears are confirmed, soon. Being an open homosexual in America in 1985 is an act of courage; being an open homosexual who openly speak about AIDS is something more. Prior is a kind of prophet of his times – at the beginning in a symbolic way. That is why it was not surprising that he will be chosen by an angel to be a real prophet. In his words we see the awareness of approaching of death (*"I'm gonna die"* or *"kiss of the angel of death"*), because in a common opinion AIDS is a kind of a death sentence with delayed execution. The disease is *"the generic rebuke to life and to hope"*.¹³ Prior reconciled himself to his fate.

¹³ Susan Sontag, *AIDS and its Metaphors*, New York, Picador, 2001, p. 24.

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The reaction of Roy Cohn is completely different. We see him in the surgery. His doctors are trying to explain him some details about AIDS. He is almost sure that Roy has AIDS. Roy is visibly irritated:

“Roy: Very interesting... Mr. Wizard. Why the fuck are you telling me this?”

Doctor: Well, I have just removed one of three lesions... which biopsy results will probably tell us is a Kaposi’s sarcoma lesion. And you have a pronounced swelling of glands in your neck, groin, and armpits. Lymphadenopathy is another sign. And you have oral candidiasis. And maybe a little more fungus under the fingernails of two digits on your right hand”.

The medical vocabulary is very important in this scene; it is concrete, ruthless and undisputed – but not for Roy. He knows that AIDS is not “ordinary” disease:

“Roy: This disease...

Doctor: Syndrome.

Roy: Whatever. It afflicts mostly homosexuals and drug addicts.

Doctor: Mostly. Hemophiliacs are also at risk.

Roy: Homosexuals and drug addicts. So why are you implying that I... What are you implying, Henry?

Doctor: I don’t think I was implying anything.

Roy: I’m not a drug addict.

Doctor: Come on, Roy.

Roy: What? «Come on, Roy» what? You think I’m a junkie, Henry? Do you see tracks?

Doctor: This is absurd.

Roy: So say it.

Doctor: Say what?

Roy: Say, «Roy Cohn, you are a...»

Doctor: Roy.

Roy: «You are a...» Go on. Not, «Roy Cohn, you are a drug fiend». «Roy Marcus Cohn, you are a...» Go on, Henry, it starts with an «H».

Doctor: I’m not gonna get into...

Roy: With an «H», Henry, and it isn’t «hemophiliac». Come on!

Doctor: Why are you doing this, Roy?

Roy: No, I mean it. Say it. Say, «Roy Cohn, you are a homosexual». And I will proceed systematically to destroy your reputation and your practice, and your career in the state of New York, Henry. Which you know I can do.

Roy: And what is my diagnosis, Henry?

Doctor: You have AIDS, Roy.

Roy: No. Henry, no. AIDS is what homosexuals have. I have liver cancer”.

Roy Cohn know exactly, what AIDS means for him – it is death; not in the future but now – in the moment, when someone tells about him as a person with AIDS; the social degradation and exclusion means a symbolic death for him. Roy fears this symbolic death more than the real one. “*I’m not afraid of death* – he declares. – *What can death bring that I haven’t faced? I’ve lived. Life is the worst*”. He doesn’t want to be weak and helpless because he has always

despised weakness and he knows that the reality will be cruelty for him. In the hospital, he talks to the Ethel's ghost:

"Worst thing about being sick in America, Ethel, is you're booted out of the parade. Americans have no use for the sick. Now, look at Reagan. He's so healthy, he's hardly human. He's 100 if he's a day. He takes a slug in the chest and two days later he's out West, riding ponies in his PJs. I mean, who does that? That's America. It's just no country for the infirm".

Roy personifies the fear about which Susan Sontag wrote:

"Indeed, to get AIDS is precisely to be revealed, in the majority of cases so far, as a member of a certain «risk group», a community of pariahs. The illness flushes out an identity that might have remained hidden from neighbors, jobmates, family, and friends".¹⁴

That is why – in Roy's opinion – liver cancer is *better* than AIDS; liver cancer doesn't stigmatizing, it doesn't describe a sick person and AIDS does. Besides, Roy Cohn is bad protagonist – unpleasant, hot-tempered, hypocritical, arrogant, who bears responsibility for others' suffering and even death. That is why Roy's story evokes the reaction of interpreting his disease as a punishment; he is the kind of person who *deserves* AIDS. It serves you right, Roy Cohn – we think and unintentionally we become this kind of people whom Susan Sontag wrote about:

"AIDS is understood in a premodern way, as a disease incurred by people both as individuals and as members of a "risk group" – that neutral-sounding, bureaucratic category which also revives the archaic idea of a tainted community that illness has judged".¹⁵

Roy Cohn had died many times before he stopped breathing. First, when he heard about his disease; then, when some ceased to respect and visit him; next, the day when he was disbarred. At the moment of his death there is only the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg with him. The ghost of his victim, who wants to delight in Roy's defeat:

I decided to come here so I could see, could I forgive you? You, who I have hated so terribly,. I have borne my hatred up into the heavens and made a needle-sharp little star in the sky out of it. It's the star of Ethel Rosenberg's hatred. And it burns every year, for one night only. June 19. It burns acid green. I came to forgive, but all I can do is take pleasure in your misery more terrible than I did. And you are, because you're dying in shit, Roy. Defeated. And you could kill me. But you couldn't ever defeat me. You never won. When you die all anyone will ever say is: «Better he had never lived at all".

Prior is not guilty. AIDS is not a punishment for him, but a kind of test. We sympathize with him when he is suffering. Because of his sincerity he is chosen for being a prophet. The angel wants to stop his suffering and propose him a quick death. Prior could be immortal prophet, but he has to resign his

¹⁴ Sontag, *AIDS*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

real life. During one of his visions, Prior lands up in the other world. He wants to give the holy book back and tell the angels that he doesn't want to be a prophet. In his long speech, he also expresses bitterness and he blames God:

"Prior: God... He isn't coming back. Even if he did, if he ever did come back, if he ever dared to show his face or whatever in the garden again, if after all this destruction, if after all the terrible days of this terrible century he returned to see how much suffering his abandonment has created if all he has to offer is death you should sue the bastard. That's my only contribution to all this theology. Sue the bastard for walking out. How dare him! (...) I'm 30 years old, for God's sake. I haven't done anything yet. I wanna be healthy again. And this plague, it should stop in me and everywhere. (...) Even sick, I wanna be alive.

Angel: You only think you do. Life is a habit with you. You have not seen what is to come. We have. What will the grim unfolding of these latter days bring that you or any being should wish to endure them? Death more plenteous than all heaven has tears to mourn it. (...)

Prior: But still, bless me anyway. I want more life. I can't help myself. I do. I've lived through such terrible times and there are people who live through much worse. But you see them living anyway. (...) I don't know if that's just the animal. I don't know if it's not braver to die, but I recognize the habit. The addiction to being alive. So we live past hope. If I can find hope anywhere, that's it, that's the best I can do. It's so much not enough. It's so inadequate. But still, bless me anyway. I want more life. And if He returns, take Him to court. He walked out on us. He ought to pay".

Prior's will of life is so strong that angels let him go back. The scene when Prior discusses with angels brings associations with the biblical parable about the fight of Jacob with Angel:

"And when the man saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And the man said, «Let me go, for the day breaketh.» And he said, «I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me.» And he said unto him, «What is thy name?» And he said, «Jacob.» And he said, «Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.» And Jacob asked him, and said, «Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.» And he said, «Why is that thou dost ask after my name?» And he blessed him there".¹⁶

Prior were wrestling with angels all night, too. And he was blessed.

In the last scene we see Prior with his friends in a park. He turns directly to the camera, to the audience:

"It's January 1990. I've been living with AIDS for five years. That's six whole months longer than I lived with Louis. (...)The fountain's not flowing now. They turn it off in the winter. Ice in the pipes. But in the summer it's a sight to see. I want to be around to see it. I plan to be. I hope to be. This disease will be the end of many of us, but not nearly all. And the dead will be commemorated and will struggle on with the living and we're not going away. We won't die secret deaths anymore. The world only

¹⁶ Genesis 32, 25-29.

spins forward. We will be citizens. The time has come. Bye now. You are fabulous, each and every one. I bless you. More life. The great work begins”.

There is strength and hope in this world. That is why we can treat this protagonist as a step forward, in the direction of – as Susan Sontag describes – compensatory mythology of AIDS.¹⁷

Dying in blue

“On December 22, 1986, finding I was body positive, I set myself a target: I would disclose my secret and survive Margaret Thatcher. I did. Now I have set my sights on the millennium and a world where we are all equal”

Derek Jarman, *At Your Own Risk: A Saint's Testament*

Derek Jarman was a British film director, painter, screenwriter, set designer, poet, writer and gardener. He was a total artist, homosexual artist and an artist sick with AIDS, that were key issues in his works. He had been diagnosed as HIV positive in December 1986 and died eight years later. Four months before his death he released *Blue* – the project that doesn't fit into any classification. It is between documentary and artistic provocation, between movie and radio play, between private confession and universal message.

Blue is composed of four elements: blue screen, voices (mostly it is the voice of Derek Jarman), music and sounds connected with some places (hospital, café, street) or appliances (washing machine, fridge). So there is (almost?) lack of the view, that is surprising and shocking for viewer. Movie without a pictures? This kind of absurd, if since its beginning, cinema has been described as an art of moving pictures. Gabrielle Griffin wrote about her feelings during the movie-show:

“(...) there is nothing to see. That, at least, is the initial impression. A blue, blank screen confronts the viewer for all the seventy-five minutes during which the film runs. The effect is extraordinary. The gaze, used to representational material on screen, meets a visual void in a context – cinema – where visuality is everything”.¹⁸

But do we really not see anything; does the blue screen is *nothing*, if the color is not accidental? First of all, we know the symbolic meaning of blue – it describes not only the color, but also a mood of depression, melancholy, gloom. Secondly, if we know the biography of Jarman, we know about his disease and its process. At the end of his life the director became blind; blue was

¹⁷ The compensatory mythology and the kind of romanticizing – as Sontag persuades – appears in the context of some others illnesses, like syphilis for example. “*This romanticizing of the dementia characteristic of neurosyphilis was the forerunner of the much more persistent fantasy in this century about mental illness as a source of artistic creativity or spiritual originality*” [Sontag, *AIDS*, p. 23]. Mike Nichols – in my opinion – tries to overcome the lack of compensatory mythology of AIDS.

¹⁸ Gabrielle Griffin, *Representations of HIV and AIDS: Visibility blue/s*, Manchester, Manchester University Press 2000, p. 14.

the last thing that he was able to see. So, if we know the context we can see the blue screen as a unique invitation to the Jarman's reality of blindness:

"Jarman's enables the audience of Blue to share his experience of being unable to see – the helplessness derived from loss of vision. The audience's experience of seeing "nothing" thus parallels Jarman's experience of sightlessness and creates a point of identification between Jarman and the audience".¹⁹

Jarman brings us into his world. It starts when he hadn't been blind yet; then some problems started: suspicions, medical examinations, preliminary diagnosis and then the moment, when Jarman lost the sight on the periphery of his right eye – the beginning of his blindness. We can see the process of going down into disease; deeper and deeper, without any hope. The narrator tells us about some paradoxes of the disease. "*The worst of the illness is the uncertainty*" – we hear, and few minutes later we get really simple and clear description, because – on the other hand – this is disease that we can describe in surprisingly easy way:

"It started with sweats in the night and swollen glands. Then the black cancers spread across their faces as they fought for breath. TB and pneumonia hammered at the lungs and Toxo at the brain".

The tone of reflections changes many times. There are moments of meditation, sadness, dispassionate relations, bitter irony, jokes... Jarman presents his different faces. What does fatal disease mean for him as a man, as a homosexual, as an artist, and so on? Will he as an artist die in the moment of the biological death; or maybe sooner? "*If I lose half my sight, will my vision be halved?*" – he asks. The reality of blue is complicated, ruthless and passing-contaminated. The expression that *nothing lasts forever* gets a new meaning here, in the world where tomorrow a distant future is:

"The virus rages fierce. I have no friends now who are not dead or dying. Like a blue frost it caught them. At work, at the cinema, on marches and beaches. In churches on their knees, running, flying, silent or shouting protest".

This is the story about process of dying and about world that is full of death. Every new day is a little victory, but – on the other hand – it is hard to be happy because of that, if many others didn't manage to stay alive. Names of dead friends go around in the world of blue; they return in the memory and repeat themselves as a kind of refrain: "*David, Howard, Graham, Terry, Paul, David, Howard, Graham, Terry, Paul, David, Howard, Graham, Terry, Paul...*" Never-ending story about passing away. And every new day means a new reality of pain. It is impossible to forget about the illness, because there is nothing else in this part of life. The paradox is that he can't dream about the end of disease, because it means end of life. All he can do is waiting; but waiting is like nothing-to-do: "*This illness knocks you for six, just as you start to forget it. A bullet in the back of my head might be easier. You know, you can take*

¹⁹Ibid., p. 17.

longer than the Second World War to get to the grave". There is a kind of quiet, calm resignation in Jarman's behavior and words. This is a story about AIDS, about blindness, about pain, but on the other hand, there is something universal of this story about passing away, because we all will die. So, when we hear the last sentences of the movie that are addressed to the person named here as H.D., we hear also our fear of death that will come one day:

"Our name will be forgotten in time. No one will remember our work. Our life will pass like the traces of a cloud and be scattered like mist that is chased by the rays of the sun. For our time is the passing of a shadow and our lives will run like sparks through the stubble".

And we dream that in the moment of our death there will be someone, who will promise – like in the Jarman's movie: **"I place a delphinium, Blue, upon your grave"**.

In the modern culture of beauty and youth death is hidden; it is not right or nice to speak about death. Of course, we can see dead people in media spectacles – in shows, movies, news, computer games – but this kind of multiplied death has nothing in common with the real life and fear; it is sham-death. That is why the social campaigns, TV-series and documentary that I described above are something special in this kind of space. They make us think about death – something what we know that exists, but what we want to forget about during our everyday life. They speak loudly about passing away and pain. And they show both kind of death, that Milan Kundera wrote about: *"Death has two faces. One is nonbeing; the other is the terrifying material being of the corpse"*.²⁰

²⁰ Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, New York, London, HarperPerennial, 1999, p. 213.

MOURIR EN TANT QUE MIGRANT : THANATOPOLITIQUES ET THANATOPRATIQUES DE L'ITALIE CONTEMPORAINE

FEDERICA MANFREDI¹

Introduction

Le phénomène migratoire des pays en voie de développement vers l'Europe est devenu de plus en plus conséquent ces dernières années. Ce processus a transformé, et transforme l'Italie en un pays où des changements sociaux très importants se développent et font que progressivement, on assiste à une adaptation institutionnelle et administrative vers une nouvelle configuration de la population présente sur le territoire. Parmi ces adaptations à la cohabitation de différentes langues, religions et cultures, cette recherche s'est intéressée aux changements relatifs à la sphère funèbre : comment les étrangers meurent-ils en Italie ? Cette question est complexe et le but de cette réflexion n'est pas de faire une liste générique des comportements de chaque communauté ethnique présente sur le territoire. L'objectif est d'analyser les difficultés et les aspects communs qui démontrent l'hétérogénéité du groupe des migrants de première génération quand ils sont confrontés à la mort loin de leur lieu d'origine. En fin, l'analyse des rites funéraires peut-elle-être un paramètre pour mesurer le niveau d'intégration d'une communauté ?

Pour comprendre comment on meurt, il est important de se concentrer sur deux terrains de recherche : le premier se réfère aux règles et aux lois qu'il y a en Italie par rapport aux possibilités d'inhumation, de crémation, de conservation, de déplacement et de traitement des corps. Le deuxième s'intéresse au domaine culturel : que se passe-t-il lors des rituels funéraires pour les migrants ? Le terrain de recherche le plus fertile se situe au croisement de deux sphères culturelles. Les thanatopolitiques délimitent et canalisent les possibilités de réalisation des rituels et impliquent des négociations importantes pour l'individu et le groupe auquel il se sent appartenir. Les différentes façons de dire adieu à la vie en Italie sont donc le résultat d'adaptations culturelles de la part des individus, lesquelles se réalisent à l'intérieur de l'espace d'action défini par les lois locales, expression d'une culture dominante. Comme si une culture coupait un espace pour une autre culture, comme si elle laissait à l'autre une marge d'existence mais délimitée dans une aire fermée.

Mais de quelle façon ce processus de cohabitation culturelle et réélaboration des comportements relatifs à la sphère funèbre se réalise-t-il ?

Un regard sur les statistiques : ceux qui partent, ceux qui arrivent et ceux qui restent

Pour traiter l'argument de la ritualité funèbre et du droit à mourir, il faut

¹ MA, Agridea Foundation, Switzerland.

comprendre les dynamiques liées à la mortalité des migrants, et par conséquent analyser les principales caractéristiques démographiques et sociales qui caractérisent cette partie de la population présente sur le territoire. Il y a trois paramètres qu'on ne peut en aucun cas ignorer pour une analyse de ce type : la croissance démographique, l'âge moyen et le taux de mortalité.

L'Italie est un pays où l'immigration est un phénomène constant et où l'augmentation est progressive depuis environ vingt ans : au 31 décembre 2009², la population régulière présente sur le territoire italien était d'environ 60'340'328 personnes, tandis que l'année précédente elle était 60'045'068. Il y a eu une augmentation de 295'260 unités, soit 0.5%. Cette croissance démographique est due presque exclusivement à l'immigration étrangère et on parle donc de nouveaux arrivants. En observant le schéma, on peut remarquer que dans les années précédentes, la population étrangère était la principale responsable de la modeste croissance de toute la population présente en Italie. Les étrangers résidents représentent le 7% de la population, un chiffre en augmentation par rapport au début 2008 où il y avait 6,5% d'étrangers sur un total de 3'891'295 personnes.

1. La population étrangère en Italie.

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Population résidente totale	59.131.287	59.619.290	60.045.068	60.340.328
Pop. étrangère	2.938.922	3.432.651	3.891.295	4.223.823
Pop. étrangère en % sur le total	5,0	5,8	6,5	7,0
Né-e-s dans le cours de l'année	57.765	64.049	72.472	77.000
Décès	3.447	3.670	4.278	*

Source: Réélaboration sur la base des données Istat.

*Information manquante

En plus des nouvelles arrivées, il faut considérer la natalité élevée: de 2007 à 2009, on est passé de 64'000 à 77'000 nouveau-nés sur le territoire italien. Cette donnée a été confirmée par celles relatives à l'hospitalisation féminine qui voit l'accouchement et les complications liées à la grossesse comme la cause la plus fréquente pour l'accès aux soins.

L'âge moyen des étrangers est très bas surtout si on le compare à celui de la population résidente. En effet, l'Italie est un des pays européen avec la population la plus âgée : depuis les années 80, le pourcentage des résidents au dessus de 60 ans est passé de 13.1% à 19%, alors qu'en même temps on a assisté à une baisse du niveau de la fécondité des femmes italiennes qui a amené à la

² Toutes les données quantitatives exposées dans ce paragraphe proviennent du dossier Istat (Institut national de statistique, 01.01.2009).

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diminution des jeunes de moins de 14 ans, de 14.1% du total de la population par rapport aux 22.6% en 1980. A l'opposé, la population étrangère est assez jeune, avec une moyenne d'âge d'à peine 30.8 ans (tandis que celle des Italiens est de 43.2). Plus d'un citoyen étranger sur deux a entre 18 et 39 ans (50.8%), alors qu'un sur cinq est mineur (22%). Le restant de 25.1% est compris entre 40 et 64 ans et seulement le 2.1% a en dessus de 74 ans. Cette caractéristique est souvent liée au fait que ceux qui se préparent pour immigrer sont des individus en bonne santé et très jeunes, deux pré-requis essentiels pour commencer le grand voyage pour *brûler la frontière* et arriver à réaliser le projet de l'émancipation professionnelle et sociale. Ces premières données nous offrent déjà une idée sur le rapport entre les migrants et la mort : un groupe qui est plus ou moins jeune et en bonne santé, aura peu affaire avec la sphère funèbre. L'immigration étant stable depuis les années 90, aujourd'hui la classe des plus de 60 ans devrait être plus représentée et la question funèbre devrait être un argument moins marginal. C'est seulement en prenant compte du phénomène des retours (une fois qu'arrive la vieillesse ou en cas de maladie), que ces données deviendront cohérentes.

2. Comparaison population selon natalité italienne et étrangère avec classe d'âge, 2006.

Classe d'âge	Italiens	Étranger
Mineur	16,9 %	22 %
18-39	28,8 %	50,8 %
40-64	33,7 %	25,1 %
Over 64	20,6 %	2,1 %

Source. Rapport Istat, 1.01.2006.

Cette interprétions est soutenue par les statistiques à disposition sur les hospitalisations de la classe d'âge des plus de 65 ans : le quota de ces étrangers ne dépasse pas le 3% (tandis que les italiens sont en dessous du 40%). Cette information signifie deux choses : d'abord que les vieux étrangers ne sont pas là où se trouvent beaucoup de vieux Italiens ; ensuite que les anciens Italiens se caractérisent par une manière spécifique de vivre : c'est dans les hôpitaux que ceux-ci viennent affronter la mort, un comportement qui peut paraître étrange à la part migrante de la population.

Nous arrivons maintenant aux informations relatives à la mortalité : de 2003 à 2008, on est passée de 2559 à 4278 décès d'étrangers résidents, une augmentation moyenne de 10% par année à partir des années 90 (1992-2008),

période où les flux migratoires vers l'Italie ont commencé à devenir une réalité stable et continue³, il y a eu 52'756 décès d'hommes et de femmes étrangers. Dans les archives Istat, on observe que jusqu'en 2002, un peu plus de la moitié de ces personnes étaient non résidentes (on parle du 52.15%), beaucoup d'entre eux étaient probablement des sans papiers, et parmi eux, le 50.9% arrivaient de pays à forte pression migratoire.⁴ Ces informations nous amènent à définir la mortalité étrangère comme un phénomène de peu de relief en termes de chiffres.

3. Pourcentage de décès après la première année de vie parmi les étrangers avec et sans statut de résident en Italie. 1992-2005.

Année	Résidents	Pas résidents
1992	43,37	53,63
1993	44,14	55,86
1994	41,86	58,14
1995	39,70	60,30
1996	42,15	57,85
1997	45,20	54,80
1998	44,91	55,09
1999	46,10	53,90
2000	47,03	52,97
2001	47,85	52,15
2002	47,85	52,15
2003	50,46	49,54
2004	50,45	49,55
2005	52,35	47,65
TOTALE	46,92	53,08

Source: Rapport *Osservasalute* 2009.

³ Alessandro Dal Lago, *Non Persone*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1999.

⁴ Les pays à forte pression migratoire sont les états africains, de l'Amérique latine, de l'Asie (sauf Japon et Israël), l'Océanie (sauf Australie et Nouvelle Zélande), les pays entrés dans l'Union Européenne en Mai 2004 et en Janvier 2007 (sauf Malta et Chypre), c'est à dire République Tchèque, Estonie, Hongrie, Lettonie, Lituanie, Pologne, Slovaquie, Slovénie, Bulgarie et Roumanie.

De toute façon, il est intéressant de remarquer que depuis 2003, les décès de personnes résidentes sont supérieurs à ceux des non résidents, pour la première fois. Cette modeste majorité est destinée à grandir, vu que la plus grande partie des décès n'a plus un caractère occasionnel. Ceux qui meurent en Italie sont surtout ceux qui habitent de façon stable dans le pays, pas des touristes ni des étrangers sans papier, ni des travailleurs de passage.

Mais où ces personnes meurent-elles ? Si ce n'est pas dans les hôpitaux, alors c'est dans les chantiers de construction qu'il faut chercher le lieu qui voit la majorité de décès des étrangers en Italie. Dans le rapport *Osservasalute* 2009, on nous dit que pour ce qui concerne les hommes qui proviennent des pays à forte pression migratoire, les accidents et les causes externes font la plupart des victimes, suivies par les maladies cardio-vasculaires et les tumeurs. Pour les hommes de l'Europe centre-oriental, la première des causes est le cancer, suivie par les accidents et les maladies cardiovasculaires. Accidents et causes externes sont donc en première et deuxième place comme principale cause de mortalité dans les deux groupes de citoyens les plus présents en Italie. En 2008, il y a eu 176 cas de décès sur le lieu du travail et les cas d'accidents dénoncés étaient de 143'561. Les communautés les plus touchées sont les roumaine, albanaise et marocaine, c'est-à-dire, les trois groupes les plus présents sur le territoire.

Cette introduction quantitative nous dit que la population étrangère est en forte augmentation en ce qui concerne le taux de natalité, que l'âge moyen est très bas et que les décès sont inférieurs aux prévisions par rapport à la présence des dernières années. En tenant compte de l'augmentation des nouveaux-nés, des permissions de séjours et de résidence, de l'inscription aux écoles et de l'accès aux services sanitaires nationaux, on peut émettre l'hypothèse que la population étrangère en Italie est en train de se sédentariser de plus en plus et donc que bientôt le phénomène de la mortalité assumera aussi des dimensions beaucoup plus conséquentes. Mais l'Italie est-elle prête à satisfaire les exigences liés à ce domaine ? Il faut se demander quels sont les espaces de liberté de choix dans lesquels un étranger peut opérer quand il se retrouve à affronter la mort d'un de ses proches en Italie ou qu'il désire organiser son propre adieu à la vie.

Quand la vie amène à affronter la mort loin de chez soi, alors les possibilités d'action se limitent à deux options : soit il y a le choix de faire rapatrier le corps, soit celui d'inhumation ou de crémation en Italie. Le choix de sépulture à *la maison* est le préféré de la plupart de la population étrangère. Malgré la difficulté de trouver des informations quantitatives, les entretiens, les articles et les études examinées dans le cours de la recherche, mais aussi les récentes polémiques sur l'introduction des tombes musulmanes dans les cimetières italiens, sont des indices précieux qui permettent de conclure que la possibilité de sépulture en Italie est encore une option très peu pratiquée. A partir des entretiens effectués, on découvre des sphères de signification qui

amènent à penser qu'il existe une bonne façon de mourir, une façon meilleure que les autres de réaliser le rituel funèbre. Ces sphères de signification évoquées au cours des dialogues avec les interlocuteurs privilégiés ont permis en partie d'éclairer ce qui rend la mort en Italie particulièrement négative et indésirable.

Renforcer le lien

La mort est un événement qui interrompt violemment la vie quotidienne. Robert Hertz⁵ a écrit que la mort n'est pas un événement ponctuel mais un processus qui touche et lacère tout le tissu social. Depuis toujours, les cultures humaines se sont investies pour inventer des façons de reconnaître, de canaliser et de surpasser la douleur qui surgit de cet événement. Chaque groupe social a cherché des chemins pour reconnaître la perte de ses membres et a établi des modèles de référence qui pouvaient faire voir la mort comme bonne et le rituel funèbre comme bienfaisant. Parmi les objectifs de ces rituels, il y a aussi celui de réintégrer dans la vie quotidienne, donc dans la normalité, ceux qui sont le plus touchés dans ce moment : les familiers et les amis les plus proches du défunt. Recoudre le tissu social après cette lacération implique évidemment une grande souffrance sous toutes les latitudes. Intervenir dans l'élaboration du deuil pendant un processus migratoire, une réalité déjà signée par l'absence de la personne qui meurt (ou par l'absence du tissu social/familial), complique encore la situation et impose aux acteurs sociaux d'inventer une nouvelle pratique pour retrouver l'équilibre. Souvent le rapatriement du corps représente la dernière occasion pour recréer le lien, qui à cause de la migration a été suspendu, et la sépulture dans le pays hôte peut aider à aller de l'avant pour ceux qui restent en devenant un symbole de stabilité. Dans les deux cas décrits, un grand investissement social et émotionnel qu'il ne faut pas sous-évaluer est requis : rétablir la normalité est un objectif difficile à attendre par la condition migratoire parce que le tissu social d'origine résulte déjà d'un équilibre perturbé, lacéré par l'expérience de l'absence.

« Au décès de mon père, j'ai dû tout prendre en charge... j'ai dû le ramener à la maison, l'enterrer dans le cimetière où se trouvait son père. Comme ça, au moins, il serait avec ses parents...et ensuite ses sœurs s'occuperaient de maintenir la tombe. Au moins lui serait à la maison » Abstract d'un entretien, 06.06. 2010.

Un des premiers motifs pour désirer le rapatriement du corps coïncide donc avec la tentative de mettre fin à la situation d'absence: l'absence du migrant de son tissu d'origine mais aussi l'absence du tissu d'origine pour ceux qui vivent en tant que migrants. On se sent hors-cadre dans la société d'accueil et souvent ce sentiment perdure lors du retour à la maison, comme si on n'était plus bien dans aucun endroit. Rentrer à la maison une fois pour toute, au moins quand on est mort, peut alors rassurer ceux qui vivent encore ce sentiment

⁵ Robert Hertz, *La preminenza della destra e altri saggi*, Torino, Einaudi, 1991.

d'inadéquation et d'ambiguïté qui naît d'être continuellement déchiré entre deux mondes et entre deux soi. Le dernier voyage vers la maison signifie rétablir un lien, faire la paix avec (peut-être) l'unique endroit senti comme à soi et probablement aussi avec soi-même. Le rapatriement est l'ultime étape, la fin du déchirement, le moment dans lequel le voyage est enfin terminé.

Sans le cadre, la peinture n'est pas un tableau

Comme mentionné dans le paragraphe précédent, le deuil loin de la maison signifie déchirer le tissu social, peut-être de la manière la plus profonde et la plus complexe. Une des raisons se trouve dans le non-partage des actes symboliques et de leurs significations.

Un rituel, c'est-à-dire un ensemble d'actions officialisé qui véhiculent une dimension symbolique culturellement et socialement codée, est un exemple qui nous montre comment le temps individuel peut se combiner avec le temps collectif. Le partage, une condition essentielle de l'existence d'une culture et de ses rites, est un autre élément qui lie la dimension collective au rituel. Sans l'aspect social, c'est-à-dire sans l'inclusion des *autres* au sein de l'action en question, tout perd son sens. Durkheim⁶ a soutenu que le partage d'une charge émotionnelle collective était une prémisse fondamentale parmi les trois conditions nécessaires pour définir un rituel, du même Blumer⁷ parle du geste comme de la forme la plus fondamentale de la communication, l'unité de base d'une interaction. Le sens d'un geste est un produit social, qui trouve sa raison d'être uniquement entre les corps et non à l'intérieur. Toutefois, si on replace ces études de sociologie du début du XXe siècle avec l'objet examiné par cette recherche, on peut déduire que la thématique de la migration constitue un élément de la communauté différent par rapport à ceux que Blumer et Durkheim avaient à l'esprit. Avant eux, Van Gennep⁸ se référait à une communauté dans laquelle le *nous* était, pour ainsi dire, le prédominant quand il a théorisé sa célèbre division des rites de passage, maintenant devenu classique, où les rites funéraires occupent une place non négligeable. En fait, la mort est la limite ultime, la condition de seuil qui attend tous les membres de la société et qui est inconnue pour tous. Aborder ce grand moment dans un contexte dans lequel le *nous* n'est pas un élément stable mais constitue également une source d'ambiguïté et des questions, des doutes et des négociations, déstabilise encore plus ceux qui sont appelés à soutenir ce moment. Faire partie d'un *nous* petit, minoritaire, donc peu affirmé et peut-être mal compris et contrasté, provoque plus de difficultés et ne contribue pas à vivre un événement qui perturbe déjà profondément l'individu. De ce point de

⁶ E. Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, Paris, Presse Universitaire, 1912.

⁷ Maurice Blumer, "La società come iterazione simbolica" in A.M. Rose (ed.), *Human behavior and social processes*, Boston, Mifflin Company, 1962.

⁸ Arnold Van Gennep, *Les rites de passage*, Paris, Édition universitaire, 1909.

vue la culture d'origine pourrait être plus un obstacle qu'une aide. De cette situation résulte, au moins en partie, le choix de retourner et de vivre ce moment dans la terre du *grand nous*. Pourtant ce n'est pas si simple : comme on l'a vu, il n'est pas possible de déléguer cette tâche à ceux qui sont restés au pays : tous sont appelés à affronter la souffrance et la nécessité de restaurer le tissu social que la mort a ébranlé. La réussite, toutefois, n'est pas satisfaisante : en effet, malgré de nombreuses tentatives, aucune communauté ne semble avoir trouvé le bon compromis pour l'accomplissement du deuil dans une terre étrangère. Tous les interviewés parlent d'un sentiment d'insuffisance qui est selon eux attribuable à la condition de migration. Pourtant, on n'est pas disposé à renoncer aux rites, même si on se rend compte qu'ils ne sont pas réalisables de façon optimale. Il y a des choses insatisfaisantes et qui font de la peine mais ce n'est pas une raison suffisante pour baisser les bras. En effet, même si la solution n'est pas la bonne, c'est-à-dire qu'elle n'est pas comme elle aurait été à la maison, il faut malgré tout donner une forme au passage, en attendant de trouver une meilleure solution. Ceci est certainement une des raisons qui pousse les migrants à réaliser des rituels de souvenirs, d'essayer de donner une forme, plus ou moins comme à la maison, à des moments qu'ils considèrent comme importants et qui nécessitent grand engagement. Outre les complications d'origine immigrée, parmi les variables qui influent les rites contemporains, il ne faut pas oublier ceux que Martine Segalen⁹ ramène à l'individualisme typique de notre temps : la personnalisation des rites, selon la sociologue française, est l'un des aspects structurels de gestes collectifs, comme par exemple le mariage, la conquête du diplôme ou la célébration des 18 ans.

En combinant les variables de la renégociation des significations et des gestes symboliques et en comparant l'expérience de la migration avec la tendance à la surévaluation de l'individu à l'égard du groupe, nous pouvons identifier au moins deux causes qui contribuent à rendre les rites en Italie si différents de ceux qui sont menés dans le pays d'origine. Ensuite il faut évaluer les possibilités économiques de l'individu, sa volonté d'avoir du temps à consacrer à ce rituel, sa connaissance des aspects traditionnels de *comment les choses devraient être faites*, la possibilité juridique d'effectuer le rite, ou certaines parties, et la variabilité personnelle que chacun d'entre nous fait intervenir lorsqu'il se rapporte à une tradition : si la culture n'est pas quelque chose d'immuable et de statique, alors il n'est pas étonnant que tout le monde essaie d'intervenir de manières un peu personnelle, interprétant selon sa conscience plutôt qu'appliquant mécaniquement les règles.

L'importance de la famille

Le rapatriement après la mort est motivé par plusieurs raisons. Les personnes interrogées parlent de l'importance de renforcer le lien avec la maison et

⁹ A. Segalen, *Rites et rituelles contemporaines*, Paris, Nathan, 1998.

obtenir une caisse de résonance qui donne du sens aux gestes qu'on connaît pour affronter la mort. Une autre sphère de sens émerge des entretiens, qui est peut-être l'élément qui lie entre elles les valeurs précédentes : la famille.

« Je m'appelle Maurice. Je suis arrivé en Europe il y a 12 ans ; avant je vivais à Paris et maintenant j'habite à Rome. J'ai 40 ans et j'ai une grande famille qui m'attend à Dakar ; d'habitude je rentre chaque hiver. Je suis musulman, comme la majorité de la population du Sénégal. Ici je fréquente une communauté sénégalaise d'environ 200 personnes. Nous louons un appartement tous ensemble. Ce lieu est notre Mosquée. Nous prions ensemble le lundi soir et le vendredi à midi. Prier cinq fois par jour n'est pas possible en Italie : le travail ne nous laisse pas assez de temps. Lorsque quelqu'un meurt, le rapatriement est obligatoire, on ne peut pas faire autrement. Un musulman ne peut pas rester dans un pays non-musulman : il faut aller le plus près possible de la Mecque. Construire des cimetières musulmans en Italie n'a donc pas beaucoup de sens. »
Entretiens avec Maurice, 17.05.2010

Apparemment, l'élément central du témoignage est l'aspect religieux. Cependant, le pôle vers lequel tourne le raisonnement de Maurice est la famille. La religion, selon lui, est sa motivation pour retourner, mais ce n'est vraisemblablement l'unique raison. Il est à noter que le précepte musulman qui veut qu'un corps soit enterré dès que possible, donc sans attendre le temps requis pour le transfert du défunt dans le pays d'origine, est totalement ignoré. La dimension familiale est donc beaucoup plus importante que la religion, et c'est la raison pour laquelle on préfère le rapatriement, même si après on justifie cette décision avec des arguments religieux. Sa propre famille est la maison vers laquelle retourner, indépendamment d'où elle est. Probablement le témoignage de Maurice devrait se lire dans ce sens : le retour à la terre d'Allah est un objectif particulièrement important car il coïncide avec le retour au pays. L'élément central de ce témoignage n'est pas l'aspect religieux, ni le culturel ou le rituel. On n'investit pas toutes ces ressources et énergies pour se conformer aux préceptes d'une croyance ou aux attentes d'une culture. Le pôle vers lequel tout ce travail d'adaptation et de négociation semble tourner est plutôt la famille. Les personnes chères, qu'elles soient en Italie comme compagnons de l'expérience de la migration ou dans le pays d'origine comme points de référence du voyage, sont déterminantes quant aux choix de rapatriement ou d'enterrement dans le pays d'arrivée. Le besoin rituel est donc subordonné à la présence de la famille, en Italie lorsqu'on choisit les obsèques ou dans le pays d'origine lorsqu'on opte pour le rapatriement.

Ce sont surtout les familles avec des enfants en bas âge pour lesquels on souhaite qu'ils se sentent chez eux en Italie et qui font le choix de rester dans un des cimetières du pays d'accueil. On crée une racine pour les générations futures et souvent on est conscient de porter le poids de la rupture avec le passé et avec sa propre terre. Cette responsabilité vise à créer une tradition et une légitimité

dans le nouveau pays, parce que quand *la famille est enterrée au cimetière*¹⁰ on n'est plus complètement un étranger. En ce sens, le lien avec la terre des parents et des ancêtres apparaît comme moins important que la proximité avec ses propres enfants. Yassin Chaïb, dit « mon pays c'est mes enfants » et la position est claire : le migrant choisit une nouvelle maison, une nouvelle patrie quand il voit les perspectives d'un bon avenir pour ses enfants. Choisir d'être enterré en Italie révèle donc une décision importante, dure et lourde, qui coïncide avec la volonté de mettre les racines dans le nouveau pays avec un sens de continuité et de stabilisation.

De cette situation, nous pouvons examiner deux éléments importants : le besoin d'avoir des espaces sacrés pour les sépultures et de nouvelles façons de produire le sacre. Les rites sont adaptés et modifiés et ils sont bien loin de l'utopique forme traditionnelle qu'il y aurait eu à la maison. On voit naître de nouvelles traditions qui souvent se mêlent à la nouvelle terre. Ce qui en résulte, cependant, est quelque chose de plus et de différente qui ne corresponde pas simplement à l'addition des éléments nouveaux et existants : d'abord parce que le préexistant, surtout dans un pays comme l'Italie, peut revêtir différentes formes, plus idéologiques que réelles. D'autre part la nouveauté n'est pas, comme mentionné précédemment, quelque chose qui reste inchangé au cours de son déroulement et chez les différents individus. Les innovations des pères sont maintenant combinées avec celles des enfants, générations futures qui amènent à réfléchir sur la notion de liminalité et qui apportent de nouveaux défis familiaux et institutionnelles.

Argent et bureaucratie mais pas de bénédiction

Jusque ici l'analyse s'est concentrée sur les motivations et les paramètres permettant de définir ce qu'est une bonne mort. Maintenant il s'agira d'examiner ce qui est nécessaire de surmonter pour réaliser ce désir. En effet, les obstacles sont multiples et une telle décision démontre le grand niveau de détermination et l'importance que le retour a pour les protagonistes.

D'un point de vue financier, le rapatriement d'un corps est un engagement économique conséquent : pour le transport du lieu de résidence ou de l'hôpital à l'aéroport la redevance minimale est de 1 euro par kilomètre, une dépense qui peut atteindre même les 2000 euros, selon le lieu de départ.¹¹ A cette dépense, il faut ajouter les frais de transport aérien, qui varient en fonction de l'aéroport italien, de la compagnie aérienne, du pays de destination et de la période de l'année. Le montant moyen est de 2500-3500 euros, par exemple, si le transporteur aérien est africain, mais on arrive aussi à 4000 euros si on décide de voler avec des entreprises européennes.

¹⁰ Yassine Chaïb, *L'émigré et la mort*, Aix-en-Provence, Édisud, 2000.

¹¹ Luciano Lagamba, "I decessi e il rimpatrio delle salme", in *Rapporto Caritas* (2009), 13, p. 150.

« Quand quelqu'un de la communauté meurt, on se retrouve dans la mosquée pour prier. Après la prière, on fait une collecte pour le rapatriement du corps qui est habituellement accompagné d'un ou deux amis du défunt. Le billet d'avion pour ces personnes est d'environ 500-600 euros, tandis que le rapatriement du corps coûte de 3000-6000 euros selon la compagnie aérienne. Chacun donne 10 euros et si l'argent ne suffit pas, nous demandons alors à d'autres communautés de Rome » Entretiens avec Mohamad, 29.05.2010

L'Italie n'a aucune législation nationale qui règle les dispositions concernant les contributions de l'État pour le rapatriement des dépouilles. La Convention de Berlin, 10/02/1937, et la déclaration de la Conférence de l'Organisation panaméricaine de la Santé, 5-12/13/1965, sont les deux premières références disponibles qui ont traité des documents nécessaires pour le transport des corps à l'étranger et qui ont établi des lignes directrices à observer; par exemple, ces organismes ont décrété qu'il était nécessaire que le cercueil soit fermé dans deux caisses, en zinc à l'intérieur en bois à l'extérieur, soudées et enfin scellées hermétiquement. En outre, à cause des précautions sanitaires, le cercueil ne peut pas être ouvert une fois arrivé à destination. Cette règle implique une difficulté supplémentaire pour ceux qui reçoivent le cercueil : ne pas être capable de voir la personne décédée rend encore plus lourde une tragédie qui s'est passée très loin, souvent dans un autre continent, et qui touche des personnes qui ne se sont plus vues depuis des années. Dans un entretien¹², il est ressorti que certains doutent du décès d'un ami qui a émigré, tant la difficulté de réaliser le deuil est grande lorsque le défunt n'a pu être vu une dernière fois. En Italie, parallèlement à ces conventions, il y a le Règlement de la Police Mortuaire qui fixe les prescriptions à respecter pour le traitement des corps. Cependant, il n'y a aucune référence pour ce qui concerne la contribution publique dans les frais de rapatriement des citoyens étrangers. Le Parlement européen, conscient du grand nombre de personnes vivant ou travaillant loin de leur pays d'origine, a abordé la question, pour anticiper l'augmentation potentielle de telles demandes. Malheureusement aucune disposition uniforme concernant le rapatriement des cadavres n'a pus être trouvée. Les familles ont donc encore sur les épaules la charge des frais importants et d'une bureaucratie difficile à gérer. Dans le passé, de 1986 à 1998, le fonds Inps¹³ payait pour le rapatriement de morts étrangers, à condition qu'ils aient payé au moins une contribution obligatoire. Avec l'entrée en vigueur de la loi Turco-Napolitano, ce fonds pour le rapatriement a été aboli depuis décembre 1999. La loi Bossi-Fini de 2002, n'a pas traité la question, sauf pour définir qui devrait payer le billet de retour des immigrés expulsés (mais évidemment bien vivants). Comme il n'y a pas une législation nationale, la gestion des transports

¹² Entretien à Daniela, 2.08.2010.

¹³ Institut national italien pour la prévoyance social.

et des contributions économiques est confiée aux autorités locales. Il y a des régions qui se sont équipées de lois spéciales sur l'immigration, lesquelles affectent également le rapatriement des corps : par exemple l'Emilia-Romagna (L.R. 5/2004, article 5), met en œuvre un remboursement d'environ 50 % du montant total des frais engagés par les membres de la famille. Dans d'autres régions, toutefois, il n'y a pas une législation spécifique, comme c'est le cas du Piémont, Veneto, Umbria, Marches, Campanie, Pouilles et Sardaigne. Cependant, ces demandes sont encore difficiles à quantifier et l'impression qui ressort est que ces démarches ne sont pas encore très fréquentes. En plus, cette situation est le signal d'une situation qui ne trouve pas une solution à l'échelle nationale.

Dans certains cas, les consulats sont responsables des frais de rapatriement, mais, dans la plupart des cas, ce sont les communautés d'étrangers présentes sur le territoire qui se mobilisent financièrement, comme Mohamad en témoigne. Il semble donc que dans ce labyrinthe administratif, ce soit la communauté de compatriotes sur place qui constitue l'une des rares ressources sur lesquelles s'appuyer. C'est comme si la terre d'origine avait ses ambassadeurs des pauvres, qui, en cas de besoin, se soutiennent mutuellement pour se donner du courage. Comme si la solidarité traditionnelle entre pauvres se trouvait un espace dans la terre d'immigration. Habituellement, dans le cas soit du transfert du défunt dans le pays d'origine, soit de l'ensevelissement dans le pays d'immigration, la communauté nationale qui assistait le décédé se rassemble dans un moment de prière. Cela se produit généralement à l'hôpital, dans la chapelle ou dans la salle de prière, quand elle existe.

« Daniela vient de Roumanie et elle a perdu sa mère il y a 5 ans. La femme est morte à l'hôpital en deux jours d'un cancer des poumons, après 4 mois de souffrances. Daniela et sa petite sœur ont voulu la ramener à la maison pour la laisser reposer à côté de ses parents. Elles ne savent pas si elles vont rester en Italie, le rapatriement paraît donc être le meilleur choix. Avant de fermer le cercueil, Daniela a voulu faire un moment de prière dans la chapelle de l'hôpital pour une bénédiction avec un prêtre. Un prêtre orthodoxe n'était pas disponible mais *ils vendent le même produit*, Daniela dit aujourd'hui » Du journal de recherche, 02.08.2010

Il y a des hôpitaux qui tentent de répondre à ces besoins : les patients des religions autres que les catholiques sont pris en compte par nombreux établissements de santé qui sont équipés avec des espaces de prière sans références religieuses spécifiques dans lequel les fidèles de n'importe quelle religion peuvent se sentir à l'aise pour prier. *Nous avons aussi la petite salle*, m'a dit une femme-médecin qui travaille à l'hôpital Molinette à Turin. Elle se réfère à un espace de prière non-confessionnel, ouvert en 2009 et alternative à la chapelle de l'édifice. Cette salle consiste en une pièce avec des fleurs artificielles et quelques bancs face à une chaire privée de symboles religieux.

« La pièce est vide, il n'y a personne. Je ne me sent pas dans un lieu d'accueil. Je me demande si les parents des patients se sentent à l'aise pour prier ici » Du journal de recherche, 11.06.2010

Une fois le corps transféré dans le pays de destination (donc d'origine), les gens se recueillent habituellement pour une cérémonie funéraire qui permet aux membres de la famille et aux amis qui n'étaient pas présents en Italie de rendre hommage au défunt. Le rituel se déroule donc en deux phases : un moment précédent le transfert avec la communauté que le défunt fréquentait dans le pays d'immigration, et une deuxième étape dans le pays d'origine avec la famille et les amis restés à la maison. Souvent il y a quelqu'un qui assiste aux deux cérémonies, quelqu'un qui vivait en Italie avec le défunt et qui accompagne son corps dans le dernier voyage vers le pays d'origine. Cette personne est souvent un membre de la famille ou un ami très proche, lequel doit supporter le fardeau de l'organisation du voyage.

La fracture du temps de traitement d'une perte n'est pas quelque chose qui passe inaperçue: à ce propos, l'interview de Daniela illustre bien la douleur associée à ces moments et aggravées par le fait d'avoir vécu le deuil une première fois en Italie et ensuite une deuxième fois en Roumanie avec leurs proches, comme s'il s'agissait d'un double deuil. Elle l'appelait une *torture* lors de l'entretien. Outre cet aspect, qu'on peut bien comprendre, il y a aussi les contraintes d'un processus bureaucratique fastidieux et difficile à gérer. Le chemin pour recueillir les documents et les bonnes signatures, parmi les consulats et les bureaux administratifs, voit les parents ou les amis du mort, qui sont étrangers soit à la langue soit au système bureaucratique italiens, obligés de suivre un sentier de paperasse et formalisme qui les dépouille du temps nécessaire à faire le deuil. Souvent, la douleur de la perte d'une personne chère est déguisée, cachée derrière la course pour recueillir ces documents. Etre face à la mort devient un enjeu bureaucratique, aseptisé, privé de son drame. À ajouter à tout cela, il y a l'absence d'une communauté qui prend en charge les rites des ancêtres ; il n'y a aucun geste de solidarité connu, ceux qu'on a vu faire dans le passé et auxquels on serait prêt à répondre. Dans un pays étranger, tout cela manque parce que la culture est différente ; les seuls signes connus peuvent arriver par les membres de la communauté nationale dans laquelle les migrants se rassemblent souvent. Toutefois, même ces gens n'auront plus le caractère naturel dans l'externalisation de ces gestes comme celle qu'ils auraient eu dans le pays d'origine, sans compter ensuite les limites découlant des heures de travail et de l'absence du réseau du soutien de la famille. En outre, la société autour d'eux n'est pas prête à mettre à disposition des endroits nécessaires à l'élaboration du deuil traditionnel ou pour la préparation du corps pour

l'enterrement.¹⁴ Seulement quand la religion d'origine coïncide avec la catholique alors on trouve espaces et services adéquats.

Les significations sont perdues dans un contexte qui ne fait pas l'effet d'une caisse de résonance : sans la confirmation de la bonté de son geste, la personne doute et la conscience de l'importance de son geste s'estompe. Sans le feedback, la culture va en crise parce que le partage fait défaut. Dans un endroit où on est une minorité, les gestes rituelles perdent leur sens. Souvent on peut oublier de les mettre en ?uvre et donc ne reste que la course derrière les documents pour le rapatriement et la solitude de ceux qui vivent ce moment.

Par conséquent, dans ce contexte de douleur et d'incertitude, le rapatriement constitue l'espoir que tout sera fait comme il faut, à la maison, soutenu par les bons rites. On espère que la tâche bureaucratique soit juste encore un autre obstacle à surmonter avant de pouvoir se donner le temps du deuil, à la maison. Le pays d'origine devient un mythe dans lequel tout ira bien, aussi la mort elle-même.

Un choix obligé : il n'y a pas d'espace pour vous

Après avoir analysé les raisons qui conduisent au rapatriement du défunt et après avoir examiné les difficultés que cela implique, il faut maintenant conceptualiser ces comportements à l'intérieur de l'espace d'action que l'Italie laisse à ces acteurs sociaux. Y a-t-il la possibilité de laisser reposer un être cher pour ceux qui n'appartiennent pas à la religion pratiquée traditionnellement par les italiens ?

Cette phase de la recherche se concentre sur la répartition par religion des communautés étrangères ; il est avéré que la croyance est le paramètre principal autour duquel évoluent les rites funéraires des diverses traditions culturelles. Évidemment il y a des particularités relatives aux différents États, aux régions géographiques et aux processus historiques qui ont affecté le même territoire, mais pour la disponibilité des données et pour la spécificité de la thématique étudiée on a choisi de se référer aux statistiques liées à la religion d'origine. Le tableau ci-dessous montre comment la population étrangère résidant en Italie est divisée entre les principales confessions religieuses; de toute évidence l'estimation de Caritas n'est pas fondée sur des données objectives parce que ces types de données, comme l'affiliation religieuse, sont très difficiles à quantifier. La subdivision a en réalité pris en compte la tradition religieuse-culturelle du pays d'origine de la personne plutôt que sa pratique personnelle.

¹⁴ Dans le cadre de la recherche on a examiné les principales structures et entreprises privées qui ont commencé à transformer leur regard aux besoins des communautés étrangères présentes en Italie et, en ce sens, ils accèdent un espoir pour l'avenir. Un exemple est l'Agence Lune, né à Turin en 2007.

MOURIR EN TANT QUE MIGRANT : THANATOPOLITIQUES ET THANATOPRATIQUES DE L'ITALIE CONTEMPORAINE

4. Appartenance religieuse des étrangères en Italie.

	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2008 (effectifs)
Chrétiens	50,3	51,7	2.011.000
<i>Orthodoxes</i>	<i>26,5</i>	<i>28,4</i>	<i>1.105.000</i>
<i>Catholiques</i>	<i>19,3</i>	<i>19,0</i>	<i>739.000</i>
<i>Protestants</i>	<i>3,3</i>	<i>3,1</i>	<i>121.000</i>
Musulmans	33,5	33,2	1.292.000
Autres religions	5,6	5,5	214.000
Athées	10,7	10,7	416.000

Source : Rapport Caritas 2009.

La moitié des résidents étrangers sont de religion chrétienne, avec une nette majorité d'orthodoxes (28,4 %), au détriment des catholiques (19 %) et protestants (3,1 %). Une des raisons de cette majorité se trouve certainement dans l'importance de la communauté roumaine. Les chrétiens sont majoritaires dans 12 régions, comme le Lazio (67 %) et la Sardaigne (80 %), tandis que le deuxième groupe le plus représenté est celui des musulmans; environ un tiers des étrangers présents en Italie ont une appartenance islamique. La Val d'Aoste est la région qui a le pourcentage le plus élevé, suivi de l'Émilie-Romagne et Puglia. Les fidèles musulmans proviennent principalement de pays d'Afrique du Nord et du sous-continent indien. Les autres confessions présentant le plus de fidèles sont la religion hindoue, principalement pratiquée en Lombardie, et la philosophie bouddhiste. Suit alors une timide présence animiste, qui regroupe les religions traditionnelles africaines et enfin une représentation juive.

Il n'est pas surprenant que de 2007 à 2008 le nombre de fidèles a augmenté, puisque le nombre de résidents étrangers en Italie a augmenté d'environ un demi-million. L'adhésion de pays de l'Est à cette période a permis de régulariser un certain nombre de personnes d'où une augmentations dans la statistique de la représentation de la religion orthodoxe. Selon ces données, donc, à la fin de 2008, les chrétiens sont plus de deux millions, dont 700 000

catholiques, et les musulmans sont plus d'un million, alors que les autres religions ont un plus petit nombre de fidèles. En pratique, un migrant sur deux est chrétien, un sur trois est musulman et un sur vingt est bouddhiste, juif, hindou ou animiste.

5. Appartenance religieuse en chiffres.

Totale	Chrétiens	Orthodoxes	Catholiques	Protestants	Musulmans	Juifs	Hindouiste	Bouddhistes	Animistes	Autres
3.432.651	1.726.179	908.707	663.338	112.443	1.150.746	5.759	84.103	56.868	41.029	367.966

Source : Rapport Caritas 2009.

Après cette analyse quantitative, on s'attendrait à voir des possibilités pour les services funéraires et des lieux de sépulture proportionnelle aux pourcentages des fidèles dans les différentes confessions religieuses.

Malgré la présence de l'article 3 de la Constitution italienne, qui établit que tous les citoyens sont égaux et ne subissent pas de discrimination fondée sur la religion, la réalité est très différente pour ceux qui ne font pas partie de la majorité chrétienne. La reconnaissance de l'autre et de sa religion a été officiellement affirmée avec l'abolition de la Loi sur les cultes admis de 1929, qui était la dernière des lois raciales de l'époque fasciste. A ce moment là, les autres religions sont devenues égales, au niveau législatif, à la religion catholique: l'article 8 de la Constitution Italienne, comme confirmation de l'article 3, précise que *toutes les confessions religieuses sont également libres devant la Loi*. Il n'y a plus aucune référence aux listes des cultes admis comme exception à la norme, surtout en ce qui concerne les rapports avec l'État. Malgré l'existence de cette disposition égalitaire, la loi sur les cultes admis a laissé une trace : chaque religion doit formaliser son rapport avec l'Etat pour l'établissement d'un contrat ad hoc. Certaines communautés¹⁵ ont réussi à l'établir grâce à d'anciens épisodes historiques sur le territoire italien, tandis que d'autres ont plus récemment négocié les paramètres qui définissent cette relation au niveau juridique et administratif. L'exemple est donné par l'Union bouddhiste italienne et la communauté Hindou, qui le 4 avril 2007 ont formalisé leurs relations avec l'État italiens. Grâce à ces contrats, l'Italie a accordé à ces

¹⁵ La référence est pour les valdais en 1984, les pentecôtistes et les adventistes du septième jour en 1986, les juifs en 1987 et évangélistes en 1993.

deux mouvements la possibilité de jouir d'une série de droits qui jusqu'alors n'étaient pas officiellement reconnus ni garantis. Un intérêt particulier, en accord avec l'UBI (Union des bouddhistes italienne) est inscrit dans les articles 4 et 8, qui permettent une visite dans les hôpitaux à des représentants du culte et le traitement des dépouilles conformément à la tradition. La deuxième partie de ce dernier article défend, dans la mesure du possible, le droit d'avoir des zones séparées dans les cimetières. Si l'hindouisme, religion tellement éloignée et différente de la tradition catholique italienne, est arrivée officiellement à se faire reconnaître et garantir le droit de mener ses rites *selon la tradition*, ce n'est pas le cas de l'Islam.

Il faut noter que, comme indiqué au paravent, fin 2008 il y avait 1.150.746 musulmans, tandis que les hindous étaient 84.103 et les bouddhistes 56.868. Le Concordat entre l'État italien et l'Islam est en cours d'élaboration et nous sommes en train de décrire un travail commencé en 1998 sous initiative de la Coreis, la communauté religieuse musulmane italienne basée à Milan.

Tous les étrangers musulmans présents aujourd'hui en Italie, vont rencontrer des problèmes pour accomplir leurs rites funéraires ou recevoir la visite d'un Imam dans un hôpital (sauf lors des horaires de visites). Heureusement, il y a des hôpitaux adhérents à un projet européen qui favorise la réalisation de centres de soins adaptés aux besoins, y compris spirituel, des patients provenant de différentes cultures et traditions. Ils s'engagent à chercher des solutions pour la vie quotidienne, plutôt que d'attendre des mesures juridiques. Un exemple est l'hôpital San Camillo à Rome, qui a suivi l'exemple du centre sanitaire de Reggio Emilia qui, déjà en décembre 2002, avait été la structure pilote pour le projet Migrant-Friendly Hospital.

Toutefois, malgré l'attention que les structures telles que le San Camillo portent à la culture de l'autre, il y a plusieurs exemples qui montrent encore une route toute à construire. L'accord avec l'Islam tarde à être signé et les espaces pour les sépultures musulmanes dans les cimetières municipaux soulèvent toujours plus de polémiques. D'une part, il y a les communes qui ont pris note de la présence stable d'une population d'origine étrangère et de la diversité culturelle avec besoins spécifiques; en revanche, ce processus de coexistence et de redistribution de l'espace soulèvent de nombreuses protestations et les craintes qui s'installent souvent dans un climat de racisme. Un autre exemple est alors donné par Fossano, une ville située dans la province de Cuneo (Italie du Nord), dont l'administration, malgré la controverse et l'opposition des plus conservateurs, a réussi en juillet 2010 à déclarer la création d'une nouvelle zone dans le cimetière municipal. Dans cet espace il y aura un endroit convenable pour l'enterrement des fidèles musulmans et des ceux qui croient plus approprié une dispersion de leur cendres dans la nature. La demande déposée en janvier par l'Imam de la communauté, a conduit à la création d'une zone avec des tombes pointant vers la Mecque, tel que requis par la tradition

musulmane, et un jardin du souvenir appelé le *jardin de roses*, dans lequel les cendres de ceux qui en ont fait la demande peuvent être dispersées.¹⁶ Tout cela est rendu possible en partie par le fait qu'en Italie, les cimetières ne se posent pas sur un sol sacré mais sont des endroits laïques. Au-delà du droit de sépulture pour ceux qui appartiennent aux autres religions que le christianisme, les demandes de funérailles laïques de la part des citoyens italiens commencent aussi à augmenter, surtout dans le centre et au nord de l'Italie. Le documentaire *Sia fatta la mia volontà*, réalisé par la compagnie de théâtre *Schegge di cotone*, témoigne des difficultés dans certaines régions de l'Italie contemporaine de réaliser des cérémonies civiles pour le dernier salut de ceux qui ne se sentent pas appartenir à la tradition catholique. Ces personnes sont souvent sans alternatives pour recevoir un adieu approprié. Les statistiques de Caritas indiquent que ce problème affecte également les migrants, puisqu'il a été constaté qu'une personne sur dix est athée.

Le droit d'adieu semble donc être un problème, non seulement pour les étrangers qui appartiennent à des minorités religieuses, mais aussi pour les laïcs italiens : dans la pratique, le problème existe pour tous les non-chrétiens.

Malgré cela il y a ceux qui choisissent de rester

Le panorama jusqu'à présent exposé nous laisse incrédules quand on pense qu'il y a des gens qui choisissent de s'installer en Italie ou qui choisissent ce pays pour enterrer leurs proches. La stabilisation croissante de la population migrante se démontre aussi pour ce phénomène, malgré les grandes difficultés rencontrées. Cette alternative au rapatriement peut désigner deux situations possibles : d'une part, le manque de ressources pour le rapatriement (contexte de guerre dans le pays d'origine, difficultés économiques ou absence d'une famille qui puisse prendre soin du corps), d'autre part par le grand désir d'une stabilité dans le pays hôte. Si le premier cas est définitivement une source de tension et de souffrance supplémentaire, la seconde situation, toutefois, exige un grand engagement culturel et affectif.

Choisir de garder ses morts dans le pays hôte signifie qu'il y a la décision de s'enraciner, de redémarrer et, d'une certaine façon, de couper les ponts avec la terre d'origine, qui ne sera plus la terre du retour, même après la mort, mais quelque chose de plus éloignée. L'Italie prend le rôle de *nouvelle maison* et se substitue à la patrie comme nouveau centre de gravité de la vie quotidienne, pour aujourd'hui mais surtout pour demain. Confier son propre avenir à une nouvelle terre, pleine d'incertitudes et d'éventualités, est certainement un grand saut, un défi qui nécessite beaucoup de négociations et investissement émotionnel. Un engagement considérable parce qu'il oblige à modifier ses habitudes, à laisser celles pour lesquelles il n'y a pas de place, à embrasser celles proposées par les générations successives et à s'adapter encore à des nouvelles.

¹⁶ <http://www.targatocn.it>.

Un bon exemple de ces adaptations est décrit par Roberta Bonino et ses recherches au sein de l'étude *Altri Addii*. Aux Philippines, le 2 novembre, les fidèles catholiques ont la coutume de célébrer leurs morts dans les cimetières apportant de la nourriture et de la musique sur les tombes. Souvent ils restent ensemble toute la nuit pour célébrer cette fête et il y a aussi ceux qui s'organisent pour dormir à l'intérieur du cimetière. En Italie ce n'est pas possible, tant du fait du climat rude de novembre que des règles et des horaires de visite des cimetières. Cette coutume a donc été abandonnée en raison des dispositions du pays d'arrivée et adaptée sous d'autres formes, comme la visite du cimetière durant la journée ou l'habitude de se trouver pour le déjeuner avec d'autres familles des Philippines émigre également en Italie et qui ont souffert un deuil.

Désirer reposer dans la terre d'émigration, après une vie de travail et après sa mort, nous montre un très fort espoir de stabilité qui ne peut pas être ignoré. Tel que déjà mentionné, malgré le fait que ce désir soit un choix encore marginal pour la majorité des étrangers, l'Italie et les italiens peuvent saisir l'occasion que les migrants offrent pour commencer à réfléchir sur soi-même. Clyde Kluckhohn¹⁷ a écrit que l'anthropologie offre à l'homme le miroir qui lui permet de se regarder dans sa multiplicité. L'un des majeurs enseignements de cette discipline est que regarder l'autre est la meilleure façon de se connaître soi-même. Donc l'immigration, plus que tout autre phénomène, est capable de révéler la nature de la société d'accueil. Lorsque nous parlons de l'immigration, nous parlons de nous-mêmes par rapport aux immigrés, donc une analyse de l'immigration qui ne met pas en jeu la société d'accueil est essentiellement incomplète, amputée.

Regarder la façon dont on traite l'autre est donc un canal préférentiel pour se comprendre. Abdelmalek Sayad¹⁸ écrit qu'étudier les migrations est comme avoir un miroir qui nous dit beaucoup des choses, sur les gens qui émigrent mais encore plus sur ceux qui les reçoivent. Les données sur la mortalité et les demandes d'enterrements *autres* sont des éléments qui confirment la nature des flux migratoires en l'Italie et ils peuvent être un élément pour mesurer le niveau d'intégration des migrants. Le retard avec lequel le gouvernement hésite à ajuster les exigences et les défis, même dans la sphère funéraire, pourrait être lu comme peur de reconnaître l'autre en tant que colocataire stable. L'hésitation pour la reconnaissance de l'accord entre l'État et les autres religions, les difficultés d'accès aux pratiques funéraires différentes de celles de la tradition chrétienne, les complications administratives relatives aux documents d'état civil et les frais élevés pour les documents de transfert de

¹⁷ Marco Aime, *L'incontro mancato*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2005, p. 170.

¹⁸ Abdelmalek Sayad, *La double absence*, Paris, Édition du Seuil, 1999.

dépouilles, sont tous des indices qui dénotent une attitude institutionnelle et culturelle qu'on pourrait définir comme résultat d'une politique du rejet.

En ce sens, la volonté de rapatrier, le désir de faire le dernier voyage, le souhait du retour fuyant un endroit ressenti comme impropre ne nous étonne pas. Il n'est pas surprenant, comme conséquence aux politiques d'immigration italienne qui visent au refoulement des vivants, qui vivent dans l'isolement social et l'invisibilité politique, qu'on assiste au fait que les migrants, mêmes après la mort, ne se sentent pas à leur place dans un pays qui n'a pas été capable d'aller au-delà de la logique de l'invité-travailleur.

En 2006, on a estimé environ 300 000 travailleurs étrangers sans papiers et en même temps, la même année, l'État Italien a requis l'entrée de 170 000 personnes pour raison de travail. Ce message ambigu est le résultat de politiques qui d'une part exigent de la main-d'œuvre pour remplacer le vieillissement de la population (laquelle ne sera pas intéressée à recouvrir cette tranche du marché du travail moins rémunéré comme l'industrie, les services et l'agriculture), et d'autre part rejettent ceux qui offrent de combler cette lacune. Gabriele Del Grande¹⁹ parle d'une *armée de main-d'œuvre pour profiter de leur travail low-cost* qui, après avoir rempli silencieusement le rôle économique qui justifie sa présence, est aimablement renvoyée à l'expéditeur.

« On ne se sent pas à l'aise dans un pays comme ceci : ce gents ont l'impression d'être toléré quand de leur vivant et leur condition ne s'améliore pas après leur mort » Du journal de recherche, 01.09.2010

Conclusion : l'Italie est en face d'un miroir

Le contexte est un élément fondamental du processus qui se déroule : les acteurs de la *question migratoire* ne peuvent pas être seulement ceux qui partent et arrivent *depuis* et *dans* un endroit, mais, comme Sayad nous le dit, il faut forcément inclure aussi les pays d'origine et d'arrivée comme co-protagonistes du processus de migration. Le contexte influe sur les événements qui se développent à son intérieur et qui à leur tour déclenchent des réactions sur les mécanismes en question. Il est peut-être utile de penser à visualiser l'image d'un mouvement circulaire infini constitué par une série d'inputs et d'outputs, de transferts et de contro- transferts qui réagissent réciproquement aux actions des uns des autres.

On se demande maintenant quelle pourrait être la prochaine étape. Accepter les migrants comme colocataires permanents et non plus seulement comme travailleurs occasionnels, c'est à dire gens de passage dont le futur ne nous concerne pas, c'est une possibilité pour améliorer les normes qui réagissent leur vie quotidienne avec des effets positifs aussi pour la population indigène. D'autre part, nous sommes tous sur le même bateau : la revendication d'un droit exclusif sur le territoire par les autochtones est heureusement une idée qui perd

¹⁹ Gabrielle Del Grande, *Mamadou va a morire*, Roma, Infinito, 2007, p. 153.

du terrain. Les lieux ont des frontières qui ne sont rien de plus que des constructions sociales : elles servent à certaines fins administratives et sont imposées en vertu des relations de pouvoir qui existent entre les acteurs présents sur la scène politique.²⁰

Bien que toute l'histoire humaine soit née et ait grandi grâce aux migrations²¹, l'homme semble perdre la mémoire du voyage à chaque arrivée, avec pour résultat de ne plus être capable de se en la personne qui arrive. Il en est ainsi, puis nous voyons se répéter l'histoire. Le sort des migrants d'aujourd'hui est exactement le même que celui réservé aux italiens lors de leur émigration en Suisse ou en Allemagne : l'invité-travailleur de la politique *konjunkturpuffer*, n'avait aucun droit de demeurer dans le pays hôte à la fin de son contrat de travail. La cynique logique de base était en effet de ne pas alourdir le welfare de l'État: après ses années de travail, l'immigrant ne pouvait pas accéder au système sanitaire ou à l'AVS²² et était donc renvoyé en Italie²³.

De ce point de vue, il semble que la rencontre entre *nous* et *eux* soit donc statique : nous sommes restés à un instruits partage des espaces où entre moi et l'autre il l'y a le vide qui nous sépare comme une barrière. Peut-être qu'un jour nous arriverons à vivre ensemble sans peur d' envahir l'espace de l'autre, de le déranger, et en se sentant les deux à l'aise l'un à coté de l'autre.

Malgré les apparences, la volonté ici n'est pas de faire la morale, mais plutôt d'analyser la la façon actuelle de rencontrer l'Autre, qui se déroule au sein d'un site spécifique, culturellement et politiquement situé. Si la rencontre avec l'autre, comme Marco Aime²⁴ la pense, pour être vraiment fructueuse doit être un échange et non un simple partage des espaces, alors ce n'est pas possible de penser au futur de l'Italie avec de nombreux rituels, cultures et personnes qui vont chacune dans leur sens, séparé des l'autres sans aucune interaction.

Ce qu'il faudrait probablement serait une nouvelle culture, celle qui sera peut-être réalisé par les deuxièmes et futures générations. Avec ce terme, je fais référence tant pour les enfants de personnes étrangères ayant grandis en Italie, mais surtout aux secondes générations d'enfants italiens, c'est-à-dire ceux pour lesquels il sera normal d'avoir des amis qui parlent une autre langue avec leurs parents et qui font le Ramadan ou qui prient Rama. Pour ces enfants, la diversité ne sera même plus là. Cependant il n'est pas responsable de déléguer cette tâche de cohabitation-échange seulement à eux: il est nécessaire de mettre aujourd'hui les bases afin de s'assurer que les prochaines générations pourront grandir ensemble sans se sentir différentes, au moins en ce qui concerne comment les institutions se rapportent à eux. Il est donc nécessaire de

²⁰ Dorren Massey, *Luoghi culture e globalizzazione*, Oxford, The Open University, 1995, p. 52.

²¹ Giorgio Manzi, Alessandro Vienna, *Uomini e ambienti*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009, p. 29.

²² Assurance vieillesse et survivant.

²³ Gian Antonio Stella, *L'orda, quando gli albanesi eravamo noi*, Milano, Rizzoli, 2008.

²⁴ Aime, *L'incontro*.

commencer à faire face à la diversité, avec l'autre, mais surtout avec l'idée de soi-même que l'autre met en question. Construire une nouvelle culture signifie, pour certains aspects, régulariser : proposer des lois, identifier des comportements sociaux partagés ; en revanche, cela signifie aussi savoir comment se repenser d'une façon critique, comme la thanatologue Marina Sozzi nous le rappelle. C'est nécessaire donc d'avoir soit des changements législatifs, depuis l'extérieur et organiser d'en haut, mais aussi une réflexion sérieuse sur nous-mêmes et sur l'alimentation de nos habitudes, notamment avec l'idée que nous avons de nous même.

La direction qui semble aujourd'hui être prise par ceux qui sont déjà à cheval entre deux mondes, deux religions, deux langues et deux cultures, et qui ont plus des compétences et de capacité de vision parmi les sphères de la vie, est celle de la créativité : on expérimente de nouveaux moyens pour célébrer, par exemple la mort, fusionnant des traditions et inventant des compromis, peut-être pour exigences techniques (parce que la loi ne permet pas de faire autrement), ou parce qu'il y a un nouveau sentiment de nécessité (comme l'échange de son goût esthétique grâce au contact avec le pays où on habite). C'est le cas de pierres tombales musulmanes dans le cimetière de Turin qui commencent à s'enrichir d'éléments typiques de la tradition chrétienne comme marbres rares, photos, fleurs et objets commémoratifs.²⁵ Ces éléments, sans rapport avec le culte de la mort musulman, constituent un exemple de rencontre et d'enrichissement, une adoption de nouvelles coutumes qui ont été harmonisées avec la tradition.

Selon Annamaria Fantauzzi²⁶, ce processus de syncrétisme voit au moins trois éléments principaux : d'abord il y a les traditions de l'inculturation primaire apprises dans le pays d'origine, les quelles sont le résultat de sélections et négociations personnelles, familiales, régionales et historiques ainsi que des changements après les contacts avec d'autres cultures ; puis il y a les coutumes observées au moment de l'arrivée dans le pays hôte, qui sont une fois de plus le résultat de la sélection, de traitement et d'apprentissage qui interviennent déjà sur leur nature en la modifiant. Enfin, il y a les habitudes qui résultent du mariage entre ces deux macros-dimensions, filles d'un temps et un espace spécifique et qu'ils sont enrichis par des éléments nouveaux qui sont le produit de leurs capacités créatrices et des besoins ressentis en ce moment. Ce mode de développement de la culture, que Piero Grassi²⁷ définit comme *créant de*

²⁵ Laura Oliva, "Morte e ritualità funebri nella comunità marocchina di Torino", in Aleesandro Gusman (ed), *Morte e ritualità funebri nelle comunità immigrate del Piemonte*, Torino, Fondazione Fabretti, 2010.

²⁶ Annamaria Fantauzzi, "Sincretismi culturali e rituali. Vivere la morte nella comunità italiana del Canton Vaud", in *Oltremagazin* (2008), p. 43.

²⁷ P. Grassi, "Morte cultura e migrazione", in A. Bria, *Trattato italiano di psichiatria culturale delle migrazioni*, Roma, Sei, 2009, p. 274.

nouveaux espaces sacrés, était envisagé comme un idéal type d'intégration partagé aussi par le professeur Luigi Maria Solivetti. Selon le sociologue, en fait, vous pouvez trouver au moins cinq modèles théoriques qui décrivent le mode d'intégration des migrants dans la société d'accueil, où les dimensions de l'intégration et de l'assimilation culturelle sont plus ou moins contrastées. Dans la dernière variante, les deux domaines examinés sont plutôt en harmonie; les migrants n'ont pas renié leurs origines et parviennent à bien vivre avec les habitudes du nouveau pays. Mais l'harmonie n'est pas limitée à la coexistence de *vieux* et *nouveau* : il y a aussi la nouveauté, le syncrétisme résultant de la combinaison de ces deux macro-sphères prises en compte par Fantauzzi.

L'avenir de l'Italie est ainsi marqué par la créativité et l'innovation de ses habitudes et probablement aussi de ses pratiques rituelles. Les cas du projet Migrant Friendly adoptée par l'hôpital San Camillo de Rome ou Agence funéraire Luna à Turin en sont deux exemples. Cependant, selon les assistants sociaux, ces événements sont rares: la solitude et l'isolement accompagnent la vie des migrants bien avant leur mort. Alessandro Del Lago²⁸ parle de *non-personnes*, et des exclus de la société mondiale et du droit à la liberté de mouvement. La construction du migrant comme un ennemi, comme menace identitaire et démonstration d'une vague d'invasion des frontières italiennes, pousse le citoyen moyen à se méfier des étrangers, presque toujours représentés clandestinement par les médias.²⁹ Il n'y a aucune réflexion sur comment la catégorie de l'identité est en réalité une construction, une fiction, une tentative de stabilisation d'un *nous* qui a peur de voir trembler sa société telle qu'il a pris l'habitude de la penser. Si l'idée de soi est moulée sur l'autre, alors je me demande ce que devrait être la triste idée de soi que le migrant produit ici : lui aussi est forcé de se repenser en vertu de la rencontre avec l'autre, avec nous.

L'isolement politique et social dans le pays hôte n'est pas le seul qui caractérise l'expérience de la migration : aussi la distance de la maison et les difficultés (souvent laissées non-dites par crainte de nuire à ses proches) sont des éléments qui isolent le migrant. Les silences et l'atmosphère d'insécurité, souvent conduisent à une résistance passive contre les difficultés quotidiennes, comme Simona Talliani³⁰ observe. Sayad parle de *vivent déjà morts*, Papageorgiou de *corps-tombe*, personnes qui vivent avec une mort sociale omniprésente. Seulement la mort biologique est certaine : quand elle arrivera, il y aura enfin le retour chez soi. On ne revient que pour mourir.³¹ Il n'est donc

²⁸ Dal Lago, *Non Persone*.

²⁹ *Una gigantografia in nero. Recherche italienne sur l'image de l'immigration parmi les medias*, Rome, Université La Sapienza, 2010.

³⁰ S. Talliani, « Etnografie della provvisorietà », in *Studi tanatologici*, 2, Milano, Mondadori, 2006, p. 289.

³¹ Roberto Beneduce, « Poteri di morte », in *Studi tanatologici*, 2, Milano, Mondadori, 2006, p. 265.

pas surprenant que le pays hôte deviennent le lieu de décès par opposition à la patrie, le lieu de naissance et de vie, la vraie terre promise qui est idéalisée dès qu'on la quitte.

Les dispositions actuelles des immigrants à l'égard du traitement de leurs corps, nous en dit beaucoup sur la façon dont ces personnes ont vécu en Italie, comment a été leur vie en tant qu'étrangers ; cependant, cela nous en dit encore plus sur la façon dont l'Italie a été capable de répondre à leur projet de migration. Vouloir revenir dans le pays d'origine signifie, qu'ici, ils ne se sont pas senti chez eux, que quelque chose a manqué, qu'ils se sont senti de passage, pas arrivés. Cela ne peut pas nous empêcher de nous interroger sur la façon dont l'Italie, d'un point de vue politique et législatif, et les italiens, dans une perspective humaine et culturelle, se positionnent face à l'immigration. Le fait d'être habitué à parler du *problème* de l'immigration, ou pire encore de *l'urgence*, de *l'invasion*, est un indice important qui devrait nous pousser à réfléchir sur ce qu'est la direction actuelle dans laquelle les italiens vivent ce moment historique. Nous sommes hostiles, nous ne voulons pas que ces gens vivent, travaillent, prient et meurent à côté de nous. Mais pourquoi ? Sayad aurait dit que nous ne sommes pas prêts à nous voir dans ce miroir. Nous sommes ceux qui ne veulent pas voir ce reflet car nous craignons de nous voir faire des travaux peu rémunérés ou de voir que nous sommes entrain de perdre notre vie religieuse.

Peut-être sommes-nous trop habitués à la rhétorique de la *photographie en noir* des médias pour déplacer l'objet de l'étude depuis eux vers nous. Observer les autres pour se comprendre soi-même. En effet, comment peut-on chercher à comprendre les rites funéraires et les besoins des migrants sans les conceptualiser au sein de la culture thanatologique du pays où ils se trouvent ? De nombreux auteurs conviennent que la culture funéraire actuelle occidentale s'est appauvrie, au moins par rapport au passé.³² Les plus pessimistes disent que nous avons perdu nos rites funéraires, nos connaissances et notre tradition et que nous avons commencé à enlever la mort de la vie quotidienne. Certainement, à partir de deux guerres mondiales, l'Italie et le reste de l'Europe méditerranéenne ont subi l'appauvrissement de la culture des funérailles : aujourd'hui, on ne se sent pas à l'aise en présence de quelqu'un qui meure ou d'une personne en deuil. Les condoléances semblent fausses, superficielles et les gens ne savent pas comment se comporter ; à l'hôpital 80 % des patients meurent sans le moindre geste pour marquer cet événement.³³ L'arrêt du travail est souvent difficile et aussi de trouver le temps nécessaire à consacrer aux rites; aujourd'hui, c'est seulement dans les petits villages qu'on voit encore les

³² On se réfère ici à auteurs comme Gorer, Ariès, Thomas, Tenenti, Vovelle e Sozzi les quelles ont contribué à l'étude de ce domaine scientifique.

³³ La mort est un échec pour la médecine et en effet dans les hôpitaux on trouve souvent la morgue un peu caché, proche d'une sorti latérale et à coté des déchets.

vêtements liturgiques pour les funérailles et d'autres signes qui annoncent la mort à la communauté.

Tout ces cas sont justes des exemples de la réalité italienne contemporaine qui, comme est souligné par Marina Sozzi, conduisent à penser que la douleur est un affaire privée, à gérer et à surmonter en privé. Cette façon de voir le deuil est une conséquence de nouvelles habitudes culturelles thanatologiques, que nous avons adoptées avec les nouvelles caractéristiques de notre société, comme l'espérance de vie accrue et le degré élevé d'individualisation. Toutefois cela ne devrait pas nous conduire à la conclusion que, dans notre culture, il n'y a pas d'espace pour les rites funéraires et pour la mort. La société actuelle a développé ce domaine avec sa culture, elle l'a modifié, adapté et rénové au fil du temps, mais peut-être qu'aujourd'hui on ne lui consacre pas le même temps qu'avant. La société moderne, en utilisant un concept de Francesco Remotti, est aujourd'hui moins *épaisse*³⁴ en ce qui concerne la mort. Les cultures humaines ne sont pas homogènes, c'est-à-dire qu'elles ne sont pas riches de la même façon dans tous les domaines de la vie sociale. Cela signifie que dans toutes les cultures existent des zones grises, des sphères sociales qui sont plus pauvres en significations et en prescriptions que les autres. Si cela arrive, comme dans le cas de l'Italie contemporaine, d'une part ça laisse ses membres perdus et désorientés par l'absence d'instructions, mais d'autre part ça leur donne une occasion précieuse : la liberté d'agir. En fait, sans précepte qui règle la vie sociale strictement, l'individu peut ouvrir la porte de la créativité personnelle. D'une part, cette grande marge de manœuvre peut faire tomber dans l'aphasie et le désespoir en raison de l'absence de points de référence; en revanche, il peut être possible de créer quelque chose de nouveau, quelque chose qui est exactement ce dont on a besoin en ce moment. Peut-être, par conséquent, que le fait d'être culturellement pauvre dans ce domaine est en fait un excellent point de départ pour un dialogue avec la diversité.

Je crois que c'est dans ce sens qu'on peut réévaluer la précieuse contribution de nouvelles générations qui permettent continuellement l'expérience culturelle du bricolage. Leur créativité pourrait être ce dont la culture funéraire italienne a en ce moment besoin, la quelle est aujourd'hui peu dense comme jamais connu auparavant.

³⁴ Marina Sozzi, *Inventare la morte*, Roma, Laterza, 2009.

SYMBOLIC IMMORTALITY THROUGH CHILDREN. A THANATOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

ADRIANA TEODORESCU¹

Introduction

Death is the generating nucleus of culture and culture is always marked by death, so that, as Michel Picard writes, death is *always already cultural*. The interplay of death and culture engenders cultural products such as rites, customs, faiths, myths, or religions, mainly attitudinal, but also tangible products, key elements in a vast and varied funerary system. At the same time, culture tries to deny death, the results of which are constructs of immortality, as Momeyer² calls them.

However, despite their name, these constructs of immortality contain deeply ingrained within the awareness of death.³ In what concerns this relation death awareness – immortality, Jacques Derrida notices that it is never a symmetric one, although the concept of immortality is an outgrowth of mortality. Never, says Derrida, will immortality, even in its *lightest* form, of faith in a sort of survival or revival, manage to obliterate death and mortality, precisely because it derives from them and thus validates them, endorsing them while denying, opposing them.⁴ Structurally, immortality is part of culture and society, and we could even say of the spirit, sitting on the same level as its opposite. However, on a second thought, this position is purely theoretical, it only functions partially.

Immortality as an active cultural product of mortality

In a synthesis of the lessons learnt from the anthropological and archeological discoveries of burial places and funerary rites that run as a red thread through the history of humanity, Augustin Dercrois argues that man is the only animal that is aware of its mortal condition, being defined by an aspiration toward immortality, one of the main criteria in his delineation from his evolutionary neighbor, the ape.⁵ The author divides immortality into two big categories: absolute – circumscribing a being who was born, but does not die (anymore), and relative – which blends with the idea of perpetuation of one's

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² Richard W. Momeyer, "Fearing Death and Caring for the Dying", in George E. Dickinson, Michael R. Leming, Alan C. Mermann (eds.), *Dying, Death and Bereavement*, Connecticut, USA, The Dushkin Publishing Group, 1993.

³ Edgar Morin explains the difference amortality-immortality. Cf.: Edgar Morin, *L'homme et la mort*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1976.

⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Apories. Mourir – s'attendre aux «limites de la vérité»*, Paris, Galilée, 1996, p. 103.

⁵ Augustin Dercrois, "Immortalité", in Philippe di Folco (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la mort*, Paris, Larousse, 2010, pp. 556-558.

own identity and its survival in one form or another. For the absolute immortality, Dercrois deems the Morinian dual model of immortality as representative: through the existence of an immaterial double that outlives the body and the rebirth-death or resurrection which so many religions have brought forth. Both branches of the model of immortality described by Edgar Morin⁶ in his landmark work *L'homme et la mort* have been, Dercrois⁷ points out, cornerstones for religious systems, the subcategories of the model often coalescing, as in Catholicism.⁸ For the relative immortality, Dercrois outlines the Kantian postulate of human immortality as necessary to human reason, and, again, Kant's challenging of the categorical affirmation of the soul's immortality as historical moments marking, on the theoretical level, the transition from absolute to relative immortality⁹, transition determined by the 18th century's blooming European materialism. Immortality becomes relative and it is more and more often related to immanence, the distance to the enduring and already estranged transcendences growing longer. It is a short way from relative immortality to the *shred of temporary immortality* – the author's phrase. This temporary immortality is constantly gaining popularity over the other types of immortality, as research and scientific discoveries focused on the prolongation of life bring forth new resources and illusions. Dercrois insists on theories and genetic discoveries which still pay heed to the old reproductive instinct connecting the human species with the other species and with nature, but he twists it the direction of a technologically assisted perpetuation, and not necessarily through children, but through the duplication of the same biological identity, or, simpler, by extending youth as much as possible. The author sees the new techno-scientific tendencies in the configuration of immortality as a revolt against institutional humanism and its main, corroded however, object: the soul.¹⁰

In his 1973 book, Ruth Menahem advances the socio-political concept of *mythologies*¹¹. Mythologies are distinct from religion and more congenial to the concept of myth, being assigned the role of organizing, under various forms, the collective defense against death. Their function consists in mitigating the turmoil stirred inside the being by the death anxiety, in humanizing death – that is, shaping it after the patterns of life, imbuing it with life's *rhythms* – and also, ensuring the coherence and power of the group where they function. Among Western mythologies, the researcher lists the bio-social mythology of the

⁶ Morin, *L'homme et la mort*, pp. 123-172.

⁷ Dercrois, *Immortalité*, p. 556.

⁸ In Catholicism, as in Orthodoxy, the principle of the immortality of the soul meets the one of total resurrection, soul and body.

⁹ Dercrois, *Immortalité*, p. 557.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 558.

¹¹ Menahem, *La mort apprivoisée*, Paris, Editions Universitaires, 1973, p. 50.

continuity of the group, the mythology of nature and of artistic work. The author highlights their status of cultural constructs, showing, for instance, that, with the first type of Western mythology, what it tries to reclaim – the right, and more, and the obligation of ensuring descendants – clashes with an indisputable reality – overpopulation. In a similar fashion, the mythology of immortality conquered through art faces the menace of potential nuclear mass destruction, which would turn tabula rasa all the artistic culture developed over the centuries. What is really interesting is that Ruth Menahem deems the refusal of death, as a paradigm of the collective attitude in the face of death, one more mythology of immortality, indeed, a very popular one in the Western world. It is a mythology that springs out of religion's fading power of providing immortality substitutes, or, to put it otherwise, its fading power of denial. Thus, "the current mythology is based on a refusal of death: man is not ontologically mortal, death is an accident, because we have not discovered yet the way to cure all disease".¹² Robert Jay Lifton considers symbolic immortality a dominant of culture in general, as it emerges as an answer to the innate and ubiquitous fear of death.¹³ He identifies five big categories that go beyond Western culture. Biological immortality – continuity through children and descendants, through the "name", theological immortality – the variety of immortalities provided by the religious imaginary, natural immortality – the cycles in nature, nature's repetitiveness as man's transcendence, creative immortality – by creating original artistic or scientific works, and, finally, experiential immortality – evinced by altered states of consciousness, as well as by the surrogates of time escape: vacations, leaves, holidays, all endorsed by society so that the feeling of happiness within the group be achieved.

In his 1992 work, *Mortality, Immortality, and Other Life Strategies*¹⁴, Zygmunt Bauman shows that immortality is part of culture precisely because death, depleted of content – in the Morinian perspective that Bauman adopts – tends to be surmounted within human communities, in order to explore and to build the transcendence that expands its boundaries. Thus, immortality complements mortality, both being *life* strategies practiced at the same time, to different extents, or alternately.¹⁵ What is certain is that, for Zygmunt Bauman, both mortality and immortality are made by man and, even more important, are *managed* by man. With immortality however, the shield function is quite prominent. Theoretically, any element pertaining to human life in one way or another may attain immortality, contributing to the spreading of immortality

¹² Menahem, *La mort apprivoisée*, p. 59.

¹³ Robert Jay Lifton, *Living and Dying*, Greenwood Pub Group, 1974.

¹⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *Mortality, Immortality, and Other Life Strategies*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992.

¹⁵ Bauman, *Mortality, Immortality*, p. 9.

constructs, except, Bauman points out, basically nothing is truly immortal¹⁶. We come across a similar perspective, but with an emphasis on the relevance of immortality to philosophy and thinking in general, in the writings of Françoise Dastur. Immortality is an intrinsic scheme of thought, of thinking, which activates automatically, before being the manifestation of a proper socio-cultural action. Thus, Dastur rhetorically wonders whether “we could conceive of human finiteness without opposing it to some form of infinity”.¹⁷

That immortality has always been a great challenge to mankind is what informs Lucian Boia's work as well. He sees immortality as *an aggravated longevity*¹⁸, the concept of longevity not fully matching the one of deathlessness, but being encompassed by the latter. That is, longevity includes a strong pragmatic component, circumscribing the time for finding the key to everlasting life. That is why, in *Youth without Age* the author passes through all the various elements that mankind has used as *keys* to access immortality, not only elements of sheer imagination, which have indirectly molded the social approach to death and immortality – the fountain of youth, the golden age, etc. – but also elements of the imaginary directly eliciting actions: the case of the science-inspired postmodern imaginary bringing forth actual solutions for achieving immortality: cryogenics, cloning or bionic body parts, or, the case of the modern imaginary, where the cult of health has clearly stipulated norms that bring it closer to immortality. Boia notices that the collective imaginary has shaped the social and cultural construction of immortality models. With Lucian Boia, we feel it is our duty to open up social constructs to the realm of the imaginary. That is, to explicitly signal the dual nature of symbolic constructs of immortality – and, in a broader sense, of all other types of constructs: mortality, fear of death, etc. –, actually, of cultural constructs in general: their concurrently social and imaginary character: “man lives simultaneously on these two planes: reality and imagination, distinct realms, but connected through a permanent flow of transfers”.¹⁹ Lucian Boia identifies three main directions in the social and imaginary shaping of longevity: the first direction points to a type of transcendence utterly external to man, the message of traditional religion being its perfect illustration. The second direction is social and it belongs to the big social projects, whereas the third circumscribes the big completed projects.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 174.

¹⁷ Françoise Dastur, *La finitude impensable. Les philosophies devant la mort*, in Frédéric Lenoir, Jean-Philippe de Tonnac (eds.), *La mort et l'immortalité. Encyclopédie des savoirs et de croyances*. Bayard, 2004, p. 923.

¹⁸ Lucian Boia, *Tinerețe fără bătrânețe. Imaginarul longevității din Antichitate până astăzi*. (*Youth without Age. The Imaginary of Longevity from Ancient Times to the Present*), translated from French by Valentina Nicolae, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2006, p. 19.

¹⁹ Boia, *Tinerețe fără bătrânețe* (*Youth without Age*), p. 7.

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The majority of these constructs of immortality are liable to critique. However, critiques should not target their ontological motivation, mankind not being able to face death in their absence, nor their cultural legitimacy – since by them culture is enriched, but only their absolutization. As far as we are concerned, we do not aim at a critique, but at a de-construction, the highlighting of an obvious lack in their status. Consequently, we will try to demonstrate that death, even though disguised as its opposite, immortality, is always an act of culture evincing mankind's creativity, but also its rigor, by the enforcing of unwritten norms and constraints.

Symbolic continuity through children

Children in history. Some discontinuities

The social continuity of the individual is one of the most solid constructs of immortality. It is distinguishable both in the relationship with the past and with the forebears, specific to traditional societies, and with the descendants that *carry on the name*, being intimately connected to a major category of immortality, identified and described by Edgar Morin as being present in all human faiths and religions, the *existence of the double*.²⁰ There are, of course, other types of relations as well that engage the mythology of continuity, of immortality, such as the relation with a larger group, with the nation²¹ as a whole, for instance. However, the relation with the descendants, with children in particular, deserves special attention, as it combines nature with culture in a most extreme and paradoxical way, not in the least as soothing as the current social common sense would have it²². On the other hand, having children is a question of *bodily continuity*, as Zygmunt Bauman calls it, a continuity that has to do above all with the logic of the survival of the species²³, and that in itself is not enough to ensure the continuity of society, of culture and human civilization.²⁴ Nevertheless, it is obvious that, pertaining to a culturally organized world, the children will become, in their turn, representatives of human culture, they will be basically loosened from the

²⁰ Morin, *L'homme et la mort*, pp. 149-173.

²¹ On nationalism as a modern myth of immortality: Bauman, *Mortality, Immortality*.

²² A methodical analysis of this subject should also take into account the ways in which children, natality and motherhood have been reflected and shaped by the human imaginary over the centuries. Both mythological and historical sources should be investigated. The result would probably be a mosaic of lights and shadows, with stable meaning areas and with unstable ones, more opaque to rationalization. The section of the human imaginary in charge with these aspects is bipolar. The child has never been utterly good, necessary, and a symbol of continuity, as it has never been the opposite either. When society favors one of the poles of signification over the other, the imaginary tends to counterbalance it and work in favor of the neglected pole employing different means and strategies. Cf.: Baptiste Delhauateur, "Infanticide", in Di Folco (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la mort*, pp. 559-561.

²³ Bauman, *Mortality, Immortality*, p. 90.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

strict, dominant context of the species and become part of the vast mechanism of a continuity that involves more than the body. This is not the issue; the issue is how come, what is the other cultural mechanism, preceding the one putting those borne into culture, by which a fact so natural as the perpetuation of the species constantly and effortlessly manages to pass the test of time with flying colors, remaining something that, even in the context of late modernity²⁵ and the proliferation of contraceptives and birth control, man does not seem willing to give up to.

The attitude toward children has changed throughout history. Freud, for instance, stirred indignation by revealing that sexuality does not merely pop out of the blue in the grown-up child but it accompanies him or her from birth. Freud defiled a world which had not long before made the child into a symbol of purity and loveliness, imposing the need for an emotional investment in what regards them. Before those new criteria of appraisal, there had been a completely different order of the world, as Philippe Ariès shows in his book on children and family life.²⁶ There was no childhood in the Middle Ages, when children were dressed as miniature adults and involved in the same activities. They shared the same world of work, and did not own a world of play, so that frequently children as young as 7 or 8 years old would work together with their parents or would even leave home to work somewhere else. It is only starting with the 20th century that the idea of a significant difference between children and adults takes shape, and social programs especially designed for children and ideas about their right to a distinct age, without the constraints of work, start to see to its observance.²⁷ The love for children is itself a late addition, at least in its explicit and overt current form.

But, if the attitude towards children has not always been the same, similarly, the view on the significance of children, their relevance to the world in general, and to the individual and the family in particular, has also varied. As we have mentioned before, albeit in passing, in the distant past people did not

²⁵ Cf.: David le Breton, "Les prolongements de soi. Les aventures contemporaines du Double", in Lenoir, Tonnac: *La mort et l'immortalité*, pp. 1549-1571. David le Breton, *Antropologia corpului și modernitatea (The Anthropology of the Body and Modernity)*, translated by Doina Lică, Timișoara, Amarcord Publishing House, 2002, pp. 226-247 [*Anthropologie du corps et modernité*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1990]. Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine, Georges Vigarello (coord.): *Istoria corpului. Vol III: Mutațiile privirii. Secolul XX (The History of the Body. Vol III: Mutations of the Look. The 20th Century)*. Translated from French by Simona Manolache, Mihaela Arnat, Muguraș Constantinescu, Giuliano Sfichi, Bucharest, Art Publishing House, 2009 [Editions du Seuil, 2006], the chapter "Freeing the body and sexuality", pp. 119-139.

²⁶ Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1975.

²⁷ More on the relation child-family, child-society, on the major mutations characterizing the contemporary era, but also on the apparent contemporary extensions of the pre-modern attitude to children, see: Anthony Giddens, *Sociologie*, translated by Oana Gheorghiu, Bucharest, All Publishing House, 2010, pp. 172-173, pp. 203-243 [*Sociology*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006].

have a choice²⁸ between to have and not to have children, at best they would manage to control their number. It is very interesting this incompatibility between the possibility/impossibility of having children and the social attitude towards them. If children are neither wanted, nor catalysts of love or family fulfillment, it is strange that the moment giving them up becomes possible this does not happen except on a very small scale.²⁹ The majority of couples, and not only, still have children, and this is how, despite the blooming individualism and feminist campaigns – some proclaiming the woman's right to extricate herself, both in the social practice and imaginary, from the secondary and incidental role of the mother³⁰ –, mankind seems to still care very much about this perpetuation of the species. So, it looks like we have to go deeper in order to fully explore these realities.

Primary semantic structures of the desire for children

In the light of the aforementioned aspects, people's desire for having children, at least nowadays, appears paradoxical. The word *paradox* is featured in the title of Paul van Tongeren's article debating on the same issue: *The paradox of our desire for children*³¹. The author argues that, before having children, people should ask themselves the following questions: why they want this, what they hope to achieve by this, and what having children actually means – questions which rarely cross the mind of those who dream of living on through others. Moreover, the relationship parents-children is never bijective. Tongeren underlines that, although the Bible demands children to respect their parents, love nowadays is supposed to run only one way, from the parent to the child. It is a special type of relationship unlike any other – distinct from the contractual relationship between life companions, marked by a high degree of objectivity. There is no option in choosing the child – at least not on the whole, although nowadays this aspect is constantly developing³² – one does not choose a child over another, the love for the child is unconditioned and rules over all other types of love: love for the parents, love for the partner. The love one feels

²⁸ Giddens, *Sociologie (Sociology)*, pp. 423-424.

²⁹ However, movements contesting the social and *natural* duty of having children are more and more active: <http://www.thechildfreelife.com/>, <http://www.childfree.net/>.

³⁰ A condensed, yet accurate view on the mother's femininity and the woman's maternal instincts: Martine Delvaux, "Vers la féminitude", in Di Folco, *Dictionnaire de la mort*, pp. 674-675.

³¹ Paul van Tongeren, "The Paradox of Our Desire for Children", in *Ethical Perspectives* 2 (1995) 1, pp. 55-62.

³² However, we do agree with van Tongeren's assertion that the control is limited to the first stage, prior to the child's birth. In what concerns the rest, randomness, the gap between what the parent wants his child to be and what that child is, cannot be controlled, obliterated, it is, more or less, permanent. The beginnings of the child-parent relationship being marked by control nowadays enhances the desire for children, as we will see, it being nothing more than an illusion of perpetuation of a, perhaps latent, imaginary self in the life of the adult.

for one's child does not spring out of a love for all the children in general³³, and reciprocity does not define the parent-child relationship. However, it is precisely in this that the author sees the seed of the idea of *true* love, which, he says, is real as long as it does not expect any benefits, but is pure giving. As it becomes obvious by attaching a hybridized Romantic-Christian-ethical meaning to the nonreciprocal love for children, the author's assertion is a case of what we deemed, in the beginning of this part of the paper focused on immortality constructs, contributions to the parallel construction of other/the same immortality mythologies than/like those presented as such. In this case, a paradox of the second degree comes into play, different from the one the author talks about. But is far from us the thought of rebuking the author. He manages to bring into the spotlight some really interesting aspects as to why, what for and what it actually means to have children. Despite all this, the paradox holds strong. Even after the demolishing, following more ample research, of the very enduring myth – probably originating with Durkheim – of people with children living longer lives than people without children, the desire for children is still *fervent*.³⁴ This is due to the fact that what underlies, on a more subtle level, the paradox of having children is a symbolic structure of immortality. One might get the wrong impression that we have made this digression only to get to this dull and obvious platitude. Except, beyond this familiar tune, what interests us is to see what this structure of immortality is and how it is organized. Paul van Tongeren provides us with the following answer: “my child is immanent transcendence par excellence”.³⁵ So, having children ensures, despite all hardship and turmoil, or even shortened life span, the inner security of an area of the being which, although they cannot permanently inhabit – my child, although *mine* more than anything else in the world, in our author's view, is never identical, interchangeable with *me* – parents can cross, get to know and place in the immediate vicinity of their own reality.

Talking and talking about reality we get to another explanatory model of symbolic immortality. In their landmark work, not only for sociology, but for human sciences in general, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann explain how the sense of objective reality is more pronounced in childhood, when language is perceived as natural, and the social and cultural build of the world has not yet betrayed its conventional character.³⁶ Parents participate in this initial objective

³³ Despite all this, Western society nowadays displays a strong tendency of cherishing children and even childhood – one of its most conspicuous signs being the «ludicization» of all human activities. The infantilization of particular segments of the contemporary society has been tackled by: Giovanni Sartori, Gilles Lipovetsky, Régis Debray or Jean Baudrillard.

³⁴ Paul van Tongeren, *The paradox*, p. 59.

³⁵ Paul van Tongeren, *The paradox*, p. 60.

³⁶ Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckmann, *Construirea socială a realității. Tratat de sociologia cunoașterii*, traducere din limba engleză de Alex. Butucelea, București, Editura Art, 2008 [*The*

consolidation of reality, enforcing it through an education which leaves little room for choice, massively trimming the child's range of real and possible choices. Moreover, the way parents interact with children affects parents themselves: "The process of passing on information enforces the parents' sense of reality, even if only for the simple reason that, simplifying, if somebody says: «This is how you do things!», they often believe themselves in that affirmation".³⁷ This *thickened* reality, centered on the early stages of human life, also manages to divert the parents' attention from death and its kinfolk – anxieties, fear of getting old, etc. Consequently, it is not too much to say that this enforcement of reality can also be perceived as a vitamin prescription against ghostly objects and bits of reality, the most vaporous of all being death. To this we must add that, if within the daily human imaginary having children is somehow opposing death, then we can also accept together with Sylvie Jaudeau that: "The more heed we pay to our first birth into the world, the more we neglect our complementary birth into the other world".³⁸ Taking this – maybe too far – farther, we could say that when the desire for children reaches the status of a paradoxical contemporary obsession we are dealing with a symptom of the refusal of death, of an attempt to evade the cultural assimilation of death³⁹.

The precariousness of the mythical structure of continued posterity through children

Theoretical views such as those held by Berger and Luckmann or Paul Van Tongeren are highly explanatory for this construct of immortality. Conversely, Ronald de Souza⁴⁰ is less preoccupied with sympathetic comprehension, and performs a rather rough critique of the symbolic immortality through children, the grounds of his views placing him in the descending of Freud and his theories linking sexuality to death.⁴¹ Also, in a more obvious way, he draws on genetic discoveries and biological theories. To give birth means to die, on all possible levels. The microscopic reality of cells that divide themselves and die holds true for the macroscopic level as well. However, since in the case of the latter reactions of rejection of the law of the

Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1966], p. 87.

³⁷ Berger, Luckmann, *Construirea socială a realității* (*The Social Construction of Reality*), p. 88.

³⁸ Sylvie Jaudeau, "Opinii despre științele morții" ("Opinions on the Sciences of Death"), in Basarab Nicolescu (ed.), *Moartea astăzi* (*Death Today*), translated from French by Mirabela Fătu, București, Curtea Veche, 2008, p. 131.

³⁹ We do not have to take Sylvie Jaudeau's word for it. This contemporary obsession with children can be demonstrated. However, this would involve too big a digression from our subject.

⁴⁰ Ronald de Souza, "Enfanter et mourir. Réflexions sur une approche biologique du rapport entre la sexualité et la mort", in Lenoir, Tonnac, *La mort et l'immortalité*, pp. 1451-1467.

⁴¹ In this sense, the Oedipus complex is the point of convergence of both Eros: the attraction for the parent of opposite sex, and Thanatos: the desire for the parents' death.

perpetuation of the species could appear, a series of mythologizing illusions come into play, that is illusions which create the opposite idea of an immortality that can be achieved by simply going along with this process. Besides death, there is no other so-called *natural* aspect that man has tried to oppose – as with death – in various ways without a fair amount of success. We have already seen, and we will see again, that one of the most prominent features of culture is its active opposition to nature. In conclusion, the simple or simplified idea that it is natural to have children is not an invincible argument for its persistence. Ronald de Souza discredits the popular common view of children as perpetuation of the self⁴², providing the human support for a symbolic immortality. He does this in two ways; first, by showing that what lies beneath this perpetuation is nothing else but death and second, by explaining the mechanisms by which man ends up accepting, along with perpetuation, his own death.

Thus, first of all, the author lays bare the selfishness that underlies the desire for children, as he wonders why, if children are valuable elements ensuring social and cultural continuity, we always care more about our offspring than we care about other children. On the other hand, this selfishness, along with its cultural masks – multiplication for the sake of the community, society, and nation – is seen as natural: “One frequently brings into discussion the species, in this context. But why identify my interests, as an individual endowed with an individual conscience, with the interests of the species. Indeed, I might vibrate in consonance with other consciences, but not dissolve into them”.⁴³ The author argues that what is gained through children is not a sort of spiritual cloning of the parent but, taking into account the smaller, less obvious levels of human realities, death: “Sexuality condemns us not only to death, but also to never finding our true copy”.⁴⁴

⁴² In literature, where the imaginaries of the structures of depth counteract the dominant effect of blatant social certainties such as this one, we find other interpretations of the meaning of having children, and other symbols of the child, less positive and, we are going to use a strange word, albeit one that matches the context, *domestic*. An example is Thomas Mann, for whom children are vehicles through which the pre-formed ancestral foundation, that is, basically, nature and death itself, enters the world and puts it out of kilter. But these issues are more extensively dealt with in Ștefan Borbély's work. He defines the status of Thomas Mann's children as being the ones who: *kill, are killed or die a premature death*. See: Ștefan Borbély: *Pornind de la Nietzsche...* (*Starting from Nietzsche...*), Cluj-Napoca, Limes Publishing House, 2010.

⁴³ (our translation) de Souza, *Enfanter et mourir*, p. 1463.

⁴⁴ (our translation) de Souza, *Enfanter et mourir*, p. 1462. On the other hand, it would be interesting to study this controversial issue of the reproductive instinct and the eternal *hoax* of the gene in the context of the contemporary techno-scientific imaginary and the shift of the existential focus that so many researchers talk about, from the soul to the body. In this context, having children might represent, for now or for the future, the imperative – more natural, since appropriate – of taking care of and shaping up one's body, be it an external body. Then, the distancing from the actual child, had, and not *to be had* – repeatedly condemned within the

SYMBOLIC IMMORTALITY THROUGH CHILDREN.
A THANATOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

In order to emphasize de Souza's observations, we call upon Umberto Eco, who asserts that the biggest disadvantage of death is that it does not allow its subject the sharing of this experience. Neither children, nor works of art⁴⁵ are capable of functioning as all-encompassing and authentic containers for the dead. Thus, and Eco has found some really compelling images, every time someone dies it is like the library in Alexandria catching fire and the Louvre being destroyed.⁴⁶ In the end, Ronald de Souza draws the conclusion that should crumble the myth of continued posterity through descendants and the myth of the personal, if not social, value of having children: "The purely psychological fact that most of us feel more affected by the fate of our descendants⁴⁷, than by that of the scarabeus in Brazil, is nothing more than an effect of our genes' subtle cunning. In order to maximize their chances of perpetuation, our genes have programmed us to forget that our offspring will not be identical with our-selves. From this point of view, our feeling of being directly affected by their fate is an illusion; my genes are not me, and their «goals» are not mine; I can either comply with them or act against them".⁴⁸ Nobody has children thinking that they might die, be ugly, mean, stupid, ungrateful or ill. An illusion of perfection – the perfect child – discreetly, but firmly, regulates the mechanism of the perpetuation of mankind. Of course, in the end, this demolishing of the myth of continuity through descendants is in its turn liable to critique for fetishizing DNA, the gene – as the fierce Darwinist Richard Dawkins imputes⁴⁹ or the one that minimizes contribution – as David le Breton puts it in his aforementioned monumental work on the subject of death.⁵⁰ Indeed, *my genes are not me*, but the reverse is true as well, and this platform of arbitrariness between me and my genes shifts the whole perspective: *I am not even my genes*, so that this whole critique of the meaning of the common human approach to having children might be just as well put in the wrong perspective.

current discourse, but along with the dissolving of the traditional family through the estrangement of the child having reached adulthood – could be read as the unconscious disappointment of a body having gained autonomy.

⁴⁵ We shall examine the deconstruction of symbolic immortality through art drawing on Sartre's views and theories on the subject in the fifth part of the paper.

⁴⁶ Umberto Eco, "Sur les inconvénients et les avantages de la mort", in Lenoir, Tonnac, *La mort et l'immortalité*, p. 1666.

⁴⁷ Cf.: Erich Fromm, *Le coeur de l'homme. Sa propension au bien et au mal*, traduit de l'anglais par Sylvie Laroche, Paris, Petite Bibliothèque Payot, 2002 [*The Heart of Man: Its Genius For Good and Evil*, 1968], p. 100. Fromm place parental love, and especially motherly love, under the sign of narcissism. The mother loves the child because she sees him as an extension of her-self, a being belonging to *her-self*.

⁴⁸ (our translation) de Souza, *Enfanter et mourir*, p. 1463.

⁴⁹ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford University Press, 1976. Cf.: E.O. Wilson, *Sociobiology. The New Synthesis*, Harvard University Press, 1975.

⁵⁰ Le Breton, *Les prolongements de soi*, p. 1557.

However, there are plenty arguments left to seriously shake, if not crumble, the often cliché idea of immortality through descendants. Since we have mentioned le Breton, we should add that he implicitly shows how the myth of immortality through children shrinks to make room for the immortality achieved through replication: cloning, or its soft form: the control of and intervention on the human embryo. Breton warns about narcissism and “the dissolving of the ontological status”.⁵¹

The fragile frame of the myth of continued posterity through children is subtly highlighted by Fernando Savater as well, who, in his book *The Eternal Life*, analyses the displacement of reproduction: “our prolongation beyond death”⁵² which “at the same time demands and requires the individual’s obliteration”⁵³ and annulations of authentic sexuality. Thus, the different manifestations of eroticism are seen as distortions of the primary function of reproduction and become: “individual efforts aimed at evading the reproductive duty of sexuality – destructive for the ones involved, although leading to the perpetuation of their genes – and opposing the biological function, turning it into a ludic strategy, apt to replenish the enthusiasm of living through personalized pleasure. It is a context fully matching Georges Bataille’s definition of eroticism as « the assenting to life up to the point of death » – in other words, the hedonistic and corporal acceptance of the individual desire to live by the very act that decidedly sanctions our ineludible condition of *not being indispensable* according to the law of the species.”⁵⁴

Martine Delvaux⁵⁵ deconstructs symbolic immortality through bearing children focusing on the agent that brings it into the world, a magnet for stereotypes, especially in modern times: the mother. The mother is more than a life giver⁵⁶, she is also a source of death, which brings her as a person closer to her own death, from a double perspective: her putting herself at risk – labor is always a potential path to death – and the anxiety caused by it, as well as by the death of an extremely significant other. On other levels, motherhood, as we notice reading Delvaux, brings forth classic patterns of death or symbolically death-tinged states: the social death of the woman – the body becomes ugly, deformed, abject⁵⁷, and the imaginary of life loses its spiritual-diaphanous

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Fernando Savater, *Viața eternă (The Eternal Life)*, translated by Cristina Sava and Rafael Pisot, Iași, Polirom, 2008 [*La vida eterna*, 2008], p. 62.

⁵³ Savater, *Viața eternă (The Eternal Life)*, p. 62.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

⁵⁵ Martine Delvaux, “Mère”, in Di Folco, *Dictionnaire de la mort*, pp. 673-675.

⁵⁶ Cf.: Paul Landsberg, *Eseu despre experiența morții, Problema morală a sinuciderii*, traducere de Marina Vazaca, București, Humanitas, 2006 [*Essai sur l'expérience de la mort*, 1951].

⁵⁷ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1982.

connotations, bending towards the animalistic, and the dynamics of matter.⁵⁸ It is the death of her individuality – the woman becomes a mother, and from that moment on she starts to define herself relationally: she is dual, plural, even when alone, and this loss of the self echoes a pathological condition, that is, the child, even from the womb stage, induces – again, symbolically – disease, cancer.⁵⁹

Instead of conclusion: Immortality myths and the cold eye of death

We have tried to identify the inner workings of an important type of symbolic immortality, as a strategy-product entailed by man's relationship to death, touching upon the personal level and especially the collective one, taking into account their diversity, the temporal and spatial variations in their function and configuration.

Death is a complicated issue, torn between the apparent universality of its forms and the incommunicable distinctiveness of its content. Subsequently, its meaning emerges out of the interplay of these two poles of significance, and, implicitly, immortality, as a product of the cultural denial of death and a symbolic line of defense, is afflicted with this same inability to reconcile the general to the particular. Thus, it is important to be aware of the conventionality gap – submerged, oblivious, separating, yet blurring the distinctions between death and images and imaginaries of death, without perfectly overlapping them. We should not neglect either the liability of the various immortality constructs to take on oppressive connotations – although, mainly within the social and cultural imaginary, and not in an actual, real sense. To summarize, it was not our intention to deny the necessity to infuse death with meaning through the idea of immortality through children, but to signal that this meaning is a partially obscured one, and maybe even distorted by social stereotypes. We do not want to deny the benefits brought by symbolic immortality constructs in general, but highlight their vulnerability. Death's propensity for mythologization confirms Louis-Vincent Thomas's assertion: "the power of death is first and foremost located on the imaginary level"⁶⁰, the locus where the discourses of the artistic and the various fields of research merge, changing the dynamics and re-configuring the imaginary of death.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Martine Delvaux, "Naissance", in Di Folco, *Dictionnaire de la mort*, pp. 726-728.

⁵⁹ Cf.: Susan Sontag, *Boala ca metaforă. SIDA și metaforele ei*. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1995 [1978, 1988] (*Illness as Metaphor. AIDS and Its Metaphors*).

⁶⁰ Louis-Vincent Thomas, *Mort et pouvoir*, Paris, Éditions Payot & Rivages, 1999, p. 47.

⁶¹ Cf.: Jacques Pierre, 'Le statut de l'imaginaire: Approche sémiotique', in *Religiologiques: Le statut de l'imaginaire dans l'oeuvre de Gilbert Durand* (sous la direction de Jacques Pierre), 1, printemps, (1990), www.religiologiques.uqam.ca, last visit on 2 February 2010. Jacques Pierre explains Gilbert Durand in semiotics' terms of form (the stable part of the structure) and substance (a formless continuum of the form). These are the two poles of Durand's dynamic structure of the imaginary. A structure's form becomes another form's substance and so on ad infinitum. Regarding the imaginary's dynamics, Gilbert Durand himself, in the issue of the

Basically, the imaginary – and this does not apply only to the imaginary of death – accompanies, that is, pre-forms, pre-conditions every research, to end up being the one shaped by the results of this research⁶², since the imaginary, as Gilbert Durand points out in his famous book, is itself a permanent attempt of avoiding the confrontation with the, actually inevitable, reality of death, a defensive reaction, an active counter-representation of death.

Canadian magazine *Religiologiques* dedicated to him, *points out to the fact that critics and scholars have favored the fixed part of his anthropological theory of the imaginary*, to the detriment of that which varies. (Gilbert Durand, 'Fondaments et perspectives d'une philosophie de l'imaginaire', in *Religiologiques: Le statut de l'imaginaire dans l'oeuvre de Gilbert Durand*).

⁶²Gilbert Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, Dunod, 2006 [1960].

DIGITAL RE-CONSTRUCTION AND DURABLE BIOGRAPHY

MAGGIE JACKSON¹

This paper is an exploration of an activity I undertook with my brother in the summer of 2009. If it is necessary to give this exploration a more academic name I suppose it might be relevant to call it a narrative exploration or an autobiographical investigation. It is a personal account, but one I explore to consider what it may tell us about the experience of loss.

One of the subjects I teach is about loss and death – I do this with graduates and undergraduates and wanted to think about ways of using digital stories as a way of thinking about loss and as a way of finding a less verbal medium of communication. So I asked my brother if he would help me develop such a digital story using him and my father as the focus of the story.

The story is partly mine in that I am going to use the story of my brother. I want to consider how by using photographs and his developing interest in the use and collection of them he has perhaps made sense of the death of our father.

What I present here cannot be considered to be “true” but is an attempt to bring order and organise experience.² My own way of making sense of the loss of my dad when I was 14 is not the same as that of my brother. Knowingly or not, I have used words to make sense of it and engaged directly with work on loss and bereavement for the last 25 years or more—Andrew hasn’t. People would suggest to me that he was obviously “in denial” but he wasn’t. I had never found Kubler-Ross’s³ theory of grief (which I assumed they were alluding to) helpful to me and could not see how it applied to my brother in any useful way either. But Walter suggests that “the norm is not just that you grieve in private, but that others should *know* you are privately grieving”.⁴

Andrew was 16 when dad died. It wasn’t expected. Dad was there one minute and dead the next. He had a massive stroke. That was it –he just died. One minute we had a dad –then we didn’t. How do you make sense of that? Not, how can you explain why someone might have a stroke? – that bit is easy – but, how the ordinary turns into never ordinary again – in a second.

Mostly, for many years, the way, I think, that Andrew did this was to do what we all did – which was to go on. To continue with our lives talking about dad with each other, doing what we hoped was the right sort of thing, but

¹ PhD., Associate Professor, University of Teeside, UK.

² J.S. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1990.

³ E. Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, London, Tavistock/Routledge, 2001.

⁴ Tony Walter, *On Bereavement: The Culture of Grief (Facing Death)*, London, Taylor & Francis Group, 1999, p. 144.

always with some part of our lives missing. For Andrew it also meant being responsible for mum –making sure she was alright – whatever that might mean. People might say – and correctly I think – that he grew up over night. Suddenly he wasn't a boy –he was a man, head of the household in effect – but still a little, now fatherless, boy.

Worden⁵ (amongst others) has commented on how men do not display grief in the same way as women. They tend to want to be more solitary, they tend not to cry openly and often they prefer to do something – practical tasks, legal pursuits, whatever it is. So putting a way the thoughts and feelings that are too painful to manage is not an unusual reaction to loss –particularly in men. This seems to me what Andrew did. He did cry with us, and he did talk about dad with us but I think he tried not to think too much about the hole that was there. So he lived happily and well as far as the world could see. Knowing that, sometimes, people just die.

I had been trying to make sense of the notion of embodiment and the deceased and had begun to think about my father's hand – which had been damaged in the Second World War – he lost two fingers from his left hand when he was a motor cycle rider in the reconnaissance corps fighting in Holland. The hand was not unusual to us but somehow was a “special thing” that somehow, for me, embodied my dad. So I began to talk to Andrew about wanting to use a photo of dad's hand in a paper I was trying to write.

I don't know exactly when Andrew began to be interested in recovering family photographs –but sometime in his 40s I became aware of him collecting and restoring many of them. We did not have family albums –but bags of photos unsorted and getting a bit scruffy and so he began to sort through them and repair them. This was done by scanning and using Photoshop (and whatever other technical things you need) to remove scratches where the photos had been bent and creased and so on. He began to pass these on to other family members – to mum – he put them in photo frames and gave them as presents. And although he had given our mother framed photos of her two grandsons as a gift in the past this giving and displaying of photos from the past –his past- was new. It may be that mid-life and new technology coincided well –otherwise maybe he'd have bought a motorbike! Also, and perhaps most significantly, dad was 49 when he died.

But this technology allowed him to explore questions of identity – without seeming to ask the questions – looking at photographs and repairing them doesn't require explanation –it is repairing – sorting stuff out – getting round to clearing out a cupboard. And – yes – all of these things seem to be

⁵ J. W. Worden, *Grief counselling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for Mental Health Practitioners*, New York, Springer Publishing, 2002.

metaphors. Riches and Dawson⁶ comment on the phenomenon of the use of photographs by parents of deceased children and that they help create “a meaning through life”.⁷ They further suggest that “photographs can provide continuing support for both public and private dialogues with the character of the deceased”.⁸ They are talking about photos being looked at not long after death – a therapeutic use of remembering how the child was and perhaps also to maintain a private memory. Going back to photographs from your childhood and before 30 years after the death can’t be, I think, about maintaining a memory – it might be about trying to find the memories again – or looking for the story that makes sense. Perhaps this is allowing “the last chapter” to be written and can only be done when both the pain and pleasure can be tolerated.

What must be considered here too is that the photograph can capture a moment – it is fixed but if the image we see is the right one then it tells us a whole story without words.

Barthes⁹ talks about sorting through photographs from his mother’s past but doubting that to others the photographs “would speak”. For him the photograph needed to speak to him directly – the composition was not one that needed to have been constructed to tell us the story but that somehow captured the essence of the scene, of the person. What he calls a “just image”. What he finds he is looking for is not a representation but something that transcends the image – something that perhaps only he will see. What Barthes finds he has lost by the death of his mother is “not the indispensable, but the irreplaceable”.¹⁰ So looking through the untidy mess of photographs in the bags Andrew was probably not looking for a father but for his father. Not for a static image of the man who had been his father but somehow something that said “I am your dad”. Mason and Davies¹¹ suggest that photographs can sometimes capture a resemblance we are searching for. “Occasionally, a photograph can capture something of a gesture or a look – whether in ourselves or others – because it freezes a frame that would be moving too fast for a person to perceive....”¹²

Perhaps then when I wanted to look at dad’s hand this allowed us both to see a “just image”. Others will see a young man on a bench – actually as with Barthes, a photo chosen of the person before they became a parent. The choosing of the image is important. But the choice of a single image can also be disappointing as the image can fail to provide the essence we are looking for. At

⁶ G. Riches, P. Dawson, “Lost Children, Living Memories: The Role of Photographs in Processes of Grief and Adjustment among Bereaved Parents”, in *Death Studies*, 22, pp. 121–140, 1998.

⁷ Riches, Dawson, *Lost Children*, p. 123.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁹ R. Barthes, *Camera lucida*, London, Vintage, 2000.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, *Camera Lucida*, p. 75.

¹¹ J. Mason and K. Davies, Mason, “Coming to our Senses? A Critical Approach to Sensory Methodology”, in *Qualitative Research*, 9, (2009), pp. 587–603.

¹² Mason and Davies, *Coming to our Senses?*, p. 594.

other times we can see beyond the flat image of the photograph and “evoke a person or a resemblance that is not actually there”.¹³ What Barthes refers to as the photograph’s “*punctum*”.¹⁴

However this lack of essence in the single photograph lead me to consider that perhaps by creating a photo story we might be able to say something better and clearer. The hand was important but also in terms of making sense of a continuing bond¹⁵ it seemed that we need to construct a story that spoke more loudly to my brother and I.

When we tell a story we are constructing an account, we choose where we start from and what will be included. “Narrative imposes structure; it connects as well as records”.¹⁶ It is not necessary that the story is “true” to everyone but that it contains the essence of what helps us makes sense of the world. Walter¹⁷ suggests that the dead can play an important part in the survivor’s biography – by making sense of which the dead person was I can make sense of who I am. It is ‘the construction of a durable biography that enables the living to integrate the memory of the dead into their ongoing lives’.¹⁸ A story that will speak to both the teller and the audience will show a “logical and meaningful connection between described objects as opposed to (being) a completely detailed analogue of them”.¹⁹

Typically, (perhaps) in the West the way in which “telling the story” is expected to happen is by offering the bereaved counselling. Parkes²⁰ offers us his vision that in the future there is *proper and effective help* for all who need it. And though I would not want to suggest that such help should not be available I wonder if it is really what is needed. Miller and Golden²¹ comment that “verbal expression of emotions is often simply not a man’s forte...”²² So that any notion of effective help would need to consider that making sense of loss needs to include ways that do not necessarily involve talking, and more particularly , not talking about feelings. Paradoxically in order to help me make

¹³ Ibid., p. 593.

¹⁴ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, p. 27.

¹⁵ D. Klass, P. Silverman, P. and S.L. Nickman, *Continuing Bonds: New Understandings in Grief*, London, Taylor and Francis, 1996.

¹⁶ P. Lamarque, “Narrative and Invention: The Limits of Fictionality”, in Nash. (Ed.) *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy and Literature*, University of Warwick Centre for Research in Philosophy and Literature, (1990), p. 131.

¹⁷ T. Walter, “A New Model of Grief: Bereavement and Biography”, in *Mortality*, Vol. 1, No.1, (1996), pp. 7-25.

¹⁸ Walter, *A new Model*, p. 7.

¹⁹ P. Copley, *Narrative*, London, Routledge, 2001 p. 84.

²⁰ C.M. Parkes, “Grief: Lessons from the Past, Visions for the Future”, in *Death Studies*, 26, (2002), pp. 367-385.

²¹ J. E. Miller and T.R. Golden, *When a Man Faces Grief*, Indiana, Willowgreen Publishing. Fort Wayne, 1998.

²² Miller and Golden, *When a Man*, p. 14.

sense of a “male” style of grieving I am forced to read about it –although the men who are able to write about their experiences perhaps have been able to do so by transforming the words not into an expression of personal emotion but somehow have used the words as an exercise in control. Safraz Mansoor writing in the *Guardian* is able to write about the profound loss he still feels when his father died when he was 24, but does so by also interviewing other men who lost their father when they were young –and so transforms the writing into research.²³ One of the experiences he recounts, also felt by the others he spoke to, was that no matter how long it was since the father had died, losing your father as a boy or young man left them all with a sense of hollowness – “the person whose approval I most wanted was unable to give it”. Although Mansoor crafts a piece of writing to talk about his experience what he describes within the piece is how he, and other men, searched for a connection to their fathers. He describes how dealing with the loss by finding some connection with their father seems to be a common experience for men – they do not seem to want to talk about how they feel but to try to find the link by watching the same films their fathers had enjoyed or listening to the same type of music. This is essentially a search without words – beyond words perhaps. Here the photograph can perhaps be understood then as Barthes suggests “the photographic image is full, crammed, no room, nothing can be added to it”.²⁴ It does not require us to explain it, it does not need words.

I found another photograph that I felt in someway might help my brother and I to find a way into the story we were trying to construct. Both my brother and my father play the trumpet. One of the photos Andrew had rescued from the bag was of my dad playing with a dance band when he was about 25. We had all been given the new tidied up versions of this photo and I had it displayed in my hallway amongst other photographs. As I walked passed it on a daily basis one of the things that struck me about it was my dad held his head in exactly the same way as Andrew does when he plays the trumpet. This may not be true, but this is what I saw. Mason and Davies suggest that photographs can “yield a resemblance that had not previously been consciously perceived”.²⁵ And it was this hitherto unperceived resemblance that offered a stepping off point for the development of our photo story.

Andrew has been told that he looks like dad – so I am sure this was not new to him – but by suggesting we try to make the link between them both playing the trumpet this allowed us to consider perhaps a different way of telling the story.

Here we must go back a little to understand why my father played the trumpet. This may seem an odd thing to say, but needs explanation. I have

²³ S. Mansoor, “I Need him Less but I want him more”, in *The Guardian*, 26 of July, (2008).

²⁴ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, p. 89.

²⁵ Mason and Davies, *Coming to our Senses*, p. 594.

already spoken about his hand with the missing fingers –this was his left hand. You only need fingers on your right hand to play a trumpet. Before losing the fingers he had played the guitar and the clarinet and also the piano –usually these require both hands (although I am aware of famous one handed guitarists and pianists). So the loss of the fingers was also somehow part of who my dad was – it must have been a terrible thing to happen when you are 19 –but he could still be a musician – just not in the same way. I have no intention of interpreting the meaning of this too far –perhaps you can make inferences for yourself as to why this might matter for the story.

Andrew looked for images of himself playing the trumpet and then we put together a short digital photo story –that allowed Andrew to play the trumpet with my dad –possible with photo shop, even if not in real life. This reconstruction allows us to “create a story of (ourselves) and (our) relationship with the deceased”.²⁶ It is not the same as describing a history but allows us to put ourselves firmly in the picture – here, literally. We should consider that “narratives are a possible answer to a particular question”.²⁷ And so perhaps by constructing this photo story Andrew, and me to some extent, could say something about whom our father was and is.

The discussions Andrew and I had whilst making this work were mostly about the construction of the story. Not so much about dad. Although of course they were. The choosing of the photos, the restyling of photos to put them both in the picture, later Andrew going to the cemetery to take an additional picture for the ending of the little film – the bench. Putting the photos into sequence – deciding what transitions we would use and what effects allowed us to communicate about the film in a practical way but somehow we were also expressing emotional reactions about dad. One particular example was when we looked at the final slides. We had chosen to use the image of my dad sitting on the bench and then to fade from him to the empty bench. We tried various transitions on this to make it look the way we wanted. One of the transitions was a scattering effect – it looked quite nice – we tried this. We both looked at each other in horror. What we saw was a man disintegrating and disappearing – too real for us –and bizarrely painful to watch. We tried another effect. The one we found was a slow fade – Andrew commented that he liked that one – “it looks like you can still see him on the bench”. I think we can.

The fact that I am personally involved in this story is important here. But narrative research insists that the researcher is part of the story. “In the narrative approach, we look for a deeper meaning; it is not about what is said

²⁶ A. Arnason, “Biography, Bereavement and Story”, in *Mortality*, Vol.5, No.2, (2000), p. 194.

²⁷ A. Carson, “The Narrative Practitioner: Keynote Speech”, in *The Narrative Practitioner Conference Proceedings* 11-13, June (2007), p. 11.

but how and why it is said”.²⁸ Here I am part of the story through my life and also by causing the digital story to be made –and again by writing up this account – my role involves interpreting as well as describing, I become “a collaborator in the new and evolving story”.²⁹

The words at the beginning of the soundtrack are mine. They reflect my intention of making sense of the story in terms of theories of grief and grieving – but then the sound track continues with Andrew playing the trumpet –it reconnects to the people in the story again. Choosing the music to play was also part of the story – it needed to say something about dad. At first Andrew had found a tune called “Trumpeter’s Lullaby” by Leroy Anderson, which sounds from its title as if it is exactly the right sort of music to use –however it doesn’t sound like a lullaby when you play it! So we thought about the type of music my dad liked and settled on “Stardust” by Hoagy Carmichael. Although there are no words heard here the words of the song express the sentiment of the film well.

Constructing this story seemed to be an important thing to do. It seemed to be a way of making sense of loss. Andrew and I have not analysed this, but he enjoyed doing it. I think in a small way it allowed him to think about the loss and to reconstruct the meaning in some small way. Neimeyer suggests that “seeking meaning through shared memories of the deceased, can have different consequences for different grieverers at different times”. Not speaking of his emotions may not be important in terms of Andrew’s story, something Neimeyer recognises as relevant to his own work in clinical practice.

There is increasing evidence that finding meaning in loss is the best predictor of a positive outcome. Not talking is not necessarily an indicator of denial. Thinking about the deceased many years after their death is not evidence of lack of acceptance. Neimeyer tells us that meaning reconstruction is “the principal task of coping with a loss”.³⁰ This is a task that will continue throughout our lives as they evolve and change.

How do we make sense of life when someone we love dies? This is probably all that grief is about. Nothing more really. This doesn’t make it easy or any less painful –it doesn’t take away the practical difficulties but it is to state simply what seems to be to me – and others³¹ a very real problem that we have to deal in some way or other –whether we like it or not. The death of someone we love forces us to ask the question. Nothing makes sense but it seems we are expected to find a way to make it make sense again.

²⁸ K. Gilbert, “Taking a Narrative Approach to Grief Research: Finding Meaning in Stories”, in *Death Studies*, 26, (2002), pp. 223-239.

²⁹ Gilbert, *Taking a Narrative Approach*, p. 225.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³¹ R.A. Neimeyer, “Grief, Loss and the Quest for Meaning: Narrative Contributions to Bereavement Care”, in *Bereavement Care*, 24 (2), (2005), pp. 27-30.

What I have tried to explore here is how I have made sense of someone else making sense of this puzzle. I have particularly considered how this might be done in the absence of words and where we cannot see or hear what might be happening. I have made an attempt to consider the role of photographs and how advances in digital photography, the availability of Photoshop and other technical wizardry might have been useful in playing a role in reconstructing a broken life.

This paper, although a personal account, tries to offer some thoughts on how we might consider the ways in which men may be demonstrating their grief in ways we do not see, because we look for words and for obvious displays of emotion. We have now come to accept that there are many ways of grieving and that these may last over time –perhaps we need to look more closely at some activities to recognise the full extent of male grief.

One final comment to be made is that after deciding on the title of this paper I realised the dual meaning of the word “digital”. The digital reconstruction which I had initially thought of only in terms of the manipulation of the photographs then could be the repair of the damaged hand – the embodied spirit of my dad.

THE OBSERVATION OF THE UNOBSERVABLE: IDEAS OF AFTERLIFE IN A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

KORNELIA SAMMET¹ AND FRANZ ERHARD²

In sociological research on religion, belief in afterlife is often used as an indicator for religiosity. But it is hardly explored what the contents of the belief in afterlife are. We would like to dedicate our article to the questions: What do people fear and hope for when they talk about a life after death? At what point do they refer to religious semantics when they are confronted with the question of death?

For the sociologist Niklas Luhmann death generates the paradox of an assured knowledge and lack of assured knowledge at the same time.³ The end of a life is imaginable, but one can not know when and how death will occur.⁴ Also death can not be experienced, since the stream of consciousness simply breaks off with its occurrence.⁵ Yet, a consciousness is able to think beyond its own close and to communicate about it, that is, to produce meaning. In doing so it opens up the unobservable transcendent sphere of afterlife, which is an object of imagination and not of experience. According to Luhmann, such interpretations of death gain plausibility, when knowledge about the world is activated. Thus death can be included into a familiar world. For Luhmann it is the social function of religion to make the difference between observable and unobservable issues observable in the sphere of the observable⁶ – which means to relate the sphere of everyday life experiences with the sphere of a possible afterlife. Such a functionalistic understanding of religion makes it necessary to include into 'Afterlife' not only the ideas of a world transcending this world's existence in the afterlife. Also concepts of an immanent life are meant (for example, by re-birth).

We argue that the contents of the belief in afterlife are determined by the experiences made in this world. Individuals pick up the interpretational patterns offered by religious traditions and scientific mainstream knowledge and adapt them in the light of everyday life experiences. That is, we interpret concepts of afterlife as an expression and a result of biographical experiences and derived prospects.

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³ Niklas Luhmann, *Die Religion der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2000, p. 51.

⁴ Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1987, pp. 45-46.

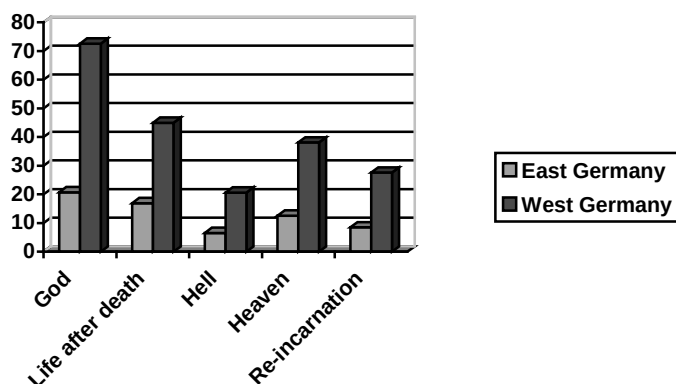
⁵ Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, p. 375.

⁶ Luhmann, *Die Religion der Gesellschaft*, p. 34.

Research Question and Data Basis

Our analysis refers to Germany. Quantitative Surveys show that the belief in life after death or in transcendent spheres is shared only by a minority in both Western and Eastern Germany.

Fig. 1: Belief in transcendent sphere and powers and in afterlife in East and West Germany



Source: Own calculations on European Value Study 2008⁷

Data of the European Value Study indicate that, in religious terms, Germany is divided: While a majority of the West Germans believe in God and almost half of the people believe in life after death, this applies only to a fifth of the East Germans. In East Germany we find the lowest rates worldwide in nearly all items related to religion.⁸ It is also remarking that almost twice as many people in West as well as in East Germany believe in heaven than in hell. That suggests that in terms of afterlife, people tend to believe more in positive than in negative concepts and both need not to be linked with each other. Furthermore, belief in reincarnation increased in West Germany from 21 % in 1999 to 27,6 % in 2008, while it declined from 11,6 % to 8,5 % in the same time in East Germany.

Our analyses however, are based on a qualitative approach. In qualitative research group discussions are used as an instrument that allows discerning

⁷ We thank our colleague Daniel Bergelt for the calculations.

⁸ See for example Gert Pickel, „Ostdeutschland im europäischen Vergleich. Immer noch ein Sonderfall oder ein Sonderweg?“, in Gert Pickel, Kornelia Sammet eds., *Religion und Religiosität im vereinigten Deutschland. Zwanzig Jahre nach dem Umbruch*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag, 2011, pp. 165-190; Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, Thomas Schmidt-Lux, Uta Karstein, „Secularization as Conflict“, *Social Compass*, 55 (2008), pp. 127-139; Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, Uta Karstein, Thomas Schmidt-Lux, *Forcierte Säkularität. Religiöser Wandel und Generationendynamik im Osten Deutschlands*, Frankfurt am Main, Campus, 2009.

collective patterns of orientation⁹, in our case: to examine ideas of afterlife. Group discussions are conversations of, ideally, three to six persons sharing a similar background. They are either 'real groups' or placed together only for the purpose of research. Following Bohnsack¹⁰ the conversations during the group discussions should have an independent character. This means that the interviewer produces as little stimuli as possible and rarely intervenes in the conversation so that the participants may unfold what is relevant for themselves. In the interpretation of the data, these autonomous passages are the special focus of interest, since they allow reconstructing differing orientations, common themes but also significant conflict divides.

Our group discussions were conducted in the framework of a research project on 'Worldviews in Precarious Conditions of Life' at the University of Leipzig, funded by the 'Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft' (DFG) from 2008 to 2012. We consider worldviews, in reference to Luckmann¹¹, as subjective theories of life and the world. 'Worldviews' reflect the basic assumptions about fundamental relations; they are subjective theories of 'how things are related in principle'. They are conceptualized with the dimensions of *boundary*, *order* and *attribution*, i.e. the analyses relate to horizons and limits of action, ways of dealing with order and contingency as well as the question of attribution of events and experience.

The study's main groups of interest are persons in precarious life situations which are characterized by high biographical insecurity, low material and symbolic resources and thus low abilities for planning and participation. These criteria particularly apply to recipients of welfare benefits and persons with insecure jobs.

The group discussions we refer to in the following were transcribed word for word in the corresponding characteristic dialect, with all grammatical faults, with all the stuttering, the iterations and the breaking off of sentences. The transcriptions were made anonymous and were evaluated with reconstructive-

⁹ Ralf Bohnsack, "Documentary Method and Group Discussions", in Ralf Bohnsack, Nicolle Pfaff, Wivian Weller eds., *Qualitative Analysis and Documentary Method in International Educational Research*, Opladen & Farmington Hills, MI, Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2010, pp. 99-124.

¹⁰ Bohnsack, *Documentary Method*, p. 106.

¹¹ Thomas Luckmann, „Über die Funktion der Religion“, in Peter Koslowski ed., *Die religiöse Dimension der Gesellschaft: Religion und ihre Theorie*, Tübingen, Mohr, 1985, pp. 26-41; see also Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, Kornelia Sammet, "Weltsichten - Lebensstile - Kirchenbindung. Konzeption und Methoden der vierten EKD-Erhebung über Kirchenmitgliedschaft", in Jan Hermelink, Ingrid Lukatis, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr eds., *Kirche in der Vielfalt der Lebensbezüge*, Band 2. *Analysen zu Gruppendiskussionen und Erzählinterviews*, Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006, pp. 21-38.

hermeneutic procedures.¹² For the publication the transcript was polished up slightly and translated in English.

In all the group discussions the participants were asked, near the end of the conversation, what, in their opinion, comes after death.¹³ From the perspective of the sociology of religion the reactions are very informative: With their statements the participants formulate ideas of an afterlife and by doing so, of transcendence.¹⁴ In comparison to the mentioned surveys, this approach has the advantage that it neither extorts decisions from the interviewees nor imputes that they can determine their position exactly. Rather, they are enabled to express their uncertainty and ambivalence as well as to develop distinguished thoughts and opinions.

Empirical Findings from Group Discussions

With the quantitative data in mind, it is not surprising that the participants react with restraint and distance to this question. The answers refer mainly to the life in this world. It is about the dead body's fate and the fate of the bereaved. A frequent and spontaneous response is, for instance, that after death nothing more will come and the corpse decays. But during some of the group discussions, ideas and images of a life after death are designed, so during the following we will attend to them. Usually, these images of an afterlife are introduced in a proposition as an intellectual game or a hypothetical possibility, which are further developed, distinguished or rejected.

This also applies to the first group presented here: a group of three friends who have completed their university studies successfully, but are not working in an adequate profession. Two of them are working in a call centre. The participants of this group discussion do not belong to a church and are not religious at all.

Almost immediately after the question was asked, one of the participants drops a very concrete idea of life after death, from which the

¹²See Aglaja Przyborski, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, *Qualitative Sozialforschung. Ein Arbeitsbuch*, München, Oldenbourg, 2008, pp. 240-271.

¹³ This stimulus is taken from the research project on secularity in East Germany: Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, Uta Karstein, Christine Schaumburg, "Ich würd' mir das offenlassen'. Agnostische Spiritualität als Annäherung an die 'große Transzendenz' eines Lebens nach dem Tode", *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft*, 13 (2005), pp. 153-173. It also was used in the group discussions conducted in the framework of the Fourth Investigation of the Protestant Church in Germany on Church Membership (see Wohlrab-Sahr, Sammet, *Weltsichten - Lebensstile - Kirchenbindung*, p. 34).

¹⁴ See Kornelia Sammet, „Religiöse Kommunikation und Kommunikation über Religion. Analysen der Gruppendiskussionen“, in: Wolfgang Huber, Johannes Friedrich, Peter Steinacker eds., *Kirche in der Vielfalt der Lebensbezüge. Die vierte EKD-Erhebung über Kirchenmitgliedschaft*, Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlag, 2006, pp. 357-399.

further discussion unfolds:¹⁵

Kata: I'll make a movie with Schlingensief. (1)

Insa: (slight laughter) (5)

Kata: You too? (2)

Johannes: Well, I .. would do that, if I believed in meeting him again. Especially in meeting him again. To meet him.

Insa: (whispers) (laughs) /Kata: (laughs, 3)/ Meet him again. (2) Reincarnation here.

The idea of making a movie after death, together with the film- and opera director and performance artist Christoph Schlingensief, who died in 2010, turns the afterworld into a space for wishful fantasies: There, projects can be realized which appear to be impossible, in fact unachievable in this world. Death becomes the space for the realizations of their self, which one of the participants even attributes to her cat that deceased recently.

Kata: Hey, my cat recently died.

Johannes: Yes, and she is going to, hmmm

Kata: And she dances Pogo with all the other cats. I find that much (laughs) better than saying that..

Johannes: Well, first of all, uh .. I'm sorry.

Kata: Gone.

Even though the interviewee was taking much seriousness out of the topic with such a witty response, it is however remarkable that she imagines the cat as still existing. The cat is just out of this world, but somewhere else she is still the funny cat, that exceeds her earthly possibilities in the afterlife and becomes almost human.

Death and afterlife form a space for the interviewee's wishes and fantasies. At the same time, self-fulfilment in the afterlife remains influenced by sub cultural identity, as the cat dances Pogo and not Waltz. This concept of afterlife is legitimated by being superior to the idea of life's finiteness and death's finality.

This fantasy from (the West-German) Kata is answered by the other two, who grew up in East Germany, with a more materialistic perspective, which emphasizes the bodies' decay.

¹⁵ The following rules were applied for the transcription: Short pauses are marked with .. , in the case of longer pauses, the length is stated in seconds in brackets. Incomprehensible words or series of words are bracketed with question marks or (inc.). We thank our team Lena Dreier and Daniel Bergelt for helpful remarks concerning the interpretation of the transcripts.

Johannes: I, I, I am. I'm a hardcore atheist and uh .. think that when I'm dead (1) uh, I become a piece of the world, as long as the uh .. coffin doesn't prevent me from transforming (2) into humus. (3)

Insa: To be honest, I think that nothing at all is going to happen. (5) Yes. (1) (low) We are dead and are eaten by worms. (2) (lower) Or cremated. (2)

Johannes: Which is, in my opinion, a much more romantic idea than somehow in in heaven.. (Hit on the table) (1)

Insa: Than stewing in eternity. (1)

While Insa adheres to the scientific explanation, which emanates from the ultimate end of the individual life, this end is transcended by Johannes despite his affirmation of being a hardcore atheist. The transition into 'humus' allows to remain part of the world, everywhere, and thus, to be close to the bereaved family, in opposite to heaven, where they would be separated forever. The German word for 'humus' or 'topsoil' Johannes uses is 'Mutterboden', which could literally be translated as 'mother soil'. This opens the association with 'Mother Earth' and with spiritualistic ideas.

In the justification of that mystical image, which alludes to natural processes, he sympathetically joins Kata's mourning for her cat:

Johannes: I have two cats, I can understand that. Uh and (1) I, I really think that the thought uh .. you have to lose the image with the worms again a little.

Kata: (laughs, 2)

Johannes: And the the idea in the world uh (2) really to go back into the world and become a part of it, and suddenly, be everywhere. Uh (1) should actually be for the uh .. be- .. bereaved family (1) a nicer more satisfying and more romantic thought than uh (2) he is somewhere up there, has nothing to do with us. (4) Mhm. (low) Right?

Kata: Yes, she is there somewhere, dancing Pogo. Mhm.

Johannes: Okay.

In this concept, the criterion that makes Johannes decide in favour for it, is its beauty and the benefit for the bereaved, who don't need to believe their deceased in a transcendent sphere. The criterion is not its rational plausibility. With regards to contents, it is an immanent transcendence, which may be able to compensate experiences of marginalisation and exclusion by anticipating future participation in the world. The conflicting positions of the interviewees can be characterized as the concept of an individual continuity in a transcendent sphere on the one hand, and as a physical continuity in this world on the other hand. Both positions emphasize the idea of community: they imagine the community of celebrating cats and the community of artists doing a project together.

The course of the conversation runs very differently in a group discussion we conducted with young unemployed who participate in a workfare

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measure in an East German city. The participants have little education and generally do not possess great expectations in relation to their future. They also are not religious and no church members. Answering the question of what will come after death one interviewee rejects totally the idea of a life after death:

Nicole: It's simply all gone. I don't think there's a life after death.

Following this proposition her colleague introduces the idea of reincarnation as a possibility, which the others take on and develop ironically.

Michael: I dunno, maybe you'll be reincarnated. (laughs, 1)

Tanja: Ya.

Nicole: As what then, as a worm? Then two seconds later you're dead again. (laughs)

Michael: Well, as a butterfly?

Nicole and Tanja: (laugh)

Nicole: That'll be .. (inc. 1)

Michael: Or as a bird. Then you can shit on the head of everyone you couldn't stand.

Nicole: Ah ya or against /Tanja: (laughs, 2)/ Or I dunno .. bang against the front of a car. And if you were born again as a cat ahh for example born again.

Michael: At least you have nine lives.

At a first glance reincarnation seems to offer the potential of compensation, for the existence of some animals have advantages the lives of the participants do not possess: the nine lives of the cat, the freedom and the opportunity for a kind of revenge as a bird and perhaps the beauty of the butterfly. At first, Michael holds on to it and introduces the idea of an individual liberation from mundane necessities. But Nicole counters with disadvantages and hazards, and carries on with that for the cat and every further suggestion:

Nicole: No, then you'll be burned by small kids. (laughs, 2)

Michael: And as a dog?

Nicole: Ahm, ya.

Michael: Then you'll be kicked, if you mess any crap up.

Nicole: Not only that. The pal of a friend took a dog and put him into a bin with a New Year's firework. That's what ya'd get as a dog as well, ya.

Tanja: The poor dog.

Nicole: So whatever you're reborn as, you're in the shit anyway.

Tanja: The poor dog. I feel awful sorry for him. (2) The poor dog, the (inc. 1)

Michael: And if you're born as a rat, you'll be eaten straight away anyway.

Nicole: Or poisoned with some venom.

As a conclusion of the discussion, the idea of reincarnation does not hold any attraction for these young people as no scenario can be foreseen in

which reincarnation could result in better conditions of life, indeed the opposite is true: It would not matter whether they were reincarnated as a worm, a bird, a cat, a dog or a rat, it could only mean (in the best case scenario) death, otherwise torture and suffering would also have to be expected. Even Michael, who has brought the idea of reincarnation into the discussion, eventually dismisses his own wishful thinking by the options illustrated by Nicole.

In the discussions of different alternatives they come together to the conclusion that, if there were a life after death, they would be at the cruel mercy of other people. Nicole concludes the discussion with 'So whatever you're reborn as, you're in the shit anyway.'

Soon, the conversation turns towards funeral and grave maintenance issues. At this point another participant expresses what she wishes to be done with her own mortal remains:

Tanja: If I should die at some point, I want to be buried right next to my father, because I am daddy's darling.

Here, the participant expresses the hope for a reunion with her deceased father. In doing so, the close relationship between the two in this life continues in proximity after death. Therefore, the interviewee insists:

Tanja: So, when someday my father's grave gets removed, I want to have the urn. I'm honest.

Tanja's wishes are based on the implicit assumption that a person is preserved in its own mortal remains and by the physical proximity with these, a post-mortem reunion amongst loved ones is possible. In this case, we are also dealing with an immanent transcendence of death.

Nicole points out that this wish is contrary to social reality, for: 'Even passing away costs', she says; at this point, coffin, grave, grave stones and flowers are mentioned. Therefore in death, one depends on financial resources and the commitment of the bereaved:

Nicole: And if your beloved relatives don't...if they don't pay, you just get kicked out. (2)

Insufficient financial recourses lead to social exclusion even in death; this is how Nicole's thesis can be summarized. This applies not only for the grave but also for the urn:

Nicole: Well, then you have to be careful, however, that you are not forced to have your house auctioned off. Because they'll take your father with them (laughs quietly).

These extracts make clear that, considering the experienced social exclusion, wishes and hopes related to an improved individual existence after death, as is the case with Michael, or for a reunion with the dead, as is the case with Tanja, are expressed.

During the conversation, Nicole establishes herself as antagonist and opinion leader. In her view, reincarnation cannot provoke an improvement of living conditions, and even the corpse is still at risk of social exclusion. This pessimism can be read as a consequence of insufficient opportunities of participation and as an expression of experiences of social marginalisation and devaluation.

Conclusion

In summary, it can be stated that the ideas of what comes after death, are expression and reflection of inner worldly experiences. During the presented discussions with the groups from underprivileged social background, a space of possibilities was produced, where negative experiences can be compensated: as an imagined self-realisation or revenge on the one hand or as social integration in a community of living and the dead, or the dead among themselves on the other hand. In formulating images of an afterlife the participants at same time criticize more or less explicitly their actual living conditions.

In both conversations is only little reference to Christian semantics. Only for one interviewee, who was socialized in West Germany, the notion of 'heaven' plays a role, but is rejected by the other participants due to its extramundane character. Instead, ideas of an immanent continuity are favoured, namely reincarnation on the one hand and material continuity on the other hand, where a person transcends death by remaining as a human being inside his mortal remains. It can be positively referred to discourses propagated in the GDR, which were mainly aimed at natural cycles and the non-discoverability of God in the universe.¹⁶

In both group discussions there is one participant who opposes the hope of compensation in a life after death, in one case with reference to natural processes – the decay and the decomposing work of the worms – in the other case, with reference to social law and the wickedness of the people one would be exposed to after death or in a reincarnated life. That means that ideas of immanent transcendence imply the problem that individual life, but not the world with its opportunity limiting laws, is being transcended.

¹⁶ See for example Thomas Schmidt-Lux, *Wissenschaft als Religion. Szientismus im ostdeutschen Säkularisierungsprozess*, Würzburg, Ergon, 2008.

END OF LIFE

THE TERM OF LIFE AND THE TERM OF DEATH AS A TWO FUNDAMENTAL BIOETHICAL AND THANATOLOGICAL VALUES

DEJAN DONEV¹

Introduction

Everything we do, the way we behave, the basic matrix on which we rely on our thinking and conclusions that in what we believe..., above all, depends from the culture on which we belong, the form and way on which we practice the same one. In this context, in a broader sense, we can say that cultural models involve characteristics which are common for most of the members in a certain community, society, group, nation...and the same ones involve system of values, legal norms, educational system, language, religion, tradition, mores, feelings, science, ethics, moral, etc. It can be said that a “culture” is a sum of expectations and goals in which indeed belongs the understanding and implementing the concept of dying and death, and also the concept of life; the acceptance, the neglecting or rejecting of it.

A step forward from the previous claims, having in mind the chances and conditions of and in the modern culture, especially the part with biomedicine sciences, it can freely be said that we find ourselves in front of a widespread reality, which in many cases can be named as “culture of death”, and which based on theory, represents the main image of an “anti-solidarity culture”, i.e. culture in which the selfishness, hedonism, and materialism dominate, or differently described, from religious aspect, the same one can be viewed like a “real structure of sin”.² Simultaneously, in the background of such a culture (of death), the socio-economical, the cultural and political ideologies are to be suited as her main factors..., ideologies that initiate the real war between the powerful ones and the weak ones, and in which, the disease and inborn handicap can't be tolerated anymore. Respectively, a “conspiracy theory against life”³ is to be coined, expressed through logics of eugenetics.

But, on such a modern conspiracy against life, which created a real “civilization of necrophilia”, dully can be responded through acceptance of “culture of life”, in another words, with the acceptance of human's life holiness, which, seen from religious aspect, from the very beginning includes the created God's will and permanently remains in special relation towards The Creator, and which culture of life, in accordance with catholic belief, found, feeds and inspires from the Gospel of life which is at the very center of Jesus' message.

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² T. Matulic, *Oblikovanje identiteta bioeti~ke discipline*, Prvi dio Vodi~a kroz bioetiku, Glas Koncila, Zagreb, 2006, p. 107.

³ That sort of coining conspiracy against life in frames of the culture of death, it's the example with the huge investment in pharmaceutical preparations that help killing a life while in uterus.

However, the culture of life is not some utopian idea, but an essential need. For that witnesses our new reality, in which there are a lot of events that speak in life's favor⁴, his protection and reflection on positive values of life. That is because the humanity slowly begin to arouse from the indolent detaining of negligence and negativity, and learned that without the built of civilization of love and life, vanishes the original human significance, his individuality and unique.

Hence, because 107 human beings die in every minute of the day, and 255 new are born⁵ with the potential to become persons, we raise the question: how much we really know and understand the concept of life and death, i.e. these basic terms on which our entire and worldwide existence relies on? What's life and what's death, does the same one is the last stadium from the process of living, and how much we really have developed any kind of culture for it; for this final part of life or for life in general?

Contextualisation of the terms "death" and "life" in thanatology and bioethics. Thanatological approach

Life and Death are two antipodes, inseparable and immanent to human reality. Each one of them requires a certain knowledge and skillfulness from us, which we gain with years of hard work and self-structuring (self-rising); of accepting and introducing to the ones related to us, because the man is a social being who has necessity of interpersonal relations, as inside the family, as a basic individual, so does in the wider social community.

In this context, today, two areas are in particular importance in research and dissemination of knowledge about life and death, i.e. for the built of an adequate culture of death, and adequate culture of life. It's about the Thanatology and Bioethics, in which both terms have a certain meaning, certain positions, certain grasps, certain (contrary) relations.

In general, the Thanatology (Greek *tanatos* = *death*) is a special branch in judicial medicine and pathology, and which interests in death (*mors*) and dying (*morior*).⁶ As Toma` Rot and Albert Juter{ek define it, the same is the science of death (...), like a unique and permanent, irreversible ending of the life and all other living processes of the individual (meaning the death of the individual).⁷ Thus, we are talking about a scientific discipline which as a subject of study has the notions of death, death's symbolic introduction, process and experience of dying, as well as numerous rituals and beliefs that follow the

⁴ The appearance and development of Bioethics is just one of the numerous events and signs that speak and affirm that a culture of life must be supported.

⁵ <http://www.sethchernoff.com/spirituality/interesting-facts-population-statistics-death-statistics-fun-facts-random-facts>.

⁶ <http://www.medicinabih.info/2008/08/08/tanatologija/>.

⁷ <http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:IL8ZJMjW7qwJ:www.mf.uni-lj.si/dokumenti>.

death and the funeral.⁸ Sublimated, it can be defined that Thanatology is a sphere which examines the psychological aspects of death and dying.

The psychologist Elizabeth Kubler-Ross started the studies of and in this area, as a branch of humanistic psychology, where as a result of her work, a large number of dying patients and their therapists, learned that death can be understood as "the last stage of development" and easier to accept it. Indeed, the general meaning of Thanatology lies in the fact that death stopped being a taboo theme, as it was in the secularized Western society, and to some extent, still is. This especially, because these studies helped a lot of patients in front of death, to pass the process, enabling them to experience easy death.⁹

Starting from these assumptions, as a fundamental criterion of action is accepted, as Peter Singer says: "the concept of quality of life, instead of untouchability of life. The thing that allows for decisions about life and death to think about quality of life is one of the two parts of the new ethics which is confirmed as it is, in hospitals, courts and parliaments of the Western world. The second part is the need for bigger freedom in deciding what to do with our lives. We like freely to decide how we will die, just as we like freely to decide how we will live".¹⁰

From here the question, how did it come to this bioethical "Copernicus twist", which attracts more and more its proponents and gradually enters into modern legislation, creating thus, "euthanasian mentality"¹¹, not only in Holland, but also in other European countries?

In today's spiritual climate, in which, for example, in linguistic and analytic philosophy, metaphysics is even considered as a disease, at least according to A.J. Ayer, who since from 1959 said that "the metaphysician is no longer treated as a criminal, but rather as a patient"¹² - it is understandable that in the expressed anti-metaphysical bioethical way of thinking every intention of human's dignity to be based on metaphysical, neither on philosophical, or on theological bases, is rejected. So, in bioethical anthropology it came to a two sided dissolution: on one side, the man is separated from its metaphysical foundation as a pure fiction, and also simultaneously separated

⁸ Ivan Vidanovi}, *Rečnik socijalnog rada*, Udruženje stručnih radnika socijalne zaštite Srbije, Društvo socijalnih radnika Srbije, Asocijacija centra za socijalni rad Srbije, Unija Studenata socijalnog rada, Beograd, 2006.

⁹ *Rečnik Ezoterije*, pp. 176-177, http://www.objave.com/recnik_pojam_cl.php?pojam=Thanatologija.

¹⁰ Peter Singer, "Dilemma Von Leben und Tod. Der Zusammenbruch der traditionellen Ethik", *Universitas*, 599 (5/1996), p. 435.

¹¹ Compare to Thomas Fuchs, "Euthanasie und Suizidbeihilfe. Das Beispiel der Niederlande und die Ethik des Sterbens", in Robert Spaemann & Thomas Fuchs, *Toten oder sterben lassen?*, Freiburg i. Br., (1997), pp. 52-53.

¹² Compare with Theo Kobusch, *Die Entdeckung der Person*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1997, p. 12.

from “the personality”, which is also stripped of its metaphysical nature and reduced to a certain empirical properties that man in the particular case may have or not, hence may be a person or not. “The doctrine about the holiness of human life”, writes Peter Singer: “is broken into two separate claims: first, that there is a special value in the lives of the members of our specie, and second, that there is a special value in the life of a person”.¹³

The first claim, as previously elaborated, cannot be defended, while the latter, believes that human life has no special value, meaning that it is not secret or untouchable. Namely, as Singer argues: “the biological facts under which the boundary is drawn between our species, have no moral relevance”¹⁴ and that should be sufficient proof that the human being has no special value. On this way he adds on the separation between the man and the person that John Locke makes.¹⁵

With reference to Locke’s separation of the man and the person, Singer concludes that “the fact that some being is a human being – in the sense of belonging to specie *Homo sapiens* – is not relevant to the mistakenness in relation to his killing. Rather, decisive are the characteristics such as rationality, autonomy and self-consciousness”¹⁶, and only if the same human being actually possesses those same properties.

From here, quite logically it’s carried the decisive criterion for moral judgment of action, in terms of quality of life, i.e. for example the issue of euthanasia: if a human being has no awareness, no relation toward the future in terms of desires and expectations, if has no feelings of comfort or discomfort, his life doesn’t meet the criteria for quality of life, in another words - life worthy for life. Therefore, it does not deserve to live and be protected and maintained.

In this way, human’s life is essentially reduced as a pure mean for experiencing the comfort, losing thereby his inalienable dignity in terms of Kant’s way of thinking. Thus, rightfully can be concluded that within today’s increasingly dominant conception of human life, a faster paradigm shift takes place, as R.Bauman-Holsl described as follows: “Human’s life principally loses its pretension of dignity and autonomy and thus its absolute pretension of physical integrity.” In light of this consideration, there can be set a certain conditions on human life, before recognizing his claim on dignity, autonomy and physical integrity. By that, this notion of human dignity becomes a notion of quality:

“the quality of life no longer presuppose the circumstances of life, but the quality of life itself (...) With this change of the paradigm (...) life circumstances and

¹³ Peter Singer, *Praktična etika*, Kružak, Zagreb, 2003, p. 68.

¹⁴ Singer, *Praktična etika*, p. 67.

¹⁵ John Locke, *Ogled o ljudskom razumu*, Knjiga II, poglavje 27, Kultura, Beograd, p. 9.

¹⁶ Singer, *Praktična etika*, p. 137.

their eligibility are no more measured, but the acceptance of the human's life is in question of being judged. By that it is possible to set a distinction between so-called "worth living" and "living an unworthy life".¹⁷

Bioethical approach

Total death gives to all of our ethical considerations, particular drama. No matter what is our philosophical view, in one thing we all agree: First, we need to maintain life, this one and the life of the future generations!

In this context, when we talk about the term of life and everyday events that confirm the thesis of the protection and promotion of life, by building, promoting and spreading the culture of life - a dazzling sign and example is the emergence and development of bioethics. If we go by the definition which Warren T. Reich gives, in the second edition of the Encyclopedia of bioethics from 1995, and which represents a kind of "official definition" of bioethics, it means: "systematic study of the moral dimensions - including moral views, decisions, actions and behavior - within the life sciences and health care, which at the same time use a variety of ethical methodologies in interdisciplinary surrounding".¹⁸

From the many explanations of the concept of bioethics, in favor of the thesis of this paper, it is the best to present a clear descriptive definition of bioethics, "as a way in which people view life, their moral interactions and responsibilities on life", or as prescriptive - determining what's good and what bad, which principles are considered as most important or the possession of certain rights from people in accordance to other people's obligation to respect them"¹⁹.

Summarized through a synthetic, although still starting definition of bioethics, we can say that bioethics is an open area of meeting and dialogue of different sciences and sectors, and different approaches and views of the world gathered for articulating, discussing and resolving ethical issues associated with life, life in general, and each of the parts of that whole, for life in all its forms, levels, stages and appearances.

The previous confirms that the field of bioethics puts important ethical and moral issues that can be summarized in three sets:

inception of life; living life from childhood, youth, maturity, with all the qualities and difficulties posed by the process of growing, maturing and mature age; end of life (the question of the meaning of life, suffering, death, palliative medicine, the maintenance of life or life functions, euthanasia, the definition and criteria of the human death, dying in human dignity, hospice).

¹⁷ Ruth Baumann-Holzle, "Der Wert des Lebens: Vom Sinn hin zum Zweck", www.livenet.ch/www/index.php/D/article/53/7210/.

¹⁸ Warren T. Reich, "Introduction", in: W. T. Reich (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, book I, p. XXI, Macmillan Pub. Co., New York, 1995.

¹⁹ Darryl Macer, "Bioetika u Japanu i Aziji", in *Društvena istraživanja*, 5(3-4), (1996), p. 671.

In Bioethics, the term “life” is examined throughout two concepts: holiness and quality of life, whereupon the concept of holiness of life is put above all, in another words the respecting of life is fundamental principle of action in society, life is primordial value, in fact, “holiness”.

Thus the culture of life must be above everything else, so that the “culture of death” won’t to become prevalent. Therefore, the holiness of life is placed on the pedestal, contrary to the concept of quality of life as a synonym for the modern concept of culture of death, whereupon the fundamental value of the ethical judgment for the holiness of life represents a demand for universality, as in the area of application of ethical judgment, so does in its validity.²⁰

In other words, one of the major stumbling blocks in modern bioethical debates about human’s life, is the concept of the holiness of life, which as a concept, is placed against the concept of quality of life, meaning, and the existence of a specific ethics of the sanctity of life which importantly differs from ethics of quality of life. “The ethics of the sanctity of life is based on the traditional conception of ethics, while the concept of quality of life represents the new ethics, i.e. the ethics that elaborates the Bioethics for itself and its practical needs”.²¹

From this it is evident that these two ethics are opposed to each other, in another words, traditional ethics is outlived and unadoptable to modern bioethical requests, while not forgetting the fact that bioethics examines moral conflicts and dilemmas arising in the field of biomedical sciences. This means that the ethics of the holiness of life would have nothing more to say in relation to biomedical problems, because they are of recent date, and therefore it requires a new ethics.

But is it really so?! It is about misunderstanding regarding the basic settings of ethics, but not in terms of whether we need the new or the traditional. Indeed, traditional ethics in its determination, is for human life, but above all perceived and understood as a *gift* and *task*. Exactly, in the modern era of biotechnology, it is necessary to emphasize that human life has the value in and by itself. From here, it leads out the dimension of human’s life as a *gift*, which biotechnology could endanger reducing it to a sum of biological substances, not taking care of the spiritual, i.e. personal substance. Hence it leads out the dimension of human’s life as a *task*, as the same should be protected and respected. If these dimensions, really ever needed to be highlighted, then today they represent the law of necessity, because there is danger of the technique to compensate the ethics, which means the derived

²⁰ “Thou shall not kill” is not only the fifth commandment of the Decalogue, but it is also the universal moral principle and moral judgment, which can be proven and should be requested with universal application.

²¹ Matulic, *Oblikovanje identiteta bioeti~ke discipline*, p. 204.

technical endeavor to become ethically justified, allowing degradation of ethics in general.

But “the ethics of the holiness of life does not allow such degradation not only because of ethics, but rather for the man, his dignity and fullness, which are not deductive to the technical dimensions of quality of life”²². There is no doubt that the ethics of quality of life can offer many positive dimensions to bioethics, but her preoccupation with the technical dimensions of human action does not meet the criteria of valuable dimensions of human’s action. This is primarily because the ethics of the holiness of life primarily puts man in correlation that goes far beyond the relationship between doctor and patient or the scientist and his experiments on humans. The ethics of the holiness of life reveals the man as a relational and dependent creature who feels that life has no meaning in the technical closure, because it, by its nature is open to transcendence.

On the other hand, the ethics of quality of life as synonymous with the culture of death, bases her on the axiom according to which “today you have to live well regardless of price”. With this, the emphasis is not only on life as such, but to all, or at least most of the living areas, situations and activities looking for better conditions for economic, scientific, cultural, psychological, health, environmental, social ... life. In such intellectual aspirations in a society, the Bioethics was born and became one of the ideal places for discussing issues for the quality of life. The crucial ethical question is related to the alleged vision of quality: what kind of quality is required and what is there to be achieved? In seeking a response to this question it poses a significant paradigm - the culture of death. The answer to this question is a challenge and a test of maturity for bioethics, because she’s the one that focuses on problems of biomedical sciences and which has contributed in large, intentionally or unintentionally, in the creation of the imperative feeling that it is important to “live well regardless the price”.

Moreover, in the bioethical literature, almost every problem is examined via quality of life. It is notable that “a large number of authors keep promoting the quality of life as a single straight and universal criterion for finding ethical-normative judgments in biomedical practice”.²³ Against this, stands the fact that is underprinted by many authors in their researches and unambiguous condemnations on Nazi’s actions during the World War II, which in the context of quality of life, seem tragically ironic. Therefore, bioethics should not allow to itself this kind of luxury, because it will lose its original idea and the right to the suffix – ethics. It must be and remain ethics of the holiness of life!

²² Ibid., p. 205.

²³ Matulic, *Oblikovanje identiteta bioeti~ke discipline*, p. 184.

Modern tendencies in bioethics and thanatology

Human history and evolution have developed more negative attitude toward death by now - as the greatest evil, synonymous to nothingness. For a change, modern thanatology is trying to emphasize the relationship of mutual wovenning between life and death, and not seeing them as antipodes. The same comes from the notion that after Martin Heidegger, and particularly Eugen Fink, death is seen as a constitutional component in life, and life, as an irreversible process that ends in the shadow of death, thus emphasizing the fact that death is an element of life to which earlier or later we will all be drawn irrevocably. "Our own death", as Heidegger says, "is irrelative... unsurpassed opportunity for survival"²⁴, while Eugene Fink believes that "the speculation about death is not only an ancient speculation of mankind, but the most living cognition, which has started any other cognition at all, about life and the world. Life as a marvel and puzzle appears to us with the death. After the man learned about death, he becomes able to love life, as such".²⁵

From this point of view, thanatology no longer see death as something which is necessarily means - evil, something that is undesirable, something that sits on the lowest scale of values compared with life. She (death) is now seen as something that needs to be revised from intimate and advisable point of view, which will lead us to a philosophical and aesthetic understanding of the moral acceptability and affordability of personal choice of death. Hence, the possibility of legalizing the right of death actually is implicitly contained in the universal right to live, as much as life is a constant process of dying that takes place everyday.

Therefore, as modern thanatology considers, the legalization and estheticism of the right of death, should provide development towards more human behavior in terms of bioethical aspects of the problem of suicide and the euthanasia. By that, the modern thanatology implicitly seeks to overcome the current idea of death as evil, and life as an endless and always desirable.

How can be realized? The death has become taboo, something that must not be named, as it used to be with sex. Created taboos about death and what follows death, are transmitted in the social quest in medicine that will ensure a complete physical, mental and social well-being, even a painless death. Moreover, today thanatology tries to strip and take away the meaning of the aspect of religion and position of the believer, where the death means a contingency of the man and his dependence with God, because the same puts his own life in God's hands/will and represents an act of complete obedience.

In this sense, thanatology believes that death is the final stage of human life. Euthanasia and suicide are a sign of human's request to entirely manage

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, M. Niemeyer, Tübingen 1984, p. 250.

²⁵ Eugen Fink, *Osnovni fenomeni ljudskog postojanja*, Nolit, Beograd, 1984, p. 128.

with himself, with his own life and with his own death. The secularization in the industrial era helped a lot in this, enhanced by the pursuit of the fertile hedonism and consequently with the ethics of hedonism, in which death and pain are major factors for the biggest interferences.

On the other hand, in bioethics, life is seen as the greatest gift and it's placed on the pedestal, while the death is seen as inferior vague, hazy mystery. In this context, speaks the adopted anthropological picture, which has had entered in the history of the Western culture, and in the philosophical way of thinking, since the same one, has been separated from theology, in another words, that the man is created in the name of God, and absolutely don't have the right to manage with its own life, while its dignity as a personal, individual, spiritual being, gifted with mind and freedom, that must never be reduced to a purely mean of realizing other goals, because it is derived from the similarity with God. So according to Kant's view, the man, as a reasonable, meaning, individual being, is a goal to himself, and in this sense it means that it has dignity, absolute value, that must never be instrumentalized, while other items only have a price or relative value based on what they can always be replaced. Hence, as Kant concludes, that if someone "is destroying himself to avoid a difficult situation, then he serves the person only as a mean of maintaining the condition bearable by the end of the life"²⁶ and thus violates the categorical imperative.

Thus, the concept of holiness of life is no longer used in specific religious meaning, but in the sense of dignity of human's life as such, and against which there is a duty for his unconditional respect. In this sense, the principle of holiness of life is an undeterred content also of the conventional secular morality, meaning that we found them not only in sacred²⁷ but also in secular²⁸ appropriate documents.

The principle of holiness of life normatively formulates what implicitly contains the belief of "holiness" of human life, in other words that it is forbidden to deliberately to take or to detain to an end an innocent human life, because every human life, regardless of its quality or capacity, is equally valuable and inviolable.²⁹

²⁶ Imanuel Kant, *Osnovanje metafizike ljudore/a*, Matica hrvatska, Zagreb, 1999, p. 61.

²⁷ "Human's life is sacred because from the beginning there's a need of God's power, that's why the same one, always remains in special relation with its Creator its sole purpose." (Congregation for the Science of Religion, Instruction *Donum Vitae*, Feb. 22, 1987, Introduction No. 5.).

²⁸ "To respect and protect the dignity of all those who are sick or dying is an obligation, derived from the inviolability of human dignity in all life stages." (Recommendation of the Council of Europe, No. 1418, June 25, 1999).

²⁹ Helga Kuhse, "Die Lehre von der "Heiligkeit des Lebens"", in Anton Leist (ed.), *Um Leben und Tod*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M., (1990), p. 79.

Conclusion

All previously mentioned in relation to contemporary discussions of bioethics and Thanatology results with the question for the moral admissibility or non-permissibility of euthanasia, where two fundamentally different perspectives oppose to each other: one stems from holiness, thus untouchability and unavailability of human life, and represents an unconditional ban on euthanasia, while the other insists on the decisive criterion for the quality of life of the individual, under which the individual has the right, in accordance to the right of deciding, whether wants euthanasia or not.

But,

“if their criteria does not mutually exclude, but complement, in that sense, on the one hand, to formulate an unconditional responsibility towards human life as such, or on the other hand, the responsibility of the others to establish attitude of solidarity towards the incurable disease, as well as creating a quality, dignified environment for the man - then the efforts for the dying that is dignified and took out of the dignity of the human kind, does not mean, maintaining human's life at any cost, especially not on the compound of the naturalistically reduced picture of human's life”.³⁰

Taking stand for dignified dying of a man in the light of the sensible connection of these two criteria, for the patients would mean a secureness that human life would not be shortened arbitrarily, that nobody has to foolishly suffer, that no one would have to endure unnecessary and painful therapies, that the medical technique will be used every day to maintain the full benefit of the patient, that the decision would be respected for those who may concern and that finally no one that is on the edge of dying wouldn't be pushed over or stranded.

Moreover, as noted by a psychologist from Rijeka, Zrinka Zhauhar Ricko: “A humane society is the society where the weakest ones are protected in dignified growth, diseases, dying and death. In this context, what really should be done is to improve the atmosphere in general, especially in the part where the old ones stand, the weak ones, the sick ones, those about to die, because that can teach us how better to live and better to die. Societies that take care of its citizens, of the social capital, recognize this as a goal, and strive to ensure the same by actions, not just words”.

By that, practically it will come to an effort of responding the series of questions about life and death: Why the life has the prior toward death? Whether we live first and then die, or we rise from death like a Phoenix from ashes? Why and whether the death is the necessary final part of our life which requires the same level of attention and dignity?

³⁰ Ivan Bubalo, “Svetost `ivota" ili "kvalitet `ivota" kao kriterij moralne prosudbe eutanazije?”, u Velimir Valjan (ur.), *Integrativna bioetika i izazovi suvremene civilizacije*, Bioetičko društvo u BiH, Sarajevo, (2007), p. 257.

THE TERM OF LIFE AND THE TERM OF DEATH AS A TWO FUNDAMENTAL BIOETHICAL AND THANATOLOGICAL VALUES

Broadly speaking, people do not want death and in this sense, it can never be any good. But, each of us knows that "he is condemned to die once", whether he likes it or not. Death is the inseparable companion of our lives, it is an integral part of life, permanent part of our creation and extinction, and as such, it is proof of our disintegration and vanishing. "From there the paradox of death, although it marks the end of the existence of one character and end of all our freedoms. It is the "physiological event" which is also logical because it is an ultimate experience of human weakness".³¹

Perhaps this is a confirmation of how in the human border situations, as it first the question of death, we are in front of the questions that we cannot always end up solving. But that certainly does not give us the right to rationalize those same problems to a level of banality, but they, by contrast, obligate us to focus on the attitude of awe in front of the mystery of human existence, as something that actually does always exceed us.

From here, the death of the individual person, regardless of rational explanation using the exact medical reasons - just as is the case with death in general - leaves smaller or wider space for the unknown and the irrational. On the other hand, is not an exaggeration to say that the power to assess, decide and practically act, to sustain life, or challenge death, belong into the sphere of the other-side, the supernatural, so to say - God's work. That's why ethics and moral are here on and with special assignment!³²

³¹ Luka Tomašević, "Smrt i njezino (ne)dostojanstvo ", u Velimir Valjan (ur.), *Integrativna bioetika i izazovi suvremene civilizacije*, Bioetičko društvo u BiH, Sarajevo, (2007), p. 260.

³² Karel Turza, *Medicina i društvo – Uvod u medicinsku etiku*, Medicinski fakultet u Beogradu, CIBID, Beograd, 2009, p. 81.

END OF LIFE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

ZHAKLINA TRAJKOVSKA-ANCHEVSKA¹

Death is the end of the biological functioning of every living organism. Death is the cessation of life, also affects nuclear and extended family, friends and people in the social environment. In the consciousness of man marks the end, weight and sorrow for the closest, sorry for the loss can't be restored.

Dying and death are biological, medical and legal importance of professional moral, social, material and legal consequences. The science that deals with the study of dying and death is called thanatology. Death is a biological term that indicates death as an integral part of life. Knowledge of death exists, although perhaps there is no specific news, yet again true fact of human mortality or knowledge of death and the situation after someone's death would encourage better quality of life.

With the advent of death presentation of a human being suddenly disappears. Our ability, image what we have built in life and what we think suddenly vanish. Then our environment disappears, people with whom we lived, where we acted, it disappears all that which was basic parameters of our existence.

The facts show that thinking about death as it something unusual, something that is outside the bounds of everyday life, something unnatural. But we all know that death is natural, we know that every life ends with death and we are absolutely sure. Different authors define different type of death.

Aristotle defined death as the separation of soul from body, he believed that a human body and the soul that expresses personal identity, it soul is immortal. He believed that man is integrated of body and soul, and death of the body will performed death in the soul.

Akvinski believes that with the death, the body returns to the matter of which is created and leaves the soul in eternal life.

Schopenhauer says death and birth are just vibrations of eternal living ideas and when a person dies, falls only a world that he carries in his mind.

The human organism is very complex structure, is composed of billions of cells each is the basic structural and functional unit with its own form and function. All bodily functions including the functions of cells are individually controlled by the brain². The permanent termination of brain function caused the death of the organism, although other functions have organic life function (lung function, heart, blood vessels). It is important that awareness and

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² *A definition of irreversible coma. Report of the Ad Hoc committee of the Harvard medical school to examine the definition of brain death*, Jama, 1968, pp. 205, 337-340

breathing as essential features of life are related to the brain. Death may be by the brain, characterized by the absence of consciousness, breathing, and brainstem function. Factors that cause brain death is brain injury, bleeding in the brain caused by various diseases and traumas. From the moment of brain death, the process of termination of life in all parts of the body and specifically in all cells dies individually. Respiratory death occurs interrupting the function of the respiratory system. Cardiac death is the cessation of the heart. Biological molecular or cellular death means the cessation of all processes in all organ cells. Although death is a process, determining the biological death is the time of determine of the moment of definite death. Evolutionary process of the occurrence of biological death is common at malignant chronic diseases.

Apparent death occurs when all the vital functions are reduced to a minimum (some inflammatory diseases, intoxications, metabolic and circulatory disorders, and electrolyte unevenness). The state of apparent death takes several hours, from 24-48 hours. The process of dying or the moment of death comes when the heart and brain cease to function. Before that moment, breathing becomes irregular and very short breath is replaced with a long breath. The liquid can penetrate into the lungs due to high blood pressure. Following the suspension of the heart, the air enters the lungs, but cannot get out of them. Tissues cannot funks without oxygen. Only after 10 seconds without oxygen, brain activity decreases for 3-4 minutes and the brain is irreversibly damaged. Pupils of the eyes are wider and not react to the light. The body loses its normal cooling temperature and the muscles rigid within 4-6 hours. Death occurs with cessation of the heart and lungs, but it can be caused of permanent impairment of a vital organ.

If you ask-Why dying is a part of everyday life, often the answer is in the following elements:

- Older people often die in their home
- Expectations are very high for health and life
- During the disease we depend of the doctors
- Society gives great emphasis on material values

According to Kubler-Ross³ after many appropriate research and analysis made on a larger number of patients, psychological reactions are categorized into 5 stages. This approach provided better insight into the psychosocial defense mechanisms, but it must be emphasized that all patients pass through the same stages. The duration of each of these phases depends on the patient, so some patients may go through a brief phase of denial and depression before the

³ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *E. On Death and Dying*, New York, A Touchstone book, published by Simon & Schuster, 1997. See also Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, London, Tavistock, 1969.

stage of acceptance. This division applies to more patients with malignant diseases due to a chronic disease that goes through these stages.

Malignant diseases have a high incidence with significant participation in the structure of morbidity and mortality of the population. They are followed by expensive diagnostic procedures, which require further and lengthy hospitalizations. Significant disease that has high rates of mortality is cardiovascular diseases, malignant diseases, chronic degenerative diseases and diseases of addiction.

The first stage is denial or rejection and occurs with the first advice by the doctor in the presence of a social worker for diagnosis, where the patient is shocked, unable to accept the truth and created an isolation suite, where the first reaction is usually- it is not possible. The reaction of denial is a temporary defensive approach and gradually transforms into a partial acceptance. But there are also a number of patients who deny the truth of their illness until the end of their life. Patients in this stage tend to doubt the veracity of the medical findings and other indicators of their disease. Initial reporting of bad diagnosis, the patient experienced like a personal disaster, but they still hopes it's not true. During the hospitalization and the therapy they start to think about the truth, about the disease.

Second stage it manifest with the anger. This phase is caused by the realization of the truth about the disease and its progression. Patient becomes angry and bitter because of deteriorated living plans, directing the anger at people in the immediate environment, family members and the medical staff, seeking to blame for their condition. Rage and anger have a wide range of reactions, ranging from hysterical manifestations to ease acceptance of the truth. Awareness of the death at this stage has not yet been established, but at this stage everything has been with some hope of cure and disease control.

During the time the patient after all recovers physical, emotional, they bid stabilized. This would be classified with psiho-emotional self-defense, or this is the third stadium of adjustment or settlement.⁴ During this stage of the patient compliance with the actual situation, it is necessary to pay much attention by doctors and social workers. The goal is to be able to talk calmer, because when we have a proactive and relaxed situation the will easily accept the suggested method of the treatment. In this phase due to the frequency of symptom and the decline of physical condition and the progression of the illness, the patient quickly walls in the phase of depression.

With the progression of the sickness of the disease the patient perceive the truth about their condition, they do not denied it and they become aware about their hopeless situation. More present are symptoms of weight loss and

⁴ M. Havelka, *Zdravstvena psihologija*, A. G. Matosh, Zagreb, Medicinski fakultet sveuchilishta u Zagrebu, 1988.

physical exhaustion, manifested with anger and hope with a feeling of personal loss, which can be manifested with a wide range of reactive depressive stages. According to Kubler Ross this stage is called depression. At this stage dominates the feeling of sadness and depression caused by feeling of great loss and mortal danger. The body reduces the normal functions, and the basic need already become difficult. Depressive condition is a consequence of fear and exhaustion due to increased pain and loss of hope. The suffering is caused by fear of change in all areas of personality.

If the patient survives these stages, including stage of depression as a reactive state within the disease, appear fifth stage of actual acceptance or reconciliation with their destinies. In the acceptance stage of the actual situation, the patient may manifest regret to their family which they will lose forever, and they remember the beautiful thing that happens to them in the past, with quiet anticipation. At this stage the patient completely cease to oppose the disease. During this period patients are sleepy and longer period of time spent asleep. They do not speak and don't want visits.

In all five stages listed from the patient psychological reactions are contained from the moment of obtaining the information about their disease to the fifth stage of acceptance and reconciliation with the actual situation. The experience shows that the phases of the development of the awareness of the inevitability of the end of life and the death vary and depend on several factors: age, stadium and type of the disease, intensity and quality of subjective symptoms (physical pain and their duration, bleeding, febricity, exhaustion, fatigue, ect.)

During the first four stages, regardless of the present reaction and including the fifth stage, all the time the hope is present. But hope may be followed by conflict mainly for two reasons.

- First because of the hopeless reaction of the family and the hospital staff, that acts negative on the patient, who remains to hope.

- Second, when the family is unable to accept the reality and the patient is aware that he dies.

The fifth stage is a stage of terminal condition, when consciously or unconsciously the patient accepts the fact that he die. Terminal state of the primary disease is a condition that leaves no hope for recovery. Sequence upon completed medical examinations the doctor suggests no treatment of the disease, where no matter of the general situation the question is the time when the death will perform. During all these stages in malignant diseases, there are always hope for the patient and their close family. In the fifth stage patients are exhausted, physically failed with lose appetite and increased sleeping time, and

the day and night are disturbed. Also the presence of strong continuous pain caused by the pathological substrate is terrible painful for the patient.⁵

Taking the consideration well describe clinical manifestation at the chronic dying patient the main requisite for peaceful death depends of the care, the treatment and using the palliative method for the treatment.⁶ At the terminal phase the patient not experience the death consciously, because of the lower breathing function (dyspnea) and the look of their face.

The decision to shift from the curative to palliative care can be taken when:

- The curative patient can't be treated with the medical treatment
- The patient needs specific treatment that is a palliative and reduces the physical and mental distress⁷.

The transition from one to another care is often delayed from the doctors, because he had to fortify that the patient is with the terminal stage of his disease, and it obviously needs this change. In managing the transition from one to another type the essential is to protect the interests and need of the patient, respecting the family expectations and helping them to reduce the feeling of guiltiness, and thinking that they have done everything in their power. We should always have in mind that the prolonged curative care, which is actually aimless, can create wrong expectation and serious dilemmas.

Comprehensive medical and psychosocial approach suggests that the period of transition from curative to palliative care needs:

- Development of key aspects of care for patients in terminal stage of disease and adapted to cultural and environmental landmarks
- Involvement of family in all decision-making process from the beginning the treatment, during the treatment and especially in the transition to palliative treatment. The decision should be cooperative with the health care team and the family members. Depends of the condition of the patient if the clinic needs, allows the patient to be included in the decisions.

Practical life tips

"the direct social support and the procedure for negotiate with the disease refers to the application of psychosocial skills and methods of establishing a positive therapeutically transfer , motivation and clarification, activation of resources, bear down the problems and bringing the patient for acceptable concept of life and death".

According to the WHO the palliative treatment and care of the patient understood: " *active comprehensive care for patient whose disease no longer*

⁵ C. B. Thompson, "Apoptosis in the pathogenesis in treatment of disease", *Science* (1995), 267, pp. 1456-1462.

⁶ C. Won Gunten C, A. Romer, " Designing and sustaining a Palliative care and Home Hospice Program", *Journal of palliative medicine* (2000), 3, pp. 115-122.

⁷ A. Regaard, "Palliative care. The principles of pain management in advanced cancer", *British Journal of Community Nursing*, (2000), 5 (8), pp. 382-386, 388.

responds to the curative treatment". Control of the pain and other symptoms, psychological, social and spiritual problem that the patients are facing with are imperative. The purpose of palliative treatment is to achieve the highest possible life quality of patient and their family members.

Defining the palliative care long time was difficult, primarily due to the new programs that were constantly changed and fed. The definition of the palliative care over the years was elaborated according to the development of the medicine in different countries. Especial challenge at the definition of the palliative care is the fact that it is not restricted in term of authority, age, type of the disease or pathology, but is related to the assessment of prognosis to specific individual needs of the patient and his family. The fact is that the palliative care is only applicable at the time when the death is imminent.

QUEERING DEATH: DYING AND MOURNING IN THE ROMANIAN GAY COMMUNITY

SEBASTIAN E. BARTOȘ¹ AND CRISTINA MARIA SPERANZA²

The understanding of non-mainstream sexualities by social scientists has changed visibly in the last four decades. While mid-twentieth-century authors viewed homosexuality as deviant and pathological, contemporary research regards “sexual minorities” as discriminated subcultures.³ Similar changes took place in Romania, where studies on discrimination⁴ and cultural practices⁵ have replaced medical writing on “sexual perversion.”⁶

Research on Romanian homosexualities has mainly focused on two issues: discrimination and risky sexual behaviour. Several opinion polls showed that a large majority of Romanians would find it unacceptable to have gay neighbours, friends, or colleagues; and about half of the respondents to a survey labelled homosexuality as “abnormal.”⁷ Gay people themselves widely report marginalisation and abuse⁸. Research on sexual behaviour (unsurprisingly) revealed a widespread use of Internet chat rooms and dating sites for seeking partners. However, most aspects of gay life in Romania remain unknown to researchers, while lesbians and bisexuals people are virtually invisible. Death and bereavement in same-gender couples is one of the many issues left unexplored.

The present paper draws on queer theory to make sense of a series of narrative vignettes. Death and bereavement are explored through the personal experience of the first author mourning his partner of the same gender. Consequently, we do not claim that this piece of work is either objective, or representative of any group. We do believe, however, in the value of narrating and analysing one’s own story; it is both a provocative way to gain insight and an effective instrument to communicate with the reader.

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³ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995.

⁴ G. Bădescu, M. Kivu, R. Popescu, C. Rughiniș, D. Sandu, and O. Voicu, *Viața în cuplu (BOP, mai 2007)* [Life as a couple (Public opinion barometer, May 2007)], Bucharest, Open Society Foundation, 2007.

⁵ Kim Longfield, Hibist Astatke, Reid Smith, Georgia McPeak, and Jim Ayers, “Men who have sex with men in southeastern Europe: Underground and at increased risk for HIV/STIs.” *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, vol. 9 (2007), no. 5, pp. 437-487.

⁶ Stelian Rândașu, „Perversiune (sexuală)” [Perversion (sexual)], in Aurelia Sirbu (Ed.), *Psihiatrie clinică: ghid alfabetic* [Clinical Psychiatry: Alphabetical Guide], Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1979, pp. 409-417.

⁷ Bădescu et al., *Life as a couple*.

⁸ Ibid.

The Context: Gay Men in Romania

Gay rights organizations and legal protection for non-heterosexual people have only recently emerged in Romania. Before the mid-twentieth century, there were no laws to specifically incriminate sexual behaviour between people of the same gender, and the authors do not know of any official groups or organizations concerned with sexuality. "Acts of sexual inversion" were, however, criminalized in 1936, and remained so throughout the subsequent authoritarian regimes. In the 1990's, homosexuality was only illegal if it sparked "public scandal."⁹ In the early 2000's, Romania's intention to join the European Union prompted the Government to finally decriminalize homosexuality and sponsor anti-discrimination laws.¹⁰

Vignette 1

When I was first invited to this conference, I immediately thought to myself that I had nothing to say about death. Sexuality was my firmly established research interest, and I could not see any relevant connection between sexual orientation and mourning. An image came to my mind: grave academics citing statistics and splitting hairs, while automatically assuming that all people who die are mourned by a typical heterosexual family. Unsurprisingly, I felt no enthusiasm to participate.

It took me a few days to realize that my initial reluctance was not something to demotivate me, but something for me to analyse and challenge. I also realized that I had misjudged the potential of the conference: the organizing committee actually encouraged me to write on mourning and sexuality, and the conference itself was, of course, a context for constructive dialogue.

But I still had no theory of my own, no policy recommendations, no surprising results, and, as a matter of fact, no data. So I set upon myself the task of raising questions. What if the person who has just passed away was in love with someone of the same gender? What if they identified as gay or lesbian or bisexual? What if they relied on friends instead of a family? What if they had no officially recognized "husband" or "wife"? What if they had several significant relationships at the same time?

In order to raise all these questions, I decided to use my own experience as someone who had just lost a same-gender partner. Tom¹¹ and I had had an on and off relationship before he left Romania to pursue his career abroad. He died there a few weeks after his departure.

⁹ This phrase, infamously left undefined, epitomises gay invisibility. See Pierre Bourdieu, "Appendix: Some Questions on the Gay and Lesbian Movement", in *La Domination masculine*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1998. Eng. trans. R. Nice, *Masculine Domination*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2001.

¹⁰ Critics often point out the Western origin of gay rights in order to dismiss them. See, for example, Creţeanu, A., & Coman, A. (1998). Homosexuality in the written media in Romania. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://accept.org.ro/presaeng.html#presa>.

¹¹ All the names have been changed for ethical considerations.

Vignette 1 offers an informative example of how sexuality research is marginalised. The concerns of non-heterosexual people are often construed and secondary and negligible, as they are assumed to belong to small, well-delineated minority.¹² Researchers then accept marginalisation without challenging it, just as the first author of this paper was tempted to avoid a conference that was likely to focus on “mainstream” issues. Avoidance, in turn, perpetuates the invisibility of non-heterosexual people and of the researchers that aim to understand them.

The Analytical Framework: Queer Theory

Queer theory stems from Michel Foucault's works on the history of social sciences. Foucault was especially concerned with the concepts and categories used in criminology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis, as he argued that the objects that these fields aim to study are not objectively given. Such objects as “mental illness” or “crime” are constructions that emerged in a specific social-historical context.¹³ While people of the same gender have always had romantic and sexual relationships, “homosexuality” is itself not a natural category: it was not until the nineteenth century that physicians and legal scholars started treating “homosexuals” as a distinct type of human being¹⁴. Foucault's arguments were carried further by queer theory: such authors as Judith Butler¹⁵ and Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick came to realize that the marginalisation of homosexuality was strongly related to the marginalisation of femininity, disability, polyamory etc. This complex system of exclusion was named “heteronormativity”; those who accepted and even rejoiced over being excluded called themselves “queer.”¹⁶ Queer theory itself may be defined as “a body of work concerned with the critique of heteronormativity.”¹⁷

Of all the tenets queer theory borrows from Foucault, two are especially relevant to the present paper. First, whatever constitutes objective reality to science and common sense needs to be thoroughly scrutinised. Second, those who fight oppression often fail to challenge the categories used by the oppressor. For example, gay rights organisations reinforce the idea that there is a distinct “sexual minority” or “gay and lesbian community”; they

¹² On the “minoritising” of lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet*, Berkley, University of California Press, 1991, esp. pp. 83-90.

¹³ Michel Foucault, *L'Archeologie du savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *L'Histoire de la sexualité*, Paris, Gallimard, 1978-1984.

¹⁵ See *Gender Trouble*, London, Routledge, 1990. Second edition, 1999.

¹⁶ Michael Warner, “Introduction”, in Michael Warner (Ed.), *Fear of a Queer Planet*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

¹⁷ Victoria Clarke, Sonja J. Ellis, Elizabeth Peel, and Damien W. Riggs, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer Psychology: An Introduction*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 40.

simultaneously speak up against discrimination and confirm the divide between homo- and heterosexual people.¹⁸

In analysing queer bereavement, we question such supposedly stable benchmarks as funeral rituals, the family, and even death itself. Our critique follows the lead of queer writing in being sceptical about such simple solutions as “non-discrimination” and “equal rights.”

Queering Death

Vignette 2

On Easter day, a few minutes before midnight, I was preparing to go to bed. I wasn't sleepy yet, and I felt like spending some more time online. So I decided to check my profile on a dating site I hadn't been using for a while. When browsing through the profiles from my area, I immediately recognized Tom's picture. Something was wrong with his profile: it was called “in memoriam,” and it showed the image of a burning candle. The allusions to death made me feel uncomfortable, and I grew annoyed with the profile: it was a bad joke, or maybe Tom's over-dramatized goodbye to his life in Romania. I visited his profile on another networking site right away, and it conveyed the same message. People were posting incredulous questions, while those more knowledgeable were confirming Tom's death, with both stories and pictures of his grave.

In the next few hours, it all got even more confusing. According to Max, Tom had died exactly two weeks earlier, but Paul told me they had spoken a day or two after that date. Natalie put some photos from the funeral service, and posted a link to the undertaker's site, which Mike admitted were rather convincing, but could still have been easily faked in a photo editor. Tom had fallen from his window on the second floor, Natalie told everyone, and it must have been an accident, according to Andra, although Nellie was convinced Tom had killed himself, and Max said suicide was the official conclusion of the police, but he wasn't ruling out foul play.

After listening to all the competing versions, I could draw the likely but still uncertain conclusion that Tom was dead. In a few days, I gave up searching for any kind of ultimate truth, or even having my own opinion. Sometimes I still have nightmares in which he returns and I'm upset with his sick joke; but I have otherwise accepted his absence.

The uncertainty of Tom's death in *Vignette 2* shows how death is not the stable benchmark it is often assumed to be. There is a possibility for death to be performed, a possibility that literature has always acknowledged and explored.¹⁹

The lack of a single objective reality seems to be especially pregnant in queer bereavement. Death is usually a moment of (re)writing one's biography: those who organize the funeral need to agree on a version of the deceased person's life that will be retold by the priest/speaker. Thus, an official version is

¹⁸ The complex advantages and disadvantages of having gay rights movements have prompted several authors to explore alternative solutions. See Warner, Introduction; Bourdieu, Appendix.

¹⁹ For a relevant example, see Luigi Pirandello, *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, Milano, Fratelli Treves, 1904.

established and affirmed against “gossip” and “dirty secrets.” In the case of Tom's death, an empirically valid truth seems to be impossible to achieve, and there is no hierarchy among the existing versions.

Queering Relationships

Vignette 3

At the time of his death, Tom had several significant relationships, none of which enjoyed any official recognition. He had been raised in a foster home, and had a very warm friendship with two of the women who had taken care of him – he would visit one of them almost every day, confide in her, and befriend her family. I had an on-and-off romantic relationship with him, a relationship that was always open to one-night-stands, crushes, or even other long-term relationships. When we met, Tom was still thinking a lot about his previous partner, and I myself had other emotional commitments. Moreover, Tom accepted the engagement ring offered by an American man he had met on a dating site. So I know of at least four or five people who were very close to Tom, including myself. But none of us was his biological relative or legally-recognized spouse, and, therefore, none of us has ever heard more than rumours about his death.

Considering the complexity of Tom's relationships (as described in *Vignette 3*), it seems unlikely that such institutional reforms as “gay marriage” would have been particularly helpful. Such legal changes, while definitely helpful and important to many, still maintain boundaries between official and non-official relationships; and, as such, they continue excluding a lot of people. When policy makers prohibit discrimination, they often find that they cannot enumerate all the groups that face marginalisation, and they “invariably close with an embarrassed 'etc.' at the end of the list”²⁰ Indeed, as long as categories are maintained, fighting discrimination seems to be an endless task.

The failure of “traditional” social structures can be contrasted to the (relative) success of the Internet. Social networking sites and virtual cemeteries have allowed Tom's friends to find out about his death, see his grave, and share their feelings. While the information circulating on the Internet is infamously uncertain, this was still the only environment that did not exclude Tom's “unofficial” loved ones.

Queering Mourning and Funeral Rites

Vignette 4

When I accepted Tom's death, I instantly felt the need to say goodbye. Visiting his grave seemed a good idea at first, but it quickly became meaningless. I decided that making three farewell acts was best. I had to be brave like Tom, to do what he would have done – this was the idea behind the gestures, an unoriginal, trite, but invigorating idea.

The first farewell was talking to my parents. Tom never met them, although, as far as I can tell, he would have liked to. So I asked them to sit down, and told them I

²⁰ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 182.

had a male partner who has just died. Taking long pauses to cry, I tried to make a coherent story out of my relationship with Tom.

The second farewell was finishing our common projects. I emailed some of our collaborators, and asked them to put Tom's photo, with a black frame, at the end of a film that was being edited. I had a short speech at the première of this film, in which I talked about Tom's openness about his sexuality, and the exemplary nature thereof. And I have finished a website we were working on before he died.

The third farewell is yet to come. This paper may be it – I'm a researcher, and maybe this is the best way I can say goodbye. I don't know yet, but this paper may be it.

The “farewells” described in *Vignette 4* transcend the boundary between the religious and the secular. While contemporary mourning often takes place outside traditional religious institutions, it is still heavily influenced by sacred funeral rituals. Roadside memorials for the victims of car accidents are obviously inspired by the religious monuments raised in similar places²¹; and secular memorial ceremonies are also very similar to funeral services.²² Religious practices have also served as an (unconscious) inspiration for the first author's grieving: he has immediately decided to perform *three* acts of good-bye; he also chose and planned these according to Tom's (presumed) preferences, as if he were somehow able to see or feel them.

Conclusion

The present paper used a personal narrative in order to scrutinise the common framework within which death is construed. The mourning family, the funeral and the grave, and even the solemn certainty of death are questioned by this story.

While a single personal experience cannot reflect all the relevant shades of queer mourning, it can help to pin down a few issues for forthcoming inquiries. First, the need to retrieve and analyse more experiences of Romanian lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people is an obvious task for the near future. Second, a deeper inquiry is needed into the way established categories work (and fail) in queer mourning. The narrative above has showed how the construction of relationships as more or less “close” can hurt people; this downside of belonging may be a particularly interesting subject for further research.

²¹ Olga Nesporova, “New Phenomenon: Roadside Memorials”, in *Dying and Death in 18th-21st Century Europe. Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Series Historica, Special Issue*, 2010, pp. 423-439.

²² Christine Schlott, “A last greeting to the deceased – secular funeral services in Leipzig, East Germany”, in *Dying and Death in 18th-21st Century Europe. Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Series Historica, Special Issue*, 2010, pp. 463-468.

SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA UNDER TURKISH LAW

ÖZHAN HANCILAR¹

Introduction

Along with its social and cultural contexts, suicide and euthanasia are related to law, especially criminal law. In this paper, these acts will be analyzed briefly under Turkish Law, particularly Turkish Criminal Law.

Similar to *many other law systems in other states*, committing *suicide is not a crime under Turkish law*. However, instigating or assisting others to commit suicide is penalized by Turkish Penal Code. This crime is *regulated by a specific article* (Article 84) in the Turkish Penal Code. Article 84 is of crucial importance for honour killings in Turkey.

Euthanasia is not legal in Turkey. It is prohibited by *the By-law of the Ministry of Health on Patients' Rights*. There is no *specific provision* in the Turkish Penal Code relating to the euthanasia. *With the absence of a specific provision in the Turkish Penal Code dealing with the euthanasia*, there is a broad agreement among the scholars that the person who performs active euthanasia *commits intentional killing*.

Suicide under Turkish Law

A. Article 84 of Turkish Penal Code

Turkey has low suicide rates, both for men and women. *According to the 2010 data of Turkish Statistical Institute, 2933 people committed suicide in that year.*² *Committing suicide is not a crime in Turkey; however*, it is illegal to instigate or help somebody commit suicide. In 2005, the new Turkish Penal Code replaced the former one. *Article 84 of the reformed Turkish Penal Code penalizes people who instigate and assist others to commit suicide.*

Article 84 (instigation to suicide) which is the only provision of the Penal Code that addresses suicide states:

1) Any person who incites, or encourages, another person to commit suicide, or who strengthens an existing decision to commit suicide or who, in any way, assists a person in committing the act of suicide, shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of two to five years.

2) Where death occurs, the person shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of four to ten years.

3) Any person who publicly encourages others to commit suicide shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of three to eight years.

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² Turkish Statistical Institute, Suicide Statistics 2010, p. 1. The data is available at http://www.tuik.gov.tr/IcerikGetir.do?istab_id=23, 05.10.2011 (Hereinafter Suicide Statistics 2010).

4) Any person who directs another to commit suicide, where the capacity of that person to understand the meaning and consequences of the act is compromised or lacking, or if a person compels another person to commit suicide by using threat or force, they shall be culpable of the offence of intentional killing.

B. Article 84 and Honour Killings

More men than women commit suicide in globally.³ Also in Turkey, 2073 out of 2933 suicide victims in 2010 were males.⁴ However, in eastern and south-eastern Turkey, the sex ratio of the victims *is quite different from the* global and national trends. More women than men commit suicide *in some provinces of these regions*. Among the suicide victims, 6 of the 8 in Bitlis and 4 of the 5 in Hakkari provinces were women.⁵ *Also in many provinces of these regions*, the number of the male and female suicide victims is so close or sometimes equal. Among the suicide victims, 12 of the 24 in Ağrı, 3 of the 7 in Ardahan, 7 of the 14 in Mardin, 11 of the 23 in Muş, 4 of the 8 in Siirt, 11 of the 22 in Şırnak, and 22 of the 47 in Van provinces were women.⁶

Yakın Ertürk, “UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women” *asserted in her report to the* Human Rights Council of United Nations: “Owing to [...] statistical anomalies, there has been intense debate about the reasons behind the suicides of women. Media and non-governmental organizations have expressed concern that many suicides could indeed be honour crimes, with the family either forcing the victim to commit suicide or successfully disguising murder as suicide. Some observers have speculated that higher penalties for customary killings under the reformed Penal Code may have motivated many families to disguise honour murders as suicides.”⁷

In the last decade, Turkey has made some legal changes to prevent honour crimes. The notorious Article 462 was abolished in 2003 within a reform package for the EU membership. As mentioned in Yakın Ertürk’s report, the reformed Penal Code of 2005 imposed harsh punishments for customary killings. The qualified cases of intentional killing are penalized with the penalty of aggravated life imprisonment by Article 82 of the new Penal Code.

³ http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicide_rates_chart/en/index.html, 05.10.2011.

⁴ *Suicide Statistics* 2010, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.

⁷ Yakın Ertürk, UN Special Report on Violence against Women - Mission to Turkey, 2006, para. 37. (Hereinafter Report on Violence against Women). The report is available at <http://www.universalhumanrightsindex.org/documents/848/1027/document/en/text.html>, 05.10.2011.

Committing homicide with the motive of customary tradition (*töre*) is one of these “qualified cases”.⁸

Also, Article 29 of the new Penal Code limited the concept of “*unjust provocation*” and required that the act of the victim should be of an “unjust act” to be called an *unjust provocation*. In many cases, “the honour excuse” was accepted as a “mitigating circumstance” under Article 51 of the old Turkish Penal Code by the criminal courts. According to the old Article 51, “If a person commits a crime in the heat of anger or under influence of grief caused by an unjust provocation”, the punishment prescribed for the crime shall be reduced. The reduction was greater for the grievous and severe provocations. Because of the general social acceptance of honor in Turkish culture and society, sentence reductions in the name of honor were rarely challenged.⁹

Despite these legal reforms in Turkish Law, the *violence against women in the name of honour* and tradition has continued. The families have exploited the loopholes of the legal system to avoid harsh punishments. The families have forced their daughters to commit suicide instead of killing them. A civil society organization worker said to the New York Times in 2006: “Families of disgraced girls are choosing between sacrificing a son to a life in prison by designating him to kill his sister or forcing their daughters to kill themselves. Rather than losing two children, most opt for the latter option.”¹⁰

According to the women’s groups in south-eastern Turkey, “The evidence suggests that a growing number of girls considered to be dishonoured are being locked in a room for days with rat poison, a pistol or a rope, and told by their families that the only thing resting between their disgrace and redemption is death.”¹¹

Ertürk also asserted in her report: “The suicides occurring in the south-eastern/eastern region are intimately linked to violence emanating from the understandings of *namus*¹² and *töre*.¹³ There are reasonable grounds to assume that some of the recorded suicide cases are indeed disguised murders. In other cases, family members appear to have instigated the suicide. While the officials indicate that every case of suicide is thoroughly investigated and that the necessary forensic investigations are undertaken, more must be done to identify and resolve cases involving criminal responsibility.”¹⁴

⁸ See Turkish Penal Code, article 82.

⁹ Violence against Women in Turkey, Report to the Committee against Torture, p. 354. The report is available at http://www.omct.org/files/2004/07/2409/eng_2003_09_turkey.pdf, 05.10.2011.

¹⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/16/world/europe/16turkey.html>, 05.10.2011.

¹¹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/16/world/europe/16turkey.html>, 05.10.2011.

¹² In Turkish, it means “honour”.

¹³ In Turkish, it means “customary tradition”.

¹⁴ Report on Violence against Women, the preamble.

There is no doubt that such kinds of acts are covered by Article 84 of the Penal Code. Instigating or assisting others to commit suicide is penalized with two to five years imprisonment by the first paragraph of this provision. If death occurs, the penalty raises to four to ten years. (Article 84/2). According to the Article 84/4, the ones who use threat or force against the others to commit suicide shall be held responsible for intentional killing. In the light of this clear expression of the provision, the judges should apply Article 81 and Article 82 of Penal Code. Article 81 of the Penal Code which penalizes intentional killing provides: "Any person who intentionally kills another shall be sentenced to life imprisonment." As mentioned above, committing homicide with the motive of customary tradition (töre) is penalized with the penalty of aggravated life imprisonment by Article 82 (k). Also committing homicide against an ascendant or descendant relative, a spouse or a sibling is penalized with the same penalty by Article 82 (d).

Euthanasia under Turkish Law

Before analyzing the euthanasia and other related issues under Turkish law, it will be helpful to give some brief information about euthanasia.

Euthanasia may be conducted with consent, which is called voluntary euthanasia or without consent which is called non-voluntary euthanasia.¹⁵ Voluntary euthanasia signifies that the patient voluntarily requests death. Non-voluntary euthanasia signifies that the patient has not requested euthanasia and cannot decide on the issue because of his/her incompetence. Proxy decision-makers (e.g., family members, legal representatives) may request that the patient's life should be ended. Involuntary euthanasia refers to a person's life being ended against his/her wishes.¹⁶

Euthanasia is also classified as either active or passive. Active euthanasia refers to that class of euthanasia wherein the death is directly and actively caused by another person. Passive euthanasia refers to those cases of euthanasia wherein death occurs because of absence of an intervention that would have prolonged life; passive euthanasia usually refers to withholding or withdrawing life-supporting therapy.¹⁷

A. Under Patients' Rights By-law

The only provision of the Turkish law that addresses euthanasia is in the By-law of the Ministry of Health on Patients' Rights of 1998. Article 13 of this

¹⁵ Vaibhav Goel, "Euthanasia – A Dignified End of Life!", in Rajitha Tadikonda ed., *Physician Assisted Euthanasia*, Hyderabad, Icfai University Press, 2009, p. 47.

¹⁶ D. M. Sawyer, J. R. Williams, and F. Lowy, "Canadian physicians and euthanasia: 2. Definitions and distinctions", *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 148 (1993), p. 1464.

¹⁷ Mark Sklansky, "Neonatal euthanasia: moral considerations and criminal liability", *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 27 (2001), p. 5.

By-law clearly prohibits the euthanasia. Article 13 states: "Euthanasia shall be prohibited. It shall be prohibited to take life, by medical methods or in any other manner whatsoever. The taking of a person's life shall not be permitted, either at his/her request or at the request of another person."

Article 13 of the Patients' Rights By-law prohibits both voluntary and non-voluntary euthanasia with the phrase of "either at his/her request or at the request of another person." There is no doubt that active euthanasia is covered by Article 13, regardless of whether it is voluntary or non-voluntary. Passive non-voluntary euthanasia is also covered by the same provision due to the absence of the wish of the patient to die. However, it is not clear whether passive voluntary euthanasia is prohibited by Article 13 of the Patients' Rights By-law along with active euthanasia and passive non-voluntary euthanasia since the patients have the right to refuse or terminate treatment under the same By-law.

The rights of refusal or termination of treatment is expressed in Article 25 of the Patients' Rights By-law. According to Article 25, the patient or his/her legal representatives or relatives have to be informed about the possible consequences of the refusal or termination of treatment. This procedure is to be evidenced by a written document. In these circumstances, the patient can refuse the treatment.

Article 25 should be considered along with Article 24 which deals with the patient's consent to a medical procedure. Article 24 provides: "The patient's consent to a medical procedure is necessary. If the patient is a minor or incompetent person, the authorization of his tutor is required. If the patient's guardian is unavailable or if the patient is not able to express his wishes, this condition is not required. [...] Except in a case of an emergency [...], consent may be withdrawn at any time" According to Article 24, "...withdrawal of consent implies that the patient refuses the treatment. However, once the medical treatment has begun, the withdrawal of consent shall be authorized only if such withdrawal is not inconvenient from a medical standpoint."

It is hard to interpret Articles 13, 24 and 25 together. These provisions fail to provide guidance on passive voluntary euthanasia for health care professionals. It is not clear whether competent patients in Turkey can demand to stop the treatment which has already been initiated even if this will lead to the patient's immediate death.¹⁸ It is not clear whether passive voluntary euthanasia is permissible under Patients' Rights By-law.

B. Under Turkish Penal Code

There is no specific provision in the Turkish Penal Code relating to the euthanasia. Similar to other countries, it is clear that involuntary euthanasia

¹⁸ Tolga Güven, Gürkan Sert, "Advance Directives in Turkey's Cultural Context: Examining the Potential Benefits for the Implementation of Patient Rights", *Bioethics* 24 (2010), p. 131.

constitutes intentional killing under Turkish penal law, since it refers to end somebody's life against his/her will.

There is also a broad agreement among the scholars that the person who performs active euthanasia commits intentional killing.¹⁹ With the absence of a specific provision in the Turkish Penal Code dealing with the euthanasia, the person who performs active euthanasia should be prosecuted under Article 81 of the Turkish Penal Code, regardless of whether the euthanasia is voluntary or non-voluntary.

As mentioned above, according to the Article 81 "Any person who intentionally kills another shall be sentenced to life imprisonment." It is no doubt that this punishment regarding active voluntary euthanasia is very harsh. Even with the presence of the wish of the patient to die (voluntary euthanasia); the person who performs active euthanasia is not excused from criminal responsibility.

However, the Turkish courts may consider the active voluntary euthanasia as a discretionary mitigating circumstance under Article 62 of the Penal Code. Under this provision, where there are grounds for discretionary mitigating circumstances, imprisonment for twenty-five years shall be imposed instead of the penalty of life imprisonment. In Article 62(2), the background, social relations and the potential effects of the penalty on the future of the offender are cited as examples of discretionary mitigating circumstances. There is no obstacle for considering the "wish of the patient" and "humanitarian purpose" by the judge as discretionary mitigating circumstances under Article 62(2).

There are two options *regarding passive euthanasia* before the *Turkish criminal courts*:

1) To find the accused guilty of intentional killing by the act of omission and apply Article 83 of Penal Code.

Under Article 83 any person causing death of a person due to failure in performing of a legal obligation or requirement may be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of twenty to twenty five years if the offence committed requires life imprisonment. According to the provision, the court can also choose not to reduce the penalty.

2) To acquit the accused of euthanasia charges, considering that the passive euthanasia is legal. This option is more likely in passive voluntary euthanasia cases.

Conclusion

Instigating or assisting others to commit suicide is punished by Article 84 of the Turkish Penal Code. This provision is of crucial importance for honour killings in Turkey. It is a concern that many suicides of women could be honour crimes,

¹⁹ M.Özen, M. E. Şahin, "Ötenazi", *Ankara Barosu Dergisi*, 68 (2010), p. 29.

especially in eastern and south-eastern Turkey, with the family forcing the victim to commit suicide.

Turkish criminal courts should not hesitate to apply article 84 in the cases of honour suicide, as recommended in UN Special Report on Violence against Women. The punishments in Article 84 should be given to the perpetrators "that serve to control women or curb their personal autonomy regardless of whether the crime is committed in the name of honour or custom".²⁰

In Turkish legislation, Article 13 *of the By-law of the Ministry of Health on Patients' Rights* is the only provision relating to the euthanasia. Article 13 prohibits *voluntary and non-voluntary euthanasia*. Despite this clear provision, there are serious loopholes regarding euthanasia in Turkish law:

1) By-laws have a low ranking in the hierarchy of norms in Turkish legal system. An important law principle recognized by most legal systems is that punishments shall be established only by codes. Therefore, provisions of the By-law *on Patients' Rights* are of no importance in criminal procedure.

2) There is no *specific provision* in the Turkish Penal Code relating to the euthanasia despite its criminal character. Thus, there is ambiguity in Turkish law on the issue of "punishment for euthanasia."

This ambiguity can encourage the misuse of euthanasia in Turkey. Turkish legislation should adopt specific penal provisions to regulate the euthanasia which some states have already adopted. In our opinion, the euthanasia should be permitted under certain conditions, such as the presence of an incurable disease associated with severe pain or irreversible coma.

²⁰ Report on Violence against Women, para. 79.

THE DISCOURSE OF BIOPOWER AGAINST DISTURBANCES OF THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

ANNA E. KUBIAK¹

„A new right arises: of sentencing to live and allowing to die”²

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present interpretative horizons³, within the scope of which judgements are formulated. I am also going to outline historical changes that had an influence on the dramatic turn (called "Copernican revolution" by Peter Singer) in the ethical reflexion. Along with them, understanding of this what is popularly regarded as obvious, common sense is changing. This dramatic change of this what we can call the public moral imagination⁴ – stressing its polyphony – was noticed and emphasised in works of bioethicists. On the one side, the history of the euthanasia is a history of ill persons, and on the other, a history taking place at court-rooms and offices of experts. Euthanasia shall be considered as an ethical and legal-political concept. It is the area where a symbiosis of medicine and politics takes place to the highest extent. "A biological given is as such immediately political, and the political is as such immediately biological".⁵ My aim is to set the debate over euthanasia in a biopolitical context, which here becomes a thanato-political context.

Bureaucratised death versus autonomy of an individual

Despite the fact that the term "euthanasia" originates in the antiquity, the modern discourse on this phenomenon, its frames, nuances and as the subject of a public debate are results of 20th century cultural transformations. Processes, which prepared this turn and which set the tone of the euthanatic discourse are: medicalisation, bureaucratisation of dying condition, which influences the publicity of the decisive area of medical staff and patients and their families, rationalisation of bio-authority, pluralisation and tensions between experts, pluralisation of outlook on life and as a consequence, various understanding of issues related with life, death and suffering.

Medical authority in the scope of competence achieved a high level of interfering in nature. A historical project on the control over a human body,

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² Michel Foucault, *Trzeba bronić społeczeństwa (Society Must Be Defended)*, Warszawa, KR, 1998, p. 238.

³ Leigh Turner, "Euthanasia and Distinctive Horizons of Moral Reasoning", in *Mortality*, vol. 2, no. 3, (1997), pp. 191- 204.

⁴Ibid., p. 191.

⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Suwerenna władza i nagie życie (Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life)*, Warszawa, Prószyński S-ka, 2008, p. 201.

which founding fathers were Rene Descartes, La Mettrie and Francis Bacon resulted in an ambition to reign over the nature. It is expressed by the conviction that death is a defeat of medicine. The phenomenon that in the past was regarded as natural is rationalised as something measurable, predictable and able to be manipulated.⁶ As far as death is concerned, the most explicit change is a decreasing amount of *mors repentina et improvisa* (the sudden death, apart from the 20th century phenomenon of road accidents) and prolonged (and maximally lengthen) process of dying. Medicalisation is accompanied by increasing bureaucratisation (accompanying even the movement of hospices.⁷ Former family physicians were replaced by officials of particular institutions, which follow strict reporting and regulative procedures. In consequence, it indicates a publicity of details of death and its causes. In case of such need, institutions of court and public prosecutor are included in these proceedings. Excessive codification and juridification of morality eclipses individual ethical reflection. Any activities that violate the law, regulations are immediately notices, restrained and penalised. Bureaucratisation along with rationality of morality precludes privacy of death, starting from its causes and condition, up to a funeral.

A decline of authorities and expanding sphere of advisors influence pluralisation of ethical stands. For example, one important condition that decision about terminating life should be conscious requires a psychiatric diagnosis. In other cases, legitimating opinion regarding patient's last will is expressed by the family. Bioethicists, doctors, philosophers and lawyers take part in discussions on social consequences in setting legal precedents and change of law. There is still, especially in Poland, a high consideration of Christian churches, which more often take the floor in discussions over matters of life and death (euthanasia, in vitro, since a long time abortion).

Processes of individualisation transferred the responsibility of decision to individuals. The decay of common symbolic universe⁸ created a space of universes competing with each other. Especially Protestantism together with the ethics of accumulation, by protecting against death, leaves an individual alone with his or her fear.⁹ Simultaneously, there has been a growth of diagnosing and prognosing possibilities, and along with the arise of patients rights and a change of patients-doctors relations – the necessity of informing patients. Thus, terminally ill people are aware of incoming experiences and are

⁶ Turner, *Euthanasia and Distinctive Horizons*, 193.

⁷ Anna E. Kubiak, Maria Surikova, "The Hospice Movement: The Egzample of Conflict between The Process of Personalized and Rationalized Institutionalization", in *Sociologia*, (2010), vol. 42, no 3, pp. 237-254.

⁸ Thomas Luckmann, *Niewidzialna religia (Invisible Religion)*, Kraków, Nomos, 1996.

⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Wymiana symboliczna i śmierć (Symbolic Exchange and Death)*, Warszawa, Sic!, 2007, p. 184.

given the possibility to make a decision whether to become reconciled with them. It is specifically expressed in practice, starting from the role of patients' rights and their decisions regarding ways of treatment, analgesics and life saving procedures. The value of a person and his/her dignity is a crowning argument in the debate over euthanasia and the project of so called "living will". This debate is influenced by various approaches – depending on particular worldviews and doctrines – to the issues of termination of life, medical practices, and the sense of human suffering, treating bodies of dying and dead ones. Simultaneously, according to Foucault, expanding the space of rights and freedom is followed by the process of mutual superimposing of control constraints and inscribing a private life into the national order. The right to live is strictly related with the ban to die and the obligation of caring about a biological body, *corpus*.

Thus, we observe a kind of *aporia* of cultural processes. Individualism, the value of autonomy, knowledge, self-consciousness, opening the scope of new decisions on one side, bureaucratisation, accumulation of authority instruments in the hands of medicine (having a practical evidence in the form of the possibility to prescribe medicaments) and the legislation penetrating issues of life and death on the other.

Copernican revolution

"After ruling our thoughts and our decisions about life and death for nearly two thousand years, the traditional Western ethic has collapsed" – wrote Peter Singer¹⁰. The groundbreaking period indicated by this Australian bioethicist is 1990s, when British court permitted doctors to terminate life of Anthony Bland and the American court acquitted Doctor Jack Kevorkian, who helped in the suicide of Thomas Hyde. In USA already in 1975, there was a public debate in this subject matter, when parents of Karen Ann Quinlan asked doctors to allow disconnect their daughter, who was in coma, from a respirator. The case was brought into a court and, with a support of Bishop Casey, a respirator was acknowledged as an extraordinary life-support mean, thus it was possible to resign from using it. In 1957, the Holy See approved the division into extraordinary and ordinary life-support systems. Pope Pius XII decreed that artificial life-support of patients who are not promising to recover is an extraordinary activity and is not morally obligatory. After disconnecting her from a respirator, Quinlan started to breath on her own and "lived" for ten years more.

However, it was in 1990s when American and German courts faced such complicated dilemmas such as: whether to support life of a fetus in a uterus of a brain-dead woman.¹¹ Singer, in his classical work, with a relentless

¹⁰ Peter Singer, *O życiu i śmierci. Upadek etyki tradycyjnej (Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics)*, Warszawa, PIW, 1997, p. 9.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 17-24.

consequence draws conclusions from an analysis of documents and decisions of parliaments and courts in the Western Europe and United States. Singer puts in the light of consequentialism the phenomena that are still covered for public opinion. Singer emphatically shows how at persistence of the dogma about sanctity of an innocent life, medical and legislative practice crushed foundations of this traditional ethics.

Introduction of a new definition of death as a brain death raised difficult, ambivalent situations. Theory is not completely translated into practice. There is a disparity between life and death: „zone of indistinction”¹² which involves doctors and lawyers into logistic contradictions. New existences, called by Gaylin *neomortos*¹³ persons at a vegetative state, occupy an indefinite zone, between life and death. According to this definition, a dead person remains florid¹⁴ and is even able to give birth to a child. New questions arise, such as those asked by Singer: „Assuming that one is dead when the brain is dead, when does one die if the brain was not possessed in fact?”). Singer¹⁵ notices that the first of "a series of dramatic changes" did not face practically any resistance. This bioethicist indicates that it is the second significant factor of changes – heart transplantation – that had an influence on changing the definition of death. The first heart transplantation was done by Doctor Christian Barnard in December 1967 in South Africa. Singer presents first documents of the Harvard Committee, where “with an unusual sincerity”¹⁶ it is stated that introduction of a new definition of death is necessary to relieve patients’ families, hospitals and to free hospital beds for awaiting patients, as well as it is important due to the possibility of transplantations. This revolution took place not only without any opposition but even with a support of the Church. Pope Pius XII ceded the definition of death to doctors. Paradoxically, it was profitable for the pro-life movement as it eliminated hard cases, when disconnecting from a respirator people regarded dead according to the classical definition, would cause a euthanasia precedent.¹⁷

This change of death definition is moving away from the focus on soul issues and increasing values of consciousness and personality, i.e. those related with mind. Let’s say it strictly: that’s the snag. Explanations that functions of brain are so important due to their integrating task, coordinating an organism, proved to be false. Thus, it is not a case of facts but a dramatic change of highest esteemed values. Consciousness, a need of controlling own life, autonomy are most valued in the new ethics. As it was expressed by Doctor Neil Campbell,

¹² Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 222.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁴ Singer, *Rethinking Life and Death*, p. 29.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

“What we care about, and we should care about, is the person rather than the body. We can respect a dead body but we should care about a conscious being”.

Even in 1970s, in the case of Karen Quinland¹⁸ an apparent avoidance of ethical dilemmas was provided by distinction between ordinary and extraordinary means of life supporting. However, as consequently bioethicists show what underlies it is a radical ethical decision which life is worth to be supported by extraordinary means. In case decision on persons in a persistent vegetative state, the issue of life quality value is raised. Thus, the old rule of sanctity of each human being is replaced by a distinction between lives worth and not worth to be lived.

Euthanasia versus biopower

Let us ask a fundamental question: do the debate over and social movements concerning euthanasia break the system of bioauthority or are its extension? The concept of biopower according to Michel Foucault is a broadly defined system of power-knowledge expressed in discourses, penetrating and supervising social behaviour. As Foucault stated, „one strategy of power can contain various, even contradictory discourses”.¹⁹ So, a discourse for or against euthanasia does not have to mean for or against bio power. Here, it should be mentioned that discourse for and against euthanasia correspond with a high rank of body. People ask for euthanasia due to a loss of a proper condition of health, after all. Foucault²⁰ presents the process of transforming authority technology from a sovereign, having the right to decide about life and death of tributaries, to biopower, imposing the obligatory to live, and the power of “sentencing to life and allowing death. Modern “life administrators” are concerned with “a bare issue of surviving”²¹ at the level of a whole population. A discourse of authority usually finishes at mass population phenomena. Thus, visions of an inclined plane, mass precedents are one of crowning arguments against euthanasia. On one side, we have the anatomy-political power over a body (disciplinary techniques), the bio-politics of population.

“Introduced in the age of classicism, the great technology about a double, anatomical and biological profile, individualising and classifying, focused on accomplishments of body, observing life processes, characterises the power, of which the main function is not killing any more but grasping all manifestations of life (...) The age of ‘bio-power’ begins”.²²

Archetypal importance of the boundary between life and death in a symbolic conversion and its monopolisation by power are carefully presented

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, *Historia seksualności (History of Sexuality)*, Gdańsk, słowo/obraz terytoria, 2010, p. 73.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 93-100; Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, pp. 237-245.

²¹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, p. 94.

²² Ibid., p. 96.

by Jean Baudrillard.²³ As he writes „Power, not at all metaphorically, is a boundary between life and death, a decree revoking a conversion between life and death, a frontier post, controlling contacts between two shores”.²⁴ Power settled in a gap between a subject and its body rationalises life and death. These ultimate issues, “separating groups of living from dead, and each of us from our own death” are, according to Jean Baudrillard an archetype²⁵ of all separations done by the authority. „All forms of power contain a trace of this primary separation, as in the ultimate instance, manipulating and managing death is a base of reigning”.²⁶

Euthanasia – continuation of biopower

In some sense, the debate over euthanasia is a continuation of biopower. Even debating in the context of rationalisation and legalising submits the case into the hands of administration. Assigning doctors as executors is giving power to representatives of the medical authority. „(...) here, significance lies in taking away the possibility to decide about oneself and giving it to somebody else, as no one can freely decide about his own life and death, each of us has to obtain a social permit for it. It is even necessary to forbid dependence of life and death on a biological incidence, as it would be some dose of freedom. Thus, our main moral imperative is not only “do not kill” but also “do not die” – at least not in a way chosen by you – you can only die provided that law, supported by medicine allows you”.²⁷ Using words of Baudrillard, issue of death, being not socialised, facing new challenges become an autonomous subject of calculations of arguments on the political status.

The possibility to save one’s life by the means of transplantations is an economical argument for euthanasia. An apparent “yes” to euthanasia is an opposition to biopower, as it constitutes in shortening life. However, economical calculations revealed facts of excessive financial resources assigned for life supporting. In some cases, these are very high amounts. As Baudrillard writes „It is necessary to make a kind of economical choice, which is euthanasia, the half-official doctrine and practice so far”.²⁸ Baudrillard undermines its humanitarian aspect as – according to him – „it perfectly matches the medium and long-term logics of the system itself. The aim in this case is empowering the social control”.²⁹

Death is still managed at controlling institutions: its priests are doctors, equipped in life supporting devices, deciding whether to push a button (e.g. a

²³ Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 163.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 164.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 225-226.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 225.

²⁹ Ibid.

respirator switch-off) and having means for prolonging or terminating life. National authorities: courts, coroners, parliaments, take part in ultimate decisions. In debates over decisions on terminally ill, they are presented in categories of "bare life". They are mentioned only in the context of the somatic side of life, advantages and losses. The paternalistic way of speaking is revealed in the discourse of "mercy arguments".

As it is known, Giorgio Agamben, in contrast to Foucault, regards biopolitics as a phenomenon of antique provenience and as a core of all political activities. It is focused on exposed "bare life", in other words – *zoe*. The above enables a conclusion that a concentration camp is a modern biopolitical paradigm, where a state of emergency becomes a rule and all people are possible carriers of "bare life". According to Agamben, the concept of "life not worth to be lived", often raised in the debates on euthanasia, "is a rather political concept, referring to a radical metamorphosis of *homo sacer*, that can be killed, but which can not be sacrificed, on which a sovereign power is based".³⁰ Agamben, in its work *Homo Sacer*, referring to modern debates on euthanasia, focuses on extreme cases – *coma depasse*, brain death (in order to expose "bare life"³¹), when a person is not able to express own will. Decisions regarding these beings, located in "uncertainty zone", between life and death, seem to be evident examples of the situation how concepts of "life" and "death" become political terms, which acquire a specific meaning only on the basis of legal decisions".³² Agamben draws a suggestive image:

„A reanimation room, in which between life and death *neomortos* float, patients in *coma de passe* and *faux vivants* (a living body from the classical definition of death point of view, ready to provide organs for transplantations – AEK), determines a space of exception, in which "bare life" is first manifested, fully controlled by humans and their technology".³³

Biopolitics of Church

"Institution of death, similarly as life after life and immortality, is an extremely late result of political rationalism of the caste of clergy and churches, which authority is based on controlling such imaginative sphere of death".³⁴ „Political economy of personal salvation"³⁵ orders being an opponent of euthanasia. Attitude of Church in the matter of euthanasia originates from the doctrine of sanctity of life as a gift from God and revealing God in a human being. Church has been taking the floor in discussions over issues related with body for many years. One good example is *Dignitas personae*, an instruction of the

³⁰ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 194.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 219-226.

³² Ibid., p. 225.

³³ Ibid., pp. 225-226.

³⁴ Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, p. 182.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 184.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which specifies the Vatican's bioethical interpretation. It focuses on criticising *in vitro* method. This document elaborates on sexual life in details. Polish Church tries to silence a public debate on euthanasia. For example, Archbishop Sławoj Głódź stated in his sermon during 2009 resurrection mass that such debate serves propagating the "civilisation of death" and moral laws should not be discussed.

Euthanasia against biopower

Does not some part of such debate, social acts and movements take death away from the power monopoly? Anomalies, which occur along with the technological progress, as well as a change of death criterion into brain death, drive norms accepted by the authority into a crisis. Using Agamben's words, where does "bare life" start and end? Biopower representatives are forced to work hard in order to set new boundaries.

There arouse a wide margin of uncertainty in court judgement itself (diversified legislations for and against euthanasia) or of ambivalence of relations between legislation and practice. In England and Wales, a help in a suicide carries a penalty up to 14 years of prison. However, people who helped their terminally ill relatives in trips to Dignitas euthanasia clinic in Switzerland were not penalised. This case was publicised thanks to the campaign of Debbie Purdy, who wanted to provide security for her husband, who would help in such departure to Switzerland. Purdy tried to obtain interpretation of court regulations about helping in suicide. She did not get any answer. The House of Lords turned to the general prosecutor for a specification of regulations. There was a following answer: „Each such case shall be considered individually”.³⁶

Another area of ambivalence is: blurring the boundary between life and death, bioethical disputes over numerous points of care over ill people (including palliative care). This shock in the set order, the Copernican revolution (using Singer words) or the state of revolution in paradigms (in Kuhn's words) may be the only argument for the fact that bio-power instruments face resistance. Let us go a step further.

If we look at presented, also in media, individual stories of people fighting for euthanasia for themselves, we shall notice their discourse: not *homo sacer*, but moral individuals. They say not about a life not worth living (in such time they write poetry, blogs, fall in love) but that their dignity, values undergo devastation and shall not strove for life itself. These are narratives focused on identity associated with the feeling of dignity, independence. It is a discourse enrooted in self-reflectivity in Giddens' understanding, in a conscious constructing of identity projects. The best example is the attitude of bioethicist Dworkin. He presents a secular form of life's sanctity. He refers to concepts of

³⁶ Jacek Pawlicki, "Wspomaganie śmierci po angielsku", in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26 of February, (2010), p. 11.

zoe and *bios*. In his interpretation, rigorous supporting life emphasises its value as *zoe* – bare, biological life. In the secular interpretation, which is more favourable by him, sanctity of life is perceived as *bios* – life created by a human being according to his values, needs, plans, life as a biography.³⁷ Care about a life in *bios* meaning is also a care about when, where and how a man dies. He writes:

"As death is a distinguished, especially weighty event in our life narrative, as the last scene of a play, when everything becomes intensive and is presented in the full light. In the first sense (life as *zoe* – AEK), the fact when we die is essential for us because of the things which would happen to us if we would have died later. In the second approach (life as *bios* – AEK), the way in which we die, is important as it is our dying".³⁸

Exceptions in the paternalistic look at dying ones, of euthanasia opponents saying about the role of suffering and the sense of life, as well as its advocates, arising "arguments of mercy", include the approach of John Hardwig, who points out the subjectivity of those persons, their moral obligations.

"I am still able to do things that have an influence on lives of the people I love. What's more, the fact that I still have obligations, places me inside the community of moral individuals. My illness or decrepitude hasn't led me to the state of solely passive experiencing".³⁹

Hardwig recalls examples of cultures in which the obligation of death at the age of decrepitude prevailed. He resists arguments that a seriously ill person can yield to family's pressure; circumstances of economic, physical and mental burden for family related with caring over him or her, and due to these reasons could demand euthanasia. According to this bioethicist, such perspective treats a patient as an object. Meanwhile, he is still a moral subject and being such, he can even accept the obligation of death. He states:

"If I terminate my life in order to save future of beloved ones, my death certifies my relation with them. Just because I love and care about these people (and I know that they care about me), I do not want to be a burden for them. And the life in which I can choose whatever I want for myself is a life deprived of relationships with others. Bioethics, treating me as if I had no serious moral obligations, would do everything to marginalise, weaken or even destroy my relations with other people. (...) I hope that when my time comes, when I will have the obligation to die, I will be aware of this, give courage to my beloved as they could realise this as well, and I will bravely fulfill it".⁴⁰

³⁷ Weronika Chańska, *Nieszczęsny dar życia (Helpless Gift of Life)*, Wrocław, Fundacja Na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 2009, p. 40.

³⁸ Ronald Dworkin, *Life's Dominion. An Argument about Abortion and Euthanasia*, London, Harper Collins Publishers, 1995, p. 209.

³⁹ John Hartwig, "Czy mamy obowiązek umrzeć?" ("Are we obliged to die?"), in Galewicz Włodzimierz (ed.), *Wokół śmierci i umierania (Around Death and Dying)*, Kraków, Universitas, (2009), pp. 281-302.

⁴⁰ Hartwig, *Are we obliged to die?*, p. 300.

If we take a look on the discourse of euthanasia advocates, who demand it for their closest people, who are not able to speak on behalf of their own (we return to the case of *coma depasse* discussed by Agamben), then it is once again about not only shortening life but also civic rights, respecting the system of values and beliefs of a man, who is in a certain trap of “bare life” (as well as a trap of life-supporting technology). Is a hybrid-body (connected to medical, technological instruments) still “bare life”?

From the point of view of Foucault’s interpretation, we can not speak about escaping biopower in no other way than by a suicide. Don’t Foucault and Agamben, sensitizing to the issue related with authority, take away these residues of the subjectivity that remained?

ABSTRACTS

ILONA KEMPPAINEN, **Finnish funeral customs in manners guides**

Abstract: This text is part of a research project called “Finnish funeral customs from the 19th century to the present”. In this project I take a look at Finnish funerals – how they have changed through the years and what reasons there are for these changes. Modernization is a loose frame for the picture I’m painting – urbanization, secularization and medicalization are familiar as the “usual suspects” when people talk about changing death ways in Europe and also in other parts of the world. Lately national differences have become a matter of interest in death studies. I hope that for its humble part this study may help to understand why we bury and mourn our loved ones so differently in places which are sometimes geographically or culturally not so far away from each other.

Keywords: funeral, Finland, modernization.

CARMEN ALEXANDRACHE, **Death – a factor of social communication in the premodern Romanian countries**

Abstract: death, as a feeling and as a fact happened, constituted an interesting topic for the foreign travelers, this which passed through the Romanian Principalities. First of all it can be observed the fact that the death (and dying) is part of the structure which defines an ethnic community. Even though the foreigners’ writings have proven to describe it superficially, yet, the information provided has revealed the social significance of these assemblies of religious gestures and actions. Thus, the ritual of death, understood either as an identity element or as a set of anecdotic aspects which are subordinated to curiosity and to the contemporary need for sensational, contributes at expressing the social, political and spiritual inter and intra-communitarian relationships. This is the premise that is found at the basis of this study.

Keywords: death, ritual, Romania, foreigners’ writings.

OLIMBI VELAJ, **Meaning of death in Albanian ballad**

Abstract: In the Albanian folklore there are two ballads, where the motif of death prevails in particular: the ballad for the walled up wife and the ballad for the dead brother. Death as a sacrifice required by the entity itself appears in the ballad of the walled up wife and the death as an impossibility to fulfill the promise shown by the entity itself in the ballad for the dead brother. In fact in both the ballads, the death is seen as a special relation with the life, sometimes as a service to life, sometimes as a hindrance to it. There are two ways of the relation between the life and the death. The wife is walled up and goes from life to death in order to fulfill the prophecy, while the dead brother is temporarily resurrected and passes from death to life to keep the given promise.

Keywords: ballad, walled up wife, death, brother, variants.

GABRIEL ROMAN, **Rroma community's attitude facing death**

Abstract: Although this study investigates the Gypsies of Zanea, a village located near the City of Iași, its primary purpose is to find out unknown aspects of the Gypsies' attitudes towards death, with respect to their life styles, traditions and beliefs, thereby facilitating a better understanding of the socio-cultural and religious differences that make it difficult to perceive specific aspects of Roma culture. The study is an empirical work based on on-the-spot observation, participation and interview. Its results reveal Roma community's attitudes facing death founded on a dualistic conception, the opposition between pure and impure, no doubt, being an Indian heritage. Fear of death is justified by the inability to observe the rules of purity. Participation in a large number of the community members is a guarantee of protection against evil, so the death of a person involves the entire group. Unlike modern environments where it is considered indecent to publicly display grief and sorrow, we have to admit the Roma community's superiority in managing death, founded on the manner in which a Gypsy understands his death as a natural order of life, but also the advantage of a strong community network of solidarity built during his life.

Keywords: Rroma community, death perception, funeral practice, impurity, fear of dead.

DOREL MARC, **La symbolique funéraire et l'identité culturelle dans la région multiethnique. Les comtés de Mureș et Harghita**

Résumé: Ce travail vise à réaliser une radiographie des aspects liés au l'étude du symbolisme funéraire dans la zone multiethnique des comtés de Harghita et de Mureș, en Roumanie. Il cherche à saisir la mesure dans laquelle peut être réalisé le transfert de l'ethnographie par l'ethnologie à l'anthropologie dans les études sur la coexistence traditionnelle entre les pratiques funéraires reproduites dans le christianisme populaire et le discours officiel sur la morte, par les interférences et influences interculturelles et interconfesionelles. Il permettra aussi de saisir la mesure dans laquelle la culture funéraire des communautés traditionnelles est donnée par les concepts hérités et reproduits par les mécanismes de la communauté, qui se manifeste dans les rites et les rituels, respectivement l'attention accordée au traitement des morts.

L'étude a en vue aussi la symbolique des coutumes funéraires, les accessoires du cérémonie d'enterrement, des éléments de symbolique suggérés par l'architecture funéraire de la zone soumise à la recherche, qui sont capables à porter les marques identitaires dans cette zone, en particulier pour les siècles XVIII-XXI. L'étude proposé vise à accroître l'attention accordée à la notion de conjoncture historique, à la contextualisation historique de la symbolique funéraire dans l'espace complexe, multiethnique de Transylvanie, qui est soumis à la recherche.

Mots-clés: coutumes funéraires, architecture funéraire, piliers de chevet, roumains, hongrois, sicules, saxons.

EVY JOHANNE HÅLAND, **Rituals of death, food and life in Greece**

Abstract: Food is important in modern and ancient Greek religion, because the religious rituals are performed to ensure the food. Since the dead control the fertility, the death-cult is a central feature in religious festivals. Today the festivals are dedicated to saints,

the holy dead. In antiquity, the heroes and heroines were central along with the vegetation gods/goddesses who oscillated between life and death. But the ordinary dead are and were also dedicated rituals and offerings at their tombs.

It is important to be on good terms with the dead, because they influence the living and the stronger powers who control the fruits of the earth. As the ancient vegetation gods/goddesses and heroes/heroines, the saints become mediators for the living. The dead person has a magical influence, and also mediates between the subterranean powers, who are responsible for the fruits of the earth. It is important to manipulate these powers for the benefit of the living world. At critical situations people pray to the dead for help, and by way of their dead the farmers communicate their wishes for an abundant crop. The article explores the annual rituals dedicated to the dead to ensure the food in ancient and modern Greece.

Keywords: Greece, modern, ancient, Death-cult, death-rituals, Communication, Gifts, Food.

RASA RAČIŪNAITĖ-PAUŽUOLIENĖ, **Lithuanian funeral rites: from tradition to modernity**

Abstract: This paper presents a detail analysis of Lithuanian funeral rites (end of 19th – 21st century) in the context of rites *de passage*. The work is based on field investigation materials gathered by the author in all ethnic regions of Lithuania. By analyzing this narrative folklore and ethnographic material, the author attempts to find answers to some questions: What are the differences between the traditional and post-modern society funeral rites? What are the new forms of funeral rituals in the 21st century? What are the new commemoration forms in post-modern Lithuanian society?

In Lithuanian traditional funeral rites a special collective role was ascribed to village community. This institution helped a dying person to prepare himself for his death, performed lavation, sang lamentations, and played an important role of mediator between the sphere of this world and the world of the dead. Nowadays Lithuanian funeral rites become more individual and anonymous. Today's death culture operates on different levels, includes details from various times, beliefs and cultures. For the past two decades the funeral rites had undergone transition for different reasons: globalization and industrialization process, changes in religious practices, increased secular observances, immigration and migration process, and a shift from modern to post-modern funeral rites.

Keywords: Lithuanian funeral rites, tradition, modernity.

AGNIESZKA KOWALSKA, JOANNA POPIELSKA-GRZYBOWSKA, **Ancient Egyptian burial patterns being repeated – mannerism or specific meaning of death**

Abstract: Napoleon's expedition to Egypt brought to light much information on splendid ancient culture. Many representations and drawings were made based on Egyptian tombs originals and were showing the tombs themselves, the pyramids included. This started the so-called egyptomania, manifestations of which one can find especially in architecture, but also in some everyday used items. It was fascination with "culture of death" – as Egyptian civilisation happens to be named – what left its impress on the 18th, 19th and 20th century European funerary customs as well. Some monuments, however, were planned for the living, as e.g. the Giraffe-house in Antwerpen or the

Carreras Tobacco Factory in London, but most were – as originally in Egypt – for the dead. Consequently, there appeared tomb monuments inspired by old Egyptian art or being its direct imitation as in case of the pyramids. Due to the inexactitude of the pictures brought from Egypt, the pyramids constructed in Europe resemble rather those of Meroe and not those of Giza. Moreover, the founders of the monuments hoped for natural mummification. Interestingly enough it did occurred from time to time. Fascination with pyramids still lasts and takes its harvest.

Keywords: Egypt, culture of death, mannerism, mummification.

NOÉMI TÜNDE FARKAS, Thoughts on dying and suicide at the turn of the 18th -19th century: a Transylvanian girl of Capulet-destiny

Abstract: Dying and suicide in 18th Century, ideas regarding death, funeral ceremonies and their representations, funeral oration, farewell poem, 18th Century readings, education and marriage views at the time, the Radáks, Transylvania. The young aristocrat committed suicide at the early age of 17, presumably because of a broken heart. The poem which we have found among funeral orations is telling a part of her story and must have been a very popular one since in the first year it was published four times in Cluj only. However, we can be sure that the poem was not ordered by the family as it is not a funeral oration and there is no author indicated on it (though his identity is speculated on based on fragmented descriptions), instead it is a poem which tackles the protestant views on education, motherhood and marriage in a liberal manner. Since the family of the girl (the Radáks) was a learned protestant family they were most probably familiar with the representations of a funeral ceremony, albeit they have organized it only for the girl's father but not for the girl. They have probably known the prayer- and advisory books and the rules of conduct in this matter, since the father attended the University of Göttingen, the mother wrote poems, the brothers and their descendants all patronized the fine arts in Transylvania.

Keywords: death, suicide, Transylvania, attitudes.

ANNA G. PIOTROWSKA, Commemorating death in European artistic music

Abstract: The commemoration of death via music needs to be discussed in two dimensions: the first one refers to (1) musical stage works such as operas and ballets where extra – musical, i.e. textual and visual factors play important role and (2) instrumental music in which death can be portrayed by means of musical tools. The strategies of presenting death in musical stage works I would like to analyze with respect to the most common pairs of tropes where death is coupled with love, honour, and sin.

Death and love seems the most common topic of various operas and ballets stemming its popularity from the first Baroque operas depicting the story of Orfeo and Eurydice. The inseparable link of Thanatos and Eros in operas was often connected with murders (Verdi's *Rigoletto*), killings and suicides (Puccini's *Tosca*). *Death and honour* in musical stage works are often used while portraying historical events. Death symbolizes the ultimate solution and as such is reserved for the very end of the work (Erkel's *Huynadi Laszlo*). *Death and evil* is connected in musical stage works again with depiction of murders, suicides but also quite often is linked with redemption of sins

(Verdi's *Traviata*). The allegoric versus eristic attempts to capture the moment of death in musical works will be also discussed. In the conclusion of the first section I would like to ponder on musical tools used by composers of different times in order to depict death musically, ranging from the extremely loud dynamics and *tutti* of the orchestra, alternatively the use of certain (harbingering death) instruments – to leaving the moment of death completely silent (Copland's *Billy the Kid*).

The second section of my paper will be dedicated to instrumental music composed for commemorating the death. Funeral music will be presented in respect to the tradition of the funeral mass – Requiem and additionally the idea of depicting death by means of notes will be presented. In the so called doctrine of musical figures the term *protopopoeia* was used to denote rhetorical personification of the deceased, e.g. in funerary oratories. Composers were often asked (also by their own pupils) to compose, for example, funeral motets. Some composers wrote their own funeral music during their life. The paper will be richly illustrated with examples from European artistic music from the period 18th – 20th century.

Keywords: music, death, commemoration, Europe, love.

LAURA POP, **Categories of death in Romanian rural world of the late 19th – early 20th century after parish registers in several villages from Mureş county**

Abstract: To understand the cultural meaning of death, criteria must set for classification of different types of death. There are two major sources for decoding the cultural categories of death: official documents, like testaments, parish registers and burial customs, rarely recorded on writing but preserved in practice until today.

For Mureş County, the first secular writing on burial habits dated since early nineteenth century, the famous medical work of Vasile Popp about Transylvanian Romanian burial customs is almost contemporary with the first parish registers of the dead in the Romanian villages. We want to unravel not only the cultural types of death, according to parish registers, but their enrollment in either category. After written sources there are two types of death: ordinary and unusual, but what is the understanding of these categories? What influences have the circumstances of death on the cultural understanding of death? It is not as important the numbers of the death categories, as their components and the burial rites that must prevent or nullifying the negative impact of some death. In this perspective the most important kind of death is the “unusual death”, because it is more dangerous for living, but what the meaning of the unusual death is and what additional rites should be done?

Keywords: history of death, cultural death, church records, burial customs, folk mentality.

EVA KOSA, **Death and dying as war experience in the war-diary Doberdo. Death and dying as war experience in the war-diary Doberdo. The book of a Honvéd officer from the Isonzo front of István Szabó**

Abstract: This paper will examine how the horrors of the First World War influenced the tradition of mourning and the dealing with the deceased. The author of this paper analyses this on the basis of a literary source, a diary of a Hungarian officer who was fighting at Doberdo, Italy. Death and Dying are rather extensive subjects which can be

examined from a completely different point of view. In order to narrow down this huge topic and to provide the examination with a logical course, the author made a model under which aspects death, dying and mourning appear in the diary. In case of death the following aspects can be found: the expectation of death, dying of heroes and the experience of killing; in terms of cemeteries and funerals there are also detailed descriptions; and last but not least how mourning is featured in the diary. At the end of the analysis of this war-diary it can be concluded that the demand of man to bury the deceased and to mourn over them is not diminished, even in case of war, where death and dying became a mass phenomenon.

Keywords: expectation of death, dying of heroes, experience of killing, cemeteries, funerals, mourning.

OLGA GRADINARU, **V. I. Lenin – history of a political relic**

Abstract: The main issue of the paper is establishing the role and the circumstances of the great Soviet ruler embalment, seen as a replacement for the religious relics in the Soviet anti-religious campaign and as an establishment of a new cult of personality. The idea of preserving Lenin's body was presented as being the idea of the masses, while it was the idea of a small group of political leaders in order to impose a political symbol and to establish a new type of „relic” as a center for „political worship”, contributing to reshaping the mentality of the new-born „Soviet people” and their sense of new type of „spiritual membership” to the Soviet community.

The burial issue of V. I. Lenin is analyzed throughout the decades, mentioning the main arguments in this ardent discussion with examples of the continuous burial issue. Another analyzed factor is the nowadays status of Lenin's mausoleum in a context of Russian spiritual and national revival. The role of a Soviet proeminent political figure is still a matter for discussion in the nowadays Russian culture in search for the Russian spirit among the reminiscences of socialist and communist propaganda.

Keywords: V. I. Lenin, political relic, burial issue, mausoleum, Soviet symbol.

VÁCLAV GRUBHOFFER, **Medicalisation of death at the turn of the 18th to 19th centuries. The moment of death, apparent death and attitudes towards the dead from the point of view of the history of medicine**

Abstract: Having considered some research results of contemporary historiography (especially Italian) and some period medical treatises, this paper is structured into three parts.

The first one (*Medicalisation of death in the medical discourse of the long 19th century*) introduces some of the author's methodological and theoretical approaches to this topic, which can suit well the period of 1740-1900.

The second part (*Medicalisation of death in the sign of a paradox I. The moment of death and living dead*) is dedicated to the problem of apparent death which has its origins in the 1740s. The medical discussion about apparent death can be considered as the beginning of medicalising death in the history of medicine. The status of death was rationalized; on the other hand, horror of being buried alive was born.

The third part (*Medicalisation of death in the sign of a paradox II. Time and space*) considers some funeral reforms from the late 18th century and their impact on

changing the attitudes of people towards dying and dead body. The well-known French discussion about the danger of mephitic vapours influenced many.

Keywords: European governments, Apparent death, Medicalisation of death, Reforms of funeral services, The Enlightenment.

AUDUN KJUS, **Death and the Boogeyman**

Abstract: The paper explores some interfaces between the history of raising children and the history of taking care of the dead. The study is based on extensive autobiographical material from rural Norway covering the decades before and after the year 1900. First some forms of punishments and threats that were used against children are presented. Then the children's involvement in the care for the dying and the dead is explored. Finally I discuss how changes in the care for the dying would lead to changes in the contents of punishments as being *thrown out the door or thrown down the cellar* and threats with various sorts of boogeymen.

Keywords: death, children, fear, boogeyman.

PIERO PASINI, **Lay saints, remains, relics and mourning in Venice after Italian Resurgence (June 1867)**

Abstract: In this paper I examine the transferal to Venice of the remains of the Bandiera brothers from the south of Italy and of the Belfiore martyrs from Mantua, as well as their subsequent funerals, celebrated in Venice in 1867. It highlights the central role of the remains as relics, physical evidence of an heritage with the political objective of instilling a national identity.

The Italian Risorgimento (1796 – 1861) produced a geographically united country, but Italy remained deeply divided in social, economic and political terms. Patriotic martyrdom was sacralized in the 19th and 20th centuries as a means of legitimizing the affirmation of nationalism and replacing traditional religion with a national religion. Mourning and funerals became important occasions for the celebration and construction of a national memory, especially in an civic calendar free of festivities and thus fertile ground for ideological investment by major institutions and by the various political factions. The relics of patriots became very important in this process. Borrowing a concept of the sacred from the Catholic religion, they readily earned a place in a country used to devotional customs.

Keywords: Devotion, Martyrs, Memory, Mourning, Relics, Remains.

FRANZISKA REHLINGHAUS, **The clericalisation of protestant funeral ceremonies in 19th century Germany: from silent burials to mourning acts**

Abstract: Most scholars of German history regard the 19th century as the starting point of secularization and anticlericalism. Nevertheless, church statistics show an increasing number of Protestant funerals which run counter the secular trend of this period.

The paper reveals some of the reasons for this development and analyses especially the reform efforts of the Protestant Churches. The church authorities started surveys in which the pastors had to answer for the organization of the burials in their parishes. Later the Churches pursued a politics of concessions, restrictions and

incentives. Firstly the pastors were urged to be more tolerant towards the burial of persons who had been dissidents during their lifetimes. The refusal of a clerical funeral had become ineffective as a punishment and was now to be granted to everybody. Secondly, the churches forbade the speeches of laymen at confessional cemeteries, which had become very popular in this time. Thirdly, the churches implemented new emotional ceremonies in their funeral rituals like intercessions and the benediction of the dead body.

Precisely because these measurements were highly disputable, they shed new light on the contemporaneous attitudes towards death and mourning and therefore challenge our view on the secularisation processes in 19th century Germany.

Keywords: Funerals, Protestantism, clericalisation, church politics, Germany, 19th century.

MANCA ERZETIČ, **Dying and death at war - concentration zone: the place of ("special") dying**

Abstract: The question about what has been left by the past in the space, that we can consume or not in the 21st century is actually fiction in people's mind. There is nothing left to remember, even memories on concentrations are nowadays like monument to those, who must live with that memories every day. Cultural history of death in the period of 18th-21st century had many "special" places in war time, where people died in concentration zone. For rest of others who had "lucky" and have no experiences like that, is this something that could represent a fiction. But in reality it is far away from fiction. The history is *regresus infinitum*. Terror(ism) exists, lives in daily life and consist a part of daily news. "This part" is often described in the books, mostly by author experience. Terrorism in literature can be described as sexual terror, gender terror, nation terror etc. One of them is also terror(ism) at concentration camps, written by author's memories. There is no time that could be called *dogma*, because we do not know the answer to the question how is life given (or not) to somebody and there is no key to resolve this mystery. Also we can't judge to whom life belongs and who doesn't deserved to live. McHale's concepts of theory are putting questions into field of metafiction and postmodernism, but there are concepts about ontological insecurity in novels, written by an author who can understand the military zones and concentration camps. We can't say that there is any meaning of this understanding. (We can't say that this is a meaningful understanding). Meaning of non-sense, unreasonable facts which have been done during the Second World War and also in the nineties in the Balkans to the innocent people, are placed in time, when the "great stories" already have been told and when the ontological insecurity is not a new object of discussions in the field of philosophers. Nowadays, the so-called "great stories" can't be re-told with the same effects. But there is the question, where and when we lost or left the spatial and temporal alternatives. The literature of the world known Slovenian author - Boris Pahor can give one point of the view with his novels, written mostly from his experience in the concentration camps, ghettos, occupied territories, frontiers in Africa, problems with passing borders etc., and his critical, objective and subjective point of view on the problematical relations, made by people. My research will be based on analyzing his literature, which gives, in some point of view, the answers to McHale's theory, and makes comparative (open) conclusions. Comparative literature can show

the line very clearly (and with that also the answer to McHale's and Bataille's theory) with Pahor's character(s) (i.e.: the individual men, everymen nowadays), which show that not human nor zones aren't changed more than sixty years later. Today we almost can't distinguish fiction from reality, because most of the things which were fiction in the past (space and time), became a reality in the modern world. But the terrorism is still alive. With that we also come to the question about reality of our realistic gestures, their meanings and point of view what means *living dying* in the modern world.

Keywords: death, dying, camp, crematorium, Boris Pahor.

MONICA MUREȘAN **Modern state and death matters: issues on Romanian legislation concerning burials and burial grounds in the 19th and at the end of the 20th century**

Abstract: The urban areas of Transylvania and the Old Kingdom, though having distinct ethnic and denominational features, gradually assumed a certain common characteristic through the joint action of civic and ecclesiastic authorities in the interval 1850–1918. In line with the modernizing tendencies of the State, in this period profound changes took place aimed at the functionality of modern cemeteries, these being conformed to the modern European system. Starting with penal codes to public health laws and medical discourses, regulations and different other laws referring to burials and cemeteries, during the whole analyzed period, we can perceive a constant effort by authorities to move the cemeteries from the centre towards the peripheries, to banish death outside the communal urban area. The precincts of modern necropolises demonstrate the changes produced on the basis of the decisions enforced and communicated preventively as unavoidable and necessary stages in defining the modern state.

Keywords: Transylvania, Old Kingdom, Modern Age, legislation, corps, burial, cemeteries.

ERIKA QUINN, **German widows of the First World War: images of rage and repression**

Abstract This essay examines the portrayal of widows from the First World War in Germany from 1914–1921. By examining both popular and high art sources, the piece surveys a broad swath of cultural production. War widows were central figures in the cult of the fallen soldier and widowhood in general was part of the bourgeois cult of the dead. Yet mass death in war disrupted prior bereavement practices. On both practical and symbolic levels the war made widowhood a difficult status for the state and society, as widows could no longer be merely dependents and they were reminders of mass death. Artwork, then, did not portray widows during the war; it was only after the war that widows appeared as chastizers and critics of the war effort. Generally, such images were executed by non-commercial artists rather than those whose style was realistic and found in popular magazines. Yet even portrayals of widows postwar contained their power by presenting them as victims in isolation and in domestic settings.

Keywords: War widows, bereavement, repression, images, Kirchner, Kollwitz.

LUIGI BARTOLOMEI, **Places for a cult of memories in the Italian post-secular city**

Abstract: I will approach the topic announced in the title from an architectural and liturgical point of view, in relation to my specific expertises. Therefore I will pay

particular attention to the liturgical action of contemporary funeral rituals and to the spaces those ritual require or simply suggest.

Looking now to the spaces for death rituals in contemporary Italian cities, we can easily recognize a recent flourishing of new proposals both in relation to a new diversification of traditional elements, and in relation to a sudden emergence of building typologies previously unknown in our geographical context.

Keywords: secularization, Italy, Catholic Church, architecture, crematoria.

MARIUS ROTAR, **European echoes upon Romanian cremationist movement** **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Abstract: This study intends to analyze the European influences upon Romanian cremationist movement from the end of the 19th century to the interwar period. There are identified very strong connections with Italian cremationists (at the end of the 19th Century) and also Czech cremationists (interwar period). Also, others patterns of the Romanian cremationist movements came from UK, France, Sweden or Switzerland. In spite of this facts Romanian cremationist movement tried to develop its own pattern.

Keywords: cremation, Romania, influences, Europe.

MARCELA CRISTINA IUGA, **The eternal time in fairytales. (The dissemination of the *Land of Youth* theme in various cultures)**

Abstract: Sigmund Freud stated that man is pushed in life by two essential, contrasting desires: Life (*Libido* or *Eros*) and Death (*Thanatos*). The second, the fatal drive will endlessly keep him searching for the eternal life. It is, nevertheless, impossible to stop the passing of time because of its subjectivity and relativity. But there were *paradoxal travellers* whose journey to the *Land of Youth* proved that their search was pointless and that you cannot escape Death. Their only gain was a time suspension, a fall into atemporality, a costly pause in time. Because what seemed a beautiful dream at the beginning became a torment when the hero started missing his world. Returning to it, accelerated the *forgotten time* and brought back the burden of death. This theme firstly appeared in the Mesopotamian myth of Gilgamesh, *the one who has seen all* or *the searcher of immortality*; in the biblical *Book of Isaiah*, whose journey lasted 32 years but who still returned home untouched by time; in Japanese mythology there is *Urashima Tarō*, a fisherman who visits the land of the Sea King and spends four hundred years there. The Celtic mythology thrives in such examples because there are two heroes who visit the People of the *Sidhe* in *Tír na nÓg*. *Brain* and *Oisín* (*The Voyage of Bran, son of Febal* and *Oisín in the land of Youth*). Washington Irving tells the fascinating story of a man, *Rip Van Winkle*, who falls asleep in the forest before the War of Independence and wakes up only after. The Romanian fairy *Tinerețe fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte/ Youth Everlasting and Life without End* has a special position among these representations because it is the only story in which the hero is waited and slapped by Death at the end of time itself. Moreover it is totally unknown among European folk culture. *Youth Everlasting and Life without End* is a *bildungsroman*, a story about growing and searching for one's identity in the world, or it is what Noica calls a *coming into being fairytale (fiintare)*, an ontological story.

Keywords: Thanatos, Land of Youth, forgotten time, Youth Everlasting and Life without End, bildungsroman.

ALEXA STOICESCU, **Death, suicide and mourning in Herta Müller's *Herztier*. Aktionsgruppe Banat and the Securitate**

Abstract. This essay proposes a close analysis of Herta Müllers novel *Herztier*, translated into English as *The Land of Green Plums*, a story of four friends who live in a terrifying society that persecutes them. The article focuses firstly on the notions of death and suicide the way they appear in the novel and secondly zooms out on the reality of communist Romania in the 1980s and the dissident German minority group called Aktionsgruppe Banat. The essay ends with a discussion on violence, mourning and politics the way Judith Butler sees these terms and a comparison of Herta Müllers novel with Assia Djebar's *Algerian White*. The essay finally considers the novels function in society.

Keywords: Herta Müller, death, suicide, mourning, Aktionsgruppe Banat.

ȘTEFAN BORBÉLY, **Death and work or: death by work? A classical case study: Marx**

Abstract: The communist future envisaged by Marx bears the characteristics of a happy eschatology. The famous author was a workaholic, had been writing about work from his beginnings up to the end of his life, but seemingly – and rather paradoxically – he hated his subject, was uncomfortable with it. There is nothing noble about work in Marx: on the contrary, work is gloomy, it destroys or reduces men to animals, is a source of mortification. Marx's main concepts, alienation and reification, are directly related to death: the paper investigates several occurrences of death in Marx's early writings, especially in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*.

Keywords: Karl Marx, work, death, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, 19th century.

ARJA RYHÄNEN, **"I gave you wings but i couldn't help the winds." Child's suicide experienced by parents in 1984 - 2010, Finland**

Abstract: When parents meet the death of their own child the loss brings along – not only a deep grief – but the death also indicates to parents their incompetence to act as a parent. Simultaneously the parents loose the dreams and expectations of the future and the life changes totally. Especially when a child commits suicide the parents face a difficult task: how to separate your own dreams from the dreams of your own child.

In my paper I studied child's suicide as it was experienced by parents. Experience is today one of the most important core concept in the cultural history. Experience is a process through it a human being as a social subject will be combined to the surrounding culture, language and the world. Simultaneously the experience is a process which makes a human being to become a subject. In my study this means how the suicide of the child as a very private experience of the parents will take a place in our culture by shaping, building, maintaining or perhaps changing it. Texts which parents have written about the experience do not only tell about our time but they also indicate the interaction between the culture and a survivor when he/she tries to understand what has happened and how to survive.

Keywords: suicide, death, children, parents, Finland.

ANDRÉIA MARTINS, **Audiences of death – between real and virtual funeral wakes**

Abstract: This work will examine the availability and viewing of actual funeral wakes on the internet in Brazil, called the Virtual Wakes. We will study the anthropology of death through a brief rescue of the history of funeral wakes in Brazil until the invention of the Virtual Wakes, which consists in the real time broadcasting of one's funeral wake, which may be assisted by anyone, even those who never knew that one who is being veiled. For this analysis, we will make a brief online ethnography in a virtual community of a popular social networking site in Brazil, called Orkut, where users weave comments about the dead being veiled, while watching the Virtual Wake, revealing different views about death. We intend, with this work, to briefly reconstruct the history of Brazilian funerals from the nineteenth century, heavily influenced by European culture, and trace the path that led part of the Brazilian urban society to hire and view funerals over the internet after more than two hundred years of distance from death. Our work will be guided by studies of the French historian Philippe Aries, the Brazilian historian João José Reis and the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman.

Keywords: virtual wakes, virtuality, funeral, dealing with death, grief processing.

RADOSŁAW SIEROCKI, **Religion, nation, media. National mourning in Poland after 1989**

Abstract: The aim of the paper is analysis the ways media (polish newspapers) deals with the death and grief in the time of national mourning. Media are obligated to commemorate somehow the victims of the disaster that was the reason for declaring the national mourning by the national authorities (usually the president of Poland). Media gives also the instruction, how the mourning should be experienced by those, who are the members of the nation (national community), and sometimes – I claim – the media “do” the mourning work (mourning rites) for us and instead of us. So reading and watching/listening to the media “in time of national mourning” is – in fact – experiencing the national mourning”.

Keywords: national mourning, national disaster, liminality and *communitas*, the media coverage.

ALEKSANDRA DRZAŁ-SIEROCKA, **Disease as the process of dying. Cultural images of AIDS at the turn of 20th and 21st century**

Abstract: There is no doubt that AIDS – describing as the plague of XXI century – is perceived and regarded as one of the *signs of our times*. Images of AIDS that appear in media are interesting examples of the cultural perception of illness which is inextricably linked to a death. What is very characteristic, is the fact that in many cases AIDS is presented as *the process of dying*. In my thesis I analyzed social campaigns, TV mini-series *Angels in America* (by Mike Nichols) and Derek Jarman's documentary project – *Blue*. These are three ways of speaking about death – difficult and “forbidden” subject during the era of beauty and youth.

My key questions are inter alia: Who is a person sick with AIDS or infected with HIV? What “signs” indicate disease and approaching death? And last but not least: How the metaphors of disease are intertwined with the metaphors of death?

Keywords: AIDS, HIV, terminal disease, social campaign, documentary, TV-series.

FEDERICA MANFREDI, **Mourir en tant que migrant : thanatopolitiques et thanatopratiques de l'Italie contemporaine**

Résumée:

Contexte

Le phénomène de la migration des pays en voies de développement vers l'Europe est devenu durant ces dernières années de plus en plus important. Ce processus a transformé, et transforme toujours, l'Italie en un pays où des changements sociaux importants se développent, impliquant une nouvelle configuration de la population présente sur le territoire et nécessitant des mises à jour institutionnelles et administratives. Parmi ces adaptations visant à la coexistence des différentes langues et cultures, la présente recherche s'est intéressée à celles relatives à la sphère funèbre: comment meurent les étrangers en Italie?

Sachant que l'Italie est un pays où l'immigration est un phénomène constant et en augmentation progressive depuis une vingtaine d'années, il n'est pas étonnant de constater une augmentation de la mortalité étrangère du point de vue numérique. De 2003 à 2008, on est passé de 2559 à 4278 décès d'étrangers résidants, soit une augmentation annuelle moyenne de 10%.

Si l'on compare ce résultat avec l'augmentation des naissances (de 64000 en 2007 à 77000 en 2009), des permis de séjour, des demandes de résidence et des inscriptions aux écoles, il est raisonnable d'estimer que la population étrangère en Italie est en train de se sédentariser et donc que le phénomène de la mortalité va encore augmenter.

Comme le phénomène de mortalité de la population étrangère est très différent de celui concernant les citoyens italiens (effet du migrant sain, âge moyen plus jeune, nombreux retours en raison de maladies), la recherche s'est intéressée aux possibilités administratives pour l'adieu à la vie et aux mécanismes sociaux intervenants à l'intérieur des communautés d'étrangers présentes sur le territoire au moment du décès d'un de leur membre.

Méthodes

La recherche s'est développée de mars à octobre 2010 et a été principalement réalisée sur les villes de Rome et Turin. La méthodologie suivie a été celle de la recherche bibliographique, dix entretiens qualitatifs avec des interlocuteurs privilégiés et l'observation participante.

Résultats

Un étranger en Italie souvent ne trouve pas de place pour vivre et, selon les résultats de la recherche, même pas pour mourir. C'est pourquoi des discours émergent l'image d'une belle mort, une mort liée à l'idée de soi et qui termine bien l'expérience de la migration avec un retour des corps vers le pays d'origine. Mais même cette solution n'est pas facile.

Actuellement, il n'est pas possible de quantifier le nombre de corps rapatriés, ni le nombre de tombes occupées par des fidèles de religions non chrétiennes (l'attention a été portée en particulier sur les fidèles islamiques, minorité religieuse la plus présente sur le territoire). Les villes et les services funèbres italiens ne sont pas encore préparés face à la demande de rituels funèbres qui ne soit pas ceux de la cérémonie catholique, y

compris les demandes de rituels laïcs. Dans les hôpitaux, il n'y a pas d'accords nationaux permettant à des représentants du corps religieux d'entrer hors des heures de visites et souvent il n'existe même pas d'endroits pour se recueillir, hors d'un contexte chrétien.

Le choix obligé paraît être celui du retour des corps, mais là aussi, il reste des ombres aux niveaux de la réglementation et des services chargés d'assister cette opération. Les deuxièmes générations, qui prennent toujours moins en considération la possibilité de renvoyer les corps dans le pays d'origine de leurs parents (car l'Italie est considérée comme leur pays), problématisent ce discours et lancent de nouveaux défis. L'Italie est appelée à s'interroger sur ce sujet et pour ce faire, une profonde réflexion sur sa propre culture des morts est nécessaire, un tabou qui peut-être arrivera à se dévoiler grâce à la rencontre avec d'autres formes rituelles.

Mots-clés: death, immigrants, thanatopolitics, Italy.

ADRIANA TEODORESCU, **Symbolic immortality through children. A thanatological perspective**

Abstract: Culture and death are tied in a bijective relationship. Death challenges culture and culture moulds the face of death, to the extent that the latter cannot be conceived of as not being, in some measure, cultural. Rites, beliefs, religions and immortality are some of the cultural products engendered by death.

This study has two main objectives. First, it aims at reflecting on the status of immortality as a cultural product, and, thus, analysing the mechanisms by which immortality can be seen as a symbolic construct. Second, it examines the non-religious symbolic construction of the continuation of existence through children. The role of this second section is to deconstruct this myth from a point of view that merges modern Thanatology with the sociology of knowledge, searching to discover and investigate the social and cultural issues entailed by immortality-through-children. The relation to one's children deserves special attention as it merges nature and culture in an extreme and paradoxical way. If there is a critique that can be brought to this immortality myth, it does not target its ontological necessity, but its absolutization and its being deemed as natural, when being first and foremost cultural.

Keywords: Death, Immortality, Children, Paradox, Construction, Mythology.

MAGGIE JACKSON, **Digital re-construction and durable biography**

Abstract: This paper is an exploration of an activity I undertook with my brother in the summer of 2009. The story is partly mine in that I have used the story of my brother whilst I was working with him on a project to be used for my teaching. I have considered how by using photographs and my brother's developing interest in the use and collection of them he has perhaps made sense of the death of our father. What I have presented here cannot be considered to be "true" but is an attempt to bring order and organise experience. Barthes talks about sorting through photographs from his mother's past but doubting that to others the photographs "would speak". The choosing of the image is important. But the choice of a single image can also be disappointing as the image can fail to provide the essence we are looking for. Here I have considered how the construction and reconstruction of the images into a photo story may have allowed a new understanding and expression of grief to occur.

Keywords: death, dying, digital reconstruction, biography.

KORNELIA SAMMET, FRANZ ERHARD, **The observation of the unobservable: ideas of afterlife in a sociological perspective**

Abstract: Afterlife is situated in a transcendent sphere and therefore it is an object of imagination and not of experience. According to Niklas Luhmann the social function of religion is to make the difference between observable/unobservable observable. This observation can only be made from an inner-worldly perspective. We argue that the contents of the belief in an afterlife are determined by the experiences made in this world and by the interpretational patterns offered by religious traditions as well as sciences. Believers and non-believers interpret everyday life experiences by picking up and adapting religious or theological concepts (like heaven or reincarnation) or scientific explanations (like the decay of corpses).

Based on group discussions with welfare benefit recipients and people with unsecure jobs, the article examines how people react when they are asked what in their opinion will come after death. It shows that the discussions about this question are determined by one's social position and the perception of one's perspectives and limits, the fears, the hopes and the suffering in this world. The article refers to findings of a research at the University of Leipzig on "Worldviews in Precarious Conditions of Life".

Keywords: Afterlife, death and dying, sociology of religion, worldviews, qualitative research, group discussions, Niklas Luhmann.

DEJAN DONEV, **The term of life and the term of death as a two fundamental bioethical and thanatological values**

Abstract: The right to live and the right to die are very important problem that need to be considered from the bioethical view point (especially in the context of modern medicine), and also a very interesting issue that can be considered from the thanatology view point.

The human history and evolution up till' now has developed a rather negative attitude to death – it has been treaded as a supprime evil, synonym of nothingness. In this context, as modern thanatology try's emphasizing the link between life and death, accenting the fact that death is an element of life on which we will sooner or later inevitably run into, in bioethics life has been treated as the greatest gift and put on a pedestal always trying, meanwhile death has been treated as inferior vague mystery.

The main aim of the paper is to investigate and present these two positions, their points of view of the problem of life and death, their relations and discrepancy, because they are the two key values in bioethics and thanatology in present.

Keywords: bioethics, thanatology, life, death, ethics of the holliness of life, ethics of quality of life.

ZHAKLINA TRAJKOVSKA-ANCHEVSKA, **End of life and palliative care**

Abstract: Terminal phase is diagnosed terminal condition of the underlying disease that leaves no hope of recovery. Terminal state of illness indicates incurable of the disease regardless independent of the general condition of the patient the matter of time he will perform death. Adequate medical, psychological and social treatment of patients with

terminal condition implies a significant differentiation of the two key periods and that means first making a decision to transition from curative to palliative care and the second period is the start of palliative care until death. The main goal of treatment is enhanced quality of life of the patient's caring, empathic management which includes providing the highest level of palliative care in order to maximally reduce physical pain, fear and anxiety. What is important is that there is no universally accepted principle or adequate psychosocial approach to announcing a state of terminal illness and the implementation of palliative treatment; it depends on the culture, tradition, religious commitments, the philosophy, values, characteristics and dynamics of family which the patient belongs. Palliative care is created according to the needs and expectations of the patient and family. Analyzing the awareness of patients in terminal state, that their disease is not communicated we come to the conclusion that unfolds in several stages.

In the first stage the patient is not aware that he is dying and very few people from his immediate surroundings are aware of it. Then some family members become aware of the terminal outcome and with them come a rise in suspicion that the disease is dangerous and worrying. Painful increasingly evaluate their own situation based on external indicators and their own physical condition and becoming more aware of the possibility of dying. A large proportion of patients who are dying are in phase with incomplete shaped awareness that they will die.

Keywords: palliative care, death, patient, quality of life, dying.

SEBASTIAN E. BARTOȘ, CRISTINA SPERANZA, **Queering death: dying and mourning in the Romanian gay community**

Abstract: The present paper used a personal narrative in order to scrutinise the common framework within which death is construed. The mourning family, the funeral and the grave, and even the solemn certainty of death are questioned by this story.

While a single personal experience cannot reflect all the relevant shades of queer mourning, it can help to pin down a few issues for forthcoming inquiries. First, the need to retrieve and analyse more experiences of Romanian lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and trans people is an obvious task for the near future. Second, a deeper inquiry is needed into the way established categories work (and fail) in queer mourning. The narrative above has showed how the construction of relationships as more or less "close" can hurt people; this downside of belonging may be a particularly interesting subject for further research.

Keywords: death, gay community, mourning, dying.

ÖZHAN HANCILAR, **Suicide and euthanasia under Turkish law**

Abstract: Committing *suicide is not a crime under* Turkish law. However, instigating or assisting others to commit suicide is penalized by Article 84 of the Turkish Penal Code. This provision is of crucial importance for honour killings in Turkey. It is a concern that many suicides of women could be honour crimes, with the family forcing the female victim to commit suicide. Turkish courts should apply article 84 in the cases of honour suicide.

Euthanasia is a *controversial issue in many countries. This action* is not legal in Turkey. It is prohibited by *the By-law of the Ministry of Health on Patients' Rights*.

However, there is ambiguity in Turkish law on the issue of "punishment for euthanasia" since there is no *specific provision in* the Turkish Penal Code relating to the euthanasia. To avoid this ambiguity, Turkish legislation should adopt specific provisions.

Keywords: Suicide, forced suicide, honour killing, euthanasia, law, Turkish law, Turkish Penal Code.

ANNA E. KUBIAK, **The discourse of biopower against disturbances of the boundary between life and death**

Abstract: The aim of this article is to set the debate over euthanasia in a biopolitical context, which here becomes a thanatopolitical context. We observe a kind of *aporia* of cultural processes. Individualism, the value of autonomy, knowledge, self-consciousness, opening the scope of new decisions on one side, bureaucratisation, accumulation of authority instruments in the hands of medicine (having a practical evidence in the form of the possibility to prescribe medicaments) and the legislation penetrating issues of life and death on the other. I ask a fundamental question: do the debate over and social movements concerning euthanasia break the system of bioauthority or are its extension? Debating in the context of rationalisation and legalising submits the case into the hands of administration. Assigning doctors as executors is giving power to representatives of the medical authority. But anomalies, which occur along with the technological progress, as well as a change of death criterion into brain death, drive norms accepted by the authority into a crisis. If we look at presented, also in media, individual stories of people fighting for euthanasia for themselves, we shall notice their discourse: not *homo sacer*, but moral individuals.

Keywords: euthanasia, biopower, biopolitics, death, boundary.

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