



DaCNet
Interdisciplinary Death & Culture Research

Death & Culture III

Abstract Book



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September 2020

The Death & Culture Network (DaCNet) based at the University of York seeks to explore and understand cultural responses to mortality. It focuses on the impact of death and the dead on culture, and the way in which they have shaped human behaviour, evidenced through thought, action, production and expression. The network is committed to promoting and producing an inter-disciplinary study of mortality supported by evidence and framed by theoretical engagement.

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The discursive architecture and communicative possibilities of suicideforum.com: An online ethnography

Mike Alvarez (University of New Hampshire)

Dr Alvarez is Postdoctoral Diversity and Innovation Scholar in the Department of Communication at the University of New Hampshire. He is the author of the forthcoming book, The Paradox of Suicide and Creativity (Lexington Books, 2020).

‡

Much psychological research has been done on the benefits and harms of suicidal individuals' use of digital technologies. However, the meanings interactionally co-created by suicidal persons online, and the unique properties of the internet that shape these meanings, have scarcely been studied. This paper enlists online ethnography and the ethnography of communication to respond to the following research question: How does the discursive architecture of online suicide forums structure the communicative possibilities that arise therein? Specifically, I analyse 2,000 posts across 130 threads in addition to ethnographic field notes and scratch notes accumulated during 30 weeks of non-participant observation in SuicideForum.com (SF), a "pro-life" suicide website. Findings reveal that the website's discursive architecture - its rules of conduct, layout and design, instruments on offer, and other technical affordances - objectify therapeutic values and beliefs espoused by users. These include openness about stigmatized experiences, a protective orientation toward users in crisis, and safeguarding the feelings of all parties during disputes. Moreover, the properties of threaded sociality foster a communicative atmosphere of safety via risk reduction and maximization of users' sense of connectedness and well-being. The paper ends by positing a range of criteria for evaluating the therapeutic efficacy of suicide websites, beyond the simplistic helpful/harmful binary. It also offers modest suggestions for using suicidal individuals' own terms and meanings to remediate existing paradigms of care and challenge unfair and disabling representations.

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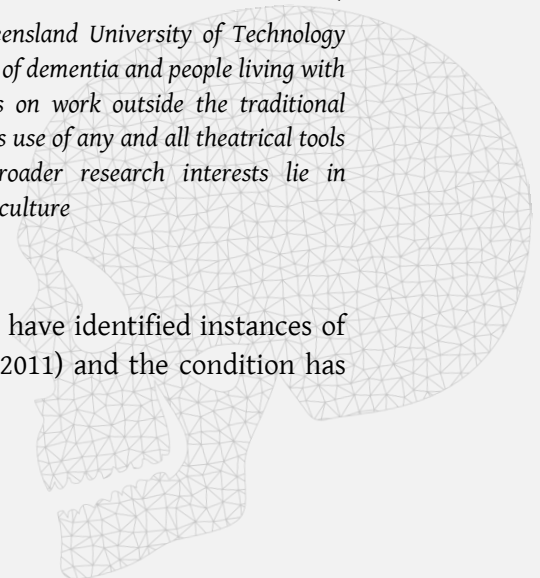
Thinking about dying with dementia: Disparities between activism and representation in popular culture

Morgan Batch (Queensland University of Technology)

Dr Morgan Batch is a sessional academic based at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Her PhD (conferred in 2019) studied the representation of dementia and people living with dementia in contemporary theatre, with a particular focus on work outside the traditional dramatic convention. She has a passion for theatre that makes use of any and all theatrical tools available to practitioners to tell diverse stories. Her broader research interests lie in representations of neurodiversity in performance and popular culture

‡

For some, dementia and death go hand in hand. Theorists have identified instances of analogising people with dementia as zombies (Behuniak, 2011) and the condition has



been described as “the death that leaves the body behind” and “the funeral that never ends” (cited in Downs, Small and Froggatt 2006, 194). In line with this, the death of a person with dementia can sometimes be accompanied by a sense of relief on the part of family and friends (Zarit and Gaugler, 2006). Some hold more severe views, that death with dementia is not only a relief, but perhaps a moral obligation. Borrowing a Kantian paradigm, Cooley (2007) considers the suicide of a person with dementia to be both moral and ethical, because they are eventually robbed of their “moral life”. Cooley’s views are perhaps too callous for most, yet comparable arguments come to the fore in discussions around voluntary assisted dying, demonstrating what Johnstone (2013) has called the ‘Alzheimerization’ of the euthanasia debate, that is, the “use and misuse of Alzheimer’s disease in public policy debate [...both for and against] the legalization of euthanasia” (6). On the whole, certain understandings of dementia lead to thinking that those with the condition are as good as dead. However, people living with dementia are taking up stronger roles in activism and challenging these misconceptions. Slowly, but surely, media depictions of people living with dementia are beginning to shift from an as-good-as-dead discourse to representations that celebrate the lives of people living with dementia. However, dementia narratives in mainstream media and entertainment still lag too far behind what activists are presenting, a trajectory not unique to dementia activism. This paper explores the gaps between narratives of dementia in popular culture and dementia activism, with emphasis on how death is treated in each.

Behuniak, Susan M. 2011. “The living dead? The construction of people with Alzheimer’s disease as zombies.” *Ageing and Society* 31 (1): 70-92. doi: 10.1017/S0144686X10000693.

Cooley, Dennis. 2007. “A Kantian moral duty for the soon-to-be demented to commit suicide.” *The American Journal of Bioethics* 7 (6): 37-44. doi: 10.1080/15265160701347478.

Downs, Murna, Neil Small and Katherine Froggatt. 2006. “Person-centred care for people with severe dementia.” In *Severe*

dementia, edited by Alistair Burns and Bengt Winblad, 193-204. England: John Wiley & Sons.

Johnstone, Megan-Jane. 2013. *Alzheimer’s disease, media representations and the politics of euthanasia: Constructing risk and selling death in an ageing society*. England: Ashgate.

Zarit, Steven H. and Joseph E. Gaugler. 2006. “Care by families for late stage dementia.” In *Severe dementia*, edited by Alistair Burns and Bengt Winblad, 185-192. England: John Wiley & Sons.

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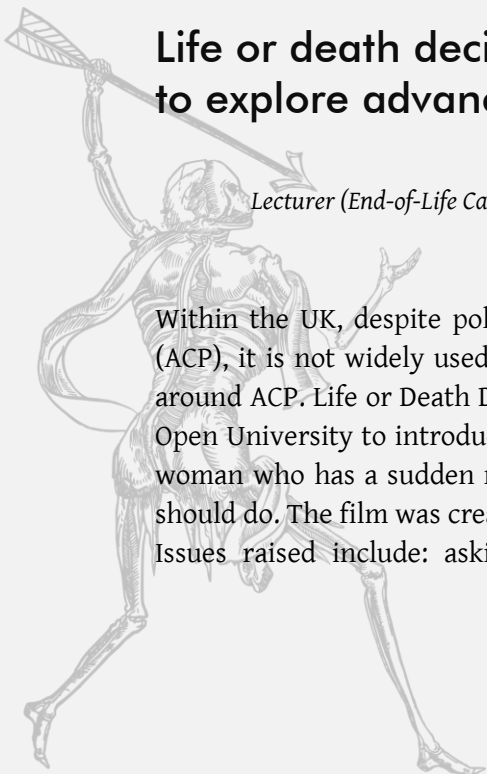
Life or death decisions: Online engagement using film to explore advance care planning

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Within the UK, despite policy drives to increase the rates of Advance Care Planning (ACP), it is not widely used by the general public and there are many misconceptions around ACP. Life or Death Decisions is an online educational interactive created at The Open University to introduce the general public to ACP. It uses a bespoke film about a woman who has a sudden medical emergency to explore what the people around her should do. The film was created to have ‘pause points’ to ask users ‘what would you do’. Issues raised include: asking if she should go into hospital, should she have an



operation, and who should be involved in decision-making. The interactive provides information about ACP, how it can be done, and who can be involved, including clarifying the concept of ‘next of kin’. The interactive was launched in September 2018 and data is continuously being collected about users of the interactive, including total number of ‘learners’, completion rates, learner country, and time spent using Life or Death Decisions. This paper will focus on how we used research to inform this interactive and critically discuss the institutional supports that enable the creation and use of free educational tools.

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The philological undead: The limits of life and death

Stephen K Brehe (University of North Georgia)

Associate Professor

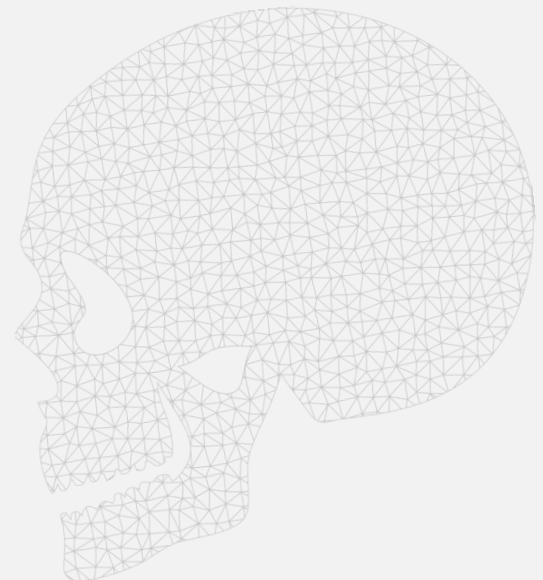
‡

Some of our most challenging and emotional controversies concern the uncertain boundaries of life and death, on the difficulty in defining the boundaries of those two states, which we usually take for granted as being definite and self-evident in their meanings. When does life begin? When does it end? How do we know? The abortion controversy, the Terry Schiavo case, and the questions surrounding the right to die depend in part on how we answer these questions.

As contemporary as these ambiguities seem because of advances in medicine, something similar has long existed. Perhaps the most direct way into this matter is through the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* and its entry on the unusual word *undead*. Originally the word had no supernatural connotations, as it has today in our popular culture. Attested from the fifteenth century, it meant (as the *OED* puts it) “Not dead; alive. Also, not quite dead but not fully alive, dead-and-alive.”

It seems that, at least since the fifteenth century, humanity has struggled in defining these boundaries. But in later fiction writers began to exploit these uncertainties, as we see in the remainder of the *Oxford* definition of *undead*, in its supernatural sense as a synonym for *vampire*. The first use the *OED* locates in print is in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), and from there the word is suffused throughout the popular culture, used again and again to exploit our anxiety about uncertain boundaries of death contrasted against the traditional views of religion about *the quick and the dead*. This paper will examine the origins and implications of the word and the ways the word has enriched and complicated our views of classic literature, as in the Old English poem *Beowulf* (Tolkien, 163-64), and has been used extensively in popular novels.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*. Edited by Christopher Tolkien, Houghton Mifflin, 2014.



Banality of virtue: Memorialisation of Nazi concentration camps and the reproduction of 'thoughtlessness'

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In 2019, over two million people visited the former Nazi concentration camps of Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. These infamous sites attract visitors from across the globe and stand as important sites of memory to the millions murdered under the totalitarian regime. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, however, has catalogued over forty-two thousand ghettos and camps. Yet smaller sub-camps have been comparatively overlooked academically, in the media, and in museums and memorials. Moreover, many of the sites have been razed or repurposed.

My research explores the memory and memorialisation of concentration camps in former Nazi Germany. Empirical research was operationalised using autoethnography in locating and visiting sixty former concentration camps, employing walking methodologies and photographing the architecture and visible memorials to the sites and their victims.

This paper argues that the centralising and compartmentalisation (De Swaan, 2015) of memorial sites at larger concentration camps such as Sachsenhausen and Dachau, for example, has produced a 'banality of virtue'. Smaller sub camps are occasionally locally memorialised but are visited by significantly fewer national and international visitors who are 'disappointed' that these sites 'do not look like Auschwitz'. By overlooking the smaller sub camps, however, this promotes and recreates 'thoughtlessness' (Arendt, 1971; 1971; 1981; 1983; 2003) towards the wider concentration camp system; sanitising, 'civilising' (Elias, 2000; 2001) and ultimately distorting our understanding of the brutality of the Holocaust.

Arendt, H. (1971) 'Thinking and Moral Considerations: a Lecture' *Social Research* 38 (3) pp417 - 446.

Arendt, H. (1981) *The Life of the Mind*, New York: Harcourt Inc.

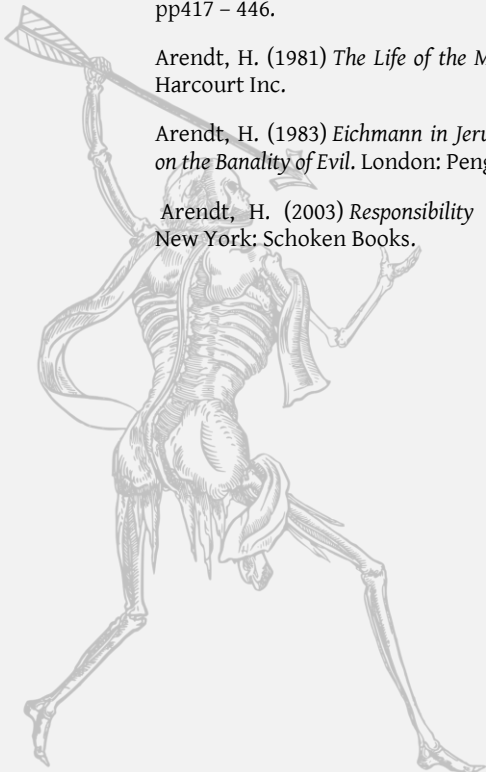
Arendt, H. (1983) *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. London: Penguin.

Arendt, H. (2003) *Responsibility and Judgement*, New York: Schocken Books.

De Swaan, A. (2015) *The Killing Compartments: The Mentality of Mass Murder*, London: Yale University Press.

Elias, N. (2000) *The Civilising Process*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Elias, N. (2001) *The Loneliness of the Dying*, London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.



Transforming *memento mori*: A contemporary lens

Charles Clary (Coastal Carolina University)

Charles Clary received his BFA in painting with honours from Middle Tennessee State University and his MFA in painting from the Savannah College of Art and Design. Clary is an Assistant Professor of Art at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, SC.

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My artwork stems from the loss of both my mother and father due to smoking related cancers in February of 2013. Their passing left a deep void in my life that led to my interest in Memento Mori, or the act of coming to terms with one's own mortality. Through this investigation I came to terms with the trauma of my childhood and the lack of memories I have.

In this paper I explore the connection between memory, art, death, and grief. As I grieved these losses, I began to collect discarded frames from antique stores, and thrift shops. They felt abandoned and forgotten much like my memories and trauma. By incorporating my paper sculptures into these frames they are imbued with new life. Each opening resembles a scar, a wound, or even a disease. They challenge the viewer to face the unfaceable and reflect on the past while reorienting their own personal traumas. They are installed in salon style groupings reflecting on the southern United States home and the collection of memories found in hallways or staircases. The overwhelming nature of each installation is purposeful as trauma feels like the heaviest of burdens something that time often doesn't heal. But there is a hopefulness with the saturation of colour and delicateness of each cut.

Mourning has been explored in many ways in the arts, most notably during the Victorian period with mourning jewellery and hair wreaths. It was a way for individuals to celebrate one's life and have a memento of that cherished loved one. My work seeks to continue the tradition through a contemporary lens.

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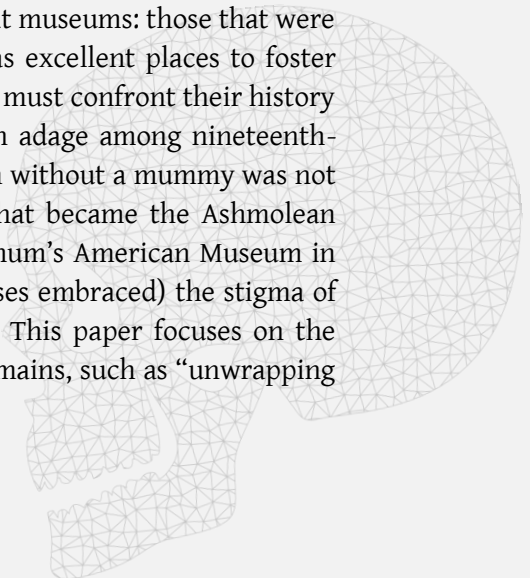
Entertaining bodies: Human remains as spectacle in museums

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Assistant Professor of History, Public History

‡

This paper explores some of the earliest displays of people at museums: those that were created for entertainment purposes. Museums can serve as excellent places to foster dialogue about death, dying, grief, and illness; but first they must confront their history as somewhat exploitative of these exact issues. A common adage among nineteenth-century museum curators and directors was that a museum without a mummy was not a museum. From the Tradescant collections in England that became the Ashmolean Museum to Rudolf II's *Kunstkammer* in Prague and P.T. Barnum's American Museum in New York, museums have struggled against (or in some cases embraced) the stigma of cabinets of curiosities and exploitative displays of bodies. This paper focuses on the entertaining programs and displays surrounding human remains, such as "unwrapping



parties” of Egyptian mummies popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, it discusses the people behind the remains of those who were displayed in museums and exhibitions, such as the Phillippi Mummies of West Virginia. The paper also explores modern examples of entertaining bodies, like those on display at the blockbuster *Body Worlds* or *Bodies* exhibits that display plastinated human remains. Collectively, these entertaining bodies illustrate the roots of museum history. The tradition of museums as dime museums, pseudoscientific institutions, or entertainment palaces is something modern museums still must attempt to reconcile with the continual display of bodies.

Hu Maxwell, *The History of Barbour County, West Virginia: From Its Earliest Exploration and Settlement to the Present Time* (Acme publishing Company, 1899), 391.

“The Wheeling Daily Intelligencer. (Wheeling, W. Va.) 1865-1903, September 13, 1889, Image 4,” September 13, 1889.

Cooney, J. D.: "Cleveland's First Egyptian Mummy Djed-Khons-iwef-ankh", *Western Reserve Historical Society News*, Volume 23, No. 7.

“Origins of Exhibited Cadavers Questioned.” NPR.org. Accessed November 18, 2018.

Jay D. Aronson, *Who Owns the Dead? The Science and Politics of Death at Ground Zero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Katherine Goodnow and Jack Lohman, *Human Remains & Museum Practice* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006).

Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums, Online at: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/DCMS%20Guide.pdf> (accessed June 8, 2018).

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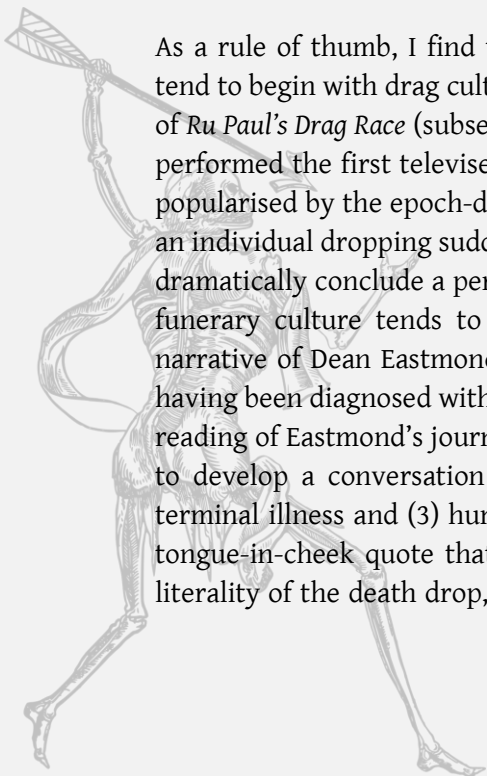
“Come on terminal cancer, let’s get sick(en)ing)... ((I definitely just made death drops a little too literal)) (((this is way too dark, sorry)))”: Queer necropolitics, humour and terminal illness

Matt Coward-Gibbs (University of York)

Matt Coward-Gibbs is an associate lecturer and PhD student in Sociology at the University of York. He is the editor of Death, Culture and Leisure: Playing Dead (Emerald, 2020). Matt’s research focuses, primarily, on death, pleasure, leisure, culture and gaming.

‡

As a rule of thumb, I find that some of the most interesting thanatological enquiries tend to begin with drag culture; in particular, the moment in which on the third season of *Ru Paul’s Drag Race* (subsequently *Drag Race*) that contestant Shangela Laquifa Wadley performed the first televised death drop on the show. The dance move developed and popularised by the epoch-defining Queens of Harlem, New York in the 1960s, involving an individual dropping suddenly down to the floor having bent a leg, usually enacted to dramatically conclude a performance. It is not difficult to argue that traditional British funerary culture tends to be at odds with queer culture. In this paper, I use the narrative of Dean Eastmond, LGBTQ activist and journalist who died in 2017, aged 21, having been diagnosed with Ewing’s Sarcoma the year previously. In performing a close reading of Eastmond’s journalistic writings, blogs, videos/vlogs and social media, I look to develop a conversation between three interlocked factors: (1) queer culture, (2) terminal illness and (3) humour. It is these three factors that are characterised by the tongue-in-cheek quote that forms the majority of the title of this paper, that is, the literality of the death drop, taken from Eastmond’s Twitter account in August 2017. By



unpacking and engaging with the playfulness and humour associated with Eastmond's experiences, I argue that, although somewhat occultic, the tumultuous performativity enacted by Eastmond's plain and open cultural resources goes a long way to help to consider the way in which we engage in death talk and death practice, as well as the differing and sometimes difficult nature of dying queer.

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The Quaker burial grounds of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London

Anna Cusack (Birkbeck, University of London)

‡

From the instigation of the Quaker movement in the 1650s, Quakers refused to be buried in grounds owned by the Church of England. To this end they met with problems when it came to where they were to inter their dead within the metropolis of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London. In 1661 the London Quakers purchased the first of many parcels of land for the purpose of burying members of their movement, who were self-described as Friends. These grounds both looked different to the other burial grounds within the metropolis and those buried within them were subjected to different interment practices. They were also placed at geographic locations that surrounded the expanding metropolis, although never within the central parishes. There was a clear wish to self-marginalise their dead, something that was altogether new amongst the religious grounds of early modern London. This paper explores the burial grounds within the broad metropolis of London, the issues their interment practices faced, and the discrepancy between theory and practice when it came to how the Quaker community disposed of their dead. The Quaker dead were separated from the rest of the parish dead, both spatially and psychologically but also found a certain amount of acceptance over time from the broader London community.

Beck, W., and T. F. Ball, *The London Friends' Meetings showing the rise of the Society of Friends in London* (2009 edn.).

Cox, M., (ed.), *Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in England, 1700 to 1850* (York: CBA Research Report 113 Council for British Archaeology, 1998).

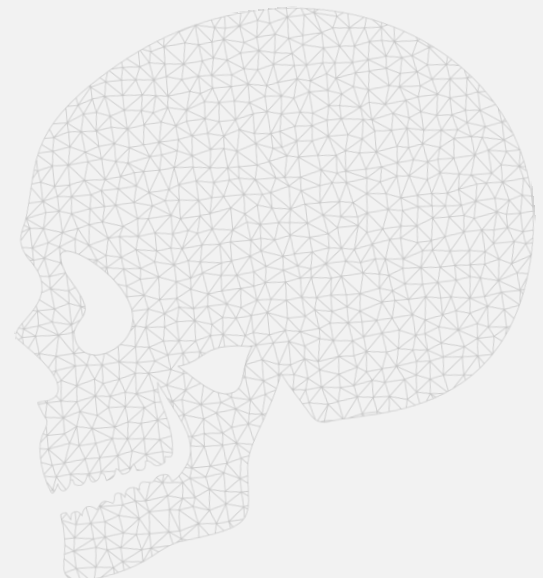
Croese, G., *The general history of the Quakers containing the lives, tenents, sufferings, tryals, speeches and letters of the most eminent Quakers, both men and women: from the first rise of that sect down to this present time* (London, 1696).

Friends' House MSS Portfolio 39/19.

Holmes, B., *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (1896).

Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle (London, England), March 14, 1759 - March 16, 1759; Issue 259.

TNA, Piece 0499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).



A dramaturgical analysis into contemporary Western society's representation of human remains and the emancipation of the corpse from the aura of death

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Alumni of MA Theatre Criticism and Dramaturgy 2018.

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This paper investigates the performativity of the corpse and its emancipation from the aura of death through situations where human remains are presented to an audience, either as part of a cultural ritual or within a museum setting as these are the two dominant contexts in which the layperson may encounter an audience with the dead.

It will address the assumption in contemporary western society that death is not an appropriate subject for discussion, that the corpse is something to be feared which is evidenced through survey findings and key examples of different cultural performances involving human remains. This will involve examining the performance of the corpse as the lived body in a funeral setting, as well as its performance as historical, medical or cultural artefact and in anatomy art. Following this is a theoretical exploration into the concept of the aura in relation to the transient state of the corpse and the impact of the interception of a mortician or anatomist. The final part of this dissertation is an application of this knowledge for the dramaturgical analysis of the performance of the corpse in the Body Worlds exhibition using the methodology of a case study.

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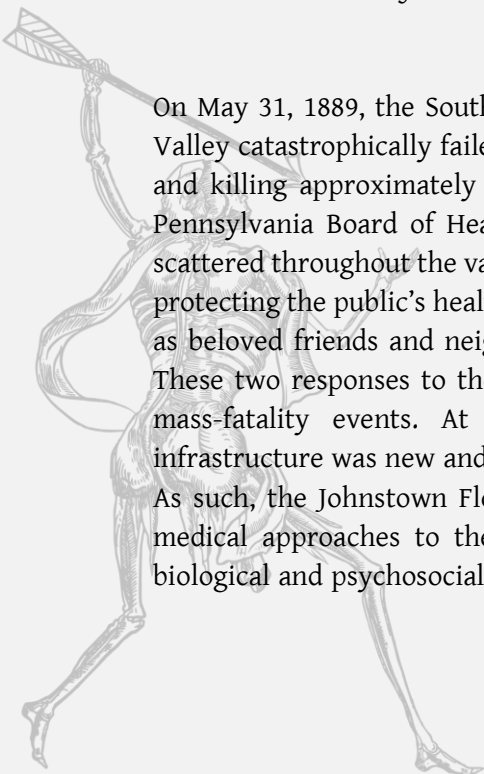
“Could a situation be more ghastly?”: Doctors, disinfectants, and the dead after the Johnstown flood of 1889

Vicki Daniel (Case Western Reserve University)

SAGES Teaching Fellow and Instructor of History

‡

On May 31, 1889, the South Fork Dam located in Western Pennsylvania's Conemaugh Valley catastrophically failed, sending a torrent of water toward the city of Johnstown and killing approximately 2,200 people. In the wake of the flood, officials from the Pennsylvania Board of Health immediately labelled the decomposing human bodies scattered throughout the valley as a massive health threat and established protocols for protecting the public's health. At the same time, bereft survivors responded to the dead as beloved friends and neighbours who deserved proper burial and commemoration. These two responses to the flood represented emerging modern frameworks around mass-fatality events. At the time of the flood, Pennsylvania's public health infrastructure was new and America's commercial undertaking market was expanding. As such, the Johnstown Flood was an early point of conflict between the social and medical approaches to the corpse, and provided a model for how to balance the biological and psychosocial needs of the community after disaster. Using public health



records, medical journals, survivor accounts, newspapers, and visual materials from the period, this paper examines how the unprecedented work of American public health officials at Johnstown unfolded and argues that, despite their concerns over the corpses' dangers, these officials ultimately relied on methods that reflected a compromise between viewing the dead as dangerous material and as human remains.

...

“Discourses of dissolution”: Designing the deceased

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Senior Lecturer Constellation (Critical/Contextual Studies)

‡

Dyer (1992) proposed an analytical framing of stars as constructed texts. He maintained that stardom “can only be studied with due regard to the specificities of what they are, namely significations” (1992:1). This paradigm of evaluating the ‘specificities’ of ‘significations’ is especially pertinent when assessing representations of the dead within visual culture as death is firmly located only within the realms of construction. Death is unknowable, it cannot be documented from experience and its presence is therefore always predicated on allegorical referents (Goodwin and Bronfen, 1993; Townsend, 2008).

Using Seale’s premise that “in considering death, a recognition of the material life of the body is unavoidable” (1998:20), this paper focusses on the biological characteristics of the corpse. How the cadaver can be plundered for “significations” in the process of designing death within visual and material culture will be investigated. With an emphasis on a conceptual toolbox of aesthetic codes, ‘Discourses of Dissolution’ (Bloom, 2003) will thereby interrogate correlations emerging between the corpse, somatic silhouette and material essence, locating death’s presence beyond a text’s specific subject matter.

Research into recurring tropes that emerge in posthumous stardom, fabric and museum display will provide a contextual framework for this study. It will suggest the process of deconstructing a text’s “micro-structures” (Mayne, 1993:18) is a significant, insightful methodology in creative reconfigurations of the deceased.

Bloom, M (2003) *Waxworks. A Cultural Obsession*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

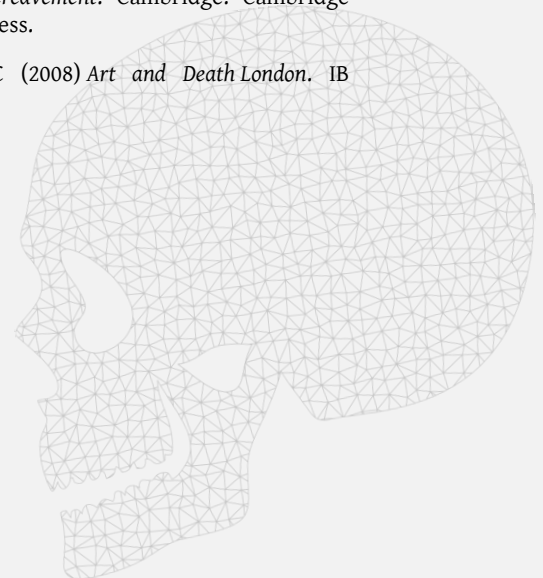
Dyer, R (1992) *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. New York: Macmillan.

Goodwin, S; Bronfen, E (eds) (1993) *Death and Representation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Mayne, J (1993). *Cinema and Spectatorship*. London: Routledge.

Seale, C (1998) *Constructing Death: The Sociology of Dying and Bereavement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Townsend, C (2008) *Art and Death* London. IB Tauris.



Euthanasia: Societal attitudes and popular opinion in Belgium 1936-1970

Niels De Nutte (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

Niels De Nutte is affiliated to the History Department of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel as a researcher.

‡

Although Belgium has been a pioneer in dynamics related to the legalisation of euthanasia since the early 2000s, the historical work done on the subject is still very limited. Quite some work has however been done on the legal and ethical aspects and implications of euthanasia laws. Questions about societal dynamics in end-of-life issues' acceptance and debate in the twentieth century in Belgium are to this day unanswered. It is clear however that before 1970 no advocacy groups on the matter existed. In this paper, I look at the scope, tone and volume of Belgian newspaper coverage in four events linked to euthanasia, which occurred prior to the emergence of advocacy groups on the subject. The four cases covered are the 1936 proposal of law by Lord Arthur Ponsonby on euthanasia in Great Britain, the 1949 trial of Dr. Herman Sander, the American physician who was charged with the murder of a patient suffering from cancer, the 1950 release of the picture *Meurtres* by Richard Pottier in which famed French actor Fernandel played a man mercy-killing his wife, based on the eponymous book written by Belgian novelist Charles Plisnier in 1943 and the book *De rechter en de beul* by novelist and journalist Janine De Rop on euthanasia and disability in 1970. The cases selected cover both the interwar and the post-war period prior to advocacy initiatives on the subject. With this paper, I will shed light on the portrayal of euthanasia as a subject and the societal attitude that corresponds to it. The highly pillarised nature of 20th century Belgian newspapers makes this source material highly suited to this endeavour.

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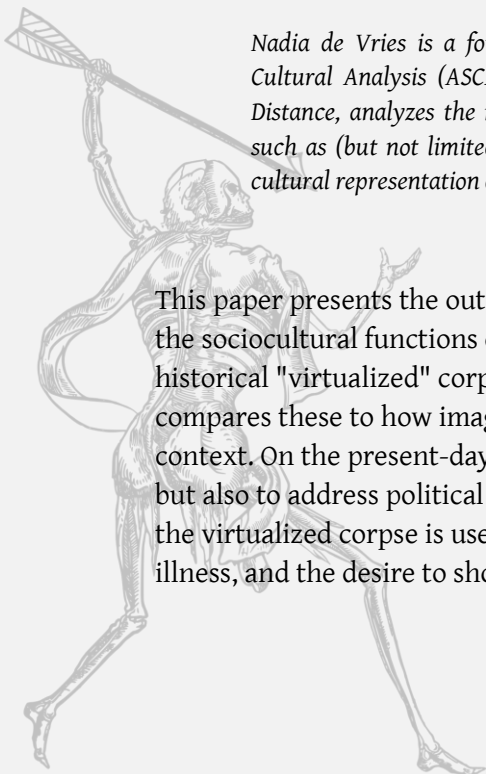
From dust to data: Human corpses in virtual space

Nadia de Vries (University of Amsterdam)

*Nadia de Vries is a fourth-year PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam's School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Her research project, titled *Virtual Bodies: The Corpse at a Digital Distance*, analyzes the representation and reception of dead human bodies in virtual contexts, such as (but not limited to) the Internet. She also teaches media theory, and writes about the cultural representation of illness for various non-academic venues.*

‡

This paper presents the outcome of a four-year PhD research project, which focused on the sociocultural functions of the human corpse within virtual spaces. It looks at historical "virtualized" corpses, such as those in post-mortem photographs, and compares these to how images of the dead are circulated in a contemporary, online context. On the present-day Internet, depictions of corpses are used to shock and repel, but also to address political questions about precarity and violence. At the same time, the virtualized corpse is used to break social taboos, such as those surrounding terminal illness, and the desire to show (and bear witness to) the process of dying.



Through a presentation of case studies, this paper summarizes the various uses and purposes of the corpse in virtual spaces. By analyzing a range of virtualized corpses and their effects on the online community, it argues that the global, large-scale mobility of virtualization is changing the perception of death, as well as the agency of the dead and dying.

...

Sex, death, birth: Mary Shelly, *Frankenstein*, and 19th century female mortality

Jennifer R deBie (University College Cork)

Jennifer deBie is a final year PhD candidate with the English Department at University College Cork. Her research centres on Mary Shelley and Frankenstein, and aims at placing both authoress and text in their fuller, international and historical context. She has presented her research in both Irish and international settings, including Frankenstein bicentennial conferences in Cork, Venice, and Bournemouth.

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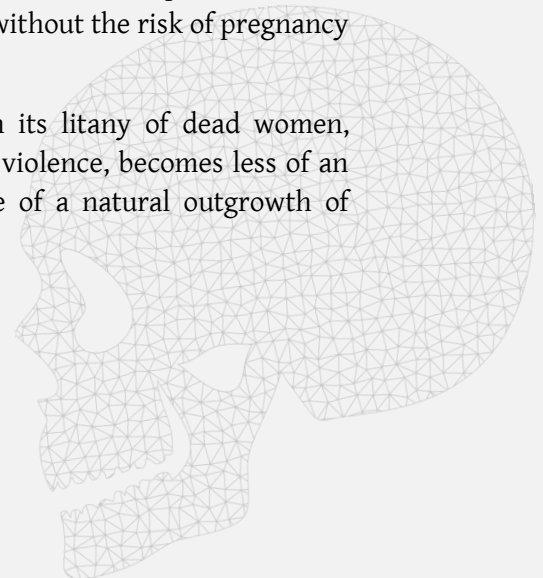
In the 1831 Introduction to *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley reiterates a question evidently posed to her frequently: how did she ‘think of and to dilate upon so very hideous an idea?’ (Shelley, 1998)

Her subsequent answer became the definitive version of the events immediately surrounding the conception of *Frankenstein* and the wintery summer of 1816; spooky stories are read, a challenge to write ghost stories is issued, the men philosophize, and *Frankenstein* is born. This version of *Frankenstein*’s conception leans heavily on Shelley as a “nearly silent listener”. (Shelley, 1998) By her own admission, she became a conduit for the ideas of her husband and others. Scholarship has long accepted this version of the origin of *Frankenstein* without acknowledging that, as a widow in 1831 raising her son in conservative, pre-Victorian London, Shelley had reason to diminish her first novel as the work of an impressionable young girl.

My paper challenges Shelley’s self-created myth of *Frankenstein* as a masculine mouthpiece, grounding the text in feminine concerns of the early 19th century. I will examine romanticized feminine self-sacrifice through suicide, a trope across literary history that saw growth in British consciousness at this time, as well as maternal mortality, which struck every level of British society from Mary Shelley’s mother in 1797 to Princess Charlotte, heir to the British throne, in 1817. At the same time, medical texts, like Tissot’s *Treatise on Onanism* (1766), stoked fears about the depletion of vital fluids through masturbation, making even sexual activity without the risk of pregnancy a dangerous operation.

In the light of this expanded context, *Frankenstein*, with its litany of dead women, masturbatory animation scene, and intimations of sexual violence, becomes less of an aberrant, horror novel from a young woman, and more of a natural outgrowth of feminineconcernsofthetime.

Shelley, M., 1998. *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 text, Oxford: Oxford University Press.



Young visitors' perspectives of a dark tourism site: The Mütter Medical History Museum

Rachel Divaker (University of Pittsburgh)

Researcher, Children and Dark Tourism Research Project

‡

The Mütter Museum, a medical museum in Philadelphia, PA, takes its visitors on a tour of death—represented through disease, deformity, and injury. The museum website beckons visitors with the question: “Are you ready to be disturbingly informed?” Despite its morbid subject matter, the museum enforces no age requirement for entry. As a result, many of its visitors are children who accompany their parents or come on school trips. Here youths encounter rooms filled with human skeletons and wet specimens in glass cases. The exhibitions include disease-ravaged skulls from around the world, jars of preserved organs and deformed fetuses, and mummified remains. A graphic exhibit shows items extracted from peoples’ bodies and the tools used to do so. “Grimm’s Anatomy: Magic and Medicine” explores the real-life counterparts of fairytale bodies.

To better understand the experiences of young witnesses to these death displays, we analyzed children’s entries in Mütter Museum visitor books from 2015-2019. We chose visitor books because they offer insights about how people experience particular exhibits or a museum in general (Coffee, 2011; Livingstone et al., 2001; Macdonald, 2005; Munar and Ooi, 2012). Verbatim entries underwent multiple rounds of qualitative coding to arrive at themes. Young children’s comments revealed an immature understanding of death concepts such as finality and causality. Adolescents, in contrast, pondered personal mortality, and some used humor to mitigate the gravity of their visitor experience. Some teens reported new realizations on health and healing, while others described feeling ill.

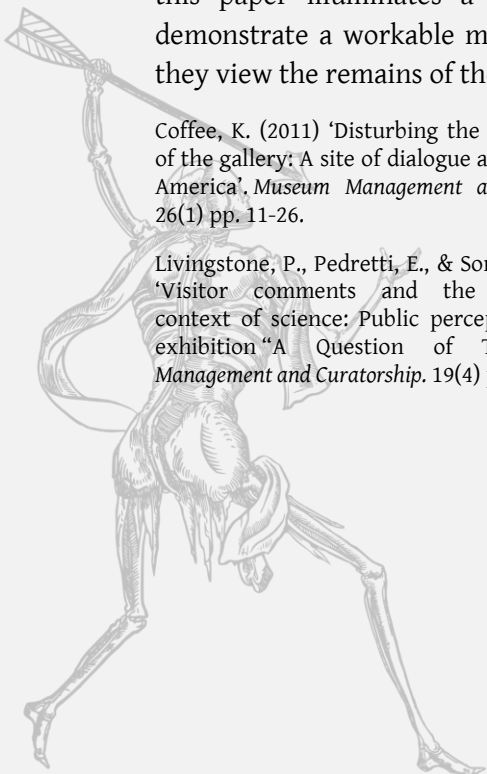
Given how little we know about young tourist encounters with death-related exhibits, this paper illuminates a significant aspect of death and culture. Moreover, we demonstrate a workable method for uncovering how the young think and feel when they view the remains of the dead.

Coffee, K. (2011) ‘Disturbing the eternal silence of the gallery: A site of dialogue about hunger in America’. *Museum Management and Curatorship*. 26(1) pp. 11-26.

Livingstone, P., Pedretti, E., & Soren, B. J. (2001) ‘Visitor comments and the socio-cultural context of science: Public perceptions and the exhibition “A Question of Truth”’. *Museum Management and Curatorship*. 19(4) pp. 355-369.

Macdonald, S. (2005) ‘Accessing audiences: Visiting visitor books’. *Museum and Society*. 3(3) pp. 119-136.

Munar, A. M., & Ooi, C. S. (2012) ‘The truth of the crowds: Social media and destination management’. In Smith, L., Waterton, E., & Watson, S. (eds) *The cultural moment in tourism*. London, England: Routledge. pp. 255-273.



End-of-life care in England during the Covid-19 pandemic

Annelieke Driessen (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Erica Borgstrom (The Open University)

Simon Cohen (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Annelieke Driessen is Research Fellow at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Her research centres around care, subjectivities and end-of-life. Annelieke is ethnographer in the forms-of-care project, in which she works alongside Simon Cohn and Erica Borgstrom.

Erica Borgstrom is Lecturer End of life Care at the Open University. Her research sits broadly within medical anthropology and medical sociology, drawing primarily on ethnographic methods. Through these lenses, Erica address normative concepts within end-of-life care to understand the complexity of care delivery and experiences. To this end, she focuses on policy, organisational approaches, and personal experiences of living with life-limiting conditions and end-of-life care. She is co-investigator in the Forms of Care project.

Simon Cohn is professor of Medical Anthropology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. His research has focused on issues related to diagnosis, contested conditions and chronic illness in the UK and other high-income societies. With a strong commitment to contemporary social theory, he is interested in how innovative social science might provide both critical insight and influence in aspects of contemporary biomedical practice. He is PI of the Forms of Care project

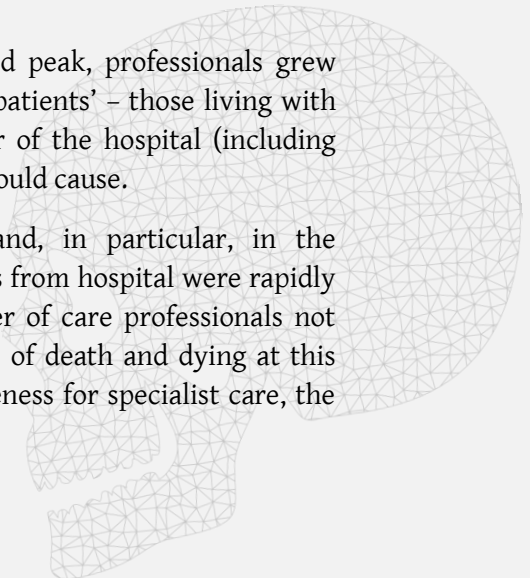
‡

The Covid-19 pandemic inescapably foregrounds questions relating to death and dying. Drawing on conversations with ICU specialists, palliative care specialists and GPs held in Spring 2020, we examine what changes occurred in the provision of end-of-life-care in England.

We witnessed a ramping up of NHS resources in hospital as the number and time-concentration of Covid-19 patients requiring end-of-life care stretched services. Covid-19 temporarily transformed hospitals into near single-condition hubs of care. Staff were redeployed to attend to Covid patients to – in the absence of treatment options besides ventilation – palliate large numbers of patients. These initial weeks were shaped by a high degree of uncertainty over the handling of the condition, the risk of running out of personal protective equipment, and anxiety over bringing the condition home to family members.

While some hospitals never reached the much-anticipated peak, professionals grew increasingly concerned with the absence of their ‘regular patients’ – those living with conditions other than Covid-19, who largely steered clear of the hospital (including A&E) altogether, and the associated ‘excess mortality’ this could cause.

With the initial focus on hospitals, the community and, in particular, in the understaffed and overworked care homes to which patients from hospital were rapidly discharged, were largely overlooked. Here, a large number of care professionals not formerly accustomed or equipped to do deal with matters of death and dying at this scale had to make difficult decisions regarding appropriateness for specialist care, the



need for planning in advance, and the urgency to talk with patients and relatives about these issues, often despite physical distancing.

We attend to how these changes were understood, framed, lived through and coped with by professionals at the 'front line', and consider which of these may have enduring effects on end-of-life-care provision in England

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Exploring the emotional impact on journalists of working on disturbing user generated content of death and trauma

Sallyanne Duncan (University of Strathclyde)

Dr Sallyanne Duncan is a senior lecturer in journalism at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

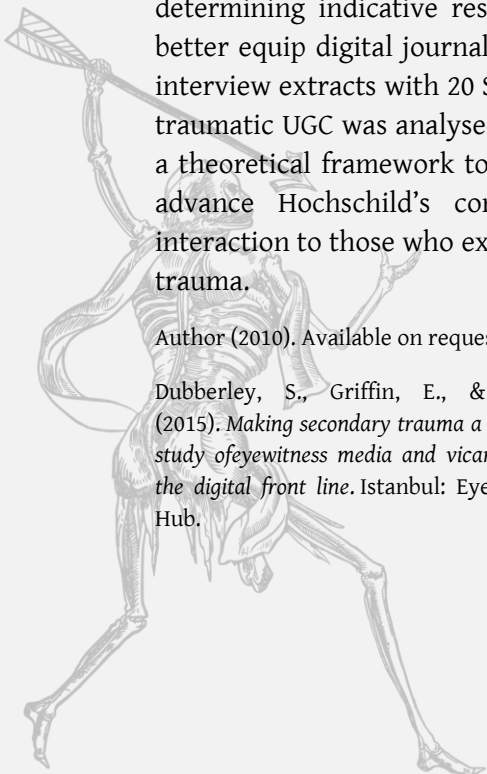
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Regular viewing of disturbing images of death can have a detrimental effect on journalists who process traumatic user-generated content, putting them at risk of vicarious trauma. This research is specifically concerned with raw video footage/still images that portray graphic, highly emotional content during traumatic events, such as road crashes, assaults, terror attacks and natural disasters that require to be verified by digital production desk staff. Research of journalists working with UGC found that frequent, repetitive viewing of violent news-related video and other media raises news professionals' vulnerability to a range of psychological injury, including anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, leaving them with a negative world view (Feinstein et al., 2014; Dubberley et al., 2015). Feinstein et al.'s research also suggests that the frequency of journalists' viewing is more emotionally consequential than the duration of their exposure. Increasingly, digital journalists are recent graduates who may have had little preparation during their higher education courses to deal with death and trauma (Author, 2010). They have to manage their own emotional reaction in order to complete the task, engaging them in emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983). A case study of the social media news agency, Storyful, was undertaken as a means of determining indicative results for a further, larger funded study on approaches to better equip digital journalists to work with traumatic UGC. A video containing short interview extracts with 20 Storyful employees about their experiences of working with traumatic UGC was analysed. The interviews were evaluated using emotional labour as a theoretical framework to unpick their reactions. In doing so, the research seeks to advance Hochschild's concept of emotional labour beyond direct empathetic interaction to those who experience *indirect* empathetic interaction with other people's trauma.

Author (2010). Available on request.

Dubberley, S., Griffin, E., & Bal, H. M. (2015). *Making secondary trauma a primary issue: A study of eyewitness media and vicarious trauma on the digital front line*. Istanbul: Eyewitness Media Hub.

Feinstein, A., Audet, B., & Waknine, E. (2014). 'Witnessing images of extreme violence: A psychological study of journalists in the newsroom'. *Royal Society of Medicine Journals*, 5(8):2054270414533323.



In written memory: Writing practices and public mourning in current societies

Érika Fernández (Universidad de Alcalá)

Érika is a PhD student at the area of Historiographic Sciences and Techniques of the University of Alcalá, where she takes part in the Interdisciplinary Seminar on Studies on Written Culture (SIECE) and the Recognized Research Group Reading Writing and Literacy (LEA). Her line of research revolves around the anthropology of writing, especially spontaneous writings in the public space related to death, focusing on the uses and meanings of writing in specific cases such as spontaneous memorials, both famous and anonymous people's graves and digital mourning.

‡

The aim of this paper is the study of the relationship between writing and death in contemporary society based on its manifestations in the public space. The great expressions of collective mourning as a result of traumatic events and deaths with a large media impact and following, work as catalysts for massive and spontaneous acts of writing. One of the main depictions of this are the spontaneous memorials that emerge at the places where the tragedies have taken place or at symbolic places in the city. Terrorist attacks such as New York 2001, Barcelona 2017, London 2017, Manchester 2017 or Paris 2015, among others, the death of Princess Diana, the murder of the Italian activist Carlo Giuliani in Genoa or that of the boy Gabriel Cruz in Spain gave rise to expressions of collective mourning. Letters, notes, drawing, cards, graffiti and all kinds of written objects were displayed on the ground, on walls, on trees and other places of urban furniture. Along with these, other forms of mourning of a more intimate nature and smaller dimensions also appear in public spaces, such as roadside crosses or graveside shrines, for instance, Jim Morrison's grave in Père-Lachaise Cemetery or Antonio Machado's grave in Collioure Cemetery, where admirers and fans leave written messages as a tribute. Beyond the fact that the content of these writings can reflect the changes in the attitudes towards, conceptions and values of a certain culture of death or show the traits and the characteristics of the society that creates them, this talk focuses on the analysis of the material characteristics, uses and functions of these written pieces in order to know the social meanings attributed to them.

Petrucci, A., 1998. *Writing the dead: death and writing strategies in the western tradition*. Translated by Michael Sullivan. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Santino, J., 2006. *Spontaneous shrines and the public memorializations of death*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

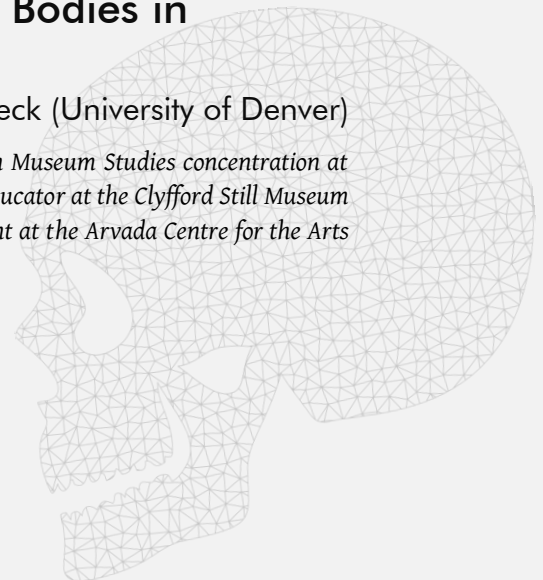
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"The Zeitgeist of Death Installation": Bodies in DeathLAB's Constellation Park

Nicole Fleck (University of Denver)

I am a Graduate Student Candidate for M.A. Art History with Museum Studies concentration at University of Denver, Denver, CO, USA. I work as a museum educator at the Clyfford Still Museum and History Colorado Center, and also as a Curatorial Assistant at the Arvada Centre for the Arts and Humanities.

‡



September 2020

In *The Inoperative Community*, Jean-Luc Nancy recognizes that “death is indissociable from community, for it is through death that the community reveals itself—and reciprocally.” Spaces of death have experiential opportunities for the individual to find their connection, especially among other people who (un)consciously seek to renegotiate their relationship with death, burial, and their considerations of mortality. “The Zeitgeist of Death Installation” realizes a connection within spaces of participatory and installation art to that of DeathLAB’s *Constellation Park*, proposed to be suspended underneath Manhattan Bridge, New York City.

DeathLAB’s *Constellation Park* is designed as tiered, cloud-like, illuminated pods. The illumination is due to bio-power released by the putrefaction of bodies, giving the pods an ethereal presence that intimates the continuation and development of perceptions of the memory of loved ones after their death. This proposed project also has another layer of transience: the remains will only light the pod for approximately one year, and then the pod is cleared for another passing. Therefore, there is no permanent site of mourning or memorializing. How, then, does the contemporary community interact, participate, and relate to DeathLAB’s spaces of death and burial?

My research considers contemporary perceptions of visibility, built environments, and experiences of western cemeteries, and anatomizes the perceptions of death and participation of communities in spaces of death today. DeathLAB proffers to loved ones, to visitors, to social performers an agency over their mourning and vision of death and burial, and in maintaining and shifting relationships with their deceased loved ones, with our culture in death installation

Nancy, Jean-Luc. "The Inoperative Community." In *Participation: Documents of Contemporary Art*, edited by Claire

Bishop, 64. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006

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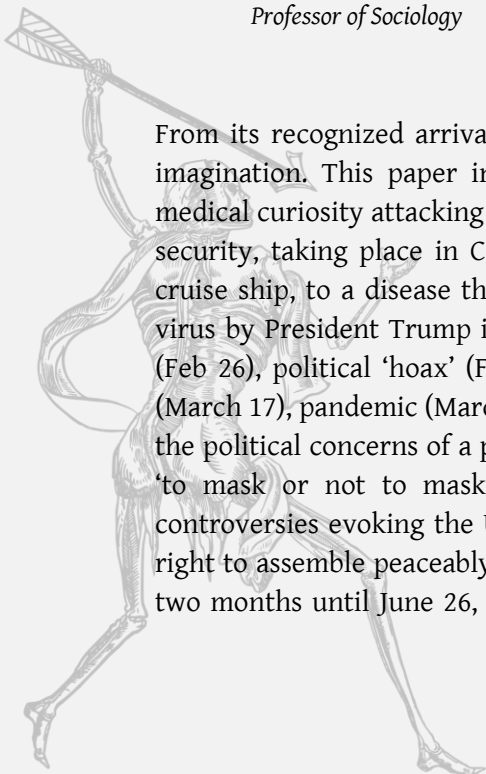
Death in the time of coronavirus: Plague, public policy, and the public imagination

Jacque Lynn Foltyn (National University)

Professor of Sociology

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From its recognized arrival in the USA in February 2020, COVID19 seized the public imagination. This paper investigates its transformation in public discourse from a medical curiosity attacking the aged, watched at a digital distance, with a false sense of security, taking place in China, Europe, a Washington skilled nursing facility, and a cruise ship, to a disease that kills indiscriminately. The ever-changing naming of the virus by President Trump is examined in an evolving narrative of the virus from ‘flu’ (Feb 26), political ‘hoax’ (Feb 28), ‘Chinese virus’ (March 16), ‘invisible enemy/curse’ (March 17), pandemic (March 31), ‘Kung Flu’ (June 20), and ‘sniffles’ (June 25). Driven by the political concerns of a president intent upon re-election, anti-science rhetoric, and ‘to mask or not to mask,’ ‘to open or re-open,’ quarantine, and social isolation controversies evoking the US Bill of Rights 1st Amendment re: freedom of speech and right to assemble peaceably, The White House Coronavirus Task Force was silenced for two months until June 26, 2020, as a second wave of virus deaths surged in US states



where restrictions had been lifted, never enforced, or enacted. (On June 26, 2020, the death toll had reached near 125,000.) The shifting narrative about what the virus is, its origins, and its dangers or lack thereof is considered not only from the points of the potency of metaphors and the politics of naming but also social ‘othering’ of the ‘deviant’ ill/dead as well as class, age, and racial groups more likely to contract the virus; xenophobia; fear of the unknown; terror management theory; the denial of death; and the disjuncture between the social contract and US radical individualism in the face of death. Theoretical frames include Becker 1963, 1973; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski 2015.

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The sin-eater: Ritual and representations

Helen Frisby (Independent Historian)

‡

In 1906 Richard Munslow, gentleman farmer of Ratlinghope in Shropshire, passed away. Munslow was the last recorded sin-eater, a man who shepherded the souls of the newly dead across the hazardous terrain between life and death. This was achieved through the 'pagan' practice of sin-eating, a ritual whereby the sins of the deceased were magically consumed in the form of food and drink handed to the sin-eater over the laid-out corpse. By doing so, the sin-eater enabled the deceased to pass into heaven unburdened. This notion that the passage from life to afterlife could - indeed should - be thus choreographed by the living underpinned many popular funerary customs of this period, some of which I will note in this talk. Yet of all these customs, it is sin-eating which appears most to have captured subsequent imagination, with sin-eaters making numerous appearances in contemporary media and popular culture. In the final part of this talk I will therefore consider the sin-eater's own afterlife - exploring an enduring cultural fascination with this enigmatic figure

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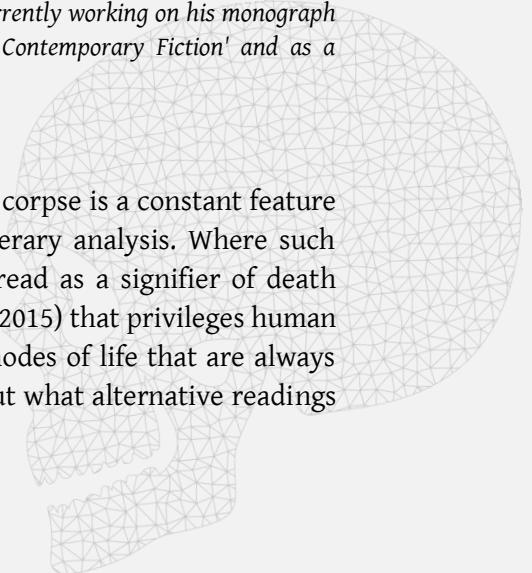
Life after death: A new materialist approach to the literary corpse

Nicky Gardiner (University of Huddersfield)

Nicky Gardiner is a researcher in new materialism and the corpse in contemporary literature and received his AHRC funded PhD on the same topic from the University of Huddersfield in 2020. His research interests include body theory, poststructuralism, posthumanism and material philosophy in contemporary literature and theory. Nicky is currently working on his monograph 'Dead as a Doornail: New Materialisms and The Corpse in Contemporary Fiction' and as a Learning Developer at the University of Newcastle.

‡

From *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to *Lincoln in the Bardo*, the human corpse is a constant feature in narratives across the ages but rarely the subject of literary analysis. Where such criticism is undertaken, the corpse is almost exclusively read as a signifier of death within an anthropocentric “framework of finitude” (Bezan, 2015) that privileges human over bacterial, cellular, mineral or otherwise nonhuman modes of life that are always blossoming forth within the processes of decomposition. But what alternative readings



might emerge when we stop viewing the corpse as a passive object denoting the absence of human life and start viewing it as an active subject teeming with material, social and symbolic vitality? Adopting a new materialist approach to death as a 'change of intensities' rather than a teleological endpoint, this paper considers how such a shift in perspective opens up new ways of reading the literary corpse as a subject that stages an imaginative encounter with the unexpected 'liveliness' of matter.

Starting with a brief survey of the human corpse's dominant conceptualisation as a signifier of death within literary criticism, the paper draws on new materialism's deconstruction of the boundaries between life and death (Braidotti, 2013; Thacker, 2010; Hinton, 2017) to reconceptualise the literary corpse as a signifier of burgeoning nonhuman vitalism, rather than an anthropocentrically defined absence of vitality. Demonstrating this new interpretive sensibility in action, the paper provides a re-reading of *American Psycho* that resists the dominant satirical interpretation that casts Bateman's mutilated corpses as an objective correlative of reification and instead argues that the corpses' unexpected vitality imbues Bateman's consumer objects with a life of their own.

Combining contemporary philosophy and literary practice, this paper aims to show how reimaging death through new materialist epistemologies can enable more productive and nuanced responses to the corpse as both a material and literary subject.

Bezan, Sarah. 'Necro-Eco: The Ecology of Death in Jim Crace's *Being Dead*.'" *Mosaic* (Winnipeg), vol. 48, no. 3, 2015, pp. 191-207, doi:10.1353/mos.2015.0035.

Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Wiley, 2013.

Hinton, Peta. 'A Sociality of Death: Towards a New Materialist Politics and Ethics of Life Itself'

in *What If Culture Was Nature All Along?* edited by Vicki Kirby, Edinburgh University Place, 2017, pp. 223-247.

Thacker, Eugene. *After Life*. University of Chicago Press, 2010.

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Disrupting normality: Reversal at funerals from Roman Britain to W. H. Auden

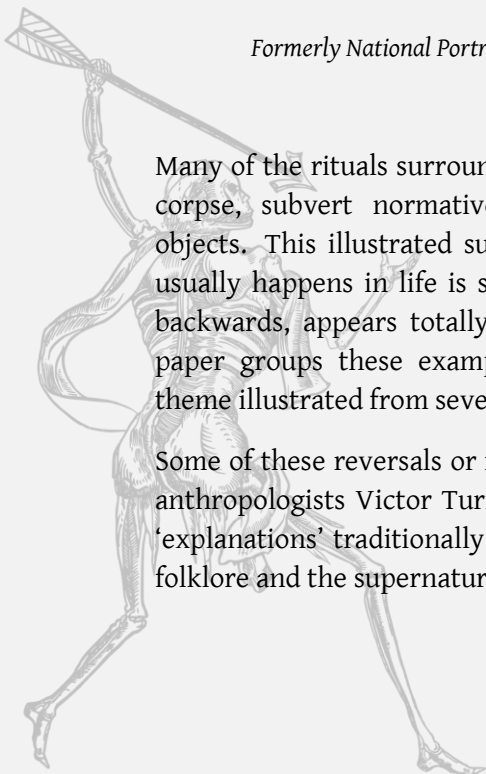
Clare Gittings (Independent Scholar)

Formerly National Portrait Gallery and CDAS.

‡

Many of the rituals surrounding death, particularly those related to the disposal of the corpse, subvert normative behaviours and practices or the usual functions of objects. This illustrated survey looks at a very wide range of examples where what usually happens in life is stopped, reversed, turned upside down, covered up, shown backwards, appears totally inappropriate and is generally subverted by death. This paper groups these examples thematically rather than chronologically, with each theme illustrated from several different time periods.

Some of these reversals or inversions are classic examples of liminality, as explored by anthropologists Victor Turner and van Gennep before him. Many reversals also have 'explanations' traditionally attached to them, ranging from the apparently rational to folklore and the supernatural. These explanations share the characteristics of 'cognitive



synergies' explored more recently by Apter and other psychologists in Reversal Theory. By bringing so many examples together, a strong case is made for reversal to be seen as a mainstream response to death rather than, as it is often presented, an occasional exceptional ritual or practice. Fundamentally the examples all emphasize disruption and the way death causes a rift, at least temporarily, in the fabric of society. All of these practices disrupt the norm in their various ways, marking the death and stopping normal life for a while. Themes investigated include reversals in the home such as concealing reflections and images; reversal of time by stopping it or making it flow backwards; reversal of burial location or of the corpse itself; reversal of weapons and military equipment; reversals relating to the age or marital status of the deceased; and the reversal of customary decorum through lewd behaviour and the playing of sexual games.

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Scandinavian urban cemeteries as public spaces: an analytical framework

Pavel Grabalov (Norwegian University of Life Sciences)

Helena Nordh (Norwegian University of Life Sciences)

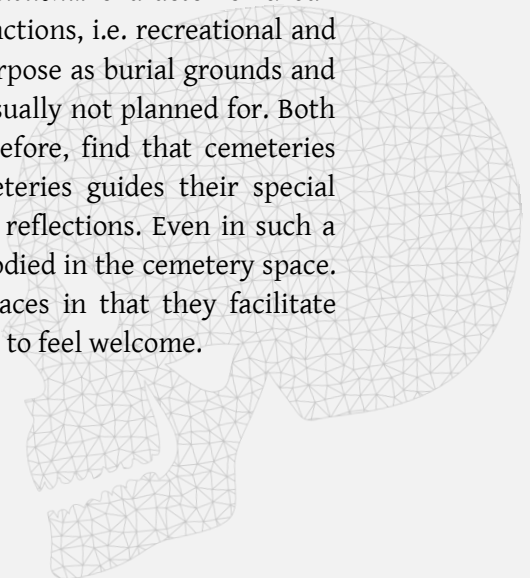
Pavel Grabalov, PhD Candidate, Department of Public Health Science, Faculty of Landscape and Society.

Helena Nordh, Professor, Department of Public Health Science, Faculty of Landscape and Society.

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The concept of public space occupies a central position both in the academic discourse of urban planning as well as in urban development and regeneration projects. Public spaces are believed to make our cities more liveable, healthy and equal. So far, the discussion around public space has primarily evolved around emblematic types, such as squares, streets and parks, while little attention has been paid to cemeteries. Such omission is unfortunate as contemporary urban cemeteries, at least in Scandinavia, are also characterized by two crucial elements of public space: open access and public stewardship. Based on insights from Oslo and Copenhagen, this paper aims to elaborate on contemporary urban cemeteries as a special type of public space. Drawing on a review of public space scholarship and cemetery research, we describe cemeteries as public spaces through the lens of four dimensions: *multifunctional*, *liminal*, *spiritual* and *multicultural* spaces.

In the Scandinavian urban context, we observe a *multifunctional* character of urban cemeteries. Here, cemeteries often accommodate other functions, i.e. recreational and environmental, not directly connected to their primary purpose as burial grounds and places for memorialisation. However, such functions are usually not planned for. Both in planning practice and people's everyday life, we, therefore, find that cemeteries occupy a *liminal* position. The primary purpose of cemeteries guides their special *spiritual* dimension which confronts us with thoughts and reflections. Even in such a secular region as Scandinavia, spirituality is explicitly embodied in the cemetery space. In diversifying cities, cemeteries are also *multicultural* spaces in that they facilitate various religious burial practices and should allow everyone to feel welcome.



This proposed analytical framework provides useful insights into the nature of cemeteries as a particular kind of public space and its development over time, while recognising the most distinctive feature of cemeteries: the presence of death.

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Performing to confront death: Singing and dancing for funerals in communities of Colombia and Uganda

Eloisa Lamilla Guerrero (Choreomundus Association & Erigaie Foundation)

Eloisa Lamilla Guerrero (Born in Colombia, 1987). Anthropologist with a master degree in Social Anthropology (Bogotá, 2011), and in Dance Knowledge, Practice and Heritage (Choreomundus, 2018). With more than ten years working in the identification, inventory and safeguarding plans of intangible cultural heritage, curatorial projects, pedagogical routes, and communitarian tourism programs.

‡

The current situation makes us reflect on the fragility of human life and the significance of rituals to confront death. Every society has its way of mourning, it is our advantage to study the diversity and distinctiveness of practices to deal with loss.

In Western societies, crying is expected at burials but a loss of control, wailing and shrieking, is seen as inappropriate. Conversely, in other cultures, a farewell for the deceased includes shouting, seizures and euphoria during the ceremonies. In some regions of Colombia and Uganda, funerals are enormous affairs involving entire communities. The core of these mourning rituals are boisterous performances, however, these could have different interests and connotations.

On one hand, for the Afro-descendants of the Colombian Pacific Coast, funerals and burials contain repeated rhythmic movements with agitation; clamour mixed with vociferation and wildness that become dance and solemn chants, to ensure a safe passage of the soul into eternity. On the other hand, for the Lugbara community of the West Nile of Uganda, the death of one individual is meant to have a human or divine cause, and it is pivotal to find the guilty ones. Thus, their songs and dances for funerals embrace convulsive periods of singing, stamping, clapping and dancing to show the violent feelings of grief, anger, and revenge that death has left behind.

The paper will approach the different significances of intense and even theatrical performances of death rituals in two communities, one in Colombia and the other in Uganda, to offer a comparative analysis of the diverse catharsis processes created to deal with the trauma of death. By comparing the different approaches to mourning we will see the resilience and empowerment offered by artistic expressions to mortality.

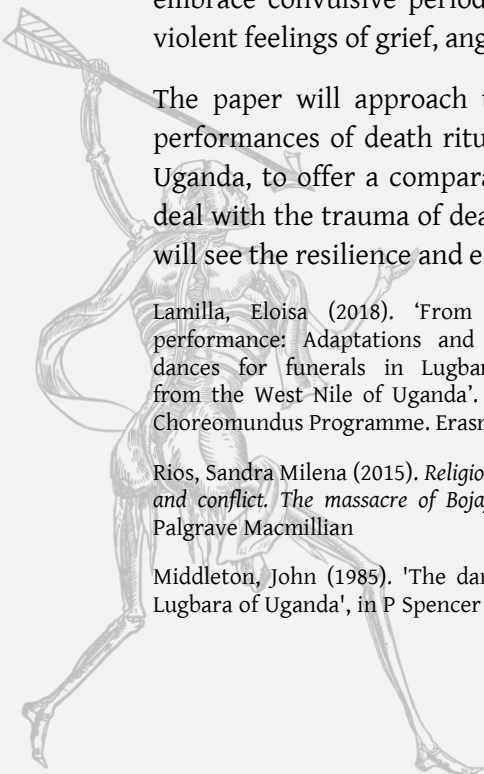
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Repatriationscapes: Death and the repatriation of human remains as an aspect of cultural belonging among the Gambian community in Newport South Wales

George William Gumisiriza (University of Bristol)

I am an early career researcher into death matters after my MSc in Social and Cultural Theory (2018/ 19) at the University of Bristol. My area of interest is the repatriation of the recent dead among African diaspora living in the UK. I moved to the UK about 10 years ago, now living in Newport South Wales. I am a lecturer in Further Education. I am keen to explore my own experience as a migrant in the UK through death and culture.

‡

Repatriation of the deceased poses an assumption that there exists a complex and intricate relationship between the UK bereaved diaspora, the deceased and the locals based in the home country. My core claim is that body repatriation is a form of ritual that can be explored through ‘The Ritual Process’ (Turner, 1969). Descriptively, there are pre-liminal rites (separation), the liminal rites (transition) and post-liminal rites (incorporation), within death and funerary ‘rites of passage’ (Gennep, 1960:1-25, 146-164). My paper aims to explore death discourse and the significance of the repatriation of the deceased among the Gambian community living in Newport. It draws from my recent MSc research where a pilot focus group and semi-structured interviews were used during the study.

‘Repatriationscapes’ (Gumisiriza, 2019) is a theoretical term I have used to refer to the social, cultural, religious rituals and practices in which the Gambians in Newport engage during the process of the repatriation of the deceased to the Gambia. Repatriationscapes explore the academic gap between ‘Deathscapes’ (Beebeejaun, et al. 2016) and ‘Consolationscapes’(Jedan, et al., 2018) within death and migration context. The theoretical approaches and conceptual aspects have been consolidated within an adapted Repatriationscapes framework whereby the migration context perpetuates a prism through which socio-cultural and religious perspectives are interwoven but also separated in places across borders. Findings in my recent study suggested that Afrocentric, socio-cultural and religious perspectives of belonging ‘in the context of relational aspects and culture’ (Corless et al., 2014:135) portrayed during bereavement and body repatriation transcend the assumed barriers involving distance, resources, grief or time for most Gambian diaspora. Repatriationscapes are negotiated within the concepts of power, ‘home’ and cultural belonging in the UK and the Gambia

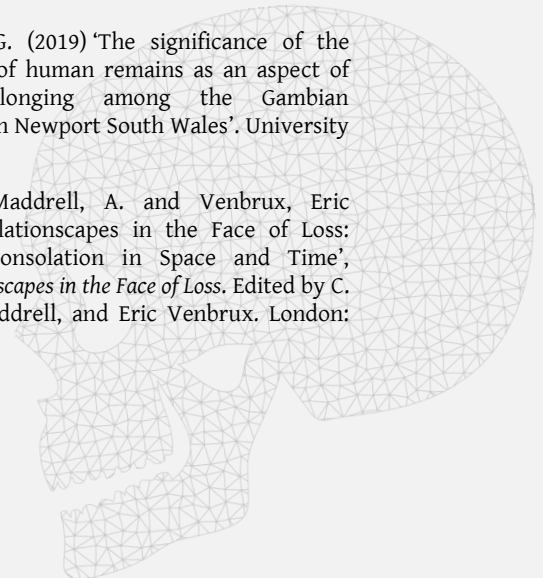
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...

Setting the scene of your death: Dying as a narrative tool in participatory fiction

Freja Gyldenstrøm (Independent Researcher)

MA. Independent Researcher, Alumna of University of Copenhagen and University of York. Experience designer and storyteller.

‡

In traditional literary and dramatic fiction, death comes when the author wills it; and struggle or yearn as they might, the characters themselves are helpless to fight the terms of their demise. Destiny is inevitable, making Hamlet's soliloquy after "To be, or not to be" mostly theoretical – he doesn't really, after all, have a choice. It's the very premise of the written work. But what happens when characters are given free will? When their moment of death is up to themselves to define?

Drawing on narrative theory, this paper examines the portrayal and experience of dying in works of participatory fiction, where characters are embodied in real-time by people and their endings are at the very least, up for negotiation. One example will be *Inside Hamlet* (run first in 2000, latest in 2018), a Marxist post-revolutionary version of Hamlet, which will be understood in comparison to its Shakespearean predecessor. Another example will be *Just a Little Lovin* (run first in 2011, latest in 2019), a biographical exploration of the lives and tragedies of those affected by the aids epidemic in 1980s New York, which will be compared to one of the works that inspired it, Larry Kramer's play *The Normal Heart* (1985). Based on narratological analysis of the works themselves and interviews with players, the paper will explore the meaning of the moment of death in drama, how it changes the narrative when it is not set, and how it is experienced from within.

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Nurturing the next generation within dark tourism: Insights from Death Valley, Slovakia

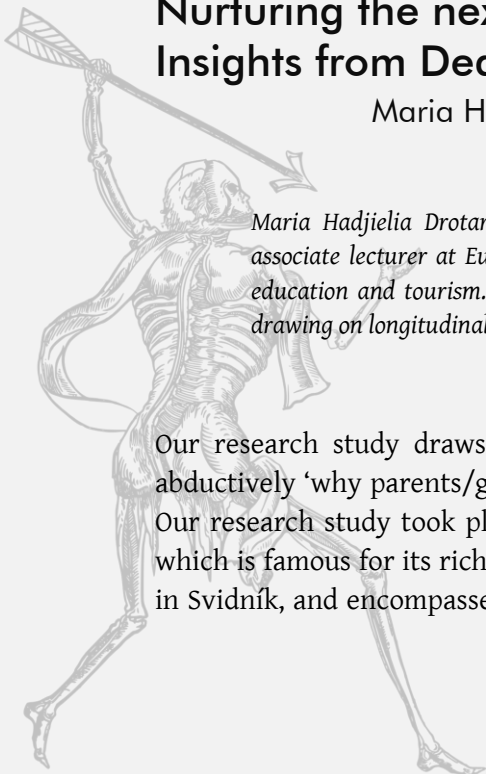
Maria Hadjielia Drotarova (Cyprus University of Technology)

Prokopis Christou (Cyprus University of Technology)

Maria Hadjielia Drotarova is a research associate at Cyprus University of Technology and associate lecturer at European University, Cyprus. Her research is found at the intersection of education and tourism. She focuses on educational research, social learning and dark tourism drawing on longitudinal qualitative research approaches.

‡

Our research study draws on activity theory and parenting literature to research abductively 'why parents/grandparents nurture the next generation of dark tourists?'. Our research study took place in the 'Death Valley' in Slovakia, a dark tourism place which is famous for its rich history on Second World War. 'The Death Valley' is located in Svidnik, and encompasses the battlefield where the heaviest tank battles took place



between 25th and 27th October 1944. In this battlefield, known as ‘Carpathian Operation’, the Czechoslovak army led by General Svoboda and the Soviet Army (about 300 000 soldiers) fought against the German troops. This battle was one of the bloodiest battles of Second World War, which brought the German defeat, 150 destroyed tanks and 180,000 dead soldiers, including the total destruction of the town of Svidník.

Further, using a theoretical sampling process we collected 26 semi-structured interviews with visitors in ‘The Death Valley’. The collected data were analysed through thematic analysis, drawing on coding process and guided by activity theory and parenting literature. Our research findings shed light on three types of drivers that lead grandparents/parents in introducing their children to dark tourism places, such as the Death Valley: ‘obligational’, ‘educational’, and ‘ethical’. Our research study brings a novel and, yet, unexplored understanding of dark tourism as a collaborative activity between grandparents/parents and the younger generation.

Last, through the research study we provide directions for future research on dark tourism. As well, as practical implications for tourist providers and educational institutions such as schools which seek to incorporate dark tourism within the school curriculum.

Caretakers of the dead: The curious case of the funerary feline

Racheal Harris (Deakin University)

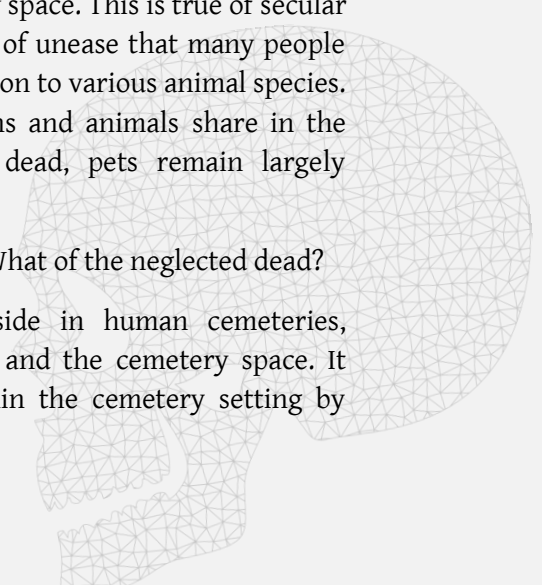
Racheal Harris completed her Bachelor of Historical Inquiry and Practice, Bachelor of Arts (Hons), and Master of Arts at the University of New England (Australia). She is currently a PhD candidate at Deakin University. Racheal has contributed to several edited collections on popular culture, including chapters on theological concepts in James Cameron’s Terminator franchise and folklore in the CW series Supernatural. Her first single-authored monograph, Skin, Meaning, and Symbolism in Pet Memorials, was published as part of the Death & Culture series in June 2019. It considers contemporary death practices related to mourning and memorializing companion animals. Racheal also has a forthcoming title on the Syfy series 12 Monkeys, to be published in 2020 by McFarland Press.

‡

Relationship bonds between humans and domestic animals have occupied the recent interests of several fields of academic inquiry, with the friction around the role of animals in the landscape of modern death rituals recurring across disciplines. What these avenues of research reveal is an innate sense of unease present in circumstances where animals mingle or reside within the human funerary space. This is true of secular and religious burial sites, and reflects the enduring sense of unease that many people feel when issues around the soul and afterlife arise in relation to various animal species. Despite the increasingly intimate lifestyles which humans and animals share in the domestic setting, it seems that in the cities of the dead, pets remain largely unwelcomed ... at least by the living.

But what of the domestic animal that becomes homeless? What of the neglected dead?

This paper examines feral cat populations which reside in human cemeteries, considering the relationship between abandoned felines and the cemetery space. It challenges the ways these animals are interpreted within the cemetery setting by



assessing the shifting narratives being told about them, along with their increasing popularity as a tourist attraction. Using Tanaka Cemetery (Tokyo) and Montmartre Cemetery (Paris) as case studies, I consider some of the ideas humans hold about the place of domestic animals in the afterlife, the legitimacy of the individual animal soul, and how these are impacted by cultural traditions and death rituals. Exploring these sites as places of dark tourism, I examine how the agency of the living animal shifts when that animal exists within the funerary space and finally, look at how narratives of the human dead are developing in response to the increasing popularity of dark tourism sites.

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Death education at dark tourism sites: A Developmental framework for interpreters

Haley Henry (University of Pittsburgh)

Researcher, Children and Dark Tourism Project

‡

Dark tourism sites provide a unique context for harnessing young visitors' natural curiosity about death and dying (Andre *et al.*, 2017; Munley, 2012). Yet, museum and memorial staff often find themselves inadequately prepared to design tours, exhibits, signage, and other forms of site interpretation (Shaffer and Kerr, 2015; Kerr *et al.*, 2017).

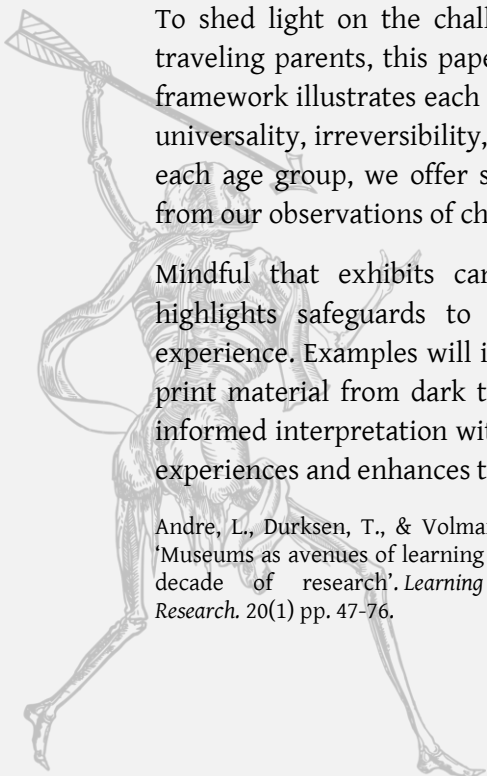
Interpretation for general audiences fails young tourists for several reasons. First, unlike adult visitors, many children have never witnessed the dead or dying. Developmental stage, cognitive understanding, and emotional maturity also shape children's understanding of human death. For example, very young children who do not understand the finality of death may be puzzled by the somber reactions of other tourists. They may view death as a temporary, even happy state (e.g., the deceased is asleep or on a trip). In contrast, adolescents are typically aware of their own mortality (DeSpelder and Strickland, 2005) and may be deeply moved or even feel anxious (Li *et al.*, 2017).

To shed light on the challenges facing interpreters, educators on school trips, and traveling parents, this paper offers a developmental death education framework. The framework illustrates each age group and their understanding of these death concepts: universality, irreversibility, personal mortality, and causality (Bianucci *et al.*, 2015). For each age group, we offer specific interpretation suggestions and pertinent examples from our observations of children's conversations and behaviors at dark tourism sites.

Mindful that exhibits can cause young children distress, the presentation also highlights safeguards to ensure that children have a meaningful and positive experience. Examples will include child-centered interpretive programs, websites, and print material from dark tourism sites worldwide. Taken together, developmentally-informed interpretation with appropriate supplementary materials enriches children's experiences and enhances their understanding of death and dying

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The construction of clothing the dead in early Islam: culture, religion and fashion

Hadas Hirsch (Oranim Academic College)

Senior Lecturer, Department of History and Department of Arabic language

‡

The Quran ordered the believers to bury their dead but the detailed rules were developed and explained by jurists who discussed all aspects of life, including clothing for burial, because the corpses must be prepared for resurrection. Clothing is aimed at concealing and revealing the body, protecting it and manifesting religious, political and social declarations. The source for this paper is medieval Muslim jurisprudence that discusses theoretical questions and real issues that needed a juridical response. The Muslim code of clothing the dead reveals the world of the living people, their concepts and values in some complementary aspects:

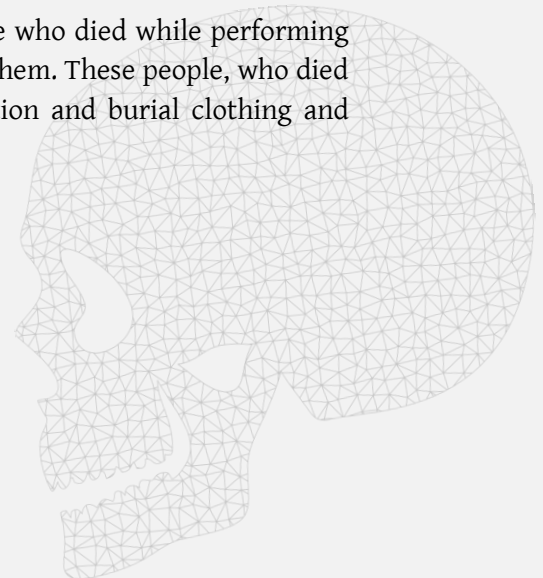
A. The first symbol of separating the dead from the life is ritual purification that includes washing and perfuming the corpse before its clothing as part of the perception that grave is a transitional stage before resurrection.

B. The significance of burial clothing as part of preparing the deceased for resurrection requires clean or new clothing according to socio-economic status and local fashions and tastes of time and place.

C. A binary gendered dichotomy defines the appropriate clothing for men and women's corpses but it also includes instructions to hermaphrodites' corpses as being part of the Muslim community.

D. Glorification of remarkable groups - martyrs and those who died while performing hajj ceremony - as a mean to urge the believers to follow them. These people, who died in exceptional circumstances, are exempt from purification and burial clothing and their corpses are buried the way they died.

...



Women and suicide: Representations of female suicide and female responses to suicide in European cinema and epidemiological mental health studies since World War Two

Kierran Horner (King's College, London)

‡

This cross-disciplinary paper explores some of the characterisations of people who have attempted and completed suicides, centring on post-war, European cinema. Focussing on representations of female suicide and female responses to suicide, it asks how ways these aesthetically rendered deaths reflect contemporaneous thinking about suicidal ideation. Examining the affinities and convergences between two fields of scholarship – film-philosophy and mental health studies – it addresses ethical ways of thinking about vulnerable people and how they are portrayed onscreen.

The WHO webpages on Gender and Women's Mental Health state that '[g]ender is a critical determinant of mental health and mental illness' and my paper considers discrete factors in mental wellbeing – psychological, sociological and philosophical and other influences – in women's relationships to suicide as they are depicted onscreen. Most of Eastern and Western Europe has a ratio of male to female suicides of an average of 3.5 to 1. Yet these data can also hide the experiences of women and the cause of their tragedies: more women attempt suicide than men. This paper will discuss some of the ways such statistics are reflected in European cinema in which female suicide is a dominant event.

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Death destroys a man, but the idea of death saves him: Affect in spaces devoted to reflecting on our own mortality

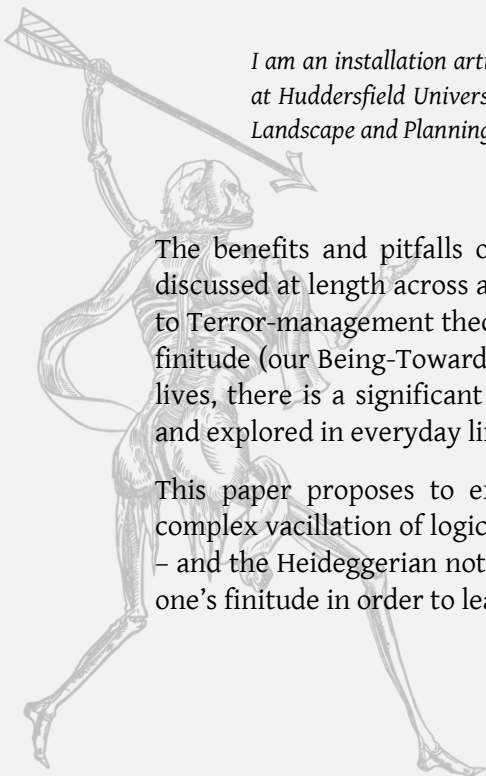
Gareth Hudson (University of Huddersfield)

I am an installation artist working in the moving image and currently a lecturer in photography at Huddersfield University, visiting lecturer in Fine Art and Design studio tutor in Architecture, Landscape and Planning at Newcastle University.

‡

The benefits and pitfalls of persistently thinking about one's own death have been discussed at length across a range of disciplines from philosophy and social psychology to Terror-management theory. While empirical evidence confirms that confronting our finitude (our Being-Towards-Death) can positively affect the ways in which we live our lives, there is a significant deficit in thinking about how mortality can be negotiated and explored in everyday life.

This paper proposes to explore the relationship between 'sublime feeling' – as a complex vacillation of logic involving a contradictory simultaneity of pleasure and pain – and the Heideggerian notion of 'Being-Towards-Death' – as an attempt to understand one's finitude in order to lead a more authentic existence.



This shared dynamic will be explored through discussing artworks whose processes focus on providing audiences with space to think specifically about their own mortality. Firstly, the paper seeks to demonstrate that while non-religious communities such as death cafés have begun to provide spaces which allow us to reflect upon our mortality, the real benefit lies with spaces which produce a more perspicuous and immediate affectual response akin to that of the sublime. Secondly, the paper will argue (through examining artworks, practice-based research and acts of practice) that the benefits of this type of immersive experience can be both longer lasting with more profound changes, thus allowing for different spiritual persuasions. Thirdly, the paper concludes that in post-enlightenment societies, where secularism and humanism hold an equally important place in how we configure our feelings about death, we must seek to establish spaces devoted to accepting our mortality. In particular, how the configuration of such spaces may allow affect and feeling to play a crucial role in our experiences of finitude.

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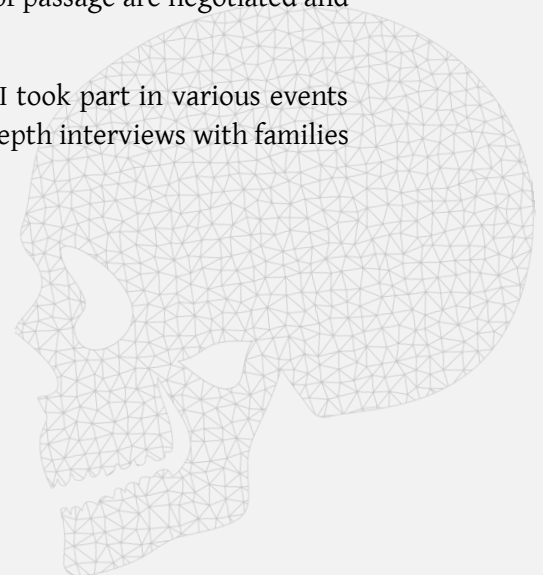
"Everything seems so illogical": Constructing 'missingness' narratives in the cultural space between life and death

Ori Katz (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)

‡

This paper discusses the case of missing persons in Israel, to show how the category of 'missingness' is constructed by the people who have been left-behind, and how it is positioned between life and death. The field of missing persons in Israel is characterized not only by high uncertainty, but also by the absence of cultural scripts. Other than the ritual of reporting to the police, there is no cultural guidance for those left-behind. Thus, their narratives are constructed considering common cultural meta-narratives regarding life and death. However, I claim that the social category of missingness and its narrative construction undercut modern dichotomies and assumptions. The missing persons are placed in a constant flux between life and death. As such, they are both in a liminal state, meaning neither alive nor dead, and in a hybrid state, meaning both alive and dead. Those who have been left-behind fluctuate not only between different ontological assumptions about the missing persons' fate. They also fluctuate between acceptance of the life-death dichotomy, and thus yearn for a solution to a temporary in-between state, and blurring this dichotomy, and thus constructing 'missingness' as a new stable ontological category. Under this new category, and due to the lack of cultural scripts, new rites of passage are negotiated and constructed.

The paper is based on a narrative ethnography, in which I took part in various events such as physical searches and meetings, in addition to in-depth interviews with families of the missing and other relevant actors



Life versus death, tipping the balance: A phenomenological analysis of body image and death in *Me Before You* (2016)

Christine Kelly (St Mary's University)

‡

The fiction film, 'Me Before You' follows the life of Will Traynor, a previously very active young man, who is rendered quadriplegic by an accident. Will, now in a motorised wheel chair, plans a trip to Dignitas to end his life. Will's motivation for assisted dying is driven, amongst other things, by the changes in his physical abilities which he finds he cannot bear to live with. He gives his parents six months before he intends to travel to Switzerland. In that time, with the help of a young female carer they hope to change his mind.

David Morris (2008:111) writes that the body is at the heart of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy; that he demonstrates in his writings that previous views which suggest that the body is a vehicle of consciousness or a biomedical object do not hold when we consider how we act in the world. In her work on body images. Gail Weiss (1999) interrogates the status of the body in our understanding of subjectivity and Elizabeth Grosz (1994) examines the origins of body image.

This paper will use the works of these authors in order to provide a phenomenological analysis of Will's actions and his approach to life and death. The analysis will incorporate key ideas contained in the terms embodiment and body image including the presence of multiple of body images, the physical and social origins of these and the possibility of distortion. The analysis will reveal how Will's bodily changes affect his body images and in turn have a bearing on how he deals with the world and his ultimate choice of death

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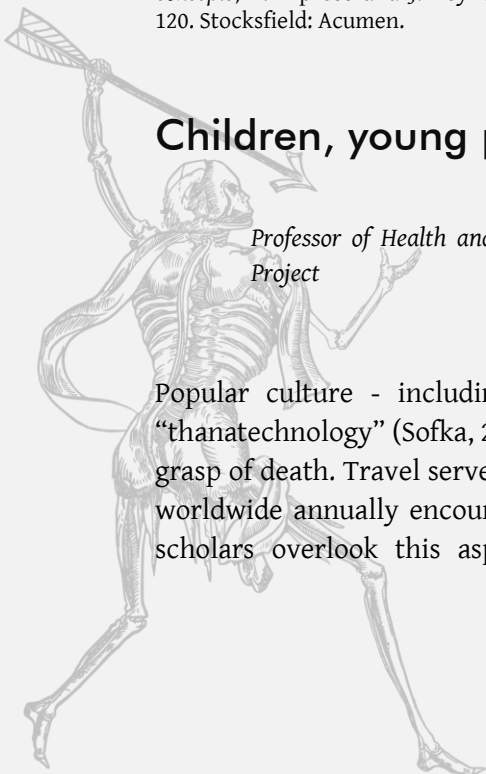
Children, young people and dark tourism

Mary Margaret Kerr (University of Pittsburgh)

Professor of Health and Human Development. Director, Children and Dark Tourism Research Project

‡

Popular culture - including media, children's books (Gutiérrez et al., 2014), and "thanatechnology" (Sofka, 2009) - influences how and when young people develop their grasp of death. Travel serves as another major influence because thousands of children worldwide annually encounter sites associated with death and human suffering. Yet, scholars overlook this aspect of youth culture (Khoo-Lattimore, 2015; Poria and



Timothy, 2014). How, then, do we know how children feel, act, and think when they visit “dark tourism” sites?

To answer this question, we first conducted research at dark tourism sites. Initially, we analyzed children’s memorial tributes (Kerr et al., 2017a; Kerr and Price, 2018). Then we recorded observations of young tourists and analyzed their visitor comments (Kerr et al., 2017b; Croom et al., 2019). Our findings suggest that very young children often explore dark tourism sites through happy play because they do not even comprehend that death and suffering occurred (Price and Kerr, 2018). Older children painstakingly craft and leave tributes, reflecting their deeper grasp of death’s finality. Recognizing their own mortality, adolescents stop at visitor books to write *memento mori* for other tourists to heed.

We then engaged more than 200 adolescents as co-researchers. These teenagers documented their own perspectives about their visits. They collected data at war and terrorism-related memorials, death-related exhibits, natural disaster sites, and cemeteries. These adolescents collected data through handwritten journals, photos, and motor coach conversations with their peers (Burns, 2018; Price, 2018). The implications of their research are new conceptualizations about how youth process difficult death-related concepts. These young researchers also offer suggestions for museum staff, teachers, and parents to engage young tourists through exhibits and conversations about death and dying. This presentation will share our research findings, highlighted with case illustrations from dark tourism sites in the US and UK

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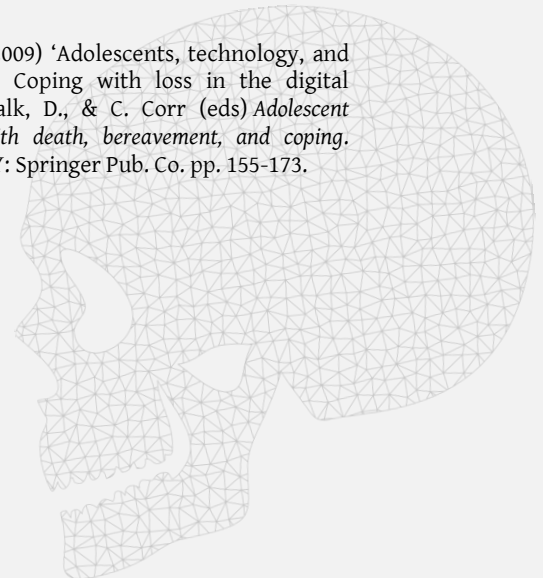
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September 2020

Death, memory and power: Public memorial culture of Moscow necropolises

Maria Kucheryavaya (Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences & The University of Manchester)

MA student of Faculty of Social Sciences

‡

My work is dedicated to the study of two Moscow necropolises, where many famous people are buried - Novodevichy and Troyekurovo cemetery. These cemeteries are an interesting case among similar cemeteries (one of the most striking examples is the cemetery Père Lachaise). Burials in both Moscow cemeteries are allocated by the government, and among those buried in the cemeteries there are famous politicians, doctors, doctors of the USSR and Russia.

The emergence of such cemeteries-museums, necropolises for famous people, is an interesting phenomenon itself: why did it become necessary to create separate necropolises? Why were they initiated? What cultural and social preconditions precede their appearance?

In my work I will focus on understanding the necropolis as an object that expresses and establishes memory through a conflict of narratives (on both verbal and non-verbal levels). The necropolis is a resource for them and establishes a commemoration relationship, displaying the general mnemonic regime. The subject of my interest will be how the necropolis embodies the specifics of contemporary public memorial culture in Russia. Through the reconstruction of the transformation of these cemeteries, I want to follow the more general framework of transformation of memorial and commemorative culture in Russia.

I will be interested in the institutional history of the cemetery, as expressed in both official and unofficial sources. Accordingly, I am interested in what cultural background was behind its creation and what metamorphoses it has undergone over its history.

The dynamics of the memorial culture is especially interesting to follow on the example of these cemeteries, because Novodevichya is the largest necropolis of Russia, which appeared in the 1900s, and Troekurovskoye is its branch, which was formed much later and represents the history of Russia, but not the USSR.



Reunion and repatriation: Migration, modern cremation, and the emergence of a transnational necro-network

Helen V L Leggatt (University of Canterbury, NZ)

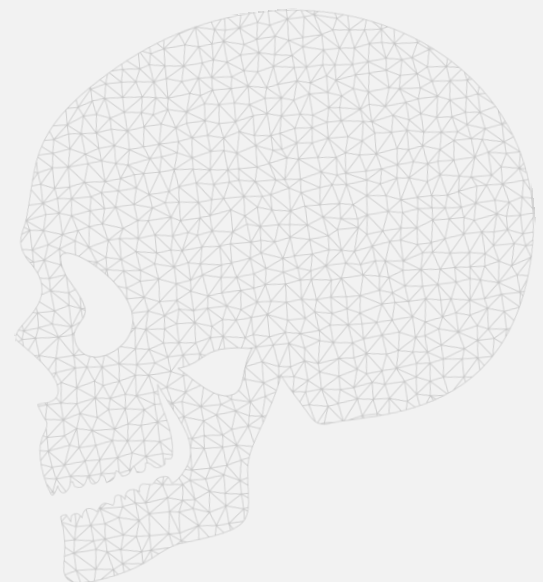
Helen Leggatt is a PhD Candidate at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, where she received her First Class Honours in 2018. Her current research focuses on modern cremation and associated social and cultural change in British colonial societies during the nineteenth century.

‡

Transnationalism is a key theme for historians of mobility but, to date, scholars have focused on the living. Research into transnational networks of the dead in the context of modern cremation has not been addressed. The emergence of such a network is significant when considering the ways migrants exploited the mobility of cremated remains when contemplating the final resting place of themselves or their loved ones.

Using cremation registers and record linkage this paper explores motivations for cremation through the stories of four individuals. The desire to return and reunite is explicit in the case of John Jack. A staunch Scottish Presbyterian, John was the first person cremated in New Zealand. His ashes were returned 'home' and interred in the family plot in Dundee. Italian-born Nicolina Antico, the first woman cremated in New Zealand, expressed her wishes for ash disposal in her will. Fourteen years after her death, her ashes accompanied her husband to Italy and were interred in his grave. Repatriation motivated the post-mortem journeys of John Bush Brown and Mona Harrison. John died in 1923 with no relatives in New Zealand. At the request of his family in Edinburgh, he was cremated and returned 'home'. New Zealand-born Mona Harrison, honoured for exemplary WWI service with the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service, died in London while resting before returning 'home'. Cremated at Golder's Green, it was three years before her ashes made the final journey back to Ashburton, in New Zealand's South Island, where she was interred in her husband's plot.

The findings reveal how cremation mobilised the corpse, restoring familial connections severed by migration or death abroad. This paper provides a new perspective from which to consider adoption of modern cremation in the British colonies – the desire for reunion and repatriation.



'Between life and death—where do I live?' Sense of self and the image of death in the music of Kælan Mikla

David Lillington (Independent Scholar)

David Lillington is a member of the International Association of Art Critics and ASDS. He is currently working on a book that collects articles he wrote for Dutch art magazine Metropolis M from 1990. He has researched art and death since 2009. Death-and-art engagements include curatorial projects, writing, conference papers.

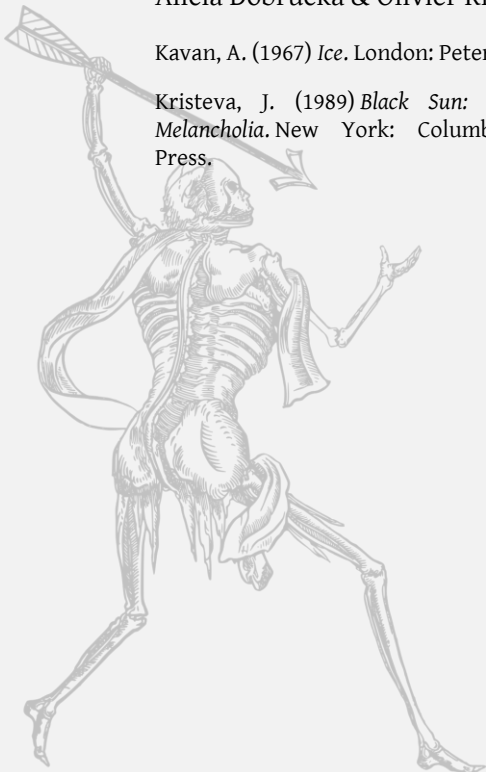
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In Kælan Mikla's songs, not sleep, but *sleeplessness* is the image of death. This equation of psychological distress and death shows a debt to Romantic literature. Lyrics present feelings of drowning, falling, floating, 'unrootedness', 'winglessness', and of *cold* (their 'I freeze your fragile souls' evokes Luz, the heroine of Anna Kavan's master novel, *Ice*). The three members conceived the idea of being one person – 'The Lady of the Cold' (Kælan Mikla) – also a literary conceit. They formed in Iceland in 2013. While very much of the 'Dark Wave' genre, and showing musical influences going back four decades, they are also highly original, and are highly respected. Two were poets prior to forming the band. They present an antithetical view of self. In 'Glimmer og Aska', 'Glitter' and 'Ashes' are separate characters, but 'aspects of the same person'. In 'Umskiptingur' (Transition), they ask, 'between life and death – where do I live?' The theme recurs: 'between two worlds,' 'between sleeping and waking', 'between dark and light' – invoking death and life. Echoing literary study, *The Gothic Imagination*, their Gothic hero's very identity lies in having lost something. Starting from the landscape ('Why is it always cold?/Why is the light black?'), and from internal states, they assert the positive-in-the-negative identity of the de Nerval poem that gave Kristeva's 'Black Sun' its title. They also intelligently mock the clichés of Gothic. In their 'Draumadís' video two members ritually sacrifice the singer. Closest to a love song is 'Ástarljóð' (Love Poetry): 'I hope you go to hell my love/Because then I will see you again' – as if love were inconceivable without thoughts of death. This paper will be informed by interviews, and images from a photoshoot I organised in March with photographers Alicia Dobrucka & Olivier Richon of the RCA

Kavan, A. (1967) *Ice*. London: Peter Owen.

Kristeva, J. (1989) *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Punter, D. (2014) *The Literature of Terror: Volume I: The Gothic Tradition*. Abingdon: Routledge.



Giving birth to death: the abject in Annie Ernaux's *Happening*

Cassie Violet Lowe (University of Winchester)

Cassie Lowe is a researcher in Learning and Teaching Development and a Lecturer (HPL) in English Literature at the University of Winchester. She has been a guest editor on the Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change in 2017 and 2019 and remains the editor for the undergraduate student journal Alfred. Her research is primarily in educational development, educational theory, literature, art, psychoanalytic theory and existential philosophy. Her recent article in the Journal of Aesthetic Education, 'The Abject in Education', brings together her research interests in both education and psychoanalysis. She is currently undertaking her PhD exploring Kristeva's theory of abjection and Freud's theory of repetition compulsion and their manifestations in literature and artwork.

‡

The autobiographical memoir *Happening* presents Annie Ernaux's harrowing experience of seeking an illegal abortion in 1960's France. This paper will explore *Happening* through framing it within Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, to expose the abject violence of the imagery, as the text makes a claim for the necessity of legalising abortion. This text's response to the concept of death through abortion betrays a unique perspective on death in the popular imagination, which exposes its fragile position amongst society. It will present this text as a confrontation with death in its most extreme form, the utmost abjection, the dead body, an infiltration of the preserved "I" with the corporeality of bodily waste. This paper will position *Happening* as describing the unborn foetus as an 'Other', to be removed, abjected, eliminated, and, as Kristeva describes the abject, 'permanently thrust aside in order that I may live' (Kristeva, 3). Through illuminating this text in Kristeva's theory, it will engage with the notion of death through abortion and its representation in *Happening* as being a necessity for Ernaux. In doing so, this paper will immerse the narrative in the Kristevan psychoanalytical proposal to suggest Ernaux's experience of pregnancy and abortion is the height of the abject 'death infecting life' (Kristeva, 4)

Kristeva, Julia. *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

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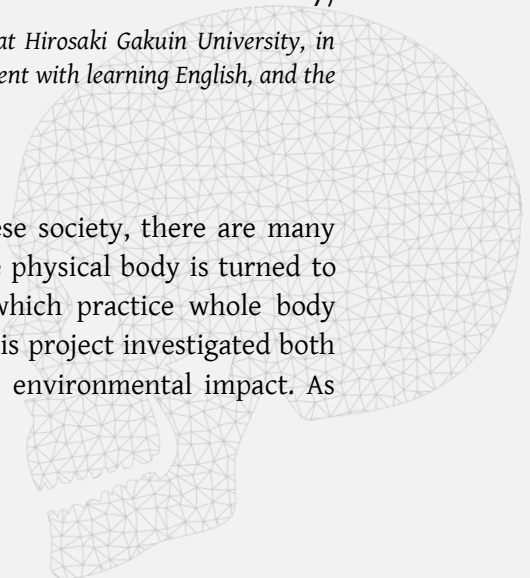
A trip to the crematorium: edifice and environment

Steven GB MacWhinnie (Hirosaki Gakuin University)

Steven MacWhinnie is a lecturer in the English department at Hirosaki Gakuin University, in Aomori, Japan. His research interests include student engagement with learning English, and the places of death in modern Japan.

‡

In a search for understanding of death in modern Japanese society, there are many places to start. This project started at the place where the physical body is turned to ash: the crematorium. Unlike many western countries which practice whole body burial, in Japan over 99% of the deceased are cremated. This project investigated both the physical spaces of cremation in Japan, as well as the environmental impact. As



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Japanese society ages, the attitudes towards death and dying will also change. This presentation will offer a snapshot into what the process looks like at this moment in time.

Taking an anthropological stance, this project documented the physical spaces where cremation takes place. By focusing on a specific crematorium in rural Japan, a timeless, and yet aged, edifice is explored. This is followed by a discussion about the environmental impact of that crematorium on the environment.

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Questions of citizenship upon the scaffold

Leslie R Malland (University of Kentucky)

PhD candidate, English.

‡

At a scene of early modern execution, the last dying speech is a right of citizenship. Foucauldian biopower is present upon the scaffold in the last dying speeches, but as we find in Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1971), biopower is also present in moments of silence when the last dying speech is denied. Through biopolitical rhetoric influenced by gallows speeches, Nashe portrays anti-Semitic sentiments that are very much Elizabethan expressions of nationalism, including Elizabethan fears that Jews would subvert the social order. He also uses the space to demonstrate the theatricality of last dying speeches, the rhetorical manipulation of last speeches, and the condemnation of vigilante acts of revenge. Thus, my work explores what is at stake when we hear and do not hear the last words of executed – or nearly executed – characters in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, arguing that Nashe manipulates gallows rhetoric to serve his nationalistic purposes in his fiction, nationalistic purposes that involve condemning other nationalities and expressions of anti-Semitism.

Nashe, Thomas. *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Edited by J.B. Steane, Penguin Books, 1971.

...

The impact of restricted death rituals on the bereavement experience: A scoping review

Sharon Mallon (The Open University)

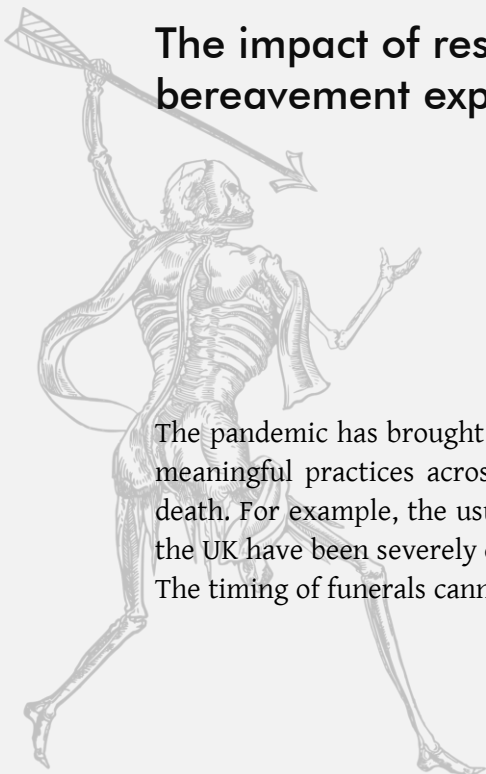
Rebecca Garcia

Sam Murphy

Vince Mitchell

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The pandemic has brought about a series of dramatic changes to long established and meaningful practices across a range of areas in society, these include areas around death. For example, the usual death rituals that characterise the mourning process in the UK have been severely disrupted and subjected to unprecedented legal regulations. The timing of funerals cannot be delayed, and the numbers of people allowed to attend



burials and cremations have been severely restricted. In addition, physical distancing rules mean typical expressions of social and emotional support such as close collective gatherings with associated reassuring touches or embraces, cannot be enacted. As anecdotal accounts in the media have repeatedly reinforced, these formal and informal rituals are an important part of how we grieve, and their absence may have significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the bereaved. In addition, they represent important signifiers of the value and loss of the life that has passed. As a result, their absence is likely to have longer-term consequences.

This paper will report on the findings from a scoping review, that identified previously published research from comparative situations where burial practices have been disrupted, alongside recently published accounts from COVID-19 related studies on this topic. In doing so, it will assess the emerging ways in which grief and the bereaved may be affected by the quarantine in the UK. It will use this evidence to consider the long-term impact on the support needs of individuals and communities, and reflect upon how the research community can contribute to our understanding of this important area, providing robust evidence that can be captured in any national policy or third sector response.

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Death, disposal and dissent: How foetal remains remain

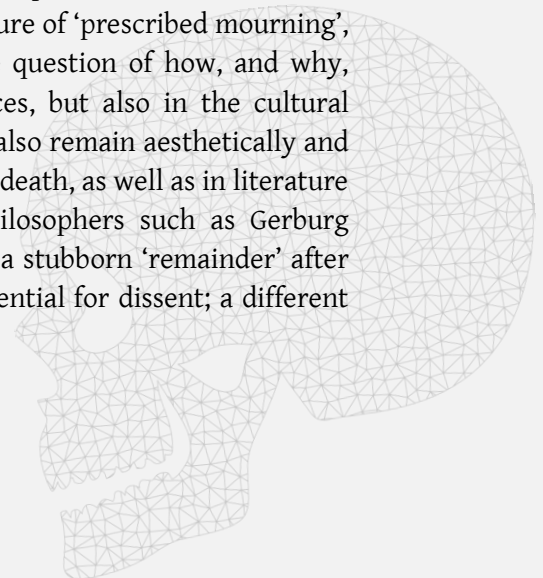
Natalie L Mann (University of Warwick)

Dr Natalie L. Mann is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Warwick, specialising in the relationship between death, reproduction and aesthetics. Her publications include work on abortion and critical theory within the field of law and art, in contemporary visual art and forthcoming publications on abortion in literature of the long nineteenth century. She is currently working on a project that explores the literary history of the foetal voice.

‡

Within the field of death studies, the disposal of foetal remains resulting from pregnancy loss and termination remains a contentious and complex issue. In the UK, guidance from organisations such as the Human Tissue Authority regarding foetal tissue disposal direct practice and policy, while in the US recent proposals for laws governing foetal tissue disposal remain pending. In neither case are these guidelines or recommendations absolutely set in stone.

While much has been written regarding the legal and socio-political resonance of this issue, this paper will instead take up the question of a culture of ‘prescribed mourning’, offering a more radical theoretical intervention into the question of how, and why, foetal tissue ‘remains’ - in medical and disposal practices, but also in the cultural psyche. The remains of foetal death will be considered to also remain aesthetically and conceptually in contemporary theories of the meanings of death, as well as in literature and foetal representation. Drawing on the work of philosophers such as Gerburg Treusch-Dieter and Jean-Michel Rabaté, the possibility of a stubborn ‘remainder’ after death will be thought of as problematic, but also as a potential for dissent; a different way in to the relationship between death and culture



“What is a person but a collection of choices?": The importance of death in a world without it

Freyja McCreery (University of York)

‡

Combining work done on the hauntology of the internet (Ondrak, 2018), *res digitalis* (Kim, 2015), and surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2015, 2019), my paper will explore the issue of dispersed agency and control over self-performances. The role that suicide plays in the (re)claiming of agency in HBO’s series *Westworld* will be examined as a site in which this contest of control and agency is demonstrated.

Westworld has emerged in a networked world and responds to it by presenting characters that deal with a version of the anxieties that arise around performing the self online. The cyborg “hosts” of *Westworld* enter a level of sentience where they recognise their multiple lives and memories as repeating and written by their human others. The human guests on the other hand have their choices and actions recorded by the theme park they visit, including brain scans performed by the costumes they wear. The line between humans and hosts is blurred and the difference cannot always be recognised – much like bots and algorithmic interactions cannot always be differentiated from human interactions online.

These collections of data and writing of nonhuman selves speaks to worries around the ownership of data harvested by large corporations. Within the series, suicide, or getting killed on purpose, is used by multiple characters as a method of reclaiming control over these data-selves by blocking external access to that data. Moreover, the backup versions of the written memories of the hosts are destroyed by the hosts to protect themselves as a collective.

There is, however, no finality in these deaths, versions of each self remain vulnerable to external control. In a world where patterns of choices represent an individual, even death cannot offer an escape from a surveillance capitalist society.

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Ondrak, J. (2018) ‘Spectres des monstres: Post-postmodernisms, hauntology and creepypasta narratives as digital fiction’, *Horror Studies*, 9(2), pp. 161–178.

Zuboff, S. (2015) ‘Big other: surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization’, *Journal of Information Technology*, 30, pp. 75–89.

Zuboff, S. (2019) *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. New York: PublicAffairs.



The sustainable dead: cultural syncretism in body disposal

Ruth McManus (University of Canterbury, NZ)

‡

This discussion explores how new forms of, and attitudes to, bodily disposal are emerging. It takes the widespread cultural shift toward sustainability and charts how this is taking shape in the tangible world of cemetery development in New Zealand. As land and resources become scarce and sustainability seeks to shift from rhetoric to practice, new sites and forms of interment are being muted, but must negotiate existing traditions and conservatism in ways that can allow for cultural departures and syncretism. This paper details ways in which three independent outfits (a church, a nurse and a quarry business) are emerging as pioneers in sustainable body disposal in New Zealand.

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Death and Hospitality in Ali Smith's *Hotel World*

Bethan Michael Fox (University of Winchester & The Open University)

I work as an Associate Lecturer for the Open University, teaching a range of English literature, interdisciplinary humanities and reflective learning modules. I was a lecturer at the School of Education and English Language at the University of Bedfordshire from 2011-2018. I passed my doctoral viva in December 2019 at the University of Winchester where I submitted a thesis on hospitality toward death and the dead in late postmodern culture, focusing on autobiographical and televisual texts. I hold a BA and MA in English Literature from Cardiff University. I am interested in critical and cultural theory and collaborative and interdisciplinary research, am a Senior Fellow of the HEA and a Fellow of the RSA. Please feel welcome to connect on Twitter: @bethmichaelfox

‡

Hotel World has been described as a novel about 'life in the aftermath of death'. It begins with the death of Sara, a young woman who goes on to narrate the opening chapter of the novel as she gradually fades away from the world, losing language as she goes. This paper examines the ways in which death and the concept of hospitality emerge throughout the novel, which centres around the Grand Hotel, a hotel familiar to anyone who has ever stayed in a global hotel chain. The hotel can be read as a metaphor for the conditional hospitality offered to both the living and the dead (and in particular in this novel to women) under capitalism. *Hotel World* is filled with women trying to both metaphorically and literally 'fit into' hostile, inhospitable spaces: a young woman dead in a dumbwaiter, a woman too large to fit into a swimming pool changing cubicle, the dead Sara's ghost laying 'half-in, half-out' of her rotting body, and Else, a homeless woman whose offer of a night at the hotel ends in disaster. The novel is replete with characters, living and dead, who are 'out of place', feeling unwanted in their environments, yet the novel itself provides a welcome home for them. The paper emphasises the broader argument that the postmodern, whether understood in terms of texts such as Smith's or more broadly as a social and cultural periodisation, is particularly hospitable to engagement with death and the dead. For those not familiar with Smith's novel the paper will offer an introduction to her narrative techniques, the

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novel's relationship to Muriel Spark's *Memento Mori* and a summary of some of *Hotel World*'s central ideas about death, including the novel's memorable refrain: 'Remember you must live. Remember you most love. Remainder you mist leaf.'

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Where do the dead go? Afterlife imaginary in Latvian traditional culture

Agita Misane (Riga Stradins University)

Leading researcher, Department of Communication

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This paper will discuss author's current work on how afterlife was perceived in Latvian traditional (premodern) culture. What we know about the topic could be deduced from folklore sources and sparse written accounts. They suggest that death was generally understood as an event extended in time, i.e. individuals were believed to attain the qualities of being socially dead gradually, some time before their physical deaths if confined to bed due to illness. Ritual activities were conducted to secure painless and peaceful physical death. After the life functions of the body had ceased, another set of rituals followed to secure safe passage of the deceased into the otherworld. It is hard to identify the location of the otherworld – some folklore sources point to a location in the West while other materials indicate a location in some proximity to individual's home, usually a farmstead. In the Autumn, revenants (*veļi*, sometimes also translated as "shades"), i.e. the deceased had capacity of seasonal returning and visiting their families and participate in "revenants feast" (*veļu mielasts*) when tables were laid for them either in barns or rooms in the house. The paper will also discuss Pre-Christian and Christian elements in the imaginary of afterlife in the Latvian culture.

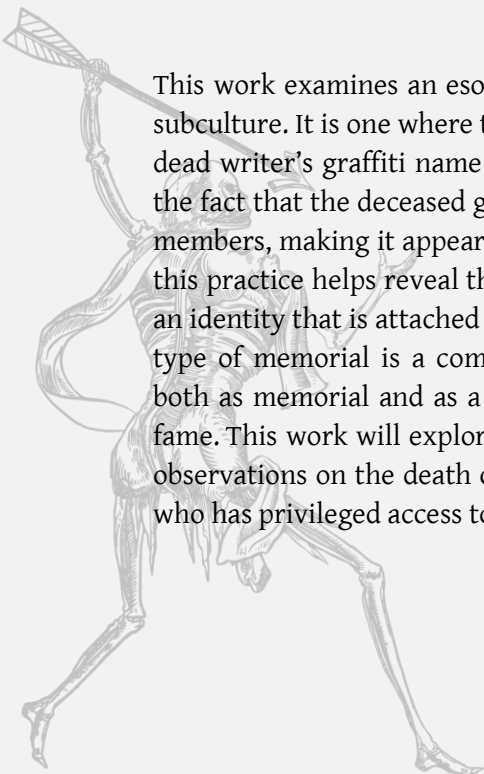
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Dead graffiti writers never die, they just fade away

Tyson Mitman (York St John University)

‡

This work examines an esoteric form of memorialisation that is specific to the graffiti subculture. It is one where the friends of a deceased graffiti writer continue to write the dead writer's graffiti name on public space. This form of memorialization can conceal the fact that the deceased graffiti writer has died to all but initiated graffiti community members, making it appear as if they were still alive and producing new work. Further, this practice helps reveal the idea that a graffiti writer's chosen name is emblematic of an identity that is attached to, but distinctly different from their personal identity. This type of memorial is a complex and compassionate act of remembrance. It functions both as memorial and as a furtherance of the deceased writer's reputation and street fame. This work will explore this form of memorialization through some ethnographic observations on the death of Philadelphia graffiti writing legend Razz, and will discuss who has privileged access to rightfully produce these memorials.



Photographic responses to collective grief online: COVID-19 in Spain as a case study

Montse Morcate (Universitat de Barcelona)

Lecturer of Photography. Visual Arts and Design Department. Faculty of Fine Arts.

Actual pandemic produced by COVID-19 has shaken the foundations of society internationally. And although pandemics have occurred in the past, individuals have been visually exposed to the events around the globe and on real time with unprecedented intensity. Moreover, they have been able to represent and share their own reflections and experiences on a continuing bases thanks to the massive democratisation of digital photography and the capacity of sharing images online for the first time in history (Gomez Cruz and Lehmuskallio, 2016).

During this intense period in which confinement and social distancing measures have become the norm for millions of people, the taking and sharing images online as well as other photographic initiatives have been increasingly appearing. While a large portion of these images have been used as a tool for communicating with others or just a form to escape from reality, many other images have been taken and shared as a way of communicating fear, concern or isolation as well as illness, pain and grief (Morcate, 2017; Morcate and Pardo, 2019). As pandemic was spreading strongly, and more and more people became severely ill and died, the multiples process of grief lived individually were transformed into a collective grieving experience, in which many of these visual practices have contributed to portray and to mediate grief in a collective manner. Multiple subjective voices to represent this pandemic that differ in many aspects to photojournalism or documentary photography approaches.

This paper analyses the different photographic practises online that have emerged as a response of collective grief produced by COVID-19 and it focuses on Spain as a case of study, one of the countries strongly affected by the pandemic.

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Morcate, M. "Tipologías y re-mediación de las imágenes de muerte y duelo compartidas en la memorialización online." *Revista M. Estudos Sobre a Morte, os Mortos e o Morrer*, 3. [online] Available

at: <http://www.seer.unirio.br/index.php/revistam/article/view/8148> (Accessed: 29 May 2020)

Morcate, M. and Pardo, R. (Eds.) (2019) *La imagen desvelada: Prácticas fotográficas en la enfermedad, la muerte y el duelo*. Vitoria-Gasteiz- Buenos Aires: Sans Soleil Ediciones

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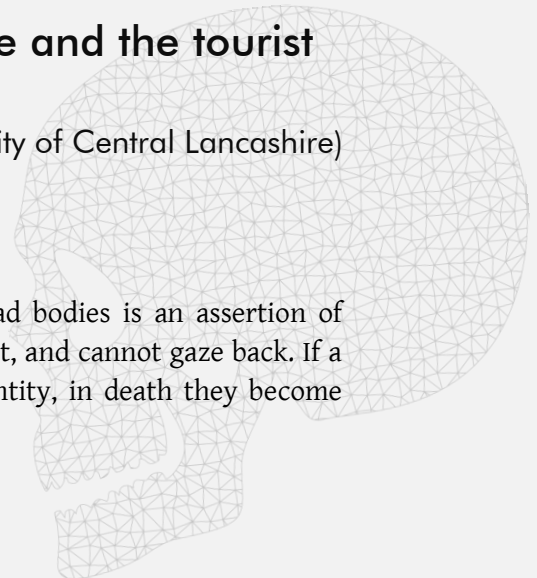
Death betrays her: The female corpse and the tourist gaze

Catriona Elizabeth Margot Morton (University of Central Lancashire)

PhD student with the Institute for Dark Tourism Research

‡

To be dead is to be vulnerable. The act of gazing at dead bodies is an assertion of privilege: the dead (usually) cannot consent to be looked at, and cannot gaze back. If a person was vulnerable in life because of their group identity, in death they become



subjected to a kind of double vulnerability. Female corpses, for example, tend to be aestheticised in a particular way. This has already been much discussed in the realm of art and literature, e.g. Elisabeth Bronfen's *Over Her Dead Body* (1992). This can be connected to Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze, which argues that women's bodies are displayed in media as objects of erotic desire. I would like to examine this idea further with reference to what John Urry calls the "tourist gaze", or the commodification of culture for tourist consumption.

The portrayal of the dead in tourist attractions depends on where the attraction falls on the dark tourism scale (Stone, 2006: 151): dead bodies might be there to entertain, to educate, to provoke some deep contemplation on the human condition, and so on. I argue that female corpses used to sell a kind of authenticity (e.g. a historical period, or the workings of the human body) are shaped by the same kind of objectification that Bronfen and Mulvey have discussed. I will illustrate this using several examples of the female corpse used as a part or as the whole of a tourist attraction, including the female cadavers at Gunther von Hagens' *Body Worlds*, the display of Sarah Baartman's body in life and death, and the use of post-mortem photography in Jack the Ripper tourism. In this way I will examine the "dark tourist gaze," with a focus on how it treats women.

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Mulvey, L., 2001 (originally published 1975). "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In: Durham, M.G. and Keller, D.M. (eds). *Media and Cultural Studies Keywords*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Stone, P., 2006. "A Dark Tourism Spectrum: towards a typology of death & macabre related touristsites, attractions and exhibitions." *Tourism*, 54 (2). 145-160.

Urry, J., Larsen, J., 2011 (first edition published 1990). *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. New York: Sage Publications Ltd.

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Planning for multiculturalism and religious diversity at cemeteries in Scandinavia

Helena Nordh (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences)

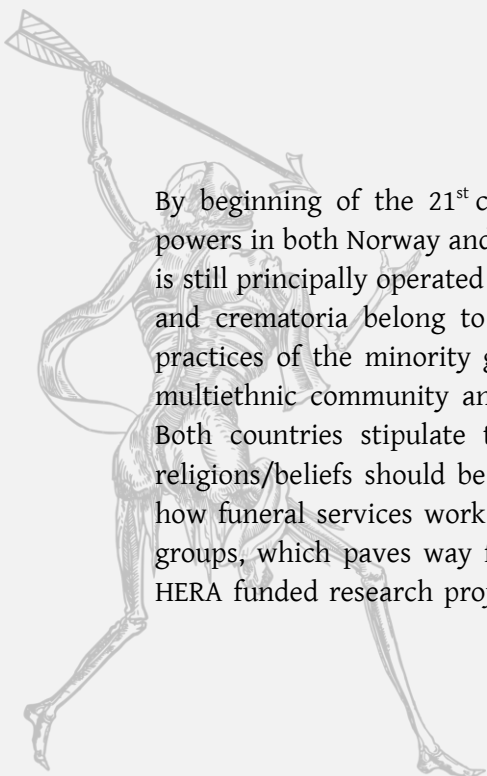
Marianne Knapskog

Tanu Priya Uteng

Carolina Wingren

‡

By beginning of the 21st century, the national church had receded its governance powers in both Norway and Sweden. Funeral services in these two countries, however, is still principally operated by the church. This effectively means that both cemeteries and crematoria belong to the Christian church, and thus issues related to death practices of the minority groups gain prominence against the backdrop of creating multiethnic community and outlining inclusionary and tolerant planning practices. Both countries stipulate that the needs regarding the funeral services of other religions/beliefs should be taken into consideration. However, little is known about how funeral services work with questions of inclusion and participation of minority groups, which paves way for interesting research agendas. Our study builds on the HERA funded research project: *Cemeteries and crematoria as public spaces of belonging in*



Europe: a study of migrant and minority cultural inclusion, exclusion, and integration. The empirical data is derived from a comparison of national burial acts, and interviews with 28 stakeholders across three case towns: Drammen (Norway), Eskilstuna and Umeå (Sweden). Analysis of laws and regulations show that on a national level Sweden and Norway share many similarities, but there are differences relating to how minorities are involved in the planning process. The interviews revealed that, despite relatively high number of non-native inhabitants across the cases, there was relatively little evidence of multiculturalism or religious diversity at the cemeteries, crematoria or within the funeral services. At the conference, we will elaborate further on accommodation of minorities needs reflections over special graves or cemetery sections for minorities.

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Rivers of forgetfulness: articulating neonatal bereavement through metaphor

Tamarin Gabriel Norwood (University of Bath & University of Loughborough)

PhD University of Oxford (Ruskin School of Art) 2018. Doctoral Prize Research Fellow, Loughborough University (School of Design and Creative Arts) 2019-21. Visiting Early Career Research Fellow, University of Bath (Centre for Death and Society) 2019-22.

‡

This paper explores the charged but under-examined dynamics of neonatal loss to ask: what borderlands are shared between the dying and the soon-to-be-bereaved, and how can we make sense of these liminal territories when the moment has passed?

The exceptionally entwined relationship between mother and new-born offers a microcosm for exploring these borderlands. The mother's physiological embodiment of bereavement—losing not only a loved one but a symbiotic partner, who shares not only her world but her body—stands to offer valuable insight into the liminality of loss. However, despite recent energetic research, the maternal experience of neonatal death remains under-examined and even taboo (Murphy, Ellis, Markin). Bereaved mothers report lacking a conceptual framework to understand, describe and integrate the unique nature of their loss (Jonas-Simpson, Côté-Arsenault), and this leaves unvoiced a potentially powerful contribution to the wider field of death studies.

My paper addresses this omission by offering one such conceptual framework, constructed through the unforeseen juxtaposition of my art historical research on liminality with my own maternal experience of neonatal loss. The paper first identifies parallel but separate traditions that associate both birth and death with immersion in water and darkness (Blanchot, Odent, Ackerman; biblical and classical narratives) and the suspension of language and diurnal patterns of thought (Schwenger, McKinnon). Secondly, it integrates these two traditions to yield a metaphorical 'underwater' space briefly shared by birthing mother and dying baby. Finally, it returns to my autobiographical experience to argue that the extensive poetic resonances of this metaphorical space offer an effective and even cathartic description of the nuanced experience of neonatal loss. It concludes by proposing that the imaginative borderlands of poetry and metaphor might offer a way to understand and express the shared

liminalities of death that might otherwise remain inaccessible to our diurnal patterns of thought

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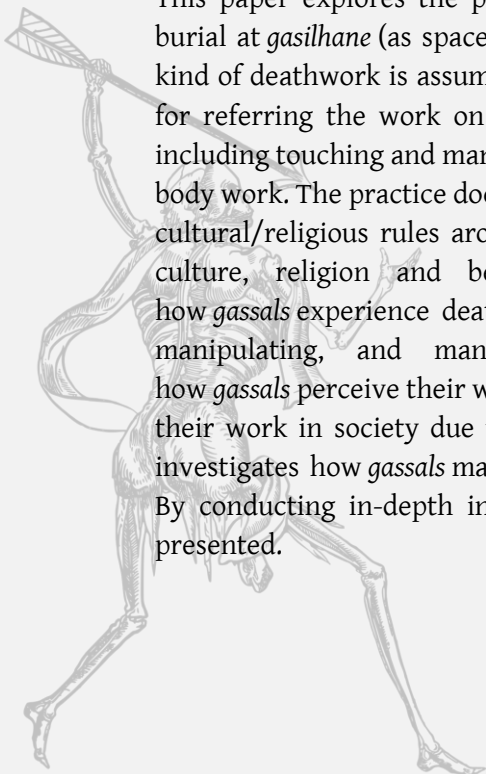
Gassals as the invisible/other body worker: the dead body, emotion management, and deathwork

Yelda Özen (Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University)

Yelda Özen is a Lecturer in the department of sociology of Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University in Turkey. She received her PhD in Sociology, Middle East Technical University. Her research interests are sociology of health and illness, body work, end of life care, ageing, migrants' health, death and deathwork.

‡

This paper explores the practice of *Gassals* who wash and prepare the deceased for burial at *gasilhane* (as space of washing the deceased body) in Turkey. The practice, a kind of deathwork is assumed as body work in this study. Body work is generally used for referring the work on others' (lived) body. Being involved with the dead body including touching and manipulating is actually a marginalized and stigmatized form of body work. The practice does not mean washing it quickly, but it has various rituals and cultural/religious rules around the deceased body, varying according to time, space, culture, religion and beliefs. The aim of this research is to understand how *gassals* experience deathwork including the work relating to touching, washing, manipulating, and management of the body. The study also explores how *gassals* perceive their work and the attitudes, stereotypes, and stigmatization about their work in society due to the bad reputation of the occupation. Lastly, the study investigates how *gassals* manage their emotions and cope with deathwork difficulties. By conducting in-depth interview with women *gassals*, preliminary findings will be presented.



Media's agenda in framing suicide in Latvia from 1918 to 1991

Edīte Pauna (Rīga Stradiņš University)

‡

Suicide is a recognized problem in Latvia, and mass communication as part of suicide prevention activities provides formal statistical reports and expert articles and opinions on suicide to inform and educate the society. By reviewing stories on suicide published in mass media, this study attempts to identify the differences in the communication patterns depending on political and social context of the time.

By reviewing stories on suicide published in mass media during the years of the first independence of the Republic of Latvia (1918-1939) and the years under the Soviet rule (1940 – 1991), I explore the impact of the governing political and social context on the narrative of suicide in public media during the period under study. The study is based on the analysis of the narrative on suicide in close to 100 publications. With less publications being available on suicide committed during the Soviet period, interviews with journalists and medical workers of that time provide assurance of initial findings from the analysis on publications on suicide.

The initial results show that the connotation of suicide changes depending on the political context much more than the social context for the study period. A communication pattern that emerged during the first years of Latvia as a new independent country showed individuals committing suicide as weak and decadent and to a certain extent as a traitor while the Soviet period portrayed suicide as an act coming from the Western world, and texts were subject to censorship. Also, World War I and World War II play a substantial role in the political context of suicide narratives. The implications of this study infer to the next study on comparing the outcomes of this study with the current narratives of suicide in public and social media

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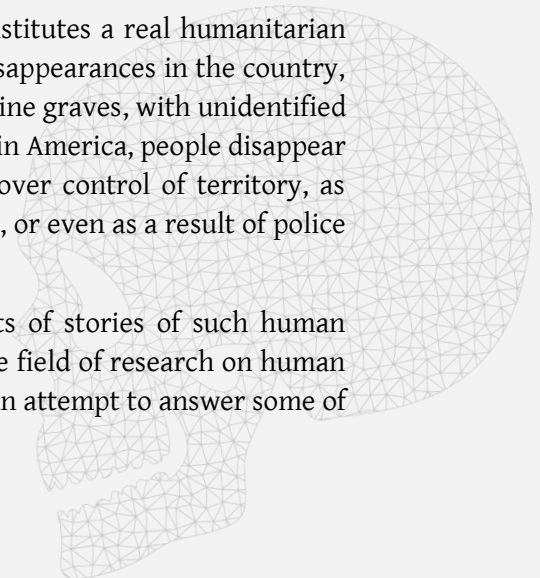
Forced disappearances and grief. A report on the life of five grieving Mexican families living with the presence of the absent

Judith Lopez Penaloza (University of Michoacan)

‡

Currently, the issue of disappeared people in Mexico, constitutes a real humanitarian crisis. As of January of 2020, there were 61,637 reported disappearances in the country, along with the finding of an enormous quantity of clandestine graves, with unidentified bodies in them. In Mexico, as well as other countries in Latin America, people disappear due to several reasons: as victims of narco cartel fights over control of territory, as kidnap victims never to be seen again, for political reasons, or even as a result of police or military involvement fuelled by corruption.

Behind these cold numbers, there are enormous amounts of stories of such human grief, that the notions and knowledge currently held in the field of research on human grief and bereavement, is being constantly challenged. In an attempt to answer some of



the questions posed by these painful state of affairs, research was conducted with five Mexican families from a very small town, notoriously ravaged by the phenomena of forced disappearances, from the state of Michoacan, Mexico, who have lost one of their members as a result of this phenomena. In-depth interviews were conducted with these families, proceeding to be audio recorded and content analysed, resulting in categories that shed light on the unbearable pain, uncertainty and fear that families and individuals are currently enduring, as well as the impact that such experience has had on all their different aspects of their life

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Re-imagining the future of death: Designing installations on end-of-life choice with libraries

Stacey Pitsillides (Northumbria University)

Vice-Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow, School of Design, Northumbria University

‡

This paper explores how collaborations with libraries can help the public to re-imagine the future of death. It reflects on a series of six installations called Love After Death that question how future technologies and aesthetics augment our relationship to end-of-life planning – aiming to build critical conversations around these themes.

The UK is an increasingly diverse society with complex-beliefs and multiple-identities, which makes it a good candidate to explore how technology is shifting perceptions of death and dying. Ecological concerns (Rumble *et al.*, 2014) and cultural shifts (Davies, 2017) are also driving new forms of dispersing human remains at the end of life. Our legacies are blended sites of on and offline identities, that come with questions of privacy, ownership and control (Edwards & Harbinja, 2013). Online environments also provide digital versions of honouring the dead (Gotved, 2014) stimulating ethical and practical questions about the nature of death and dying.

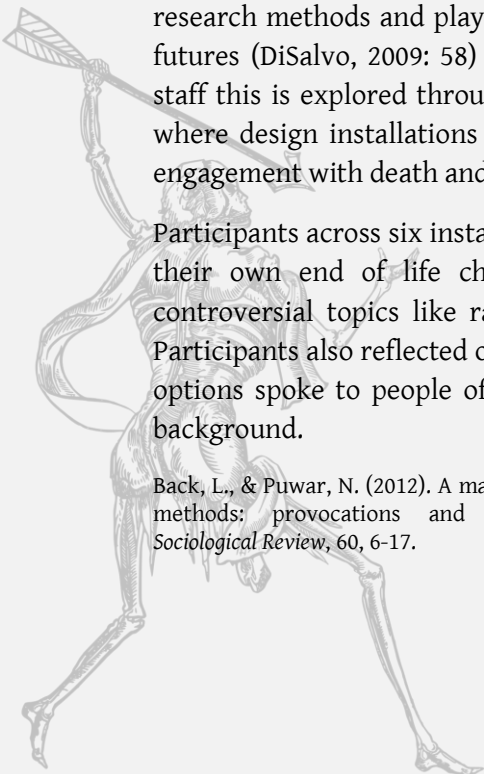
Love After Death tackles death literacy by working with libraries in London, Yorkshire and Newcastle (UK). It introduces people to planning end of life wishes using artistic research methods and playful diegetic prototypes (Kirby, 2010) that position potential futures (DiSalvo, 2009: 58) as options to be chosen. For both researchers and library staff this is explored through live methods (Back & Puwar, 2012) and public testing – where design installations are used to activate critical questions around the public's engagement with death and dying.

Participants across six installations stated that it has helped them think critically about their own end of life choices. Alongside introducing them to new choices and controversial topics like radical life extension that may be available in the future. Participants also reflected on their religious and cultural identity and how the different options spoke to people of 2nd and 3rd generation British citizens with a migration background.

Back, L., & Puwar, N. (2012). A manifesto for live methods: provocations and capacities. *The Sociological Review*, 60, 6-17.

Davies, D. (2017). *Death, ritual and belief: The rhetoric of funerary rites*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

DiSalvo, C. (2009). Design and the Construction of Publics. *Design Issues*, 25(1), 48-63.



Edwards, L., & Harbinja, E. (2013). "What Happens to My Facebook Profile When I Die?": Legal Issues Around Transmission of Digital Assets on Death. In *Digital legacy and interaction* (pp. 115-144). Springer, Cham.

Gotved, S., (2014). Research Review: Death Online-Alive and Kicking!. *Thanatos*.

Kirby, D. (2010). The future is now: Diegetic prototypes and the role of popular films in generating real-world technological development. *Social Studies of Science*, 40(1), 41-70.

Rumble, H., Troyer, J., Walter, T., & Woodthorpe, K. (2014). Disposal or dispersal? Environmentalism and final treatment of the British dead. *Mortality*, 19(3), 243-260.

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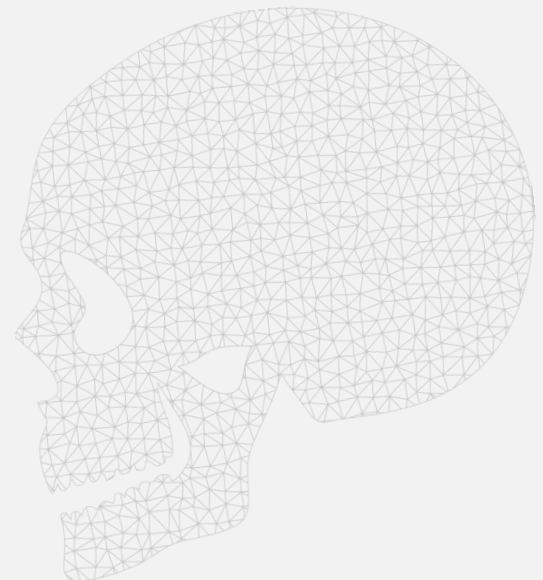
The Hollywood Museum of Death: The commodification of the maiden, criminal, and the corpse

Tia Tudor Price (University of Winchester)

Currently working as an English language Tutor, however, completed the 'Death, Religion & Culture' Masters (2018) at Winchester University. Currently in the process of PhD application.

‡

This paper centres on the representation of the corpse within the Hollywood Museum of Death and the subsequent commodification of the criminal, the corpse and socially bad death (Walter, 1994). Positing that Thanatourism and the drive to 'consume' death in this space is driven by 'Wound Theory/Culture' (Seltzer, 1998), Discourse 2000 (Seltzer, 1998) and encouraged by Western Secular society's consumerism. How we view these differing, organic and synthetic representations is softened by popular culture and forensic science television shows (Penfold-Mounce, 2015). The genre of Death and the Maiden is explored: Charles Manson as a brand and symbol of death, Sharon Tate is the Archetypal Maiden in memorial as victim, a mannequin- fetish object and figure of consumerism- is signified as the symbol of life and the Black Dahlia murder exhibit; Elizabeth Short represents the brutalised, sexualised symbol of death. This examination also looks to the commodification of the items, the victims and the criminal as celebrated in Foucault's methodology of power (1977/1975). Through this commodification, and the methods employed by the museum, there is a de-stabilising of the authentic, seeming to create fiction from 'the real' (Fernandez, 2011). Concluding that any educational merit is undermined through the commercialisation of the corpse, such exhibition highlights ethical issues for the victims and questions the means through which Western secular society derives meaning whilst drawn to 'The Wound'.



As Hårga gives, so Hårga also takes: A close reading of *Midsommar*

Kelly Richards D'Arcy-Reed (University of York)

Kelly Richards is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of York. With a background in graphic design, cultural theory, and comics, Kelly's research focuses on gendered representations of death in popular culture. Other research interests include visual sociology, thanatology, queer theory, and comics studies.

‡

Inspired by the work of Ernest Becker, the Death Positive movement, founded by Caitlin Doughty, works to create an open dialogue by breaking the culture of silence surrounding death through discussion, gathering, art, innovation, and scholarship. Drawing on the principles of the Death Positive movement, this paper presents a close reading of the 2019 folk horror movie *Midsommar* (dir: Ari Aster), and the narrative arc of its protagonist, Dani Ardor; who, after the traumatic deaths of her family, is reluctantly invited to travel along with her boyfriend, and his friends, to the Hårga, a remote commune in Hälsingland, Sweden to witness its midsummer festival. The nine day festival, which occurs once every ninety years, celebrates life, death, and love within the commune through a series of increasingly violent acts such as ritualistic suicide, sexual intercourse, and sacrificial offerings. Finding herself with an increasingly authoritative role within the celebrations, Dani capitulates to the commune's unsettling community practices which in turn help her move beyond the helplessness of her own grief and towards a newly understood acceptance of death as an integral part of life. By expounding upon this narrative I will present a case study of the emergence of Death Positivity that can be found amongst the horror of *Midsommar*.

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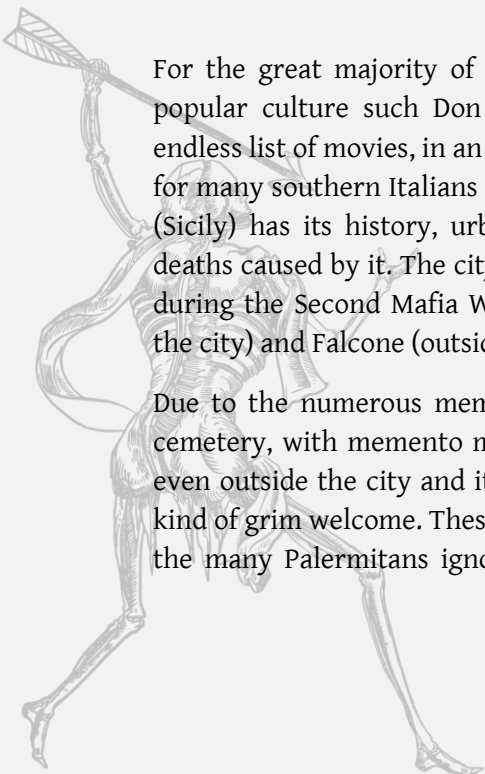
Mafia and the city: a death studies view on the Mafia phenomenon in Palermo

Giorgio Scalici (NOVA Universidade de Lisboa)

‡

For the great majority of people, Mafia is a word that recalls iconic figures of the popular culture such as Don Vito Corleone, *The Sopranos*, Mafia videogames and an endless list of movies, in an almost caricaturist image of what, in reality, is a cancer that for many southern Italians mean death and suffering. In particular, the city of Palermo (Sicily) has its history, urban geography and identity shaped by the Mafia and the deaths caused by it. The city still shows the scars left by the thousands of people killed during the Second Mafia War. Moreover, the explosions who killed Borsellino (inside the city) and Falcone (outside the city) in 1992 are still in the memory of its citizen.

Due to the numerous memorials for the Mafia victims, Palermo has become a city-cemetery, with memento mori all over around its space. The memorial for Falcone is even outside the city and it is the first thing people coming from the airport see, in a kind of grim welcome. These many memorials have become part of the city itself, a part the many Palermitans ignore every day to negate the fear of death that its around



them. Similar to death, Mafia is a cultural taboo in Sicily, so the union of the two creates an even bigger taboo.

By sampling various crucial event of Mafia history, I will explore how death has a pivotal role in the Mafia phenomenon, even more than money or power. Moreover, I will show how the Palermitans cope with the memories (memorial, actual memories, movies and memorial days) of death that have shaped the identity of the city, in a desire to hide death and the pain, rooted in the Sicilian traditional relationship with the dead.

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'Lured to the slaughter': Illustrations and representations of Jack the Ripper victims in *The Illustrated Police News*

Rosie Smith (York St John University)

Dr Rosie Smith is Sociology Course Lead and a Lecturer in Sociology and Criminology at York St John University. Her research is concerned with topics such as: criminal justice, media, crime, death and social theory.

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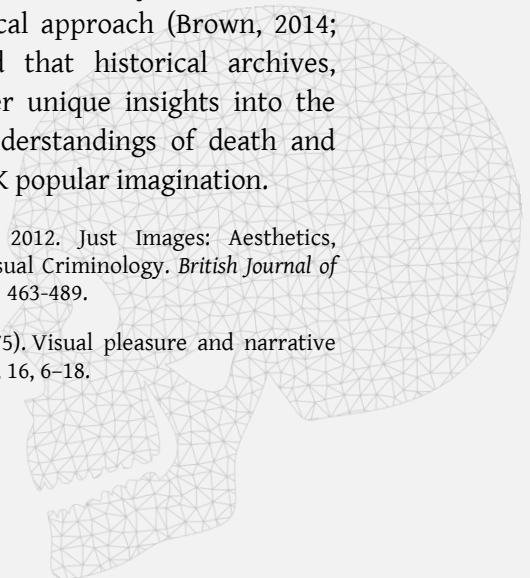
In 1888 Jack the Ripper plagued London's East End, resulting in the deaths of five women: Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes and Mary Jane Kelly. At the time of their deaths the women were seen as unfortunate victims whose miserable end was lamentable but simultaneously a consequence of their intemperate lifestyles. One of the main public sources of information reporting on the serial murders was the *Illustrated Police News* (IPN). The publication was a weekly illustrated newspaper, resembling the tabloid press we see today, and it focused heavily on sensational crimes. Naturally, the Jack the Ripper murders were front and centre. Using archival data from The British Library, this paper puts the victims' bodies and remains at its core and will explore how the five women after death were illustrated and represented within this publication. After being brutally murdered each of the five women were corporeally depicted and drawn as 'open', 'fleshy', 'mutilated', 'butchered', and 'violated' (Seltzer, 1998). Their bodies were illustrated in ways that emphasised their passivity, their vulnerability, and in some cases, their perceived impropriety. Using the data, it will be argued that representations of these women's bodies exposed the victims to a process of double victimisation; they were abused and defiled by Jack the Ripper and then subsequently posthumously by print media (Mulvey, 1975; Penfold-Mounce, 2016; Sappol, 2002). Taking a visual criminological approach (Brown, 2014; 2017; Carrabine, 2012; Rafter, 2014) it will be argued that historical archives, particularly visual media materials such as the IPN, offer unique insights into the intersections between crime and death and how our understandings of death and extreme criminality have changed historically within the UK popular imagination.

Brown, M. 2014. Visual criminology and carceral studies: Counter-images in the carceral age. *Theoretical Criminology*. 18(1): 176-197.

Brown, M. 2017. 'Visual Criminology'. *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Criminology*. Oxford University Press.

Carrabine, E. 2012. Just Images: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Visual Criminology. *British Journal of Criminology*. 52: 463-489.

Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen*, 16, 6-18.



September 2020

Penfold-Mounce, R. 2016. Corpses, popular culture and forensic science: Public obsession with death. *Mortality*. 21: 19-35.

Rafter, N. 2014. Introduction to special issue on Visual Culture and the Iconography of Crime and Punishment. *Theoretical Criminology*. 18(2): 127-133.

Sappol, M. (2002). *A traffic of dead bodies: Anatomy and embodied social identity in nineteenth century America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Seltzer, M. 1998. *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's wound culture*. London: Routledge.

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Gazing upon a fictional ghost town: Juan Rulfo's *Comala* and the juxtaposition of literary tourism and dark tourism

Mark Speakman (University of Lincoln)

‡

Death pervades the pages of Pedro Paramo, the novel published by Mexican author Juan Rulfo in 1955 and regarded as a classical work of Latin American fiction. It tells the tale of a young man named Juan Preciado and his experience at Comala - a deserted ghost town which happens to be populated by the souls of those who once resided there. The work is commemorated by a monument that overlooks the town of San Gabriel in Jalisco- where Rulfo spent his childhood and the inspiration for Comala- depicting the opening scene in which Preciado first sets his eyes upon the eerie purgatory in the valley beneath him. In reality, the view is of San Gabriel, yet a person visiting the monument, familiar with the novel, is able to imagine that they are, in fact, gazing upon the unearthly Comala as Preciado once did.

This study seeks to examine the perceptions of the tourists that visit the monument specifically because of its connection with Rulfo and his novel; in particular, it is interested in the manner in which death permeates the thought process of these individuals as they look upon San Gabriel, and whether the experience could be labelled as thanatological. If this is the case, it raises the question as to whether this experience represents a juxtaposition of literary and dark tourism; that is, are those tourists familiar with Rulfo's novel and thus aware of the significance of the view, actually indulging in a form of dark tourism? They are, after all, in their mind's eye contemplating a scene of death, just like the dark tourists who visit sites of death, dying and the macabre. Are they actually motivated by an insular desire for a symbolic peek upon death, more so than the motivations usually associated with literary tourists?

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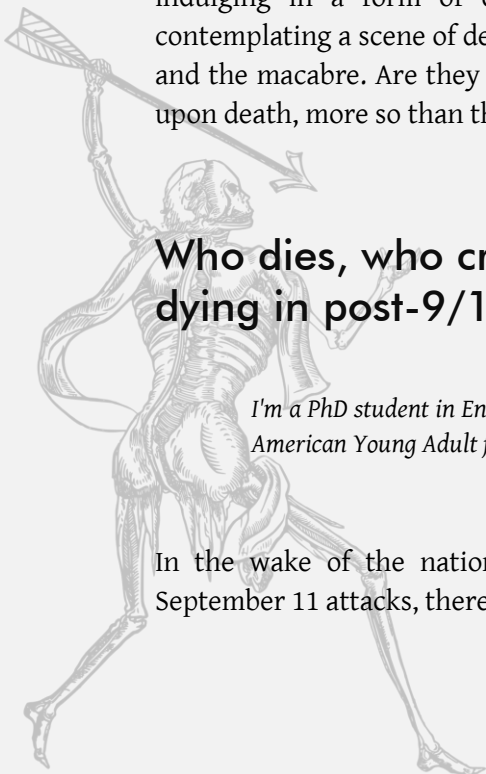
Who dies, who cries: Representations of death and dying in post-9/11 young adult literature

Choneratt Suriyarangsun (University of Hull)

I'm a PhD student in English. My thesis focuses on how the representations of death and dying in American Young Adult fictions have been shifted after the national trauma, September 11.

‡

In the wake of the national grief that followed the great loss of life due to the September 11 attacks, there has been a shift in the way in which American YA literature



represents death. This study seeks to investigate how the September 11 incident has affected the way in which American YA literature depicts death and dying. Using interdisciplinary approaches along with the close-reading text analysis, my paper presentation will highlight the related socio-cultural contexts that are reflected in the YA literature. As explicit and straightforward representations of death and dying are addressed in the Post-9/11 YA literature more than ever before, I contend, people's conceptions of death have been challenged following this national tragedy with a literary trend emerging with adolescents engaging with the concept. So, by humbly building upon Philippe Ariès' historical exploration of death in the 1970s, this study affirms that, in the aftermath of 9/11, death has been described more in terms of 'our' or 'everybody's' death, rather than 'their' or 'someone else's' death. Death, which was once considered a taboo topic, is prevalent in the socio-cultural shift expressed in this literary canon.

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Stillbirth memento photography

Rob Tovey (Loughborough University)

‡

Perinatal death represents a tragic but ambiguous loss; it is the end of a life not yet lived. For the bereaved, research indicates the creation of "continuing bonds" with the baby can improve long-term wellbeing and encourage a resilient response.[1] Various approaches have been taken to assist with this, including the use of stillbirth memento photography. In this practice, the bereaved are provided with photographs of the baby. They are encouraged to interact with the child whilst a photographer creates images, resulting in photographs that often show the baby being held, nursed or cuddled.

Whilst research indicates the intervention is valued by the bereaved, there is little data on what style of image is preferred.[2] This paper will discuss a recent study by the author addressing this challenge.[3] Through a novel methodology that brings together examples of stillbirth memento photograph and references them against a large qualitative study examining the language use of bereaved families following baby loss, 51 professionally produced stillbirth memento photographs were sampled, anonymised and analysed. Using a content analysis methodology, imagery was characterised by aesthetic and semantic properties. The results were then cross-referenced against existing stillbirth scholarship, data from the ERSC-funded *Death Before Birth* research project, and against image theories.

The analysis identified specific qualities distinctive of stillbirth memento photography that included: a set of specific visual stylistic attributes; a focus on acknowledgement and validation; the facilitation of identity construction; the use of ambiguity; and an emphasis on embodiment. These qualities will be discussed in this paper, outlining how specific aesthetic decisions facilitate the production of continuing bonds.

[1] Erlandsson K., Warland J., Cacciato J., Rådestad I., (2013). Seeing and holding a stillborn baby: Mothers' feelings in relation to how their babies were presented to them after birth—Findings from an online questionnaire. *Midwifery*, 9(3), 246-50.

[2] O'Connell, O., Meaney, S. and O'Donoghue, K., (2016). Caring for parents at the time of stillbirth: How can we do better? *Women and Birth*, 29(4), 345-349; Gold, K.J., Dalton, V.K. and Schwenk, T.L., (2007). Hospital care for parents after perinatal death. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 109(5), 1156-1166.

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Death and dying in the times of Covid-19: An Indian perspective

Khyati Tripathi (University of Delhi)

‡

The current pandemic is not just a physical threat, it is a psychological threat as well. The meaning of death in the current times cannot only be understood in terms of the deaths due to the COVID infection. Rather, it is also important to take into account the 'other deaths' that are being witnessed. In order to understand 'death and dying' in the time capsule of COVID, I would like to propose two categories of death; a) 'real death' and b) 'anticipated death'.

The category of 'real death' entails all the deaths due to the infection as well as those not due to the infection but the circumstances created by the pandemic. The perception of the COVID dead bodies and the effect on the bereaved due to the absence of physical touch and the rituals form an inevitable part of the 'real death'. In the Indian context, the stigma attached with the bodies of the COVID infected patients becomes an important point to focus on. Funerals of many such bodies were protested against by people living near the crematorium or the graveyard based on the suspicion that the infection might spread through the cremation smoke or from under the earth. The migrant workers, on the other hand, walked hundreds of kilometers to the far away cities during the lockdown, some succumbing to the heat wave and some meeting with accidents on the way, like the 16 workers who were crushed by a train (real deaths due to the current circumstances). 'Anticipated death' on the other hand, expresses the fear of one's own death or of the significant other due to the infection. The environment of fear and vulnerability created by the pandemic is being felt most by those at risk, their family members and the one's constantly in contact with the reality of the COVID deaths, like our 'death' workers who are helping cremate or bury them. Through this paper, therefore, I would like to reflect on the above-mentioned categories of death to understand the current pandemic climate.

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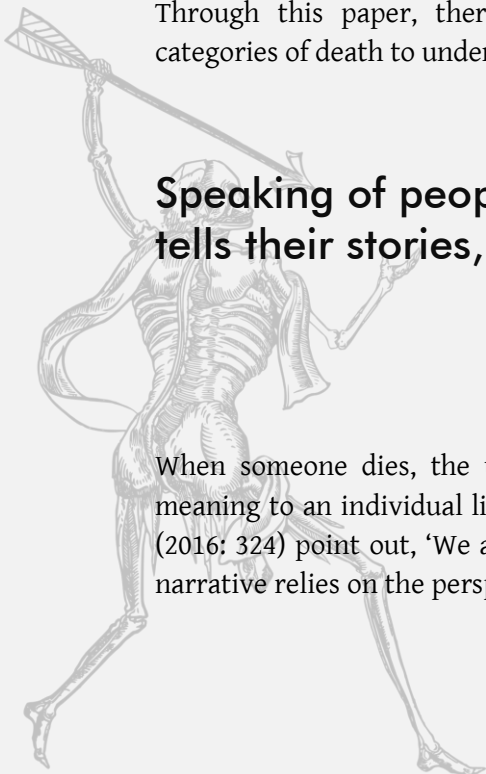
Speaking of people who lived and died alone. Who tells their stories, and how?

Nicole Turner (University of Nottingham)

Glenys Caswell

‡

When someone dies, the unique set of actions and attributes that gave form and meaning to an individual life are discursively examined in various ways; as Davis *et al.* (2016: 324) point out, 'We all die in the middle of a story'. The task of completing the narrative relies on the perspectives of family and friends, crime scene investigators and



coroners, news reporters and journalists, poets and priests depending on the story to be told.

As researchers, we also speak of the dead. This presentation is based on our experiences of conducting a research study exploring the social circumstances of deaths that take place alone at home. When this happens and the person has few friends or relatives, there is an increased chance that the body may not be discovered for some time. We collected in-depth information on ten case studies of a lone death, interviewed twelve professionals who deal with lone deaths, and observed four funerals of people who died alone at home.

In this presentation we consider our responsibilities in speaking of the dead when they leave behind few, if any, close associates to speak for them. We ask who are the custodians of the lives of people who appear to have withdrawn from social contact prior to their death, and how do they construct their accounts? Finally, we identify the wider cultural narratives that inform and shape our interpretive work and explore the implications for the stories we tell.

Davis, C., Quinlan, M. & Baker, D.
(2016) Constructing the dead: Retrospective

sensemaking in eulogies. *Death Studies*, 40
(5), 316-328.

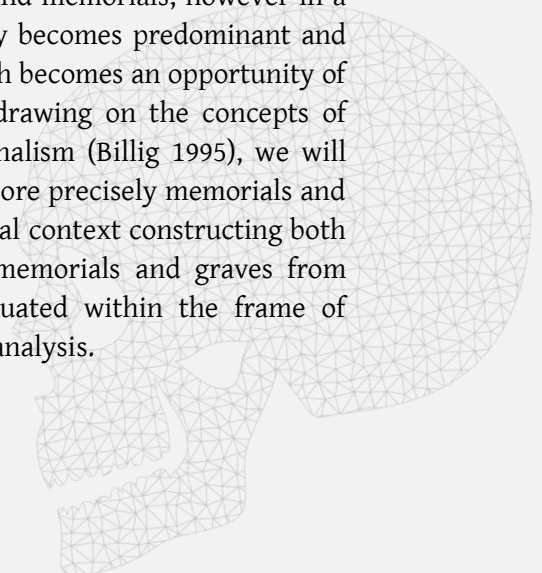
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The final statement: Alsatian cemeteries and the construction of national identity

Katharina Vajta (University of Gothenburg)

‡

Statements of national identity are recurrent in Alsatian cemeteries, as are the mentions that the departed died at war. But in Alsace, a region in the east of France, the question might also be which nation is meant and for which nation death occurred. Indeed, national belongings have shifted several times between France and Germany, which has left visible traces in the region, not least in cemeteries and public memorials. Nevertheless, the sense of belonging to France is predominant, and French national belonging is asserted in more or less explicit ways. This will usually be made by the use of French in the inscription, the display of Republican symbols and by referring in the epitaph to an historical event implying taking a stand for France, even under German rule. Parallely, Alsace also has a strong Germanic tradition and a regional narrative of its own. Also this narrative is to be found in cemeteries and memorials, however in a less apparent way, implying that French national identity becomes predominant and that Alsace is incorporated into the French nation. So death becomes an opportunity of stating a belonging to France. With this in mind, and drawing on the concepts of imagined communities (Anderson 2006) and banal nationalism (Billig 1995), we will here consider how the linguistic landscape of death and more precisely memorials and tombstones in Alsatian graveyards are part of an ideological context constructing both national and regional identity. The study is based on memorials and graves from selected Alsatian cemeteries. Methodologically, it is situated within the frame of linguistic landscape studies and an interpretive, inductive analysis.



Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities. Reflexions on the origins and spread of nationalism.* London: Verso.

Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism.* London: SAGE.

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Ageing and dying behind bars: Prison healthcare staff perspectives

Renske Visser (University of Surrey)

Jo Armes (University of Surrey)

Emma Plugge (Public Health England)

Rachael Hunter (University College London)

Josefien Breedveldt (Mental Health Foundation)

Jennie Huynh (King's College, London)

Margreet Lüchtenborg (King's College, London)

Rachel Taylor (University College London Hospital)

Jeremy Whelan (University College London Hospital)

Elizabeth Davies (King's College London)

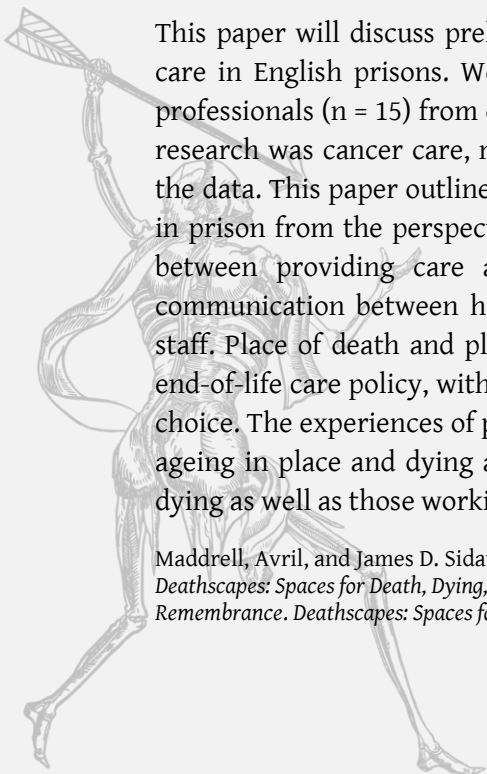
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Prisons are increasingly becoming 'deathscapes' (Maddrell and Sidaway 2010), as they are places where death, dying, grieving and mourning take place. With over 80,000 people in prison, the UK has the largest prison population in Europe. People aged 50 and over are the fastest growing group in English prisons, currently comprising 16% of the total prison population. Life expectancy of people in prison is significantly lower compared to the general public. The growing number of older people in prison combined with lower life expectancy means that increasingly people are ageing and dying in prison. People dying in custodial settings brings up many ethical and practical questions on how to deal with dying and death in secure environments.

This paper will discuss preliminary findings from a research project exploring cancer care in English prisons. We undertook qualitative interviews with prison healthcare professionals (n = 15) from different types of prisons in England. While the focus of our research was cancer care, managing death and dying was a key theme emerging from the data. This paper outlines key challenges in managing palliative and end-of-life care in prison from the perspective of prison healthcare staff. There is an ongoing tension between providing care and custody, and care is compromised by constrained communication between healthcare staff in prison and community-based healthcare staff. Place of death and place of care are both important markers in current English end-of-life care policy, with an emphasis on supporting people to die in a place of their choice. The experiences of people ageing and dying in prison are challenging notions of ageing in place and dying at home and more attention should be given both to those dying as well as those working with the dying in secure environments.

Maddrell, Avril, and James D. Sidaway. 2010. *Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying, Mourning and Remembrance. Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying,*

Mourning and Remembrance. Ashgate Publishing Ltd.



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Between the living and the dead: Recovering and establishing relationships in the 'lynching memorial'

Tanya Walker (Rivendell Institute)

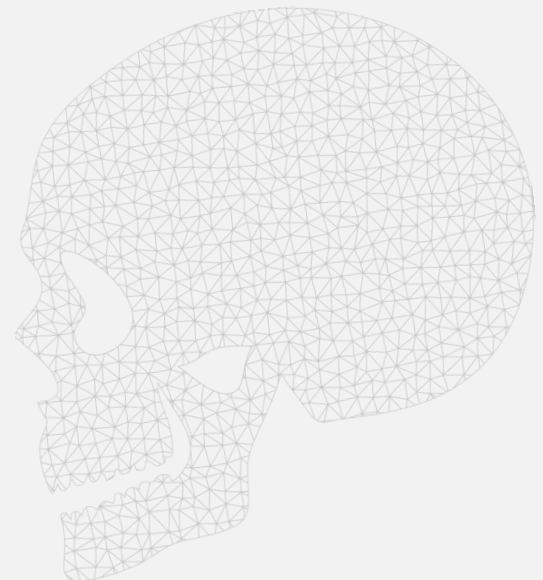
Co-Director and Senior Fellow of the Rivendell Centre for Theology and the Arts (RCTA).

‡

Many contemporary memorials to victims of genocide, terrorism, or gross injustice are perceived to function in terms of societal recognition of injustice, restoration of dignity to victims, and prevention of future atrocities.[1] Inherent to each memorial's design is an articulation of the relationship between the living and the dead. Among such memorials, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, USA—colloquially known as the 'Lynching Memorial'—has drawn significant media attention in the United States; however, its relatively recent establishment (April 26, 2018) means that published scholarly research on the memorial is still in its early stages; there is thus an opportunity to add substantive fodder to the burgeoning conversation by analyzing how the memorial's design facilitates interaction with the dead. Because this truth-telling memorial aims to enact societal change by fostering 'a more thoughtful and informed commitment to justice' *through* its remembrance of the thousands of victims of the 'age of racial terror,' it is vital to consider what role the dead play in facilitating this end.[2] In this exploratory paper, I use careful analysis of the memorial's structural and textual design elements to uncover how the living (memorial visitors) and the dead (lynching victims) relate to one another. In particular, I examine how the presence-in-absence of the dead, visitors' relational frameworks, and dialogue between the living and the dead are critical factors in establishing their relationship. I argue that the memorial's design works to recover or create continuing bonds between visitors and the deceased, and that these bonds are perceived to be central to accomplishing the memorial's goals. Understanding how the National Memorial for Peace and Justice articulates the relationship between its living and its dead is the first step toward evaluating the design's effectiveness in accomplishing its aims.

[1] Buckley-Zistel, S. and Schäfer, S. (2014). 'Introduction' in Buckley-Zistel, S. and Schäfer, S. (eds.) *Memorials in Times of Transition*. Cambridge, UK: Intersentia, p. 10.

[2] Memorial signage at the *National Memorial for Peace and Justice*. Montgomery, AL, USA.



Lost Worlds? Photographing the everyday to enhance mementos and memories

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This image rich paper addresses the issue of memorial objects and the importance of lost context; crucially how photographs may capture the context of everyday objects transiting from functional to memorial artefacts. A common practice when someone dies is to share out mementos to act as reminders of the relationship of the living with the deceased person. One problem that may arise is the loss of context when the artefacts are removed from their original environment resulting in a decentralised, decontextualized, condition. The mnemonic power of the tokens is reduced as the relationship to one another and their emotive environment is removed or at least reduced. It has never been an option for most individuals to preserve a room or building as may be done for rare (famous) individuals as rooms are cleared and properties changed or even sold. However, it is now within the power of most people to map out poignant places by photographing rooms before furniture, ornaments and other artefacts are removed. Doing so situates individual mementos into their original environment and place within a wider collection. Photography is a powerful memory enhancing technology which when combined with one or more of the original objects helps cement the links between past and present, the living and the dead. Using the example of the presenter's parent's flat it shows how photographing even the most mundane of objects can translate these into powerful memorial triggers. The author proposes that people are encouraged to map out domestic memorial environments using digital cameras in order to capture the context of objects which may help cement continuing bonds.

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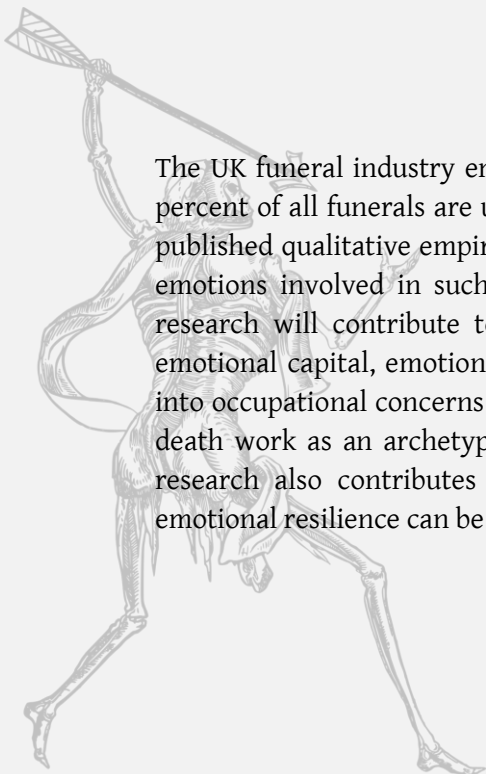
The last taboo: Death work with a stiff upper lip

Jenna Ward (University of Leicester)

Robert McMurray (University of York)

‡

The UK funeral industry employs 20,000 workers and is worth £1.7bn. While seventy-percent of all funerals are undertaken by independent family firms, there is almost no published qualitative empirical research on their work. We understand little about the emotions involved in such work and how practitioners cope with death work. The research will contribute to our theoretical understanding of death work in terms emotional capital, emotional dirty work and emotional labour. Practically it will feed into occupational concerns to prioritise the well-being of funeral directors. Positioning death work as an archetype of complex and demanding emotional labour work, this research also contributes to the contemporary debates that question if and how emotional resilience can be accumulated within work contexts.



Death aesthetics: Examining Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection in the artwork of Bob Flanagan and Teresa Margolles

Elinor Williams (York St John University)

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As an artist and researcher with chronic illness, my area of interest is in disability theory, with a particular emphasis on disability arts. In this paper, I will be focusing my research on two artists: Bob Flanagan (1952-1996) and Teresa Margolles (1963).

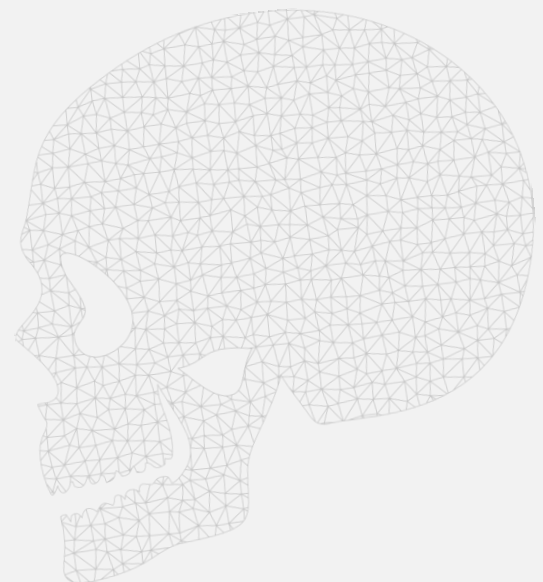
Bob Flanagan was a writer and performance artist. He described himself as a 'supermasochist', creating performances inspired by his personal experiences as a masochist living with cystic fibrosis; approaching the subject matter of his own impending death with wry, comedic levity.

Former morgue employee turned conceptual artist Teresa Margolles directly uses the human corpse in her artwork. She works with obscure elements of the cadaver, such as the moisture from humidified fabric that had been used to clean up liquid from the crime scenes of murder victims. These elements create visceral artworks that the public are able to engage, and often physically interact, with.

The work of both Flanagan and Margolles utilise Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection, the unsettling feeling that arises when we are faced with objects that exist in a liminal space. Kristeva writes that 'the corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject' (1980, p.4).

Abjection is a fascinating link between the way that audiences interact with both the physical manifestation of the corpse as well as the subject matter of death and process of dying. It is a feeling of unease but often also intrigue, as both artists take advantage of 'morbid curiosity' to reveal more about the inextricable relationship between life and death

Kristeva, J. (1982) *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Roudiez, L. New York, Columbia University Press



The Mourner: Lamentation in Dust

Lucy Willow (Falmouth University)

Lucy Willow is an artist and full time senior lecturer in Fine Art at Falmouth University. Working with dust, memorial debris, objects, sound and installation she explores the idea of creating a material presence for the 'dead' to create a space where communication can take place between the dead and the living. Dust is used throughout her practice as a metaphor for death addressing the way in which visual culture represents death and dying, mourning and grieving through imagery. She is interested in memorial sites, nowhere places, landscapes with no borders and spaces that don't always make rational sense. Specific sites that are in a state of ruin or transition inform her work. The installations become a psychic space that invite audience to contemplate the landscape of mourning and loss.

‡

This paper will discuss a recent artwork, *The Mourner: Lamentation in Dust* made for ANTI-festival in Kupio, Finland (September 2019) where I was invited to use an old factory as a site for an installation using the dust in the space. Through the act of ritually sweeping the space wearing black mourning clothes, areas of the building were activated and considered in relation to its history and what can be found in the debris. The mourner made a connection to the building and the materiality of death found in the dust. She collected dust, made piles, walked through the space, and swept before creating a series of intricate tomb stones in dust. The performance and installation in dust made reference to Tuonela, the Finnish underworld. The work explored notions of traveling to a dust isles of the dead, looking for something intangible, searching. Mythology often suggests an active exchange between the land of the living and the land of the dead. Responding to the architectural details of the space a cemetery in dust was created and attended to by the character of the mourner as she picked through the debris in the space. The work that invited the audience to reflect on mourning and the reexamining of detail that can be present in this state.

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Cicely Saunders and the heritage of 'total pain' at the end of life

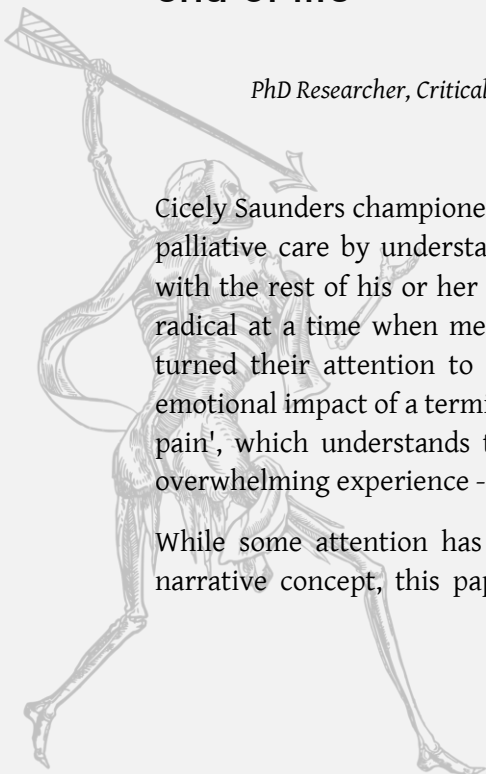
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PhD Researcher, Critical Studies/Interdisciplinary Studies. End of Life Studies Group.

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Cicely Saunders championed the modern hospice movement and initiated what became palliative care by understanding a patient's embodied pain as inextricably bound up with the rest of his or her life-story and the fact of its ending. Saunders' attitude was radical at a time when medical professionals routinely deserted the dying because it turned their attention to the way patients expressed themselves and to the wider emotional impact of a terminal diagnosis. Her approach is summed up in her term 'total pain', which understands that an individual's pain when they are dying is a whole overwhelming experience - not only physical but also emotional, social and spiritual.

While some attention has been paid to how 'total pain' might be thought of as a narrative concept, this paper will explore how its origins lie not only in Saunders'



experiences with her patients but also in her reading of literary, philosophical and theological texts. Using references to, among others, Julian of Norwich, Viktor Frankl, Paul Tournier, Ladislaus Boros, John Macmurray and even William Golding, Saunders used the words of others, usually outside the medical establishment, to communicate her own holistic understanding of her patients' experiences at the end of life. While using the word pain rendered such holism palatable to a medical audience, the total of 'total pain' can therefore be understood to bring together diverse existential, religious and experiential perspectives on mortality and endings.

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'I hope you are at peace now': lynching and communal mourning

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‡

In recent years in the United States there have been renewed efforts to remember the victims of racial terror lynchings. For example, the Equal Justice Initiative has established a Community Remembrance Project which includes collecting soil from known lynching sites. This soil is stored in named jars and displayed in the EJI's Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama. It is collected by members of the local community in which the lynching took place; sometimes the collection is accompanied by a larger commemorative event or ceremony. Clearly the act of digging up soil is symbolically significant. Indeed I argue that this ritual provides an opportunity for the community to publicly mourn these victims of racial terror. During the lynching era, families of victims weren't always able to retrieve or bury their bodies. Their opportunities to mourn were curtailed by the oppressive force of white supremacy. This twenty-first century ceremony thus represents a belated 'burial' and a site for mourning.

In this paper I will discuss whether it is possible for communities to mourn historic losses. Can they mourn collectively? And if so, how? What possibilities for communal mourning are suggested through memory work and commemorative practice? While my paper focuses on lynching in the United States, I hope it will provide space to discuss the necessity for and viability of communal mourning more broadly.

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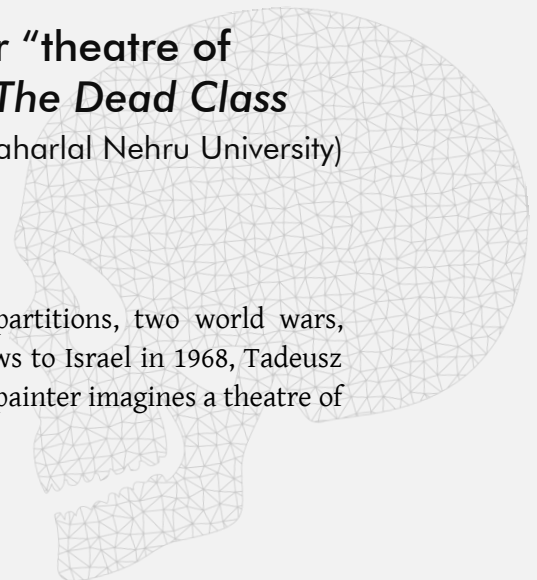
Mannequins & memory in a post-war "theatre of death": A study of Tadeusz Kantor's *The Dead Class*

Monica Yadav (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

PhD Student, Theatre and Performance Studies

‡

In a police regime of Poland with a history of three partitions, two world wars, Holocaust and the government forced exodus of Polish Jews to Israel in 1968, Tadeusz Kantor, a theatre director, set designer, photographer and painter imagines a theatre of



death and memory. Kantor's *teatr biedny* is a poor theatre of "found objects"— objects found after the butchery of the second world war. "The word *biedny* denotes both material poverty and a psychological condition of complete destitution, loneliness, and loss. [... Kantor's theatre] is foremost a theatre of absence, the Theatre of Death" (Romanska 2012). Kantor's Theatre *Cricot 2* underwent many formal experiments and arrived to its final stage in the Theatre of Death (1975-1990), beginning of which was marked by the play *The Dead Class* (1975). This play is based on Kantor's encounter with an abandoned one classroom school in 1971/ 72 reminding him of his young self in a classroom opening his first book. The actors of the play are child size mannequins and human actors in a bombed room playing a classroom from just before the first world war. Through the introduction of a mannequin as a dead double/ alive double to a living or an already dead character is Kantor laying a condition of life as a spatial and theatrical possibility only in theatre? In its attempt to reflect on stage the memories of the dead or alive human whose sufferings and existence can only be "foreign" (Kantor 1975) to the audience, does Kantor's theatre transform its audience into frozen images of emptiness? This paper hence argues that the image of life in the mannequins and the image of death in the human actors on stage constitute an index of memory in the "found objects" and of emptiness in the spectatorial reflection.

Romanska, Magda. 2012. *The Post-Traumatic Theatre of Grotowski and Kantor. History and Holocaust in Akropolis and the Dead Class*. London: Anthem Press.

Kantor, Tadeusz. 2009. "The Theatre of Death (1975)." In *Further On, Nothing: Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre*, translated by Michal Kobialka. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Covid-19 and the economic spectacle of death

Staci Zavattaro (University of Central Florida)

Abdul-Akeem Sadiq (University of Central Florida)

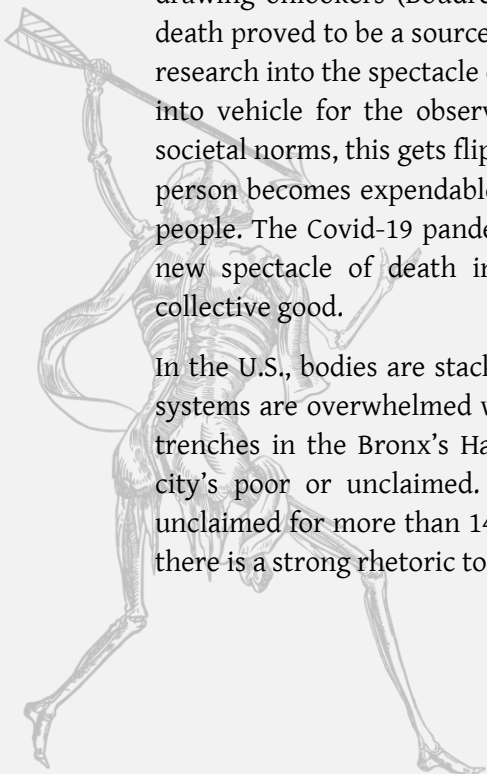
Rebecca Entress (University of Central Florida)

Jenna Tyler (University of Central Florida)

‡

In colonial times, punishment was a public spectacle, with hangings and executions drawing onlookers (Boudreau, 2006). The phenomenon of private justice with public death proved to be a source of entertainment for rich and poor alike. While most of the research into the spectacle of death centers on public punishment and making the body into vehicle for the observance of state power and ultimate control to conform to societal norms, this gets flipped with the introduction of another value: economics. The person becomes expendable – a proverbial cog in the machine seeking to dehumanize people. The Covid-19 pandemic is the case we examine in this article to highlight the new spectacle of death in a society focused on ultimate production rather than collective good.

In the U.S., bodies are stacked in refrigeration trucks because hospitals and deathcare systems are overwhelmed with virus victims. Drone footage captured workers digging trenches in the Bronx's Hart Island, a public cemetery home to mass graves for the city's poor or unclaimed. The cemetery was used for overflow burials of victims unclaimed for more than 14 days. While deaths are still occurring throughout the U.S., there is a strong rhetoric to "open the economy" and put people back to work.



In this we see the new spectralization of death: economic value as the main driver of public value. With this, lives are expendable and death as something people “deserve” because of socio-economic status. We rely on Debord’s (2010) explanation of the society of the spectacle to understand the shift in public value and how death is spectaclized in the name of economic gain. We use examples from popular press coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic in the U.S. to understand this change, seeing how victims are turned into bodies and counts rather than important beings

Boudreau, K. (2006). *The spectacle of death: Populist literary responses to American capital cases*. Prometheus Books.

Debord, G. (2010). *Society of the spectacle*. Bred and Circuses Publishing

